

THE ELIZABETHAN HOME IN DOMESTIC

TRAGEDIES OF THE PERIOD

by

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## CHAPTER I

### THE DOMESTIC TRAGEDY

During the last decade of the sixteenth century and the first decade of the seventeenth century, there flourished in England a type of drama now referred to as "domestic tragedy." Tragedy, in the classical sense, centers on a hero or protagonist, usually a king, prince, or great leader who moves from good fortune to bad fortune. The qualification "domestic," meaning "at home" or "relating to one's home life," indicates that the principal difference between classical tragedy and domestic tragedy is that the latter is concerned with the common people rather than with heads of state.

Domestic tragedies originated in the early morality plays which presented moral lessons, while emphasizing the idea of mercy. The outline of action in these morality plays was followed with few changes by the authors of domestic tragedies. H. H. Adams has commented on this pattern as seen in the anonymous Castle of Perseverance (written in 1405):

The chief character, Mankind, is born, is subjected to the importunities of his good and bad angels, accepts the counsel of the latter, and spiritually descends rapidly with the willing aid of the Seven Deadly Sins. Soon Death strikes him down, but not until he has repented his sins. Mercy and Peace intercede for Mankind, and the Father forgives him. Thus he is saved from damnation.<sup>1</sup>

The next step in the development of the domestic tragedy came with Ulpian Fulwell's Like Will to Like, Quoth the Devil to the Collier (c. 1562-68), which is an interlude, a shorter play than the morality

and frequently performed indoors before a limited audience. This play combined the familiar moral framework with scenes of realistic comedy, a necessary step in the development of the domestic tragedies.

The prodigal son stories, which appeared from 1490 to 1550 in continental Europe, reached their fullest development in England. The English versions of these stories were the final stage in the development of the domestic tragedy. The situation was domestic; the treatment was realistic; the attitude was serious, and the endings were frequently tragic. The domestic tragedy then developed rapidly after 1576, possibly because the court circles in England exerted less influence over the dramas than they did in France and Italy, and there was little opposition to plays about the lower classes of people.

Arden of Feversham (published 1592) is generally regarded as the first true domestic tragedy. The genre flourished during the last decade of the sixteenth century and the first decade of the seventeenth century, only to disappear before the closing of the theaters in 1642. However, domestic tragedies did reappear in the second quarter of the eighteenth century, and vestiges can be seen in some modern plays such as those of Ibsen and O'Neill.

Tudor and Stuart domestic tragedies regularly exhibit similar characteristics. The most important of these is the hero who is important only to his own limited society. He belongs to the middle class, and his fate is unrelated to the great affairs of state. Another important characteristic of the domestic tragedy is its pronounced didacticism. There is a pattern of action: sin, discovery, repentance, punishment, and expectation of divine mercy. The

penitent sinner, usually near death, surrenders the gains obtained from his sins, and Divine Providence frequently intervenes in the lives of the characters to assure the operation of divine justice.<sup>2</sup>

The moral instruction presented in the domestic tragedies was not unique; it is characteristic of both dramatic and nondramatic homiletic literature of the period. For example, sermons based on exempla included people of lower social classes. The Mirror for Magistrates, designed to teach moral lessons to persons of the higher classes, also contains some examples that refer more directly to lesser people, such as Jane Shore, mistress of Edward IV, and Jack Cade, a famous rebel, who had provoked the intervention of the Providence of God or had become victims of the turn of fortune's wheel.<sup>3</sup> Another similar example of moral instruction can be found in Anthony Munday's A View of Sundry Examples (1580), which contains twenty murder stories filled with scriptural quotations illustrating the ways of Providence. Moral instruction is also found in the quarto pamphlets which were written by hack writers to capitalize on the sensations of the moment and which repeat the warnings of the sermons and moralities.

The domestic tragedies also were based on actual events which were familiar to most of the audience, thereby lending a note of realism to the plays. Most of these dramas present a recent tale of infidelity and murder which had happened in the London area. Arden of Feversham, for example, corresponds with a similar story told by Thomas Kyd in a pamphlet of the same year, 1592.<sup>4</sup> Another pamphlet, Two Most Unnatural and Bloody Murders, which appeared anonymously in 1605, was the basis for two domestic tragedies, A Yorkshire Tragedy

and The Miseries of Enforced Marriage.

These domestic tragedies are realistic also in the sense that, since the scene is usually London and the surrounding area, the home life of these people is presented. Other plays of the period also present aspects of the Elizabethan home, but the domestic tragedies are domestic not only in theme but also in their presentation of details of contemporary Elizabethan home life. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how selected domestic tragedies of the period reveal many of these details of the life of the Elizabethans at home.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PLAYS

I intend to discuss the realistic elements of Elizabethan home life as they appear in the following domestic tragedies: Arden of Feversham, A Warning for Fair Women, The Witch of Edmonton, A Yorkshire Tragedy, The Miseries of Enforced Marriage, A Woman Killed with Kindness, and The English Traveller. These plays were selected because they are all set in London and the surrounding area, and they all deal with relationships between husbands and wives.

#### Arden of Feversham

Arden of Feversham,<sup>1</sup> printed in 1592 and probably performed a year or two earlier by an unknown company, is considered one of the best, as well as the first, of the domestic tragedies. Thomas Kyd, Christopher Marlowe, and William Shakespeare have been suggested as the author of the play, which was printed anonymously.<sup>2</sup>

The play is based on the actual murder, on February 15, 1551/2, of Thomas Arden, chief comptroller of his Majesty's Customs at Faversham in Kent and the town's mayor in 1548.<sup>3</sup> The details of this murder were printed in the 1577 edition of Holinshed's Chronicles. The title of the play gives a brief summary of the action as given in Holinshed's account and in the play: "The Lamentable and True Tragedie of M. Arden of Feversham in Kent. Who was most wickedlye murdered, by the meanes of his disloyall and wanton wyfe, who for the loue she bare to one Mosbie, hyred two desperat ruffins Blackwill and

Shakbag, to kill him. Wherein is shewed the great mallice and dissimulation of a wicked woman, the vnsatiabable desire of filthie lust and the shanefull end of all murderers."

The play opens with Arden and his friend Franklin discussing the fact that Arden's wife Alice has been seen with Mosby, a tailor. Franklin convinces Arden to go away to London with him for a while. As they prepare for their journey, Mosby, who no longer loves Alice but desires the money she would receive at the death of her husband, enters with plans for the death of Arden. When Arden and Franklin reappear, Mosby vows to Arden that he will not come near Alice as long as Arden is alive. Arden replies that he may come to his house as often as he wishes because the world must not think that Arden distrusts his wife.

The first attempt on Arden's life fails when he detects the poison Alice has placed in his broth. Alice then prepares a plan for the murder of her husband while he is in London. She promises Susan, Mosby's sister and Alice's waiting-maid, to Michael, Arden's servant, if he will help in the murder of Arden. Alice also employs a man named Greene, who has lost some of his land to Arden, to hire someone to murder Arden. Greene hires two ruffians, Black Will and Shakebag, to perform the deed. Their first attempt on Arden's life is foiled when an apprentice knocks Black Will in the head with the window of his stall. The next attempt is equally unsuccessful because Michael, who had promised to leave unlocked the doors to Arden and Franklin's dwelling, becomes frightened and yells, awakening the two men, who proceed to lock the doors. Another attempt on Arden's life fails when he

meets on his way home Lord Cheiny, who invites him to a meal later that day. Cheiny spots Black Will, who has been waiting in ambush for Arden. Still another unsuccessful attempt occurs when Shakebag and Black Will wait to ambush Arden when he crosses on the ferry on his way to Lord Cheiny's. Fog, however, obscures the view, and Shakebag falls into a ditch.

Alice and Mosby decide to take matters into their own hands and walk arm in arm to meet Arden as he returns from Lord Cheiny's. This angers Arden, and all draw their swords. In the scuffle, Mosby and Shakebag (who was supposed to stab Arden in the confusion) are wounded. Alice consoles Arden, and everyone is invited to the evening meal. Greene detains Franklin and Mosby invites Arden to play at tables so that the murder may be accomplished before the guests arrive. While Mosby and Arden are playing the game, Black Will springs from a closet in which he has been hiding and murders Arden.

Even though the murder has been finally accomplished, the murderers encounter additional problems. Susan and Alice are unable to remove the blood from the floor and are forced to cover the spot with rushes. Susan, Mosby, Greene, and Michael then carry the body outside. When the guests arrive, Alice pretends to worry about Arden's safety because he has not returned. The guests search for him, immediately finding the body and, nearby, a towel and knife belonging to the Arden household. Rushes are found in his shoes and footprints in the snow lead to Arden's house. There the searchers find blood where Arden was accustomed to sit. Alice repents, Mosby confesses, and all are arrested for the murder.

In this play, Arden is presented as a man who is greedy for land. He has the opportunity to redeem himself when one Dick Reede pleads for the return of his land. When Arden refuses, he must pay the price for his sin. The murderers provide Arden's punishment, but they must be punished for their own sin of murder. Divine Providence acts to preserve Arden's life from the murderers until Arden's sin is so great that punishment is necessary. Then Providence provides for the discovery of the identity of the murderers. Divine Justice is the cause of the punishment of Arden and the punishment of his murderers. Although Alice and Susan repent and believe that God will forgive them, Michael and Mosby do not repent. Mosby, Alice, Michael, Susan, and Bradshaw (a messenger from Greene to Alice) are executed for the murder. Greene, Black Will, and Shakebag are murdered or executed later. The only person to escape is Clarke, a painter and suitor of Susan who helped plan the murder of Arden. There is some question about the fate of Susan and Bradshaw, who were relatively innocent of the crime; however, the pattern of the domestic tragedy is obvious: sin, discovery, repentance, punishment, and expectation of divine mercy.

#### A Warning for Fair Women

Another play dealing with the murder of a husband by his wife and her lover is A Warning for Fair Women,<sup>4</sup> printed in 1599 and performed several years earlier by the Lord Chamberlain's (Shakespeare's) Company. The author of this play is not known, although John Lyly, Thomas Lodge, Thomas Kyd, and Thomas Heywood have each been suggested

as the dramatist.<sup>5</sup>

The play, which resembles a morality play with allegorical characters such as Hystorie, Comedie, and Tragedie, is based on the murder in 1573 of George Sanders. The details of the murder were printed in a pamphlet in that year,<sup>6</sup> and Munday included the crime in his View of Sundry Examples (1580). The full title of the play reads: "A Warning for Faire Women. Containing, The most tragicall and lamentable murder of Master George Sanders of London, Marchant, nigh Shooters hill; Consented vnto by his owne wife, acted by M. Browne, Mistris Drewry and Trusty Roger agents therin: with their seuerall ends."

George Browne falls in love with Anne, the wife of George Sanders, a loving husband and father. Browne seeks help in his wooing of Anne from Mistress Drury, a widow, and her servant Roger. Mistress Drury approaches Anne who has just been denied money from her husband for household supplies. Drury tells Anne that, according to the lines in her palm, she will soon be a widow and that her next husband will be George Browne. In her anger at her husband, Anne allows herself to be persuaded that this is true, but she vows that she will be faithful to her husband as long as he lives.

Browne's first attempt on the life of Sanders is foiled when a friend joins Sanders at the spot where Browne is waiting in ambush. Divine Providence preserves the life of Sanders as long as possible, but since it is his destiny to be murdered, Browne finally accomplishes his mission. Divine Providence then brings about his discovery, for John Beane, a companion of Sanders at the time and left

for dead by Browne, lives long enough to describe Browne, who is quickly arrested. Drury and Roger are also arrested for helping Browne escape the scene of the crime. Although Browne vows that Anne is innocent and Anne herself declares that she is innocent, Mistress Drury refuses to endanger her own soul by lying for her. Anne finally repents before her death. All the characters realize the greatness of their sin and believe that they will be saved from everlasting damnation through divine mercy.

#### The Witch of Edmonton

The Witch of Edmonton,<sup>7</sup> written in 1621 and published in 1658, combines one plot dealing with domestic tragedy with another plot dealing with witchcraft. The full title of this play is: "The Witch of Edmonton; A known True Story. Composed into a Tragi-Comedy by divers well-esteemed Poets, William Rowley, Thomas Dekker, John Ford, &c. Acted by the Princes Servants, often at the Cock-Pit in Drury-lane, once at Court, with singular Applause. Never printed till now." The source of the subplot, which provides the title of the play, is the execution for witchcraft in 1621 of Elizabeth Sawyer of Islington.<sup>8</sup>

The main plot of the play, which is set in Edmonton and London, concerns Frank Thorney and his forced marriage to Susan Carter. Frank, a servant of Sir Arthur Clarington, has already married Winnifrede, also a servant of Sir Arthur, when his father tells him he must marry Susan Carter if he wishes to inherit his land. Frank agrees to marry Susan, but he does so only for her dowry and land he

will inherit. Frank and Winnifrede later meet near Edmonton and prepare to ride to the other side of England to escape with the dowry so that they may live peacefully. When Susan approaches, Frank tells her that she must go away because he must leave for awhile.

At this point, the subplot influences the main plot. Mother Sawyer, who has been called a witch for so long by the townspeople that she decides to become one, has a familiar in the form of a black dog who helps her get revenge on certain people of the town. When this black dog, which can be compared to the Vice of the morality plays, rubs Frank's leg as he tells Susan to leave, Frank is overwhelmed with the sudden desire to kill her. He stabs her to death and ties himself to a tree with the aid of the black dog. Carter and his father find them, and Frank tells them that they were attacked by Warbeck and Somerton, two acquaintances of the Carters.

Divine Providence reveals the true murderer, however, when Kate, Susan's sister, finds Frank's bloody knife in a pocket. After she hurriedly tells her father, Frank is arrested, Warbeck and Somerton are pardoned, and Mother Sawyer is executed, partly because the townspeople believe that she bewitched Frank. Frank repents just before his execution and receives the forgiveness of all the other characters. His sin was not only the murder of Susan, but also his lie to his father when he said he was unmarried and his break with the solemn oath to Winnifrede that he would never leave her for another. Frank realizes that he cannot escape the power of heaven, but he believes, as does everyone else in the play, that he will receive divine mercy. On the other hand, even though Mother Sawyer repents, she has

committed an unpardonable sin by conspiring with the forces of evil.

### A Yorkshire Tragedy

Another play dealing with forced marriage is A Yorkshire Tragedy,<sup>9</sup> which was printed in 1608 and performed by the King's Men. This short play is perhaps one of four one-act plays, as the original title read: "All's One, or, One of the Four Plaies in One, Called a York-shire Tragedy, as it was Plaid by the Kings Plaiers."<sup>10</sup> The title was later changed to "A Yorkshire Tragedy. Not so New as Lamentable and true." This play has been variously attributed to William Shakespeare, his brother Edmund Shakespeare, Thomas Heywood, and George Wilkins.<sup>11</sup>

The play is based on the execution in August, 1605, of Walter Calverly, who injured his wife and murdered two of his three children on April 23, 1605. The facts of this story were printed in 1605 in a pamphlet entitled Two Unnatural Murders.<sup>12</sup>

The plot centers around Calverly, who, though betrothed to Clare Harcop, is forced by his father to marry Katherine. After he sends a sorrowful message to Clare, he reluctantly obeys his father. Clare commits suicide when she reads the letter, and Calverly, on learning of her death, begins a life of drinking and gambling, continually demanding money from his wife and brother. After his brother is sent to prison for a debt, Calverly is so despondent that he decides he must murder his family to save them from ruin. After he injures his wife and successfully murders two of his children, he sets out for a house twelve miles away where his third child is being cared for.

Providence permits him to be apprehended when he falls from his horse, thus allowing the officials to overtake and arrest him.

This play, which assumes that the audience knows the background of the murder, moves swiftly in the presentation of the crime and in the punishment of the murderer. No hope of divine mercy is held out to Calverly because he has shown himself to be a "scorner." He repents at the last possible moment even though he knows that there is no hope of grace for him. The characterization in the play is weak: "The husband appears as a monster of vice, unredeemed by any saving virtues, and the wife could be the sister of Patient Griselda. The other characters merely serve their essential dramatic functions."<sup>13</sup>

#### The Miseries of Enforced Marriage

Another play based on the same Calverly story is The Miseries of Enforced Marriage,<sup>14</sup> written by George Wilkins and acted and printed in 1607. Wilkins, who concentrates on the earlier events of the story, changes a few names and gives the play a happy ending.

Scarborough, who is eighteen and thus can marry anyone he chooses, marries Clare Harcop, but his guardian, Lord Falconbridge, possesses the power to force him into a marriage with Katherine, Falconbridge's niece. Scarborough marries Katherine and thus becomes an adulterer. When Clare learns of her husband's second marriage, she commits suicide, thereby saving them all from committing a greater sin. It is assumed that Clare will receive her reward in heaven. Scarborough, unlike the husband in A Yorkshire Tragedy, is not required to pay the

penalty for his sin of adultery and is allowed to enjoy prosperity and lead a Christian life.

Divine Justice is seen in the punishment of Falconbridge at the critical point in the action. Having recognized his blame in the matter of Scarborough's adultery, he increases significantly his bequest to Scarborough and Katherine. Divine Providence accomplishes Falconbridge's death just as Scarborough is preparing to murder Katherine and his children.

#### The English Traveller

A domestic tragedy based on the death of an erring wife is Thomas Heywood's The English Traveller,<sup>15</sup> which was published in 1633 and performed by Queen Henrietta's Company. The play appears to have been inspired by a contemporary incident; therefore, the names of the characters are probably fictitious.<sup>16</sup> Though not a murder play like those mentioned previously, the tragedy presents a moral lesson to the audience.

Young Geraldine returns from a journey abroad and learns that his lifelong acquaintance has married the much older Mr. Wincott. Wincott enjoys Geraldine's company and invites him often to his home. During one of these visits, Geraldine and Wincott's wife (who is never given a name in the play) pledge their love to each other and vow to marry when Wincott dies. Geraldine has no wish to wrong Wincott, so the relationship for the time being is that of brother and sister.

Later, Geraldine is informed that Mistress Wincott has been unfaithful to both her husband and her betrothed. He refuses to

believe this. Meanwhile, Dalavill, a suitor to the wife's sister Prudentilla, tells Geraldine's father that he suspects an illicit relationship between Geraldine and Wincott's wife. Geraldine's father is disturbed by this and informs his son that he may no longer visit the Wincotts. Mr. Wincott sends for Geraldine in order to learn why he no longer visits there. Geraldine visits him late at night, and while there he goes upstairs to see Wincott's wife. Outside the door he hears Dalavill rejoicing with her that neither Geraldine nor anyone else knows of their relationship. At this point, Geraldine thanks heaven (i.e., Divine Providence) that he did not have his sword with him or he surely would have become a murderer.

Geraldine resolves to tell no one what he knows and prepares to leave the country. Wincott insists on giving him a farewell party and all the neighbors are invited. Wincott's wife succeeds in being alone with Geraldine and asks him why he no longer visits them as he did before. Geraldine tells her that he knows of her affair with Dalavill, and she is so filled with remorse for her sin that she asks for forgiveness, hopes for grace and mercy from heaven, and dies.

Geraldine's discovery of the unfaithfulness of Wincott's wife comes at the same time as the audience learns of it. The moral lesson of the difference between appearance and reality presented to Geraldine is therefore presented simultaneously to an audience which was totally unprepared for the infidelity of the wife.

Though there is controversy over the purpose of the subplot of this play,<sup>17</sup> it perhaps is a variation of the theme of unmasking a

dissembler. Old Lionel, a neighbor of the Wincotts, has left his son Young Lionel in charge of the household while he travels at sea. Young Lionel feels that he is in charge, but actually the servant Reginald is in control of the house, its provisions, and the household money. After many feasts and days of revelry, the money is exhausted. When Old Lionel returns, Reginald attempts to reconcile everyone, but he only complicates matters. Old Lionel, who finally realizes that Reginald was responsible for his son's misdeeds, forgives his son when he repents and asks for forgiveness from his father.

#### A Woman Killed with Kindness

Considered the outstanding representative of the domestic tragedies and the best of Thomas Heywood's plays, A Woman Killed with Kindness<sup>18</sup> also deals with the death of an unfaithful wife. The play, written in 1603, was acted by Worcester's Company and was printed in 1607.

Frankford, a prosperous member of the middle class, marries Anne, the sister of Sir Francis Acton. While Frankford is away on a trip, Wendoll, a friend to whom Frankford has offered the hospitality of his home, seduces Anne, who appears as a very weak person. A servant reports to Frankford, who cannot believe what he has heard and desires visual proof of his wife's unfaithfulness. After a card game, Frankford prepares to leave on a journey and then returns after allowing Wendoll and his wife time to retire. Hearing their voices, Frankford draws his sword, and Divine Providence, in the form of a

maidservant, stops him from murder. Wendoll flees, and Frankford sends his wife to the country where she will have all the comforts of home but where she will be denied the presence of her husband and children. Overcome with grief, she takes to her death bed and summons her husband. After he forgives her, she dies happily, thereby satisfying divine justice which required death as the punishment for her sin.

The subplot of this play centers on Sir Francis Acton, who desires Susan, the sister of the imprisoned Charles Mountford. Sir Francis agrees to pay the debts of Charles in return for the favors of Susan. Now released, Charles forces Susan to agree so that their debts may be paid and then prepares to kill himself and his sister. Sir Francis, who changes his way of life through his love for Susan, marries her, and this segment of the play comes to a happy ending.

Each of the previously mentioned domestic tragedies is noteworthy for its presentation of contemporary Elizabethan life. A study of these plays reveals the actual home with its furnishings, its gardens, its meals, its servants, its guests, its entertainments and other daily activities, and the domestic beliefs of the people.

## CHAPTER III

### PHYSICAL FEATURES OF THE HOME

Evidences of the daily life of the Elizabethan people in their homes can be seen in the domestic tragedies of this period. Physical characteristics of the houses, the meals prepared and eaten in the homes, the hospitality of the Elizabethans, the servants, and the clothing these people wore can be studied from the realistic details presented in the plays.

#### General Features

The houses of London at this time were three and sometimes four stories high. They were usually built of wood, though the better ones were of brick. The prosperous middle-class people in the towns and cities of the area built their houses of heavy timbers, lath, and plaster. The framework was elaborately carved.<sup>1</sup> There is mention of carved gateposts in The English Traveller:

Reignald: See what a goodly Gate?

Reignald:           • • •  
What brave caru'd poasts,  
Who knowes but here, In time Sir.  
You may keepe your Shreualtie:  
And I be one oth' Seriants.

Old Lionell: They are well Caru'd.

Ricott: And cost me a good price Sir . . . . (Act IV, sc. 1)

The roofs of these houses were mostly of red tile (or sometimes of lead) because of the fire hazard created by thatched roofs, which were common in the poorer sections.<sup>2</sup> This thatch is mentioned in The Witch of Edmonton (Act IV, sc. 1):

All the countrey-men: What hast got there?

Hamlet: A handful of thatch plucked off a hovel of hers; and they say, when 'tis burning, if she be a witch, she'll come running in.

The floors, usually bare in the poorer homes, were strewed with rushes in the better homes. The rushes on the floor play a part in the arrest of Arden's murderers in Arden of Feversham (Act V, sc. 1, lines 2441-42). The rushes are also mentioned in The English Traveller (Act V, sc. 1) when Dalavill says to Old Lionel: "Methinks friend, You should expect greene rushes to be strow'd, After such discontinuance." Carpets were not used much as floor coverings at this time, but they were used as coverings for beds, tables, or chests.<sup>3</sup> Frankford's house in A Woman Killed with Kindness has carpet in the parlor (Act III, sc. ii), and carpet is used to cover the table before the card game.

Since the Elizabethans loved elegance, their homes were lined with either panels or tapestries, or both. Painted cloths covered the walls of the houses of people who could not afford the panels and tapestries. Regardless of the type of covering of the walls, the subject of the pictures on the covering varied according to the taste of the owner. Even the plastered ceilings were decorated with designs.<sup>4</sup>

The doorway arches were semicircular and had flattened points.<sup>5</sup> Anne Sanders waits in the doorway for her husband in A Warning for Fair Women. Perhaps this doorway resembled the type described by

Pearson:

The attention given to the design of the main entrance was reflected in the intricately recessed doorway and the elaborate projecting porch.

Often several shallow steps led to the carefully designed door, and if the house belonged to a member of the gentry, the family coat of arms would be in evidence, perhaps in each corner of the arch. A typical doorway had several recesses, each a work of art with its paneling, carved moldings, and the design, repeated in the lunette of heavy wood.<sup>6</sup>

The windows of the Elizabethan home were designed with not only a concern for practicality but also for beauty and design. The tracery and carving found on the square-headed mullioned windows were the result of Italian influence. Balancing pairs or groups of bay and oriel windows were common.<sup>7</sup> Bay windows are mentioned in The English Traveller (Act IV, sc. i):

Reignald: Looke that way Sir,  
                   What goodly faire Baye windows?  
 Old Lionell: Wondrous stately.

And in The Miseries of Enforced Marriage (lines 2002-4) Bartley and Wentloe recognize the place they are seeking by the bay window:

Bartley: Heere about is the house sure.  
 Wentloe: We cannot mistake it, for heres the  
                   signe of the Wolfe and the Bay-window.

The houses in London were dark since they were crowded together. Light, in the daytime, was provided by the many windows which generally were not covered with drapery. At night, light in these rooms was provided with candlelight. A Woman Killed with Kindness contains the realistic touches of the command to snuff the lights (Act III, sc. ii) and the request for candles and candlesticks before the card game (Act III, sc. ii).

Every home had fireplaces, the ornamentation of which varied with the wealth of the owner. An example of the usual chore of

placing wood in the fireplaces of the Elizabethan home is seen when billets (chunky pieces of wood) are placed on the fire in Frankford's house in A Woman Killed with Kindness (Act III, sc. ii).

The stairwells of these houses were ornate. They led to the upper chambers, which consisted of bedrooms for the family and their guests. In Arden of Feversham (lines 973-78), Michael tells Greene, Black Will, and Shakebag:

This night come to his house at Aldergate. The  
dores Ile leaue unlockt against you come. No  
sooner shall ye enter through the latch, Ouer  
the thresholde to the inner court. But on your  
left hand shall you see the staires. That leads  
directly to my M. chamber.

#### The Rooms

The houses of this period were generally E- or H-shaped. This structure arose from the common practice of having the quarters of the family on one side of the house and the quarters of the servants on the other side, with the hall and other rooms separating them. Reginald, in The English Traveller (Act IV, sc. i), explains to Ricott that Old Lionel is coming to see how his house is built because he wants to remodel his own in the manner of Ricott's:

Reignald: 'Tis supposed, He hath late found a  
Wife for his Sonne, Now Sir, to haue  
him neere him, and that neernesse Too,  
without trouble, though beneath one  
roofe, Yet parted in two Families; Hee  
would build And make what's pickt, a  
perfit quadrangle, Proportioned iust  
with yours, were you so pleased, To  
make it his example.

The huge central hall was the common meeting ground for the friends and family of the master and the servants.<sup>8</sup> Pearson describes

the hall;

In ordinary homes the hall continued to serve many domestic purposes throughout the century, but in fine houses the hall became more and more a room for special entertainment, and most of its space was kept clear for tables that could be seen through its large windows, but since it was situated at the center of the house, it became more or less a thoroughfare. Here the usher was in charge and must be responsible for all who entered the house. He had to see that the hall was kept clean and free from dogs, but most of all he had to watch out for all comers so that he might announce the 'better sort' to his master. The 'meaner sort' he questioned about their business and dismissed as soon as possible, but not without some cheering drink, unless he served a parsimonious master.<sup>9</sup>

The dancing of A Woman Killed with Kindness and the revelry of the "guests" of Young Lionel in The English Traveller probably take place in the halls of the respective houses.

The richer houses had galleries to display paintings. This can be seen in The English Traveller (Act IV, sc. 1):

Reignald: And what a Gallerie, How costly Seeled;  
What painting round about?

Mention of galleries is also made in Arden of Feversham when Mosby and Alice discuss methods of killing Arden. One plan is to have a painting which will give off poisonous fumes, thereby killing anyone who enters the chamber and smells it (lines 234-41).

The richer the family was, the more bedrooms were built into their house, because entertaining guests was the custom of the time. The furniture of the rooms varied with the wealth of the owner also.

Modest homes had little more than the bed, a chest, a stool, and perhaps a table. The bed, of course, was the most important piece of furniture. Pearson describes the types of beds found in Elizabethan homes:

Among the middle class the average bed was joined, stood about four feet high at the back, was carved, and ended in short, knobby posts rising about three feet above the rail. If the owner could afford it, the bed was curtained with both upper and lower valances, for when drawn they gave privacy. Children and servants slept in the low trundle beds which, in the daytime, could be pushed out of sight under the low valances or 'basses.' Small households might own one four-poster bed. In common households the canopied beds and valances were retained long after they were discarded by the upper classes.<sup>10</sup>

Sir Francis Ilford, in The Miseries of Enforced Marriage, mentions the three basic types of beds:

. . . it shall accord with the state of gentry, to submit my selfe from the featherbed in the Maisters side, or the Flock-bed in the Knights warde, to the straw-bed in the hold . . . (lines 1178-79)

Another mention of the bed is made in Arden of Feversham when Arden's "purse and girdle" are found on the "beds head" in Mosby's room (line 2486). Also, in The English Traveller, the company of drunken revellers in Old Lionel's house include bedsteads in the furniture they throw out of the house (Act II, sc. i).

Since several people slept in the same room, and since Elizabethans relished privacy, private sitting rooms or "closets" were built to provide a retreat. Roger the Clown in The English Traveller refers to these private rooms (Act IV):

Master Dalauill's gone to his Chamber; My Mistresse to hers; 'Tis now about Mid-night; A Banquet prepared,

bottles of Wine in readinesse, all the whole Houshold  
at their rest; And no creature by this, honestly  
stirring, sauing I and my Old Master; Hee in a bye  
Chamber, prepared of purpose for their priuate Meeting;  
And I heere to play the Watchman, against my will.

And, in Arden of Feversham, Alice tells Mosby: "Remember when I lockt  
the in my closet, What were thy words and mine, did we not both  
Decree, to murder Arden in the night" (lines 198-200).

It was a custom of the Elizabethans to perfume their chambers.  
When Anne Sanders buys perfume in A Warning for Fair Women, she may  
plan to use it in this manner. In The English Traveller (Act I,  
sc. ii), Reginald speaks of the smell of the rooms when he dismisses  
Robin:

Because thou stink'st of garlike, is that breath  
Areeing with our Pallace, where each Roome,  
Smells with Muske, Ciuit, and rich Amber-greece,  
Alloes, Cassia, Aromaticke-gummes,  
Perfumes, and Pouders, one whose very garments  
Scent of the fowlds and stables, oh fie, fie.

Another important part of the house consisted of the area used  
for preparing and serving food. Some houses had two kitchens because  
of the number of people who ate there. Poorer houses had a room which  
doubled as a hall and as a kitchen. The important element of both  
was the fireplace with spits before the fire to roast the meat.  
Pearson describes the Elizabethan kitchens:

In the kitchen of a noble's house the adjoining  
rooms devoted to culinary purposes as well as those  
used for storing provisions increased the bedlam of  
activity. Commands would be called out to servants  
in the kitchen, pantry, spicery, and wet and dry  
larders. In the latter were stored liquors, meats,  
and other foods. Bread was kept in the pantry,  
where the pastry ovens were also located. Spiceries  
were special departments only in wealthy homes, and  
in the wet larder were butts or casks of liquor.

Later this room was called the buttery and was used for all kinds of provisions.<sup>11</sup>

In The English Traveller, Roger announces that the meal is ready by saying:

Dancing newes sir,  
For the meat stands piping hot vpon the dresser,  
The kitchin's in a heat, and the Cooke hath so  
bestir'd himselfe,  
That hee's in a sweat. The Iacke plaies Musicke,  
and the Spits  
Turne round too 't. (Act I, sc. 1)

A "yeoman of the buttery" asks Browne in A Warning for Fair Women if he would like to drink ale or beer, and the buttery hatch is mentioned in The English Traveller when Robin, a servingman, says to Old Lionel: ". . . his Buttrey hatch Now made more common then a Tauernes barre" (Act I, sc. 11). Mention of the pantry is made in A Warning for Fair Women when Anne Sanders sits in the doorway waiting for her husband and tells her son:

Goe pratling boy, go bid your sister see  
My Closet lockt when she takes out the fruite.

Mention of a broom closet is made in Arden of Feversham when Black Will and Shakebag are hidden in the broom closet by Greene (Act IV, sc. 1). (Arden's body is later hidden in the countinghouse, a room used for keeping records and for transacting business.)

The private dining area for the family, the parlor (See A Woman Killed with Kindness, Act III, sc. 11), was usually located off the upper end of the hall. If the guests were not too numerous, they ate with the family in the parlor. If the gathering was large, the meals were eaten in the hall. Even modest homes usually had a parlor even though the furniture might consist of only a table and stools.<sup>12</sup>

The furniture in the dining area usually consisted of tables, stools, a cupboard, and two or three chairs.<sup>13</sup> Since chairs were a luxury introduced slowly into the homes of the common people, there are more references in the plays to stools than to chairs. These stools, sometimes called joint stools, were about two feet high and were sometimes used as tables.<sup>14</sup>

Among the references to these stools are the following:

Robin: His Stooles that welcm'd none but ciuill  
 guests,  
 Now onely free for Pandars, Whores and  
 Bawdes, Strumpets, and such.  
 (The English Traveller, Act I, sc. ii)

Young Geraldine reports on the activities of the home  
 of Young Lionel:

At this All fall to Worke, and Hoyste into  
 the Street, As to the Sea, What next to their  
 hand, Stooles, Tables, Tressels, Trenchers,  
 Bed-steds, Cups, Pots, Plate, and Glasses.  
 (The English Traveller, Act II, sc. i)

Later in The English Traveller (Act IV, sc. i), the stage  
 directions provide:

Table and Stooles set out, Lights; a  
 Banquet, Wine  
 for the meeting between Wincott and Young Geraldine.

In The Miseries of Enforced Marriage (line 2653), Scarborough  
 calls for

a table, candles, stooles, and all things fit  
 to be set out for Doctor Baxter of Oxford, who counsels him.

Frankford calls for a stool in A Woman Killed with Kindness  
 (Act IV, sc. ii, line 19):

A stool, a stool!

The high regard for chairs can be seen in Arden of Feversham (lines  
 2133-34) when Black Will tells Alice:

Place Mosbie being a stranger in a chaire,  
 And let your husband sit upon a stoole . . . .

Also, in A Warning for Fair Women, the injured Beane is brought in a chair, and in The Miseries of Enforced Marriage (line 2676) heaven is called God's chair and earth God's footstool.

### Gardens

Every home had a garden, for Elizabethans loved their gardens as much as their homes. Gardens of the richer people were formal with terraces, arbors, fountains, and walks. The clown of The English Traveller announces to the audience (Act IV, sc. 1): "This is the Garden gate; And heere am I set to stand Centinell, and to attend the coming of Young Master Geraldine." These walks and gardens further the action in the same play when Wincott, Prudentilla, Young Geraldine, and Wincott's wife walk in the gardens of Old Geraldine, allowing Dalavill a chance to plant suspicion in the mind of Old Geraldine concerning Young Geraldine's conduct with Wincott's wife (Act III, sc. 1). And Wincott praises them:

Wincott: Y'aeue Master Geraldine,  
Faire walkes and gardens, I haue praised them,  
Both to my Wife and Sister.

Old Geraldine: You would see them,  
There's no pleasure that the House can yeeld,  
That can be debar'd from you; prethee Sonne,  
Be thou the Vsher to those Mounts and Prospects  
May one day call thee Master.

### Meals

The times for meals were generally the same. Breakfast was usually eaten alone in the private chambers. The gentry usually ate dinner, the most important meal, between ten and twelve, and had supper at five.<sup>15</sup> The farmers dined at one and ate supper at seven.

Reference to the meals is made in The English Traveller (Act I, sc. 1) by Wincott and Roger the Clown:

Wincott: This fellowes my best clocke,  
Hee still strikes trew to dinner.

Clown: And to supper too sir, I know not how the  
day goes with you, but my stomacke hath struck  
twelve, I can assure you that.

In the better homes the table would be covered with a cloth.

References to the tablecloth can be found in The Miseries of Enforced Marriage (line 802): "the cloths laide, the meat cooles," and in

A Woman Killed with Kindness (Act III, sc. 11): "Enter three or four Serving-men, one with a voider and a wooden knife to take away; another the salt and bread; another the table-cloth and napkins; another the carpet; Jenkin with two lights after them" and (Act IV, sc. 11):

"Enter Butler and Jenkin, with a table-cloth, bread, trenchers, and salt." A salt-cellar was always placed on the table, and at every place was set a trencher (wooden platter), a napkin, and a spoon.

Wine, ale, glasses, and cups were set on the buffet, and a basin and towel were provided for the guest to rinse and dry his fingers.<sup>16</sup>

China dishes and plates were beginning to be known. In A Warning for Fair Women is a reference to the worth of the plate of the Londoner:

Drury: Why Roger, canst thou get but twentie pound,  
Of al the plate that thou hadst frcm us both,  
Mine owne's worth twentie, what hadst thou  
of her?

Roger: Two bolles and spoones I know not what myselfe.  
Tis in a note and I could get no more  
But twentie pound.

Reference to plate is also made in Arden of Feversham (lines 701-13) when Bradshaw asks Black Will if he knows who stole the plate of

Lord Cheiny. Also, in The Miseries of Enforced Marriage (lines 2067-70), Sir Francis Ilford tells Scarborough's sister that he is ready to see her wealth--her plate, jewels, and treasure.

There is a reference to the towel in Arden of Feversham: Black Will plans to pull Arden down to the floor with a towel (line 2136), and this same towel is used as evidence for the guilt of the murderers (line 2426). Knives as eating utensils only began commonly to take the place of fingers in 1563, and forks were not used before 1611.<sup>17</sup> Guests commonly used their own knives. The crime of Frank Thorney in The Witch of Edmonton is discovered when the murdered Susan's sister Kate searches for Frank's knife so that he may cut up his chicken. When she finds the bloody knife, she knows that he is the murderer (Act IV, sc. ii).

It was customary to spend two or three hours at dinner. The richer class of people favored elaborate cooking with eccentric flavoring, and luxuries and extravagance in food became common.

Pearson discusses the common diet of the Elizabethans:

At a dinner expected to last two or three hours . . . several joints might be served, several kinds of fish, and several kinds of game, venison, etc., besides salads, vegetables, sweetmeats, fruits, and several kinds of wine and other drink. No one was ever expected to partake of all the dishes but to eat and drink moderately by making a selection from the variety so bounteously offered. When the rich merchant or gentleman dined alone with his family, he had about three dishes at supper, such as roast mutton, boiled rabbit or fowl, served with vegetables and bread, and always some drink, such as ale or claret. If he had guests--and a rich or ambitious man could scarcely afford not to have guests frequently--four to six dishes were served at a simple meal. Salad usually came before the meats, and

fruit last. . . The common people were compelled to live chiefly on 'white meats,' consisting of milk, butter, cheese, and bread, though soups and thick broths also formed a large part of their diet.<sup>18</sup>

It should be noted that the bread the rich ate was "wheaten" bread and manchet, a fine white bread also of wheat. The poor class ate bread made of rye or barley, or of beans, pease, or oats.<sup>19</sup>

In the sixteenth century, William Harrison explained the abundance of food on the Elizabethan tables:

The situation of our region, lying near unto the north, doth cause the heat of our stomachs to be of somewhat greater force: therefore our bodies do crave a little more ample nourishment than the inhabitants of the hotter regions are accustomed withal, whose digestive force is not altogether so vehement, because their internal heat is not so strong as ours, which is kept in by the coldness of the air that from time to time (especially in winter) doth environ our bodies. It is no marvel therefore that our tables are oftentimes more plentifully garnished than those of other nations . . . .<sup>20</sup>

He further comments on the types of food found on Elizabethan tables:

. . . there is no restraint of any meat either for religious sake or public order in England, but it is lawful for every man to feed upon whatsoever he is able to purchase, except it be upon those days whereon eating of flesh is especially forbidden by the laws of the realm, which order is taken only to the end our numbers of cattle may be the better increased and that abundance of fish which the sea yieldeth more generally received. . . white meats, milk, butter, and cheese. . . are now reputed as food appertinent only to the inferior sort, whilst such as more wealthy do feed upon the flesh of all kinds of cattle accustomed to be eaten, all sorts of fish taken upon our coasts and in our fresh rivers, and such diversity of wild and tame fowls as are either bred in our island or brought over unto us from other countries of the main.<sup>21</sup>

The Elizabethans disliked delaying meals. In The Miseries of Enforced Marriage, Thomas Scarborough tells Clare (lines 806-8):

"the meat staies for us, and our stomacks ready for the meat. . . ."

The best examples of the food eaten by the richer Elizabethans can be seen in The English Traveller (Act I, sc. ii) when Young Lionell calls for duck, capon, turkey, green plover (also a fowl), snite (snipe?), partridge, lark, cock, pheasant, and widgin (a type of duck). He then calls for caviar, sturgeon, anchovies, pickled oysters, and a potato pie. He also says: "No Butchers meat, Of that, beware in any case." Roger the Clown describes their feasting as ". . . Feeding like Horses, and Drinking like Fishes; Where for Pints, w'are served in Pottles (half-gallons); and in stead of Pottle-pots, in Pailles; in stead of Siluertanckards, we drinke out of Water-tanckards; Clarret runs as feely, as the Cocks; and Canarie, like the Conduits of a Coronation day . . . ." He further describes the feast:

It seems it was first Broacht in the Kitchin;  
 Certaine creatures being brought in thither, by  
 some of the House; The Cooke being a Colloricke  
 fellow, did so Towse them and Tosse them, so Plucke  
 them and Pull them, till hee left them as naked as  
 my Naile, Pinioned some of them like Fellons; Cut  
 the Spurres from others of their Heeles; Then downe  
 went his Spits; Some of them ranne in at the Throat,  
 and out at the Back-side; About went his Basting-  
 Ladle, where he did so besawce them, that many shrode  
 turne they had amongst them. . . The chieftest that  
 fell in this Battell, were wild Fowle and tame Fowle;  
 Phessants were wounded in stead of Alfaresse, and  
 Capons for Captaines, Anchoues stood for Antiants,  
 and Caiiare for Corporals, Dishes were assaulted in  
 stead of Ditches, and Rabbets were cut to pieces  
 vpon the rebellings, some lost their Legs, whil'st  
 other of their wings were forc'd to flie; The Pioner  
 vndermind nothing but Pie-crust; And-- (Act II, sc. i)

The clown makes another reference to food on the next page: "This

is like hastie Pudding, longer in eating then it was in making."

(There is also a reference to porridge in The Miseries of Enforced Marriage, line 1294.)

In The Witch of Edmonton, Carter says:

. . . bread, beer, and beef, yeoman's fare; we have no kickshaws (fancy dishes); full dishes, whole bellyfuls. Should I diet three days at one of the slender city-suppers, you might send me to Barber-Surgeons' hall the fourth day, to hang up for an anatomy. (Act I, sc. ii)

Also, references are made to beer (Act III, sc. iv), butter and cheese (Act IV, sc. i), chicken (Act IV, sc. ii), and roast meat (Act V, sc. i).

Liquors were the common drink of the Elizabethans. Fifty-six French wines were imported and thirty kinds of Italian, Greek, Spanish, and Canary wines were imported.<sup>22</sup> In addition to the references already cited, wine and other liquors are mentioned in The Miseries of Enforced Marriage: ale (line 556), wine (line 710), "licquor" (line 751), wine (line 1061), "a full gallon of sacke" (line 1319), "a Cuppe of sacke and a Capons legge" (line 1335), and "I can drink Muscadine and Egges, and Muld sack" (lines 1496-97).

In The English Traveller, Reginald insults Robin in terms of food:

Adue good Cheese and Oynons, stuffe thy guts With  
Specke and Barley-pudding for digestion, Drinke  
Whig and sowre Milke, whilst I rince my Throat,  
With Burdeaux and Canarie. (Act I, sc. ii)

Another reference to food and meals is made in Arden of Fever-sham when Alice tries to explain the blood found by Franklin by saying: "It is a cup of Wine that Michaell shed" (line 2445) and

"It is the pigs bloode we had to supper" (line 2431).

### Guests

As mentioned earlier, it was usual for an Elizabethan family to have guests, not only because of the amount of time required for traveling from one place to another and the desire to cultivate the "right people," but also because the Elizabethans simply enjoyed having guests in their homes. In The English Traveller, Young Geraldine and Dalavill are told by Roger the Clown:

. . . you have so seasonably made choise, to come  
so just at dinner time; you are welcome Gentlemen,  
Ile go tell my Master of your comming. (Act I, sc. 1)

And when Wincott greets them he says:

Gentlemen, welcome, but what neede I vse  
A word so common, vnto such to whom my house  
was neuer priuate. . . . (Act I, sc. 1)

And still later, Wincott says to them:

You take vs vnprouided Gentlemen  
Yet something you shall finde, and wee would rather  
Giue you the entertaine of houshold guests,  
Then complement of strangers. . . . (Act I, sc. 1)

Immediately following this, Wincott's servant, Roger the Clown, sums up this attitude:

Ile stand too't, that in good hospitality, there  
can be nothing found that's ill, he that's a good  
house-keeper, keepe a good table, a good table, is  
neuer without good stooles, good stooles, seldome  
without good guests, good guests, neuer without good  
cheere, good cheere, cannot bee without good stomackes,  
good stomackes, without good digestion, good digestion,  
keepe men in good health, and therefore all good people,  
that beare good minds, as you loue goodness, be sure  
to keepe good meat and drinke in your houses, and so  
you shall be called good men, and nothing can come on't  
but good, I warrant you. (Act I, sc. 1)

This tendency to welcome guests plays an important role in two of the domestic tragedies. Arden of Feversham is consoled by his wife and is persuaded to invite all the people present for supper. Michael reports to Alice:

Arden sent me to bring you word  
That Mosbie, Francklin, Bradshaw, Adam fowle,  
With diuers of his neighbors and, his frends,  
Will come and sup with you at our house this night.  
(lines 2044-47)

This, of course, leads to the murder of Arden because he has welcomed these people into his house, and to the discovery of the murder when the later guests find his body. Frankford in A Woman Killed with Kindness tells his friend Wendoll that he is free to use his table, his purse, and his men, and extends total hospitality to him. Wendoll then takes advantage of Frankford's hospitality when he begins an illicit relationship with Mistress Frankford.

### Servants

Numerous guests and huge meals in the Elizabethan households necessitated many servants. Most of these were assigned the kitchen area; however, many of the servants in the domestic tragedies are personal servants. These people felt bound to their families by genuine responsibility; they were considered members of the family, yet they could leave if they so desired. Generally they were very trustworthy and proud of their work.<sup>23</sup>

In The Witch of Edmonton, Frank Thorney and his wife Winnifrede are both servants to Sir Arthur Clarington. In A Yorkshire Tragedy, Oliver and Ralph, two servingmen, provide the expository information

needed for the audience to understand the plot, and it is a servant who attempts to capture the husband after he has stabbed his wife and children. At the beginning of this play, Sam says:

You see I am hangd after the truest fashion,  
three hats, and two glasses, bobbing vpon em,  
two rebato wyers, vpon my brest, a capcase by  
my side, a brush at my back, an Almanack in my  
pocket, & three ballats in my Codpeece, maie I  
am the true picture of a Common seruingman.

In Arden of Feversham, Michael, Arden's servant, agrees to help with the murder of his master. But he does so because Alice, Arden's wife, has promised that Michael may marry Susan, Mosby's sister. Alice tells him: "What needes all this, I say that Susan's thing" (line 166). And Michael replies:

Why then I say that I will kill my master  
Or any thing that you will have me doo. (lines 167-68)

Later, when confronted by Greene, Black Will, and Shakebag, Michael says:

Well gentlemen I cannot but confesse,  
Sith you have urdged me so apparantly,  
That I haue vowed my M. Ardens death,  
And he whose kindly loue and liberall hand,  
Doth challenge naught but good deserts of me,  
I will delyuer ouer to your hands. (lines 967-72)

But then Michael has second thoughts about what he has agreed to do:

Ah harmeles Arden how, how hast thou misdome,  
That thus thy gentle lyfe is leueld at,  
The many good turnes that thou hast don to me,  
Now must I quitance with betraying thee.  
I that should take the weapon in my hand,  
And buckler thee from ill intending foes.  
Do lead thee with a wicked fraudfull smile,  
As unsuspected, to the slaughterhouse;  
So haue I sworne to Mosby and my mistres.  
So haue I promised to the slaughtermen.  
And should I not deale currently with them,  
Their lawles rage would take reuenge on me.

Tush I will spurne at mercy for this once.  
 Let pittie lodge where feeble women ly  
 I am resolued, and Arden needs must die. (lines 991-1005)

Again Michael wavers because of his devotion to his master:

Conflicting thoughts incamped in my brest  
 Awake me with the Echo of their strokes;  
 And I a iudge to censure either side,  
 Can giue to neither wished victory.  
 My masters kindness pleads to me for lyfe,  
 With iust demaund, and I must grant it him,  
 My mistres she hath forced me with an oath,  
 For Susans sake the which I may not breake,  
 For that is nearer the a masters loue. (lines 1070-78)

Michael then calls out in his distress, thus awakening Arden and Franklin, who lock the doors Michael had left open for the murderers.

In The English Traveller, three servants are presented. Reginald is called "a parasiticall seruing-man" in the list of characters, and indeed he does take over the household in the absence of Old Lionel. Reginald banishes Robin, "a countrey seruingman," because he objects to the manner in which Reginald has been running the house:

Waste, Ryot, and Consume, Mispemd your Howres  
 In drunken Surfets, lose your dayes in sleepe,  
 And burne the nights in Reuells, Drinke and Drab,  
 Keepe Christmase all yeere long, and blot leane Lent  
 Out of the Calendar; all that masse of wealth  
 Got by my Masters sweat and thrifty care,  
 Hauocke in Prodigall vses; Make all flie,  
 Pour't downe your oylie throats, or send it smoaking  
 Out at the tops of chimnies; At his departure,  
 Was it the old mans charge to haue his windowes  
 Glister all night with Starres? his modest House  
 Turn'd to a common Stewes? his Beds to pallats  
 Of Lusts and Prostitutions? his Buttrey hatch  
 Now made more common than a Tauernes barre,  
 His Stooles that welcom'd none but ciuill guests,  
 Now onely free for Pandars, Whores and Bawdes,  
 Strumpets, and such. (Act I, sc. ii)

Later, when Old Lionel discovers Reginald's mismanagement and threatens punishment, Reginald pleads:

Why Master? Haue I laboured,  
 Plotted, Contriued, and all this while for you,  
 And will you leaue me to the Whip and Stockes,  
 Not mediate my peace. (Act IV)

Old Lionel ends up only scolding Reginald, and Reginald promises:

"I was the Fox, But I from hencefoorth, will no more the Fox--."

Wincott's servant, Roger the Clown, provides a view of a typical servant as he carries messages and performs other services, all with a touch of humor. Another servant in the play is Besse, the chambermaid to Wincott's wife, who is the first to tell Young Geraldine of the unfaithfulness of Wincott's wife.

Frankford's household servants in A Woman Killed with Kindness, Nicholas, Jenkin, Spigot, and Cicely, maid to Mistress Frankford, provide the humor of the play and some realistic comments as well:

Jenkins: O Nick! What gentleman is that that comes  
 to lie at our house? My master allows him one  
 to wait on him, and I believe it will fall  
 to thy lot.

Nicholas: I love my master; by these hilts, I do;  
 But rather than I'll ever come to serve him,  
 I'll turn away my master.

Cicely: Nich'las! where are you, Nich'las? You  
 must come in, Nich'las, and help the gentle-  
 man off with his boots.

Nicholas: If I pluck off his boots, I'll eat the  
 spurs, And they shall stick fast in my throat  
 like burrs.

Cicely: Then, Jenkin, come you!

Jenkin: Nay, 'tis no boot for me to deny it. My  
 master hath given me a coat here, but he  
 takes pains himself to brush it once or  
 twice a day with a holly wand.

Cicely: Come, come, make haste, that you may wash  
 your hands again, and help to serve in dinner.

Jenkin: You may see, my masters, though it be after-  
 noon with you, 't is but early days with  
 us, for we have not din'd yet. Stay a little;  
 I'll but go in and help to bear up the first  
 course, and come again to you presently.

(Act II, sc. i, lines 87-111)

The loyalty of Nicholas to his master is strong:

I love my master, and I hate that slave;  
I love my mistress, but these tricks I like not.  
My master shall not pocket up this wrong,  
I'll eat my fingers first. (Act II, sc. ii, lines 171-74)

Later, when Wendoll is preparing to leave, Jenkin tells him:

What, my young master, that fled in his shirt! How  
come you by your clothes again? You have made our  
house in a sweet pickle, ha' ye not, think you?  
What, shall I serve you still, or cleave to the  
Old house? (Act V, sc. iii, lines 116-20)

### Clothing

The clothing of the Elizabethans can also be seen in the plays.

In the sixteenth century, William Harrison wrote of the clothing of the Elizabethans: ". . . nothing is more constant in England than inconstancy of attire."<sup>24</sup> He continues:

. . . then we must put it on, then must the long  
seams of our hose be set by a plumb-line, then we  
puff, then we blow, and finally sweat till we drop,  
that our clothes may stand well upon us.<sup>25</sup>

The clothing of the period was varied, and there was a craze for novelty. However, some general statements may be made about the attire of these people.

This was "the era of the doublet and hose, the ruff and the farthingale."<sup>26</sup> The breeches and doublets of a man were padded to an uncomfortable size. The waistline of the doublet came down into a V-shaped point in front, and it was attached by tagged laces, called points, to the breeches. The neck was finished either with a small ruff like a "pie-dish" collar or with an ordinary "turn-over" collar. The breeches were worn with stockings, and a cloak, buttoned

at the shoulders, was worn over all. The cloaks of the period were of silk, velvet, or damask, and they were embroidered with gold or silver. The linings, which were of different colors, were often as costly and as beautiful as the actual cloaks.

The woman of the period wore an undergown or petticoat revealed from waist to hem in front by the cutting away of the gown in an inverted V. The gown was "full in skirts, and worn over the bell-shaped Spanish farthingale made the wearer look rather like an hour-glass. The bodice was long-waisted, ending in a sharp point. Across the shoulders it was cut low and square, and was surmounted by a high-necked chemisette, with a small ruff. The sleeves were frequently puffed, slashed, or epauletted like the men's."<sup>27</sup> About 1580, the ruff and the French farthingale began to dominate the fashion. The French farthingale was "a monstrous invention which held the skirts out stiffly all round the figure. It consisted of a kind of projecting shelf or hip-bolster which was attached to the bottom of the corset, and over which the petticoats and gown were then draped. It varied from a complete oval to a semicircle at the back of the skirt; the latter was slightly more becoming, but either kind gave the wearer a stiff and stumpy appearance, the shortness of the legs being further accentuated by the extremely long bodies of the gowns, so designed to imitate for every lady of fashion the Queen's long-waisted figure."<sup>28</sup>

However, the lower classes of people did not dress in the same manner. Elderly men "as a rule wore a long gown with hanging sleeves over their doublet and hose, and quiet colours and older fashions

were always to be seen in any street crowd. But in some form or another extravagance made itself felt everywhere."<sup>29</sup> The underclothing of the Elizabethans consisted of a linen smock for the lady and a linen shirt for the man. Over these were worn ordinary garments, with extra clothing added for colder weather.

There are few references to women's clothing in the domestic tragedies. In The Witch of Edmonton (Act I, sc. ii), Carter asks Warbeck and Somerton: "And how do you find the wenches, gentlemen? have they any mind to a loose gown and a strait shoe?" In A Yorkshire Tragedy, the stage directions call for: "Enter wife in a riding suite with a seruingman," and in The Witch of Edmonton (Act I, sc. i), the stage directions read: "Re-enter Winnifrede in a riding-suit." In The Miseries of Enforced Marriage (lines 2072-75), Sir Francis Ilford tells Scarborough's sister: ". . . for that giues thee a new gowne to morrow morning, by this hand do thou but dream what stuffe and what Fashion thou wilt haue it on to night." In A Woman Killed with Kindness, there are several references to women's clothing. Susan tells her brother Sir Charles Mountford: "Brother, why have you trick'd me like a bride, Bought me this gay attire, these ornaments? Forget you our estate, our poverty?" (Act V, sc. 1, lines 1-3). Sandy tells Susan that he remembers when she was "Mistress Sue, trick'd up in jewels" (Act III, sc. iii, line 23). Master Frankford tells his wife to remove everything that belongs to her:

Go make thee ready in thy best attire;  
Take with thee all thy gowns, all thy apparel;  
Leave nothing that did ever call thee mistress,  
Or by whose sight, being here in the house,

I may remember such a woman by.  
 Choose thee a bed and hangings for thy chamber;  
 Take with thee everything which hath thy mark.  
 (Act IV, sc. v, lines 124-30).

And later, Frankford says:

I would not have a bodkin or a cuff,  
 A bracelet, necklace, or rabato wire,  
 Nor anything that was call'd hers. (Act V, sc. iii, lines  
 7-10)

In A Warning for Fair Women, Joane, the maid of Old Joan, asks Beane to bring her something:

John, pray ye bestowe a groate or sixe pence of  
 Carnation Ribbin to tie my smocke sleeves, they  
 flappe about my handes too bad, and Ile giue you  
 your money again.

And later, Old John tells Joane to "take my napkin and thy apron" to bind the wounds of Beane. In The English Traveller, Young Lionel tells Scapha that

Hencefoorth, I will Confine thee on one Garment,  
 And that shall be a cast one, Like thy selfe.

Scapha had said to him previously:

. . . tie thy selfe to one Gowne; and what Foole,  
 but will change with the Fashion, Yes, doe, Con-  
 fine thy selfe to one Garment, and vse no Varietie,  
 and see how soone it will Rot, and turne to Raggs.

People were just beginning to wear garments to bed. Reference to the sleeping attire is made in The English Traveller (Act IV): "Enter Dalauill in a Night-gowne, Wife in a Night-tyre, as coming from Bed." In A Woman Killed with Kindness, Anne, who thinks her husband is catching cold, calls for his dressing-gown. Later, the stage directions read: "Enter Wendoll, running over the stage in a night-gown, he (Frankford) after him with his sword drawn, the maid

in her smock stays his hand, and clasps hold on him" (Act IV, sc. v).

In A Yorkshire Tragedy, reference is made to a child's clothing: "Husb, takes vp the childe by the skirts of his long coate in one hand and drawes his dagger with the other." And in A Warning for Fair Women, reference is made to new Easter clothing for the son of Sanders:

Boy: Mother, shal not I haue new bow and shafts,  
 Against our schoole go a feasting?  
 Anne: Yes if ye learn,  
 And against Easter new apparel too.  
 Boy: Youle lend me al your scarves, and al your rings,  
 And buy me a white feather for my veluet cappe,  
 Wil ye mother? yea say, praie ye say so.

In the same play, Anne Sanders talks to a draper and a millener:

Come neare I pray you, I doe like your linnen,  
 and you shall haue your price; but you my friend,  
 the gloues you shewed me, and the Italian purse  
 are both well made. and I doe like the fashion,  
 but trust me, the perfume I am afraide will not  
 continue, yet upon your words ile haue them too.

And later in the same play, Mistress Drury argues to Anne Sanders that "the next (husband) shall keepe you in your hood, and gowne of silke."

In A Warning for Fair Women, Beane describes Browne: "One in a white dublet and blew breeches." Later a "water man" describes Browne as wearing "a doublet of white satten, And a large paire of breeches of blew silke. . . his hose were bloody, which he hid Stil with his hat sitting bare head in the boate." And the report of his description says: "The man that did the deede, Was faire and fat, his doublet of white silke, His hose of blew."

The Miseries of Enforced Marriage opens with Sir Francis Ilford

telling Wentloe "thou art not worthy to weare guilte Spurs, cleane Linnen, nor good Cloaths" (lines 7-8). Ilford later says of Scarborough: "And now I put him into good Cloths to shift two sutes in a day, that could scarce shift a patcht shirt once in a yeare, and sayes prayers when he had it" (lines 560-62). Later, when trying to convince Scarborough to spend his money, Bartley argues that Scarborough now wears good clothes (line 1184). Another reference to clothes in the play comes when Butler tells Wentloe and Bartley as he promises them wives: "Away, put on your best cloaths, get you to the Barbers, Curle vp your haire. . ." (lines 1831-34).

In Arden of Feversham, when Arden tells Mosby to use his sword (lines 323-24), he tells Mosby "to use your bodkin, Your Spanish needle, and your pressing Iron." The term "bodkin" could refer either to a dagger or a sharp slender instrument for making holes in cloth. Other references to clothing in the play come when Black Will asks Bradshaw to describe the man who stole Lord Cheiny's plate:

Will: What apparell had he,  
 Brad: A watchet sattin doublet all to torne,  
 The inner side did beare the greater show,  
 A paire of threed bare veluet hose seame rent,  
 A wosted stockin rent aboue the shoe,  
 A liuery cloake, but all the lace was of,  
 Twas bad, but yet it serued to hide the plate.  
 (lines 721-27)

Other references to clothing can be seen in A Woman Killed with Kindness as well. Sir Charles Mountford tells Frankford that his new wife

. . . doth become you like a well-made suit,  
 In which the tailor hath us'd all his art,  
 Not like a thick coat of unseason'd frieze,

Forc'd on your back in summer. She's no chain  
To tie your neck, and curb ye to the yoke,  
But she's a chain of gold to adorn your neck.  
(Act I, sc. 1, lines 59-64)

Later Sir Charles tells his sister Susan:

I have so bent my thoughts to husbandry,  
That I protest I scarcely can remember  
What a new fashion is; how silk or satin  
Feels in my hand. (Act IV, sc. 1, lines 47-50)

And the reference to the servants and the boots of Wendoll cited earlier (Act II, sc. 1, lines 95 ff.) is a good example of how these details of everyday life add much to the domestic tragedies.

## CHAPTER IV

### ENTERTAINMENT IN THE HOME

The Elizabethans preferred to spend their leisure time outdoors, but when they were in their homes they entertained themselves with such activities as card games, table games such as backgammon, dancing, singing, the playing of musical instruments, and smoking.

#### Card Games

Card games were a common form of entertainment in Elizabethan homes. An interesting list of some of these games is presented in A Woman Killed with Kindness when Frankford, his wife Anne, Wendoll, and Cranwell (a visiting acquaintance) prepare to play cards after the table, carpet, candles, counters, and cards have been arranged. The servant Nicholas has informed Frankford of the relationship between his wife and Wendoll; therefore, suspicious of every word they say, Frankford searches for hidden meanings in their conversation as they discuss which card game to play:

Cran.: Gentlemen, what shall our game be?  
Wen.: Master Frankford, you play best at noddy.  
Frank.: You shall not find it so; indeed, you shall not.  
Anne: I can play at nothing so well as double-ruff.  
Frank.: If Master Wendoll and my wife be together,  
          there's no playing against them at double-hand.  
Nich.: I can tell you, sir, the game that Master  
          Wendoll is best at.  
Wen.: What game is that, Nick?  
Nich.: Marry, sir, knave out of doors.  
Wen.: She and I will take you at lodam.  
Anne: Husband, shall we play at saint?  
Frank.: (Aside.) My saint's turn'd devil.--  
          No, we'll none of saint. You are best at  
          new-cut, wife, you'll play at that.

Wen.: If you play at new-cut, I'm soonest bitter  
of any here, for a wager.

Frank.: (Aside.) 'Tis me they play on.--  
Well, you may draw out; For all your cunning,  
't will be to your shame; I'll teach you, at  
your new-cut, a new game. Come, come!

Cran.: If you cannot agree upon the game,  
To post and pair!

Wen.: We shall be soonest pairs; and my good host,  
When he comes late home, he must kiss the post.

Frank.: Whoever wins, it shall be to thy cost.

Cran.: Faith, let it be vide-ruff, and let's make  
honours!

Frank.: If you make honours, one thing let me crave;  
Honour the king and queen except the knave.  
(Act III, sc. ii, lines 148-75)

They proceed to draw to determine which one will deal the cards. Master Wendoll draws the knave (the card with a soldier or servant, the jack), and Anne Frankford draws the queen (implying "quean"). Anne then asks what will be trumps and Wendoll answers "hearts." At this point, Frankford, sick at heart, leaves the table.

This card game has proved more convincing to Frankford in his suspicions of his wife and Wendoll than has the warning given by his servant. Wendoll and Anne have no idea how the double meaning of their words affects Frankford, and the irony of their conversation serves to heighten the dramatic force of this scene. Joseph T.

McCullen comments:

How well a game of cards serves a dramatic purpose may be observed here as the basic terms of the game are made to describe, unknown to the guilty pair, the course of the tragic action decreed by their lust. . . in this manner their secret game is being revealed to Master Frankford and to the audience. This scene immediately intensifies the dramatic power of the play. . . Also, in like manner it provides a doubting mind with grounds for future action which is not to be halted until it has run full course.<sup>1</sup>

Other Games

Besides card games, Elizabethan games included forfeit games, guessing games, various parlor games, and chess. Shovel board, draughts, and billiards were also played, as were various games of the simple country folk which included hot cockles, ninepins, shuttlecock, and handy-dandy.<sup>2</sup>

Backgammon, always referred to as "tables" in the plays, was very popular. This game plays an important role in Arden of Feversham, as it provides the opportunity for the murder of Arden. Mosby plans to occupy Arden in a "friendly" game of tables so that Black Will and Shakebag may murder him. Mosby tells Greene to detain Arden's friend, Frankford, so that he will not be able to prevent the murder:

You M. Greene shal single Francklin foorth,  
And hould him with a long tale of strange newes;  
That he may not come home till suppertime.  
Ile fetch M. Arden home, & we like frends  
Will play a game or two at tables here. (lines 2107-11)

Arden is convinced that his suspicions of his wife and Mosby were ill-founded, and he is happy to join Mosby in a game of backgammon. After the tables have been brought in, Arden and Mosby prepare to play the game:

Arden: Come Ales, is our supper ready yet?  
Ales: It will be then you have plaid a game at tables.  
Arden: Come M. Mosbie, what shall we play for.  
Mosbie: Three games for a french crowne sir,  
And please you.  
Arden: Content.

Then they play at the tables:

Mosbie: One ace, or els I lose the game.  
Arden: Nary six theres two for fayling.  
Mosbie: Ah M. Arden (now I can take you) (lines 2240-53)

These last words were the signal for Black Will and Shakebag to spring from their hiding place and murder Arden.

McCullen has pointed out how this game of backgammon "greatly intensifies the emotions of the spectators, who in contrast to Arden, foresee the murder that has been planned by his wife and Mosbie."<sup>3</sup> Because the audience is aware of Arden's false sense of security, the suspense grows as the game proceeds.

### Dice and Gambling

The extreme popularity of backgammon, which is played with dice, and of primero, a card game which was the chief gambling game "at Court or in a tavern,"<sup>4</sup> indicates the Elizabethan preference for games involving gambling. Although, or perhaps because, gambling was a common pastime among many of the Elizabethans, it is presented as an evil in the domestic tragedies. Every reference to dice or gambling concerns someone's ruin, financially, morally, or both.

In The Yorkshire Tragedy, the husband has played so often at dice that he has lost almost all of his money and lands. He says:

What is there in three dice to make a man draw  
thrice three thousand acres into the compasse  
of a round little table, & with the gentlemans  
palsy in the hand shake out his posteritie. . .

And later the maid expresses sorrow for the children:

'Tis lost at Dice what ancient honour won,  
Hard when the father plaies away the Sonne.

Sir Francis Ilford, in The Miseries of Enforced Marriage, tells of his experiences with dice:

Now let me number how many rooks I

haue halfe vndone already this Tearme  
by the first returne; foure by Dice. . . (lines 510-12)

In the same play, when Ilford, Wentloe, and Bartley make plans to obtain Scarborough's money, Wentloe says:

First draw him into bands for money,  
then to dice for it. . . (lines 543-44)

When Scarborough begins to lose money, he regrets his gambling:

This is the hel of al gamesters, I thinke when  
they are at play, the boord eates vp the money;  
For if there be fiue hundred pound lost, theres  
neuer but a hundred pounds wonne. (lines 1476-78)

Another instance of gambling in the domestic tragedies is found in The English Traveller, when the "guests" in the home of Young Lionell spend their time at "Feast, Dice, Drinke, and Drab" (Act IV).

A Warning for Fair Women presents the evils of gambling more dramatically with the shocking picture of children gambling:

Young Sanders: Come Harrie shall we play a game?  
Harry: At what?  
Y. S.: Why at crosse and pile.  
Har.: You have no Counters.  
Y. S.: Yes but I have as many as you.  
Har.: Ile drop with you, and he that has most, take all.  
Y. S.: No sir, if youle play a game, tis not yet  
twelve by halfe an houre.  
Ile set you like a gamester.  
Har.: Go to, where shall we play?  
Y. S.: Heere at oure doore.

Browne, who has just killed Sanders, feels guilty when he sees Sanders' son playing and tells Roger, Mistress Drury's servant, to send him inside:

Roger: Away my pretty boy, you master comes,  
And youle be taken playing in the street,  
What at unlawful games? away be gone,  
T'is dinner time, yong Sanders youle be jerkt,  
Your mother lookes for you before this time.

Yound Sanders: Caffer if you'le not tel my master  
of me, Ile giue you this new silke poynt.  
Roger: Go to I will not.  
Harry: Nor of me, and there's two counters,  
I haue wonne no more.

The audience realizes that these children should not be gambling, but should be playing with such a toy as a top and scourge (a whip-like string used to start the top spinning). The son in A Yorkshire Tragedy is playing in this manner when his father grabs him. That he should stab his son while he plays at his feet was no doubt an attempt on the part of the dramatist to arouse strong feelings in the audience so that they would realize the horror of his actions. In like manner, the gambling children in A Warning for Fair Women are probably presented to shock the audience into seeing the horrors of gambling.

#### Music

Music played a large role in the activities of the Elizabethan home. Ordinary men and women were accomplished at singing, dancing, and playing instruments. That all Elizabethans, from young to old, from rich to poor, made music a part of their daily lives can be seen in speeches of characters in the domestic tragedies. In A Woman Killed with Kindness, when the imprisoned Sir Charles Mountford is told that all his debts have been paid, he tells his guard:

Thou grumblest out the sweetest music to me  
That ever organ play'd. (Act IV, sc. 1, lines 29-30)

The troubled Frankford, in the same play, tells his servant Nicholas, who has just told him of the activities of Wendoll and Anne;

Astonishment,  
Fear, and amazement beat upon my heart,  
Even as a madman beats upon a drum.

(Act IV, sc. v, lines 23-25)

In The Miseries of Enforced Marriage, when Scarborough's brothers find him in a tavern, Ilford says:

They are Fiddlers I thinke, if they be,  
I preeche sende them into the next roome,  
and let them scrape there, and weell send  
to them presently. (lines 1322-24)

And when Ilford, Bartley, and Wentloe want Butler, Scarborough's servant, to give them information about the proposed "wives" for them, Butler says:

But Cargo, my fiddlestick cannot play without  
Rozen. (line 1705)

Scapha, "a bawde," tells Blanda, "a Whore," in The English Traveller:

. . . is he a Skillful Musician, that plaies  
but on one String. . . make Musicke with all  
Strings. . . (Act I, sc. ii)

And Young Lionell advises Blanda:

Thou shalt to one tune Sing, Lie at one Guard,  
and Play but on one String. . . (Act I, sc. ii)

The Elizabethan men and women "felt ashamed if they could not take their part in the singing of a madrigal or accompanying their songs upon the lute."<sup>5</sup> When the dinner was over, the master of the house called for his music books, and his family, guests, and servants would sing together. In The English Traveller, singers are to be included in the revelry at the house of Young Lionell:

Rioter: Feare not Sir, You will have a full Table.  
Y. Lio.: What, and Musicke?  
Rio.: Best consort in the Citie, for sixe parts.  
Y. Lio.: Wee shall haue Songs then?  
Rio.: Bith' eare. (Act I, sc. ii)

In A Woman Killed with Kindness, the melancholy Wendoll meditates about his desire for Anne Frankford;

I'll drive away this passion with a song.  
 A song! Ha, ha! A song! As if, fond man,  
 Thy eyes could swim in laughter, when thy soul  
 Lies drench'd and drowned in red tears of blood!  
 (Act II, sc. iii, lines 4-7)

The importance of musical ability can be seen in A Woman Killed with Kindness, when Susan Mountford is described according to these talents:

Sandy: I knew you ere your brother sold his land.  
 Then you were Mistress Sue, trick'd up in jewels;  
 Then you sung well, play'd sweetly on the lute. . .  
 (Act III, sc. iii, lines 22-24)

Sir Charles Mountford also praises Anne Frankford according to her musical abilities:

Her own tongue speakes all tongues, and her own hand  
 Can teach all strings to speak in their best grace,  
 From the shrill'st treble to the hoarsest base.  
 (Act I, sc. 1, lines 19-21)

The lute was undoubtedly the most popular instrument among the Elizabethans. After Frankford has banished his wife from his home in A Woman Killed with Kindness, the servant Nicholas points out her lute:

Nich.: 'Sblood! master, here's her lute flung in  
 a corner.  
 Frank.: Her lute! Oh, God! Upon this instrument  
 Her fingers have run quick division,  
 Sweeter than that which now divides our hearts.  
 These frets have made me pleasant, that have now  
 Frets of my heart strings made. Oh, Master Granwell,  
 Oft hath she made this melancholy wood  
 (Now mute and dumb for her disastrous chance)  
 Speak sweetly many a note, sound many a strain  
 To her own ravishing voice; which being well strung,  
 What pleasant strange airs have they jointly rung!--

Post with it after her!--Now nothing's left;  
Of her and hers I am at once bereft.

(Act V, sc. ii, lines 11-24)

Nicholas brings the lute to Anne;

Nich.: There!

Anne: I know the lute. Oft have I sung to thee;  
We both are out of tune, both out of time.

Nich.: Would that had been the worst instrument  
that e'er you played on! My master commends  
him unto ye; there's all he can find that  
was ever yours; he hath nothing left that  
ever you could claim to be his own heart,--

. . . .

Anne: . . . My lute shall groan;  
It cannot weep, but shall lament my moan.

She plays.

(Act V, sc. iii, lines 19-35)

Wendoll approaches her and says:

So poets write that Orpheus made the trees  
And stones to dance to his melodious harp,  
Meaning the rustic and barbarous hinds,  
That had no understanding part in them;  
So she from these rude carters tears extracts,  
Making their flinty hearts with grief to rise,  
And draw down rivers from their rocky eyes.

Anne then says:

Go, break this lute upon my coach's wheel,  
As the last music that I e'er shall make,--  
Not as my husband's gift, but my farewell  
To all earth's joys; and so your master tell!

(Act V, sc. iii, lines 55-78)

Other Elizabethan instruments of the home are also found in  
the domestic tragedies. When Young Geraldine, in The English Trav-  
eller, describes the rioting at Young Lionell's dwelling, he says:

A third, takes the Base-violl for the Cocke-boate,  
Sits in the belly on't, labours and Rows; His  
Oare, the Sticke with which the Fidler plaid; a  
fourth, bestrides his Fellowes, thinking to scape  
as did Arion, on the Dolphins backe, Still fumbling  
on a gitterne.

A gitterne was a medieval stringed instrument of the guitar family.  
 In A Warning for Fair Women, Hystorie enters with a drum and Comedie  
 plays on a fiddle. Tragedie says to Comedie;

Ile cut your fiddle strings,  
 If you stand scraping thus to anger me.

Dancing was a favorite pastime of all Elizabethans. A Woman  
 Killed with Kindness presents a list of dances and dance tunes which  
 were popular at the time. The occasion is the wedding of Frankford  
 and Anne;

Sir Francis Acton: Some music, there! None lead  
 the bride a dance?  
 Sir Charles Mountford: Yes, would she dance "The  
 Shaking of the Sheets"; But that's the dance  
 her husband means to lead her.  
 Wendoll: That's not the dance that every man must  
 dance, According to the ballad.  
 Francis: Music, Ho! . . . This marriage music  
 hoists me from the ground.  
 (Act I, sc. 1, lines 1-9)

Sir Francis Acton and Sir Charles Mountford discuss the country dances  
 that are taking place at the same time as the dances in the hall;

Francis: Now, gallants, while the town musicians  
 Finger their frets within, and the mad lads  
 And country lasses, every mother's child,  
 With nosegays and bride-laces in their hats,  
 Dance all their country measures, rounds,  
 and jigs,  
 What shall we do? Hark! They're all on  
 the hoigh;  
 They toil like milk horses, and turn as  
 round,--  
 Marry, not on the toe! Ay, and they caper,  
 Not without cutting; you shall see, to-morrow,  
 The hall-floor peck'd and dinted like a  
 mill-stone.  
 Made with their high shoes. Though their  
 skill be small,  
 Yet they tread heavy where their hobnails fall.  
 (Act I, sc. 1, lines 80-90)

Two popular Elizabethan dances were the cushion-dance, a round dance performed at weddings, in which the women and men alternately knelt on a cushion to be kissed, and the hay, a country dance having a winding or serpentine movement much like a reel. These dances and others, as well as dance tunes, are mentioned by the servants and the "country fellows" who perform their own dancing in the yard:

Jenkin: Come, Nick, take you Joan Miniver, to trace withal; Jack Slime, traverse you with Cicely Milkpail; I will take Jane Trubkin, and Roger Brickbat shall have Isbell Motley. And now that they are busy in the parlour, come, strike up; we'll have a crash here in the yard.

Nich.: My humour is not compendious; dancing I possess not, though I can foot it; yet, since I am fallen into the hands of Cicely Milkpail, I consent.

Slime: . . . it may be in the way of dancing we can do the horse-trick as well as the serving-men.

Brick: Ay, and the cross-point too.

. . . .

Slime: I come to dance, not to quarrel. Come, what shall it be? "Rogerero"?

Jen.: "Rogerero"? No; we will dance "The Beginning of the World."

Cicely: I love no dance so well as "John come kiss me now."

Nich.: I that have ere now deserv'd a cushion, call for the Cushion-dance.

Brick: For my part, I like nothing so well as "Tom Tyler."

Jen.: No; we'll have "The Hunting of the Fox."

Slime: The Hay, the Hay! There's nothing like the Hay.

. . . .

Nich.: "Put on your Smock o'Monday."

Jen.: So the dance will come cleanly off! Come, for God's sake, agree of something; if you like not that, put it to the musicians; or let me speak for all, and we'll have "Sellenger's Round."

All: That, that, that!

Nich.: No, I am resolv'd thus it shall be; First take hands, then take ye to your heels.

Jen.: Why, would ye have us run away?

Nich.: No, but I would have you shake your heels.-- Music strike up!

They dance; Nick dancing, speaks stately and scurvily,  
the rest after the country fashion.

(Act I, sc. ii, lines 1-66)

Another dance of the lower classes is mentioned in The Witch of Edmonton when Anne Ratcliffe goes mad after the dog rubs against her:

There's a Lancashire hornpipe in my throat; hark,  
how it tickles it, with doodle, doodle, doodle, doodle!  
Welcome, sergeants! Welcome, devil! hands, hands!  
hold hands, and dance around, around, around.

(Act IV, sc. i, p. 243)

The hornpipe was a lively folk dance accompanied by playing on the hornpipe, which was a single reed instrument consisting of a wooden or bone pipe with holes at intervals and a bell and mouthpiece, usually of horn.

Unlike the upper classes who danced the stately, slow pavan, the galliard, and the lavolta, the common people enjoyed such "romping" dances as those mentioned before and the morris dances which were performed by professionals. The "sophisticates" regarded these morris dances with contempt because they delighted the common people with their intricate steps and elaborate costumes.<sup>6</sup> The dancers, who numbered as many as the community could afford, included the Negro, the Moor, the hobbyhorse, the dragon, Friar Tuck, Little John, and Maid Marian, who all produced remarkable pantomime.<sup>7</sup>

The hobbyhorse was the most popular of the dancers. A man was fitted inside a frame with the head and tail of a horse, with strap-pings reaching to the ground to hide the man's feet as he danced. Like the other performers, he had bells tied to his costume, often at the legs. These bells, of different sizes and tones, were known as the fore bell, the second bell, and the treble, mean, tenor, bass,

and double bells.<sup>8</sup>

The presentation of the morris dance by Cuddy Banks and other clowns in The Witch of Edmonton provides many details of the dance.

The bells are the first topic for discussion:

- Cud.: A new head for the tabor, and silver tipping for the pipe; remember that; and forget not five leash of new bells.
- First Cl.: Double bells;--crooked-lane--ye shall have 'em straight in Crooked-lane;--double bells all, if it be possible.
- Cud.: Double bells? double coxcombs! trebles, buy me trebles, all trebles; for our purpose is to be in the altitudes.
- Second Cl.: All trebles? not a mean?
- Cud.: Not one. The morris is so cast, we'll have neither mean nor base in our company, fellow Rowland.
- Third Cl.: What! nor a counter?
- Cud.: By no means, no hunting counter; leave that to Enfield-chase men; all trebles, all in the altitudes.

Next, the clowns decide who shall be the hobby-horse:

- Cud.: Now for the disposing of parts in the morris, little or no labour will serve.
- Second Cl.: If you that be minded to follow your leader know me--an ancient honour belonging to our house--for a fore-horse (i' th' ) team and fore-gallant in a morris, my father's stable is not unfurnished.
- Third Cl.: So much for the fore-horse; but how for a good hobby-horse?
- Cud.: For a hobby-horse? let me see an almanac. Midsummer-moon, let me see ye. "When the moon's in the full, then's wit in the wane." No more, Use your best skill; your morris will suffer an eclipse.
- First Cl.: An eclipse?
- Cud.: A strange one.
- Second Cl.: Strange?
- Cud.: Yes, and most sudden. Remember the fore-gallant, and forget the hobby-horse! The whole body of your morris will be darkened.--There be of us--but 'tis no matter;--forget the hobby-horse!
- First Cl.: Cuddy Banks!--have you forgot since he paced

it from Enfield-chase to Edmonton?--Cuddy, honest Cuddy, cast thy stuff.

Cud.: Suffer may ye all! it shall be known, I can take mine ease as well as another man. Seek your hobby-horse where you can get him.

First Cl.: Cuddy, honest Cuddy, we confess, and are sorry for our neglect.

Second Cl.: The old horse shall have a new bridle.

Third Cl.: The caparisons new painted.

Fourth Cl.: The tail repaired.

First Cl.: The snaffle and the bosses new saffroned o'er.

First Cl.: Kind,--

Second Cl.: Honest,--

Third Cl.: Loving, ingenious,--

Fourth Cl.: Affable Cuddy.

Cud.: To show I am not flint, but affable, as you say, very well stuff, a kind of warm dough of puff-paste, I relent, I connive, most affable Jack. Let the hobby-horse provide a strong back, he shall not want a belly when I am in him--

(Act II, sc. 1, pp. 198-200)

After Cuddy has become involved with Mother Sawyer and the dog, he wishes to have a witch in the morris:

Cud.: . . . Have we e'er a witch in the morris?

First Cl.: No, no; no woman's part but Maid Marian and the hobby-horse.

Cud.: I'll have a witch; I love a witch.

First Cl.: 'Faith, witches themselves are so common now-a-days, that the counterfeit will not be regarded. They say we have three or four in Edmonton besides Mother Sawyer.

Second Cl.: I would she would dance her part with us.

Third Cl.: So would not I; for if she comes, the devil and all comes along with her.

Cud.: Well, I'll have a witch; I have loved a witch ever since I played at cherry-pit. Leave me, and get my horse dressed, give him oats; but water him not till I come. Whither do we foot it first?

Second Cl.: To Sir Arthur Clarington's first, then whither thou wilt.

Cud.: Well, I am content, but we must up to Carter's, the rich yeoman; I must be seen on hobby-horse there.

. . . .  
Cud.: The hobby-horse shall be remembered. But hark you; got Poldavis, the barber's boy, for the witch, because he can show his art better than another.

(Act III, sc. 1, pp. 216-18)

Cuddy asks the dog to take part in the morris:

Cud.: One thing I would request you, ningle,  
as you have played the knavish cur with me  
a little, you would mingle amongst our morris  
dancers in the morning. You can dance?

Dog: Yes, yes, anything; I'll be there, but unseen to  
any but thyself.

(Act III, sc. 1, p. 221)

Later, the morris-dancers arrive at Sir Arthur Clarington's house:

Enter Sawgut the fiddler with the Morris-dancer, &C.

Saw.: Come, will you set yourselves in morris-ray?  
the fore-bell, second-bell, tenor, and great-bell;  
Maid Marian for the same bell. But where's the  
weather-cock now? the Hobby-horse?

. . . .

First Cl.: We stay but for the Hobby-horse, sir;  
all our footmen are ready.

Somerton: 'Tis marvel your horse should be behind  
your foot.

Second Cl.: Yes, sir, he goes further about; we can  
come in at the wicket, but the broad gate must  
be opened for him.

Enter Cuddy Banks with the hobby-horse, followed  
by Dog.

. . . .

First Cl.: Strike up, Father Sawgut, strike up.

Saw.: E'en when you will children. (Cuddy mounts the  
Hobby.)--Now in the name of--the best foot forward!  
--(Endeavours to play, but the fiddle gives no  
sound.)--How now! not a word in thy guts? I  
think, children, my instrument has caught cold  
on the sudden.

. . . .

Saw.: I'll lay mine ear to my instrument that my poor  
fiddle is bewitched. I played "The Flowers in  
May" e'en now, as sweet as a violet; now 'twill  
not go against the hair; you see I can make no  
more music than a beetle of a cow-turd.

Cud.: Let me see, Father Sawgut (Takes the fiddle);  
say once you had a brave hobby-horse that you  
were beholding to. I'll play and dance too.--  
Ningle, away with it. (Gives it to the Dog,  
who plays the morris.)

The constable and officers then break up the morris and arrest Warbeck  
and Somerton for the murder of Susan Carter. Sawgut picks up the

fiddle and says:

Saw.: (strikes his fiddle, which sounds as before)  
 Ay? nay, an my fiddle be come to himself again,  
 I care not. I think the devil has been abroad  
 amongst us to-day; I'll keep thee out of thy  
 fit now, if I can. (Exit with the Morris-dancers.)  
 (Act III, sc. iv, pp. 232-35)

### Smoking

Another popular pastime of the Elizabethans was smoking. They found a great deal of pleasure in smoking, and "court gallants" even hired "professors" to teach them to "drink" tobacco and to blow smoke into shapes of bells, rings, and long tubes. Snuff taking was also popular, partly because it was so expensive.<sup>9</sup>

The Miseries of Enforced Marriage contains references to this practice of "drinking" or inhaling tobacco:

Ilford: . . . feed wel, drink Tobacco  
 and be honored into the presence. . . (lines 19-20)

Wentloe: Why then I think Tobacco be a kind of  
 swearing, for it furs our nose pockily.  
 (lines 1090-91)

Wentloe: . . . and weele stay heere and drinke  
 Tobacco. (line 1117)

There is also a reference to tobacco smoking in A Warning for Fair Women, when Comedy says to Tragedy:

With that a little Rozen flasheth forth,  
 Like smoke out of a Tabacco pipe. . .

There are not enough references to tobacco smoking in the domestic tragedies to determine what opinion the moralists had of it. Those activities connected with music seem to have been the most acceptable, and those activities dealing with gambling are presented as moral

lessons to the Elizabethans.

## CHAPTER V

### BELIEFS OF THE PEOPLE

Up to this point, the external nature of Elizabethan home life, as seen in the domestic tragedies of the period, has been discussed. These plays also contain proverbs and other folk sayings, home cures for illnesses, and superstitions, all of which reveal the mental attitude of the Elizabethans in their daily life at home.

Proverbs and folk sayings, handed down through tradition, were common in the speech of Elizabethans. A saying that is still common today is found in The English Traveller, when Roger the Clown finds Young Geraldine and says:

Oh Sir, you are the Needle, and if the whole  
Country of Middlesex had bin turn'd to a meere  
Bottle of Hay, I had bin injoyn'd to haue found  
you out, or neuer more return'd backe to my old  
Master. (Act III, sc. iv)

This, of course, refers to the common saying "to look for a needle in a haystack."

Other proverbs and folk sayings found in the domestic tragedies convey a dramatic effect in the presentation of husband and wife relationships. After two unsuccessful attempts on the life of Sanders in A Warning for Fair Women, Roger tells Browne: "Haue you forgot what the old prouerbe is, The third time payes for all?" According to Morris Palmer Tilley, this proverb "was spoken to encourage those who have attempted a thing once and again to try a third time."<sup>1</sup> Another example is found in A Woman Killed with Kindness, when the servants discuss the relationship between Anne Frankford and Wendoll.

Cicely says: "Mum; there's an old proverb, --when the cat's away, the mouse may play." And Jenkin replies: "Now you talk of a cat, Cicely, I smell a rat" (Act IV, sc. iii, lines 6-9).

The Witch of Edmonton contains several proverbs dealing with domestic life. When Carter approaches Old Thornton about the proposed marriage between Frank and Susan, he tells Thorney that he means to give no security for "the marriage-money," and Thorney replies: "How! no security? although it need not so long as you live, yet who is he has surety of his life one hour? Men, the proverbe says, are mortal; else, for my part, I distrust you not, were the sum double" (Act I, sc. ii, p. 186). When Warbeck and Susan talk, Carter says: "Let 'em talk on, Master Thorney; I know Sue's mind. The fly may buzz about the candle, he shall but singe his wings when all's done; Frank, Frank is he has her heart" (Act I, sc. ii, p. 188). This is a variation of the proverb "The fly (moth) that plays too long in the candle singes its wings at last."<sup>2</sup> Soon after, Carter says: "Warbeck and Sue are at it still. I laugh to myself, Master Thorney, to see how earnestly he beats the bush, while the bird is flown into another's bosom" (Act I, sc. ii, p. 189). This is also a variation of a proverb: "One beats the bush and another catches the bird."<sup>3</sup> And later, when Carter and Warbeck discuss the forthcoming marriage of Frank Thorney and Susan Carter, Carter says that Warbeck can not blame him, for "Wedding and hanging are tied up both in a proverb; and destiny is the juggler that unties the knot" (Act II, sc. ii, p. 208). The proverb simply states that "Wedding and hanging go by destiny."<sup>4</sup>

The Miseries of Enforced Marriage also contains folk sayings

dealing with relationships between men and women. While teasing Scarborough about his wooing of Clare Harcop, Sir Francis Ilford expresses this belief;

The Wise and Auncient Fathers know this Rule,  
Should both wed Maids, the Child would be a Foole.  
(lines 123-24)

Ilford then tells Scarborough that if he wants women, he should go to London, for "change of pasture makes fat Calues" (line 128).

Ilford, still trying to discourage Scarborough from marrying, says:

Women are the Purgatory of mens pursses, the  
Paradice of their bodies, and the Hel of their  
mindes; Marry none of them. Women are in Churches  
Saints, abroad Angels, at home Diuels. Here are  
married men inow, know this; Marry none of them.  
(lines 148-52)

Scarborough replies that Ilford shows his sharp wit only by downgrading women according to the custom. Ilford proceeds to give Scarborough more advice;

Tho thou hadst Argue eyes, be sure of this,  
Women haue sworne with more then one to kisse.  
(lines 169-70)

A proverb of this time reflects this belief: "Who has a fair wife needs more than two eyes." Scarborough later tells Clare that she must prepare to be the type of wife expected according to the custom;

Maids being once made wiues, can nothing call  
Rightly their owne; they are their husbands all.  
(lines 263-64)

Clare replies with the model of a husband expected of Scarborough;

As women owe a duty, so do men.  
Men must be like the branch and barke to trees,  
Which doth defend them from tempestuous rage,  
Cloth them in Winter, tender them in age,  
Or as Ewes loue vnto their Eanlings liues,

Such should be husbands custome to their wiues.  
 If it sappeare to them they haue straid amisse,  
 They onely must rebuke them with a kisse,  
 Or Clock them as Hens Chickens, with kind call,  
 Couer them vnder their wing, and pardon all;  
 No iarres must make two beds, no strife deuide them,  
 Those betwixt whom a faith and troth is giuen,  
 Death onely parts, since they are knit by heauen.  
 (lines 268-80)

After the unhappy Scarborough has been forced to marry Katherine,  
 Ilford tries to persuade him to spend his money to make everyone  
 happy again;

For this saying, is as true as old;  
 Strife murst twixt man and wife, makes such a flaw,  
 How great so eres their wealth, twil haue a thaw.  
 (lines 657-59)

Folk beliefs found in these plays also include treatments for  
 illnesses. These beliefs were based almost wholly on medieval prac-  
 tices and superstitions. Frankford, in A Woman Killed with Kindness,  
 puts to good use his wife's fear that his agitated state of mind is  
 due to his catching cold;

Anne: It is some rheum or cold.  
 Wendoll: Now, in good faith,  
 This illness you have got by sitting late  
 Without your gown.  
 Frank.: I know it, Master Wendoll.  
 Go, go to bed, lest you complain like me!--  
 Wife, prithee wife, into my bed-chamber!  
 The night is raw and cold, and rheumatic.  
 Leave me my gown and light, I'll walk away my fit.

. . . .  
 Anne: Shall I attend you, husband?  
 Frank.: No, gentle wife, thou'lt catch cold in thy head.  
 (Act III, sc. ii, lines 208-18)

In Arden of Feversham, Michael tells Clark, his rival in love, that  
 Susan Mosby is ill;

Clark: Sick, of what disease?

Michael: Of a great feare.  
 Clark: A fear, of what?  
 Michael: A great feuer.  
 Clark: A feuer God forbidde.  
 Michael: Yes faith, and of a lordaine too,  
 As bigge as your selfe.  
 Clark: O Michael the spleane prickles you.  
 Go too, you carry an eye ouer Mistres Susan.  
 (lines 1657-65)

"Lordaine," or lardan, refers to dullness and incapacity, idleness, and the spleen was supposed to be the seat of emotions or passions.

Home cures are a topic for conversation between Browne and Mistress Drury in A Warning for Fair Women. Browne has fallen in love with Anne Sanders, and Mistress Drury proposed remedies for his "inward grief":

Drury: But if you haue some secret maladie,  
 That craue my helpe, to vse myurgerie,  
 Which though I say't is preitie; he shall hence,  
 If not, be bold to speake, there's no offence.  
 Browne: I haue no sore, but a new inward griefe,  
 Which by your phisicke may find some reliefe.  
 Drury: What, is it a surfet?\*

Browne: I, at this late feast.  
 Drury: Why, Aqua coelistis, or the water of balme,  
 Or Rosa solis,\*\* or that of Doctour Steeuens  
 Will help a surfet. Now I remember me,  
 Mistris Sanders hath a soueraigne thing,  
 To help a sodaine surfet presently.  
 Browne: I thinke she haue; how shal I compasse it?  
 Drury: Ile send my man for some on't.  
 Browne: Pray ye stay.  
 Sheele neuer send that which wil do me good.  
 Drury: O say no so, for then ye know her not.

Mistress Drury then proceeds to tell the wonders of Anne Sanders'

---

\* A surfet was a full, uncomfortable feeling from eating too much.

\*\* Rosa solis was a cordial or liquer originally made from or flavored with the juice of the sundew plant, but later composed of spirits (especially brandy).

cure for "surfeit",

. . . a poore woman tother day,  
 Her water-bearers wife, had surfeted  
 With eating beanes (ye know tis windy meate)  
 And the poore creature's subiect to the stone;  
 She went her selfe, and gaue her but a dramme,  
 It holp her strait, in lesse than halfe an houre  
 She fell vnto her busines till the sweat,  
 And was as well as I am now.

After this speech, Mistress Drury realizes that Browne's malady is love. Later in the same play, Joan calls for a piece of ginger to revive her when she sees John Beane lying wounded: "O master, master, looke in my purse for a piece of ginger, I shall swet, I shall swound, cut my lace, and couer my face. . . ."

These beliefs for the treatment of illness were not the only medieval beliefs held by the Elizabethans. These people were quite superstitious. For example, in A Warning for Fair Women, Joan is concerned about the dream she has had and the fact that her nose has bled;

It is not dismall daie maister? . . . if it be not,  
 then tis either long of the breded cow, that was  
 nere wel in her wits since the butcher bought her calf,  
 of long of my dreame, or of my nose bleeding this  
 morning, for as I was washing my hands my nose bled  
 three drops, then I thought of John Beane, God be with  
 him, for I dreamd he was married, and that our white  
 calfe was kild for his wedding dinner, God blesse  
 them both, for I loue them both well.

Appropriately, immediately after this speech of Joan to Old John, they find the wounded John Beane. Another superstition in the same play is that of Anne Sanders regarding the yellow spots on her fingers:

Anne: Sure I did know as wel when I did rise

This morning, that I should be chast ere noone  
As where I stand.

Drury: By what, good Mistris Sanders?

Anne: Why by these yellow spots upon my fingers,  
They neuer come to me, but I am sure  
To heare of anger ere I goe to bed.

Drury: Tis like enough, I pray you let me see,  
Good sooth they are as manifest as day.

Mistress Drury then utilizes one superstition to lead into another superstition. For she is not only a practicing "surgeon," but she is also a palm reader. She proceeds to read Anne's palm to convince her that her husband will die and she will marry Browne:

Drury: And let me tel you too. I see diciphered  
Within this palme of yours, to quite that euil,  
Faire signes of better fortune to ensue,  
Cheere vp your heart, you shortly shalbe free  
From all your troubles. See you this character  
Directly fixed to the line of life?  
It signifies a dissolution,  
You must be (mistris Anne) a widow shortly.

Anne: No, God forbid, I hope you do but iest.

Drury: It is most certaine, you must burie George.

Anne: Haue you such knowledge then in palmestrie?

Drury: More then in surgerie, though I do make  
That my profession, this is my best liuing,  
And where I cure one sicknesse or disease,  
I tel a hundred fortunes in a yeere.  
What makes my house so haunted as it is,  
With merchants wiues, bachlers and yong maides,  
But for my matchlesse skil in palmestrie?  
Lend me your hand againe, ile tel you more.  
A widow said I? yea, and make a change,  
Not for the worse, but for the better farre;  
A gentleman (my girle) must be the next,  
A gallant fellow, one that is belou'd  
Of great estates, tis playnely figurd here,  
And this is called the Ladder of promotion.

. . . .

Tut, I could tel ye for a neede, his name,  
That is ordained to be your next husband,  
But for a testimonie of my former speeches,  
Let it suffice I find it in your hand,  
That you already are acquainted with him,  
And let me see, this crooked line deriude  
From your ring finger shewes me, not long since  
You had some speech with him in the streete,

Or neere about your doore I am sure it was.

. . . .

His name is George I take it; yea tis so,  
My rules of palmestrie declare no lesse.

Anne: Tis verie strange how ye should know so much.

Drury: Nay I can make rehearsal of the words,  
Did passe betwixt you if I were disposde.  
Yet I protest I neuer saw the man,  
Since, nor before the night he supt with us.

That this was a common belief can be seen in the fact that palmaristry is also found in The Witch of Edmonton. Frank Thorney, who is married to Winnifrede, tells his wife Susan:

. . . 'twas told me by a woman  
Known and approv'd in palmistry,  
I should have two wives. (Act II, sc. ii, p. 213)

By far the most common superstition or belief of the Elizabethans was in witches, devils, and ghosts. The most obvious example is found in the play The Witch of Edmonton in which Elizabeth Sawyer, believed to be a witch by many people, decides that it might as well be true and joins the devil, who appears in the form of a dog. And people in Arden of Feversham and A Warning for Fair Women speak of themselves and others as being bewitched. Alice says: "I was bewitched, woe worth the haples howre, And all the causes that inchaunted me" (lines 1344-45). Mosby answers: "I was bewitched, that is no theame of thine, And thou vnhalloved hast enchaunted me" (lines 1359-60). And Old John tells Joan: "Now by my fathers saddle Joane I thinke we are bewitched, my beasts were neuer wont to breake out so often." The devil is also mentioned in A Yorkshire Tragedy when the servant says to the wife: "I should think so mistris, If he should now be kinde to you and loue you, and cherish you vp, I should thinke the deuill himselfe kept open house in him." The superstition

concerning ghosts is found in The English Traveller when the servant Reginald tries to prevent his master, Old Lionell, from entering his own house, because it is "haunted";

. . . this murdered Ghost appeared,  
His body gasht, and all ore-stucke with wounds,  
And spake to him as followes.

. . . .  
Here was my body buried, here my Ghost  
Must euer walke, till that haue Christian right,  
Till when, my habitacion must be here.

. . . .  
This mansion is acourst. (Act II, sc. ii)

When Old Lionell asks why Reginald is not afraid, he answers "the Ghost and I am friends."

It can be seen, then, that superstitions and folk sayings play a part in these domestic tragedies. Some of these further the plot, such as in A Warning for Fair Women, and others play only minor roles, but all develop the picture of the home life of the people in the domestic tragedies because these beliefs and proverbs were common elements of every Elizabethan home.

CHAPTER VI  
HOUSE AND HOME

Lu Emily Pearson has said that ". . . the self-respecting man, rich or poor, sought to maintain the integralism of his home. In its well-managed beehive of industry there was no room for the laggard, yet always time for merriment and repose and worship. From this center of life emerged whatever stability was present in political, social, or religious Elizabethan England."<sup>1</sup> This stability was due, primarily, to the fact that the Elizabethan home was not simply a house with its furnishings, the meals, and the activities of the people, for the honor of the "ancestral house" was a vital part of the Elizabethan world.

The house was the symbol of the family itself, and in most cases was considered just as important. In The Miseries of Enforced Marriage, when the usurers and the sheriff surround Scarborough and his brothers, Scarborough says:

So that the rooffe our Auncestors did build  
For their sonnes comfort, and their wiues for charity,  
I dare not to looke out. (lines 2410-12)

When the husband is apprehended in A Yorkshire Tragedy, he says:

I am right against my howse, seat of my  
Auncestors; I hear my wif's aliue. . .

A good example of the importance placed on the ancestral home can be found in A Woman Killed with Kindness, when Sir Charles Mountford speaks of his house:

Oh, pardon me; this house successively  
Hath long'd to me and my progentios

Three hundred years. My great-great-grandfather,  
 He in whom first our gentle style began,  
 Dwelt here, and in this ground increas'd this mole-hill  
 Unto that mountain which my father left me.  
 Where he the first of all our house began,  
 I now the last will end, and keep this house,--  
 This virgin title, never yet deflower'd  
 By any unthrift of the Mountfords' line.  
 In brief, I will not sell it for more gold  
 Than you could hide or pave the ground withal.  
 (Act III, sc. 1, lines 15-26)

The honor of the ancestral home also plays a role in the domestic tragedies. In A Yorkshire Tragedy, the wife says of her husband;

my husband neuer ceases in expence

. . . .  
 Dice, and voluptuous meetings, midnight Revels,  
 Taking his bed with surfetts. Ill beseeming  
 The Auncient honor of his howse and name.

Later, the husband realizes that he is tarnishing the honor of the family home;

Mine and my fathers, and my forefathers generations,  
 generations; downe goes the howse of vs, downe, downe;  
 it sincks; Now is the name a beggar, begs in me  
 that name which hundreds of yeeres has made this  
 shiere famous; in me, and my posteritie runs out.

And when he stabs his child, he says;

Brat thou shalt not liue to shame  
 thy howse.

Others note the ruin of the ancestral name, as shown when the knight says of the husband;

Ruinous man, the desolation of his howse, the blot  
 vpon his predecessors honord name;  
 That man is neerest shame that is past shame.

The importance of a person's ancestral house can be seen in A Woman killed with kindness when Frankford notes that Wendoll is of "a good house" (Act II, sc. 1, line 31). Another example can be seen in The Miseries of Enforced Marriage when Scarborough, who is already

married to Clare and has now married Katherine, Lord Falconbridge's niece, is told by Falconbridge;

Thy selfe new married to a Noble house,  
Rich in possessions, and posterity,  
Which should cal home thy vnstaid affections.  
(lines 1512-14)

After a study of these passages from the domestic tragedies, it is clear that the Elizabethans considered their homes not simply places to live. Their homes were symbols of their ancestry, their wealth, and their position in society.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it can be stated that a close study of these domestic tragedies (Arden of Feversham, A Warning for Fair Women, The Witch of Edmonton, A Yorkshire Tragedy, The Miseries of Enforced Marriage, A Woman Killed with Kindness, and The English Traveller) reveals that these tragedies are not only domestic in that they deal with husband-wife relationships, but also in that they present a picture of the details of daily life in the Elizabethan homes. Each of these plays reveals physical features of the homes, the meals, the guests, the servants, the entertainment in the homes, the beliefs of the people, and the value they placed on their ancestral homes. In depicting life as the common Elizabethan knew it, the domestic tragedies presented their moral lessons to a receptive audience which could see themselves in the same situations as the characters in the plays.

## NOTES

### CHAPTER I

<sup>1</sup>Henry Hitch Adams, English Domestic or, Homiletic Tragedy: 1575 to 1642 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), p. 55.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 41.

### CHAPTER II

<sup>1</sup>Arden of Feversham (London: Edward White, 1592), The Malone Society Reprints (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940-1947).

<sup>2</sup>Adams, p. 101; C. F. Tucker Brooke, The Tudor Drama: A History of English National Drama to the Retirement of Shakespeare (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1911), p. 356; Felix E. Schelling, Elizabethan Drama: 1558-1642, I (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1908), pp. 344-45; Keith Sturgess, ed., Three Elizabethan Domestic Tragedies, (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1969), pp. 20-21.

<sup>3</sup>C. E. Donne, An Essay on the Tragedy of "Arden of Feversham" (London: Russell Smith & Co., 1873; rpt. New York: AMS, 1972), p. 1.

<sup>4</sup>A Warning for Fair Women (London: Printed by Valentine Sims for William Aspley, 1599), The Tudor Facsimile Texts, ed. John S. Farmer, 1912.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., Introduction; Schelling, p. 346; Adams, p. 125.

<sup>6</sup>Schelling, p. 346.

<sup>7</sup>George Wilkins, The Miseries of Enforced Marriage (London: George Vincent, 1607), The Malone Society Reprints (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963-1964).

<sup>8</sup>Schelling, p. 362.

<sup>9</sup>A Yorkshire Tragedy (London: Printed by R. B. for Thomas Panier, 1608), The Tudor Facsimile Texts, ed. John S. Farmer, 1910.

<sup>10</sup>Adams, pp. 126-27.

<sup>11</sup>Schelling, pp. 347-48; Sturgess, pp. 36-37.

<sup>12</sup>Sturges, p. 30.

<sup>13</sup>Adams, p. 132.

<sup>14</sup>William Rowley, Thomas Dekker, and John Ford, The Witch of Edmonton (London: Printed by J. Cottrel for Edward Blackmore, 1658), in The Works of John Ford, III, William Gifford and Alexander Dyce, eds., (1895; rpt. New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1965).

<sup>15</sup>Thomas Heywood, The English Traveller (London: Robert Raworth, 1633), No. 606 of The English Experience (New York: Da Capo Press, 1973).

<sup>16</sup>Frederick S. Boas, Thomas Heywood (London: Williams & Norgate, Ltd., 1950), p. 45.

<sup>17</sup>Norman Rabkin, "Dramatic Deception in Heywood's The English Traveller," in Shakespeare's Contemporaries: Modern Studies in English Renaissance Drama, 2nd ed., Max Bluestone and Norman Rabkin, eds. (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), p. 209.

<sup>18</sup>Thomas Heywood, A Woman Killed with Kindness, 3rd ed. (London: Isaac Jaggard, 1617), in English Drama: 1580-1642, C. F. Tucker Brooke and Nathaniel Burton Paradise, eds. (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1933).

### CHAPTER III

<sup>1</sup>Lu Emily Pearson, Elizabethans at Home (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1957), p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>3</sup>M. St. Clare Byrne, Elizabethan Life in Town and Country (1925; rpt. London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1950), p. 24.

<sup>4</sup>Pearson, pp. 34-35.

<sup>5</sup>Byrne, p. 19.

<sup>6</sup>Pearson, p. 23.

<sup>7</sup>Byrne, pp. 18-19.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>9</sup>Pearson, p. 24.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 54.

- <sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 44.
- <sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 28.
- <sup>13</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>14</sup>Byrne, p. 27.
- <sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 30.
- <sup>16</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>17</sup>Mandell Creighton, The Age of Elizabeth (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1930), p. 196.
- <sup>18</sup>Pearson, p. 557.
- <sup>19</sup>Byrne, p. 36.
- <sup>20</sup>William Harrison (1534-1593), Elizabethan England, Lothrop Withington, ed. (London: Walter Scott Publishing Co. Ltd., 1902), p. 84.
- <sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 87-88.
- <sup>22</sup>Creighton, p. 196.
- <sup>23</sup>Pearson, p. 4.
- <sup>24</sup>Harrison, p. 108.
- <sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 109.
- <sup>26</sup>Byrne, p. 37.
- <sup>27</sup>Ibid., pp. 38-39.
- <sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 39.
- <sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 41.

#### CHAPTER IV

- <sup>1</sup>Joseph T. McCullen, "The Use of Parlor and Tavern Games in Elizabethan and Early Stuart Drama," Modern Language Quarterly, 14 (March 1953), 9.
- <sup>2</sup>Byrne, pp. 211-12.
- <sup>3</sup>McCullen, p. 8.

<sup>4</sup>Byrne, p. 212.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 222.

<sup>6</sup>Pearson, p. 524.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 534.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 524.

#### CHAPTER V

<sup>1</sup>Morris Palmer Tilley, A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1950), p. 669.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 224.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 715.

#### CHAPTER VI

<sup>1</sup>Pearson, p. 3.

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