

FEMININE INTERESTS AND INFLUENCES IN EARLY
ENGLISH PERIODICALS

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DEPARTMENT OF
E N G L I S H

BY

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I hereby recommend that the thesis prepared
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PREFACE

Gradually developing from the accession of William and Mary, public sentiment against the coarse, cynical social attitudes as manifested in the Restoration period began, toward the end of the seventeenth century, to need some instrument for its expression. Whereas drama in the Restoration period embodied social attitudes, the latter part of the Stuart regime and the beginnings of the Hanoverian era, being proportionately devoid of drama, saw the rise of the periodical essay as an instrument of social expression. The periodicals aligning themselves with the new reforming movement, in the general trend of Sentimentalism, set about rectifying social evils not the least of which was the contemptuous attitude toward woman.

It has been the purpose of this thesis to demonstrate the fact that specific periodicals, namely the Tatler, the Spectator, the Guardian, the Gentleman's Magazine or the Monthly Intelligencer (1731-1736), the Female Spectator, and the Rambler dedicated themselves to the general purposes already outlined, and that they did yield a vast amount of space to the interests of woman, not only with a view to enlarging circulation but more especially out of a sentimentalized consideration for womankind and her prepossessions.

The compiling of these data would have failed long since had it not been for the patient encouragement of my director,

Dr. L.M.Ellison. To him I express sincere gratitude not only for his kindness but also for the inspiration of his profound scholarship which it has been my privilege to enjoy as his student.

To Dr. Bertha K. Duncan, I wish to give grateful acknowledgement for her thorough-going instruction in the science of psychology and for her personal friendship.

And for whatever of merit the composition of this thesis exhibits I give just credit to my friend, Miss Mamie Walker, for having painstakingly taught me the principles of composition.

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Gladys Walker Hefley

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FEMININE INTERESTS AND INFLUENCES IN EARLY ENGLISH PERIODICAL LITERATURE

CHAPTER I

THE CHANGING SOCIAL STATUS OF WOMEN AS REFLECTED IN RESTORATION AND EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY LITERATURE

In surveying the work of the early periodical essayists of the eighteenth century in England, one finds striking evidence that these writers, engaging themselves to combat the social evils of the day, deliberately attempted to attract women readers; and once sure of having attracted them, sought to improve upon their interests in life and to refine their social manners.

Some such agent was greatly needed at that time to raise woman in the estimation of society. Puritanism and its consequent reactionary extreme, the licentiousness of Restoration social life, had forced woman into a more inferior position domestically and socially than she had known since the Middle Ages. In truth, at the beginning of the Queen Anne period, woman was little more than chattel in the eyes of man and the law. And in spite of the embryonic stirrings of interest in woman as an entity in that era, she was to remain in a relatively inferior position until the nineteenth century, when William Godwin, Mary Wollstonecraft, Harriet Martineau, John Stuart Mill and the last militants demanded equal rights for woman whom they considered the

equal of man. The eighteenth century, a transition period in woman's social history, saw the rise of the periodical essay, the effect of which, in specific instances, was to soften the pernicious belittling of woman, as well as to awaken woman to an enlarged sense of her own importance. To this more or less unconscious office on the part of the periodical essayists was added the conscious one of correcting woman's moral and social follies.

These self-appointed arbiters devoted themselves to two different types of aristocratic women whom they felt to be in need of social and moral reform. One of these, the urban woman of society, usually of the court, the essayists considered as brightly cynical and unconventional as had been the court lady of the brilliant Stuart regimes. The other was the unsophisticated country lady, lacking in social aplomb because of the lack of experience.

The latter had, hitherto, lived a secluded life, largely dependent for her entertainment upon the society of her own family and the friends of her husband. Usually, the husband, indeed head of his house, disapproved current urban society and shielded his wife and daughters from that disturbing element by keeping them closely at home. In this he was abetted by the well-nigh impassable condition of country roads.

However, with the advent of John Macadam and his system of surfacing roads, the rural gentry began to emerge from its isolation and to mingle with urban society in such fashionable centers as the Baths, then the playgrounds of England.

Here, too, came a third type of woman appallingly innocent of proper social decorum. This was the woman of that rapidly enlarging and aggressive group, the middle-class. A product of the new economic era which elevated her stratum of society, the new middle-class woman at her best often suffered the lack of self-confidence. At her worst, she often exhibited a blatant over-confidence no doubt inspired by the realization of her new importance in the world.

This new importance naturally grew out of the turn of fortune which the middle-classes enjoyed during the latter part of the seventeenth century and particularly in the eighteenth century. This period saw their aggrandizement through their pursuit of the commercial enterprises attendant on colonization, with its shipbuilding, importing, exporting and merchandizing activities. Acquiring wealth, these classes began to buy up vast land holdings and to set up luxurious country estates. To a considerable extent, this application of capitalism to the land succeeded in completing the Agricultural Revolution and in realigning social classes in England. Newly important borough-owners came to demand seats in Parliament and society. Cross tells us that the new capitalistic farmer "was often a very grand person, indeed. He kept great hospitality; he entertained his guests with French and Portuguese wines, his daughter played the piano and dressed in imitation of the nobility."¹ This process of the elevation of these

1 A Short History of England and Great Britain, Chapter XLIV

classes continued throughout the eighteenth century. The Annual Register in 1759 mentioned the fact that "even the meanest tradesmen keep governesses for their daughters."²

This made for a vast class of nouveaux riches "with manners and tastes of those who have acquired wealth too easily and rapidly."³

Outstanding thinkers of the time stood appalled at the social confusion. Seeing all that British society had heretofore held traditionally sacred now being rudely revolutionized, essayists and other commentators expressed themselves vehemently. Said Steele:

The common face of modesty is lost among the ordinary part of the world, and the general corruption of manners is visible from the loss of all deference in the low people towards those of condition. One order of mankind trips fast after the next above it and by this rule you may trace iniquity from the conversations of the most wealthy, down to those of the humblest degree.⁴

By 1751, when Fielding wrote "An Inquiry into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers", economical conditions had almost completely revolutionized the old order. He wrote :

Nothing has wrought such an alteration in this (lower) order of people as the introduction of trade. This hath indeed given a new face to the whole nation, hath in great measure subverted the manners, customs and habits of the people, more especially of the lower sort. The narrowness of their fortunes is changed into wealth; the simplicity of their manners into craft; their frugality into luxury; their humility into pride and their subjection into equality.⁵

² Annual Register, 1759, p. 45

³ G. Dodd, The Food of London, p. 96 (quoting Daniel Defoe) London, 1856.

⁴ The Guardian, No. 87, Saturday, June 21, 1715

⁵ Fielding, "An Inquiry into the Late Increase of Robbers" London, 1751

Country gentlemen of the old landed aristocracy now began the practice of binding their younger sons, as apprentices, to prosperous merchants. Pope recognized this custom in his Moral Essays:

Boastful and rough your first son a squire,
The next a tradesman meek and much a liar. 6

Intermarriage between members of the middle classes and those of the aristocracy became increasingly common. The desire of land-poor aristocrats for large marriage settlements, in order to acquire comforts and luxuries, plus the desire of wealthy merchants for better social position and more power, incited these contracts. Of this development, Sir William Temple wrote:

Our marriages are made just like other common bargains and sales, by the mere consideration of Interest and Gain without any Love or Esteem.....Yet this Custom is of no ancient Date in England, and I think I remember within less than fifty years, the first noble Families that married into the City for downright Money, and thereby introduced this public Grievance which has since ruined so many Estates by the Necessity of giving good portions to Daughters. 7

Thus the wealthy middle class, many of whom were allied with the aristocracy or newly raised to the peerage, produced a type of woman socially ambitious and enjoying the advantage of leisure through the employment of numerous servants.⁸ Yet this type of woman found herself socially inadequate and greatly in need of a guide for her manners and tastes.

6 Moral Essays, Essay I

7 Works, Vol. I, p. 268

8 Defoe, "Behaviour of the Servants of England" (London, 1724), p. 12

The conventional feminine Character, relic of the Restoration period, was completely out-moded through this levelling process and the powerful influence of conservative middle-class demand.

In the clever social comedies from Etherege to Congreve woman had found her model an affected creature of false modesty and questionable morality; and, if in the least pretending to learning, she was satirized as a "she-wit". And the one refuge for woman, namely marriage, was so flippantly ridiculed as to cast aspersions on the constancy of husbands and the fidelity of wives.

A good summary of the prevailing social conditions and attitudes of that era is found in The Man of Mode:

DORIMANT ("the man of mode", passing from Mr. Courtage, a "foppish admirer of quality", who wishes to gain the good graces of Lady Woodvill, with whose daughter he desires an alliance and with whom he is now engaged in conversation): All people mingle nowadays, madam, and in public places women of quality have the least respect showed'em.

LADY WOODVILL. I protest you say the truth, Mr. Courtage.

DORIMANT. Forms and ceremonies, the only things that uphold quality and greatness, are now shamefully laid aside and neglected.

LADY WOODVILL. Well, this is not the woman's age. Let'em think what they will, lewdness is the business now; love was the business in my time.

DORIMANT. The women, indeed, are little beholding to the young men of this age.....

DORIMANT. They(the men) pretend to be great critics of beauty. By their talk you would think they like no face, and yet they can dote on an ill one, if it belong to a laundress or a tailor's daughter. They cry, "A woman's past her prime at twenty, decayed at four-and-twenty, and insufferable at thirty." 9

Popular conceptions of the typical women of the day are found in Shadwell's Bury Fair, where a character remarks, "Your fine women are a company of proud, vain fops and jilts abominably daubed and painted."¹⁰ Also, one finds, in Congreve's Love for Love, Scandal describing a "celebrated beauty" of his acquaintance as possessing "pride, folly, affectation, wantonness, inconstancy, covetousness, dissimulation, malice¹¹ and ignorance all in one piece."

The universally low esteem in which men held women is nowhere better reflected than in the conversation between Scandal and Mrs. Foresight in the last named play :

MRS. FORESIGHT....Hark ye, devil ! do you think any woman honest ?

SCANDAL. Yes, several very honest, they'll cheat a little at cards, sometimes, but that's nothing.

MRS. FORESIGHT. Pshaw ! But virtuous, I mean.

SCANDAL. Yes, faith, I believe some women are virtuous, too, but 'tis as I believe some men are valiant, through fear. For why should a man court danger, or a woman shun pleasure ?¹²

As a measure of the respect shown women, particularly on the promenades and in public places, one finds in Congreve's The Way of the World:

WITWOOD. Oh, rare Petulant !Thou shalt to the Mall with us and we'll be very severe.

PETULANT. Enough ! I'm in a humour to be very severe.

MIRABELL. Are you ? Pray then, walk by yourselves ! Let us not be necessary to your putting the ladies out of countenance with your senseless ribaldry which you roar out aloud as often as they pass by you; and when you have made a handsome woman blush, then you think you have been severe.

¹⁰ Op. cit., Act III, scene 3 (1689)

¹¹ Ibid. Act I, Scene 1 (1695)

¹² Ibid. Act III, Scene 2

PETULANT. What, what! Then let'em either show their innocence by not understanding what they hear, or else show their discretion by not hearing what they would not be thought to understand.

MIRABELL. But hast not thou then sense enough to know that thou oughtest to be most ashamed of thyself when thou has put another out of countenance ?

PETULANT. Not I, by this hand ! ---I always take blushing either for a sign of guilt or ill breeding. 13

Learning in woman was satirized effectively in many comedies of the period, but notably so in the character of Lady Fantast in Shadwell's Bury Fair (1689); in the character of Melantha in John Dryden's Marriage a la Mode (1672); and in Lady Froth, a character in Congreve's Double Dealer (1694)

In this period, according to the wits, love was a game of pursuit, and marriage but a snare. The fashionable attitude is aptly expressed in The Man of Mode:

YOUNG BELLAIR. I could find it in my heart to resolve not to marry at all.

DORIMANT. Fie, fie ! That would spoil a good jest and disappoint a well-natured town of an occasion of laughing at you. 14

And further, in the same comedy :

MEDLEY. Bear up, Bellair, and do not let us see that repentance in thine we daily do in married faces.

LADY TOWNLEY. This marriage will strangely surprise my brother when he knows it.

MEDLEY. Your nephew ought to conceal it for a time, madam, since marriage has lost its good name. Prudent men seldom expose their own reputation will 'tis convenient to justify their wives. 15

13 Op. cit., Act I, Scene 1 (1700). In Mirabell's remarks the breaking down of the Restoration Comedy type is clearly seen, indicating the influence of Sentimentalism on Congreve.

14 Op. cit., Act I, Scene 1

15 Ibid., Act V, Scene 2

As early as 1676, when Etherege wrote the Man of Mode, marriage was a matter of settlements.

BUSY. (Harriet's maid) I wonder you do not like him.

HARRIET. I think I might be brought to endure him, and that is all a reasonable woman should expect in a husband; but there is duty in this case.....

HARRIET. Shall I be paid down by a covetous parent for a purchase ? I need no land.....16

Congreve satirized the practice in Love for Love:

JEREMY (valet to Valentine). 'Tis an act of charity, sir, to save a fine woman with thirty thousand pounds from throwing herself away.

TATTLE. So 'tis, faith ! I might have saved several others in my time; but egad, I could never find it in my heart to marry anybody before. 17

At the same time, the attitude of the more conservative element of English society, while tempered by affectation and more respect for woman, coincided, for the most part, with the attitude of the more worldly element. The Marquis of Halifax, for instance, wrote in The Lady's New Year's Gift; Or Advice to a Daughter:

You must first lay it down for a Foundation in general, that there is an Inequality in the Sexes, and that for the better economy of the world, the Men, who were to be the Lawgivers, had the larger share of Reason bestowed upon them; by which means your Sex is the better prepared for the Compliance that is necessary for the better performance of those Duties which seem to be most properly assigned to it.....We are made of differing Tempers, that our Defects may be better mutually supplied. Your Sex wanteth our Reason for your Conduct, and our Strength for your protection; ours wanteth

16 Op. cit., Act III, Scene 1
17 Ibid., Act V, ~~Scene~~ 1 (1695)

your gentleness to soften, to entertain us.... You have more strength in your Looks than we have in our Laws, and more power by your Tears than we have by our Arguments.¹⁸

Lord Halifax further admonished his daughter that marriage is a game of wits, and he recommended passivity in the face of even the most extreme faults of her husband as being the proper role in life.

All of the foregoing evidence indicates the grave need not only for the refinement of manners, but also for a revision of social and moral values at that time. And, as a matter of fact, movements in these directions had already originated when, during the Queen Anne period, Steele and Addison seized upon the current trends of reforming thought and with the establishment of the Tatler and the Spectator, constituted themselves the needed agent through the medium of their literary essays.

The first official movement for reform was the bloodless revolution of 1688, when William and Mary embodying staid middle-class ideals, set a new fashion in court circles by the examples of their private lives and by their domestic stability. If the courtiers resented this social reformation, the people as a whole welcomed it. Chamberlayne relates that toward the end of the seventeenth century, a large number of leading Londoners, including members of par-

¹⁸ "The Lady's New Year's Gift or Advice to a Daughter," in Miscellanies, by the late Right Noble Lord Marquess of Halifax, London, 1700. p. 13

liament, legal authorities, professional men, as well as merchants and tradesmen, organized "A Society for the Reformation of Manners." This organization, in effect, did much not only to improve social conduct but also to alleviate criminal conditions growing out of the general laxity of behavior. One of its purposes was to insist on the enforcement of law and on the arrest and conviction of wrong-doers.¹⁹

The reformation of popular entertainments also began about this time. Attention was called specifically to the vicious influences on the morals of the people by the dissolute comedies, then prevalent, by Jeremy Collier in A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage (1698). In his indictment, he is especially severe upon Congreve and Vanbrugh for their indecencies. Colley Cibber tells us that Congreve seemed to be too much hurt to defend himself, but that Vanbrugh only laughed at the lashes.²⁰ In fact, at the opening of Vanburgh's theater, the Haymarket, in 1705, the prologue of the play, written by Sir Samuel Garth, retaliated satirically with the statement that the stage had now taken the place of the church.²¹

However, Collier's attack on the stage did have a telling effect. Cibber tells us :

But the Master of the Revels, who then licensed all plays for the stage assisted this Reformation with a more jealous severity than ever. He would strike out whole scenes of a

¹⁹ The Present State of England. London, 1704 and 1748, pp. 333-334

²⁰ An Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber. 1740. Section, "Theatrical Reform"; Chapter VIII

²¹ Harleian Miscellany, 11, 21

vicious or immoral character, though it were visibly shown to be reformed or punished. 22

King William thought Collier's work so laudable that he granted him special favors before the law. Cibber continues:

And it must be farther granted that his (Collier's) calling our dramatic writers to this strict account had a very wholesome effect upon those who writ after this time. They were now a great deal more upon their guard; indecencies were no longer writ; and by degrees the fair sex came to fill the boxes on the first day of a new comedy, without fear or censure. 23

On June 4, 1701, the Grand Jury of Middlesex, voicing the resentment of the middle class, issued a condemnation of the stage :

The plays which are frequently acted in the Play-houses in Drury-lane and Lincoln's Inn-Fields in this country are full of prophane, irreverent, lewd, indecent and immoral expressions, and tend to the great displeasure of Almighty God, and the corruption of the auditory both in their principles and their practice. 24

The action of the Grand Jury met with wide spread public approval and in 1703, Queen Anne issued a proclamation against debauchery and vicious amusement; whereupon, the Grand Jury renewed its activities, making presentments against questionable entertainments and returning indictments against violators of the recently enacted statutes.²⁵ The effect of these movements on the public is recorded in The Observer:

22 Harleian Miscellany, 11, 21

23 Op. cit.

24 James P. Malcolm, Anecdotes of the Manners and Customs of London During the Eighteenth Century, 2 vols, London 1808. Vol. II, pp. 116-117

25 Ibid. Vol. III, p. 141

(Each) Kennel of debauchery is quite dismantled by this proclamation, and the beaux who sit at home on Sundays and play picquet and backgammon, are under a dreadful apprehension of a thundering prohibition of stage playing.²⁶

By most authorities, the moral corruption of the age was attributed to the drama. A representative to Queen Anne from the two Houses of Convocation, in 1711, censured the indecency of the current drama.²⁷ In 1709, in his "Project for the Advancement of Religion", Swift indicated the drama in this regard. The improper influence on the feminine element is recognized by Pope:

The fair sat, panting at a courtier's play
And not a mask went unimproved away. ²⁸

Also, Colley Cibber comments on the custom of women's wearing masks to the theatre and given a plausible explanation:

While our authors took these extraordinary liberties with their wit, I remember the ladies were then observed to be decently afraid of venturing barefaced to a new comedy till they had been assured they might do it without risque of insult to their modesty; or if their curiosity were too strong for their patience, they took care at least to save appearances, and rarely came upon the first days of acting, but in masks (then daily worn and admitted in the pit, side-boxes and gallery). ²⁹

Queen Anne, perhaps partly because of other pernicious results of masking, but certainly because of the encouragement given, to producers of lewd comedy through the persistent

²⁶ The Observer, No. 92

²⁷ Harleian Miscellany, 11, 21

²⁸ Essay on Criticism (1711), Part II

²⁹ Cibber, op. cit., Chapter VIII

attendance of women who could rely only upon masking to protect their identity, prohibited this custom in the theatre.³⁰ An appeal was made to women themselves. "Go to these immoral or lewd plays", says one reformer, "and you support them. Absent yourselves, show your dislike by not appearing at them, they will be corrected or never performed and consequently fall into oblivion."³¹

All these efforts to regulate lewd entertainments and to reform questionable tastes did much to mitigate the evils of the first decade of the eighteenth century. Yet much remained to be done; it is here that Addison and Steele, together with certain later essayists, proved themselves useful, particularly in their efforts to improve the social and moral conditions affecting woman. Steele, in criticizing the licentiousness of current dramatic entertainment, wrote:

Indeed it is, among other Reasons for want of Wit and Invention in our modern Gallants, that the beautiful Sex is absurdly and vitiously entertained by 'em. ³³

Steele also believed the licentious drama to be an important contributing cause for the great lack of respect shown women:

30 Davies, Life of Garrick, ii, 355 (Ed. 1780).

31 Jonas Hanway, An Essay on Tea. London, 1756. pp. 30-31

32 Tatler, No. 18, April, 1709

33 The Christian Hero (1701), p.64

When the actors make their exit, on this good occasion, the ladies are sure to have an examining glance from the pit to see how they relish what passes; and a few lewd fools are very ready to employ their talents upon the composure or freedom of their looks. Such incidents as these make some ladies wholly absent themselves from the playhouse, and others never miss the first day of the play. 34

He also attributed the fact that the wedded state had fallen into ill repute to the influence of comedy of the Restoration type. "The theatre", he says, "in some late Reigns owed its chief support to those Scenes which were written to put matrimony out of Countenance. 35

The efforts of the reformers, plus the influence of the periodicals in promoting the new force of Sentimentalism, made for a new Feminine Ideal. Steele set up a new conventional type of woman in his criticism of the stage:

For there is in (her) tender Frame native Simplicity, Groundless Fear, and little Unaccountable Contradiction upon which there might be built Expostulation to divert a good and Intelligent Young Woman, as well as the fullsome Raptures, guilty Impressions, senseless Deifications, and pretended Deaths, that are every Day offer'd her. 36

True enough, Steele's ideal is only morally superior to that of the wits. He and Addison were not so liberal as some of their predecessors who had begun, the previous decade, the agitation for a new feminine ideal. Of these, John Dunton, notably liberal, a periodical writer himself, had staunchly advised women 'to tear down the tender cobweb of Ignorance in

34 Spectator, No. 51, Saturday, April 28, 1711

35 Spectator, No. 479, September 9, 1712. See also Tatler, No. 119, July 18, 1710 for similar expressions.

36 The Christian Hero, p. 64

which men like subtil Spiders would shrewdly hold them."

Said he, "Reason tells us that Women have Souls as well as Men" and are to be equally prized, as being of equal value."³⁷

An anonymous writer, purportedly a woman, proposed in 1696 to "reduce the Sexes to a Level, and by Arguments to raise ours to an Equality at most with Men."³⁸ The greatest liberal of his age, Daniel Defoe, in "An Academy for Women" (1697), outlines the whole attitude of his era:

I have often thought of it as one of the most barbarous customs in the world, considering us as a civilized and Christian country, that we deny the advantages of learning to women. We reproach the sex every day with folly and impertinence, while I am confident, had they the advantages of education equal to us, they would be guilty of less than ourselves. ³⁹

No doubt, had Steele, Addison, and their subsequent imitators, or even Dr. Johnson so staunchly championed woman's rights, what with their widely circulated influence, the eighteenth century had seen greater changes, sociologically, for women. Defoe holds the attitude of man responsible for the intellectual thralldom of woman:

I would ask them what they can see in ignorance that they should think it a necessary ornament to a woman ? ⁴⁰

³⁷ The Ladies Dictionary, Being a General Entertainer for the Fair Sex. A work never attempted before in English, Printed for John Dunton, London, 1694, "Ability" p. 438. (Other works in which Dunton took up the cause of women: the Athenian Mercury (1691-1697), a periodical; and the Female War (1697))

³⁸ An Essay in Defense of the Female Sex. In a Letter to a Lady, written by a Lady. 2nd Edition, London, 1696 Dedication

³⁹ An Essay Upon Projects, "An Academy for Women" (1697).

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Defoe eulogizes woman to a greater extent than can be found among any of his contemporaries, and indeed very few of his successors can compare with him in this regard:

The capacities of women are supposed to be greater and their senses quicker than those of the men; and what they might be capable of being bred to is plain from some instances of wit, which this age is not without; which upbraids us with injustices and looks as if we denied women the advantages of education for fear they should vie with the men in their improvements.....

A woman well bred and well taught, furnished with the additional accomplishments of knowledge and behavior, is a creature without comparison; her society is the emblem of sublimer enjoyments; her person is angelic and her conversation heavenly; she is all softness and sweetness, peace, love, wit and delight. She is every way suitable to the sublimest wish, and the man that has such a one to his portion has nothing to do but to rejoice in her and be thankful. 41

Here is embodied the antithesis of the Restoration attitude toward woman; instead, we have the chivalrous attitude of the more distant past colored with rank sentimentality. Early periodical essayists, beginning with Steele and Addison, were influenced in their tempered attitude by Defoe. They all agreed with him that woman must be protected. He had pointed out :

I know 'tis dangerous to make public appearances of the sex. They are not either to be confined or exposed; the first will disagree with their inclinations and the last with their reputations. 42

However, Defoe expresses his platform for woman's position in society more positively than can be found in the peri-

41 An Essay Upon Projects, "An Academy for Women" (1697)

42 Ibid.

odicals studied:

And herein it is that I take upon me to make such a bold assertion that all the world are mistaken in their practice about women, for I cannot think that God Almighty ever made them so delicate, so glorious creatures, and furnished them with such charms, so agreeable and so delightful to mankind, with souls capable of the same accomplishments with men, and all to be only stewards of our houses, cooks and slaves.....Not that I am for exalting the female government in the least, but, in short, I would have men take women for companions, and educate them to be fit for it. A woman of sense and breeding will scorn as much to encroach upon the prerogative of the man as a man of sense will scorn to oppress the weakness of the woman. But if women's souls were refined and impressed by teaching, that word would be lost; to say, the weakness of the sex as to judgment would be nonsense, for ignorance and folly would be no more found among women than men. 43

It will be noticed that Defoe referred to "some instances of wit which this age is not without". No doubt he was referring to certain women contemporaries who stood in defense of their sex. He points, in this essay, specifically to Mary Astell's plan to establish a retreat or a sort of lay nunnery for women who would study. In her pamphlet outlining her plan, Mary Astell recommended that women be given an opportunity to discover themselves and probe their potentialities, whereby they might "enlarge their prospect, rectify their false ideas, for in their minds adequate Conceptions of the End and Dignity of their Natures, not only have the name and common Principles of Religion floating in their Heads and sometimes running out of their Mouths, but understand the Design and Meaning of it.....not only feel Passions but

43 An Essay Upon Projects, "An Academy for Women" (1697)

be able to direct and regulate their Motions.....The Men therefore may still enjoy their prerogatives, for us, we mean not to intrench on any of their lawful Privileges-...
our only endeavor shall be to be absolute Monarchs in our own Bosoms.....to be intimately acquainted with our own Hearts."⁴⁴ Defoe disapproved Mary Astell's plan on the grounds that restraint is not natural. Bishop Burnet⁴⁵ also disapproved the plan, thus quashing it entirely.

Mary Astell was not the only woman reformer contemporary with Defoe. Another of these "wits" was Damaris Chudleigh, (1656-1710), poet and essayists. In one of her poems, she recognizes the attitude of men toward women of learning, and she promises the masculine world that woman intends to better her position intellectually:

'Tis hard we should be by the men despis'd
 Yet kept from learning what would make us priz'd.
 Debarr'd from Knowledge, banished from the Schools,
 And with the utmost dignity bred Fools,
 Laughed out of Reason, jested out of Sense,
 And nothing left but native Innocence.

.....

But, spite of you, we'll to ourselves be kind,
 Your Censures slight, your little Tricks despise,
 And make it our whole Business to be wise.
 The mean, low, trivial Cares of Life disdain,
 And read and think and think and read again,
 And on our Minds bestow the utmost Pain. 46

44 Mary Astell, A Serious Proposal to the Ladies for the Advancement of their true and greatest Interest. In two parts. By a Lover of her Sex, 3rd Edition of Part I; 1st Edition of Part II, London, 1797. Part II, p. 21

45 Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. II, 14th Edition. See Mary Astell

46 Damaris Chudleigh, Poems. London, 1703. "The Ladies' Defense". See also Cibber's Lives of the Poets, Vol. III, pp. 177-186 for an account of this poet and essayist.

No doubt, Defoe also had Anne, Lady Winchelsea in mind when he referred to those women of his era who were notably intellectual. Lady Winchelsea (1661-1720), was so outstanding among the writers of her time that Pope and Gay satirized her in Three Hours After Marriage. This famous forerunner of Romanticism in poetry, Lady Winchelsea, summarizes the attitude of all her critics in her poem, "The Introduction":

Alas ! a woman that attempts the pen
Such an intruder on the rights of men,
Such a presumptuous Creature is esteem'd
The fault can by no vertue be redeem'd.
They tell us we mistake our sex and way;
Good breeding, fashion, dancing, dressing, play,
Are all the accomplishments we should desire,
To write, or read, or think or to enquire
Would cloud our beauty, and exhaust our time
And interrupt the Conquest of our prime;
Whilst the dull mannage of a Servile house
Is held by some, our utmost art and use. 47

Lady Winchelsea was an ardent feminist, and a sharp critic of the shallow social life of women of that day, particularly of their endless tittle-tattle and the general inanity of current social conversation. She was one of those who condemned the current drama on the score of its influence for immorality.

A fourth contemporary of Defoe, and perhaps the most

47 Winchelsea, Anne, The Poems of. From the Original Edition of 1713 and from unpublished Mss. Edited with an Introduction and Notes by Myra Reynolds. The Decennial Publication, Second Series, Vol. V, Chicago. The U. of Chicago Press. 1903

brilliant scholar of the period, was Elizabeth Elstob (1683-1756). In the Preface to An Anglo-Saxon Homily on the Birthday of St. Gregory (1709), she wrote that she had received the criticism of both men and women. The former, seemingly jealous, questioned her right to learning, whereas the women, even more violent in denouncing her intellectual propensities, "despairing to arrive at any eminent or laudable degree of knowledge, seem totally to abandon themselves to Ignorance, contenting themselves to sit down in darkness, as if they either had not Reason, or it were not capable of being rightly cultivated by bringing them into the Light." Miss Elstob asks, "Where is the fault in Women's seeking after Learning ?"

A younger contemporary of Defoe, Addison and Steele was Mrs. Eliza Haywood (1693-1756), famous for her fecund pen, particularly in the production of novels, since she was credited with seventy single works of fiction.⁴⁸ Mrs. Haywood is of specific interest in this study in that she edited the Female Spectator from 1744 to 1746. This periodical was devoted to feminine interests. It is of value here in that it marks woman's progress to the mid-century, revealing the fact that sociologically, woman had progressed little except in so far as sentiment was beginning to cherish woman for her own sake. Mrs. Haywood, no doubt commercializing on social trends, failed to press any causes beyond

⁴⁸ George F. Whicher, The Life and Romances of Mrs. Eliza Haywood, N.Y. Columbia U. Press, 1915

what would be popularly acceptable. The material success of Mrs. Haywood demonstrates the fact that women were then avidly in search of reading material, but suggests that this search was actuated more by the desire for entertainment than for the real improvement of their minds. In the Female Spectator, Mrs. Haywood's feeble efforts to interest her readers in study and mental improvement will be cited below in the section on the education and training of women. Through the survey of this periodical we can but conclude that woman accomplished little for herself by the middle of the eighteenth century.

Yet there was a group of women interested in their own social and intellectual capacities of whom Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762) exemplifies the best type. Her letter to her daughter, the Countess of Bute, on January 28, 1753 is enlightening in that it reflects what the most liberal minds allowed to be the right training for a daughter at the mid-decade of the century. She wrote:

You have given me a great deal of satisfaction by your account of your oldest daughter. I am particularly pleased to hear she is a good arithmetician; it is the best proof of understanding; the knowledge of numbers is one of the chief distinctions between us and the brutes.....Every woman endeavors to breed her daughter a fine lady, qualifying her for a station in which she will never appear, and at the same time incapacitating her for that retirement to which she is destined. Learning if she has a real taste for it, will not only make her contented but happy in it. No entertainment is so cheap as reading, nor any pleasure so lasting. She will not want new fashions, nor regret the loss of expensive diversions, or variety of company, if she can be amused with an author in her closet. To render the amusement extensive, she should be permitted to learn the languages.....You should encourage your daughter to talk

over with you what she reads; and, as you are very capable of distinguishing, take care she does not mistake pert folly for wit and humour, or rhyme for poetry, which are the common errors of young people, and have a train of ill consequences. The second caution to be given her (and which is most absolutely necessary) is to conceal whatever learning she attains, with as much solicitude as she would hide crookedness or lameness. The parade of it can only serve to draw on her the envy and consequently the most inveterate hatred of all her and she fools, which will certainly be at least three parts in four of all her acquaintance.⁴⁹

Later, on March 6, 1753, she further records the attitude of the male world towards learning in women:

I cannot help writing a sort of apology for my last letter, foreseeing that you will think it wrong, or at least, Lord Bute will be extremely shocked at the proposal of a learned education for daughters, which the generality of men believe as great a profanation as the clergy would do if the laity should presume to exercise the functions of priesthood. I desire you would take notice, I would not have learning enjoined them as a task, but permitted as a pleasure, if their genius leads them naturally to it. ⁵⁰

Lady Mary attributed the root of women's follies to ignorance:

I could give many examples of ladies whose ill conduct has been very notorious, which has been owing to that ignorance which has exposed them to idleness which is justly called the mother of mischief. ⁵¹

Nor did she recognize any "sex in souls":

There is nothing so like the education of a woman of quality as that of a prince; they are taught to dance, and the exterior part of what is called good breedings, which if they attain, they are extraordinary creatures in their kind, and have all the accomplishments required by their directors. The same characters are formed by the same lessons, ----which inclines me to think (if I dare say it)

⁴⁹ Lord Wharnccliffe, Letters and Works of Lady Mary Montagu, London, 1887. vol. II, p. 236

⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 239

⁵¹ Ibid.

that nature has not placed us in an inferior rank to men, no more than the females of other animals, where we see no distinction of capacity. 52

Thus we come to the middle of the eighteenth century finding only the boldest daring to assert that woman's capacity equals that of man---- and this assertion in the private correspondence of a woman ! Thinkers, however, were all agreed that women's follies were the outgrowth of idleness and ignorance. This was the keynote of Addison and Steele and those essayists who came after them. Yet none of these prescribed so liberal an educational program for women as had their predecessors, Dunton and Defoe. Certainly their program fell short of the demands of the leading women scholars and reformers of the day.

Addison, Steele and their imitators did much to improve the current social attitude toward woman. They, however, did not risk didacticism, but, rather, struck and held a middle ground. Their delightful method was to intermix some of the new ideas of reform with the flippancy of the wits and to tincture all slightly with Sentimentalism. This latter element became predominant in Mrs. Haywood's Female Spectator. Even Dr. Johnson did not spurn its use in the Rambler, but he effectively disguised it in the elegant garb of classicism.

Since the early periodicals avoided extremes in all particulars, their matter was exceedingly popular. In this

52 Lord Wharnccliffe, Letters and Works of Lady Mary Montagu, London, 1887. Vol. II, p. 239

way, they subtly circulated the new influence over a wide area of the reading public, and, in effect, softened the social and moral attitudes to more acceptable standards than had obtained throughout the Stuart regimes. Therefore, it is of value to take cognizance, here, of the extent to which specific periodicals were engaged in the effort to reform the manners and private lives of their feminine readers. Also, we shall note to what extent these publications allowed themselves to be influenced by current trends of feminism.

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CHAPTER II

THE ATTEMPTS OF EARLY PERIODICALS TO ATTRACT WOMEN READERS

Because each of them attempted to attract women readers, the following periodicals will be examined to determine what methods each adopted in order to draw the attention of women: the Tatler, the Spectator, the Guardian, the Gentleman's Magazine or the Monthly Intelligencer, and the Rambler.

The first three, under the editorship of Steele and Addison, are important for the purpose of this study because of the fact that they were the first periodicals of a purely literary type to cater openly to women. These were so bold as to challenge public opinion with the statement that women were not held, at the time, in the esteem to which they were entitled, and to avow that, as periodicals, they intended to interest and instruct the "weaker sex". As for the Gentleman's Magazine, a survey of its issues for its first five years (1731-1736) yields conclusive proof that the influence of feminism on its pages was proportionate to the steady rise of sentimentalism throughout the literary realm. Necessarily, in selecting its representative miscellany, this first magazine of the digest type included much material for women readers. The Female Spectator is important here since it is the best known example of the original "ladies magazine", edited by a woman. It unerringly illustrates just how far, by the 1740's, woman had come toward a public expression of

her own mind on all her main topics of interest, including those intellectual. Last and least in volume, yet as significant as any of the foregoing, we find the Rambler of consequence to this study because of the fact that it reflects the attitude of the greatest classicist of the eighteenth century, Dr. Samuel Johnson. The Rambler marks not only the beginning of the decline of the purely literary periodicals but, having been published from March, 1750 to March, 1752, it also marks the mid-century and thus indicates the end of the period to be covered by this research.

In examining these six periodicals for assurance that they aimed to attract women readers, we shall consider them in chronological order.

The Tatler, the Spectator and the Guardian

Predecessors of Steele, namely, Dunton, La Crose, and Defoe, essayed to defend the fair and to advocate conjugal amity, but none of these so concentrated his efforts as did Steele. Nor had any of these perfected his preachment into the finished literary essay as Steele, in conjunction with Addison, was able to do. Through the collaboration of these two in the Tatler, the Spectator, and the Guardian, some of the most delightfully elevating and, at the same time, some of the most whimsically humorous essays in all literature were written for and about women.

Directly after the establishment of the Tatler (April 12, 1709) it became apparent that the periodical intended to treat in a familiar manner "those singularities of human

life...which obstruct anything that was truly good and great", just as Steele had stated earlier in his Dedication to the Comedy of the Drummer. When Addison joined forces with Steele in editing the periodical, this policy developed full-fledged into one of reform. Couched in a style compatible with the "dignity of a teacher of wisdom and morals", the Tatler proposed to assume the wholesome project of making¹ wit useful."

Always the gallant champion of the ladies from the beginning of his literary career when he wrote his first drama,² Steele informed his reading public in the very first number of the Tatler that he would give consideration to the interests of his women readers:

I have resolved to have something which may be of entertainment to the fair sex in honor of whom I have taken the title of this paper. ³

Not the least of Steele's abilities as an editor and journalist lay in his unerring instinct for using the right devices to attract readers. Various of these were utilized in gaining the attention and favor of feminine readers. In the first number of the Tatler, he introduced a disconsolate lover, a subject never failing to appeal to women. The succeeding issues included such intriguing topics as accounts of belles of the town; Sappho, the first woman poet and her women com-

1 Tatler, No. 64, September, 1709

2 See (1) The Funeral or Grief a la Mode (1701); (2) The Lying Lover or the Ladies' Friendship (1703); (3) The Tender Husband or the Accomplished Fools (1705)

3 Tatler, No. 1, April 12, 1709

panions and the publications of a tale in rhyme specifically "for ladies".

One of the most useful devices by which the Tatler was able to hold its feminine readers, meanwhile admonishing them, was that of the publication of "letters". Dr. Chalmers gives Steele credit for successfully 'employing if not introducing the harmless fiction of writing letters to himself, a device used by all succeeding essayists but never so successfully as by Steele.'⁴

No doubt, with a view to lending an air of authenticity to all quoted "correspondence", Steele invited women readers to communicate information for publication in the Tatler:

Advertisement:

Any Ladies who have any particular stories of their acquaintance which they are willing privately to make public, may send them by the penny post to Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq., inclosed to Mr. John Morphew, near Stationer's Hall. 5

And once before he had advertised:

If any gentleman or Lady sends to Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq., at Mr. Morphew's near Stationer's Hall by the penny post, the grief or joy of their souls, what they think fit of the matter shall be related in colors as much to their advantage as those in which Gervas (Jervas) has drawn the agreeable Chloe. 6

4 Chalmers, A., Editor English Essayists. 45 vols. Printed for Nichols and Son (and Others). London, 1803. Historical and Biographical Preface to Tatler, Vol. I, p. LXXXIII.

5 Tatler, No. 11, May 5, 1709

6 Ibid., No 7, April 26, 1709

Later, Steele justified the use of the letter device on the premise that "the way to have a greater number of the aimiable part of Womankind and lessen the crowd of the other sort is to contribute what we can to the success of well-grounded passions; and therefore, I comply (by inserting letters from women readers and replies fraught with advice).⁷ To further justify this accommodation, he modestly inserted in the same number, a letter from one of his women readers:

"Mr. Bickerstaff,

You that are a philosopher, know very well the make of the mind of woman and can best instruct me in the conduct of an affair which highly concerns me." ⁸

Using the fictional character, Isaac Bickerstaff, as general editor, the real editors of the Tatler had hit upon a most disarming device. The description of him as a venerable old gentleman, viewing the world with benignity, made for the greatest liberty on the part of the Tatler to criticize the foibles of its devotees. In this conciliatory guise, Isaac Bickerstaff assumes monitorship over the feminine world:

He that is past the power of beauty may take upon me to consider the sex as they live within the rules, and as they transgress them. ⁹

To further pique the interest of women readers, another

⁷ Tatler, No. 201, July 22, 1710

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

clever device was begun in the tenth number of the Tatler. This was the introduction of Mrs. Jenny Distaff, half-sister to Isaac Bickerstaff, whose function it was to give the feminine view-point, having 'the liberty to speak in her own way'. She intrigues the feminine interest at once by the exposure, supported by concrete evidence, of her brother's predilection for the ladies. Her frank plea for feminine interest, while adroitly provocative, is cleverly, if naively expressed :

It is so natural for women to talk of themselves that it is to be hoped all my sex at least will pardon me that I could fall into no other discourse. If we have their favour, we give ourselves very little anxiety for the rest of our readers. 10

Here, early in the Tatler's history Miss Jenny Distaff began that periodical's campaign in behalf of women. At the same time, the promise is held out to women that the Tatler will publish subject-matter which will interest them:

Some men outdo women in faults imputed to the latter (such as indolence and intractability).....Sure if our Sex had the liberty of frequenting public-houses and conversations, we should put these rivals to our faults and follies out of countenance. However, we shall soon have the pleasure of being acquainted with them one way or other; for my brother Isaac designs, for the use of our sex, to give the exact characters of all the chief politicians who frequent any of the coffee houses from St. James'es to the Exchange.....This will be of great service to us and I have authority to promise an exact journal of their deliberations; the publication of which I am to be allowed for pin money. 11

That he felt that the periodical essay, employing some such device as has been outlined above, was the proper instru-

10 Tatler, No. 10, May 3, 1709

11 Ibid.

ment for the correction of those peccadillos of society which ranked beneath "the dignity of the pulpit and the bar", Steele, under the guise of Isaac Bickerstaff, facetiously recorded:

I own myself of "the Society for the Reformation of Manners". We have lower instruments than those of the family of Bickerstaff for punishing great crimes and exposing the abandoned. Therefore, as I design to have notices from all public assemblies, I shall take upon me all indecorums, improprieties, and negligences; if a fine lady thinks fit to giggle at church or a great beau come in drunk to a play, either shall be sure to hear of it in my ensuing paper. For merely as a well-bred Man, I cannot bear these enormities. 12

From the outset, the Tatler promised news which would be of interest to women as well as to men:

When a Toast or Wit is first pronounced such, you shall have the freshest advice of their preferment from me, with a description of the Beauty's manners and the Wit's style, as also in whose places they are advanced, for this town is never good-natured enough to raise one without depressing the other.13

In the last number of the Tatler we find a statement of its general purpose :

The general purpose of the whole has been to recommend truth, innocence, honour and virtue as the chief ornaments of life.....

I must confess it has been a most exquisite pleasure to me to frame characters of domestic life, and put those parts of it which are least observed into an agreeable view; to enquire into the seeds of vanity and affectation.....and show much shorter methods than men ordinarily practice to be happy, agreeable and great. 14

Thus did the Tatler arrogate to itself the powers of

12 Tatler, No 3, April 16, 1709

13 Ibid. No. 4, April 19, 1709

14 Ibid. No. 271, January 2, 1710

monitor over the morals and manners of its readers, both masculine and feminine. This venture was so successful for the editors that they continued their association in the Spectator.

The new periodical, begun March 1, 1710, likewise devoted much attention to its large circle of feminine readers, and it, too, engaged in the mission of correcting their petty sins. The methods employed in the Tatler were continued here -----the use of Characters, either good or bad, to demonstrate a moral; the use of letters, real or fictional, setting up the problem which in turn the essayist dissected and elaborated upon; and the use of the gentle satire of Addison combined with the gallant sentiment or the mischievous humor of Steele. Here Mr. Spectator usurped the role of Isaac Bickerstaff; and the fictitious club (of which he was an interested and observant member) composed of other now famous characters came into circulation to delight both masculine and feminine readers.

The Spectator described himself:

I am very well versed in the theory of a husband, or a father, and can discern the errors in economy, business and diversions of others, better than those who are engaged in them.....

For this reason, therefore, I shall publish a sheet full of thoughts every morning for the benefit of my contemporaries and if I can any way contribute to the diversion or improvement of the country in which I live, I shall leave it when I am out of it, with the secret satisfaction of Thinking that I have not lived in vain. 15

Especially are the characters of Sir Roger de Coverley

and Will Honeycomb of interest to feminine readers. Sir Roger, a bachelor because he had been crossed in love by "a perverse and beautiful widow of the next county to him", had been so affected that he had lost interest in his appearance but "his temper being naturally jovial, he at last got over it." No doubt because of this romantic atmosphere attaching to him, "all young women profess to love him."¹⁶ Will Honeycomb, the other of these two characters, was so shrewdly described by the editors as to ensnare feminine curiosity as to whatever he might have to relate. He knew "the history of the King's wenches; our wives and daughters had this manner of curling their hair, that way of placing their hoods; whose frailty was covered by such a short petticoat and whose vanity to show her foot made that part of the dress short this year. In a word, all his conversation and knowledge has been in the female world."¹⁷ However, it must be admitted that this promise of scandal-monging failed to materialize in the Spectator. No doubt many readers failing to discover the promised gossip, remained to read instruction in social decorum, so the end perhaps justified the means.

Thackeray once aptly defined the function of the Spectator. He wrote:

In Addison's kind court only minor cases were tried; only peccadillos and small sins against society; only a dangerous

¹⁶ Spectator, No. 2, March 2, 1710/11 (Steele)

¹⁷ Ibid.

libertinism in tuckers and hoops; or a nuisance in the abuse of beaux, canes and snuffboxes. It may be a lady is tried for breaking the peace of our sovereign lady, Queen Anne, and ogling too dangerously from the side-box;..... or a citizen's wife for caring too much for the puppet show and too little for her husband and children....he dismisses each with the pleasantest penalties and the most charming words of admonition. 18

Steele, early in the periodical, in outlining the policy of the Spectator as regarded its provision for feminine interests, wrote:

As my pleasures are almost wholly confined to those of the sight, I take it for a peculiar happiness that I have always had an easy and familiar admittance to the fair sex. If I never praised or flattered, I never belied or contradicted them. As these compose half the world, and are, by the just complaisance and gallantry of our nation, the more powerful part of our people, I shall dedicate a considerable share of these my speculations to their service, and shall lead the young through all the becoming duties of virginity, marriage and widowhood. When it is a woman's day in my works, I shall endeavor at a style and air suitable to their understanding. When I say this, I must be understood to mean that I shall not lower but exalt the subjects I treat upon. Discourse for their entertainment is not to be debased but refined..... In a word, I shall take it for the greatest glory of my works if among reasonable women this paper may furnish tea-table talk. In order to do it, I shall treat on matters which relate to females as they are concerned to approach or fly from the other sex, or as they are tied to them by blood, interest or affectation. 19

Addison also recommended the Spectator specifically to the ladies:

But there is none to whom this paper will be more useful than to the female world. I have often thought there has not been sufficient pains taken in finding out proper employments and diversions for the fair ones....I hope to increase the

18 Thackeray, Wm M., English Humorists of the Eighteenth Century. Editor, Starke Young. New York, 1911. (Ginn and Co.), pp. 74 to 76

19 Spectator, No. 4, March 5, 1710/11

number of these (women properly employed) by publishing this daily paper, which I shall always endeavor to make an innocent if not an improving entertainment, and by that means at least divert the minds of my female readers from greater trifles. At the same time, as I would fain give some finishing touches to those which are already the most beautiful pieces in human nature, I shall point out all those imperfections that are blemishes, as well as those virtues which are the embellishments of the sex. In the meanwhile, I hope these, my gentle readers, who have so much time on their hands, will not grudge, throwing away a quarter of an hour in a day on this paper, since they may do it without any hindrance to business. 20

Not only to popularize the periodical but also to be assured of proper disciples, the Spectator was recommended, by Addison, to the consideration of the whole family circle:

I would therefore, in a very particular manner recommend these my speculations to all well-regulated families that set apart an hour in every morning for tea, bread and butter; and would earnestly advise them for their good to order this paper to be punctually served up, and to be looked upon as a part of the tea equipage. 21

The Spectator assured his readers that space would be given to that universally fascinating subject, love. However, he assured the forthright that no personalities would ever be exposed :

Upon this occasion, I think but reasonable to declare that whatever skill I may have in speculation, I shall never betray what the eyes of lovers say to each other in my presence. At the same time I shall not think myself obliged by this promise to conceal any false protestations which I observe made by glances in public assemblies; but endeavour to

20 Spectator, No. 10, March 12, 1711

21 Ibid.

make both sexes appear in their conduct what they are in their hearts. By this means, love, during the time of my speculations shall be carried on with the same sincerity as any other affair of less consideration. As this is the greatest concern, men shall be from henceforth liable to the greatest reproach for misbehaviour in it. Falsehood in love shall hereafter bear a blacker aspect than infidelity in friendship or villainy in business. For this good and great end, all breaches against noble passion, the cement of society, shall be severly examined. 22

On several other occasions, the Spectator took occasion to repeat the promise that he would never make personal remarks, nor would he publish intrigues, although he knew well that such would swell the circulation of the periodical.²³ Perhaps the most concise expression of the purpose of the Spectator, along with this reassurance, is to be found in Number 34:

In short, if I meet with anything in city, court or country that shocks modesty or manners, I shall use my utmost endeavours to make an example of it. I must however, entreat every particular person who does me the honour to be a reader of this paper never to think himself or anyone of his friends or enemies aimed at in what is said; for I promise him never to draw a faulty character which does not fit at least a thousand people or to publish a single paper that is not written in the spirit of benevolence and with a love of mankind. 24

Thus he defined the radius of influence which, it is clearly seen, was intended to have no boundaries of character, class or sex.

Were further evidence needed to prove the extent to which the Spectator concerned himself with feminine interests, Swift's

22 Spectator, No. 10, March 12, 1711

23 ibid. No. 16, March 19, 1711

24 ibid. No. 34, April 9, 1711 (Addison)

statement that "I will not meddle with the Spectator, let
 him fair sex it to the world's end" would be quite enough.²⁵

The Guardian

Begun March 12, 1713 and published daily except Sunday until October 2, 1713, the Guardian was another of Steele's projects. Naturally, it continued the policies instituted in the Tatler and perpetuated in the Spectator, for once again Addison was his associate, thus guaranteeing a continuation "of the same elegance and the same variety."²⁶

Although a similar plan was utilized, a new set of characters was introduced. Here Nestor Ironsides is the spectator criticizing morals and manners. As the executor and guardian of the Lizard family he is represented as a familiar in the Lizard home where, at Lady Lizard's tea-table, he collects as well as dispenses innumerable commentaries on home and family life in general. In the Guardian, Steele adopts the device of tea-table gossip previously utilized by an early periodical, the Female Tatler which was attributed variously to Mrs. de la Riviere Manley and to Thomas Baker. This device lends itself well to developing a variety of viewpoints on a given subject, and, in the Guardian, each member of the Lizard family is awarded consideration in this way.

Nestor Ironsides claimed kinship with his predecessors,

²⁵ Works (Crown 8 vo.) vol. XXIII, p. 158

²⁶ Johnson, Samuel, Lives of the Poets. London, 1790 vol. III, p. 130. Addison

the Tatler and the Spectator, remarking :

It is observed by every branch of our family that we have all of us a wonderful inclination to give good advice, though it is remarked by some of us that we are apt on this occasion, rather to give than take. 27

He boasted that

Above a hundred different authors have endeavoured after our family-way of writing, some of which have been writers in other kinds of the greatest eminence in the kingdom; but I do not know how it has happened, they have none of them hit upon the art. Their projects have always dropped away after a few unsuccessful essays. 28

Like the Spectator, the Guardian pictures himself as an old gentleman so that his criticism may be allowed :

For I am past all the Regards of this Life, and have nothing to manage with any Person or Party but to deliver myself as becomes an old Man, and one who thinks he is passing to Eternity. All Sorrows which can arrive at me are comprehended in the sense of Guilt or Pain; if I can keep clear of these two Evils, I shall not be apprehensive of any other. Ambition, Lust, Envy, and Revenge are Excrescence of the Mind which I have cut off long ago: But as they are Excrescences who do not only deform but also torment those on whom they grow, I shall do all I can to persuade all others to take the same measures for their Care which I have. 29

One of the most amusing devices, provocative of interest, employed by the editors of the Guardian, was the designation of the Lion's Head as a station for receiving the letters of correspondents. The Guardian announced that a large lion's head would be built and set up in Button's Coffee-house in

27 Guardian, No 109, July 16, 1713

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

Covent Garden 'in imitation of those he had described in Venice, through which all the private intelligence of that commonwealth is said to pass'³⁰ The mouth of the lion was described as being wide and voracious, 'which should take in such letters and papers as are conveyed to me by my correspondents.'³¹ Later, he announced that the Lion's Head had been erected:

I need not acquaint my readers that my lion, like a moth, or a bookworm, feeds upon nothing but paper, and shall only beg of them to diet him with wholesome and substantial food.....

I intend to publish once every week "the roarings of the lion" and hope to make him roar as to be heard all over the British nation. 32

Then Nestor Ironsides, the "Guardian", specifically invited feminine correspondents also, with sly indelicacy impugning the chastity of women generally:

There is a notion generally received in the world that a lion is a dangerous creature to all women who are not virgins: which may have given occasion to a foolist report that my lion's jaws are so contrived as to snap the hands of any of the fair sex who are not thus qualified to approach it with safety. I shall not spend much time in exposing the falsity of this report, which I believe will not weigh anything with women of sense. I shall only say that there is not one of the sex in all the neighborhood of Covent-Garden who may not put her hand in his mouth with the same security as if she were a vestal. However, that the ladies may not be deterred from corresponding with me by this method, I must acquaint them that the coffee-man has a little daughter of about four years old who has been virtuously educated, and will lend her hand upon this occasion to any lady that shall desire it of her. 33

30 Guardian, No, 98, July 23, 1713 (Addison)

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid. No. 114, July 22, 1713 (Addison)

33 Ibid.

He continued humorously :

In the meantime, I must further acquaint my fair readers that I have thought of making a further provision for them at my ingenious friend, Mr. Matteaux's, or at Corticelli's, or some other place frequented by the wits and beauties of the Sex. As I have here a lion's head for the men, I shall there erect an unicorn's head for the ladies.....As both these monsters will be very insatiable and devour great quantities of paper, there will be no small use redound from them. 34

Steele outlined his general purpose thus in the first number of the Guardian:

My design upon the whole is no less than to make the Pulpit, the Bar, and the Stage, all act in Concert in the Care of Piety, Justice and Virtue. 35

The Guardian maintained that the correction of small sins was properly the province of the periodical essay, stating

There are many little extremeties which our preachers would be very glad to see removed; but at the same time dare not meddle with them, for fear of betraying the dignity of the pulpit. Should they recommend the tucker in a pathetic discourse, their audiences would be apt to laugh at them..... For this reason I look upon myself to be of great use to these good men. While they are employed in extirpating mortal sins, and crimes of a higher nature, I should be glad to rally the world out of indecencies and venial transgressions. While the doctor is curing distempers that have the appearance of danger or death in them, the merry-andrew has his separate packet for megrims and toothache. 36

In the first number of the Guardian, Editor Steele

34 The Guardian, No 114, July 22, 1713 (Addison) An Affixed note to the Guardian, No. 114, by Dr. Chalmers, the editor of British Essayists, states (Volume 17, p. 232); "The Lion's Head formerly at Button's Coffee-house is still preserved at the Shakespeare Tavern in Covent-Garden (see Gentleman's Magazine, Volume LVII, p. 311)."

35 Guardian, No. 1, March 12, 1713

36 Ibid. No. 107, July 14, 1713

asserted that "the improvement of the Ladies" should be one of his chief concerns. And in the periodical, he continued to pass judgment on the "business of dress" and on the application of young ladies to the improvement of their minds and to the best employment of their leisure time. In Guardian, Number 120 (July 29, 1713), Addison refers to his feminine readers as "my fair wards", and shows clearly that the periodical has their interests at heart. In another issue, the Guardian stated that it was his "design" to keep a watchful eye over every part of the female sex, and to regulate them from head to foot." ³⁷

One of his correspondents, one Tom Plain, called upon the Guardian to criticize the current modes in dress, remarking that

Your predecessor, the Spectator endeavoured, but in vain, to improve the charms of the fair sex, by exposing their dress whenever it launched into extremities. ³⁸

We shall find upon scrutiny of the Guardian that the editors kindly complied with this request.

Whereas Addison herein addressed himself to a wide variety of matters, both classical and familiar, Steele retained, in the Guardian, the role of chronicler of the "Province of Love and all transactions relating to that passion." ³⁹

³⁷ Guardian, No. 109, July 16, 1713

³⁸ Ibid., No. 114, July 22, 1713

³⁹ Steele continued in this role throughout all his subsequent periodicals, namely: the Lover, the Reader (1714); the Englishman (1713-16); Tom Talk (1715/16); Tea Table (1715); Chit-Chat (1716 ?); and the Theatre (1720)

In summary, we find concrete evidence that the Tatler, the Spectator and the Guardian not only constituted themselves the monitors of society but that they particularly made it their project to elevate, through cleverly contrived methods, the characters and manners of the feminine element of society.

After the cessation of the publication of the Guardian, and especially after the death of Addison in 1719, periodical production declined its brilliancy. Many editors, lacking originality, appeared to operate on the premise that what had once been popular and of value would be even better in profusion. The number of periodicals had multiplied overwhelmingly by 1724 when, Andrews reports, there were three daily and five weekly papers printed in London alone, as well as ten which appeared three times a week, to say nothing of those printed in other localities of Great Britain.⁴⁰ And periodical production was so extensive by 1731, that the result was confusing.

The Gentleman's Magazine

or

The Monthly Intelligencer

Out of this confusion, Edward Cave brought order by establishing the Gentleman's Magazine or the Monthly Intelligencer, which is justly famous because it is the first success-

⁴⁰ Andrews, Alexander, History of British Journalism, London, 1859. 1--129

ful miscellany published for English readers and persisted for well over a century and a half.

Cave, in the first number of the periodical, recounted the existing superfluity of periodical production, stating that much valuable reading material by "Persons of Capacity" was lost because of being printed in loose papers. He wrote:

It often happens that many things deserving attention contained in them are only seen by accident, and others not sufficiently published or preserved for universal Benefit and Information.

This consideration has induced several Gentlemen to promote a monthly Collection, to treasure, as in a Magazine, the most remarkable Pieces on the Subjects above mentioned, or at least impartial abridgements thereof, as a method much better calculated to preserve those things that are curious, than that of transcribing. 41

Mr. Cave further outlined his project as being an undertaking "to give a monthly view of all the Pieces of Wit, Humour, or Intelligence daily offer'd the Publick in the Newspapers.... and in the next place we shall join some other matters of use or amusement that will be Communicated to us." 42

Cave's general method of compiling his magazine was to present abridgements from numerous contemporary periodicals, notably the Universal Spectator and Weekly Journal; Applebee's Journal; the London Journal; the Prompter; the Auditor; the Craftsman; Fog's Journal; the Daily Courant; the Grubstreet Journal; and the Weekly Register. Nearly all of these, having

41 The Gentleman's Magazine or Monthly Intelligencer, Volume the First for the year 1731. Introduction.

42 Ibid.

been in circulation for several years prior to the establishment of the Gentleman's Magazine had practiced, as a common policy, currying popular trends of feminism, particularly in the field of sentiment. To a widely various selection from such periodicals as these, Cave added, on his own account, original essays dealing with morals, affairs of the heart, and domestic matters. The whole was rounded into a Magazine by the publication of such items as domestic and foreign news; lists of army promotions; book lists, and stock lists---of great importance in Great Britain where speculation was rife.

Nowhere in the Gentleman's Magazine is an avowed purpose of engaging feminine readers expressed. Such an expression does not seem necessary in view of the history of periodicals up to that date. Nor, indeed, does it seem necessary in view of the plethora of extracts relating to woman's affairs, found represented therein.

The trend toward the Sentimentalism of Richardson is plainly seen in the species of essays selected for reproduction in the Gentleman's Magazine. They testify that the light, gay, bantering tone of the Tatler, the Spectator and the Guardian had been swamped in almost simpering effusions on the beauties of love and the married state. In building up a sentimental attitude toward woman and her sphere, this miscellany almost entirely neglected the correction of her small social sins.

⁴³ See Gentleman's Magazine, 1733 (Vol. III) The Auditor for April 24, 1733, No. 31

Illustrative of this Sentimentalism we find Mr. Stonecastle of the Universal Spectator (who had now come to take the role of the "Spectator" or "Guardian" in the lives of readers) flattering his feminine correspondents while he subtly insults their intelligence:

Mr. Stonecastle observes ' that there is generally more sound Sense runs through the Epistles he receives from the ladies than in those from the Men. The Women chuse no Subject but what they understand, and their Thoughts spring from their Hearts, and what Nature dictates cannot be disagreeable. ' 44

And taking it for granted that woman's interests were limited to the two topics, the Prompter published an essay "Of Love and Beauty". Rather ambiguously, he wrote :

The Papers being devoted to my fair Readers, I believe 'tis needless to sue for their Attention-----they are too nearly concerned to be indifferent. Nothing is more generally to be believed by all, to be known and yet is in fact less understood than Love. ' 45

In the same number, a bid for continued interest is made:

Hitherto I have talked of Love as a philosopher but may hereafter intersperse sentiments more agreeable. 45

Numerous examples could be given to show that the periodicals contributing to the Gentleman's Magazine during the first five years of its history served only as retaining agents for what little social progress woman had made by that time; and that

44 Gentleman's Magazine, Vol. IV, 1734 from the Universal Spectator, No. 322, Dec. 7, 1734.

45 Ibid. Vol. 4, 1735 The Prompter for January, 1735

46 Ibid.

they did not serve her cause beyond cherishing her for sentimental reasons. The fact that the Gentleman's Magazine made no positive invitation to women readers corroborates the fact that temporarily, at least, active propagandizing in behalf of woman was either being ignored or was lying dormant. Since the reading public made no complaint, we can but conclude that the latter condition obtained, for it is too well known that publications from that day to this have always met public demand. So we find woman's social progress definitely stalemated for the time being.

The Female Spectator

Of particular interest in this study, the Female Spectator of Mrs. Eliza Haywood, is distinguished, not so much for its matter and style as for the fact that it was a bona fide literary periodical for women, edited by a woman, and as such, best reflects the status of woman's social position at the time of its publication. Mrs. Haywood established this periodical in April, 1744 and it ran until April, 1746.

The plan of the Female Spectator is reminiscent in some degree of the Female Tatler of George Baker and Mrs. de la Riviere Manley in that Mrs. Haywood's chief editorial device was the pretension of a fictitious editorial staff. In this way, she credited varying viewpoints or opinions to each of four characters, including herself, and three friends; Mira, wife to a Gentleman of Worth; a Widow of Quality; and Euphrosine, daughter of a Merchant of Wealth. By this harmless ruse

Mrs. Haywood no doubt hoped to leave the impression that she had cooperation in the preparation of the papers.

In her dedication of the new periodical to the Duchess of Leeds, Mrs. Haywood, in imitation of Addison and Steele, dedicated her paper to the correction of small sins:

The chief view in publishing these monthly essays is to rectify some errors which small as they may seem at first, may, if indulged, grow up into greater, till they at last become vices and make all the misfortunes of our Lives. 47

The Female Spectator, in defining her right of authority, gave a resumé of her experience. She was formerly a coquet, she averred, and

Dress, Equipage and Flattery were the idols of my heart. With this experience, added to a genius tolerably extensive, and an education more liberal than is ordinarily allowed to persons of my sex, I flattered myself that it might be in my power to be in some measure both useful and entertaining to the public. 48

There can be no doubt but that Mrs. Haywood certainly modeled her work here on that of Addison and Steele. Like them, she assured her readers that she would never become personal nor venomous in her remarks, her "intention being only to expose the vice not the person." (This was a decided departure from her former works, consisting of a play, many novels, and two periodicals, wherein the identity of persons of the day was none too thickly veiled, while at the same time she plied them with invective.)⁴⁹

47 Female Spectator, Vol. I, Dedication

48 Ibid. Book I

49 See The Life and Romances of Mrs. Eliza Haywood, by George F. Whicher (Columbia University Press, New York, 1915) for full information on Mrs. Haywood.

Mrs. Haywood also employed the practice of Steele and Addison of utilizing historical and classical Characters as exemplars :

Nor shall I confine myself to modern transactions; whenever I find an example among the Antients which may serve to illustrate my topic, I shall happen to be upon, I shall make no scruple to insert it. An instance of shining virtue in any age, can never be too proposed as a pattern, nor the fatality of misconduct too much impressed on the minds of our youth of both sexes. 50

Mrs. Haywood summed up her general purpose in this wise:

To check the enormous growth of luxury, to reform the morals, and improve the manners of an age, by all confessed degenerate and sunk, are the great ends for which these essays are chiefly intended; and the authors flatter themselves that nothing has been advanced but may contribute in a more or less degree to the accomplishing so glorious a point. Many little histories, it is true, are interspersed, but they are such as serve to enforce precept by example, and make the beauty of virtue and deformity of vice sink deeper into the reader's mind. When we would strike at any favorite passion, it requires the utmost delicacy to do it in such a manner as shall make the person guilty of it ashamed of being so, without being angry at the detection; and no way so likely to succeed, as to shew him the resemblance of himself in the character of another. 51

Proving her zealous intention to busy herself only with rectifying "the parts of the whole", the Female Spectator published a letter from one of her critics, "Curioso Politics". In his letter, dated from White's Chocolate House, November 9, 1745, he upbraided her for not giving her readers the news, particularly that concerning matters of government and the progress

50 See The Life and Romances of Mrs. Eliza Haywood, by George F. Whicher (Columbia University Press, New York, 1915) for full information on Mrs. Haywood.

51 Female Spectator, Vol. 2, Bk. VIII

of the army and other "such accounts as are every day to be found in the public papers". He indicted her further:

To deal plainly with you, the best that can be said of the lucubrations you have hitherto published is that they are fit presents for the country parsons to make to their young parishioners:-----and to be read in boarding-schools, and recommended as maxims for the well regulating private life but are no way fit for the polite coffee houses, or to satisfy persons of an inquisitive taste. 52

She defended her casuistry in this manner:

The Female Spectator is not altogether so indolent and insensible to public transactions as he ("Curioso Politico") imagines, and if he allows (as sure he must) that virtue is the surest preservation of freedom, he must at the same time allow, that an endeavour to rectify the morals of individuals is the first step ought to be taken for rousing up a general ardour for maintaining and asserting those privileges our ancestors purchased for us with their best blood and we have renewed the lease of by almost all our treasure.

In this road, therefore, I have travelled since the beginning of these lucubrations, and from this I shall not through the whole course of them depart. 53

As the publications continued, more complaint arose because of the fact that the tone gradually gave over from one of entertainment to one entirely of moral admonition. Confessing the didactic practices rankly prevalent among the Sentimentalists, Mrs. Haywood replied:

To the greatest part of this accusation, I must plead guilty.....In the first place, it was necessary to engage the attention of those I endeavoured to reform by giving them such things as I knew would please them....therefore I began that way, and proceeded by degrees to more grave admonitions.

I was obliged to treat them with the tenderness of a mother, but not like some mothers, to continue my indulgence to their ruin. The examples I gave of good and bad behaviour

52 Female Spectator, Vol. II, Bk. VIII

53 Ibid.

were not merely to divert them, but to inspire them with an ambition of imitating the one, and the care to avoid the other.

For this end it was I chose to assume the name of Female Spectator rather than that of "Monitor" as thinking the latter by discovering too plainly my design, might in a great measure have frustrated it with the gay and unreflecting, who are indeed those from whom this work was chiefly intended as standing most in need of it.

Bad as the times are, I am fully persuaded, nay convinced, that there are no inconsiderable number who approve this undertaking, for the very reason that some others are displeased with it, and that several of those last mentioned have even been the better, and throwing aside their vanity and expectations, have dressed themselves in the glass of nature. 54

Purporting to have won the approval of the majority of her readers, Mrs. Haywood published a letter from one of them to prove it :

"Ladies,

Permit me to thank you for the kind and generous task you have undertaken to improve the minds and manners of our unthinking sex; it is the noblest act of charity you could exercise in an age like ours, where the sense of good and evil are almost extinguished, and people desire to appear more virtuous than they really are, that so they may be less unfashionable: this humour which is too prevalent in the female sex, is the true occasion of the many evils and dangers to which they are daily exposed:-----no wonder the men of sense disregard us ! and the dissolute triumph over that virtue they ought to protect ! 55

Taking advantage of the Rising flood of Sentimentalism, Mrs. Haywood allowed her periodical to drift with the current. Love became her chief concern and moralizing her best craft. She dealt with the countless domestic minutiae which absorb women. She preached conjugal fidelity. She prescribed study for the development of the mind and proper good taste, yet she

54 Female Spectator, Vol. IV, Bk. XXIV

55 Ibid. Vol. II, Bk. X

advocated domesticity rather than worldly pursuits for women. She posited that woman should occupy a more cherished position than society allowed her.

Perhaps the most revolutionary aspect of the Female Spectator, as a testimonial of woman's social progress, is the evidence that women were interested in Mrs. Haywood's discourses on literature. These in themselves were usually remarkable not so much for their perspicuity as because of her daring to publish them. However, in view of the few embryonic stirrings toward a Shakespearean revival at that period, Mrs. Haywood's commentaries on that great poet, however ineffectually expressed, are little less than sensational in a woman of the era.

When we find that the Female Spectator aimed only at holding the standards set earlier by Addison and Steele, we expect to find no marked progress of feminism. In this, we are warranted when we discover that Mr. Haywood is at heart no crusader, but rather a Sentimentalist whose chief function is moralizing.

The Rambler of Dr. Samuel Johnson

Although popular appreciation of the periodical essay had begun to decline, paradoxically, the Rambler was at the same time the most popular and the most famous periodical of the single-essay type. A single essay was published on each appearance, Tuesdays and Saturdays.

Johnson's style was, naturally, one of dignity and erudition. Chalmers says that Johnson "could not descend to familiarities with tuckers and commodes, with fans and hoop petticoats.....it must be allowed that the levity and giddiness of coquets and fine ladies are expressed with great difficulty in the Johnsonian language. It has been objected also that even the names of his ladies have very little of the air either of court or city.....(Dr. Johnson) appears to have taken his Zepherettas, trypheruses, Nitellas, Misotheas, Vagarios and Flirtillas from the suggestive names given Mrs. Haywood's Female Spectator currency."⁵⁶ Heavily didactic in tone, the Rambler was a far cry from the lightly humorous half-sheet folios of Steele's and Addison's era.

To Johnson's credit, however, it should be said that he was as original in his own way as Addison had been, particularly in that his subjects were new in the essay-writing field and also in the excellence of the religious and moral nature of his discourses. Dr. Chalmers Commented :

What virtue he praises receives dignity and strength; and whatever vice he exposes becomes more odious and contemptible. Instances might be multiplies in which common truths and common maxims are supported by an eloquence nowhere else to be found;.the author's favorite study (is) the study of the heart.⁵⁷

Although Johnson was dedicated, at that time, to the drudgery of compiling his dictionary, nevertheless he found time to

56 Op. cit., Volume XIX, Preface to Rambler, pp. XLIII-XLV

57 Ibid. pp. XLVII and XLVIII

produce, personally, all of the Rambler essays except the five which he credited to others in the last of the series. Numbers 10, 30, 44, 97 and 100 were credited to Richardson, to Miss Catherine Talbot, to Miss Mulso (later Mrs. Hestor Chapone) and to Mrs. Elizabeth (Eliza) Carter, respectively. Therefore, his critic may assume that the Rambler, as a whole, reflects and embodied Johnson's ideals and dogmas.

When in Rambler Number 184, Dr. Johnson discussed essay-writing, and, particularly, appropriate topics for essays, he concluded:

The most frequent difficulty by which the authors of these petty compositions are distressed arises from the perpetual demand of novelty and change.....

It is indeed true that there is seldom any necessity of looking or inquiring long for a proper subject. Every diversity of nature, every public blessing or calamity, every domestic pain or gratification, every sally of caprice, blunder of absurdity, or strategem of affectation may supply matter to him whose only rule is uniformity. 58

His "only rule of uniformity", indeed, along with championing literature and the litterateur was to instruct and reform. He did not shirk pointing out the vain follies of his day nor did he miss an opportunity to commend "sincerity, honor and virtue" with such profundity as to admit him to fame for his essays alone, had he no other claims upon it. He clearly felt that "the task of an author was to teach what is not known or to recommend known truths by his manner of adorning them"⁵⁹ He also admitted :

58 Rambler, Number 184, Saturday, December 21, 1751
 59 Ibid. No. 3, Tuesday, March 27, 1750

I took upon me the office of a periodical monitor. 60

Early in his periodicals Johnson began to devote space to feminine interests. In Rambler, number 34, he admitted that he was influenced by his women readers:

I have been censured for having hitherto dedicated so few of my speculations to the ladies; and indeed, the moralist whose instructions are accomodated only to one half of the human species must be confessed not sufficiently to have extended his views.....We find that in philosophical discourses which teach by precept, or historical narratives that instruct by example, the peculiar virtues or faults of women fill but a small part; perhaps generally too small, for so much of domestic happiness is in their hands, and their influence is so great upon our earliest years, that the universal interest of the world requires them to be well instructed in their province; nor can it be thought proper that the qualities by which so much pain or pleasure may be given should be left to the direction of chance. 61

Typical of the topics of interest to women included among the Rambler essays are these: "the Misery of a Modist Lady in Solitude" (No. 42); "the Uneasiness and Disgust of Female Cowardice" (No. 34); the Unhappiness of Women, Whether Single or Married" (No. 39); "the Employment of a Housewife in the Country" (No. 51); "a Young Lady's Impatience of Control"(No. 84); "the History of a Beauty" (No. 130); and "the Character of Mrs. Busy" (No. 138); and many more.

While Johnson retained the old device of propounding Characters, he combined it as did all of the foregoing essayists with that of publishing letters to himself, purportedly from readers seeking his advice.

60 Rambler, No. 15, Tuesday, May 8, 1750

61 Ibid. No. 34, Saturday, July 14, 1750

One such "letter" (an excerpt from the essay, "The Misery of a Modist Lady in Solitude") everlastingly insures Dr. Johnson against those critics who would deny him a sense of humor, sly though it may have been. "Euphelia" writes:

I am no grave admirer of grave writings and therefore very frequently lay your papers aside before I have read them through; yet I cannot but confess that, by slow degrees, you have raised my opinion of your understanding and that though I believe it will be long before I can be prevailed upon to regard you with much kindness, you have, however more of my esteem than those whom I sometimes make happy with opportunities to fill my tea-pot or pick up my fan. I shall therefore chuse you for the confident of my distresses and ask your counsel with regard to the means of conquering or escaping them, though I never expect from you any of that softness and pliancy which constitutes the perfection of a companion for the ladies.....

I shall, therefore, think you a benefactor to our sex, if you will teach me the art of living alone. 62

Another mischievously humorous letter, reflecting quite clearly Johnson's attitude toward the feminine world, is signed "Bellaria", and states:

My aunt has just brought me a bundle of your papers for my amusement. She says you are a philosopher and will teach me to moderate my desires and look upon the world with indifference. But, dear sir, I do not wish, nor intend to moderate my desires nor can I think it proper to look upon the world with indifference till the world looks with indifference on me. I have been forced, however, to sit mornings a whole quarter of an hour with your paper before my face; but just as my aunt came in, Phyllida had brought me a letter from Mr. Trip which I put within the leaves and read about absence and inconsolableness and ardour, and irresistible passion and eternal constancy, while my aunt imagined that I was puzzling myself with your philosophy, and often cried out, when she saw me look confused, "If there is any word that you do not understand, child, I will explain it." 63

62 Rambler, No. 42, Saturday, August 11, 1750

63 Ibid., No. 189, Tuesday, January 14, 1752

Johnson wrote gravely of marriage and its responsibilities, and took it upon himself to advocate marriage for sentiment rather than for settlement. His attitude toward the institution is remarkable in that age. He wrote:

I intend to treat in more papers on this important article of life, and shall, therefore, make no reflection upon these histories except that all whom I have mentioned failed to obtain happiness for want of considering that marriage is the strictest tie of perpetual friendship, and there can be no friendship without confidence, and no confidence without integrity; and that he must expect to be wretched who pays to beauty, riches, or politeness that regard which only virtue and piety can claim. 64

The last Rambler essay, published on March 14, 1752 summarizes Johnson's reforming purpose in producing the periodical. He declares:

As it has been my principal design to inculcate wisdom or piety, I have allotted few papers to the idle sports of imagination. Some, perhaps may be found, of which the highest excellence is harmless merriment; but scarcely any man is so steadily serious as not to complain that the severity of dictatorial instruction has been too seldom relieved, and that he is driven by the sternness of the Rambler's philosophy to more cheerful and airy companions.....

In the pictures of life, I have been so studious of novelty of purpose as to depart wholly from all resemblance.

The essays professedly serious, if I have been able to execute my own intentions, will be found exactly conformable to the precepts of Christianity, without any accomodation to the licentiousness and levity of the present age. I therefore look back on this part of my work with pleasure which no blame or praise shall diminish or augment. I shall never envy the honours which wit and learning obtain in any other.

Herein we discover that Dr. Johnson's bluff classicism was but the august cloak of the heart of a Sentimentalist. As

such, we do not find his periodical furthering the cause of women beyond the goals already reached. Yet Dr. Johnson is to be commended in that a man of his mental powers recognized the importance of women readers enough to cater to them in his periodicals.

Thus, through the examination of the Tatler, the Spectator, the Guardian, the Gentleman's Magazine, the Female Spectator and the Rambler, we verify the fact that they were indeed the social monitors which they pretended to be. In this role, each periodical employed various editorial devices calculated to attract readers generally, and particularly, women readers. Then after having engaged their attention, these periodicals began to instruct the world of women readers not only with the view of entertaining them, but also for the purpose of elevating their minds and characters.

CHAPTER III

ATTEMPTS TO REFORM THE CONVENTIONAL FEMININE CHARACTER

In arriving at the character of the typical woman of society of the early eighteenth century, we have only to study the periodicals of the time; in this way we are able to reconstruct a composite picture. She was, they tell us, usually a vain, idle creature, loving extravagant show; She avidly pursued pleasure, coquetting, dancing and gambling being her favorite occupations. One periodical characterized thus the sex :

The women are fine and handsome, kind and affable; nor are displeas'd with any but such as boast of what they never did or neglect to do what they might: They who have Cunning or Beauty, command the Men; Husbands are treated as their Servants, Gallants as their Slaves. It is not the Fashion for Mothers to suckle their own children, nor to keep up a female Virtue call'd Housewifery. There are few Penelopes who weave, and Needlework is voted pernicious to the Eyes.

Marriages among the politer People, after a certain Time are dissolv'd: My Lord and Lady after the first Month are never seen together.¹

The early eighteenth century conventional Feminine Character was modification of the Restoration type who, being exposed to the prudish regime of William and Mary, adopted a certain degree of affected prudery, along with which she exhibited the gauche, extravagant air of the new-rich, spending money in any way that would afford pleasure. She was too

¹ Gentleman's Magazine, Vol. IV, reproducing Universal Spectator, No. 289, April 20, 1734

often lacking in learning, since the training of the typical English woman of that time was, at most, for the purpose of her participation in society and, at least, to the extent of teaching her how to make herself pleasing to men.

Here it was that the periodical essayists did their best service. Beginning with Steele and Addison, all of them criticized woman's aimless pursuit of pleasure, they recommended virtue, modesty, naturalness, and all the pleasing qualities of human nature; and they satirized woman's affectation in manner, dress and learning. Best, of all, in the succeeding chapter, we shall find that they attempted to elevate her position in the world's esteem by pointing out her claims to distinction and by eulogizing the attractions of love and marriage.

The composite feminine creature of Steele's and Addison's era wore hoop skirts of finest silks from the orient, or of woollen from the English mills; and she wore a ridiculously tall head-dress.² She painted her face with whitening, used "beauty spots", wielded a fan in meaningful manner, and often carried a lap-dog or some such pet. She set herself against an extravagant background of fine furnishings, perhaps of oriental lacquer-work, strewn with decorative China, set in rooms hung with silk or feather hangings. Here she drank tea late mornings

² See caricature by Hogarth, showing the hair-dresser working on her hair from the vantage of a ladder.

and afternoons with friends of both sexes. If these chanced to call early in the morning, before ten o'clock, she, in the French manner, was likely to receive them in her bed-chamber, from the vantage of her highly befurbished bed, and have her maid serve them chocolate.³ During the week, she was apt to have one formal "at home" day, and on Sundays she sent her coachman to call at the homes of her friends and say "How-do-ye?" When she herself went calling, she preferred riding in a coach luxurious with that novelty, glass windows. Otherwise she used a sedan chair.

For recreation, she sometimes went horseback-riding dressed in the accepted habit of the time so severely tailored as to receive much outward criticism from the men, who feared an encroachment upon their province. Other pleasures in which my lady indulged included walking in the Mall, going to Ranelagh and Vauxhall where she listened to the music, perhaps danced, drank tea, and played cards, taking a pinch of snuff now and then from the most ornamental of boxes.

At fashionable dinners, the ladies sat alternately with men in the Dutch fashion introduced by William and Mary. However, after dinner, the sexes separated punctiliously; sometimes they repaired to separate rooms, sometimes to the same drawing-room where the ladies congregated at one end of the room and the gentlemen at the other.⁴

³ Spectator, No. 323, March 11, 1711/12

⁴ The Tricks of the Town Laid Open (1747), Being Reprints of Three Eighteenth Century Tracts with an Introduction by Ralph Straus, and Eight Illustrations. New York, 1928. The Trip from St. James's to the Royal Exchange (1744), p. 225

When the social season in London was over, milady exhausted from her round of pleasure, repaired to one of the fashionable Baths where she immediately resumed the round, only finding herself more completely involved in a trivial world of fashion.

All in all, the greatest problem of the modish lady of the early eighteenth century was to maintain her place in the social whirl. As easily as fortunes were made, they were, in turn sometimes lost. An anonymous writer, of about 1735, wrote of the miseries resulting from the extravagances of the time:

The innumerable Equipages and outward Appearances that we see in every corner are but the dismal prospect of an universal poverty, and crowds of miserable people, either wracked with the Agonies of their own Guilt or Folly, are groaning under the terrible Apprehensions of Bankruptcy. Observe the Shops and you'll see an Universal Discontent and Melancholy hanging in the faces of their respective Occupiers. 5

The periodicals attacked this rage for extravagance, placing extreme emphasis at the same time on the recommendation of woman's chief virtues which they appeared to consider chastity, modesty (as opposed to vanity and affectation), and natural beauty

Regarding the first of these virtues, namely chastity, one essayist wrote:

The great point of honour in men is Courage and in women Chastity. If a man loses his honour in one encounter, it is not impossible for him to regain it in another; a slip in a woman's honour is irrecoverable.

5 The Tricks of the Town Laid Open (1747), Being Reprints of Three Eighteenth Century Tracts with an Introduction by Ralph Straus and Eight Illustrations. New York, 1928. A Trip Through the Town (1735), pp. 113-114

they had extended their persons and lengthened themselves out into formidable and gigantic figures....I am highly pleased with the coiffure now in fashion. 32

Other comments in the same periodical would indicate that woman's hair-dressing did not remain so simple very long. An anonymous writer in 1728 mentioned the fact that women at that time wore heavy headdresses. A servant woman is reprimanded by her mistress for "loading her fine Brussels Head and Ruffles with such a quantity of Starch, that", she said, "they sate as heavy upon her as Frauds on a Supercargo's Conscience"³³

About this time, the Gentleman's Magazine records the fact that women dressed their hair in a variety of modes:

The Head-dress is the highest point of female elegance, where (one) finds such a variety of modes, such a Medley of Decoration, that he knows not where to fix it. The Ornaments of the Hair, stiled the Horns, he is certain was calculated by some good natur'd Lady to keep her Spouse in Countenance, and by Sympathy the Fashion has prevailed ever since. 34

Again, in the Gentleman's Magazine, we find:

The Discourse at our Club the other Night, turn'd upon Female Head Dress. Frank Easy said the Head Dress is equally free from the Over-growth in those of our Great Grand-mothers, and the Dwarfishness that succeeded in the last Age; but the Ladies still retain an ornament for that Part, which is often unbecoming, namely their Bridles or Kissing Strings. This Fashion we owe to the French Ladies.....35

32 Spectator, No. 98, June 22, 1711. See also Spectators, No. 30 and No. 50

33 Tricks of the Town Laid Open. A trip from St. James's to the Royal Exchange (revised 1735 and 1744), p. 117

34 Gentleman's Magazine, Vol. I, reproducing Weekly Register, No. 66, July 10, 1731

35 Gentleman's Magazine, Volume III, quoting The Auditor, No. 29, April 17, 1733

The essayists imputed the quick pageantry of style to woman's vanity, love of novelty, and her tendency toward affectation. In the Gentleman's Magazine we find an apt expression of this idea:

The love of novelty is the Parent of Fashion, and as Fancy sickens with one Image it longs for another; this is the cause of the continual Revolutions of Habit and Behaviour. This Affectation is so prevalent, that a certain Lady of Humour and Quality frequently invented some whimsical Dress which she was sure to become, that others might copy her and be laughed at for their folly. Hence 'tis plain that every novelty is but beauty. 36

Among the adjuncts to her attire, the woman of the early eighteenth century affected many faddish practices which the periodical essayists disapproved. Particularly did the fan, the snuff-box and the salts bottle draw ridicule. But even more criticism was levied at woman's fad of harboring pets such as the parrot, the lap-dog, and the monkey. Addison's wit was never demonstrated more entertainingly than when he wrote essays on these subjects. His paper on the Exercise of the Fan is justly famous. Therein the Master of this exercise outlines the lessons he gives the ladies in handling their fans daintily and coquettishly. The Instructor concludes:

The fluttering of the fan is the last (lesson), and indeed the master piece of the whole exercise.....

There is an infinite variety of motions to be made use of in the flutter of the fan. There is the angry flutter, the timorous flutter, the confused flutter, and the amorous flutter.....37

36 Gentleman's Magazine, Vol.I, reproducing Weekly Register, No. 66, July 10, 1731

37 Spectator, No. 102, July 27, 1711

In the Tatler, Steele had already established the subject of the fan as a fitting subject for satire. He related an encounter between two girl friends----Delamira who is about to be married, and Virgulta who despairs of "entering the matrimonial state." When asked the secret of her charm, Delamira says her success is due to her fan. Presenting the fan to Virgulta, she advises her in this manner:

You may observe in all public assemblies, the sexes seem to separate themselves and draw up to attack each other with eye-shot: that is the time when the fan, which is all the armour of a woman, is of most use in our defence, for our minds are construed by the waving of that little instrument, and our thoughts appear in composure or agitation according to the motion of it. 38

As for the use of snuff, the Spectator lamented the fact that "even fine women take snuff, taken with a coquetist air by some, a sedate masculine one in others." 39

Mrs. Haywood was most specific as to the proper use of the snuff-box and smelling-salts bottle as adjuncts to the fashionable lady's equipage:

The snuff-box and smelling-bottle are pretty trinkets in a lady's pocket, and are frequently necessary to supply a pause in conversation, and on some other occasions; but whatever virtues they are possessed of, they are all lost by a too constant and familiar use, and nothing can be more pernicious to the brain or render one more ridiculous in company, than to have either of them perpetually in one's hand. 40

Woman's fashionable practice of surrounding herself with pets drew the satire of periodical writers. How hard this was

38 Tatler, No. 52, August 9, 1709

39 Spectator, No. 344, April 4, 1712

40 Female Spectator, Vol. II, Bk. VIII, p.85

for the critics to endure is best indicated by the extent of their attention to the subject. Addison expressed himself:

A lap-dog has broken the hearts of thousands. Flavia, who had buried five children and two husbands was never able to get over the loss of her parrot. 41

The Tatler also relates that one gentleman, when he saw that Poll had all her attention although his sighs were neglected, thereupon addressed a poem to the parrot in the hope of gain-
42
ing the ear of his mistress. Sam Trusty reported to the Tatler that when he called upon Mrs. Feeble (formerly Betty Frisk), he found her chamber infested with pets.

I found her environed by an old shock dog...a monkey... a great grey squirrel...and a parrot. 43

Addison, in a startlingly modern psychological analysis, explains this tendency of woman to adopt pets:

As they are by nature very much formed for affection and dalliance, I have observed that when by too obstinate a cruelty or any other means they have disappointed themselves of the proper objects of love, as husbands, or children, such virgins have, exactly at such a year, grown fond of lap-dogs, parrots, or other animals. 44

The essayists were likewise, outspoken in their criticism of woman who used cosmetics such as whitening and patches.

41 Tatler, No. 146, March 16, 1709/10

42 Ibid. No. 266, December 21, 1710

43 Ibid. No. 27, June 11, 1709

44 Ibid. No 121, January 17, 1709/10

They recommended natural beauty in contrast to the concealment of defects by "painting" (the use of whitening). And their practice of wearing patches resulted in such badinage, particularly from those writers of the Queen Anne period.

The Spectator quotes from a letter received from a gentleman correspondent wherein the writer declares he has just pretensions to a divorce, as the woman he married is not the one he took her to be, now that he has seen her without paint. This gentleman is of the opinion now that the women are very skillful at concealments. He says

Give them but a tolerable pair of eyes to set up with, and they will make bosom, lips, cheeks, and eye-brows by their own industry. 45

The Spectator allows "that he has very much justice on his side." He continues:

I have indeed very long observed this evil, and distinguish those of our women who wear their own from those in borrowed complexions by the Picts and the British The British have a lively animated aspect, the Picts though never so beautiful, have dead uninformed countenances. The muscles of the real face sometimes swell with soft passion, sudden surprise, and are flushed with agreeable confusions... but the Picts behold all things with the same air, whether they are joyful or sad; the same fixed insensibility appears upon all occasions. A Pict, though she takes all pains to invite the approach of lovers, is obliged to keep them at a certain distance; a sigh in a languishing lover if fetched too near her would dissolve a feature; and a kiss snatched by a froward one, might transfer the complexion of the mistress to the admirer. 46

Then the Spectator humorously relates how Will Honeycomb, enamored of a Pict, could get her attentions in no other way

45 Spectator, No. 41, April 17, 1711

46 Ibid.

than by bribing her maid "to conceal him early in the morning behind the hangings in his mistress's dressing room" . He watches his love, not recognizing her, as she applies her complexion:

As soon as he saw the dawn of her complexion.....he thought fit to break from his concealment....The Pict stood before him in utmost confusion with the prettiest smirk imaginable on the finished side of her face, pale as ashes on the other. 47

He then gives the character of Statira who, being natural in her beauty, is a worthy example to all women:

Her features are enlivened with the cheerfulness of her own mind, and good humour gives an alacrity to her eyes. She is graceful without affecting an air, and unconcerned without appearing careless. Her having no manner of art in her mind, makes her want none in her person. 48

On the other hand, we find in the Gentleman's Magazine in 1734, a paper defending woman's practice of using cosmetics. "Inamorato" writing to the universal Spectator, quoted therein, reflects unmistakable signs of Sentimentalism in this defence:

Mr. Stonecastle, You lately defended the Inconstancy of Women. Let me vindicate them from another supposed foible, that of giving themselves an artificial Beauty. I affirm that all women (who are not beautiful in themselves) should paint. Beauty and Perfection are pleasing : Should we therefore prohibit anything which would procure them, or even a similitude of them.....Again would it not be ungenerous not to love that woman who takes so much Pains to seem lovely in the eyes of Men ? 49

47 Spectator, No. 41, April 17, 1711

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.

The application of so-called beauty patches to their faces was satirized in woman by Addison and Steele. The device of reporting the opinions of four visiting Indian potentates who had lost their journals, which in turn their London landlord had found, was utilized in this service.

Quoting from one of the lately discovered "papers", the Spectator published these impressions of one of the visitors:

The women (of Great Britain) look like angels and would be more beautiful than the sun were it not for little black spots that are apt to break out in their faces, and sometimes rise in very odd figures. I have observed that those little blemishes wear very soon; but when they disappear in one part of the face they are very apt to break out in another inso-much that I have seen a spot upon the forehead in the afternoon which was upon the chin in the morning. 50

Addison carried the gentle satirizing of both the custom of wearing patches and the current tendency of women to take sides in party politics so far as to relate the two in an entertaining essay which will be used in the following chapter in the discussion of the extent of woman's participation in public affairs.

All of the essayists believed that naturalness in a woman is the key to real beauty. Steele expressed this belief very well:

The regard and care of their faces and persons are as variously to be considered as their complexions themselves differ; but if one may transgress against the careful practice of the fair sex so much as to give an opinion against it, I

humbly presume that less care, better applied, would increase their empire and make it last as long as life. Whereas now, from their own example, we take our esteem of their merit from it; for it is very just that she who values herself only on her beauty, should be regarded by others on no other consideration. 51

The Spectator, Number 33, written by Hughes, outlines very nicely the opinion of the essayists regarding the quality of beauty in woman. He sets up rules for beauty:

....No woman can be handsome by the force of features alone any more than she can be witty only by the help of speech. Pride destroys all symmetry and grace, and affectation is a more terrible enemy to a fine face than the small-pox. No woman is capable of being beautiful who is incapable of being false. And that what would be odious in a friend is deformity in a mistress. From these principles....it will be easy to prove that the true art of assisting beauty consists in embellishing the whole person by the proper ornaments of virtuous and commendable qualities. 52

For the edification of those women who would be beautiful Steele gave a large variety of examples or characters who should be emulated by all women. The qualities he accentuated are naturalness, simplicity, good-breeding, accomplishments, the power of pleasing, a majestic form, an humble aspect, nobility of spirit, kindness and that quality of being wholly
53
feminine.

Johnson likewise called attention to the fact that, since facial beauty is fleeting, woman must develop qualities of mind which will sustain her when and if facial beauty is destroyed.

51 Tatler, No. 61, August 30, 1709

52 Spectator, No. 33, April 7, 1711

53 Ibid.

In the History of a Beauty, he relates the story of a beautiful young girl, named Victoria. Her ambitious mother, expecting to capitalize on the girl's looks by marrying her into fortune, has trained her only to be a beauty and an ornament to society. The narrative describes the great care taken to guard the girl's beauty. The climax of the story comes when, just after her introduction to society, Victoria is the victim of small-pox. This, of course, destroys her beauty; and now she found that those who had valued her as a friend were deserting her. Finally, however, Euphemia, who has remained faithful, advises her:

"You have only lost early what the laws of nature forbid you to keep long, and lost it while your mind is yet flexible, and while you have time to substitute more valuable and more durable excellencies. Consider yourself, my Victoria, as being born to know, to reason and to act; rise at once from your misfortune to wisdom and to piety; you will find that there are other charms than those of beauty and other joys than the praise of fools." 54

Mrs. Haywood, an incipient "psychologist", recommended good nature as the prime source of beauty:

I have often thought it strange that some ladies who think no expence of time or money too much for anything they are told will afford either addition or support to their personal charms, should by an ill disposition of mind, destroy what all the arts they make use of never can repair. Ill nature is a greater enemy to beauty than the small-pox ever was. 55

54 Rambler, No. 130, June 15, 1751 and No. 133, June 25, 1751.

55 Female Spectator, Vol. I, Bk. VI, pp. 274, 275

Ill temper together with other personal faults, such as envy, slander and extravagance, received close attention from the essayists. On the subject of ill temper, Mrs. Haywood expressed herself, conforming to the conventional attitude of the masculine world:

But as all other vices, so a sourness of humour is also more unbecoming in women than in men; a virago how much soever she may be blown up with self conceit, to imagine that to domineer, and rail, and bounce, denotes her a person of wit and economy, is as despicable a character as any I know..... The sudden and thwarting disposition is often as perplexing as the assuming and violently unhappy are all who contract an intimacy with a woman of these tempers; but greatly to be pitied is the husband, the child, and the servant of such a wife, a mother, and a mistress. 56

Addison and Steele had a peculiarly appropriate name for this type of woman. They termed her a "Scold". Steele, in a discourse on the subject, delineates the type of feminine disposition acceptable to the conventional masculine world of the time :

The generality of women are by nature loquacious, therefore mere volubility of speech is not to be imputed to them, but should be considered with pleasure when it is used to express such passions as tend to sweeten or adorn conversation; but when through rage, females are vehement in their eloquence, nothing has so ill an affect upon the features..... I humbly conceive the great cause of this evil may proceed from a false notion the ladies have of what we call a modest woman. They have too narrow a conception of this lovely character; and believe they have not at all forfeited their pretensions to it, provided they have no imputations on their chastity. But alas ! the young fellows know they pick out better women in the side-boxes than many of

those who pass upon the world and themselves for modest.

Modesty never rages, never murmurs, never pants; when it is ill-treated, it pines; it beseeches, it languishes.⁵⁷

Addison, in his droll way, had a remedy to recommend for curing "Scolds". He tells of a physician in town who has prepared a cold-bath treatment "for the benefit of Ladies who are troubled with virulent tongues." This physician uses a ducking-stool with good effect:

This operation so effectually chills the tongue and refrigerates the blood, that a woman who, at her entrance into the chair is extremely passionate and sonorous, will come out as silent and gentle as a lamb. ⁵⁸

Another pernicious personal sin, that of envy, should be weeded out of woman's nature, according to the periodicals.

The Tatler uses the character of Fidget to teach this lesson:

Fidget has a restless torment in hearing of any one's prosperity; and cannot know any quiet until she visits her and is eye-witness of something that lessens it. Thus her life is a continual search after what does not concern her; and her companions speak kinder even of the absent and unfortunate to tease her. ⁵⁹

Too, the Tatler had a remedy for this envious lady :

This lady I shall take the liberty to conduct into a bed of straw and darkness; and have some hopes that after long absence from the light, the pleasure of seeing at all may reconcile her to what she shall see, though it proves to be never so agreeable. ⁶⁰

Johnson considered the case of envy in women. Out of a

⁵⁷ Tatler, No. 217, August 29, 1710

⁵⁸ Ibid. No. 221, September 7, 1710

⁵⁹ Ibid. No. 174, May 20, 1710

⁶⁰ Ibid.

long elegant, sentimental effusion, he arrives at the conclusion that no one should envy any other because of the fact that everyone has some sorrow or disappointment to bear. In this conclusion, his satire is easily comparable to that of Steele and Addison :

There are, indeed, some strokes which the envy of fate aims immediately at the fair. The mistress of Catullus wept for her sparrow many centuries ago, and lap-dogs will be sometimes sick in the present age. The most fashionable brocade is subject to stains; a pinner, the pride of Brussels, may be torn by a careless washer; a picture may drop from a watch; or the triumph of a new suit may be interrupted on the first day of its enjoyment, and all distinctions of dress unexpectedly obliterated by a general mourning.

Such is the state of every age, every sex, and every condition: they all have their cares, either from nature or from folly; whoever, therefore, finds himself inclined to envy another, should remember that he knows not the real condition which he desires to obtain, but is certain that, by indulging a vicious passion, he must lessen that happiness which he thinks already too sparingly bestowed. 61

Another vicious flaw in woman's nature, according to the periodicals, is the love of slander and gossip. They each felt the responsibility of weeding out this blight on womankind. The Spectator began by moralizing on the subject:

It is a certain sign of an ill heart to be inclined to defamation....The Lazy, the idle, and the froward, are the persons who are most pleased with the little tales which are passed about the town to the disadvantage of the rest of the world..... The unwillingness to receive good tidings is a quality as inseparable from a scandal-bearer, as the readiness to divulge bad. 62

Later, the Gentleman's Magazine carried a condensation from

61 The Rambler, No. 128, June 8, 1751

62 Spectator, No. 427, July 10, 1712

the Universal Spectator on the subject of Female Slander.

His article recommends that the "fair readers" keep the ninth commandment which says "they shall not bear false witness against their neighbour." He further states:

" In Billington, Stockmarket, Inc, the Females scatter scandal in plain English monosyllables. But Ladies of better breeding make the Tea Table their mart to disperse scandal and attack Reputations with great Elegance and soft Language. They have carried their politeness and cruelty to such a pitch that they can ever Praise a poor innocent Creature out of her good Name, and command her to compleat her Ruin. 63

As an example of a slanderer, he cites Prudella who "has the most lucky knack at cutting throats with a Feather of any Lady I know"⁶⁴ He then begs the ladies:

Let'em say only things that are galling, not killing. For instance, instead of saying such a one is no better than she should be, what if they said her Ladyship was a Blattern and knew nothing of Dress. For tho' this Charge might more chagrine her than the other, yet her Husband and Children might maintain their Credit, tho' one Side of the Lady's Gown hang deeper than the other.

I am afraid this Advice will not be taken, though calculated for their Advantage; I have done my Endeavour to serve the Sex, if they should not accept it, 'tis not (my) Fault.⁶⁵

The Female Spectator enlarged on this defect of character in women. She admonished women to be particularly careful 'to conceal and palliate the faults of other women, as men are but too quick-sighted to their prejudice anyway and are ready enough to think women numbered among the fallen ones.' 66

63 Gentleman's Magazine, Vol. V, quoting universal Spectator, no. 335, March 8, 1735

64 Ibid.

65 Ibid.

66 Female Spectator, Vol. III, Sk. XIII, p. 16

According to the periodicals, another flaw of woman's nature is her tendency toward extravagance. Steele delightfully satirized the women who mask this vice under the cloak of philanthropy and patronage:

Mrs. Cornelia Lizard buys an abundance of romances for the encouragement of learning; and Mrs. Annabelle squanders away her money in buying fine clothes because it sets a great many poor people at work. 67

And the Universal Spectator upbraided that "Politeness" which is synonymous with "Prodigality". He quotes a letter from a tradesman:

Sir:

..I have a polite Wife, so extremely well bred, that unless I can put a stop to her Elegancy of Taste, she will soon bankrupt me. As I am a Tradesman, I can't conceive it necessary to have the Plate, Table and Equipage of a Man of Fortune; yet my wife says its Polite, and she must and will have it; therefore, too, she has her Card-Day; her Foot-Boy, and her Confidante, Abigail; goes to Plays almost every Evening, games till Midnight, lies abed till Noon, only because its polite. On my telling her that her Extravagance would ruin me, that I would indulge her in everything my Circumstance would allow,--but--what, says she, do you grudge me the Necessaries of Life? 68

Besides their assiduous concentration on weeding out woman's personal faults, the periodicals were interested in inculcating a sense of good taste and good manners into the feminine sex. Great need was felt in this respect. Recalling the levelling process then in progress, we remember with Dr. Johnson that "a change in fortune causes a change in manners."⁶⁹

67 Guardian, No. 58, May 18, 1713

68 Gentleman's Magazine, Vol. IV, Universal Spectator, No. 283, March 9, 1734

69 Rambler, No. 172, Nov. 9, 1751

The Spectator recorded a general decline in manners; and he had a recommendation to make to woman concerning her share in it:

This decency of behaviour is generally transgressed among all orders of men; nay, the very women, though themselves created, as it were, for ornament, are often very much mistaken in this ornamental part of life. It would, methinks, be a short rule for behaviour, if every young lady in her dress, words, and actions were only to recommend herself as a sister, daughter, or wife and make herself the more esteemed in those characters. 70

The essayists concerned themselves with the decorum of women in all of their social appearances; they examined every avenue of woman's social pursuits and criticized avidly all transgressions of behaviour. The Spectator quoted a letter from a young man who could not bring himself to marry a certain young lady because of her 'daily committing faults which gave him the utmost uneasiness.' The fact that she dressed well was overshadowed by the fact that she had "no notion of that which polite society have agreed to distinguish by the name of delicacy." She sat ungracefully, spoke of crass subjects, and ate greedily. He feared that 'what shocked him
71
now would appear insupportable in a wife.'

Misdemeanor in church drew considerable ire from Addison and Steele, particularly, with the result that several papers were produced on the subject. They reported the case of Elizabeth Makebate:

70 Spectator, No. 104, June 29, 1711 (Steele)

71 Ibid. No. 217, November 8, 1711 (Budge)

(She) never failed to come to church on Sunday..... and she spent her whole time during divine service in disparaging other people's cloaths and whispering to those who sat next to her. 72

The Tatler further criticized church etiquette by publishing a letter from "Lydia", who knowing him to be in correspondence with Pasquin, begs him, when describing the customs of the people of England, to forbear exposing the behaviour of churchgoers who are guilty of "bowing, saluting, taking snuff and other gestures".⁷³ The Tatler admits that he suffers all the indignation imaginable when considering this state of affairs.

Mrs. Haywood believed that misdemeanors of this sort, as well as all violation of good form in conduct, and dress, were attributable to the lack of good taste. She wrote:

When we have good taste in essentials (which is to be gained through learning), we cannot be without it in things of a more trifling nature. 74

When women have studied to learn good taste 'their actions will be endearing, their behaviour engaging; and their very pleasures have decent gallantry in them.'⁷⁵ Mrs. Haywood also posited:

Good-breeding we owe merely to the care and pains taken with our education....but good manners are our own entirely, not learned by rote, not borrowed or forced, as it were, into us by others, they are the immediate workings of a soul replete with gentleness, humanity, and every social virtue; and the more we discover of them, the more we resemble the Author of Our being, Who is the Source of all goodness. 76

72 Tatler, No. 259, December 5, 1710 (Addison and Steele)

73 Ibid. No. 140, March 2, 1709/10

74 Female Spectator, Vol. III, Bk. XV, pp. 116-161

75 Ibid.

76 Female Spectator, Vol. IV, Bk. XXIV, p. 266

She placed a definite responsibility on married women for setting the example in behaviour for younger women. She expressed a hope for marked reform in social behaviour and for the time 'when our ladies will....once more depend upon their own good sense for the guide of behaviour.'⁷⁷

If the periodicals disapproved the manners or behaviour of women of the day, they disapproved no less the inane ways in which woman employed her time. A barrage of criticism was directed at the subject generally; and more specifically, various diversions in which women indulged became the butt of criticism and satire. Any acquaintance with Addison presumes an acquaintance with that delightful satire, the *Journal of Clarinda*. Here we see an account of all the activities of a woman of fashion for an entire week---the account day by day almost boresomely repetitive, filled as it is "with a fashionable kind of gaiety and laziness."⁷⁸ Again and again, Addison, as well as the other essayists, attacked the comparatively useless lives of fashionable women of the time. Addison on one occasion wrote of women:

The toilet is their great scene of business and the right adjusting of their hair the principal employment of their lives. The sorting of a suit of ribbons is reckoned a very good morning's work; and if they make an excursion to a mercer's or a toy-shop, so great a fatigue makes them unfit for anything else all the day after. Their more serious occupations are sewing and embroidery, and their greatest drudgery the preparation of jellies and sweet meats. This, I say, is the state of ordinary women; though I know there are multitudes of a more elevated

⁷⁷ Female Spectator, Vol. I, Bk. V, pp. 264-265

⁷⁸ Spectator, No. 323, March 11, 1711/12

life and conversation, that move in an exalted sphere of knowledge and virtue, that join all the beauties of the mind to the ornaments of dress and inspire a kind of awe and respect, as well as love, into their male beholders. 79

In order to emphasize the desirability of spending her time profitably, the Guardian, for woman's benefit, related a dream in which the characters, all women, came to the entrance of the infernal regions for final judgment before Rhadamanthus, who asked what each of them had been doing. Of the eight examined, those who had been gambling, reading plays and romances, criticizing others, and spending too much time over the toilette were committed to Erebus; whereas, those who had spent their time in domesticity, who were modest, and who loved their husbands, were recompensed by being rejuvenated and committed to Elysium.⁸⁰

The Female Spectator also pursued the subject of woman's idling away her time in pleasure; attributing the vice to woman's gregariousness:

It is this love of company....that makes our ladies run galloping in troops every evening to masquerades, balls, and assemblies in winter, and in the summer to Vauxhall, Ranelagh, Cuper's Garden, Mary-le-bon, Sadler's Wells, Goodman's Fields and twenty other places. 81

Mrs. Haywood continues by excusing the younger women, but she is particularly critical of the "gadding matron" who sets the example, and she has no patience with mothers of small children,⁸² nor with older women who spend their time so uselessly.

79 Spectator, No. 10, March 12, 1711

80 Guardian, No. 158, September 11, 1713

81 Female Spectator, Vol. I, Bk. IV, p. 164

82 Ibid.

The Rambler did not neglect various opportunities of making a preachment on the evils resulting from empty pleasure. Mrs. Carter, in that periodical, made this ironic statement:

All the soft feelings of humanity, the sympathies of friendship, all natural temptations to the care of a family, and solicitude about the good and ill of others, with the whole train of domestic and social affections which create such daily anxieties and embarrassments, will be happily stifled and suppressed in a round of perpetual delight; and all serious thoughts, but particularly that of hereafter, be banished out of the world. 83

But Dr. Johnson himself treated this subject with satire almost, if not quite, as delightfully as did either Addison or Steele. He quoted a letter from Bellaria:

Dear Mr. Rambler,

I have been four days confined to my chamber with a cold which has already kept me from three plays, nine sales, five shows and six card-tables, and put me seventeen visits behind-hand; and the doctor tells my mama that if I fret and cry, it will settle in my head, and I shall not be fit to be seen these six weeks. But dear Mr. Rambler, how can I help it? At this very time, Melissa is dancing with the prettiest gentleman; ----she will breakfast with him tomorrow, and then run to two auctions, and hear compliments and have presents; then she will be dressed and visit, and get a ticket to the play; then go to cards and win, and come home with two flambeaus before her chair. Dear Mr. Rambler, who can bear it? 84

The periodicals then became more specific in their denunciations of women's pursuits. The conventional visiting day; the shopping for diversion only; the new custom of the two sexes mixing in society; the habit of tea-drinking, as well as the

83 Rambler, No. 100, March 2, 1751 (Mrs. Carter)
 84 Ibid. No. 189, January 14, 1752

more worldly pursuits of dancing and gambling, came under the scrutiny of the essayists with the result that much moralizing made itself evident in the publications.

The Tatler treated the subject of the current convention of ladies' exchanging social calls. He related how a fashionable woman, while calling upon Mr. Bickerstaff, produced a long list of those on whom she must call. 'He laughed secretly to think how she wasted her time,' but he was really amused when she expressed the hope that 'a third of those on whom she would call should be abroad,' so that she could get all her visits done. She explained the convention to him:

"Many of the ladies exchange visit for visit punctually every week, and yet we have not seen each other since last November was twelvemonth....General visits are not made out of good-will but for fear of ill-will. " 85

Mr. Bickerstaff expresses his opinion:

I do not know one thing that contributes so much to the lessening the esteem men of sense have to the fair sex, as this article of visits. 86

He then imputes the convention to be conceived in the cause of gossip, and accuses the visitants of practicing, in most cases, an empty form. 87

"The general reception of mixed company" was also criticized by Mr. Bickerstaff on the following grounds:

85 Tatler, No. 109, December 20, 1709

86 Ibid.

87 Ibid.

The pretty fellows that are admitted to those assemblies give a young woman so false an idea of life, that she is generally bred up with a scorn of that sort of merit in a man which only can make her unhappy in marriage. 88

The fashionable practice of tea-drinking was little criticized by the essayists because of the wide-spread popularity of the habit with those of all ages. However, Mrs. Haywood found that it fell within the category of personal vices. She believed the frequency of partaking of the beverage to be bad for the health and considered that it led to the formation of a worse habit, namely, dram-drinking. She goes into detail:

The three objections...anybody can make against the tea-table are,....first, the loss of time and hindrance to business; ...secondly, the expence; and lastly, the consequences often arising from it, dram-drinking and ill-health...The most temperate and sober of the sex find themselves obliged to drink wine pretty freely after it (because the tea has so dejected their spirits)....Brandy, rum and other spirituous liquors.... are become a usual supplement to tea. 89

The pastime of shopping with no real purpose of buying was popular in Steele's day. When we remember how exotic, and therefore seductive, were the wares offered to them, we cannot wonder that women of that day frequented the market centers. In satirizing this aimless pleasure, Steele quoted a letter from one of the "top China-women" about town who kept a good shop. She complains that she might hope for success were it not for "your idle ladies of fashion, who having nothing to do, employ themselves in tumbling my wares" and she begs him to admonish "all such day-goblins to make fewer

88 Tatler, No. 109, December 29, 1709

89 Female Spectator, Vol. II, Bk. VIII, pp. 80-86

visits or to be less troublesome when they come to one's
⁹⁰
 shop".

Dancing was one of the favorite diversions of the day among all classes. Budgell, in the Spectator, undertook a long discourse on dancing, disclosing much that is interesting to posterity concerning the customs of the time in this form of recreation. He proclaims it to be a good exercise, but recommends modesty and discretion to the female sex when indulging in the pastime. He deplores the kissing-dances and especially does he condemn country-dancing, as it allows, he believes, too much familiarity between the sexes. He concludes that dancing is necessary "to the behaviour and
⁹¹
 handsome carriage of the body."

The subject of woman's gambling agitated many of the most serious thinkers of the eighteenth century, and the essayists were not behind-hand in condemning this vice. Steele, Addison, Mrs. Haywood, and Dr. Johnson all recorded their disapproval of that horrid creature, the "female gamester". Steele objected to gaming on the score that it ruins a woman's disposition.
⁹²
 Addison, too, believed that gambling, "a practice which, when it runs to excess, is the most shameful but one that the female world can fall into," is injurious to both mind and body. The deleterious effects of "gaming" he outlined in this wise: by night the woman who gambles dreams bad dreams;

90 Spectator, No. 336, March 26, 1712

91 Ibid. No. 67, May 17, 1711

92 Ibid. No. 140, August 10, 1711

by day, out of play season, she neglects her family to practice play all her waking hours. Addison resents this creature:

Who can consider without a secret indignation that all those affections of the mind which should be consecrated to their children, husbands and parents, are thus vilely prostituted and thrown away upon a band of loo : 93

The Female Spectator could not understand the attraction gaming had for women. She asked:

After all, how can this method of spending time, as now practiced, bear the name of a diversion ? Is it not more a business, a vocation ?.....

The wisdom of legislature has indeed given a great check to public gaming, and the cognizance they have taken of it methinks should make ladies ashamed of encouraging any sort of play at their assemblies. 94

Gambling was still rampant among the elite when Dr. Johnson published the Rambler, as can be seen from Rambler Number 50, wherein he describes existing conditions in this particular, and at the same time criticizes the practice:

A fatal passion for cards and dice.....seems to have overturned not only the ambition of excellence but the desire of pleasure; to have extinguished the flames of the lover as well as of the patriot; and threatens....to destroy all distinctions both of rank and sex. 95

At that period, the masquerade came into popularity as a mode of entertainment. Even as Queen Anne had disapproved of women's wearing masks to the theatre, just so the periodical essayists admitted an aversion to this type of social

93 Guardian, No. 120, July 20, 1713

94 Female Spectator, Vol. III, Bk. XII, pp. 268-279

95 Rambler, No. 15, May 8, 1750

function.

"Being in disguise takes away the usual checks and restraints of modesty; the beaux do not blush to take wantonly, nor the belles to listen...therefore, Mr. Ironsides, (wrote a correspondent) set your lion roaring against these dangerous assemblies." 96

The Female Spectator also pictured dire results to the morals from masquerading.⁹⁷

Besides attending private social affairs such as the assembly and the masquerade, the Beau Monde had various public places of amusement in which to while away the hours. At various of the clubs or coffee-houses, at Vauxhall and Ranelagh, the opera, the theatre, and of course, the Baths, women mingled freely with men. Some few women, of course, had entree at court. The essayists generally disapproved all of this social activity, believing that it totally unfitted women for their real sphere in life. The Tatler summarized the prevailing opinion of all these reformers when he said

I think most of the misfortunes in families arise from the trifling way the women have of spending their time and gratifying only their eyes and ears instead of their reason and understanding. 98

From the periodicals of the early eighteenth century, we have evolved a panorama depicting woman, with all her petty personal faults, engaged in various of the fashionable diversions of the period. We have seen the deliberate efforts of her critics to awaken her to her own imperfections so that she

96 Guardian, No. 142, August 24, 1713

97 Female Spectator, Vol. I, Bk. I, pp. 38-45

98 Tatler, No. 109, December 20, 1709

might be ready for the better position in society which, at the same time, they were attempting to build for her.

In the chapter to follow, we shall examine the periodicals again in order to ascertain to what extent they were concerned with elevating woman's social position.

CHAPTER IV

ATTEMPTS OF THE PERIODICALS TO ELEVATE WOMAN'S SOCIAL POSITION

In their efforts to elevate woman's social position, all of the periodicals under consideration rendered much service to woman's social progress. It is true, without doubt, that the period saw only the softening of the conventional attitude. And this degree of progress, not to be underestimated, can, in large degree, be attributed to the championing of woman sentimentally, by the periodicals. At the same time, it is agreed that the very limitations set upon her proper sphere in life by the periodicals perhaps retarded her progress toward that time when man would yield her equal privilege. But remembering that this was a transition time in woman's social history, we recognize the fact that relegating woman to the realm of the home was part of the Sentimentalism which ennobled the roles of sweetheart, wife, and mother. Thus matrimony and the family must remain woman's specialized field, yet even there she was not supreme, as she must yield subservience to her husband, the natural head of the house. As to woman's recreational employments, those relating to the home were recommended. But learning was allowed, provided it did not produce an opinionated "she-wit". Although some of the essayists were so bold as to question masculine superiority in the field of learning, the masculine element refused to admit such a possibility. But much service was done the cause of woman through the recommendation of learning, even though this activity should be pursued from

the vantage ground of woman's only refuge, that is, marriage. As regards the latter, the periodicals rendered service to woman through the insistence upon a higher regard for marriage. They extolled the beauties of sentimental love; they criticized inconstancy; and they lauded the joys of mutual regard in matrimony, all part of the trend of Sentimentalism.

We shall consider, first, the attempts of the periodical essayists to soften the attitude of the world toward woman. The first of these, Addison and Steele, had an example of a virtuous woman in Queen Anne, and they did not neglect to cite her on various occasions as a worthy example. "She", said Steele, "exhibits private virtue in a high degree of perfection."¹ Another example worthy of emulation, they agreed, was Aspasia (Lady Elizabeth Hastings) who was unaffected and consciously virtuous. No one of the wits could dispute her worth. But she was a lovely exception:

Her countenance is the lovely picture of her mind, which is the seat of honour, truth, companionship, knowledge and innocence....She consults retirement without the learning of schools, she goes on in a steady course of uninterrupted piety and virtue.

2

The Spectator likewise waxed sentimental over that type of woman in the character of Sophronia:

It is, methinks, a low and degrading idea of that sex which was credited to refine the joys and soften the cares of humanity, by the most agreeable participation, to consider them merely as objects of sight...How faint and spiritless are the charms of a

1. Tatler, No. 130, February 7, 1709/10

2. Ibid., No. 42, July 16, 1709 (Congreve)

coquette when compared with the real loveliness of Sophronia's innocence, piety, good-humour and truth; virtues which add a new softness to her sex, and even beautify her beauty ! That agreeableness which must otherwise have appeared no longer in the modest virgin, is now preserved in the tender mother, the prudent friend and the faithful wife. Colour spread upon canvas may entertain the eye but not affect the heart; and she who takes no care to add to the natural graces of her person any excellent qualities, may be allowed still to amuse as a picture but not to triumph as a beauty. 3

Steele felt that "Every temper, except downright insipid is to be animated and softened by beauty" and told of the case of Colonel Router, who "never spoke but with an oath until he saw the Lady Betty Modish".⁴ And the Spectator felt that man's⁵ endeavours to please woman often polish and refine him. 'The Fair Sex have a more delicate humanity than man,' according to⁶ Steele, and this sentimental attitude seems to have been fairly well launched by the first two periodicals of consequence, namely, the Tatler and Spectator.

In the attempt to induce a greater evaluation of woman in the mind of man, various of the periodicals criticized the fashionable practice of depreciating woman and blamed man for the universal low esteem into which woman had fallen. Steele criticized man's "affecting a superior carriage from a false notion of the weakness of Female Understanding"⁷ He condemned man's valuing her as "a mere woman" and having "but one reason for setting any value on the Fair Sex".⁸ In the Guardian, he went

3 Spectator, No. 33, April 7, 1711

4 Tatler, No. 10, May 3, 1709

5 Spectator, No. 433, July 17, 1712 (Hughes)

6 Tatler, No. 68, September 15, 1709

7 Ibid. No. 49, March 23, 1709

8 Ibid. No. 61, August 30, 1709

into some detail in regard to reasons for woman's trivialities:

A set of fops from one generation to another has made such a pother with "bright eyes, the fair sex, the charms, the air, and something so incapable to be expressed ~~but~~ with a sigh", that the creatures have utterly gone out of their being, and there are no more women in all the world. If they are not nymphs, or goddesses, they are, to a woman, all of them "the ladies" 9

Before, in the Tatler, Steele had made man responsible for the state of affairs:

It must be acknowledged that the very inadvertences of this sex are owing to the other; for if men were not flatterers, women could not fall into that general cause of all their follies and our misfortune....By this romantic sense of things, all the natural relations and duties of life are forgotten; and our female part of mankind are bred and treated as if they were designed to inhabit the happy fields of Arcadia, rather than be wives and mothers in old England. 10

Dr. Johnson accused man of flattering woman out of a sensible state of mind so that the time and care she should be spending on development of graces of the mind, she spent, instead, in the cause of beauty:

With what hope can we endeavour to persuade the ladies that the time spent at the toilette is lost in vanity when they have every moment some new conviction that their interest is more effectually promoted by a ribband well disposed than by the brightest act of heroick virtue ? 11

To Mrs. Haywood man's flattery of woman bore more significance than the trivial:

I am sorry to say that in England ladies of the first quality are treated with very great indifference except by those men who have a design upon them. 12

9 Guardian, No. 26, April 10, 1713

10 Tatler, No. 139, February 17, 1709/10

11 Rambler, No. 66, November 3, 1750

12 Female Spectator, Vol. I, Bk. V, p. 237

Other periodicals were also more specific in their criticism of the fad for depreciating women. Men ogling women in public places annoyed Steele:

If there be not a stop put to this evil art, all the modes of address and the elegant embellishments of life which arise out of the noble passion of love will of necessity decay. 13

The disrespect shown women by man's indulging in indelicate conversation also received indictments. Jenny Distaff says, in the Tatler:

I gladly embrace this opportunity to express myself with resentment I ought on people who take liberties of speech before that sex, of whom the honoured names of Mother, Daughter and Sister are a part. 14

Again Steele takes occasion to upbraid man for what he calls "impertinent conversation" in such public places as the stage-coaches, churches and play houses:

If these brutes could reflect....though they want shame they might be moved by their pity to abhor an impudent behaviour in the presence of the chaste and innocent. 15

Particularly does Steele heap invective on those foul-speaking young fops who go into shops and insult women of business. He says

A woman is naturally more helpless than the other sex; and a man of honour and sense should have this in view in all manner of commerce with her. Were this well weighed, inconsideration, ribaldry and nonsense would not be more natural to entertain women with than men. 16

13 Tatler, No. 145, March 14, 1709/10

14 Ibid. No. 33, June 25, 1709

15 Spectator, No. 242, December 7, 1711

16 Ibid. No. 155, August 28, 1711

This gallantry in behalf of women who worked outside the home was indeed notable in Steele when we remember what inequalities working women of that day suffered at the hands of organized society.

By 1734, the sentimental attitude toward woman being fairly well established, the Universal Spectator went so far as to admit that man's tyranny was the explanation of woman's inferior position in the world. "A very gallant Philosopher" asserted:

We (have) taken Advantage of their greater natural Sweetness and Delicacy and, consequently, of their greater Humanity and Reason; and that these very natural Advantages which ought to have entitled them to the Superiority, if we had been reasonable, had deprived them of it, because we were not so.....

If this be true, what (power) they have over us is Natural, I mean that of Beauty which is so irresistible....Why then should we have this Privilege? Is it because we are naturally stronger than they? No, because we employ all imaginable means to soften their Nature and to abate their Courage: Their strength perhaps might be equal to ours if their Education were the same, for if we regard them in those talents which have not been influenced by education, we shall find them equal to, if not surpassing us. 17

A letter to the Universal Spectator from Arabella, quoted a verse of Calista's speech, from the third act of Rowe's Fair Penitent:

How hard is the Condition of our Sex
Thro every State of Life a Slave to Men,
In all the dear, delightful Day of Youth
A rigid Father dictates to our Will,
And deals out pleasure with a scanty Hand;
To his the Tyrant Husband next succeeds,

17 Gentleman's Magazine, vol. IV, quoting the Universal Spectator, No. 279, February 9, 1734

Proud with opinion of Superior Reason,
 He holds Domestick Business and Devotion
 All we are capable to know and shuts us
 Like cloistered Ideots from the World's Quaintance
 And the Joys of Freedom. Wherefore, are we
 Born with high Souls, but to assert ourselves ?
 Shake off this vile Obedience they exact
 And claim an equal Empire o'er the World.

Arabella then complains at Pope's ironic criticism of Madam
 Dacier for expressing herself in the world of letters, saying
 that his remarks in his annotations to this Odyssey (Book I, V,
 445), concerning her, reflect on the whole female sex. Arabella
 complains further that men 'through the sublimation of woman,
 place her on the level of Brutes.' ¹⁸ Mrs. Haywood also blamed
 man's tyranny for woman's inferior position in the world. She
 demands

Why do they call us silly women and not endeavour to make
 us otherwise ?---God and Nature has indued them with means,
 and custom has established them in the power of rendering our
 minds such as they ought to be:---how highly ungenerous is it
 then to give us a wrong turn and then despise us for it...O !
 would too imperious and too tenacious man be more just to the
 world as to be more careful of the education of those females
 to whom they are parents or guardians !Those men are cer-
 tainly guilty of a great deal of injustice who think that all
 the learning becoming in a woman is confined to the manage-
 ment of her family. 19

Again she accused men in righteous indignation

Say they, learning puts the sexes too much on an equality;
 it would destroy that implicit obedience which it is necessary
 the women should pay to our commands:---if once they have the
 capacity of arguing with us where would be our authority ? 20

18 Gentleman's Magazine, Vol. VI. quoting Universal Spec-
tator, No. 184, February 14, 1736

19 Female Spectator, Vol. II, Bk. X, pp. 192-193

20 Ibid., p. 204

The masculine element among the critics yielded very little ground here, as they did not consider woman capable of the same stability of character or acquisition of knowledge as man. In this, they remained true to the conventional pattern set for them by time and custom. Steele only appeared to yield when he said,

If we grant an Equality in the Faculties of both Sexes, the Minds of Women are less cultivated with Precepts, and consequently may, without disrespect to them, be accounted more liable to illusion in cases wherein Natural Inclination is out of the Interest of Virtue. 21

Yet he was far from conceding woman the equal of man in any respect, as can be seen from the following in which he describes woman:

(She is) a creature formed with a Mind of a quite different make from his (man's) own. I am sure I do not mean it as an injury to women where I say there is a sort of Sex in Souls. I am tender of offending them and know it is hard not to do it on this Subject, but I must go on to say that the Soul of a Man and that of a Woman are very unlike according to the Employments for which they are designed. The Ladies will please to observe I say our Minds have different, not superior Qualities to theirs. The Virtues have, respectively, a Masculine and a Feminine Cast. What we call in Men Wisdom is in Women Prudence. It is a partiality to call one greater than the other. A Prudent Woman is in the same class of Honour as the Wise Man, and the Scandals in the way are equally dangerous....To manage well a great Family is as worthy an Instance of Capacity as to execute a great Employment; and for the Generality, as Women perform the considerable part of their Duties as well as Men do theirs; so in the common Behaviour, those of ordinary Genius are not more trivial than the common rate of Men. 22

Here again we see how jealously man guards his precincts

21 Spectator, No. 79, May 31, 1711

22 Tatler, No. 172, May 16, 1710

against woman's encroachment. As in the realms of style, so also in the realm of action do we find man satirizing each fancied encroachment. One of the best examples of this reaction may be found in Addison's paper on "Female Party-Rage". We remember that in the famous shift of power from the Tory to the Whig party during Queen Anne's reign, party feeling naturally ran high in all circles. In Addison's paper wherein he unmistakably disapproves woman's daring to take sides in the controversy, he makes it clear that each sex should remain within the bounds of its own province. He is writing the paper, he says, in the service of women to clear them of the party-rage which has of late years crept into their conversation. His reason for doing so is plainly expressed:

That (party-rage) is, in its nature a male vice and made up of many angry and cruel passions that are all together repugnant to the softness, the modesty and those other endearing qualities which are natural to the fair sex.....There is nothing so bad for the face as party zeal....indeed, I never knew a party-woman that kept her beauty for twelve months. I would therefore advise all my female readers, as they value their complexions, to let alone all disputes of this nature. 23

Later, in a paper entitled "Female Party Spirit Discovered by Patches" he satirized both woman's party zeal and her affectation of wearing patches. He goes to the opera and there sees the ladies drawn up in two parties sitting in opposite side-boxes:

The faces on one hand being spotted on the right side of the forehead, and those upon the other side upon the left; upon inquiry I found that the body of Amazons on my right hand were Whigs, and those on my left, Tories; that those who had

placed themselves in the middle-boxes were a ~~neutral~~ party (which) diminished daily. 24

The Gentleman's Magazine carried various condensations pursuing the topic of woman's encroaching on man's prerogative by showing interest in public life. A satire called the "Female Patriot", printed in September, 1731, is the "opinion" of Annabelle English, who declares herself a Whig and states that she abhors the Doctrine of Passive Obedience and can resent tyrannical usage either as an English Subject or as an English
25
Wife. Later, in 1736, the same magazine carried a satirical article called "Petticoat Government":

Mr. D'Anvers, as an Advocate in Behalf of the Fair Sex, for political as well as domestic Government, observes that they are blessed with excellent intriguing Heads and a good deal of Spirit, and other necessary qualifications for government. 26

Part of the sentimentalizing of woman by the periodicals was the conscious ennobling of her role as chatelaine of the home. As before stated, this field was her only refuge of the gentle woman. After she had looked to the welfare of her household, her spare time could be spent in related occupations. Such lady-like pursuits as needlework, gardening and preserving were recommended, and reading was allowed provided it did not produce an over-balancing erudition. The Tatler suggested:

Those who are in the quality of gentlewomen should propose to themselves some suitable method of passing away their

24 Spectator, No. 81, June 2, 1711

25 Gentleman's Magazine, Vol. I, quoting Daily Courant, September 25, 1731

26 Ibid. Vol. VI. quoting The Craftsman, No. 198, Jan. 14, 1736

time. This would furnish them with reflections and sentiments proper for the companions of reasonable men, and prevent the unnatural marriages which happen every day between the most accomplished women and the veriest oafs, the worthiest men and the most insignificant females. 27

Appealing to woman's vain desire to increase her beauty, the Tatler recommended horseback riding as good diversion. He was of the opinion that

To be well diverted is the safest guard to innocence and methinks it should be one of the first things to be regarded among people of condition. to find out proper amusements for young ladies. 28

The Spectator considered embroidery to be a proper spare-time occupation for women

What a delightful entertainment must it be to the fair sex, whom their native modesty and the tenderness of men towards them exempt from public business, to pass their hours in imitating fruits and flowers...This is, methinks, a most proper way wherein a lady can shew a fine genius; and I cannot forbear wishing that several writers of that sex had chosen to apply themselves rather to tapestry than to rhyme. 29

This discourse, of course, is easily recognized as being from the pen of Addison, He proceeds humorously concerning the value of embroidery as a pastime.

If I may without breach of good manners, imagine that any pretty young creature is void of genius, and would perform her part herein but very awkwardly, I must nevertheless insist upon her working if it be only to keep her out of harm's way.

27 Tatler, No. 247, Nov.9, 1710

28 Ibid.

29 Spectator, No. 606, October 13, 1714

Another argument for busying good women in work of fancy is because it takes them off from scandal, the usual attendant of tea-tables, and all other inactive scenes of life. While they are forming birds and beasts, their neighbours will be allowed to be fathers of their own children; and Whigs and Tory will be but seldom mentioned where the great dispute is whether red or blue is the more proper colour....

A third reason that I shall mention is the profit that is brought to the family where these pretty arts are encouraged. It is manifest that this way of life not only keeps fair ladies from running into expense but is at the same time an actual improvement. 30

Because of the fact that so many servant women had to live wholly by those arts, Mrs. Haywood believed that it was not necessary for the gentlewoman to know more of cooking and sewing than to know when she is imposed upon by her servants. Being too domestic when not necessary disqualified woman for polite conversation or for entertaining herself agreeably when alone. Said she:

There are certain avocations to take up the mind which are of a more pleasing as well as a more improving kind. 31

Some of the avocations she recommended are gardening and reading. As for the former, she considered it as a pleasing diversion not only because it lies in the field of beauty but also because of the fact that it is scientific.³² She also approved music and dancing as proper diversions for young ladies. Then by way of introducing her favorite subject, reading and study, to the ladies, Mrs. Haywood recounted some of the popular pastimes and explained their adoption:

30 Spectator, No. 606, October 13, 1714

31 Female Spectator, Vol. III, Bk. XV, p. 153

32 Ibid., Vol. IV, Bk. XIX, P. 46

The ladies themselves, methinks, begin to find a vacuum in their minds, which to fill up, they of their own accord invented the way of sticking little pictures on cabinets, screens, dressing-tables, and other little pieces of chamber-furniture, and then varnishing over them so as to look like one piece of painting; and they now have got into the art of turning ivory into whatever utensil they fancy:---there is no doubt but a pair of globes will make a better figure in their anti-chambers than the vice and wheel; but great revolutions are not to be expected at once; and if they once take it into their heads to prefer works of ingenuity, though in the most trifling matters, to dress, gambling and rambling abroad, they will, it is to be hoped, proceed to more noble and elegant studies. 33

All of the periodicals were agreed that reading was a desirable pursuit for woman. But her reading should be prescribed for her. Steele and Addison narrowed her field of reading to only such works as were of religious, moral and domestic character. Mrs. Haywood favoured a broad field, in fact almost too broad for the voracious novel-reading type of mind then prevalent. Sir Roger de Coverley, in praising Leonora (although he disapproves of her wide range of reading as indicated by her library), says,

Amidst these innocent entertainments which she has formed for herself, how much more valuable does she appear than those of her sex who employ themselves in diversions that are less reasonable though more in fashion. 34

The Spectator published a letter from Annabella who thanks him, for all of her sex, for his efforts to benefit them and especially for his promise to recommend a proper library for the ladies:

33 Female Spectator, Vol. II, Bk. X, pp.202-203
 34 Spectator, No. 37, April 12, 1711 (Addison)

Your directing us to reading is certainly the best means of our instruction, but I think with you, caution in that particular very useful since the improvement of our understanding may or may not be of service to us according as it is managed.³⁵

Annabella then proceeds to advise the Spectator to include in his proposed Ladies Library works on arithmetic and philosophy³⁶ as well as the Bishop of Cambray's Education of a Daughter. The Spectator referred from time to time to his project of compiling a Ladies Library. This was his plan:

This collection of books shall consist of such authors as do not corrupt while they divert, but shall tend more immediately to improve them as they are women. They shall be such as shall not hurt a feature by the austerity of their reflections, nor cause one impertinent glance by the wantonness of them. They shall all tend to advance the value of their innocence as virgins, improve their understanding as wives, and regulate their tenderness as parents....My Female Library.....shall be furnished with nothing that shall give supplies to ostentation or impertinence; but the whole shall be so digested for the use of my students that they shall not go out of character in their inquiries, but their knowledge appear only cultivated innocence. ³⁷

It will be remembered that Steele fulfilled his promise by publishing, in 1714 The Ladies Library in three volumes.³⁸ Mrs. Haywood in the Female Spectator, lauds the pleasures and advantages to be gained in reading in essay after essay. One of her best effusions on the subject is this one:

³⁵ Spectator, No. 95, June 15, 1711 (Steele)

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid., No. 248, Nov. 9, 1710 (Steele)

³⁸ See G. A. Aitkin "The Ladies Library", Athenaeum, July 5, 1884, pp. 16-17 for complete list of inclusions which were largely excerpts from moralists of the ages.

What clods of earth should we have been but for reading !
 ---how ignorant of everything but the spot we tread upon!-----
 Books are the channel through which all useful arts and sciences
 are conveyed.----By the help of books we sit at ease, and travel
 to the most distant parts; behold the customs and manners of all
 the different nations in the habitable globe; may take a view of
 heaven itself, and traverse all the wonders of the skies,-----
 By books we learn to sustain calamity with patience, and bear
 prosperity with moderation---By books we are enabled to compare
 past ages with the present; to discover what in our fore-fathers
 was worthy (of) imitation, and what should be avoided; to improve
 upon their virtues, and take warning by their errors.--It is
 books which dispel the gloomy melancholy our climate but too much
 inclines us to, and in its room diffuses an enlivening cheerful-
 ness.----In fine we are indebted to books for everything that can
 profit or delight us. 39

Mrs. Haywood recommended a wide variety of reading material to
 women. She considered the reading of philosophy both pleasant
 and profitable; also some branches of Mathematics; History;
 Bayle's Dictionary; as well as a widely various reading of
 travel books. 40 Poetry and novels were to be read for relaxa-
 41 tion.

As to the actual education and training of women, we can
 give the periodicals hardly any praise, as the standards of
 woman's education were not raised appreciably during the first
 half of the eighteenth century. We can, however, applaud their
 uniform efforts in attempting to arouse all parents to the neces-
 sity of giving their daughters the training allowed at that time.
 This training, in the light of progress, appears superficial in
 the extreme, yet it must be allowed that even it was preferable
 to the total ignorance resulting from neglect. The laxity of
 parents was indicted by Steele:

39 Female Spectator, Vol. II, Bk. VII, p. 39

40 Ibid., Vol. III, Bk. XV, p. 122-151

41 Ibid., Vol. II, Bk. X, p. 202

I am apt to believe there are some parents imagine their daughters will be accomplished enough if nothing interrupts their growth ~~on~~ their shape. According to this method of education, I could name you twenty families where all the girls hear of in this life is that it is time to rise and come to dinner as if they were so insignificant as to be wholly provided for when they are fed and clothed.....

It is with indignation that I see such crowds of the Female World lost to humane society. 42

Again he recorded his opinion on this matter:

To make her an agreeable Person is the Main Purpose of her Parents....The Management of a young Lady's person is not to be overlooked, but the erudition (education) of her Mind is much more to be regarded. The true Art of the Case is to make the Mind and Body improve together. 43

He resented ~~g~~ girls being allowed to run among the servants of⁴⁴ the household through neglect of their parents. And the Gentleman's Magazine protested against this custom as the daughters in this way too often acquired the low manners of⁴⁵ the servant class, or even married among them. Mrs. Haywood, in the Female Spectator, describes a product of the superficial training of the time:

She was trained up in the way young ladies in England ordinarily are; her relations following the common opinion that ~~tho~~ singing, dance, play on the spinnet, and work at her needle are accomplishments sufficient for a woman:--- wit she had enough but was never taught that to accustom herself to Reflection was necessary to ripen that wit into wisdom. 46

42 Tatler, No. 248, November 9, 1735

43 Spectator, No. 66, May 18, 1711

44 Tatler, No. 294, February 6, 1711/12

45 Gentleman's Magazine, Vol. V, quoting Grubstreet Journal, No 276, February 27, 1735. This article duplicates part of the same accusation to be found on p. 163 of the essay called "A Trip through the Town" printed in the Anonymous tract, Tricks of the Town Laid Open

46 Female Spectator, Vol. II, Bk. X, p. 190

She thought that girls should be taught more than the principles of virtue and morality. Particularly should "her" genius be cultivated, her understanding improved, such employments found for her as will rectify her mind and bring her to that good taste which would prevent her choosing the indecent, the unbecoming, and, particularly, a husband beneath and unworthy of her"⁴⁷.

The numerous academies then extant justified their existence in the eyes of the world by their training girls to act their proper roles in society with the home the pivotal point. The Spectator carried an advertisement from a school-mistress who described the curriculum of her school for young ladies as being planned to teach all the usual accomplishments with the needle, dancing; the French tongue; and also the whole art of pastry and preserving; "with whatever may render them accomplished"⁴⁸. However, somewhat more thorough, a "gentleman of education" set up a "French Boarding School" in 1732 and advertised in the Craftsman that it would be a school

Where young Ladies are Taught, Reading, Writing, Working, and Accounts, Geography, Dancing and Instructed in all Parts of education. ⁴⁹

If Steele believed there was "sex in souls", apparently Addison, as well as other authorities, did not believe there was a vast inequality of minds between the sexes:

⁴⁷ Female Spectator, Vol. III, Bk. XV, p. 154

⁴⁸ Spectator, No. 314, February 29, 1711/12

⁴⁹ Gentleman's Magazine, Vol. II, quoting The Craftsman, February 12, 1732

I have often wondered that learning is not thought a proper ingredient in the education of a woman of quality or fortune. Since they have the same improvable minds as the male part of the species, why should they not be cultivated by the same method ?

Learning and knowledge are perfections in us not as we are men, but as we are reasonable creatures, in which order of being, the female world is upon the same level with the male. 50

In fact, he proceeds to argue that learning is more adapted to the female world because of the fact that women have more spare time. Mrs. Haywood appeared to be torn by a conviction that woman's intelligence is equal to that of man's and at the same time by the doubt which tradition had instilled in her. She rationalized:

There are undoubtedly no sexes in souls; and we are able to receive and practice the impressions not only of virtue and religion, but also of those sciences which men engross to themselves, as they can be.---Surely our bodies were not created out of the finest mould that our souls might be neglected like the coarsest of clay. 51

Then the inborn influence of her mores doubted:

If by the texture of her brain as some pretend to allege, we are less capable of deep meditations and have a multiplicity of volatile ideas, which continually wandering, naturally, prevent our fixing on any one thing; the more care should be taken to improve such as may be of service, and suppress those who have a contrary tendency....But I agree no farther than in supposition to this common place argument. 52

Mrs. Haywood in no way sought to establish an equality of the sexes beyond that of rights to learning. She outlines all of man's arguments against the educating of woman, and answers

50 Guardian, No. 155, September 8, 1713

51 Female Spectator, Vol. II, Bk. X, p. 192

52 Ibid. p. 199

each of them. In effect she contended that the larger education would not cause woman to attempt domineering, but, rather, that it would better fit her for her proper role of wife and mother, nor would it make women so bold as to speak in public places:

It is true that it would not befit us to go into the pulpit, nor harangue at the bar; but this is a weak and trifling argument against our being qualified for either, since all men who are so (educated) were never intended for the service of the church nor to put on the Ælong robe; and by the same rules, therefore the sons as well as the daughters of good families should be bred up in ignorance. 53

Although the periodicals praised specific instances of celebrated learning or accomplishment in women, they all returned to their dominant premise that woman's place is properly the home. Steele confessed that "we see nowhere in conversation the perfection of speech so much as in an accomplish woman." 54 And although Addison attributes woman's power of "oratory" to her "inability to suppress her thoughts," 55 he does allow that "if we look into the histories of famous women, we find many eminent philosophers of this sex". He mentions Portia, Hypparchia and Eudisia, as well as Madame Maintenon, who became famous no doubt because of the development of their minds through "books and literature." 56 Steele praised the writings of Mrs. Rowe (Elizabeth Singer); 57 and also the essays of Mrs. Arabella Manley, "Schoolmistress of Hackney" 58 However Steele

53 Female Spectator, Vol. II, Bk. X, p. 194-199

54 Tatler, No. 62, September 1, 1709

55 Spectator, No. 247, December 13, 1711

56 Guardian, No. 155, September 8, 1713

57 Tatler, No. 10, May 3, 1709

58 Ibid. No. 4, April 18, 1709. Note that this is not Mrs. de la Riviere Manley with whom Steele carried on a literary feud.

allowed Swift to publish in the Tatler his bitter satire on "Madonella" (Mary Astell) and her school for "Platonites".⁵⁹

The Gentleman's Magazine for April, 1736 offers as proof "that the Soul knows no difference in Sex" those "female worthies", Sappho, Tanquilla, Portia, the Celtic Women, Minerva, Huldah of Holy Writ, Aspatia, Cornelia (mother of the Gracchi) and again Eudisia (Athenais). The article continues:

Nor have our own times wanted such Ornaments of the Sex; nor has our own Nation: Why need I mention our Chudleighs, Finch's, Behn's, Singers? Since had I named Mrs. Barker only who has lately publish'd some Poems, you would allow she excels most of our present Poets. And what is particular to her honour, be it known that she never stoops for an infamous applause to those Loosenesses from which too many of both Sexes have deriv'd all their Fame. 60

This article also states that "there are other British Females of the present age worthy to be recorded in this list of Fame". Mrs. Haywood, while not citing specific women notables in the Female Spectator (aside from the Duchess of Leeds to whom the dedication is given), did record a unique accomplishment of women patrons of learning at that time. Since, however, we can accord Mrs. Haywood just recognition for her own share in in the imminent Shakespearean revival, it may well be that she is only being modest when she gives credit to "some ladies" for the following bit of patronage of that great bard:

Some ladies indeed have shewn a truly public spirit in rescuing the admirable, yet almost forgotten, Shakespear from

⁵⁹ Tatler, No. 32, June 23, 1709

⁶⁰ Gentleman's Magazine, Vol. Vi, quoting the Universal Spectator, No. 293, April 17, 1736

being totally sunk in oblivion:---they have generously contributed to raise a monument to his memory and frequently honoured his works on the stage:---an action, which deserves the highest encomiums, and will be attended with an adequate reward, since in preserving the fame of the dead bard, they add a brightness to their own which will shine to late posterity. 61

Yet, although once a woman had succeeded she was yielded vast admiration, the periodicals insisted that 'it was rather to be wished that woman improve in her own sphere, and approved themselves better daughters, wives, mothers and friends.'⁶² And all believed that for the average woman "to be well-dressed, in good-humour, and cheerful in the command of her family are all the arts and sciences of life."⁶³ Steele went to some pains to make his position clear:

We have indeed carried women's characters too much into public life and you will see them nowadays affect a sort of fame: but I cannot help venturing to disoblige them for their service by telling them that the utmost of all woman's character is contained in domestic life; she is blameable or praiseworthy according as her carriage affects the house of her father or her husband as contained within the duties of a daughter, a sister, a wife, and a mother. All these may be well performed, though a lady should not be the very finest woman at an opera or an assembly. They are likewise consistent with a modest share of wit, a plain dress and a modest air... When they consider themselves, as they ought, no other than an additional part of the species (for their own happiness and comfort as well as that of those for whom they were born), their ambition to excel will be directed accordingly and they will in no part of their lives want opportunities of being shining Ornaments to their fathers, husbands, brothers or children. 64

Moreover, Mrs. Haywood, consistent with convention, advocated

61 Female Spectator, Vol. I, Bk. V, pp. 263-264

62 Spectator, No. 95, June 15, 1711

63 Tatler, No. 75, October 1, 1709 (Addison and Steele)

64 Spectator, No. 342, April 2, 1712

no activity outside the realm of domesticity, Nor, indeed, did Dr. Johnson, although Boswell reported that had he married, Dr. Johnson would have preferred an intelligent wife. In short, all of the essayists believed with Steele that

The Family is the Province for a Private Woman to shine in. 65

Since they relegated woman strictly to the home, the periodicals, continuing their attempts to elevate woman's social position, now set themselves to sentimentalize the institution of marriage. Working to that end, they extolled the beauties of sentimental love; they advocated marriage based on mutual attraction between persons carefully selected by each other because of their superior qualities; and they pictured the joys of the home built on ideal marriage. In these directions, the periodicals demonstrated their greatest reforming efforts. Gone was the light, gay, bantering tone of Addison and Steele with which they had treated lesser subjects. This style now gave over, in those two essayists, to one of tender sentiment. Mrs. Haywood, always loquaciously sentimental, was never more so than in this field. And Doctor Johnson, who knew nothing of airy badinage, was never more at home than when treating these subjects which allowed the exercise of his didacticism. In their efforts to create a higher regard for and wider practice of sentimental love in marriage,

the essayists set themselves in direct opposition to the Restoration wits. Steele stated that

The wits of this Island for above fifty years past, instead of correcting the vices of the age, have done all they could to inflame them. Marriage has been one of the common topics of ridicule that every stage hath found his account in; for whenever there is an occasion for a clap, an impertinent jest on matrimony is sure to raise it. 66

As regarded love itself, Steele considered it as "a solemn and honourable passion"⁶⁷ and wrote of it

There is therefore an assiduous care and cultivation to be bestowed upon our passions and affectations; for...they are the excrescences of our souls. 68

And again he complained:

Of all the laudable motives of life, none have suffered so much...as Love, under which reversed name a brutal desire called Lust is frequently concealed and admitted. 69

And Addison also gave his estimate of love:

But this may be said of Love, that if you strike it out of the soul, life would be insipid, and our being but half-animated. A real passion which has in it a capacity for making life happy can thoroughly accomplish this great end, provided they have always a real and constant love to work upon.70

Somewhat ambiguously, the Gentleman's Magazine sentimentalized love also:

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- 66 Tatler, No. 159, April 15, 1710
 - 67 Ibid., No. 30, June 18, 1709
 - 68 Ibid., No. 54, August 13, 1709
 - 69 Ibid., No. 49, August 2, 1709
 - 70 Ibid., No. 90, November 5, 1709

Nothing is more generally to be believed by all to be known and yet is in fact less understood than Love. As Plants take a Tincture from the Soil they grow in, Love receives a Colouring from the Lover's Temper....The true and only Object of Love is Beauty...Beauty being of two Kinds, mental and Corporeal, Love cannot be the result of one only; a Savage may taste the Last, yet have no idea of the First, but none can taste the First without having both the Idea and Capability of the Last. The cue for my pretty Readers is not to be led by the eye alone. 71

Mrs. Haywood, deeply embroiled in the whirl of Sentimentalism, reached the vortex when she discussed love and marriage. Surprisingly rationalistic in this instance, however, she gave her opinion of love:

I readily agree that love itself, when under the direction of reason, harmonizes the soul and gives it a gentle, generous turn; but I can by no means approve of such definitions of that passion as we find in plays, novels and romances..... When once we truly love, we rarely change. 72

The essayists disapproved the degrading of that tender passion of love by dalliance or "demurrage". Although coquettes received their share of denunciation, all were agreed that this faulty practice was to be attributed largely to the men. Jenny Distaff believed that men could never deceive women in love if women would use better judgment to distinguish the good from the bad and would learn to value merit above graceful address. Here again she blames Restoration attitudes for woman's love position:

It is from the writings of those times and the traditional accounts of the debauches of their men of pleasure, that the cox-combs now-a-days take upon them, forsooth, to be false

71 Gentleman's Magazine, Vol. V, quoting the Prompter, No. 5, January, 1735

72 Female Spectator, Vol. I, Bk. I, pp.6-9

swains and perjured lovers. Methinks I feel all the woman rise in me when I reflect upon the nauseous rogues that pretend to deceive us, wretches that can never have it in their power to over-reach anything living but their mistresses ! In the name of goodness, if we are designed by nature as suitable companions to the other sex, why are we not treated accordingly?
73

The Tatler denounces the inequality of sex in cases of dalliance:

A man that is treacherously dealt with in love may have recourse to many consolations. But a woman that is ill-treated, has no refuge in her grief but in silence and secrecy. The world is so unjust that a female heart which has been touched is thought forever blemished. The very grief in the case is looked upon as a reproach, and a complaint, almost a breach of chastity....For these reasons we see treachery and falsehood are become, as it were, male vices, and are seldom found, never acknowledged in the other sex. 74

He then offers women the service of exposing the names of deceivers.

If man was guilty of bandying the affections about, so was woman; but even here man was indirectly to blame because of his constant flattery of her, easily inducing her thereby to resort to coquetry. Resenting woman's ability to play at a game which man himself invented, the essayists vented much bitter criticism on "coquettes", "jilts" and demurrers. Addison advised demurrers who spin out the time of courtship either "to close with their lovers or dismiss them," as time flies and beauty is fleeting. "The virtuous woman should reject the first offer of marriage,"
75
but she should demur only "so far as decency requires."

Steele believed a "jilt" a "dangerous animal," one degree worse than the coquette. "She is a spider in the midst of a cobweb,

73 Tatler, No. 247, November 7, 1710 (Steele)

74 Ibid. No. 128, February 2, 1709

75 Spectator, No. 89, June 12, 1711

that is sure to destroy every fly that approaches it." 76
 An Oxonian corresponding with the Universal Spectator gave the amusing character of Belinda, 'who treated him with all the cruelty of a coquette.' When he gave her the poems he wrote to her,

She just looks at them and drawls out,----What, verse ?
 Ha, ha, ha ! Poetry is the prettiest Thing to curl one's
 Hair with ! 77

The essayist consistently villified the "deflowerers of innocence". The Guardian wondered that such men, though dead to all the sentiments of virtue and honour, are not restrained by compassion and humanity. To bring sorrow, to wound the heart of a tender parent, and stain the life of a deluded young woman with a dishonour that can never be wiped off, are circumstances, one would think, sufficient to check the most violent passion in a heart which has the least tincture of
 78
 pity and good nature. In this regard, Steele again reproached the inequalities of the sex when he wrote:

It has been often asserted in these papers that the great source of our wrong pursuits is the impertinent manner with which we treat women both in common and important circumstances of life...Our women have much indulged to them in the participation of our fortunes and our liberty; but the errors they commit in the use of either are by no means so impartially considered as the false steps which are made by men. In the commerce of lovers, the man makes the address, assails and betrays; and yet stands in the same degree of acceptance as he was before he committed the treachery. The woman for no other crime but believing one whom she thought loved her is treated with shyness and indifference at best, and commonly with reproach and scorn. 79

76 Spectator, No. 187, October 4, 1711

77 Gentleman's Magazine, vol. V, quoting Universal Spectator, No. 330, February 1, 1735

78 Guardian, No. 123, August 1, 1713

79 Tatler, No. 201, July 22, 1710

The Gentleman's Magazine, for January, 1735, quotes an article from the Prompter warning maids to be cautious on whom they bestow their love. The essayists emphasized his lesson by quoting a verse from Rowe:

Were you, ye Fair, but cautious whom you trust;
 Did you but know how seldom Fools are just,
 So many of your Sex would not in vain
 Of perjured Man and broken vows complain.
 Of all the various wretches love has made,
 How few have been by Men of Sense betray'd !
 Convinced by Reason, they your power confess !
 Pleased to be happy as you're pleased to bless;
 And conscious of your Worth, can never love you less. 80

The same magazine, quoting the Universal Spectator, gives a full account of the conventional mistreatment of the wronged woman with an accompanying insight into the customary disposition of unwanted children. A physician who has written a letter to the Universal Spectator regarding the miseries of the abandoned women of the town,

Proceeds to argue with the infamous Authors of the misery of these wretches who first seduce the poor young Creatures from their Innocence and then triumph in their Wickedness. He who debauches a Maiden and then exposes her to want and shame is arrived to such a monstrous height of Villainy, that no word in our Language can reach it. Mentions a further species of cruelty, that is the necessity some of these poor wretches are under if with child, of applying to a Magistrate to procure some pitiful Maintenance for her unfortunate Babe.----When all that is done by the Father is to make the best Bargain he can with the Church-wardens to take it off his Hands; which is commonly done for a treat and 10 or 12 pounds. So the Child is placed upon the Parish and the Woman upon the Town. 81

80 Gentleman's Magazine, vol. V, representing The Prompter No. 5, January, 1735

81 Ibid., Vol. I, quoting the Universal Spectator, No. 118. January 9, 1731

If much admonition was given regarding the proprieties of courtship, even more was extended to those persons contemplating marriage. Care in choosing a mate was considered extremely important by all of the essayists. At the same time, the Tatler also recommended that the seeker develop the same qualifications as those sought for successful marriage:

These are in my opinion cheerfulness and constancy. A cheerful temper joined with innocence will make beauty attractive, knowledge delightful and wit good-natured. It will lighten sickness, poverty, and affliction; convert, ignorance into an amiable simplicity; and render deformity itself agreeable. 82

The Spectator kindly advised young ladies as to what to look for in a husband:

The best husbands have been famous for their wisdom; virtue naturally produces constancy and mutual esteem; good-nature which is insufficient unless it be steady and uniform and accompanied with an evenness of temper which is above all things to be preserved in this friendship contracted for life. 83

The Grubstreet Journal, quoted in the Gentleman's Magazine advised men, on the other hand, not to prefer Beauty or Fortune⁸⁴ to Sense and Good-Humour. Mrs. Haywood advised women to be sure of their own hearts in marriage, being not hasty to determine whether they feel a real tenderness or only a liking, first⁸⁵ being sure, of course, of the sincerity of the men. Dr. Johnson, in a long discourse on "The Unhappiness of Marriage Caused from Irregular Motives of Choice," listed many examples of un-

82 Tatler, No. 192, July 1, 1710

83 Spectator, No. 607, October 15, 1714

84 Gentleman's Magazine, Vol. IV, quoting Grubstreet Journal, No. 228, May 9, 1734

85 Female Spectator, Vol. II, Bk. I, p. 9

wise marriages: Prudentius who married Furia for money; Florentius who married a coquette unable to sustain her repartee and therefore insipid; Melissus who married Ianthé, brought her to town where both became miserable because solitude and reflection gave way to public life and gaiety; Ptosapius who married his housekeeper; Avaro who married to please a rich uncle.

(All) failed to obtain happiness for want of considering that marriage is the strictest tie of perpetual friendship, and there can be no friendship without confidence, and no confidence without integrity; and that he must expect to be wretched who pays to beauty riches, or politeness that regard which only virtue and piety can claim. 86

Along the same line of reasoning the Gentleman's Magazine in May, 1733 carried an amusing article from the Grubstreet Journal entitled "Of Unjustifiable Marriages." The essayist here proposes that some legislation be taken to prevent unhappy marriages and that suitable penalties should be inflicted on Delinquents:

As for example : when two young thoughtless Fools, having no visible way to maintain themselves nor anything to begin the World with, yet resolve to marry, and be miserable let it be deemed petty Larceny,---- If a younger Brother marries an old Woman purely for the sake of a Maintenance, let it be called de defendendo,--- When a rich old Fellow marries a young Wench in her full bloom, I would have it made Felony without Benefit of Clergy,----When a Lady marries her Coach-man or a Gentleman his Cook-maid (especially if there are children by a former marriage) let them both be transported for fourteen years,--- When a man has had one Devil of a Wife and buried her, and yet will marry a Second, let him be brought in Felo de fe, and buried in the Highway accordingly,---When a Woman in good circumstances marries a Town-rake not worth a groat; if she's

betrayed into it, let it be called Accidental Death: But if she knew it, make it a single Felony, and singe her Fist, ----When a Man with children marries a Woman with five or six, and vice-versa, let the Delinquent stand thrice on the Pillory, lose both his Ears, and suffer one Year's Imprisonment, ---- If a man marries a Woman of ill Fame knowing her to be so, let him be condemned to have a pair of Horns painted on his Door, in perpetuum rei memoriam; or if she be a known Scold, then a couple of Neat's Tongues painted there.-----And when a Man or Woman marries to the disinheriting of their Children, let them suffer as in Cases of High Treason.-----When a woman marries a Man deeply in debt knowing him to be so, let her be sent to the House of Correction and kept to hard labour for three months; and if he deceived her, and did not let her know his Circumstances, let her be acquitted, and he be doomed to beat Hemp all the Days of his Life. 87

The obvious inference here is that all of these marriages are unjustifiable because they were contracted on unreasonable grounds and without the bonds of affection.

Mrs. Haywood, as well as the other essayists, placed a real responsibility on parents for the possibilities of happy marriages for their children. In the first place, a girl should early be surrounded with men so that she could learn to judge them and thus be assured of selecting wisely. She deplored the practice of parents selecting husbands for their daughters, giving a most unhappy instance of one such marriage. This was a marriage of two persons of conflicting religions (which Mrs. Haywood greatly disapproved) with the result that their home was the scene of continual discord. And all of the essayists accused ambitious parents of arranging many unhappy marriages for the purpose of gaining huge settlements. The

87 Gentleman's Magazine, Vol. III, quoting Grubstreet Journal, No. 178, May 24, 1733

88 Female Spectator, Vol. I, Bk. I, p. 9

89 Ibid. Vol. III, Bk. XVI, p. 203

periodicals exhibited peculiar aversion to this practice.

Steele was the first to express his opinion of the matter:

I have often admired at the barbarity of parents who frequently interpose their authority in this grand article of life. I would fain ask the father whether he thinks he can bestow a greater favour on his daughter than to put her in a way to live happily ?....Whether he can make amends to his daughter by any increase of riches for the loss of that happiness she proposes to herself...or whether the father should compound with his daughter to be miserable though she were to get twenty thousand pounds by the bargain ? 90

Steele was also of the opinion that " this trade of minds and bodies in the lump without regard to either as they are accompanied with such sums of money, and such parcels of land cannot but produce a commerce between the parties concerned suitable to the mean motives upon which they first came together." 91
Again and again he protested against such "auctions" because this custom was in direct opposition to his efforts to sanctify the idea of marriage in the minds of his readers. 92
He believed that such a marriage was "insipid if not loathsome," and that the principals in such an arrangement could not be happy :

(They would live) without the least relish of that exquisite gladness of meeting, that sweet inquietude at parting, together with the charms of voice, look, gesture and that general benevolence between well-chosen lovers which makes all things please. 93

The periodicals published numerous complaints both from those betrothed and those already married because of their unhappiness in being thus "bargained" by their parents. Such parents

90 Tatler, No. 185, June 15, 1710

91 Ibid., No. 223, September 12, 1710

92 Ibid.

93 Ibid., No. 199, July 18, 1710

were greatly criticized by all but particularly so by Steele who termed them "extortioners"⁹⁴. He as well as the others attributed the falling away from matrimony to this practice. "Contempt of Matrimony prevails amongst us," says the Universal Spectator, taking the advantage parenthetically⁹⁵ of advertizing "the Batchellors Recantations" at 6 pence. Later, the same periodical states that:

(He) subjoins a Petition from several Batchelors, complaining of being slighted by the Fair Sex for want of Estates to make jointures, and therefore offer their joint Request that the Women may not by any Publick Act be allowed to court since they have made so indiscreet a Use of the Toleration for some-time passed allowed them. 96

The practice of requiring settlements and jointures for daughters was still so prevalent in Dr. Johnson's time that that good man was moved to write one of his rare satires on the subject of⁹⁷ "Love Unsuccessful Without Riches."

There is only one justifiable basis for marriage, according to the periodicals. That is love based on mutual attraction. This "real marriage" is the source of greatest happiness, according to Mrs. Haywood:

It is indeed the fountain-head of all the comforts we can enjoy ourselves and of those we transmit to prosperity. It is the band which unites not only two persons but whole families in one common inseparable interest.---It is that which prevents those numberless irregularities that would else overthrow all order and destroy society, but then not to pervert the intention of so necessary and glorious an institution and rob it of every blessing it is full of, lies only in ourselves. No violated

94 Guardian, No. 13, June 4, 1712

95 Gentleman's Magazine, Vol. I, quoting Universal Spectator, No. 117, February 13, 1731

96 Ibid., No. 127, April 13, 1731

97 Rambler, No. 192, January 18, 1852

vows before pledged to another, ---no clandestine agreements made up by a hasty and engoverned passion, no sordid bargains where wealth, not merit, is the chief inducement,--- no notorious disparity of years, of family, of humours, can ever be productive of a lasting concord, either between the principals themselves, or those in alliance with them. 98

Steele believed that "marriage is a solemn prostitution where⁹⁹ there is not an union of Minds." He also believed that "mutual confidence of each other....renders the satisfactions of marriage even greater than those of friendship, and makes wife and husband the dearest appellations of human life."¹⁰⁰ The North-hampton Mercury for January, 1732 in an essay on "Conjugal Love" stated:

When Good Nature, Respect, and Equality of Tempers meet, this state is an inexhaustible source of Felicity. 101

Again in the Gentleman's Magazine, in an article quoted from The Auditor, we find a letter from a happily married man who credits his having married for love with being the secret of his happiness:

I did not seek an overgrown Fortune, nor could think of giving my hand to a Woman from whom my Heart was likely to be at Liberty. A beautiful Face and fine Shape were not enough to engage me if the Soul was not fitted to my own too. 102

Another article in the same periodical eulogized the beauties of marriage:

98 Female Spectator, Vol. I, Bk. II, pp. 59, 60

99 Tatler, No. 91, November 8, 1709

100 Ibid. No. 136, February 21, 1709/10

101 Gentleman's Magazine, Vol. II, quoting the North-hampton Mercury, January 8, 1732

102 Ibid. quoting the Auditor, No. 24, April 24, 1733

No Station of Life can Equal that where two Persons come together with Friendship, Love, Honour and Generosity; as for Fortune, if it be on one Side, its sufficient; as to Beauty Its blaze, tho' fierce, is quickly past, While Love, Good Sense and Virtue always last. 103

Dr. Johnson, too, believed that proper choice based on love was necessary to marital felicity. In one of his Rambler essays, Dr. Johnson produces a letter from Hymenaeus, who has married Tranquilla, in which the correspondent outlines the reasons that made their marriage happy: they have no unreasonable expectations of each other; there is not too much disparity in their birth and fortune; they chose each other without the authority and avarice of parents; they, both know the world and like books; and concludes:

We considered marriage as the most solemn league of friendship, a state from which artifice and concealment are to be banished forever, and in which every act of dissimulation is a breach of faith. 104

Because it fell so far below the ideal standards for which the periodicals were striving, clandestine marriage was gravely censured. When we remember the historic scandals of "Fleet Street" and other easy accesses to matrimony how the "fortune stealers" eloped with and married the daughters of wealth, we can understand the fears of "Tim Watchwell", a father, who wrote to the Spectator:

I, for one, live in continual apprehension of this sort of people that lie in wait, day and night, for our children, and

103 Gentleman's Magazine, quoting the Auditor, No 24, April 24, 1733

104 Rambler, No. 167, October 22, 1751

may be considered as a kind of kidnappers within the law. 105

Mrs. Haywood described an instance of clandestine marriage with all its typical viciousness. Jemima, wooed by Lothario, who makes a secret contract with her, holds out for a marriage ceremony in confirmation of the contract. He then negotiates a fraudulent ceremony with his valet acting the part of the clergyman. Needless to say this affair is followed by the direst results. 106 With this example, Mrs. Haywood warns girls never to marry without the consent of their parents; and she insists on a church ceremony, since it carries both authenticity and at the same time a greater solemnity. 107 History tells us that because of the prevalence of these travesties, Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act was passed in 1753, requiring the knowledge and consent of parents and the publishing of previous notice. We submit the foregoing evidence to show that the periodicals lent their effort to the stamping out of that evil.

The essayists, having promulgated a better basis for selecting a mate in marriage, now offered their benevolent advice on how to remain happy in the married state. As always where the affections were concerned, Steele had a wholesome program of conduct to offer the happy pair:

In marriage, the chief business is to acquire a prepossession in favour of each other. They should consider one another's words and actions with secret indulgence. There should always

105 Spectator, No. 311, February 26, 1711/12 (Hughes)

106 Female Spectator, Vol. IV, Bk. XXII, pp. 155-204

107 Ibid., Vol. IV, Bk. XXIII, pp. 256-258

be an inward fondness, pleading for each other, such as may add new beauties to everything that is excellent, give charms to what is indifferent, and cover everything ~~that~~ is defective. 108

Addison likewise expounded the principles of congenial marriage. In a discourse on the "Difference in Temper of the Sexes," he stated:

We may conclude Men and women were made as counterparts to one another, that the pains and anxieties of the husband might be relieved by the sprightliness and good-humour of the wife. When these are rightly tempered, care and cheerfulness go hand in hand; and the family like a ship that is duly trimmed wants neither sail nor ballast. 109

The wife's share in the happiness of the home was exemplified in Steele's characterization of the ideal young wife, Mary Home. She explains to a coquette the reason for her retirement from society:

I have no other concern but to please the man I love; he is the end of every care I have; if I dress, it is for him; if I read a poem or a play, it is to qualify myself for a conversation agreeable to his happiness---I love to talk to him and never hear him named but with pleasure and emotion. 110

Sounding almost as obnoxious to present-day women as Lord Halifax's "Advice to his Daughter" is the recipe given to wives for managing their husbands, to be found in the Gentleman's Magazine for June, 1734. This article, quoted from the Universal Spectator, recommends the role of a sychophant to a wife who would be successful:

108 Tatler, No. 150, March 25, 1710

109 Spectator, No. 128, July 27, 1711

110 Spectator, No 254, December 21, 1711

The man who is not of so tractable a Disposition is to be governed by Artifice; However difficult this may see, it is only to persuade him to do what you before knew he had determined to do.

To preserve Dominion, you must preserve good Humour, and to please a Husband, continue that which pleased a Lover; To expose the ill Qualities of Mind or neglect the Care of their Appearance to their Husbands is a great oversight in the Ladies. 111

And the Prompter offered sage advice to women:

The Cue then, that I would give the Wives of Great Britain, after they have studied their Husband's Disposition, Temper and Taste, for Pleasure, is, never to let their own come so near as to put them upon ever asking themselves the question, Who shall Yield ? 112

The Prompter soon afterward carried a rejoinder to the above article, from Martha Rulewell. She wrote:

Smooth Mr. Prompter,

D'ye think for all your fine Speeches, I don't see your Drift; what is the Tendency of your Paper, No. 15, but to make Wives blindly submit to their Husbands, for fear the good man should take Pett. Bachelors' Wives are always well-governed; but, Sir, there is a Difference between Theory and Practice, --as you'll find, if you come among us with your Fool's Cap and your Fool's Notions of Matrimonial Government.-----I wonder you do not preach up the old-fashion'd Doctrine of Honour and Obey, which was well enough in former days when 113 wives were mere Domestick Animals or at best, but Upper Servants.

The Prompter hastened to answer that he meant only Reasonable Authority and Reasonable Submission, but 'that Honour and Obe'y are still to be built, upon the Basis of Reason.'

The essayists loved to dwell on the joys to be observed

111 Gentleman's Magazine, Vol. IV, quoting the Universal Spectator, No. 297, June 15, 1734

112 Ibid. quoting the Prompter, No. 15, January, 1735

113 Ibid. Vol. V, Prompter, No. 19, January, 1735

in congenial family life, all the result of marriage based on pure affection. Perhaps the tenderest account of such a family in their home was given by Steele in his essay "A Scene of Domestic Felicity". Mr. Bickerstaff here recounts a pleasurable visit he has just made in the home of an old school friend. The children of the home, all well-trained and friendly, welcome him and render him numerous little hospitalities. The father and mother, each an old friend, give him warm welcome. But the charmingly affectionate attitude of the whole family for one another, particularly that of the wife and husband for each other, delight Mr. Bickerstaff beyond measure. His old friend's eulogy of his wife is one of Steele's tenderest masterpieces:

She gives me every day pleasures beyond what I ever knew in possession of her beauty, when I was in the vigour of Youth.Her face is to me much more beautiful than when first I saw it; there is no decay in any feature, which I cannot trace from the very instant it was occasioned by some anxious concern for my welfare and interests. Thus at the same time, methinks, the love I conceived toward her for what she was, is heightened by my gratitude for what she is. The love of a wife is as much above the idle passions commonly called by that name as the loud laughter of buffoons is inferior to the elegant mirth of a gentleman. Oh! she is an inestimable jewel ! 114

Thus we have seen in what manner the periodicals attempted to elevate the social position of woman through the sentimentalizing of her and her "calling", marriage. We have found that these monitors allowed woman learning, provided its pursuit kept her well within the prescribed sphere of domesticity. They attempted to heighten the regard of the world for woman. They attempted to reform the institution of marriage through a readjustment of moral standards; through teaching men and women how

to select mates; and, particularly, through eulogizing the beauties of love and marriage and the mutual felicity of the happy home.

CHAPTER V

AN EVALUATION OF THE WORK OF THE EARLY PERIODICALS IN FURTHERING WOMAN'S SOCIAL PROGRESS

It has been the purpose of this treatise to show that the various periodicals under consideration, namely, the Tatler, the Spectator, the Guardian, the Gentleman's Magazine or the Monthly Intelligencer (1731-1736), the Female Spectator, and the Rambler attempted to attract and hold women readers; and that they constituted themselves the proper instrument for furthering woman's social progress.

We have shown evidence that all of these periodicals offered a direct invitation to women readers, that they presented an abundance of reading material calculated to interest them throughout the period, thus demonstrating to what extent the periodicals themselves fell under the influence of the onward march of feminism.

Then we have offered evidence to show that, in turn, the periodicals contributed to the steady progress of feminism not only by catering to women readers, as stated above, but also through their very real contributions toward her social elevation. We have seen how the essayists attempted to correct the peccadillos of woman's social behaviour and her dress; how they attempted to reform her character. Then, too, we discovered that through the channel of Sentimentalism, the periodicals essayists devoted themselves to inculcating greater respect for woman as a thinking creature. Since her precincts were

narrowly circumscribed to the home by the Sentimentalists, the periodicals deliberately attempted to glorify her role as sweetheart, wife, and mother.

Did the essayists themselves feel that they enjoyed any degree of success ? or, if they did not so express themselves, did the reception of their efforts reflect this success ? Steele, for one, was discouraged because he felt that his progress toward reform was slow, yet he believed that he had accomplished some good for woman:

It is no small discouragement to me to see how slow a progress I make in the reformation of the world. But indeed I must do my female readers the justice to own that their tender hearts are much more susceptible to good impressions than the mind of the other sex. 1

And in the last number of the Tatler, Steele expresses a repugnance at inquiring into faults and weaknesses and gives notice of the conclusion of his work. He estimates his service in the following way As to the work itself, the acceptance of it is the best proof of its value.²

However, it remained for John Gay, Steele's contemporary, to weigh the value of his and Addison's work adequately:

Bickerstaff ventured to tell the town that they were a parcel of fops, fools and coquettes; but in such a manner as even pleased them, and made them more than half inclined to believe that he spoke the truth.

Instead of complying with the false sentiments and vicious tastes of the Age either in morality, criticism or good breeding---he has boldly assured them with an authority, which perfectly well became him, to surrender themselves to his arguments for Virtue and Good Sense.

1. Tatler, No. 139, February 28, 1709/10

2. Ibid. No. 271, January 2, 1710/11

It is incredible to conceive the effect his writings have had on the town; how many thousand follies they have either quite banished or given a very great check to ! how much countenance they have added to Virtue and Religion ! how many people they have rendered happy by showing them it was their fault if they were not so ! 3

In the well-known Addisonian manner, the Spectator boasted itself thoroughly successful, particularly in the reformation of fashions:

The petticoat no sooner begun to swell but I observed its motions. The party-patches had not time to muster themselves before I detected them. I had intelligence of the coloured hood the very first time it appeared in a public assembly. I might here mention several other (of) the like contingent subjects upon which I bestowed distinct papers. By this means, I have so effectually quashed those irregularities which gave occasion to them, that I am afraid posterity will scarce have a sufficient idea of them to relish those discourses which were in no little vogue at the time when they were written. They will be apt to think that the fashions and customs I attacked were some fantastic conceits of my own, and that their great-grandmothers could not be so whimsical as I have presented them. 4

And, again, Addison expressed pleasure at the reception of the Spectator: "It is with much satisfaction that I hear this great city inquiring day by day after these my papers,⁵ and receiving morning lectures with a becoming seriousness." Nor did he believe these "morning lectures" had been in vain. In a discussion between Will Honeycomb and Sir Andrew Freeport, the Spectator reported that the latter said that (My papers) had done great good in the city and that all their

3 John Gay, The Present State of Wit, 1711 (Reprinted in An English Garner: critical Essays and Literary Fragments, Ed. J.C. Collins, New York. pp. 201-210

4 Spectator, No. 435, July 19, 1712

5 Ibid. No. 10, March 12, 1711

wives and daughters were the better for them; and further added that the whole city thought themselves very much obliged to me."⁶

The Guardian was also reported successful by one of Steele's contemporaries, who stated that 'one could hardly find a lady dressing or drinking tea in the morning with her friend but Mr. St⁷_____le's paper made up the best part of the entertainment.'

The far-reaching influence in all directions by the Gentleman's Magazine is evident from the fact that this miscellany was popular as late as 1909, when its publication was discontinued.

The Female Spectator wholly feminine in character, being published by that veteran novelist Mrs. Haywood, was welcomed by her host of followers who believed she was attempting to "tread in the steps of the Spectator of Immortal Memory" in advocating Good Manners, Morality and Religion. To these, Mrs. Haywood addressed herself in her concluding number, thanking "those ladies who had extraordinarily encouraged these Lucubrations."

As to his efforts in the Rambler, Johnson issued his benign valedictory: I shall never envy the honours which wit and learning obtain in any other cause, if I can be numbered among the⁸ writers who have given ardour to virtue and confidence to truth.

⁶ Spectator, No. 34, April 9, 1711

⁷ Quoted from John Tutchin's Ghost (pamphlet, dated December 8, 1714) by G. A. Aitkin in the Life of Richard Steele, Cambridge. Riverside Press. 1889. p. 415

⁸ Rambler, No. 208, March 14, 1752

We could not claim that the periodicals had a noticeable immediate effect. We have various comments of contemporaries at the mid-century as to the prevailing social conditions. Richardson in a Rambler paper offers the opinion that, although the Spectator and Rambler have fostered precepts on vices and manners, especially referring to women, he considers the women more avidly interested in "idle amusements" and "wicked rackets" than ever before. Lord Chesterfield in his letter to his son, (April, 1753) stated that social conditions were so disgusting that he longed for the days of good Queen Anne. On the other hand, the influence of the Blue Stockings, that group of women led by Mrs. Montagu and her associates, had, according to all reports of these women, begun to spread to other circles of feminine thinkers. Hannah More is one of our authorities for the fact that women generally had begun to devote more time to indulging in serious conversation in preference to engaging in vain pursuits.⁹ And the Annual Register is witness that the education allowed women had spread to the lower middle classes by¹⁰ 1759. So we conclude that as the petty vices become more widespread in the process of levelling, even so, the good influences tended to spread also throughout the vast English population, thus presenting a situation somewhat like conflicting streams of influence.

Now let us consider what evaluation noted authorities in

9 Hannah More, Works, Vol. I, pp. 14-18

10 Annual Register, 1759, p. 425

literature and history have put first upon some of those essayists who carried on the reforming movement in periodicals; and second, their evaluation of the results of the reform.

In his affrays on the English Humorists, Thackeray contrasts the ability of Addison and Steele to understand women. Addison, who "sees only the public life of woman," can reform her only¹¹ by laughing at her foibles; whereas Steele understood woman so well that he knew how to appeal to her.

His breast seems to warm and his eye to kindle when he meets with a good and beautiful woman, and it is with his heart as well as with his hat that he salutes her.....All women especially are bound to be grateful to Steele, as he was the first of our writers who really seemed to admire and respect women. 12

Macaulay valued the reforming work of Addison very highly, He wrote: So effectually, indeed, did he retort on vice the mockery which had recently been directed against virtue, that since his time, the open violation of decency has always been considered amongst us the sure mark of a fool.¹³ As to the efforts of Mrs. Haywood in the Female Spectator, only grudging admittance is given her by Miss Myra Reynolds, who refers to the periodical only as a "notable undertaking" the editors of which only now and then break out of the charmed circle of love and give a glimpse of women who with their overworked hearts have¹⁴ at least rudimentary minds. So we infer that Miss Reynolds

11 Thackeray, English Humorists, Addison pp. 77-79

12 Ibid., Steele. p. 104

13 Thomas Babington Macaulay, Essays on Addison and Milton. Addison.

14 Myra Reynolds, The Learned Lady in England, 1650-1760. New York, 1920. p. 216

considers that Mrs. Haywood's most serious efforts lay in the field of Sentimentalism. She also states that 'Mrs. Haywood nullifies her eloquent plea for study by the narrow limits she assigns to their work.'¹⁵ Another modern writer gives an evaluation of Dr. Johnson:

Without the exquisite talent for throwing ridicule upon the minute improprieties of life which gave Addison his fame, he still found in his own time endless texts for commentary and timely admonition....After the Spectator, the Rambler is easily the outstanding single-essay periodical of the century. Undoubtedly Johnson was the man of highest talents to devote himself to the arduous labor of such. 16

In yielding tribute to the new influence of woman for the gradual bettering of social conditions during the eighteenth century, Sir Walter Bezant paid an indirect tribute to the periodicals according to the premise of this study:

When they (the men) began to spend the evening in their own homes and in the society of their wives and daughters..... the old ribaldry disappeared and found shelter in holes and corners and society, from the highest to the lowest, became distinctly purer in language. I believe, too, under the new influence of women that it became clearer and purer in reality. It is true that life also became duller. 17

Perhaps the most concise summary of the social conditions of that period is given by the historian, Lecky in his History of England in the Eighteenth Century, when he says that during that century "the institutions and manners were steadily assuming their modern aspect". Yet this progress lagged between

15 Myra Reynolds, The Learned Lady in England, 1650-1760 New York, 1920. p. 217

16 Walter Graham, English Literary Periodicals. The Rambler and the Decline of the Single-Essay Periodicals, pp. 120-121

17 Sir Walter Bezant, London in the Eighteenth Century, London, 1903. pp. 276-277

Anne's reign and that of George III because the two intervening reigns saw no effort on the part of the rulers to improve the prevailing tone. He continues:

The essay writer had made it their great object as much as possible to popularize and diffuse knowledge and to bring down every question to a level with the capacities of the idlest reader; and without any great change in education, any display of extraordinary genius or any real enthusiasm for knowledge, the circle of intelligence was slowly enlarged. The progress was probably even greater among women than among men. Swift, in one of his latest letters, noticed the great improvement which had taken place during his lifetime in the education and writing of ladies (Mrs. Delany's Correspondence, 1, 551) and it is in this period that some of our best female correspondence in Literature belongs.

The prevailing coarseness, however, of fashionable life and sentiment was but little mitigated. 18

Thus we find in the light of history that although the periodicals can in no sense be credited with having created a social revolution in the early eighteenth century, they, nevertheless, deserve just acclaim for the part they played in the gradual evolution of woman's social position which she enjoys today.

18 William E.H. Lecky, A History of England in the Eighteenth Century. London, 1913. p. 153

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