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Creator(s)
Greer, Germaine (1939-)

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It is evident that Shakespeare is concerned with marriage in his early comedies, but it is not immediately evident how serious this interest is or how representative it might be.

Trevelyan, who presented a dismal picture of child marriages for family aggrandisement and the lot of a wife constant pointless childbearing, and her only protest shrewishness, illustrated potently by the Paston Letters, but at the end of his chapter he adds—

When we reach the age of Shakespeare, literature and the drama treat mutual love as the proper but by no means the invariable basis of marriage. The struggle of the children against the parents for normal freedom has got hold of the sympathetic popular imagination and the commonest interest on the Elizabethan stage is the devotion of lovers aiming at marriage, and the adventures of runaway couples like Master Fenton and Anne Page.

It sounded exactly what was wanted to establish the seriousness of Shakespeare's use of courting situations in the early comedies, until upon further examination of the passage itself, it all appeared to be false. The term "mutual love" was damned unhelpful. What did these people think that was? The struggle of the children against the parents is the invariable theme of Roman comedy which deems at least as much with the right to sow wild oats as to marry, and has been claimed to be an archetypal feature of all comedy, the triumph of life against the forces of repression and death, and of youth against age. The Elizabethan stage gave as much space to historical tragedies with no love interest, to revived moralities and festivity plays as it did to plays of wooing and winning, especially in the comedies by the term Elizabethan the whole period from 1558-1603. Master Fenton and Anne Page are not a runaway couple, for their match is ultimately brought within the social canon and accepted, and they are not typical of the ideal lovers of adult age and discretion like Beatrice and Benedick, Olivia...
and Viola, Rosalind and Orlando. Indeed for a moment the utterance seemed pretty nearly meaningless, and what vague impression could be gleaned from it seemed almost certainly misleading. Moreover the most fascinating question what not broached - why should this change have occurred? 

In fact the answer can I think be expressed in terms of four broad ideas which I have no hope of illustrating, especially as all their manifestations will be beyond the scope of illustration by the single life or even the single family, or, at present, the single parish.

1. the longterm effects of the decay of the feudal system, namely the development of the nuclear family and the absence of seigneurial control over mating among the lower classes. To my mind this has uncharted effects upon the marrying habits and ideology of the common folk, which do not become manifest in the culture of the society until the development of a lower class culture with printing of ephemeral literature in the sixteenth century. The upper classes continue to subordinate the needs of marriage to policy and interest against increasing pressure from the lower classes, the scandals grow more fetid under this very pressure. (When wives may not be put off with impunity by intelligent resource to ecclesiastical courts; they must fall downstairs or be bribed to keep silence about a match, and failing that, to be poisoned.)

Indistinguishable from the gradual pressure of the views of the common sort upon the expressed ideology of the society is the Reformation which brought with it among other things a complete re-thinking of the doctrine of marriage as a sacrament, and perhaps may be described in its beginnings at least as the democratisation of religion.

4. And to all of these except the decay of feudalism, is the decline of monasticism in England, which brought with it the gradual and by no means complete
secularisation of learning. Where once literature had been the exercise of men trained by religious system, it became the trade of professional writers whose books had to be sold. These were men inhabiting a real world for whom Platonism, to take only one example of a typical distortion, became a game to conceal wittily the basic recognisable drives of fleshly men whose interest in mundane behaviour gave and took strength from the revival of interest in classical studies.

When these major but very gradual changes in orientation are borne in mind it would seem logical that the change in literary views of marriage which Trevelyan wrongly recognises wrongly extends to behaviour, but in a manner much more organic and baffling to trace than any hinted at by him. I take the view that the change in ideology occurs long after the change in behaviour. The nuclear family develops under economic pressures as the feudal system decays, but the fact has no appreciable influence upon our literature until the ignoble classes discover that the inherited culture of the upper classes will not fill the bill. They want stories of people with whom they can identify and which they can moralise in terms of more utilitarian value than the fourfold allegories of the middle ages.

Moreover, even among the non-marriage oriented love stories of the middle ages we may find the intrusion of the lower class ethic; and it is now generally accepted that the views of De Rouge and C.S. Lewis are strikingly pervasive and oversimplified. The most beautiful myths of conjugal love like the Owl and the Nightingale and the Franklney's Tale belong to the adulterous and fleshless middle ages, but at the same time it cannot be denied that the development of a vast literature wholly devoted to stories of courtship and marriage belongs to our time more than any other, and to western culture more than any other.
Literature about marriage there always has been, but literature having as its catastrophe a wedding after which the troubled couple may be safely assumed to live happily ever after is a modern development, and this is born, not without travail, in the sixteenth century. Because my way of discussing the literature of marriage in the sixteenth century may disguise this fact, I shall say at this point that I regard the effects of the myth upon our society as disastrous, in terms of the happiness of the individual.

The theory that I have thus presented was not, of course, formed a priori. As a baby historian of the naivest kind, I began to scrutinise the propaganda of the sixteenth century for evidence of an upheaval in sexual morals, and I found it; only after I found it, I was compelled to recognise that the propagandists of new marriage in the sixteenth century needed a revolution for their theories as much as I thought I did for mine, and that it was fictitious. However, for my purposes, an imagined revolution is as valuable as a real one.

Of what then does my imaginary revolution consist? I am not sure yet what its most important component is, or even what kind of causal relationships are most important within it, but it may be discussed arbitrarily under several heads - the legal reform of marriage legislation, the marriage of the clergy, the development of a cause in the imagined need to rescue marriage from opprobrium cast upon it by Romish sodomitical devils and to stamp out widespread (fictitious) contemporary abuses, a cause which could boast of its martyrs and its champions, the gradual changes in the defence of the chastity of marriage, the view that marriage was chaste because sexual intercourse was controlled within it and by it, not only with prominent religious consent, but also with the bodily characte.

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Chastity in the form of celibacy became suspect as evidence of homosexuality and basically antisocial. On the other hand, marriage became of increasing social importance partly on analogy with Roman law, and the patriarchal family unit was acknowledged as the basic unit in the Commonwealth, and admission to full citizenship.

The sixteenth century theorists were aware that they were denying the old authorities upon the subject of domestic ethics. The scholastic method was still so much a part of all academic training that they tended to justify themselves wherever possible by reference to the theologians who had always been cited on such topics, but at the same time, they also claimed to be restoring a forgotten and betrayed past practice in stead of perversions. In the same way that the Church of England justified what were in fact doctrinal innovations by reference to a past only beginning to be accurately interpreted, the sexual reformers defied accepted practice in the name of a restoration of the sexual-social mores of the primitive church. We find a definite crusading element in their writings on the subject, a tendency to distort and vilify the views of the opposition and to melt with loyalty and tenderness for ideas which had always been accepted. However there are factual elements in their criticisms of prevailing conditions.
The reform of marriage legislation can be understood as part of the struggle to reduce the multiple heritage of English law to a single administrable code. It is chiefly thrown into the limelight in the Tudor period by disputes about the marriages of Henry VIII and the subsequent anxieties about the royal succession. Royal cases were not the only which featured in pamphlet literature either.

Catholic legislation on marriage was the result of a compromise between canon law based upon the Roman law, and indigenous Teuton and Anglo-Saxon custom, of bride-buying. Marriage was only partly absorbed into Catholic ritual, and was conducted in the Church porch, often with survivals of pagan practice included in the ritual, such as the laying of gold and silver on the book. The priest was only regarded as necessary to the sacrament after and even then marriage of a kind, binding if not perfect, could be conducted without him. However, the Church seized unto itself the right to legislate on the validity of marriage, and marriage was included among the seven sacraments. Thus the ecclesiastical courts exercised a degree of control over all cases of inheritance and dower, and with the decline of their power and the dubiousness of the status of sixteenth century bishops, as well as the proliferation of abuses such as those complained of in the various attempts to reform them, some alternative way of dealing with questions so vital to a society based upon a system of hereditary rights became necessary.

The problems of marriage did not only affect England, however. The change in the shape of society in Catholic Europe had also necessitated legislation represented by the sweeping concession of the Council of Trent, namely that marriage to be valid must be contracted before a priest and witnesses in the words of the present rite and followed by cohabitation.
This piece of legislation is interesting because it involves a recognition by the canonists of the function and responsibility of their decrees. Theologically marriage consists in the consent between the two ministers of the sacrament, and if this has been given, witnesses or no witnesses the couple is one flesh before God and any subsequent marriage with another is bigamous. It is not theologically necessary even to cohabit. But, because legal action cannot rely upon metaphysical and completely subjective evidence, the Church had to adopt the view that it would uphold the marriage that had the external sign, and the internal truth of the matter would have to rest between the conscience and God. In England such pragmatic precedent could not be followed. For example it was Papist and therefore to be rejected, no matter how badly it was needed. For another, it did involve a piece of doublethink, a compromise which the new reforming spirit could not recognise, and did not for another two hundred years. If the essence of marriage was to be in a public contract than it was to be a contract and no sacrament the more extremist reformers argued, and the logical development of their views was the institution of secular marriage in the Interregnum.

But there was a good deal of marital legislation in the sixteenth century. It is difficult to assess just how far the existence of changes in legislation indicates practical need for such legislation but perhaps we can glean something from the following facts.

25. Henry VIII c.22 prevented the ecclesiastical courts from annulling any match after the death of either of the parties, which may have meant that there had been cases of disinheriting the children of a deceased partner. A more significant piece of legislation is 28 Henry VIII c.7, which reduced the degrees of consanguinity limiting marriage to the Levitical degrees. The Church explained her extension of these to include all relatives by blood to the seventh
degree as a measure to break in upon the hermetic isolation of mediaeval communities. It was extended to include all those similarly related by affinity, that is by marriage, and even to include those related by spiritual affinity, that is, by standing godfather to a child in Baptism and Confirmation. Affinity was also contracted by sexual intercourse; even the Council of Trent realised the invidiousness of this law and repealed it. In practice these laws simply meant that any marriage could be set aside by the ecclesiastical courts when it seemed advisable. The poor folk could not avail themselves of it, and could hardly be regarded as causing widespread immorality and wife discarding, but by the sixteenth century these matters were apparently getting enough publicity to be a cause of scandal, and Henry repealed the canon laws in his convenient role as head of the church. But the memory remained, partly because Henry all the Henrician legislation on these matters.

Under Henry also, a law was brought in abolishing pre-contract as a ground for voiding of marriages, if it was not followed by consummation and issue. This has reference to the canon law that the words of consent spoken by the partners in the present tense constituted matrimony, not cohabitation, and to claim that such words had passed between two people was enough to annul any subsequent match involving either of them. The plea was used over and over again, Henry used it, Margaret Tudor used it, Charles Brandon, and so on. However, it proved too useful apparently, and under the Edwardm the zealous reformers oddly enough repealed the Henrician act, for reasons which I mean to look up, if I can.
The most difficult aspect of that law, for all practical purposes was that the words of consent spoken de præsentia constituted matrimony and were binding, but the words de futuro only constituted trothpledge, which was not matrimony, although even that solemn promise could only be set aside by a bishop. The principle of the church organisation was that ecclesiastical intervention should be necessary at every point of course, but the needs of the reformers were quite otherwise.

The difficulty of interpreting the law, and its frequent reduction to casuistic questions to be expensively and languidly argued in the ecclesiastical courts was not desired by the champions of religion. In an attempt to reduce the number of offences against this kind of law, and to make it less easy to break, books of legal advice appeared like Clerke's Triall of Bastardie which is devoted to a discussion of marriage legislation. Bibles contained long and complicated maps of consanguinity. Catechisms contained minute arguments about marriage, the smuggled Catholic omnes like Laurence Vaux's contained the old mis Tridentine version of teaching on the necessity of absolutes. The apologists were still settled with his old doctrine which they long to in any case the idea of consent could never set aside, and reformers had to content themselves with beseeching the faithful to marry in facie ecclesiae, with the consent of their parentes and the blessing of God, and not the consent of the whoremonger and the bawd who consulted no will but their own pleasure.

The ecclesiastical courts became less and less popular and apparently less and less efficient and reliable. In 1569 Edward Dering preaching to the Queen advised her to do away with them, the Admonition to the Parliament of 1572 requested their abolition, as did the second admonition and the View of Popish Abuses; in 1576 various jurists were consulted on the question of reforming abuses in the ecclesiastical courts, including William Aubrey, Smidal who also consulted.
There are a number of interesting matrimonial causes fought during the period, one of which, quoted by Strype, is very revealing, for the common lawyers of the Court of Common Pleas at Norwich referred the question to the Bishop of Norwich, but the Master of Requests himself consulted eminent secular lawyers. The split in authority is thus clearly indicated, but the new thing is that the common lawyers kept their hold in the case.

For the student of sexual mores in the sixteenth century the question of the age of the contracting parties presents a difficulty; the Roman law provided the precedent of the age of puberty and marriage being coincident, and in a society operating on a non-European pattern, to use Hajnal's argument for a moment, that would do very well, as it simply ensures that couples may be married when they are capable of the physical relationship. However, we know from Mr. Lazlett's work on the seventeenth century that the vast mass of the population had no difficulty in waiting many years longer. We know also from dynastic studies that many people of noble birth were married much earlier. Strategy and insurance prompted monarchs to contract their children at very early ages: for the gentry the difficulties of wardship often made it necessary to marry orphaned children in order that their estates might not be sold by the crown, and their wardship exploited for profit or given away; for all heirs under age became automatically wards of the sovereign who could dispose of the wardship as he pleased. In John Cowley's Italy, the same situation was comprehensively described.
Probably no great section of the community was involved in the marriage of children for reasons of policy, but it does not take many to constitute a scandal, and the Protestant champions of a new moral order frequently mentioned the buying and selling of children among the abuses which marred the face of society...

Evidence that there was a certain pressure to raise the ages at which marriage might be contracted can be drawn from the Canons published by the Bishops in 1571 which stipulated that children might not marry without the consent of their parents and that they might not marry in any case until the men were sixteen and the girls fourteen. However even these canons are no more efficacious than admonitions, for no penalty is stipulated, and when it comes to the point, in canon law it suffices that the couple be habiles ad matrimonium.

Whatever the whole truth of the situation may be, it is clear that children continued to be married among certain classes of the society, and although they were not numerically important, the relative publicity makes them of consequence in any discussion of ideology.

Feeling ran high upon the subject of the wooing and stealing away of wealthy heiresses, and there are legislative attempts to control it in the reign of both Mary and Elizabeth, although both are probably indexes of the power of single parties who feared such an eventuality, than of the actual incidence of such offences. 4 & 5 4th & 5th & 6th of 15...

decreed that anyone marrying a woman child under the age of sixteen years without consent of parents or guardians would be heavily fined or imprisoned for five years and that her estate was to pass to the next heir during her husband's life... Elizabeth reinforced the legislation with 39 Eliz.c.9.
However, none of these legal reforms actually secured what was wanted, namely a single undisputable, public and binding marriage contract. One section of society, vociferous if not numerous, insisted upon publicity as the essential characteristic of the contract, and another insisted that consent was the essential part. The freedom of marriage was jealously defended by one section of the community, while the solid Puritan element wanted parents' consent made indispensable, certificates issued, registers kept, or even an official secular contract. I hazard the interpretation of the situation that in fact during the years of vacant cures and religious upheaval, and even civil strife, the common folk had married themselves according to recognised public local custom. The multiplication of fatuous impediments which cost money and patience to remove, especially in a community which remained fairly well fixed in abode from generation to generation must have made semi-official marriage easier than the banns announcing church kind. As the old ballad has it

Faith boys and girls, and knaves and knylls,
There can be no dirt in it,
They must be married and will be joined,
Somehow to have a wedding.
Thus saith the old rule, man yoke a fool,
And now they'll prevent the impediment
To own gods clave and bry and heather.

The Puritans and radicals seized upon the tradition of secular public marriage as ground for disputing that marriage was a sacrament, but the common folk in fact did their best to impart a sacramental character to marriage "in the street" by exchanging rings, execrated by the Puritans, and gifts, tokens, eating and drinking together, and being ceremoniously bedded. They clung to the fact that some magical formula was needed to wed folk,
but the one essential factor of the formula, that it be in the present tense, they could never grasp. In establishing the validity of such matches (always the duty of the ecclesiastical courts) the whole complex had to be taken into account, gifts, eating and drinking together, words, cohabitation.

In fact the marriage ceremony had not itself been a part of church ritual having been performed in the Church porch, and the couple admitted only for the nuptial mass. The role of the mass in Elizabethan England was hardly likely to be considered indispensable, and there seemed no immediate reason why the contract which the church had so half-heartedly celebrated should not have been celebrated right away from it, as justifiable as right inside it.

The polemic literature of the sixteenth century is certainly more middle class than noble, although Louis B. Wright's view of the situation will clearly not do, and the new ideal of marriage seems likewise to be middleclass. Here there is no place for dreaming idealism, for violent and transfiguring passion. The love of ideally wedded couples in this mythology is comfortable, self-righteous and peaceful. The greatest threat to it was the love that laughed at locksmiths, that made the world go round, and drew young people together under the moon or the maypole, the sinful Passion that inspired the clandestine marriage.

The clandestine marriage is one of the most often repeated motifs of Elizabethan literature, it is true, but it is by no means universally defended from the charges brought against it by the self-consciously solid citizens. It may or may not be conducted before a priest and or witnesses. The essential thing is that it is not acknowledged to the community at large, it is not conducted with consent of parents, nor are the banns announced. From the twelfth century Canon law abounds in repressive measures against those daring to marry themselves in such
Clandestine marriages we call them *Quae clam contrahuntur* that is to say the bee contracted so privately that they cannot be lawfully proved by witnesses, shall that be bastard? I saie not so, without exception, but I counsell thee to trust it not, for I assure thee, (howsoever the matrimony hold before God and the world) that if the parties shall both of them acknowledge it, incurring only a corporal penance, and the clerk that shall celebrate the same but 3 yeares suspension from his office, yet if the one confess it not, or that which is more, renounce the marriage, and the other prove it not (for in this case the partie in euioned to prove it that pleadeth the matrimony) verily proved, holdeth co am deo et ecclesia i, before God and the congregation, otherwise *Coram deo qui corda scrutatur* &c and that is to say, before God it shall stand, the searcher of all the secrets of all hearts: but *Ecclesia non indicat de occultis* it is to secret for the Church to determine.

Let us wade a little further, and suppose by the way that but that falleth out indeed oftentimes viz. Thou contractest thy self and marriest (privily) with a woman who afterwards contracteth and marrieth openly with another, whose wife shall she be?
a fashion, but they only serve to prove that the practice continued; the only effective measure against this evil is to declare such marriages invalid, but this was not done in England until the Hardwicke act, and even then the outcry was considerable; better to be married imperfectly than not to be married at all. Banns asking had been compulsory since the thirteenth century but the repeated demands that the law be enforced suggest that it was not particularly effective, or at least that it was uneffective to a degree. The attack upon clandestine marriage launched in the sixteenth century was carried on by the same old names Hermann of Cologne, Bering, and the marital fumblings of Elizabeth's court which hardly dared to marry publicly because of the enormous fuss that Elizabeth generally contrived to make about it, gave them plenty of examples a which to point a finger trembling with righteous wrath. While some attempt had been made under Edward to convince people that a degree of publicity was necessary for the validity of marriage, Mary, possibly encouraged by the shortage of acceptable pastors, had her catechisms repeat the old teaching about consent, and even supply the correct form of words for clandestine marriages contracted without clergy or witnesses. Among the articles to be enquired at the first visitation in Elizabeth's reign the clandestine marriages contracted in the preceding years must all be declared and regularised.

The confusion of the legal situation can be illustrated from Clerke.
For obvious reasons it is difficult to find out just how many people did marry in this unofficial and troublesome way. The professional critics like Stubbes claimed that it was going on all the time but there seems little reason for believing them. On the other hand the clandestine marriage bloomed as a narrative motif in the popular literature of the last decades of the century. Painter's Palace of Pleasure supplies us with a voluptuous situation in which a king's daughter married her lover in bed and got the Pope to recognise it, and with another tragic tale of a young woman who married in this way was repudiated and unable to discover the priest who performed the match. Fenton, translating the Italian Bandello moralises his accounts of clandestine matches in a representative fashion:

"Hike as it happens, oftentimes that time regains returned to the harm it list on in the parties; who albeit the have a certain respect of honour in their doing by appearance of a marriage, yet not being the judge of their issue will not suffer the wrong to the obedience of parents in considering any contract unapproved and that with such a licence as he rememberance is notorious in all ages."

The outcome is that the groom dies on his wedding night from inordinate pleasure. Pettigrew the PP of P regales his chosen audience of gentlewomen with several tales turning on this question of secret contracts. The stern moralists lamented this tendency in literature but proved powerless to stem the tide, for the most outrageous examples are probably those described by "eloney... when Arianna

Fenton's translation is treated very differently. A girl running off to be married clandestinely discovers her oyster that her lover is married, and the ideal marriage is cured with the ultimate repulse and responsibility."
However it was not only the lawyers who wanted reform. It became a persistent feature of some sorts of polemic and instructive literature that a situation of emergency was presumed to exist, occasionally mirrored in the titles, as an Admonition for the Necessity of the Present time etc. It is hard to tell just what this means in terms of actual behaviour of course, but very often the image which society has of itself is formed by the behaviour of the notorious few rather than the stolid many; the astonishing confusions and scandals of Elizabeth's guiltily marrying courtiers were known to all, but their criticisms of current practice on matrimonial matters does not stop here. The marriage of infants was constantly referred to, by protestant reformers like Thomas Becon in 1542, and by the Catholic bishop of Lincoln in 1558 -

This we see that the covetous affectio of certen Gentylmen which for luores sake marry their chyldre before they come vnto any perfect knowledge eyther of the selues or other, is one occasion why holy wedlocke is so litle esteemed nowadayes, and so large a wyndow openned into whoredome and adultry.

The Synod of 1562 was tabled to discuss the marriage of wards "seeing such onconveniences daily ensue from the order now in use." However, on this matter as well as many others, the synod was unable to prevail in any effective way. The age of marrying was raised, but the marriages under age continued.

The prevalence of whoredom is here interpreted as a result of wrong marital practices: it is of course a standard cry of a certain kind of preacher, but it is often made, as above, in a sage and sober manner. One might be able to disregard the sermon against whoredom and uncleanness in the two book of homilies appointed to be read in churches of 1547, reissued all through the century which claims that whoredom has overfowled the world, but when the York visitation report that the last visitation uncovered great
However, it was not only the families who were affected by this. It became a permanent feature of some parts of the town, and the presence of the constant, almost unceasing, reminder of the past was a constant reminder of the need for caution and vigilance.

The war had only just started, and the situation was rapidly deteriorating. As an indication of the necessity of the present time, etc., it was only fair to tell that many of these scenes in terms of caution and surveillance were felt to be a necessary part of the war effort. It was not just the families, but the whole community, that were affected by this. The war had only just started, and the situation was rapidly deteriorating.
numbers of fornicators there might be something more in it.

It was claimed that, in put away their wives for slight pretexts, that divorce was prevalent, that spouses epearatred from their mates for long periods were marrying again without due inquiry, or anticipating as well they might the outcome of proceedings in the ecclesiastical courts. Clandestine marriages are assumed to be rife, and cause of "daily inconveniences" "for who seeth not, what and how great incommodities follow of these preuy contrattes and secret marriages, which be made without the authprity and consent of the parents". John Stubbes claimed that "every sawsy boy of x, xiiij, or xvi or xx yeares of age" will "catch up a woman and marie her, without any repexteste how they may live together with sufficient mayntenaunce for their callings and estaat. No. no, it maketh no great matter for these things, as long as he haue his petie puesie to huggle withall, it forceh not, for that is the only thing he desireth. Then they build vp a cottage though but of elder poals, in euery lane end, almost, where they lyue as beggars al their life." In Visitation and Interrogatories clandestine marriages were always condemned, along with those who might have been wrongfully married or divorced in the late time of trouble.

Marriage was assumed to be dishonored by these abuses, and there are claims that marriage was regarded as a less jolly and swaggering life for a swashbuckler than witty conceited dalliance with loose ladies, but these cannot probably be taken seriously. In the sermons on marriage however there is a repeated motif of the dishonor of marriage by riotous ceremonies and Festenine games and songs. Becon laments the growing up of wicked customs between the handfasting and the churchgoing, claiming that the handfasting may be accompanied by a banquet after which the couple is publicly bedded; that on the day of churchgoing the featinh
begins so early that the congregation is vomiting during the sermon: and that after the banquet on this occasion there is a wild sort of dancing in which the skirts of the women are held up, and the bride is forced to dance with every one who asks her, that they are not allowed to escape to bed until very late and then are tormented with bawdy ballads. The evidence for this view of the ceremonies is not only to be found in Puritan Grundyist literature; even Puttenham gives an insight into such goings on, but again, it seems to me to be more likely a deliberate attempt to imitate Roman marriage practices, well known through the study of Catullus and the Latin trade in epithalamia, and not related to native English practice at all.

It is difficult to decide how seriously to take the evidence of malpractice, but one thing must be conceded, namely that there was a consciousness of malpractice, justified or not. For a small but vociferous section of society it called for immediate reform at all costs, even that of martyrdom.
Those who presented themselves to the world as martyrs for the cause of marriage were in fact burned as heretics, and their marriages construed as invalid because they were priests and a solemn vow invalidates subsequent marriage contracts, which are less serious. However, their way of defending themselves was to declare that marriage was chastity, a sacrament, and hence could not be denied to anyone. The only justification, they argued, for the prohibition of marrying among clerics must have been that marriage was an infringement of chastity, a less worthy state of life.

It was assumed that the champions of monasticism had vilified marriage and plunged the faithful into guilt and fear by their insistence that married life, while not necessarily sinful was very rarely in fact free from sin. This can be attested by evidence from the writings of the fathers of the church, but there is no indication that it had any effect upon the actual marital practice of the middle ages. Celibacy was a superior way of life, and in Catholic doctrine it still is, but in order to prove a significant effect of this view upon behaviour a quite different kind of evidence would be necessary. But the sixteenth century propagandist had none of the scruples of the modern historian.

John Bale hops into this Vnchast vothaies on the score of theydisabilites they laid upon the state of marriage -
Neither reckoned they wedlock anye Godlye estat of lyuyng, though yt were an onely ordre instytuted of God in the beginning yea, for his prestes also. Commonlie they have dyswaded bothe men and women from yt, as from a most pernicious eyyll, or from a myschefe of all myschefes, callynge yt pollyshnesse, fylthynesse, beastlynesse, a workynge in darknesse, a mayntenaunce of lechery, a fulfillinge of fleshly desyres, a ground of all vyce, an entrance of death, a corruptyng of maydenhode, a lake of myserye, a clay pytt of vnolennessesse, a thralldome of Egypt, a nette of Satan, a snare of the deuyll, & a ponde of perdicyon, 

Of course he is right to point to the almost ubiquitous chastity of the proliferating saint of the mediæeval church, and to their horror of marriage. He goes on to reinterpret all these legends in a hard-headed and occasionally coarse way, shedding some valuable light on the function of the legends as he does so, poising them against the arguments of the champions of chaste marriage, Melancthon, Luther, Lambert, Pomerane and Barnes. Perhaps what he observes about the cultus of St. Walstan of Hawburghe may have been true of other saints as well. He was not a religious, but vowed chastity and

performed that promyse by fastynge of the frydaye and good saynts vygyyls, without any other grace or gyft gyuen of God. He dyed in the year of our lord 1477 in the thyrde calends of June, and became after the maner of Friapus, the God of their foldes in Northfolke and gyde of their haruestes, al mowers and sythole folowers sekyng hym ones in y' yeare, loke his legende in ye Catalogue of Johan Capgrau, prouyncyall of the Augustine fryres and ye shall fynde there, that both men and beastes whych had lost their prey partes, had newe members agayne restored to them by this Walstane.

Bale does not stop at regional saints like St.Walstane, whom mother church does not even bother to discredit, but challenges even St.Edward the Confessor, whose companions marriage was so loathed by his subjects.
In 1541 Melancthon's _Defense of the Marriage of Priests_ addressed to Henry VIII was published in a translation by Lewis Benchame, and the pitiful case of the marrying kind was put more unequivocally by him:

> these vayne vorticyes feyn their chastite to be an excellent good worske wherewith God is ye beter pleased / and men thery be deseerve higher places in heaven. They reiecte maryed persones as vnclene / ye is to werte / not pleasing god / or his verely smarled with a more perellous kynde of lyung whiche skant can please god / as it is playne many of the maryed persones to have douted of their actes of wedlock and dewtes of matrimony whether they pleased God.

So the discrimination against married Parsons is seen as entailing a denigration of the institution in general, and it is therefore in need of reinstatement. The early church is seen as the protector of wedlock, and the monastic church as a "prodigious Sodomitically sect of vnshamefaced shauelingis."

Thomas Becn is one of the most prominent figures in the crusade and was imprisoned and thrown out of his living by Mary for being a married priest; in addressing his _Book of Matrimony_ to King Edward, explains why he finds it necessary to speak of the excellence and dignity of the institution in his first part:

> I have thought it not vnfitting somewhat to speak of the mauestie and excellency, of the dignitie and worthines of the same, that by this meanes some part of the glory thereof may be restorred, whiche these many yeares hath ben greatly obscured and hyndred, yea, & almost ytterly defaced thorow ye wicked doctrine of certayn moste wicked and most filthy hypocrites, sweating to establish their single and wyueless

> 

> itteand to liste vp that with prayses incoparable even unto the starres, yea, aboue the starres, haue most vylely and vnhonestly both judged taughte & written of the holy state of honorable Matrimonye as of a kind of life base, vnperfecte, fleschy, troublesome, paynefull, vnquiete, carefull, vnrestful, stuffed full of all sorrow, calamitie, misery, wretchednes, discorde, strifes, contention, debate, and what not....
There is a ballad temp. Eliz. which embodies perhaps better than any single utterance the ideal of wedded love which lies behind the increasing interest in domestic affairs and the attempts to alter existing administration and practice by the protestant reformers. It is not, I should think, a new ideal, but it is a newly self-conscious one. It is, I think, evidence of the virtuous practice of the lower classes, who are now becoming critical of the quite different conduct of the upper classes, and in it we can see fairly simply adumbrated, the fruitful understanding which is the basis of love in Shakespearean comedy.

This little ballad was enormously popular in the time of Shakespeare, and so well-known that many another ballad used the tune, and could rely on being sung buy the purchasers on the instruction that it went to the tune of the Bride's Goodmorrow,

The night is past and joyful day appeareth most clear on every side.
With pleasant music we therefore salute you, "Goodmorrow, Mistress Bride!"
From sleep and slumber now wake you out of hand: Your bridegroom stayeth at home;
Whose fancy favour and affection still doth stand fixed on thee alone.
Dress you in your best array: This must be your wedding day.
God almighty send you happy joy, In health and wealth to keep you still!
And if it be his blessed will, God keep you from sorrow and annoy!

This day is honour now brought unto thy bosom and comfort to thy heart
For God hath sent you a friend for to defend you from sorrow, care and smart.
In health, and sickness, for thy comfort day and night, he is approved and brought,
The document contains a block of text that appears to be a historical or academic essay. The text is not legible enough to transcribe accurately without专业的图像处理工具。
Whose love and liking is most constant, sure and right:
Then love him as ye ought!
Now you have your heart's desire,
And the thing you did require;
God almighty send you happy joy,
In health and wealth to keep you still!
And if it be his blessed will,
God keep you from sorrow and annoy.

There is no treasure which may be compared
unto a faithful friend.
Gold soon decayeth and worldly wealth consumeth,
and wasteth in the wind:
But love, once planted in a perfect and pure mind,
endureth weal and woe:
The frowns of fortune, come they ne'er so unkind
cannot the same o'erthrow.
A bit of bread is better cheer
When love and friendship doth appear,
Than dainty dishes stuffed with strife:
For where the heart is cloyed with care,
Sour is the sweetest fare,
And death far better than so bad a life,

Sweet bride! then lay you full well contented stay you,
and in your heart rejoice;
Since God was guide of your heart and fancy
and maker of your choice
And he that hath preferred you to this happy state
will not behold you decay,
Nor see you lack relief nor help in any rate,
if you his precepts obey.
To those that ask it faithfully,
The Lord will no good thing deny;
This comfort in the scriptures you may find:
Then let no worldly grief and care
Vex your heart with fond despair,
Which doth declare the unbelieving mind.

All things are ready and every whit prepared
to bear you company.
Your friends and parents do give their attendance
together courteously.
The house is dressed and garnished for your sake
with flowers gallant and green.
A solemn feast your ready cooks do ready make,
where all your friends will be seen.
Young men and maids do ready stand,
With sweet rosemary in their hand,
A perfect token of your virgins life.
To wait upon you they intend
Unto the church to make an end;
And God make you a joyful wedded wife!

Nothing could be more different from the epithalamia written in Latin on the models of Catullus and Sappho, which had been commissioned for the marriages of the high born. This little wishing song is innocent of the motifs of defloration and the battle of love, and so far from Fescennine references to the wedding bed, that it is hard to believe that these same make their appearance in the vernacular in this period for the first time. The whole matter is conceived in public terms, and the private secret ceremony of the epithalamos is no concern of the singers, and yet it is concerned with love, in a way which the cold eroticism of, say, Chapman's Epithalamium Teratos is not. Spenser's Epithalamium is aware of the structure and preoccupations of the classical form, but the sentiment of his song is much closer to this one; the wedding bed is only visited by the lovers who reverently close out all prying eyes and jokers, and Spenser's prayer for the wedding bed (which has baffled too many commentators) is taken directly from the old marriage service in the Salisbury, Sarum and York manuals:

Bene + dic Domine hoc cubliculum Respice qui non, dormis, neque dormitas. Qui custodis Israel, custodi famulos tuos in hoc lecto quiescentes, ab omnibus phantasmaticis daemonum illusionibus: custodi eos vigilantes, ut in praecptis tuis meditentur dormientes, et te per soporem sentiunt, ut hic et ubique desensionis tuae mutuantur auxilio. Per Dom. etc. 2.

1. Printed in English Epithalamies, ed. R.H. Case
Like the bride of the Goodmorrow, Spenser's is given away in the midst of her community, and her maidens tend her with Rosemary and a feast is prepared. The loves of Spenser and this nameless Groom are both based upon the desert of the parties, on her virtue, except for Spenser, more Platonically, her physical beauty is its outward concomitant, being itself unsensual, the beauty of "honour's seat and chastity's sweet bower."

In the Epithalamium in the original version of the Arcadia, Sir Philip Sidney makes the implied distinct between Love disordered and venerious in Barclay's phrase, and the love of the marriage bed.

But thow fowle Cupid, syer to Lawless Lust,
   Bee thow farre hence with thy impoysoned Darte,
   Which thoughte of glittering golde shall here take Rust,
   Where simple Love, which Chastenes dothe imparte,
   Not needing charming still,
   Such myndes with sweet affections for to fill
   Which beeyng pure and blayne
   O Himen long theyre Cupled Joyes mentayne. 3

Only the refrain indicates that the poet was a learned man and was acquainted with the Latin tradition. The sentiment otherwise, even in free and spontaneous Arcadia, is thoroughly protestant. This is direct and simple affection, having nothing to do with unreason, adoration, lust or blindness. This is the love that springs from deserving, and similitude or sympathy, not from the puissant rays from gray eyes, or the snare of golden hair. However young folk are prey to the movements of such pernicious passion, and this is why they must be guided by their parents; on the other hand their parents must be sure to choose one whom their child can love in this manner, and many castigations, like Bartholomew.
Fairing for Parents was addressed to parents who married their children to spouses whom they could never grow to love, for base reasons. Among the characteristics which rendered a spouse totally unlovable were depravity, deformity, age, and cruelty, and the chief motive for marrying a child to such a one was greed, although there were other, like fear, personal obligation and stupidity. When it came to a case of this kind, the beleaguered children were allowed to consult another kind of parental authority, the prelates and pastors of the church, who set themselves up as the champions of chaste love.

The great clerk Erasmus had thundered forth the principle of similitudo mater amoris in his Proverbes or Adagies translated for the commoner sort by Taverner in 1545, but he elaborated a more difficult idea in a dialogue likewise Englished by Edmond Becke, who was ordained by Ridley in 1551.

Thou louest thy wyfe for this cause onely, that she is thy wyfe. Thou doest no great thyng therefor this thing is commens as wel to infidels as to the. Or els thou louest her for no other thyng but bycause she is to the pleasant and delectable. Thy loue nowe draweth to thy fleshwarde. But thou louest her for this thyng chiefly by cause thou hast perceyued in her the image of Christ which is Godly reuerence / modesty / sobrenesse / chastity and nowe louest not her in her selfe but in Christ ye rather Christ in her / After this manner thou louest spirtually.4

This view is the basis of the sixteenth century teaching on godly love, intangible and unreal though it may seem to us. Beneath all the denunciations of headstrong wilful marriage lies this view of passionate love of the person being ungodly, and virtue, which can only be recognised by wisdom and familiarity, as the lodestone of love. Your true Platonist would have found no difficulty in absorbing this view of
love, if he had not had a less utilitarian attitude
towards what constituted virtue, and if he had been
able to countenance the marital ordeal as the proper
sphere for such virtue to operate in.

By this time the Petrarchan passion had deteriorated
so much, that Erasmus was able to dismiss it in
characteristically stringent and commonsensical words.

Beholde now how moch the worlde abuseth the
names of loue and hate. Whan a folyshe yong
man is clere out of his wytte & mad for a
wenches sake: that ye comune people call loue/
& yet is there no veryer hate in the world.
True loue even with his owne losse, desyreth
to se vnto an othermannes profyte. Whereunto
loketh he, saue vnto his owne pleasure?
Therfore he loueth not her but himselfe:
how be it forsothe he loueth not himselfe.
For no man can loue another, except he loue
himselfe first / ye & except he loue hymselfe
arght. 5

The servile lover, beseeching adulterous favours
from an unattainable lady, is, in this view no lover
at all, and the Groom of the ballad is his superior
in the eyes of God and man. The lover must esteem
himself, and not lose sight of what is due to God
and himself, or he falls into grievous sin.

Set before thyne eyen howe ungoodly it is, how
altogery a mad thing / to loue / to waxe pale /
to be made leane / to wepe / to flatter and
shamefully to summyte thyselfe vnto a stynkyn
harlot most filthy and rotten / to gape and
syngge all nyght at her chambe wyndowe / to be
made to the lure & to be obedient at a becke /
nor dare do anything except she nod or wagge
her head / to suffre a folyshe woman to reign
ouer the / to chyde the / to lay vnkyndnesse one

5. [Two dialoques wrytten in laten by the famous
clerke. D. Erasmus of Roterdame / one called Polythemus
or the gospeller / the other dysposing of thynges and
names translated into Englyshe by Edmonde Becke / And
printed at Cantorbury in saynt Paules paryshe by John Mychell]
against ye other to fall out / to be made at one agayne / to gyue thy selfe wyllynge vnto a Queene / that she might mock knocke mangle and spoyle the. Where is I besche amoung all these thynge the name of a man? where is thy berde? where is that noble mynde created vnto most beautyfull and noble thynges? 6

The accusation of effeteens levelled against the romantic lovelorn was a favorite one, which Vives also used to characterise the literature of concupiscent love which the young christian gentlemewoman must not read. The marriage champions were too concerned with the role of the man as pater familias and spiritual guide and protector of his wife to have any time for it. For them with woman's love was to be yielding and submissive and utterly dependent, and his forbearing, controlled and dignified. To dote upon a wife was the action of a cuckold, and led to hideous perversions of the natural order such as jealousy.

All theorists were not equally naive on this question, however. Sir Thomas More, one of the most celebrated preachers and practitioners of the art of marriage, apart from his view of pleasure which was something unheard of in Christian stoic thought, and in Platonist thought, spoke wisely of the "nice direction of a maiden's eyes" in Utopia.

For all men be not so wise as to have respecte to the vertuous conditions of the partye. And the endowenmes of the bodye cause the vertues of the mynde more to be esteemed and regarded: yea even in the marriages of wyse men. Verely so foule deformitie maye be hidde vnder those coueringes that it may quite alienate and take away the mans mynde from his wife....7 and so he outlines his celebrated plan for the
promised spouses in Utopia to see each other naked before the match is finalised. According to Aubrey he showed his sleeping daughters naked to Sir William Roper who selected one, but it is doubtful that Aubrey's information on this point is any more reliable than it is on any other. However, even such a sane and modern exponent of marital love as More knew better than to take sexual attraction as sufficient as well as necessary.

Also as they count and reken very little witte to be in him, that regardeth not naturall bowntie and comelinesse, to helpe the same with payntinges, is taken for a vayne and wanton pride, not withoute greate infamie. For they know even by very experience, that no comelinesse of bowntye doethe so hyghelye comende and auance the wiuas in conceite of their husbandes as honest conditions and lowlines. For a loue is oftentimes wonne with bownty, so it is not kept, preserued and continued, but by virtue a and obedience.8

Cornelius Agrippa's Commendation of Matrimony gives us the other side of the picture: he sees that the love generated between husband and wife must be the strongest and firmest known to man, because they must become one flesh and their relationship take precedence over all others -

there is no loue so vehement and so stedfast, as between the husband and the wife..9

and because this love must prevail between them in order to cement the bond, they must not be married against their inclination.

8. ibid.
9. The commendation of Matrimony made by Cornelius Agrippa and translated into English by Dauid Clapksam 1534 (Colophon gives date 1545) Sig.B8
life, to the procreacion of children, nor to 
chastitie, but through couteousnesse and ambiotion 
that they haue worldly dignitie, nobilitie, power, 
riches, and such lyke) beyond all due obedience 
to parentes by goddes commaundement (by a certain 
tyranny) restrain and make bonde (which to this 
sacrament ought to be geuen) the free consent 
of their sondes and dougthers.10

However there was never any suggestion that the 
children ought to be able to choose their own spouses. 
More than parental consent was required, but the chosen 
was to be elected with a view to the child being able 
to develop the ideal relationship with him. Herman of 
Cologne counselled the officiating pastor to describe 
to the ministers of the sacrament the manner in which 
they ought to feel toward each other.

...with how great beniuolence amd loue 
they that be coupled in matrimony ought to embrace 
one another, by what meanes and with what 
redines of mynde the one ought to do the other 
good, wyth what diligence the man must shew 
him selfe an head and sauioure to his wyfe; 
and the woma a bodie and faythfull helps in 
all thynges to hir husband, brefely with what 
care they must mainteine betwene them selues 
agreement of mindes, and auoyde all differing 
of the same, seinge that they must nedes be 
one fleshe, one ma, and liue together with 
one mynde and one herte, and haue al thynges 
commune both the that pertayne to God and 
those that pertayne to menne. Great is the 
conjunction and nere is the frendshyppe of 
allyes and kinsfolk, and other frendes amonge 
themselues, and the same be greater betwene 
parentes and children, but the greatest of al 
must be betwene married persons.

For they must be so glued one to another 
with the affecti0n of loue, that they make one 
ma al other being left and set apart. I menne 
not as touching charite & other duties, but as 
touching the vse & companie of the whole life.11

This view of the supreme excellence of the love 
of man and wife has cleam evangelical sanction, but 

10. ibid.
11. A Simple and Religious consultation loc. cit
it was far from being an accepted view in the middle ages, and it was not an accepted view for the platonic idealists even in the Renaissance. To take an example from the Treatise of Love:

There be four special louys in this worlde. The one is betwene ij good felawes; The tother betwene mother and chylde; The thyrde betwene body and soul; and the fourth betwene man and wyf.

For John Lyly also the love of friends was far superior to that of man for woman, and in demonstrating this view over and over, he is adhering to a well-established scholastic tradition. However, for the lower classes, where the wife had to work side by side with her husband and partake of his affairs like a friend as well as lover, the distinction that could be drawn in the case of Euphues between love and friendship, between study and dalliance, could not be made. The most beautiful lines of the Bride's Goodmorrow deal with the joy to be derived from the friendship of man and wife. The Duke married Viola in Twelfth Night on the basis of a friendship contracted unawares of her sex: Beatrice and Benedick come to appreciate each other as friendly sparring partners: In the Merchant of Venice Portia takes over the role of Bassanio's friend and benefactor. Of course Shakespeare, like Sir Thomas More, is too wise to omit the sexual element, but the peculiarly restricting conditions of the Petrarchan love situation are not present; courtesy and complement are circumvented, and the couples speak each other fair in the terms of the love of fellows, not in those of frigid dalliance. The ladies of Love's Labour's Lost refuse their suitors because dalliance is thrust on them, instead of understanding.

12. The Tretryse of Loue (trans 1493) ed J.H. Fisher
One of the most sympathetic accounts of marriage, and most typical of the Protestant view as it developed was Thomas Becon's whose view is delicate and comprehensive but rigorous nonetheless. The married man must love his wife because God commanded that he should, in the lovely words of the Proverbs:

Let thy fountain be blessed and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind and the pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished with her love. (v, 18-19)

and because it glorifies God to be joyous in the state ordained by him, and

Thirdly, the married man ought to love his wife, not for the satisfying of his carnal pleasure, not for nobility of parentage, not for beauty nor properness of personage, nor yet for riches and (for such love is between ruffians and harlots) but because she is his sister in the christen faith and inheritour with him of God's most glorious kingdom; Againe, because she is given him of God to be an helper unto him, and a faithful yokefellow as well in adversity as in prosperity: Moreover he shall love her, because she is flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bones: and in fine because she is endowed through the spirit of God, and with noble and godly vertues, as shamefastnesse, charity, modesty, sobriety, diligence, sadness, patience, temperance, silence, obedience and such other godly vertues. All these... shall provoke a Christen married man to love his wife, although she be neuer so pore and base in beauty.

The honest adherence to this view gave rise to a great deal of soulsearching as to whether it was right to marry an infidel, papist or dissenter, and as the sects proliferated in England the problem became more and more acute. It was also clearly wrong in this view to marry without a reasonable expectation.

13 The Workes of Thomas Becon loc.cit. Sig. Vv iii
of some prosperity mixed in with the adversity as Becon points out on the next page. In his account of the first marriage, Becon allows Adam to respond instantly to Eve with something rather more like sexual passion than Paradise was hitherto commonly supposed to contain—

Moreover so soon as God had married and coupled man and woman together, man, being enflamed with the loue of his wife, and burninge with a fervent, singuler and moste harty good wyll toward her, broke out into these words, and sayde. She shall be called Woman becausye she was taken out of man.... Adam had before all the moste goodly and beautifull creatures that God had made, and gaue to every one of them their proper name, even as they now be called: but he delighted in none so greatly as in Woman. So sone as he behelde her he was rauished streightways with the loue of her, delighted in her as in him selfe, called her his owne loue and his owne fleshe, and was so greatly inflamed with most hertye and vnfayned loue toward her, that all other creatures in comparison of her, though never so goodly, plesaunte and beautiull, seemed in his eyes to bee vyle, and of no reputacyon.14

It is probably the innocence and joyousness of this interpretation which tempted C.H.Powell to dub him—"the most modern and least sordid of all the religious writers. His definition of the institution comes like a breath of fresh air into a cattle shed." 15 The quotation does not do justice to his fellow reformers, but it is probably true that he was less embarassed by the essentially sexual nature of the marriage relationship than his contemporaries, who could not sanction sexual pleasure in itself, but were obliged to limit it severely in the interests of marital chastity. However, all of them, safe within the confines of anti-papist sentiment, denounced the attempts by the old church to limit the use of

14. ibid.
"due benevolence" by instituting prohibited seasons, and forbidding spouses who had had intercourse together from entering the church, until more than a day had elapsed, or from taking communion until three days had elapsed.

The repercussions of the popular view were not altogether unfelt in nobler circles. When poor Lady Mary Grey, a tiny woman, married the sergeant porter, it was regarded as a monstrous action, and both were imprisoned.

Now also an "unhappy chance and monstrous" (as he that writ the news expressed it) fell out at court. The sergeant-porter, being the biggest gentleman of the court, married secretly the lady Mary Grey, the least of all the court. They were committed to severall prisons. The offence was very great. 16

Poor Mary had married beneath her for security, but it was interpreted an monstrous and ungovernable lust. On the other hand when Sussex was sent to negotiate a marriage with the Emperor, it was said to him jestingly, but disturbingly.

Where these three, Honour, Power and Riches are respected in marriage, the Deuill and the world are the matchmakers and brokers. 17

The indefatigable moralist, Fenton, permitted himself an improving peroration on the nature of conjugal passion in the story of Anselmo and Angelica, which also reflects on the commission of Sussex, and many others, for the practice was too important in international politics to cease.

For marriage being a law and holy sacrament given us from God as the only knot of mutual tranquillity between man and woman, ought

17. Camden Annals p.100(Edn.of 1630 Benjamin Fischer)
to be embraced for the virtue and sincerity of the thing, and not abused with a regard of riches or other filthy promotions of the world. And he that on the choice of a wife respects chiefly her beauty and greatness of portion (besides a thousand petty mutinies that fall out in housekeeping) escapeth seldom without spirit of a grudge or civil dissension disturbing his quiet, with a continual humour of fretting disposition seeding his mind. For the glass of beauty retireth and giveth place to age, which also mortifieth the delight or desire of further pleasure: and, on the other side, the woman knowing her descent more noble and portion to exceed the wealth of her husband, forgetteth not to take heart at grace, and, decketh her garland with all sorts of flowers, pride and disdain, seeks to govern and get the upper hand of him, who, as he is appointed her head by the words of scripture and institution of nature, so he ought to keep a straight hand on the same bridle...

And yet there be those, crying out against love, paint him in colours of rage, folly and frenzy. But such are rather abused with their own conceits, than able to consider rightly the virtue of that impression. For love in the noble heart is other thing than the true subject of courtesy, the fountain from whence distilleth the origin of all civil and good order, the only means that moves us to moderation when we are inclined to cruelty or revenge, and the chiefest nurse and preserver of peace among men. 18

The situation between husband and wife outlined here is very similar to that of The Bachelor's Banquet Dekker's reworking of the old Quinze Joies de Mariage, but whereas in the old tract, it is pure misogyny, and no alternative is seen, here it is the result of marrying for debased motives. Fenton confuses the issue of the love that is the foundation of marriage by talking of it in terms that the neo-platonists often used, of love as the guiding principle of the universe, although he still consistently gives it the characteristics of

caritas rather than amor. Elsewhere he condemns ungovernable sexual passion as "a rage or humour of frantic folly, derived of ourselves, and converted to our own harm by the indiscretion that is in us" and to be conquered by reason. Elsewhere he claims that love that can be governed can hardly be said to be love at all, and reveals in an attempt to account for the marital sentiment, the woful confusion in which his sententious mind wallows.

...he which you call love, and would that we honour him with a title of god, and give him a power more than human, is no other thing than a brutal passion of the mind, derived of that part which nature hath made common to us with beasts, touching sensuality; and he which laboureth in the disease of that folly is in no other degree than he that is possessed with the spirit of frenzy and desperation....

For end, if there be any amongst you that abstainest from like violation (as the villainous abbot) I think, sure, he is not stricken with the extremity of love, but that his mind hath but tasted but a simple impression of that folly: seeing he that is touched to the quick, can hardly refrain from executing of like villainies. Amongst whom notwithstanding, I comprehend not the integrity of them whose wills tend to do honour to the holy bed of marriage without violation (for that I am persuaded those affections proceed from above and approved by God himself) but I inveigh against their unhonest desires, who respect nothing but the pleasure in that wherein Mars and Venus strive for the mastery... 19

Fenton's confusion can be accounted for by his feelings, and by his desire to include an improving sermon wherever possible in his stories.

19 ibid p. 275-6
without any attention to the coherence of the total moral view. The total drift of his age was less compromised, as even a mind as conventional as Barclay's in the edition of 1570 gave evidence; here the distinction between disordered love and the love of those wed in the sight of God was clearly seen, as he whipped the adherents of Venus, and the prostituters of children to wealth and power in the same breath.

Dudley Fenner reiterated the command of God to chaste love which were to be so often quoted in 1592, from Exodus xxi,10, Titus.ii,3, 1st Corinthians, vii, 12, Matthew i, 18, and Ruth, iv,1l and added in his own words.

The mutual good, proceeding from dwelling together is that which consisteth in a sweet communicati ng of the persons and goods, for the mutuall necessitie and consolation of one of another. 20

Fenner also takes a freer attitude towards the sexual pleasure that husband and wife may have of each other.

Here also must be considered the partes of this dutie: first due beneuolence, which is the honorable possession of their vessels in holinessse one towards another, for avoiding of sin,-bringing forth a seede of God, and the honest and proper delight which ought to bee betweene the man and his wife. 21

Here the pleasure is included as a motive, if not the best one, in rendering the debt of nature. Likewise the parents are to direct their children in chpice of a mate worthy of love - not to make matches only for carnall respects, suffering them to liue wantonly and vncleanly & not seeking the remedye appoynted. 22

20 Certain godly and learned treatises ...by...N.Dudley Fenner...Edinburgh, printed by Robert Waldegrauc...printer to the Kings Maiestie 1592 Sig. D3
21 Ibid. 22. Ibid. Sig. E1.
When Jack of Newberie was widowed although he was very wealthy and eligible, he married in a manner which his reforming contemporaries would have thoroughly approved of.

Notwithstanding he bent his only like to one of his owne s[ervants] whom he had tried in the guiding of his house a year or two; and knowing her carefulnesse in her business, faythfull in her dealing, an excellent good huswife, thought it better to have her with nothing than some other with much treasure. And besides her qualities were good, so was she of very comelie personage, of a sweet fauour and faire complexion. The maid (though she took this motion kindly) said, shee would do nothing without the consent of her parents. 23

This is the manner in which Deloney's ideal marriage is initiated. This is no forward bride who will gain the mastery of her household, and no spendthrift or dazzling beauty who will ruin him, although she is fair. In this story Deloney has deliberately presented a didactic ideal which may strike us as philistine and commonplace but it was one which folk culture made surprisingly winning - like the ballad with the refrain "Thy vertues makes me loue thee" and many the humble maiden who was sung in ballads like Coridon's Commendation

She will loue no man but me....
No sugred tempting tongue
Nor golden promise faire
Can do my Phillis wrong
Or her good name impaire...

If Cupid bend his bow
His shaft she turns aside,
And tells him whither to goe,
That can it better abide...

My loues a louely lass
Her Coridon must loue,

23 The Works of Thomas Deloney ed. F.O. Mann, Oxford, 1912. Lack of Newbery...p.20
And times will come to passe,
When maides and men may proue.
For she is true and honest,
I know she is true and honest,
And will loue as maides will doe,
Yet is she faire and honest too.
You shepherd swaines be wise,
And chuse as I haue done;
That will not be precize;
But be with reason wonne.
For she is faire and honest,
I know she is faire and honest,
And will her husbandes pleasure doe,
Therefore is she faire and honest too.

In Campion's Two Books of Airs occurs the panegyric of Joan, whom some must love instead of my lady, and get the better of the bargain...

Ione can call by name her cowes,
And decke her windowes with greene boughs,
She can wreathes and tuttyes make,
And trimme with plums a bridall cake....

Is not Ione a housewife then
Iudge true-hearted honest men...

Anything that longs to man
Ione will do it if she can...

Ioane is of a louely browne,
Neate as any in the Towne:
Heaire as blacke as any crow,
And doth nimbly trip and goe....

Happy is their houre and time
Who can giue sweet Ioane the wine.24

This was the spirit of healthy wooing compared to that of effete adoration; Joan's tangible virtues were coming increasingly to mean more and more than the unattainable lady-love's more metaphysical characteristics, which many Englishmen had never believed in, and assumed to be merely flattery veiling the most lustful and depraved intentions. At any rate such nonsense will not wash with these ideal country girls.

Nicholas Breton sang the delights and moral superiority of country pleasures to those of the court, which he does not understand or value at all. He describes the framework in which Joan is to be seen and courted by the village boys:

...at our meetings on the holy days between the lads and the wenches such true mirth at honest meetings, such dancing on the greens, in the market house or about the may-pole, where the young folks smiling kiss at every turning, and the old folkes checking with laughing their children, when dancung for the garland, playing at stool balle for a Tansie and a Banquet of Cords and Creame, with a cup of olde nappy ale, matter of small charge with a little reward of the Piper, after casting of sheep's eyes and faith and trothe for a bargaine, clapping of hands, are sealed to the truth of hearts, when a pair of gloves or a handkerchief are as good as the best obligation, with a cappe and a courtesy hie ye home, maides to milking, and so merrily goes the day away.

Wooing then is carried on in the atmosphere of festivity, but that is a public one, where the elders are also present, and framed in the round of daily duties. It is probably true that as the Puritans claimed the old feasts led to fornication and misrule, but not as frequently as these enemies of joy and youth would like to insist. This is the background against which the protestant ethos of marriage must be seen—this is how they wanted things done, not hugger mugger and guiltily,

...so that we have pleasure with profit, mirth without madnesse and love without dissembling, when peace of conscience is an inward Paradise.25

The countryman goes on to claim that true love is to be found in the country, where love is learnt by familiarity and the conditions of mutual life.

are thoroughly well-known before it is undertaken, so that no foolish dreams can be shattered, and no innocents are sacrificed to avarice and lechery.

And for love, if it be in the world, I think it is in the country, for where envy, pride and malice and jealousy makes buzzes in men's brains what love can be in their hearts, howsoever it slip from their tongues? No, no, our Turtles ever fly together, our Swannes ever swimme together, and our lovers live and die together. Now if such love be among you, it is worthy to be made much of; but if you like today and loath tomorrow, if you fawne today and frowne tomorrow, if all your love be to laugh and lyee downe, or to hope of gaine and reward: that is none of our love.

The contrast he makes is that same as is made in the little song at the end of Love's Labour's Lost between Spring love which is easy and pleasant and exciting and irresponsible, and the domestic love of winter, love tried by endurance, by loss of beauty and comfort; the court afforded many examples of the first as any history will show, which must have scandalised the common folk, although there were great and noble exceptions like the marriage of William Cecil with Tildred Cooke. Breton continues in words typical of the marriage theorists...

Wee love all goodnes and onely for goodnes, first God, then ourselues, then our wifes and children, then our family and then our friends: and so hath love his course in our liues; and therefore if there be any observation in affection, I pray you, let it rather be in the Country then in any place, where faith is not so fast, but fancy can alter love on a little humour of dislike...26

As Catton's compendium of marital theory was later to put it,

Deceive not thyselfe by ouerexpecting happinesse in the married state.27
This love that was to be won by familiarity and deserving was seen as the natural opposite of false, dissembling love, which used the machinery of wooing to draw young folk into immoderate passion which led to their ruin. The opposition was often seen in terms of the one being love proved by stedfastness and deed, and the other love feigned by words. A heart could be won away from virtue and true love by glozing compliments, and the seriousness with which the view was held may be judged from Leicester's success in putting about that the Queen had been bewitched by the charms wrought by Simier, Anjou's ambassador skilled in the chiromancy of love. In fact, in 1563, among the Penitential Canons issued by the Primate of England there is one stipulated for anyone who "by witchcraft cause love in another and give it him either at Meate or Drinke, or by Charm..." Penitential Canons are issued for the guidance of confessing priests to punish sufficiently the crimes confessed to them. For a request to be made for such a crime as this to have the precise penance stipulated it must have been confessed in more than a few isolated cases.

Even in realistic terms however, it was evident that a simple soul could be seduced by the contemplation of joys and dreams hitherto outside its imagination—maidens with flattery that persuaded them that they were deserving of a glittering destiny, young men with dreams of a transfiguring passion for the most perfect woman on earth. The opposition between the love of Arthurian legend and Italian courtesy and the love of man and wife had been perceived since the Dark Ages, but as printing enlarged the scope of

harmful literature, the opposition became matter for indignation and invective.

James IV had pointed out at length the same errors and delusions of venereal love and its inferiority to chaste love in the Kingis Quair and anticipated the sixteenth century theorists in his advice to young folk to avoid the vicissitudes that afflicted all those he saw in attendance upon Venus in his realm.

Lo, my gude sone, this is als mich to seyne,
   As, gif thy lufe be sett all-uterly
Of nyce lust, thy travaill is in veyne;
   And so the end sall turne of thy folye
   To paine and repentance; lo wate thou quhy?
Gif the ne list thy lufe on vertew set;
   Vertu sall be the cause of thy forfet.

Tak Him before in all thy gouernance,
   That in His hand the ster has of you all;
And pray vnto His hye purveyance
   Thy lufe to gye, and on Him traist and call,
   That corner-stone and ground is of the wall;
That failis noght; and trust withouten drede;
   Vnto thy purpose sone He sall the lede.

For lo, the werk that first is foundit sure,
   May better bere a pace and hyare be
Than othir-wide and langer sall endure
   Be monyfald, this may thy resoun see,
   And stronger to defend adversitee:
Groundith thy werk, therefore vpon the stone;
   And thy desire sall fortheward with the gone.

Be trewe and meke and stedfaste in thy thoght,
   And diligent hir merci to procure,
Noght onely in thy word; for word is noght,
   Bot gif thy werk and all thy besy cure
Accord thereto and \textit{vtrd} be; mesure
   The place, the boure, the maner and the wise;
Gif mercy sall admiten thy seruice.28

The connection between fleeting infatuation,
and woong by words is made here by the royal lover,
and more subtly than many of the sixteenth century polemicians were to do it: the implication is that proving love by deeds will also test it for the lover.

as well as the beloved, and he may be sure that if it leads him to good works this love is the gift of God and his vocation. The opposition is not simply between a lustful, adulterous passion and a conjugal sentiment, but between a miserable and a happy marriage. However it would be wrong of me to suggest that this distinction was not seen by the Elizabethans, and that they saw it as the opposition merely of honorable and dishonorable intentions. They were aware that a marriage could be barren and sinful because it was taken for the wrong reasons and without divine approbation, and Thomas Gataker vehemently denounced such in his boulster lecture—

Such men, who have cast their Lots in faire fields by making choice of such consorts whose vertues confirme them Mirrors and whose lives are lines of examples unto others; finde Hymen smiling, nay, shining on their Nuptialls all the year long. Whereas such who cast their Lots in barren fields, by joyning hands to sensuall Brides, brothell-beds: who are nothing but voyce or ayre: with a small portion of skin-deepe beauty to practise on deluded Sense, till it grow weary. The bodies of such men, I say, begin to suffer Mezentius torment, living in the embraces of the dead untill they dye. For as Death holds in his power all that is past, governs all that is present, and pretends to gouern all that is to come, the very like Soveraigntys death ouer these who haue enwreathed and embathed themselves in such loathed embraces. 29

The connection made by King James between the light love and eloquence contrasted with true love and deeds is made more and more markedly throughout the next century, partly because the development and flourishing of English petrarchan poetry involved the debasement

of the idealist sentiments of neo-platonism into something the reformers had not difficulty in recognising as adulterous. Even Skelton had Courtly Abusión teaching the monarch Magnificence how to seduce the ladies of the court, and the manner of serving a fair mistress.

So as ye be a prince of great might,
It is seeming your pleasure ye delight,
And to acquaint you with carnal delectation,
And to fall in acquaintance with every newe fashion;
And quickly your appetités to sharp'e & address,
To fasten your fancy upon a fairé mistrés,
That quickly is enured with ruddies of the rose,
Impurtuned with features after your purpose......

A mistress I tell you is but a small thing;
A goodly ribbon or a goldé ring,
May win with a saute the fortress of the hold.
But one thing I warn you, press forth and be bold.
Magn: Yea but some be full coy and passing hard-hearted.
C.A: But blessed be our lord, they will soon be converted.
Magn: Why, will they then be entreated, the most and the least?
C.A: Yea, for omni mulier meretríx, si celari potest.

And indeed Henry's reign saw the verification of Courtly Abusión's contention over and over again. In a little aid to the examination of conscience prepared by Wynkyn de Worde the same connection is made between wooing and dishonourable purpose.

Haste thou wowed any wyght
And tempted her overmyght
Haste thou made the gaye therfore
That she sholde the loue the more
Haste thou had lust to here
Songes that of lechery were.

As is manifest in both these instances clothes came very rapidly to be an accessory in the business of seduction, and the opposition with kersey was held literally as well as a metaphor for speech, as it was used by Shakespeare.

31 Here beginnieth a boke of a Ghoostly fader / that confessest th'his Ghoostly chyldc... Wynkyn de Worde. n.d. (1520) B6
In Skelton's satire, Courtly Abuson's introductory song is a celebration of the seductive powers of his clothes...

My hair brusheth
So pleasantly,
My robe rusheth
So ruttingly,
Meseems I fly,
I am so light,
To dance delight.

Properly dressed,
All point device,
My person prest,
Beyond all size
Of the new guise,
To rush it out
In every rout.

...All this nation
I set on fire
In my fashion
This was their desire,
This newe attire
This ladies have,
I it them gave. 32

The connection was also made by Barclay in the Ship of Fools, in which he addressed

Ye counterfated Courtiers come with your fleing Braine,
Expressed by these variable garments that ye finde,
To tempt chaste damosels and turn them to your mind...

and he also levels the criticism of contemporary literature which was to be made gain and again, as encouraging frivolous and indulgent modes of thought, and tempting the young to give free rein to fancy.

But tales are loued, ground of ribaudry,
And many are so blinded with their folly,
That no scripture think they so true nor good,
As is a foolishe iest of Robin Hood.

32 Magnificence Loc. cit.
33. The Ship of Foolses...translated out of Latin by Alexander Barclay, Priest (edn of 1570.) F.8
34 ibid. F.23
The assumption that the arts of wooing were principally used for dishonourable motives was almost universal in the sixteenth century, except of course, for those who actually practised them in poetry. Erasmus brusquely assumed that the machinery of compliment had nothing to do with the sentiments of honest love.

Who so euer therefore for his pleasure (as he supposeth it) layeth awayte & goeth about to begyle a mayden with flaterynge & gyftes / with fayre promesses / to plucke from her the best thyng she hath / that is to wyte / her perfytenesse / her chastyte / her simplicite / her innocency / her good mynde & her good name / whether meaneth this man semeth this man to hate or to loue? 35

Nicholas Breton's countryman replied very tartly to the courtier's boasting of

excelfent musique and admirable Voyces, Maskes and Pryyes, Dauncing and Riding; deversity of Games, delightful to the Gamesters purposes; and riddles, Questions and Answers: Poems, Histories and strange inventions of Witt, to startle the Braine of a good understanding: rich Apparell, precious Jewells, fine Proportions and High Spirits....sweet Creatures and ciuill Behauiour and in the course of loue such carriage of content as setts the Spirit in the lapp of Pleasure..... 36

assuming point-blank that the motive of all this was simply fornication or adultery.

Now for your bewitching obiects I doubt they will make abiects of subiects, and therefore I loue no such diuellish deuices, when womens eyes will bewitch mens hearts, and the breath of Tongues will poison a mans wits. And as for your rauishing delights, it is a word that I well understand not, or at least, as I haue heard,ix this rauishing is a word that signifieth robbing wenches of the inner lining of their linnen against their wills, and if

35 Two dyalogues...by...D.Erasmus...translated..by Edmond Becke...Cantorbury...John Mychell. n.d.
36 The Court and Country in Inedited Tracts printed for Roxburghe Soc. 1868 p.178
it be so, it is a perilous delight that brings a man to the Gallowes, if not to the Diuell, for a little fit of pleasure: but if there be any better sense in it, I would be glad to understand it, though at this time, I care not to be troubled with it.37

The feigned magnanimity of this hardly disguises the judgment that has already been passed upon the toys of dalliance, and of these words were the most pernicious. In Wits Miserie Lodge attributes amorous poetry to two kinds of fellows, Adulation, who "hath all the Sonnets and wanton rimes the world of our wit can afford him", and Fornication -

Put him to a sonnet Du Portes cannot equal him; nay in ye nice tearmes of lechery he exceeds him; at Riddles he is good; at Purposes better; but at Tales he hath no equall, for Bandello is more perfitt in him than his Paternoster.38

Lodge was no Puritan, nor was he incapable of mastering these literary arts for himself, so that it would seem that the judgement was one suggested by observation. Fontaigne came to the same conclusion, that illicit passion and poetry have something intrinsic in common - speaking of the sonnets of Stephen de la Boetie to the lady of Grammont.

For truely these have a kind of liuelinesse and more piercing Emphasis than any other, and which I cannot well express: as he that made them in his Aprills youth, and when he was inflamed with a noble glorious flame, as I will one day tell your Honoure in your eare. The other were afterward made by him in favoure of his wife, at what time he wooed and sollicited her for mariage, and began to feele I wot not what marital-dulnesse and husbands coldnesse. And I am one of those whose opinion is, that divine Poesie doth nowhere fadge so well and so effectually applaudeth, as in a youthfull, wanton and unbridled subject.39

37 ibidi p.189
38 Wits Miserie and the Worlds Madnesse: Discouerin g the deuils incarnat of this age. London. Printed Adam Islip 1596. D2v & G4.
Expressed this way, we would probably find ourselves agreeing that such passion was needful for poetry, although hardly for permanent social relationships. These were the very qualities that the protestant reformers wanted to eliminate from the emotional experience of their youth in the interests of a solider happiness and virtue; by definition such passion faded and left disgust and guilt behind, which would be justice if only the consequences were not also such that godly marriage might thereafter be impossible. It was the inspiring of young people with the desire for such an emotional experience, which was wrong, and to induce them to believe that such a passion was the basis for marriage was hardly less wrong.

For the most part however it was assumed that such devices were not utilised by the lover who had the solid advantages of marriage and joynture to offer, and the country maids would warn one another, as Nanny reassured her listeners in *The Flattering Lovers Farewell*.

Carnations is for graciounness
Mark this well by the way
Give no regard to flatterers
Nor passe not what they say. 39

The relationship that Montaigne saw between love and poetry was not all onesided. Not only did wanton passion help poetry, poetry helped wanton passion to gain its ends,

...who shall debarre Cupid the service and conversation of poesie,—shall weaken him of his best weapons. 41

39. *The Essayes, or Morall Politike and Militarie Discourses of Mr. Michael De Montaign Knight...done into English by John Florio...London...Val Sims for Edward Blount...1603* p. 97
41. Montaigne—*Essays* vide supra p. 509
Even Puttenham, whose description of epithalamia becomes almost frankly libidinous, is not able to justify completely the poetry of love, although he refuses to acknowledge the contradiction in his view of the honesty of amoruous affections. He begins:

The first founder of all good affections is honest love, as the mother of all the vicious is hatred. It was not therefore without reason that so commendable, yea, honourable a thing as love well meant, were it in Princely estate or private, might in all civil commonwealths be uttered on good form and order as other laudable things are.

So far so good: the puritans themselves were not above putting noble faith and hope into verse, but of what followed they were not likely to approve.

And because love is of all other humane affections the most puissant and passionate, and most general to all sorts and ages of men and women, so as whether it be of the young or old or wise or holy, of high estate or low, none ever could truly brag of any exemption in that case:

Not so good — this looks precious like the heresy of the indomitable godhead of Dan Cupid, and the implication, though not a strong one, is that it can overcome reason and virtue — what follows makes it clear that Puttenham's idea of honest love is more than a little confused.

It requireth a forme of Poesie variable, inconstant, affected, curious and most witty of others, whereof the loves are to be uttered in one sorte, the sorrows in another, and by the many forms of Poesie, the many moods and pangs of lovers thoroughly to be discovered: the poor foules sometimes praying, beseeching, sometime honouring, advancing, praising; an other while railing, recycling and cursing: then sorrowing, weeping, lamenting: in the end laughing, rejoysing and solacing the beloved again, with a thousand delicate deuises, odes, songs, elegies,
ballads, sonets and other ditties, moouing one way and another to great compassion. 42

How is it that honest love the mother of all good affections has become the worker of such madness: what is it that the lover should be beseeching, and why should he revile? The power of such poetry is disturbingly indicated in the last line. As far as the champions of marriage are concerned, poetry thus stands convicted out of its own mouth.

Roger Ascham traced the trouble more particularly to Italy: speaking of the young men skilled in Italian fashion, he specifically linked the adulterous love interest with the cult of celibacy and stressed its demoralising influence.

For commonlie they cum home, common contemners of mariage, and readie persuaders of all other to the same: not because they loue virginitie, nor yet because they hate prettie yong virgines, but, being free in Italie to go whither so euer lust will carry them, they do not like, that lawe and honestie should be such a barre to their like libertie at home in England. And yet they be, the greatest makers of loue, the daylie daliers, with such pleasant wordes, with such smiling and secret countenances, with such signes, tokens, wagers, purposed to be lost before they were purposed to be made, with bargaines of wearing colours, floures and herbes, to breede occasion of after meeting of him and her, and bolder talking of this and that. And although I haue scene some innocent of ill, and ste in all honestie, that haue vsed these things without all suspicion of harme, yet these knackes were brought first into England by them, that learned them before in Italie in Circes court: and how Courtlie Curtesses so euer they be counted now, yet, if the meaning and maners of some that do vse them, were somewhat amended it were no great hurt neither to thelbelues, nor to others. 43
The lurid reputation of the political Machiavel in England was only equalled by that of the sexual Machiavel, whose appeal was not of course mitigated by his publicity. In John Bale's soi-disants Histories of Papist malpractice marvels of depravity were set forth for public delectation. Poor Petrarch would not have recognised himself as he was transmogrified by the historians' imagination in the seething bed of lechery that was papist Italy.

Though Benedict the Pope granted to Franciscus Petrarcha, which was a canon of Padua & archdeacon of Parma to take one Laure to wyfe & retayning styl his benefices, yet wolde he not afferne it lawfull that prestes myght marrye but onelye by soch blynde dispensaciōs for his owne carnall purpose.

He goes on to explain that this carnall purpose was the enjoying of Petrarch's sister in return for which he would also have awarded Petrarch a Cardinal's hat. At which point Petrarch acquitted himself quite well —

The lord of heaven forbydde (sayth he) that ever so fylthye a diademe shulde couer my head.

And so he fled with his love while his brother Ghirarde complied with the Pope's request. 44

This then was the atmosphere in which the greatest love poems ever written were born — small wonder that philistine reformers regarded them with severe opprobrium. The curious thing about references to Petrarch in this kind of writing (and Bale's is not the only one) is that the authors appear to be unaware that he is also a great poet. As George Watson's study had indicated direct acquaintance with the poet was enjoyed by a very narrow circle; it would seem also true that indirect acquaintance was enjoyed by a circle only slightly less
At all events the condemnation of frivolous literature was not mollified by any acquaintance with the real preoccupations of Petrarchan verse, and could hardly have been expected to be, when the preoccupations of the English Petrarchans seemed so much simpler and less exalted. Becon speaks with great energy of the guilt of all those who suffer them to be propagated in England...

These me shall rise vp against vs English men at the day of Judgement, which banish not, nor burn not, but rather print, publish, set forth and sell baudy balades and filthy books vnto the corruption of reders, as the Court of Venus and suche like wanton booke...46

Poor Becon could hardly have foreseen that the great age of amorous poetry in England was just dawning. When we look at his lists of undesirable works we must rejoice that he was not gifted with prescience.

Lette them (your daughters) not reade bokes of fables, of fond and lyght loue...Bokes of Robin Hood, Beues of Hampton, Troilus & such lyke fables do but kynde in lyers lyke lyes and wanton loue, which ought not in yought wyth theyr fyrst spettle to be dronke in, lest they euer remayne in them. 47

The poetry that Becon wanted them to love was that of the Psalms, of which hundred of metrical versions and musical settings were being produced, and to which some of the hated love poetry was clearly indebted.

Vives had issued positive instructions for the control of his young lady's reading which chill the spine with their narrow joylessness, but perhaps when we reflect what a laborious and expensive business

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46 Becon Workes loc. cit. fol. 1Clxiii
47. Becon The golden boke of christen matrimonye loc cit fol. 1xxviii
introducing the young woman to the literature that was to form her mind was likely to be.

And it shall not only be forbidden our young gentlewoman to read anything that may induce her minde (very delicate of itselfe) to become more feeble and effeminate, but all such things as may by any means make her forget her reputation.

He distrusts learning for if she learn Latin she will commence by reading the Christian poets but may well progress to "Ouid, Catulle, Properce, Tibull and Virgil, of Eneas and Dido: & among the Grecian poets the foolish love of the gods themselves; and in Homer their adulteries and fornications."

so she be not suffered to peruse amorous and impudent verses, or fables and newes: as the tales of Boccace and others...48

Robert Sauter's Mirror of Modesty is heavily indebted to Vives, and there is evidence that his views on the education of maidens were widely espoused. Sauter lists the same approved Christian authors and produces the same argument against the young lady's acquiring Latin, but he adds his own comments upon the necessity of such guidance for parents and the proliferation of dangerous literature -

I would have her if she reade to reade no other booke but such as bee written by godlie fathers, to our instruction and soules health, and not such lascivious songs, filthie Ballades, and vndecent Bookes as be moste commodiouslie now adayes sette to sale, to the great infection of youth, the names of which to recite would require a long tyme and to write a great volume, beyng more pleasaunte than profitable, long then learned, gallant then godlie.49

48 The necessarie, fit and conuenient Education of a yong Gentlewoman. Written both in French and Italian and translated into English by W.P. and now printed with the three Languages together in one Volume for the better instruction of such as are desirous to studie those tongues. London. Islip. 1598. Sig E8v, F2, & G4v

49 A Mirror mete for all mothers, matrones and Maidens, intituled the mirror of modestie...London...for Edward White...(MS licensed 1578) Sig, C3.
We have confirmation of Sauter's claim that the literature of dalliance was increasing in bulk and availability from a conscientious balladeer who apparently disapproved of a rival's resort to such topics for his living. He was Thomas Brice, himself a poet, author of *The Court of Venus* moralised and a collection of songs and sonnets, neither of which have survived. He wrote a ballad *Against Filthie Writing* and such like *Delighting* in 1566 in which he asks melodramatically—

Tel me is Christ or Cupid lord? Doth God or Venus reign? 50

Some evidence is supplied for his case in that the same collection contains a ballad of *The panges of loue and louers fittes*, giving potted accounts of the loves of Solomon, Paris, Troilus, Leander, Priam, Hercules and Eronie, Anaxaretis and Iphis, and Jupiter and Alcmene.51

John Dickenson gives a very good account of how amorous expectations induced by poring over such debased stuff could prepare a woman for the wiles of the courtier. Valeria imagined herself a cultured and superior woman, and when Arthemio fell into the recognisable postures of the pseudo-Petrarchan lover, she was as good as won.

After many thoughts, he deemed this one the best, to seeme rauished by her beautie; for well he knewe, that herein to flatter women was highly to please them: in effecting which resolution, he did so quaintly counterfeit the droupping lover, both in his lookes, and other gestures, that her witte blinded th(r)ough selfe-conceipt, was by his wiles farre ouer-reacht.52

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50 Ballads & Boradsides chiefly of the Elizabethan Period...formerly in the Heber collection...now in the library at Britwell court Bucks.ed.H.L.Collmann.1912.No.13
51 ibidi no.39.
52 Prose and Verse by John Dickenson ed. A.B. Grosart. 1878
The Tragicue historie of Valeria.1598 P.26.
And so Valeria was seduced and married by a ruthless man, and paid for her wantonness for the rest of her life, and according to the enemies of amorous literature there were many more like her.

So the courtier skilled in amorous dalliance was seen as the natural enemy of all fathers with daughters of marriageable age, and various ways were sought to render them impervious to their charms. Dekker saw the enemy in these seductive terms...

a lustie young gallant riding at pleasure vp and downe the countrye, especially at those places of sport and pleasure where fine Dames and dainetye Girles meet, whoe can finely mince their measures, haue their toongues trained vpp to amorous chat.53

This is the sort of young man that seduces a young maiden and then shows her a clean pair of heels, in Stubbes’s view, or, if she has a portion whisks her way to be secretly married to mend his fortunes, and might just as likely spend her money and then show her a clean pair of heels.

Even supposing that these obvious pitfalls could be avoided, it was also undesirable that a maiden should succumb to this kind of charm because the passion inspired by it was not the right kind to serve as a basis for marriage. Instead a maiden was to feel as the then Mr. John Cheke wrote to the orphaned daughter of Sir William Pie:

Be you wholie careles of your bestowinge, as a thinge not pertaininge to youe, tyll it be brought you orderlie; giue yourselfe onelie to vertuous exercises, that the good fame of your owne persone may giue furtherance to your governers to make your bargaine with the beste, which shall be, if these things concurr to advance the value of youe; your fathers prouision of goods and liuinge, your own storinge yourself with good conditions, your fame thereby to
moue the worthiest to desire youe, and your frendes wisdome and diligence to iudge the meetest for youe. Beware that you soe order your selfe in the principall point, that you giue no impedienent to their good provisioone for your bestowinge. 54

In these terms the lot of the marriageable girl seems wretched indeed to a modern mind, and it is no wonder that young folk were breaking out of this system and marrying according to their own lights. As we shall see, it was not ever seriously maintained by any sixteenth century reformer that the young should have disposition of their own affections, but, on the other hand, it was stressed over and over again that parents choose with their children's possible liking in mind, and not simply the material aspects of the match. If Penelope Pie comported herself like a wanton, she would not only make a financially and socially disadvantageous match, but she would forfeit her chances to a worthy and disinterested spouse as well. She should marry for love, for virtue and similarity of temperament, both of which should also be considered by the parents or friends, are the natural objects of love - under no circumstances must she marry for amorous folly, and not the least ground for opposing this was the essential chastity of marriage.

Sir John Harington Nugae Antiquae being a miscellaneous selection of original papers...sel. from authentic remains by...Henry Harington, newly arr.by Thomas Park. LONDON, 1804 p. 35