

DOMESTIC SERVICE IN YORKSHIRE 1650-1780

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For my father and mother,
George and Marion Holmes
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A B S T R A C T

This study is an investigation of domestic service, arguably one of the most distinctive phenomena in the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The adherence to a particular region, Yorkshire, has no purpose other than to aid the investigation by working with a more coherent body of evidence and making use of the wealth of materials which exists in this county. It is not generally felt that domestic service differed in character in Yorkshire any more than in other areas of the country, other than that certain customs such as hiring fairs may have survived longer in this region than elsewhere. The study aims to highlight and bring together different types of service in pre-industrial England and in addition to investigate master and servant relations as well as the more fundamental aspects of service such as wages and conditions of service.

This study fills a gap in research on service in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Studies based on English and French evidence have produced important and detailed records, but servants and the lower orders of society in pre-industrial England have hitherto been remote from our understanding, an almost invisible and barely audible group. Attention has largely been concentrated to date on the nineteenth century, for which more records are extant, and for which first-hand, oral accounts from ex-servants can be used, which have added to the appeal of this subject.

The conclusions reached in this study support and extend existing ideas on service in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. By considering different types of servants, the study allows for comparison between the experiences of servants in differing environments and emphasizes the diversification of this occupational group in early modern England. Moreover, the study's concern with master and servant relations sheds light on the changes in social consciousness both before and during industrialisation, changes which impinge on the fundamental ideals of society - on the relations between the upper and lower orders and on the nature of authority and patriarchy.

ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS

Libraries and Record Offices

British Library, London	(BL)
Public Record Office, London	(PRO)
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Bradford District Archives	(BDA)
Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, York	(BIHR)
Calderdale District Archives, Halifax	(CDA)
Hull City Record Office	(Hull CRO)
Hull University Archives, Brynmor Jones Library	(Hull Univ)
Humberside County Record Office, Beverley	(HCRO)
Leeds Central Library	(LCL)
Leeds District Archives	(LDA)
North Yorkshire County Record Office, Northallerton	(NYCRO)
Rotherham Central Library	(RCL)
Sheffield City Library, Archives Division	(SCL)
West Yorkshire Archives Service, Wakefield	(WYAS)
Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Leeds	(YAS)
York City Archives	(YCA)
York Central Library	(YCL)

Journals

Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Record Series	(YAS Rec Ser)
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Family and Estate Papers

Chichester Constable	(DDCC)
Cholmeley	(ZQG)
Constable of Everingham	(DDEV)
Duke of Leeds	(DD5)
Gascoigne	(GC)
Gossip of Thorp Arch	(Acc 2401)
Grimston	(DDGR)
Lister of Shibden Hall	(SH)
Munby	(Acc 54)
Newby Hall	(NH)
Spencer Stanhope	(Sp St)
Stapleton of Carlton Towers	(DDCA)
Sykes of Sledmere House	(DDSY)
Temple Newsam	(TN/EA)
Vanbrugh	(YM)
Wentworth Woodhouse	(WWM)
Wharnccliffe Muniments	(WhM)

INTRODUCTION

The one hundred and thirty years between 1650 and 1780, the time span of this study, lay between two of the most significant events of English history, the consequences of which reverberated throughout the whole of English society. The Civil War left an indelible impression on the fortunes of landed families, on the nature of government and the question of authority. The Industrial Revolution, which according to traditional historiography completely changed the face of English society and its economic foundations, was stirring by 1780.¹ In the intervening period society was taking stock of itself, readjusting, reaffirming and reconsidering those fundamental aspects that had been so severely tested and thrown into such confusion by the events of the mid-seventeenth century. The social and political revolution of the 1640s is coming to be seen as having a somewhat more beneficial effect on society than its immediate aftermath might have suggested. Recent historians have suggested that the "days of shaking" had dissolved some of the more turbulent elements of society and brought to a premature head underlying problems that would have exploded.² The dramatic events of the revolution forced the ruling classes to re-evaluate their political attitudes in the light of what had happened. After the Glorious Revolution of 1688 relations between the monarch and the ruling elites had finally worked themselves out and established a broader balance, producing a firmer constitutional base and sowing the seeds of the modern "state".

Among the lower orders change was also taking place. The check on population growth which occurred after about 1640 created a leveling out of society both physically and subconsciously, which was the basis for the birth of the more stable and settled social

context of the late seventeenth and eighteenth century.³ Conversely, the Civil War and ensuing social revolution had given a political voice to the lower orders, the Diggers, Levellers, sects, and others like them. Never before had the common people been so politically organised nor vociferous. Popular radicalism was shortlived, but in the national consciousness its emergence brought debate over social relations more to the fore and the attitudes of social levels to one another remained problematic into the ensuing century.

One of the most crucial aspects of society which contemporaries felt was at stake in the mid-seventeenth century was that of order. Disorder was greatly feared as precipitating the collapse of the whole social hierarchy, and the time-honoured concept of order was fundamental to English society and remained so, well into the eighteenth century. It had strong connotations with the ideas of rank, degree, status and authority.

The basic prescriptions for order were the concepts of degree and authority and it is from these that some of the greatest historical debates and themes of early modern England have arisen - the power and hegemony of the state, the nature of patriarchy and deference and the extent to which English society at this time was represented by classes or degrees of people.⁴ Contemporaries described the social order of the seventeenth century in terms of a hierarchy made up of degrees of people. Society formed a vertical pyramidal structure. At the peak were the ruling classes who formed the minority in terms of numbers; the wider sections of the pyramid represented the middle and lower orders of society, with the poor occupying the very base and noticeably forming the widest and most numerous layer. The most famous exponent of the social structure in the late seventeenth century was Gregory King, whose detailed table of the "Ranks, Degrees, Titles

and Qualifications" of people in 1688, whatever its inaccuracies, has been taken as the basis for many interpretations of the social structure at this time.⁵ Other commentators, earlier and later than King, agreed on a hierarchy of three or four degrees of people descending from the nobility and upper gentry, down through the professional and merchant classes, the yeomanry and finally to the common people who included labourers, husbandmen, artificers and servants.⁶

The idea that this was basically a "one-class society", with all the power and wealth vested in a small minority at the top of the social scale was expounded by one historian in the 1960s.⁷ This idea has not been well received. Broadly speaking, the two-group model of the haves and havenots, is too simplistic, even for English society in the seventeenth century, and it tends to distort the detailed layers within the hierarchy. Moreover, the use of the word "class" is now generally unpopular amongst historians, and deemed to be incompatible with the notion of hierarchy.⁸

Class is seen as being essentially a nineteenth century phenomenon, brought about by industrialisation and the economic forces of growth. As J C D Clark has said, the idea of class "merely provided the perspective in which economic matters were viewed, a perspective drawn from a group loyalty prior to industrial capitalism being carried over and applied in a new age ... "Class" was not a fact, but a way of describing facts; it did not objectively come into being but was slowly and partially adopted as a terminology".⁹ Class implies antagonism, being synonymous with class struggles, and rivalry between the different groups or classes. As J A Sharpe has stated, by accepting the word "class" as an interpretation of seventeenth and eighteenth century society, "we also accept the implications that early modern England experienced class consciousness and class conflict".¹⁰

Seventeenth and eighteenth century English society was not constantly at loggerheads within its different ranks. Rather, the concept of hierarchy which has been described above implied cooperation and communication between its ranks, with each layer interlinked with those above and below, to form a whole. Take away a layer of the pyramid, or a rung of the ladder and the whole was dislocated and deformed. A network of communication existed between the various layers, based on an exchange of deference and authority. It is thus easy to see how this hierarchical system fitted into notions of order. If one layer or rank rebelled or disconnected itself in some way from its place within the social structure, the rest could not function correctly and disorder would follow.

Nevertheless, the notion of "Class" did not spring up automatically after 1800 as a way of producing a decisive break with the old patriarchal order of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the new full-blown industrial society of the nineteenth. The term was, so one historian has identified, in use in late eighteenth century society though "it was still used interchangeably with traditional concepts of rank, degree, order, without the nineteenth century overtones of social strife and antagonism".¹¹ But broadly speaking, the notion of "class" does not correctly apply to the period before the late eighteenth century, while the "hierarchy" of early modern England had all but lost its meaning after this, with the rise of capitalism and industrialism.

This is not to imply that strife and discontent did not exist in early modern society. Certainly, human hardship existed on a wide scale. The vast majority of people in this period were poor and lived barely above the subsistence level. Poverty was feared as being a potential disruptor of the social order and much attention

was accordingly paid to it. The very poor laws showed how the poor were deemed to have a necessary and unavoidable place in the social order just as any other social group, and that they were participators in the exchange of deference and authority.

The notion of hierarchy does not have the same overtones of antagonism as that of class because of one fundamental element which pervaded the whole of the social structure - patriarchy. Patriarchy emanated from the top of the social structure in the form of patronage; it was present at other levels and in smaller units in the form of paternalism. At all levels, the head of the dynasty or household was seen as the benefactor, overseer, master, patron of his dependants and subordinates who, in their turn deferred to him, sometimes throughout their whole lives.

The concepts of hierarchy and patriarchalism are central to a correct understanding of domestic service in this period. Not only were they elements identified with the concept of service itself, but, taken in a wider perspective, they had connotations for another important unit of society with which servants were inextricably linked, indeed in which they had their being, that of the family. In addition, servants had their own hierarchical structure which ranged throughout the whole social scale. At the top of this, the stewards of the great houses and wealthy estates were often themselves gentlemen. At the base, the scullion or kitchen maid in the great house, or the ordinary servant in a yeoman's or husbandman's household had no authority or power whatsoever, theoretically speaking not even over their own lives, and were ruled totally by their masters' wishes. Like the poor at the base of the macrocosmic pyramid, they virtually existed for the benefit of their superiors alone and were, indeed, classed alongside the poor by social commentators.

Conversely, many of the servants about whom we shall read later on served gentlemen and families in the upper social strata. From the Middle Ages, it was the practice for young men of substance to seek service in the households of the wealthy and powerful. Patronage was a beneficial exchange for both parties. By serving a great figure, a young man gained an entry into the elite world and the possibility of great advancement in fortune. The gentleman he served in turn expected dependence and deference, the public show of which demonstrated his power and status.¹² Patronage was largely bound up with ritual and display on both sides; in the words of one historian, patriarchy or patronage was "as much theatre and gesture as effective responsibility".¹³

Some rituals demonstrated an important visible link with the lower orders. The famous painting of the Tichborne Dole, a detail of which graces the cover of two recent works, provides excellent visual evidence of the patriarchal ideal.¹⁴ It also reveals that patronage was not all ritual and performance, but involved obligations too, on the part of the master no less than from his inferiors and dependants.

As we shall see, a gentleman's role was also as a provider to those who lived under his jurisdiction as tenants, labourers, servants, or in the nearby community over which his influence extended. The relationship permeated the whole social structure. Nevertheless, patronage could not function correctly without the cooperation of the lower orders. The rich demanded deference from their inferiors; this was accorded by the poor to the gentry "but for a price".¹⁵ In other words there had to be give and take on both sides; each side imposed obligations on the other.

One historian declared that patriarchy "has implications of face-to-face relations which imply notions of value and therefore it confuses the actual with the ideal ...".¹⁶ This confusion arose mainly because

of the exercise of patriarchy at various levels of the social scale. In the upper echelons of society the gentry frequently had intermediaries, generally upper servants, who dealt with the common folk for them. Their retreat from contact with the lower orders became more acute in the eighteenth century. Within the smaller social unit of the family of a lesser gentleman, a yeoman or a husbandman, there was much closer contact, both physically in terms of living space, and in day-to-day relations, and therefore the exercise of patriarchy took on a much more personal and, to us, human sense. But generally, within the family the same characteristics of patriarchy can be identified as in the external world - subordination, deference and the overall superiority and authority of the head, or master.

The idea of deference, offered by a servant to a master, is a most interesting one. Deference could be offered for a number of reasons. First and foremost, it was a necessary obligation on the part of dependants and the lower orders towards their superiors. But behind this could lie various motives. Self-seeking was one; another was the "eye-service" which is warned against in many seventeenth century didactic texts, whereby the servant appears on the surface to defer to his or her master but inwardly harbours a contempt for him and a resentment of his own lot in life.¹⁷ Howard Newby refers to this as "impression management", whereby both sides are on a public stage, as it were, and their private attitudes and motives are different to those they display in the open.¹⁸ But how far was deference sincere and how far was it, in Newby's words, merely "the necessary pose of the powerless"? There is no better social group by which to test this, than domestic servants, who were literally bound to the subordination of their masters, and this subordination and its consequences is a theme which recurs throughout the study.

It has been argued that as the period extended, changes occurred in patriarchal attitudes and within the family. In the eighteenth century, the hegemony, political and social, of the elite was challenged. Society became noticeably more fluid and flexible. One element of this was the relative ease with which self-made men, those whose wealth was not inherited, could enter the ranks of the gentry and establish dynasties and country seats of their own.¹⁹ This had repercussions both above and below them in the social scale. But its major effect was to widen the gap between the upper and lower orders, creating a polite world of the employers and the elite on the one hand and an impolite one of labourers, small farmers, servants and the poor on the other. Interaction and communication between the two came less to be based on the time honoured concept of patriarchalism whereby respect to one's superiors was an automatic and assumed function. Traditional patterns of behaviour were threatened and relationships shifted as one historian has put it, so that "subordination became negotiation".²⁰

Yet while, to all outward appearances, the lower orders remained subordinate to their superiors, the boundaries of deference were being pushed to wider limits. The gentry did little to stem this tide of change, if indeed anything could be done. For their own roles in relation to society were being transformed in ways which encouraged the widening of the gap between themselves and the lower orders, and further effected the "polarisation of society", the seeds of which Keith Wrightson detected in the mid-seventeenth century.²¹ Increasingly, their actions and attitudes marked a relinquishing of certain social responsibilities and a retreat into their own world, away from constant daily contact with their inferiors.

These developments had implications for the servant and master relationship. Historians have seen, too, a modification in relationships in the eighteenth century gentry household parallel to that between the upper and lower orders in the social world. Broadly speaking, family life had formerly involved members of the household as well as the immediate family, all of whom lived alongside each other and came into frequent contact. This situation gradually changed. The "family" came to mean only those immediately related to the head, his wife and children, and did not include the whole household as before. The idea of the immediate nuclear family gradually closing its ranks to outsiders, including inferiors such as servants, has gained support amongst some historians.²² With the decline in patriarchal attitudes the relationship between master and servant turned from one where the master supposedly governed every aspect of a servant's life, to one where he exercised much less control over the latter. This can be seen especially in the case of farm servants, for example, where the farmer/master began to hire day labourers as opposed to living-in servants and, depending on their wages, may not even contract to feed them during the day. Likewise, in the case of apprentices, eighteenth century indentures increasingly noted that parents of the youth were responsible for clothing him, doing his washing, and sometimes even for feeding him.

There were, however, an infinity of individual relationships and in general, the institution of service was flexible. It reflected changes in society in this period, while yet retaining its fundamental ethos. Furthermore, service has much more to tell us about early modern society than it has previously been given credit for.

Service is not a subject which has aroused a great deal of interest in its own right. Servants were accorded a chapter or section of some works on the family and household as a matter of course. Early works on domestic servants included Dorothy Marshall's pamphlet, A History of English Domestic Service (Historical Association, 1948) and Dorothy Stuart's The English Abigail (London, 1946), but no really detailed study appeared before J J Hecht's The Domestic Servant in Eighteenth Century England (London, 1956, 1980). First published in 1957, it stood virtually on its own for two decades or so, by which time social history had come into its own as a branch of historical research and more attention was being paid to the lower orders of society. Since then, the number of works on the lives and experience of ordinary working people has increased. These have included important studies of communities which have discussed servants in the context of their daily social world.

One of the earliest of these involved Peter Laslett's work with the Cambridge Group, first referred to in The World We Have Lost. Two of the first communities to receive attention were Clayworth and Cogenhoe, in an article of that title, by Laslett and J Hanson. Subsequent similar studies of note have included David Hey's An English Rural Community: Myddle under the Tudors and Stuarts (Leicester, 1974); Margaret Spufford's Contrasting Communities: English Villagers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (Cambridge, 1974); K Wrightson and D Levine's Poverty and Piety in an English Village: Terling 1525-1700 (New York, 1979), and Miranda Chaytor's Household and Kinship: Ryton in the late sixteenth century and early seventeenth century.²³ An earlier work, E Trotter, in Seventeenth Century Life in the Country Parish (Cambridge, 1919), used documentary sources from the north and included chapters on all aspects of life in the local community,

including the lives and work of farm labourers and servants, and is still of value. A work of equal importance for its early investigation of the life of women, was Alice Clark's Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century (London, 1919).

One of the most recent works on servants has also produced a new and significant insight into a particular branch of service. Ann Kussmaul's Servants in Husbandry in Early Modern England (Cambridge, 1981) is a major contribution to the subject which has undoubtedly focussed attention on a previously little-known world of labourers. The only worthy forerunner of the book was Alan Everitt's contribution on Farm Labourers in volume IV of The Agrarian History of England and Wales.²⁴ Another book responsible for a detailed insight into one particular branch of service and which has become a "classic" work, was Dunlop and Denman's English Apprenticeship and Child Labour: A Social History (London, 1912). This is a very useful book for the conditions of apprenticeship, and its place within the poor law system. Ordinary and pauper apprentices are considered and the significance and effects of the Statute of Apprentices on the institution of apprenticeship is discussed. It is supplemented by D M George's London Life in the Eighteenth Century (London, 1926) which contains a useful chapter on parish apprentices and poor children. But these two works have recently been updated and superseded by K D M Snell's Annals of the Labouring Poor: Social Change in Agrarian England, 1600-1900 (Cambridge, 1985). This book is as impressive as its title suggests and offers an intuitive and well researched insight into the experience of apprentices and "servants" in the eighteenth century.

Although the story of servants may not have been told in detail in studies devoted solely to this subject, it has many links with a wide range of related subjects all of which offer clues to the

experience of servants. Servanthood relates to women's history, the history of the family, the poor, and the social and economic roles of the country house. In a more aesthetic sense, servants are present in art and literature and both areas are worthy of study on their own. Servants are inextricably bound up with the whole experience of people's working and social lives and they are present in a wide range of work based on social, domestic, economic, family and criminal history in all periods. It is surely the case that servants are worth an independent study, as Hecht showed earlier. Such a study would help unravel the mysteries of life at the bottom of the social scale in early modern England.

There is a growing variety of published material related to this subject. Much of this documentary evidence offers a useful and valuable study in itself. Various record series have published apprenticeship registers and diaries for example, with notes. These are generally excellent studies and have remained in the forefront of work in this field not only because they shed new light on their particular topic, but also because of their use and interpretation of specific types of document. Of particular note amongst these and other similar works are Bukatsch's study of immigrant apprentices into the Sheffield cutlery trades in the seventeenth century, and Alan Macfarlane's masterly comment on the diary of the Essex clergyman, Ralph Josselin.

Historians of the nineteenth century have shown greater interest in social history and in servants in particular. Writers such as Teresa McBride, Leonore Davidoff and Pamela Horn have all contributed towards the debate.²⁶ This interest has found its way into the twentieth century largely through autobiographies and oral

history which has the advantage of immediacy and flexibility - one is not bound by the limitations of documents, although there are other obstacles to overcome, the main one being the illusory quality of memory.²⁷ Yet it is largely historians' reconstruction of the nineteenth century notion of servanthood, based on copious sources which has influenced twentieth century ideas. By the nineteenth century, servant-keeping was very much associated with the middle and upper classes, although single servants-of-all-work were frequently found in lower middle class families. Service was also considered to be largely a female occupation and thus confined to the domestic sphere. These servants "lived to establish and maintain the status of the family and to attend to its personal needs".²⁸

This was also the function of domestic servants in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, particularly those of the upper orders. But one of the major differences between servants in this period and those in the nineteenth century was that the term "servant" covered a much broader range of working practices in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries and therefore a much larger section of the populace. This fact is corroborated by documentary evidence, in which the terms "servant" and "apprentice", for example, are often indistinguishable. Likewise when farm servants became day labourers there was little other than a brief mention to mark this change. In the eyes of employers both alike were servants. In the seventeenth century labourers, domestic servants, farm servants and apprentices were all classed together, for all were wage-earners and therefore earned the general title of "servants".²⁹ By the nineteenth century these were much more distinct categories.

According to Kussmaul, seventeenth-century society divided workers

into two categories: "productive" and "unproductive" workers. Certain domestic servants came into the latter category. These included many of those belonging to wealthy people, such as butlers, footmen, grooms, housekeepers, chambermaids and so on. These were employed to maintain a particular lifestyle in addition to their ordinary duties. Productive servants, on the other hand, were "hired not to maintain a style of life, but a style of work, the household economy".^{29a} These included farm servants, and labourers and, we might also add, apprentices. This distinction is an important one to bear in mind. It is doubtful whether, for example, the lone female servant in a household of the lower middling orders, felt that she was there largely to maintain her master's status; her work might be vital towards keeping the family economy going. In many households of the lower sort, servants replaced the master's children, since their labours compensated for the children's unproductive presence.

Despite the changes in definition, one aspect of servanthood which remained throughout all periods, was the fact that all were under the jurisdiction of a master and as such theoretically had little say over their own lives. As we have noted, they lived and worked alongside his family and in theory submitted themselves totally to his will, having little or no independence or status whatsoever. They were totally "subsumed" into the families of their master, and were often treated as non-persons.³⁰ This non-status was quite unique. Even paupers had more independence. No other social group apart from children had fewer rights. This fact set servants apart from the rest of society. But what also made the servant class unique was the fact that their lack of rights and privileges of

any kind and their displacement in the social hierarchy, meant that they carried few social responsibilities. Therefore, they did not have the concerns of householders in maintaining a family and home and the care of providing for dependents. Moralists pointed this out to servants as a way of mitigating the evils of their lot. Once out of service and left to fend for themselves, ex-servants found that marriage and the setting up of a household unit of their own, frequently brought with it poverty and insecurity. Many worked as day labourers and relied, partly or totally, on the land for their living. When crops failed, or work was scarce or non-existent, poverty could drive many onto parish relief. Servants were extremely poor, having little to call their own, but they were at least assured of a roof over their heads, plentiful food and often a small wage which the prudent amongst them put by for the future.

Yet servants existed in households at all levels of society and therefore in a sense linked the various social levels of the hierarchy, aiding the dissemination of attitudes and ideas from one social group, up or down, to another. One of the most obvious ways in which this came about was through their relationship with the upper orders of society, with gentry and aristocratic families. Information about life in the upper levels of society and about what life was like as a servant in a great house, was passed down to servants' families and the lower orders. Stories and information travelled along a wide network, and both vertically and horizontally throughout the social scale. This gossip was sometimes important enough to influence the social mores and attitudes that existed between one social level and the rest. Servants were thus an integral part of the function of the country house in the local community, from which many were drawn.

This is demonstrated by one of servants' most important functions. Most servants in the employment of a gentleman or nobleman existed largely to gratify their master's status and power. The cult of the gentry was very much in evidence in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. There were few more visible demonstrations of a gentleman's power and wealth than the number of servants he employed or their elaborate liveries. He employed servants not only to minister to his daily needs, but also to display publicly his influence and status. There was talk of personal servants and footmen who were as haughty as their masters and indeed sometimes even worse, and who assumed an inflated superiority simply because of the status of their master. Nevertheless, this heightened sense of worth which servants of this ilk had of themselves, rubbed off on the relationship with their masters - this was very much a two way one, with attitudes on both sides influencing the other.

The servants of the great also played a part in architectural history. The development of the English house included significant changes in the location of servants' quarters, which reflected the attitudes to servants as part of the household.³¹ Servants appear to have been shunted to all the extremities of the house from the early modern period onwards. The undesirability of their quarters as opposed to those of the family, is perhaps illustrated in the fact that tours of stately houses today often do not include the servants' quarters because of their inaccessibility and cramped conditions, which would cause problems regarding safety and visitor flow. Nevertheless, in those houses where the visitor can see the kitchens, housekeepers' rooms, servants' bedrooms and so on, albeit of a nineteenth century nature, as much interest is often taken in these areas of the house as in the sumptuous family and state apartments.

Finally, perhaps the most important reason why servants in early modern England are worth investigation is that they were recruited from the vast majority of young people in the country and therefore formed a numerous and very substantial proportion of the population. Laslett estimated that "a quarter, or a third, of all the families in the country contained servants in Stuart times", while Ann Kussmaul estimated that between a third and a half of hired labour in England was supplied by servants in husbandry alone.³² Furthermore, very many of these young people came from humble backgrounds. Most of them were sent out into service because their parents could not afford to maintain them within the precarious household economy. Once more, any information we can uncover about these people is therefore of great value in throwing light on the lives of the lower orders of seventeenth and eighteenth century society.

Yet service was very much a transitional occupation in the lives of young people. Few remained as servants for more than a few years. Servants' ages ranged typically from early or mid-teens to the mid-twenties, when most married and left service to set up independent units of their own. The practice of sending children out into service as soon after the age of ten or twelve as possible was practised in almost every household from the middling orders downwards. Service of some sort was also the way to rid the gentry family of younger sons and unmarried daughters. This was a necessary means of maintaining the family economy. When children grew too much of a financial and economic burden, they were sent away, and replaced by servants of their own age who would contribute more productively to the household unit. The practice ensured that young people earned their living as soon as they were able. There was little room for sentiment or unproductivity in early modern English society. Young people's changes in status also marked the beginnings of their transition

from childhood to adulthood, often a swift one by which many missed out on a childhood altogether. Service was therefore embarked upon during the crucial and formative years of adolescence and thus no doubt helped mould the attitudes and working practices of these young people for the rest of their lives.

Any reconstruction of the life of the early modern servant must, of course, be founded on bodies of relevant evidence. Such evidence does survive, of a varied if sometimes fragmented nature. Both personal and official records bring to light snippets of information which, pieced together, can reveal a picture, albeit somewhat sketchy, of the life and work of servants of all kinds.

Research for the study of domestic service is very much conducted from above. Nearly all the personal records which have been used, such as diaries and correspondence, were produced by the gentry classes and upwards. This social group did not have a monopoly in diary writing. Some have survived from professional people and wealthy tradesmen and merchants. One of the most famous examples of this is the diary of Thomas Turner, the Georgian shopkeeper.³³ Clergymen on a more humble level were also known to keep diaries. Oliver Heywood and Ralph Josselin are two of the best known.³⁴ There are several other shorter diaries by yeomen, squires and people of the middling orders, most of which have been transcribed amongst the volumes of various record series.³⁵ The diary of Ralph Josselin has been the subject of an excellent study by Alan Macfarlane in which he includes a chapter on diary writing. This, he suggested, signified an important psychological step in the minds of seventeenth century people.³⁶ From the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

onwards there was a marked growth in personal literary output. Diaries, autobiographies and correspondence were "manifestations of the urge to record the individual's experience".³⁷

Although these sources are very valuable to us, we must, in order to draw the most accurate information from them, recognize their bias and the fact that they are the product of minds with very different outlooks and opinions to a servant. Evidence of them is therefore seen through the eyes of the employing classes, with their meritable biases against unruly or difficult servants.

It is with this in mind therefore, that we turn to perhaps the most obvious source for an investigation of domestic service in the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries - the records of major gentry families and their households.

True to the convention of the age, by which whatever the upper ruling orders said or did was projected over and above the activities of the lower orders, we shall start at the top of the social pyramid. The first two chapters are thus devoted to servants of the gentry, drawing on these sources.

The county record offices and local archives of Yorkshire contain the papers of many leading gentry families. A total of about fifteen of these collections were chosen for study.³⁸ Household and steward's account books, correspondence and diaries and journals were used where possible. In some collections, the sequences of account books span several decades, and are valuable for the information they can provide on wages, and the running of the household. These books could be of several different types in a large household. Household account books generally included the purchase of provisions week by week with some other payments such as wages, tradesmens' bills

for sundry items such as soap, candles, chair hire, and washing bills. These books were kept increasingly by the housekeeper in the eighteenth century and many of the later ones recorded only the daily or weekly purchase of provisions with one or two small payments for odd jobs performed in the household and kitchen. Sometimes the steward kept the household accounts, particularly where there was no housekeeper present, or even the lady of the house herself. This was probable in a minor gentry household where the mistress was more directly responsible for the running of it, for overseeing the servants and what came forth from the kitchen.

The Stewards' books, on the other hand, might contain some information of a similar nature, particularly regarding wages, but were mostly concerned with farming and estate accounts. Wages paid included those to day labourers as well as regular servants both inside and outside the house. The master and mistress sometimes also kept their own personal account books. These included anything from payments of wages to personal servants and the purchase of personal items, but also occasionally reveal insights into their relations with these servants, through the gift of money bestowed at random, or an odd memorandum. It is rare to find such account books surviving, but those kept by Lady Isabella Irwin at Temple Newsam and Sir John Vanbrugh at Heslington Hall have proved valuable.³⁹

A frustrating array of names parades through the accounts, leaving much to speculation, since in many cases the identity of a person receiving a token payment for an errand or for whom a pair of shoes was purchased, is never revealed. They may have been regular indoor servants, or one of the army of day labourers and general helpers called in to aid the domestic staff at busy times, or children of tenants used to hanging around the domestic offices of the great house.

Where a long sequence of accounts exist, or wage lists such as those of Burton Constable, which run from the 1730's to the nineteenth century, there is a wealth of information on the careers of servants, and changes in wages and household size over time. Such documents are of great importance for the evidence they provide of the lower orders and the workers associated with the great household: "Here is one of the few shafts that can be sunk to reach the life of the great mass of the under-servants and those workers who depended on casual gifts rather than on their low fixed wages".⁴⁰

The letters of various gentlemen and their wives have proved a rich source of information from several of the collections. Sir Thomas Robinson and his wife, Fanny, of Newby, wrote many letters to their relatives in England when they were living on the continent where Sir Thomas was an ambassador. Because of the distance between the families, events such as acquiring a new servant were described with much more detail than normal, and Fanny's fears and opinions about foreign servants also pervade some of her letters. The Gossip family of Thorp Arch have also left us with some interesting details about their servants. Despite the bias of these letters, they record the feelings and activities of their author with a reality that is lacking elsewhere. There is a sense of timelessness pervading some of the letters. The subject matter of some of them - the qualities looked for in a prospective servant, or the problems of servant-keeping because of bad or unruly servants - might have been the same in whatever age they were written.

Although the household and estate papers of these families yield a wealth of information it is often rarely of a consistent quality. For example, where one collection reveals a lot about servant numbers and wages, there is often little to match this information from

the others, making comparisons between two or more households difficult. Furthermore, the existence of a good collection of correspondence and account books together in the same collection is rare. Thus, the estate correspondence for the Constables of Everingham Hall in the East Riding has proved most useful, while the account books are not so fruitful a source.⁴¹ Conversely, the Temple Newsam archives have an interesting and varied collection of account books and vouchers, but no relevant personal correspondence to back them up. On the other hand, the Wentworth Woodhouse archive has produced the largest and most varied body of material relating to both the estates and household in the mid to late-eighteenth century, including a superb collection of letters from Lady Rockingham, wife of the second Marquis, to her steward.⁴²

By far the majority of this type of material relates to the eighteenth century rather than the seventeenth, and the evidence therefore tends to be fairly heavily weighted towards the latter end of the period. I do not think, however, that conclusions would be much different were the evidence more evenly spread. Aspects of service such as the payment of wages, and the methods and channels of hiring, stayed much the same throughout the period. The main changes stemmed from the agreements made at the outset in the contract, and the fact that the contract became more important as paternal relations between master and servant waned.

The same applies to the sources used to investigate other branches of service. These mostly consist of official records which are more impersonal and also have their own inherent bias. Judicial records, poor law papers, and apprenticeship registers and indentures, all involved someone taking down information spoken by another person. The information has therefore already been subjected to an unconscious

selection procedure and historians are faced with the additional problem of manoeuvring legal procedures and other possible pitfalls which trick them into a false sense of security, before they can make a final judgement.

The major sources used to investigate farm servants were settlement examinations, culled from the poor law records of several Yorkshire parishes. The quality of the information varies tremendously from one parish to the next. Around sixty examinations taken from parishes in and around Halifax, provided the most detailed information, including wages of the examiners, ages at leaving home, the places at which the examinant served and conditions and agreements related to the hiring, as well as some evidence of master and servant relations. They are unmatched by examinations from other areas, notably Wakefield, Sheffield, Leeds and the North Riding, while those from the East Riding are very poor in detail. The magistrates here were obviously intent on verifying as directly as possible the one piece of evidence which determined the candidate's suitability for a settlement; they therefore noted only one place of service and virtually no other information was provided. On the whole, examinations tend to be much scarcer than the other records by which the machinery of settlement was carried out - the Settlement Certificate and the Removal Order. It was therefore very pleasing for our purposes to find such an excellent set of examinations in the Halifax area.

Settlement examinations, according to one historian, are "virtually autobiographies of persons in a class of which other biographical records are rarely found".⁴³ For this reason alone, they are extremely valuable to a study of this kind. They enable us to observe life at the lower end of the social scale. Though not altogether devoid of legal formulae and standardised phraseology, probably the influence

of the clerk taking down the information, there is nevertheless a sense that some of them have come straight from the examinant's mouth. This is especially so in those cases where there was present "a garrulous examinant with a good memory and an interesting history, magistrates unpresed for time, and a clerk proud of his penmanship but uncertain of the most salient legal points in the testimony".⁴⁴ Such a document conveys a much greater sense of immediacy to the present-day reader.

Registers of apprenticeship again vary in the amount of detail they divulge, but it is of a less personal kind. For this sort of information we have to turn to diaries and journals, although it is rare to find such a one which tells us much about the master and apprentice relationship. One of the best of these is the diary of Roger Lowe, of Ashton-in-Makerfield, an apprentice out of the usual mould, since he lived independently of his master and ran the latter's shop single-handedly.⁴⁵

Nevertheless, registers can provide useful information regarding the social origins of apprentices and the distances they travelled between their home and place of service. Records of the trades to which they were bound also allow for a useful quantitative study of the social and commercial structure of a city and where the trades of the apprentices' fathers are also noted, a comparative study is possible relating to the social backgrounds of apprentices and the trades to which they were bound. Other interesting and more unusual social information may come to light. This includes the number of apprentices bound to their fathers or their mothers or women practising a trade on their own. The numbers of female apprentices appearing in the register and the trades to which they were bound is also illuminating. These details may not give us an insight

into relationships, working conditions or apprentice culture, but they do help to fill out some aspects of apprenticeship in terms of movements and length of service, and thus provide an interesting comparison with similar information relating to farm servants for example. Random additional pieces of information nevertheless do produce a tantalising glimpse into the prospects or life of an apprentice and prevent the analysis of lists of names and trades from becoming too dry and laborious.⁴⁶

Many of the larger thriving industrial and commercial towns and cities of Yorkshire maintained a lively apprenticeship system and the records of some of them survive to show for it. Those for the city of York are actually among the most prolific and detailed as one might expect and these will be discussed in detail later.

Strangely enough, apprenticeship indentures are by far the most useful illustration of pauper apprenticeship and provide the nearest record to a general index of poor children apprenticed out by certain parishes. One would perhaps have expected the indenture, with its wordy legal phrasing and formulae, to have been common only to ordinary apprenticeships. These were agreements carried out by the fathers of apprentices, who went through the channels of registering and exchanging the indenture, as opposed to pauper apprentices who were often orphans and placed out by parish officers and frequently to whoever would take them for the fee offered. One hundred and sixty or so indentures remain for the parish of Holy Trinity in Goodramgate in York, between 1679 and 1729; these seem to be exceptional.⁴⁷ They included the apprentices' and employers' names, the trades to which the apprentices were bound, their term of service, the date of the indenture and the conditions of their apprenticeship. Occasionally also, the premiums were noted. The latter were payments

given to the master of the apprentice when the agreement was made. The survival of this run of parish indentures is probably due more to luck than to a heightened sense of efficiency on the part of the overseers and churchwardens of Holy Trinity. The apprenticing out of parish children was a common occurrence in seventeenth and eighteenth century England; it was also a system fraught with administrative horrors.

As with all other records, registers present their own peculiar problems. For example, many apprenticeships may have slipped through the administrative net, because of illegal agreements and failure to have the indenture stamped. Besides the problems, there are those related to the conditions of the apprenticeship. We have no way of knowing exactly how many of the apprentices completed their term of service and how many ran away or were deserted or thrown out by their masters. Quarter Sessions records give some clue to those numbers, but even these cannot be relied upon because many prematurely terminated apprenticeships were never recorded; not all those servants and masters who had grievances found their way to court.

The Quarter Sessions books have been used in another context, to gauge the extent and range of servant deviance and criminality. This is an interesting aspect of service. By looking at types of deviance other areas come to light, related to the environment in which these acts took place, the opportunities for them and the motives behind them. These in turn offer insight into master and servant relations. Not only this, but depositions, in which servants gave evidence, offer fragments of information concerning servants' living and working conditions. On its own, the evidence from judicial sources does not appear to be very much, but when seen alongside evidence from other sources there is enough information to begin

to piece together a picture of servants' and labourers' daily lives. Information also comes to light concerning social comment and ideology. Historians of crime have used these sources to test theories of "social" crime and the regulation of offenders by the community.⁴⁸

Quarter Sessions Order Books contain a record of all the cases brought before the court on which pronouncement was made. They are fairly brief and, depending on the clerk, limited as to the amount of information they give. They have, however, been one of the main sources for the study of servant deviance. The working papers of the sessions courts, which may also have been useful to us, consisting of depositions and examinations, have not survived in sufficient numbers to be able to trace many of the cases which appear in the order books.

Order books for the West, North and East Ridings, have been studied, as well as the Minute Books for the city of York. These survive in the most prolific numbers for the West Riding; around thirty volumes exist for the period from 1650 to 1780 alone, attesting to the greater numbers of people and industrial development of the West Riding as opposed to the other two.⁴⁹ From the 1740s the Order Books become predominantly concerned with settlement cases and with orders relating to an epidemic amongst horned cattle and are therefore less useful for our purposes.

As we stated above, the order books cannot be reliable indicators of the level of crime among the servant classes. There is no way of knowing whether every case that came before the court was recorded therein and how many similar cases indeed never came to the court's notice for various reasons. There are also problems relating to ambiguity of definition. The terms "servant", "apprentice" and "singlewoman" are frequently used for example, sometimes with no

clear indication of their real definition. Also, of course, the one big pitfall with such sources, is that we may be tempted to think that relations between masters and servants were generally bad, and fraught with tension and often violence. This was not the case, although very often the only relations which come to light are in documentary evidence of this nature because they were the only ones worthy of note.

Assize court depositions, which have also been used briefly, give more detailed testimonies and may also be the source for a brief glimpse at living conditions or relations within the household, like the settlement examination. Some of them make fascinating reading, the results of which will be seen in a later chapter.

We therefore find that there are a number of sources, both regional and national, upon which a study of service in our period might be based. Added to this are documents with a wider significance, such as newspapers and conduct books. Newspapers only really begin to be useful to us in the mid-eighteenth century; they contain some interesting advertisements for servants of various kinds and a few other snippets demonstrating the public status and image of servants. Conduct books or household books, like newspapers, represent a popular image of servants. They too, were intended for public consumption. This has its pitfalls as far as reality and bias are concerned, but these sources are nevertheless useful for presenting service from another angle and for taking it out on to the streets and relating it to the public at large. It is within the conduct books that we see the "concept" of service most succinctly and clearly expounded; and significantly, our findings from other evidence appear to be largely contrary to this. For this reason it might seem logical to place a discussion of servants in literature at the outset of

the study in order to approve or disprove this public image, but it is best left to the end, to concentrate first and foremost on the reality and to give the material and sources the attention and interpretation they deserve.

There will always be a large area of the servant experience which is impossible to understand fully and accurately, simply because the nature of the sources does not allow us to penetrate this level of the social scale in great depth. We see much of servanthood through the eyes of the middle and upper orders. Nevertheless, the diversity of the material does allow us a glimpse outside this social level to that in which most servants moved. Some of the records which provide this information are particularly rich for Yorkshire - the northern circuit of the assize court, for example, has a good run of depositions for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the quarter sessions records are one of the best sets surviving in the country. In addition, the benefit of having a major and well-established centre such as York, by the seventeenth century, also provides us with a wealth of material. Apprentice registers and quarter sessions minute books are examples of some of the records which survive in almost complete sets for York, amongst many other records of administration for the city which shed light on the lives of the inhabitants. Finally, Yorkshire's diverse pattern of settlement and landscapes and its well-established network of gentry families, also make this an interesting and wealthy county on which to base a study of servants. It is to the broader economic background to the region which we shall now turn.

* * *

Yorkshire remained largely a rural county right up to the end of our period. Agricultural practices differed quite considerably throughout the county due to its varied geology and landscapes.⁵⁰

In the extreme west, the Pennines allowed the pasturage of livestock, but in some of the more fertile areas farmers grew small patches of crops although not in sufficient amounts to earn a substantial living. Many also practised a craft. The Pennines stretched down the whole of the western side of the county, straddling the boundary into Lancashire. Across the county in the east, lay the North Yorkshire Moors. In this period this area was fairly bleak and along with the Pennines, was regarded as one of the most backward and least populated areas of the country. The Moors provided rough grazing but little else. Even the practising of a craft was difficult. To the south of the moors lay the Wolds and in the eastern corner of the county, the plain of Holderness. The Wolds were hilly and, in their highest reaches, were used for sheep grazing. But lower down it was possible to earn a reasonable living from the cultivation of corn on the more arable districts. This area was fairly well populated by scattered hamlets and villages. The plain of Holderness was known to be extremely marshy which presented problems of drainage, but also provided very rich agricultural land in parts. The churches of this area were a legacy from the Middle Ages when the plain had been very prosperous, no doubt through both farming and overseas trade. Nevertheless, contemporaries in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, such as Daniel Defoe, who could find "not a town of note", had not much to say for the area, which would suggest that it had lost much of its former prestige and influence.⁵¹

The central area of the county was dominated by the fertile Vale of York, a rich arable area which divided the Pennines and the North

Yorkshire Moors. The Vale of Pickering was equally rich and lay between the moors and the wolds in the east. Both areas had the advantage of being able to cultivate extensive crops in well drained soils, and raise livestock on the less fertile patches and by extending onto the moors nearby.

Sheep and arable farming were therefore practised extensively throughout the county. The most common method of arable farming amongst communities up to the early seventeenth century had been by individual strips of land known as open fields. As in every county in England, evidence of this can be seen in fields dotted all over the landscape, by the markings of ridge and furrow which remain. The practice of enclosure, by which common fields were amalgamated into small enclosed and individual farm units, became widespread in the seventeenth century. Enclosure changed the practice of agriculture throughout the whole country and the debate about its effects has formed two opposing schools of thought. On the one hand there are those who say that enclosure made destitute many small farmers by confiscating their strips of land. But the general opinion would seem to lean towards the more favourable conclusion that less devastation was caused than was previously thought, though the main losers were the poorer small farmers who were left with very small closes of land to farm and few or no grazing rights.

As mentioned earlier, many farmers also practised crafts to supplement their incomes from agriculture. In the Dales the knitting industry expanded in the seventeenth century and was booming at the beginning of our period. Its markets included abroad as well as home. Depending on which area of the county a farmer lived, his craft assumed a major or secondary place in the family economy. As the seventeenth century progressed and new industrial processes and business rose,

more people gained a livelihood primarily from a craft or industry than they did from agriculture, in certain parts of the county. The West Riding, for example, remained agricultural in the eastern areas but in the western part where the industrial revolution made most impact, agriculture was practised alongside other industries by the late seventeenth century.

In 1641, a yeoman farmer left a unique document outlining his farming techniques. He was Henry Best of Elmswell in the East Riding, and his Farming and Memorandum Books deal with all aspects of farming, from how to choose and sell livestock to how to hire servants.⁵² He also enlightens us as to what crops he grew and interestingly, the methods he used to experiment with crops. His book is a social and economic document as well as a practical manual on the techniques of husbandry in the mid-seventeenth century and ranks as equally important as Ralph Josselin's or Parson Woodforde's diaries. We may assume that there were other yeoman farmers like Henry Best in Yorkshire who experimented with new farming techniques and practised husbandry on a fairly large scale. In the eighteenth century, gentlemen farmers like the Marquis of Rockingham and Sir Christopher Sykes of Sledmere continued this innovatory approach.

Farming then, was the livelihood of the majority of people in the county in the seventeenth century and for much of the eighteenth also, but the rise in industrial processes from the late seventeenth century onwards began to channel a labour force into these. By the end of the period, around 1780, parts of Yorkshire, notably the West Riding, were on the brink of the industrial revolution and agriculture took second place as a means of earning a living. The absence of guild restrictions coupled with the initiative of enterprising landowners, allowed free rein to the spirit of

industrial entrepreneurship in the West Riding of Yorkshire especially. This reached its height in the century after 1780 but by that date there were signs of industrial growth in many towns and centres in Yorkshire specialising in certain industries. The industrial scene over the whole county was varied and active even by the late seventeenth century.

In the West Riding the major industry was that of textiles. Wool and worsted production was practised in many towns. Even as early as 1700 Yorkshire as a whole produced twenty per cent of England's wool, while a century later this had risen to sixty per cent.⁵³ The eighteenth century saw the building of Cloth Halls in Huddersfield, Leeds, Wakefield, Halifax and Bradford. These buildings were the major market places for textile goods for at least the next hundred years, and the places where deals and money were made. The production of worsteds in the West Riding rivalled that of Norwich by 1770. This was due to the vast amount of weaving which was done in the homes of small farmers. A loom in the upper chamber of the house meant an extra income to a small farming family while also guaranteeing the prosperity of the textile manufacturers in the towns.

The metal and iron trades were also prominent in Yorkshire in the seventeenth century, though their most productive period was the eighteenth century. Sheffield was the centre of the cutlery and metal trades and by the late seventeenth century, half the total number of occupations recorded in the city were involved in these.⁵⁴ Experiments with metals in the eighteenth century allowed for further expansion of the industry, and the Sheffield Plate industry dates from this time. The iron industry was very much in the hands of gentleman landowners in the eighteenth century and owes much to their spirit of entrepreneurship. The Spencer family of Cannon

Hall were one of the leading families, employing many local people in the mines on their estates. Another industry, organised on a smaller scale, was nailmaking. This was located in the countryside and provided income for many poorer people, who again used it to supplement their gains from agriculture. Its importance is not to be dismissed, however. It helped sustain a growing population and supported the industrial growth of the county by providing much needed capital.

The coal, glass and pottery industries were all in evidence in Yorkshire in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Coal was another industry located on the great estates of prominent gentlemen. One of the leaders of the industry in the eighteenth century was the Marquis of Rockingham, whose business enterprises and the collieries on his estates are well documented. An early glasshouse was built on Sir Thomas Wentworth's coalfield in 1632. Coalfields were where most glasshouses flourished in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, until their demise at the end of the latter century. Potteries were only small local businesses in Yorkshire until the eighteenth century, and could not rival the Staffordshire concerns.⁵⁵ But in 1755 the Leeds Old Pottery was established and with it the birth of the famous and now most sought-after creamware.

Improved methods of communication in the eighteenth century greatly aided the growth of industries. Canals were built in profusion, linking many towns and providing more efficient transport facilities for industry and superseding the centuries-old way of travel, along rough tracks and highways. In the seventeenth century laws were laid down for the formation of turnpike trusts, whence a system of roadmaking and maintenance was instituted which was also beneficial to industry. In addition turnpikes reached towns which had previously

been virtually isolated from the major centres. Thus Whitby and Scarborough were linked to York in the mid-eighteenth century, giving them an enormous economic boost.

This last point serves to remind us of the growing importance of provincial towns in our period.⁵⁶ The seventeenth century saw a great rise in the numbers of people who were town dwellers, thus indicating an increased importance in the town as a feature of early modern life and its influence on people's lives. Figures suggest that, compared with 1600, the numbers attracted to towns just about doubled in the seventeenth century and trebled in the eighteenth.⁵⁷ Many people who lived in towns were immigrants, who had come to the town in search of better prospects. Towns exerted a massive pull on the surrounding countryside for miles around, draining it of its youthful labour force. Souden has suggested that females might have headed this group of migrants, who came to the town as servants, but both young men and women were attracted to towns and cities because of the potential they held for work and prosperity.⁵⁸ The city of York relied heavily on youthful labourers from the surrounding countryside, who were attracted to it because of its tradition of guilds, commerce and enterprise.

Besides drawing on the rural population towns also had a beneficial effect. They were the centres of trade to which goods from the countryside were sent for marketing and from whence they were sent to other parts. Good lines of communication extended between neighbouring towns. They were also centres of culture and leisure, particularly so in the eighteenth century, and as such they attracted an influx of gentry families who sought a more entertaining lifestyle during the winter months than they got from living in their country houses. Many larger, fashionable towns and cities, such as Leeds and York, boasted fine town houses belonging to gentlemen.

Yorkshire was not without its share of either market towns or the larger cities. At the end of the seventeenth century there were a number of market towns which could offer accommodation and stabling for fifty or more people.⁵⁹ Among them were Selby, Thirsk, Ripon, Beverley, Richmond, Tadcaster, Pontefract and Boroughbridge. These were not little backwaters, but thriving small towns, with some noteworthy buildings. Moreover, they attracted some highly favourable visitors, and comments from such seasoned travellers as Celia Fiennes and Daniel Defoe. Their markets sold a wide range of high quality goods and several of them were renowned beyond Yorkshire. Richmond, for example, was said to have "one of the best corn markets in the north of England", in 1749, while York's markets, held in different parts of the city and specialising in different goods on different days were also renowned.⁶⁰ On market days, there was not only a lively trade in goods, but once a year many servants found new masters and vice versa. The hiring fair was a feature of many market towns and an important factor in the life of both town and countryside.

York, Leeds and Hull were Yorkshire's leading towns in 1700, and already worth national note. Other important towns included Sheffield and Doncaster. Despite what Daniel Defoe has said of the East Riding in the eighteenth century, Hull was a major port and the centre through which most of Yorkshire's, and a substantial part of the country's, imports and exports passed. A healthy trade was maintained with France, the Baltic and the Low Countries and goods of all sorts, ranging from coal, timber and cloth to wine, were imported. Cloth, lead, wood and metalwares were major exports.⁶¹ Hull was estimated to have a population of around seven thousand in 1700 and in 1767 this had risen to nearly thirteen thousand.⁶² Leeds, on the other hand, had between nine and ten thousand inhabitants

in the late seventeenth century and although it flourished in the eighteenth century when many of its fine buildings appeared, signs of this awakening were beginning to show in the later seventeenth century in the number of different occupations in the town, for example, and its enterprise and trade.⁶³

Both were overshadowed by York, however, which was the centre of trade and craftsmanship, and also the social life of the county. York's market goods included pewterware and gold, malt, leather, cattle and horses, fish, cloth and corn. It supplied nearly the whole of the West Riding with corn. It was a focal point for the receipt and dispatch of goods within Yorkshire, but also from centres elsewhere, notably London. Links with the capital meant that fashions and ideas reached the wealthy inhabitants of Yorkshire who need not necessarily go south to partake of luxury items or keep abreast of fashion. York merchants were active in markets abroad as well as at home and craftsmen produced high quality goods. The guilds were well established, and still strong in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, ensuring that the city's reputation for quality, workmanship and excellent training facilities was maintained.

Standards of living among many tradesmen were good; these compared favourably with London, as Francis Drake remarked in 1736: "the better sort of tradesmen ... sit down to as good a dinner at their usual hour twelve a clock, as a very top merchant in London would provide for his family".⁶⁴

York was well known as a leading social centre by the end of the seventeenth century, and the presence of gentry families in large numbers enhanced its prosperity and standing. In the eighteenth century social entertainments such as assemblies, race meetings, dances and card parties, lured them to their town houses to enjoy

the cultural attractions of the city. With them of course, came retinues of household staff, some accompanying them from their country mansions, some hired from the city's population. Even in 1682, John Reresby remarked that York was "a place full of company, my Lord Carlisle and many other families being comd to winter ther".⁶⁵ In 1736 Francis Drake wrote in his monumental Eboracum that "the chief support of the city at present, is the resort to and residence of several country gentlemen with their families in it".⁶⁶ This was confirmed by Daniel Defoe, an astute social observer, when he wrote that "an abundance of good families live in York ... a man converses here with all the world as effectively as at London".⁶⁷ In 1732 the Assembly Rooms were built, no doubt enhancing the social climate of the city.

Nearly all aspects of life in the county were dominated by the gentry. They held all the public offices, administered justice and were political go-betweens for the parliament and ordinary people. Many gentlemen were also active as farmers, with the wherewithal to try out new techniques and machines, and also in the field of industry, as merchants or mineowners. While they personally dominated public and community life, their large estates and country seats, symbols of their wealth and influence, physically dominated the landscape.

At the outset of this period, around 1642, there were 679 gentry families noted in Yorkshire.⁶⁸ The mid-seventeenth century marked a turning point in the fortunes of many gentlemen. It also marked a rise in the number of self-styled gentry who, through success in commerce, or politics, had risen to the ranks of gentlemen and, to match their status with their new wealth, bought country seats of their own and set about founding their own dynasty. Some clung

to their new position for only one or two generations. The Robinson family rose, via commercial success, to be nominated to the baronetage in 1660, but the estate was sold in 1777 by Sir Thomas Robinson whose lifestyle just about bankrupted him.⁶⁹ Among the older gentry, Sir Arthur Ingram of Temple Newsam, who acquired the house in 1622, also owed his profits to industry - the alum industry in Yorkshire. Those gentlemen whose papers have been studied here have included a diplomat, a Prime Minister, an MP, JP's and businessmen. The gentry spanned various occupations and interests themselves and by no means all earned their wealth from the rents on their estates alone.

It is thus appropriate that we should begin our investigation of service in Yorkshire in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with servants of the gentry. Today their country houses and lifestyle attract as much interest as they did in their heyday, and they are by far the most prolific source for a study of domestic service.

CHAPTER 1

SERVANTS OF THE GENTRY: LIFE IN THE COUNTRY HOUSE

"Servants are indubitably as necessary to us as links which constitute a Chain; the comfort and security of life depend on them. They are generally formed of the labouring part of the people ... " 1

It is from the household and estate papers of the gentry that we have drawn much of the evidence for this study. Personal diaries and letters, account books, help to define the size, structure and management of gentry households. From them also we can draw evidence of servant and master relations. Evidence has been drawn from the family and estate papers of about a dozen Yorkshire gentlemen of variable note and distinction.^{1a} The majority of them were titled gentlemen, and nobility, with both agricultural and business interests; they include amongst them a Prime Minister, a Justice of the Peace, and a diplomat. These gentlemen used their Yorkshire residences for the most part as country retreats to which they retired with their families for part of the year, when they were not conducting their more public affairs in London, or elsewhere. Ordinary gentlemen, such as John Lister of Shibden Hall, near Halifax, had one household of smaller means and employed fewer and more general servants.

This chapter will investigate the types and duties of servants; their ranks according to the servant hierarchy; the size and regulation of large households; the rewards and physical conditions of service. In Chapter two the psychology of the master and servant relationship will be considered, thus almost completing the picture of what service to a gentleman was like for some young people in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Almost, because we cannot be entirely sure, since we have few, if any, recollections from servants themselves.

One of the most notable features of gentry households was their regimented structure. Their size, and the varied departments into which they were divided, made some sort of organisation imperative. Housekeeping at this level was a skilled business, requiring dexterity on both an administrative and practical level, because of large numbers of servants and the volume of work they were required to undertake. An example of such organisation is to be found in the lists drawn up by the steward at Wentworth Woodhouse, detailing members of the household, and the seating arrangements at meal times. One such list, that of 1767, indicates the hierarchical structure of this household, and the presence of high-ranking officials alongside menial servants.² It numbered eighty-one servants in all, which was by any standards a large number for one household. But its owner, Lord Rockingham, was no ordinary gentleman. Twice Prime Minister and a landowner and businessman whose estates in Yorkshire included coal mines and iron works, his household befitted that of an important public figure. Such a grand household seemed to represent a microcosm of the social world outside, with a power structure equally well defined and regimented.

In 1767 the servants were divided between three rooms at mealtimes; the most senior group, amongst whom were the steward and housekeeper, the chaplain and clerk of the Kitchen, occupied the Steward's Room where they ate in a fashion not far removed from the family above stairs, and were waited upon. At this particular time the Lobby accommodated skilled and master craftsmen engaged on work in the house. The remainder, and by far the largest number of servants, who included ordinary domestics, stable staff, craftsmen and outdoor workers, were relegated to the Servants' Hall. Their

ranks were headed in the list by five footmen, followed by the porter and then seventeen maidservants, from the laundry, storeroom, kitchen, chambers and farm. Amongst the stable staff, coachmen and grooms ranked equal in importance with the butler and footmen indoors, while stable boys had their counterparts in the various maidservants.³ The under butler was also present, equal to a footman or groom in rank, and the waiters of the Steward's Room, and Lobby.

The household in 1767 may have been unusually large due to the building work then being carried out in the house. The dining arrangements nevertheless mirrored those of many an upper class household where the room in which the servant ate, the table at which he or she sat, and even the place he or she occupied at that table, outwardly manifested the gradations within the servant hierarchy.

The division between upper and lower servants in the household was indeed well-defined, and in some cases reflected not only a functional distinction but also a social one, since some upper servants originated from the middling or gentry ranks of society, while the lower ones for the most part came from labouring families. At Wentworth also, the presence in the household of certain servants, with specialised functions, indicates further the extent of this differentiation of rank. There was a confectioner as well as a cook, in a similar list of 1753, who would grace Lord Rockingham's table with specialist pastry and sweet dishes to impress his guests. Both men were high up in the servant scale; their wages were second only to the housekeeper and steward. Moreover, their names, Mr Negri and Mr Blanche, confectioner and cook respectively, imply that they were Frenchmen, a not infrequent occurrence in fashionable and wealthy households. Not only would a host's popularity be

undoubtedly increased when he presented his guests with Parisian cuisine, but the ownership of a French cook, butler or such like servant, gained him particular prestige. Moreover the cook was an important man. The Duke of Bedford's French cook received sixty pounds a year and a house of his own, twice the amount of the English cook.⁴ The presence of a pastrycook in the same house, as at Wentworth, was a French idea, often demanded by the cook, to work alongside him.⁵ Like all specialists, French cooks were not cheap or economical acquisitions. Sir John Reresby, seeking such a one in 1673, heard that, "... the french cook ... will not come under 20 lbs a year: nor can I hear of any that will if they can doe any thing that is fitting for a person of quality ... unless it bee some Idle fellow that is pur (sic) in debt ... and would come into the country to shelter him selfe from being arrested ...".⁶

The sub-division of the various ranks of servants into their own little hierarchies, a process which J J Hecht has termed "specialization of function", was also an indication of a large and prosperous household.⁷ In 1753 Lord Rockingham's household contained a butler and two under butlers, two grooms and four under grooms. In addition John Sersby served "in ye Lobby" and William Malpas was an "Usher of the Hall", two posts which later became waiter in the Steward's Room and Lobby.⁸ If posts became too specialized however, the system had its drawbacks. Servants could become too inflexible and, as one writer pointed out, they would be "obliged to do nothing for anyone that requires or intreats it, if it does not immediately concern their place or office".⁹

Personal servants, again with French titles, also usually featured amongst the retinue of a gentleman. A valet de chambre, whose title was later shortened, was present at Wentworth in 1794.

In 1779 Walter Spencer Stanhope of Cannon Hall, hired a valet with wages of twenty five pounds a year, exclusive of travelling expenses.¹⁰ Gentlemen were very dependent on their valets, so much so that in 1739 Sir Marmaduke Constable of Everingham Hall, wrote to his chaplain, who supervised his estates, that he was unable to put his mind to thinking of a suitable successor to his steward, because he has just lost his valet, without whom, it appeared, he was in a great dilemma.¹¹ The wives of such gentlemen also had their own personal maids, sometimes taken from amongst the ranks of ordinary maidservants in the household. Thus, Jane Lester, Lady's chambermaid, and Mary Armitage, Lady's laundrymaid, had risen to these exalted positions from being ordinary laundrymaids in 1753.

Besides ownership of French and foreign servants, another mark of an employer's prestige was the presence amongst his staff of a coloured servant. Henry Friday appeared in a list of servants at Wentworth in 1770, described as a "Blackboy".¹² Possibly this young fellow, if he was indeed coloured, had been christened or even re-christened after his famous namesake, as Robinson Crusoe's companion was by this time around fifty years old.¹³ Some employers, while eager to employ blacks because of their social value, had misgivings about frequent day to day contact. One lady wrote to Fanny and Thomas Robinson on 18 September 1739 that her new maid was "a perfect Mallotto, 'tis so much a la mode", though she was convinced "I chant (sic) like her" and wished that she "would do something wrong y^t we might part".¹⁴ On the other hand, Sir John Reresby's "fine More", given to him by the boy's original owner, "Mr Drax who had brought him out of the Barbadoos", accompanied him on his frequent travels, and proved most practical in once

rescuing him from the anger of a crowd.¹⁵ The popularity of such servants reflects the whims of a fashion and status-conscious elite, and their love of ostentatious display and social prowess.

Not all households were as large and diverse as Lord Rockingham's. Certain servants were the privileges only of wealth and power, and were themselves treated with some privilege in the household; others adopted a superior, supervisory role, while those least powerful but almost equally important, were the lower and ordinary servants at the base of the servant scale.

On a practical side, households of such proportions needed some system of regulation and control. Idleness, one of the major criticisms directed against servants and large staffs, had to be guarded against, so had bad tempered and unsuitable servants, who could disrupt the whole mechanism.¹⁶ Masters and mistresses laid down the rules by which their households were to be run, but most left the everyday running of it to their stewards and upper servants, who reported back to their masters regularly. Depending on whether the steward oversaw merely the house, or the estates as well, his duties ranged from the collection of rents, the leasing of farms and property, the cultivation of crops and maintenance of livestock, to the keeping of accounts, the purchase of provisions for the household, the hiring and dismissal of its staff, and their due regulation and control. Many stewards' account books contain a mixture of business relating to both, whilst their correspondence with their masters reveals a lot about the responsibilities, rewards and frustrations of their position.¹⁷

Benjamin Dutton, steward to John Spencer, assured his master in one such letter that, "The servants have behaved pretty well and I hope will continue to do so".¹⁸ Such was not always the case.

There were reports of one or two servants who did not fit in with the rest and caused disruption. In 1758 Michael Newlove informed Sir John Grimston of a servant maid who cursed and swore, raising chaos in the household and refusing to do as she was bidden; William Martin likewise reported that one of the skilled workmen at Wentworth Woodhouse, Mr Clarici, had taken it upon himself to beat one of the housemaids, "which has occasion'd a great Hubbub in the House".¹⁹

More serious in large households were those occasions when factions arose with one group of servants taking sides against another, or one in particular. Thus Ann Stanhope reported to her brother in 1767 that relations with the new housekeeper seemed to be strained so that she had to insist upon the gardener's "behaving well to (her)", and noted that, "ye Inferior Servants seem to hang together and has made great Complaints".²⁰ Another correspondent, writing to Fanny Robinson, referred to the new nurse as one of the best in the world, but added doubtfully that, "I only fear y^e Servants and her quarrelling for she has A Spirit".²¹ Indeed, advice offered to the Agent at Castle Howard, John Forth, in 1788, warned that, "You will find them as in all great Familys, jealous of and quarrelling with each other - all should be kept at a distance, but in such a manner as to let every one speake in Confidence to you ..."²²

Friction and clannishness amongst servants was not uncommon.

Quarrels and prejudices were the normal tenor of domestic life in many a household. The hierarchical servant structure was probably a major cause of this, with upper servants receiving privileges over and above the lower ones, and adding to the grudges of the latter by constantly exerting their power and influence over them. Dissension amongst the lower ranks was often the result of the high-handedness of upper servants.

Nevertheless upper servants were expected to be a breed apart

from the lower ones. Writing to William Gossip, Mary Wood anxiously requested that he "would not lett the Under Servants abuse (her son) ... pray tell him to mind what you and my m[istress] says and the upper Servants ..."²³ Clearly, therefore, no small amount of class distinction existed between the upper and lower ranks of servants. This was undoubtedly exploited by upper servants, to whom the lower ones were often mere scivvies and scapegoats. When Benjamin Hall took over as steward at Wentworth in 1772 he set about to "purge" the household, ridding it of several undesirable members. This resulted in his grateful master's praise in a letter of 8 July 1773, for bringing "so many Persons ... into a more regular course of attention to their respective employments than they have been used to".²⁴ His predecessor had, two years earlier, reported that the management of the kitchen was "on a very bad footing", and that, "the wastfullness, extravaganzzy and embezzlements committed ... amounted to more than would have paid a good Clarke of the kitchen's wages and all other expenses".²⁵ It was probably partly this state of affairs which provoked the new steward's action. Indeed, the troubles William Martin had faced as steward, prior to his retirement in 1772, included disruption in the household, and a general undermining of his authority which eventually proved too much for him. It required a stronger-willed man to affect the sweeping changes that would put this household back into order.

Not all improvements were effected, or problems resolved, so easily. Some stewards found their authority seriously undermined by thoughtless and absentee masters who made the problems of administration all the more difficult. When the building work

was in progress at Wentworth Woodhouse, Lord Rockingham's issuing of orders to all and sundry, instead of through his steward, provoked William Martin to respond that, "My Power here is look'd upon as very insignificant amongst the greatest part of your Servants and Workmen, and must continue so unless you make great alterations in the present mode of having your business conducted".²⁶ The frustrations felt by him were heightened in the case of John Potts, the long suffering business and domestic adviser to Marmaduke Constable. Lack of communication with his master, and the latter's prolonged absence from the country, brought about an almost critical situation at home with which Potts felt increasingly inadequate to deal. During the years between 1717 and 1743, the year of his death, Potts saw his master only twice. At times he did not even know whether his master was alive or not and long intervals between letters provoked this alarming fear. His only consolation from his master, when he complained of troublesome servants and other matters, was that his unease was "groundless", and that "all will end well".²⁷ Communications and co-operation were thus essential at all levels in large households.

Upper servants should, of course, set examples to the lower ones, though this did not always happen. Some of Potts' troubles were caused by the housekeeper, who arrived in 1726. The following year she took affront when he locked the wine cellar door after some thefts and "did demand to be dismissed and did declare she would not stay beyond the 30 of this (month) ... upon count of mistrustfulness".²⁸ In 1772 the new housekeeper at Wentworth also gave her employers and the steward some trouble. Lady Rockingham was anxious to know from her steward "how you think

Broughton does in her department and if she concurs readily with you". One of the redeeming features of another housekeeper, Mrs Crofts, was that she was "willing to put herself under the direction of the Steward and for the two to work alongside each other".²⁹ Again, co-operation between two of the most senior servants of the household was essential for its smooth running. Though the housekeeper had authority over the maidservants, she was nevertheless ultimately responsible to the steward and at times his decisions overrode hers.

Despite their long absences from their households, masters and mistresses kept a watchful eye over them, offering advice and expecting regular reports of goings on, financial accounts and so on. John Spencer gave his steward specific instructions in a letter of 10 March 1757, to "write me a particular account how the Family goes in all Respects; and the Business each particular Serv^t is employ'd in". In the same letter he instructed him with regards to livestock and household provisions, and required that the housekeeper "keep a particular Account of all the Ale us'd in my Absence, I would have none given to any Workman whatsoever".³⁰ Lady Rockingham's letters to her steward reveal especial concern over her maids; she wrote on all aspects of their work and welfare, commenting, advising and ordering with regards to suitors, hiring and discharge, and their suitability for their posts. Lady Robinson of Newby Hall took it upon herself personally to keep house when she was resident, for which event in 1757 the steward wrote in preparation, "I fancy we must kill a Sheep, I am afraid she will get but little Assistance from the garden towards house keeping".³¹ The efficiency and success of the household sometimes

depended as much on the master's and mistress's administrative and housekeeping skills, as on their servants. Despite their absences employers were all too aware of their servants' behaviour. Marmaduke Constable, wrote cynically in 1735, "I know what is don att the door of other Gentlemens houses when they are abroad. My Servants are capable of doing the same ...".³²

The country house community would not be complete without mention of the casual, or "invisible" servants.³³ These were the many who laboured in the gardens, on the estates, and sometimes in the house, aiding and supplementing the work of the regular servants. They received a few shillings for several days' or weeks' work. Many of them came from families on the estate. Some became almost a permanent feature in the laundry or kitchen, or wherever they helped out. In 1666, Sir Francis Wortley included "an olde woman y^t hath bin a longe tim Belonging to y^e House y^t helps in y^e kitchen ... " in a list of servants' wages.³⁴ In the 1720s William Clauston paid a few shillings to Alice Barker on several occasions for such jobs as "helping in the kitchen", at Wentworth, or "helping y^e Cook", and for "Washing 12 Days"; she was also paid for providing eggs for the household.³⁵ Others were paid for odd job work which included mending and making clothes for the servants, watching at the gates, or in the house at night, and nursing sick servants.³⁶ At Wentworth Woodhouse around thirty people worked as labourers in loading, digging, cleaning, carrying, and so on, in the mid-eighteenth century.

Such troupes of part-time workers were depended on as much as the regular staff. The provision of work for these people, and for the wives and families of tenants and estate workers, was to a certain extent a social obligation on the part of

the owner. It would be interesting to know more about the relationships between these casual labourers and the full-time staff; were the latter, for example, condescending towards these part-time helpers? Unfortunately, little else is recorded about them, other than a brief mention in the accounts. Moreover, such servants had a further, interesting and important role to play; they formed a link between the country house and the wider community. Their presence meant that contacts and news were brought into the household from outside. The regular servants might look to these casual workers for diversion from the insularity of their lives in the country house. To outsiders, the country house represented the power and authority at the centre of their existence at a local level.

The country house was the focal point of the community. It is unlikely that there were shortages of servants willing to work there, although the owner and his wife selected their servants carefully, ensuring that they got good ones. It is difficult to establish the exact origins of servants working in a gentleman's large household. Many of those employed in the country house came from the estate or nearby villages and from the homes of tenants. Servants with a rural or farming background were thought to be especially suitable, as having received a good general education which, though small, was "sufficient to qualify them to read virtuous books, and to know how to behave in a proper and decent manner".³⁷ They had the added virtue of being uncontaminated by city life, which was felt to lead young people down a wayward path.³⁸ Nevertheless, some gentry households included servants from London, who had been hired when the master was there for the

season. The reverse was also probably the case. Servants from rural areas, who served in the country house often accompanied their masters and mistresses to London or elsewhere. Employers sometimes found that this change of environment was disadvantageous. Lady Chaytor doubted the suitability of her maid, Bessy, from her Yorkshire home, for service in London. "I doubt she will be too much a stranger and not so used to the town as to buy things well ...".³⁹

Skeleton staffs would, of course, be kept at all times in a gentleman's country and town residences, but the removal of himself, his family and personal servants to one or the other, occasioned a fair amount of reorganisation and preparation. At these times, extra staff such as cooks and maidservants, would be hired to complete the household staff for the duration of his stay. Thus the steward at Newby Hall, William Bowker, wrote to Sir William Robinson his master outlining the arrangements for Sir William's arrival in 1757; "The Cookmaid will Com to Newby on Monday ... And I have Agred with one for the kitchen Maid And she is to Come to Newby on Thursday next".⁴⁰

One of the safest ways of ensuring that one acquired good servants with good reputations was to apply for them through friends or acquaintances, who were interested employers themselves, or through trusted servants who had the necessary contacts. When Sir William Robinson wanted a postillion in 1760, his steward John Ellis suggested making "Enquiry amongst our Acquaintance".⁴¹ On another occasion in 1749, Sir Thomas Robinson hired a governess solely on the strength of her description from a friend.⁴² When Lady Fitzwilliam wanted a new dairy maid, it was Betty Dixon,

an old "Dame at the farm", possibly a tenant, to whom the steward went and who produced the desired "Yorkshire woman".⁴³ Another recommendation of a servant was the quality of the people he had already served. Of two applicants for the post of porter to Lord Rockingham in 1767, one had served as a footman to Lady Fitzwilliam, and the other as an under butler to Lord Lincoln. Both received good characters, though the latter was preferred because he was unmarried.⁴⁴

A more public channel through which servants could be acquired was newspaper advertising. This was considered to be as respectable and reliable a way of securing servants, as personal recommendation, and was certainly popular as newspapers expanded in size and circulation. After 1750 there is a notable increase in the number of advertisements for servants in the York Courant, and not only employers, but servants themselves, advertised through this medium.

Servants sometimes acquired new places through the intervention of their present master or mistress who could exercise a little string-pulling and make use of their social contacts. Thus, Mistress Wise, probably a housekeeper to Fanny and Thomas Robinson, approached her mistress to "interseed with Sir Thomas on my behalf", hearing that he had been made Grand Master of the Wardrobe, and thus had "a great many places in his gift". She had her eye on the position of servant to the Duchess of Bridgewater.⁴⁵ Lady Rockingham also wrote to her husband that an upper servant of theirs, Loisel, probably the cook, "has beg'd me to speak for him" on hearing that Lord and Lady Ravensworth wanted a clerk of the kitchen, although personally she did not rate his chances very highly.⁴⁶

There are few clues generally, from whence servants originated in either account books or correspondence. Almost certainly there would be no relatives of a wealthy family living in as servants. At this social level this was highly unlikely. These were more likely to be found in the homes of lesser gentlemen, or country squires and clergymen. Two well-known examples of this are the households of Ralph Josselin, in which his sister lived as a servant, and Parson Woodforde, in which his niece, Nancy, lived with him as a sort of housekeeper.⁴⁷ The question of family members living in as servants prompts a much wider debate on the nature of the family, the size and structure of the household, and relations with the extended family, in early modern England.⁴⁸ Two historians of particular people and communities, have concluded that relatives living as servants within the household were rare and not the usual practice.⁴⁹ The occurrence of identical surnames in accounts and wages lists suggests moreover that some servants in large country houses came from local families or tenants and that generations of such families served the masters of the great house, as at Wentworth Woodhouse, or Burton Constable.

Not surprisingly, private letters refer constantly to the desired abilities and qualifications of new servants. Some employers found it difficult to satisfy their search and complained of the poor supply of good servants. One man wrote that "It is difficult to meet with a good Servant, and I believe you'll easilier make such a one than find him".⁵⁰ Another correspondent wrote to Mrs Gossip that the qualities of sobriety, steadiness and industry were "all good qualities (which) are hard to be found" in servants, and unless they exhibited these, "People had better have nothing to do with 'em".⁵¹ For example, idling

was a trait to be particularly guarded against in young servant boys. A boy of fourteen, who had been recommended to William Gossip, was "quite unaccustomed to Swearing Lying and playing away his time in going of Errands, which we think too much practised by boys of his age".⁵² William Constable surmised that, "Servants who have nothing to do Spoil those who have busyness ..."⁵³ On the other hand, a prospective maid who was "very Disiers of geting her hous work Doon that she may asist in Sowin" came highly recommended to Lord Carlisle's agent at Castle Howard in 1775.⁵⁴

Another trait of character frowned upon in servants was a proud or overbearing manner. High ranking Menservants were particularly prone to this. One butler had become insufferable because of his being "too haughty with the family" while a footman apparently "grew a Coxcomb during ye latter part of his time and thought himself above ye place he had".⁵⁵ Pride in such servants was often a reflection of their master's status. Aware that they served important men and that they themselves, if good at their work, were rare commodities in the servant market, they may well have developed an exaggerated sense of their importance. Their pride sometimes extended beyond the boundaries of the household in which they worked. In 1757 one coachman to Sir William Robinson threatened Mr Hotham, a tradesman, whom he maintained had not cleaned his hat properly.⁵⁶ The incident is especially pertinent since it related to an item of livery, the special badge of a master, whose title gave his servants the assumed right to pull rank over others. Even more telling was the fact that Hotham, in his complaint to

Sir William Robinson, stated that he "always found it very Easy to please you, but more than once found it very difficult to oblige your Servants". Upper servants who felt that their responsibilities were being abrogated or their trust brought into question were a force to be reckoned with.

"Sober" and "honest" were qualities essential for any servant. Servants who were found lacking in either or both of these were invariably dismissed. Sometimes their fate was worse. One servant, drunk after being enticed to the bottle by acquaintances, drowned attempting to sail a boat.⁵⁷ Honesty was essential especially in those servants who occupied positions of great trust or responsibility. The opportunities for stewards to line their own pockets, for example, were many. It was probably with this in mind that William Martin, steward at Wentworth Woodhouse, wrote to his master in 1772, that he "never neither directly nor indirectly made a single Guinea out of my place over and above my stated Salary notwithstanding the many thousands of your Lordship's money which has pas'd through my Hands ... "⁵⁸ William Constable was convinced that "More family's are ruin'd by their Stewards than themselves, they Encourage their Masters in Extravagance, Create Confusion, which he cannot See thro, lend him money underhand, and often his own Money ... " A good steward, able and honest, was, he declared, "one of the greatest Happynesses that can fall to the lot of a Man of Fortune".⁵⁹

Lower down the servant scale, the honesty of servants was continually put to the test. In certain departments, servants regarded perquisites as their unquestioned right, but the regularity with which they discarded items such as candle ends, dripping,

used playing cards, and so forth, and sold them to tradesmen for their own profit, cost their masters dear over the year. The author of The Servant's Calling expressed his abhorrence of this practice in terms not just of dishonesty, but of downright stealing. The provisions of the household were, he said, often "consum'd in a Debauch to the great Detriment of the Owner who feels the increase of the Expense ... And because [the servants] eat and drink what they steal, make Light of such Robbery".⁶⁰ The lines of demarcation between waste, extravagance and stealing were very thin. Swift, in his satirical Directions to Servants, highlighted these wasteful practices. He counselled the butler "Never to let the Candles burn too low, but give them as a lawful perquisite to your Friend the Cook", and to change playing cards often so that the used packs were still in good enough condition to sell.⁶¹

An honest servant was also considered to be one who did not waste his master's provisions or money, spread his master's business abroad, or keep such company as would tempt him to neglect his duties. It was probably with relief that Thomas Robinson heard in 1749 that his new butler was discreet. The man was said to keep "little or no Company", nor did he "frequent any publick house".⁶²

A servant's age, and whether he or she had had smallpox were also scrutinized by prospective employers. Such was the fear of smallpox that some employers would consider only those servants who had already had the disease.⁶³ Servants who contracted it while in service were sometimes turned away. Others were cared for by their employers though kept well away from the household.⁶⁴ As to age, employers had their own preferences

for this. Housekeepers, according to newspaper advertisements, were favoured between thirty or forty years of age. Mrs Gossip "would not willingly have (a maidservant) under four and twenty, for she has already found the inconvenience of young giddy girls ... ". Amongst other things she also "desires to know ... whither she has had the smallpox".⁶⁵ Young girls starting out in their first posts lacked experience and stamina and they would be unpopular in large households where time was needed to train them, and efficiency was the watchword. Lady Rockingham dismissed a young store room maid because she was unsuitable, but had words of encouragement for her when she heard it was the girl's first post: "I would not wish her to be discouraged. I would have you try ... to satisfy her that for that place in a large family it is necessary to have one that has seen something of service".⁶⁶

Nevertheless, youth could be of benefit to servants, especially footmen and grooms. Their duties included accompanying their masters and mistresses in public, and a combination of youth and good looks seemed to have a most desirable effect on employers. Leonard Gatting appeared to be suitable as a footman for John Grimston being "a slender and good-looking young Man about Twenty-One".⁶⁷ A more wary correspondent wrote of a man who had applied to him for the post of butler, adding that "He is a sightly Servant but there's no judging from outside".⁶⁸ Dressed in livery butler, porters and footmen looked splendid as decorations to their master's coach or at his table.

Masters and mistresses who came into frequent contact with their servants obviously desired ones that were pleasant to

look at. Lower down the servant scale, however, suitability depended less on looks than on skills. While a servant who combined attractive features with diligence appeared all to the good, comeliness did have its disadvantages, especially in women servants. Lady Rockingham thought that Betty Hankin would be "unlikely to turn out a very steady servant" as she "passes for a Beauty". Molly Vickers' career in the same household, on the other hand, was far more assured for she had, in Lady Rockingham's opinion, "more the look of a servant than any in the house, and I fancy is a solid, sober woman and always about her business".⁶⁹ What was meant by "the look of a servant" is a matter for conjecture. Lady Rockingham obviously included size and brawn, for she had Molly in line for the post of upper store room maid, which, she said, required "somebody strong". If these were attributes amongst the servant class, then the three hefty maids of a Durham gentleman, the Kitchen, chamber and cookmaid, reported as weighing in at 16 st 7 lb, 16 st 5 lb and 15 st 13 lb respectively, were obviously suited to their work.⁷⁰

Indeed, the less attractive a maidservant was, the less trouble employers could probably anticipate from them in the way of suitors. Conduct books were not short of advice for maidservants of all ranks with regard to the company they kept. Young ones especially, were exhorted to beware, since the monotony and drudgery of their work might induce them to be more receptive to the solicitations of suitors. Thus they had to beware of the "brave Gallants (who) will fall foul upon the Wench in the Scullery". Even the high ranking Waiting Gentlewoman was not above being guilty of "any wanton gestures, which may give

Gentlemen any occasion to suspect you of levity and so court you to debauchery".⁷¹ Mrs Haywood warned servants that, "Being so much under (their master's command) and obliged to attend him at any Hour ... will bring you under Difficultis to avoid his Importunities... your persevering (with resistance) may perhaps in Time, oblige him to desist".⁷² William Constable would not employ female Cooks at Burton Constable because they were "more troublesome" with regards to love affairs".⁷³

Servants who had suitors were likely to marry them and leave their service, which was an inconvenience to masters and mistresses. They disliked the idea of having to accustom themselves to a new face in the household. Married servants too, were unpopular with employers. For obvious reasons, masters were unwilling to hire a servant who had a family to maintain. Thus, the steward at Cannon Hall wrote to John Spencer in 1766, that "We have met with a Disappointment in the Cook maid that was to come here, she going to take a Husband; therefore shall be obliged to enquire for another ... ", and Frances Robinson, writing to her husband in 1748, expressed doubts as to the suitability of a servant for Sir Thomas, because he was married.⁷⁴ But there were exceptions to this. Robert Usher, steward to Marmaduke Constable, married a fellow servant in 1737, and the couple were allowed to "plant (themselves) in the Dairy end of my House".⁷⁵ Broughton, the housekeeper to Lord and Lady Rockingham, also married a fellow servant while in service. One of the lower maidservants at Wentworth was also seemingly married, and her departure from her place was occasioned only by her husband wanting her to "join him in his new business".⁷⁶

For most servants marriage effectively meant the end of their service. Some masters would allow it, but most would not. William Spencer noted in his diary in 1753 that he "turned Ann Lewkes, Cook, away, she being married to Senior".⁷⁷

Employers no longer appeared to exercise the authority in matters of religion that they once had done, though some clearly wished to employ those with a like mind to themselves. The Gossips were careful to avoid Roman Catholics. In 1761, William Gossip would have hired a young man but for the fact that "he was a Papist [so] I wav'd it. Some Inconveniences generally attend them".⁷⁸ However, he was later confronted by a prospective maid who, although a Catholic, said that, "if she Cannot go to Mass will do as well as she can".⁷⁹

Servants were expected to perform a variety of duties for which certain qualifications were necessary. Butlers and personal menservants had to shave their master and dress his wigs. Footmen were good candidates for these posts, and some had wigs of their own as part of their livery. William Cross, writing to John Grimston, informed him that a young man who had worked as a footman to a lady in York had "learnt how to Dress Hair and Shave a little (and) I think he may easily comb out a Wigg". Another could "wait at Table very prettily".⁸⁰ Although Footmen were technically lower down the servant hierarchy than personal servants, their ability to shave and dress seemingly gave them an advantage. One lady, enquiring after a personal servant for her father, who was in "great distress" without one, thought that one with the ability to shave and write qualified him for a post higher than his previous employment as a footman.⁸¹

Despite the compartmentalisation of posts, servants' duties were nevertheless fairly flexible. Butlers were expected to "overlook a Number of things as when a Wanting", as one prospective employer explained. The same master, on enquiring after another butler some years later, was more specific. He must "do the business in the house as a Butler and at leisure hours have an open eye to my County affairs. He must shave me and dress my wig and if he can ... I shall like him the better".⁸² Similarly, the York Courant advertised in 1761 for a manservant that "understands Gardening ... chiefly kitchen Garden and Wall-Trees, both which he must perfectly understand keeping in order, to look after two Horses, and be useful in the House, all which may be done with Ease ... "⁸³

Newspaper advertisements are a good source for servants' duties and qualifications. Some advertisements included extra incentives for prospective servants. For the adventurous a groom was required for one gentleman who "understands keeping a Running Horse, and is willing to go to America", while another required a "Man Servant about Thirty Years of Age" for a "Young Gentleman who is going abroad".⁸⁴ One position was offered for a "Gardiner who is married ... and understands a Hot-house". Besides wages of thirty-five pounds, he was to be provided with a house, and a labourer to work under him, with the added bonus of being allowed to keep a cow "if he behaves to the satisfaction of his Master".⁸⁵

Amongst the female ranks of servants the housekeeper was as important as the steward or butler. This position usually required a mature woman of middling age, and much experience,

since she had charge of all the other female servants. One of "between 30 and 40 years of Age" was requested in the York Courant in 1765. The housekeeper purchased the necessary provisions for the household, and kept accounts, like the steward. William Martin, the steward at Wentworth, wrote to Lady Rockingham in 1769 that Molly Shore, "keeps a very good book of the daily consumption of all kinds of stores and provisions".⁸⁶ On the other hand, John Potts, writing to his master, Sir Marmaduke Constable, in 1726, seemed a little perplexed as to what the new housekeeper's real duties should be, as she seemed to have a very peculiar manner of going about her business. Thus, "she pretends to much, but I see her doe nothing but sew and open and shoot the windows to air the rooms ... I doe not take her to be the best contriver. She has made some quantity of jamme but seldom or never puts her hand to cookery ... " Moreover he added that "she never appears before seven" in the mornings.⁸⁷

Again, Housekeepers were expected to be expert in a variety of household departments as befitted their rank. Lord Downe required a woman who showed "skill in the direction and management of a Dairy" which he regarded as "more essential than any qualification of a professed housekeeper".⁸⁸ Another, recommended to William Gossip at Thorp Arch, was said to understand "Family affairs and can send up a Dinner handsomely".⁸⁹ Housekeepers should also be initiated in the arts of the kitchen and table. Supervision of these fell increasingly to her as the eighteenth century progressed, as the male-dominated roles of steward and clerk of the kitchen declined except in the largest establishments. In the 1760s advertisements appeared in the York Courant for

housekeepers who could "send things up to Table in a neat Genteel Manner". Another declared that the housekeeper "will have a Cook under her but is required to attend the kitchen" and must herself "understand Cookery and making Sweetmeats perfectly well".⁹⁰ One other of her duties in the eighteenth century involved showing visitors around her master's country house. As gentlemen increasingly threw their doors open to the public, their housekeepers happened upon a very useful source of profit. Horace Walpole's housekeeper made such a profit from showing visitors around his house that he joked that by marrying her he would recover what he had spent on it.⁹¹

Because of the superiority of her post it was essential, Lady Rockingham thought, that a housekeeper should "have some spirit and not be got the better of by the rest of the servants".⁹² She certainly did not seem to mind when the steward reported in 1773 that the new housekeeper, a Mrs Crofts, was a chatterbox and emitted "a great deal of Talk". The idea of the starched and formidable housekeeper and upper female servants of the nineteenth century was not always mirrored by their predecessors in the eighteenth. Wilmer Gossip thought that his new Cook was "not so very strate Laced as some are".⁹³ Such a revelation adds a very human dimension to the picture of master and servants in these large households. A newspaper advertisement in 1765 echoed Wilmer's sentiments. It appealed for a "Good Cook", but added that "None need apply that are not thoroughly good-tempered".⁹⁴ An interesting afterthought about the role of housekeeper was provided by a woman who decided not to go into business, but to take the post of housekeeper offered to her "thinking that she may be easy in it".⁹⁵ Despite expectations

from employers, the post was seen by some as one to settle in comfortably in middle age, as having the right amount of prestige while yet not being too taxing.

Lady's maids or waiting women were in almost constant attendance upon their Mistress and were effectively a class apart from the other servants, including the housekeeper. Mrs Gossip, searching for a new maid for herself, stipulated that "she must be able to wash and dress her M[istress's] Linnen".⁹⁶ Lady's maids sometimes received certain perquisites, such as their employer's cast-off clothing, which were not so forthcoming to other servants. But the Lady's maid did not have the companionship of other servants, making her life sometimes a very lonely one. Mary Platt wrote of her service in York as a lady's maid as if it were an ordeal; "of all the Situations in life, that of being humble companion to any lady is the most slavish, the most mortifying, the most disagreeable, of any I every knew or experienced, and what I would never accept of, if I was reduced to live upon water gruel".⁹⁷ Possibly the humbler maids of the kitchen, laundry or housebody, who had harder lives, nevertheless found them more companionable.

* * *

Every servant received payment for their work, in kind and in the form of wages. The value of these differed from household to household and depended much on the will of the master.

The wage rate was often fixed by mutual agreement, with servants having a say in what they were to receive. Upper servants, who were in a fairly strong bargaining position, often stipulated what they expected as a wage. Walter Spencer Stanhope wrote

to his steward at Cannon Hall that he thought a prospective servant "asks rather too much wages, you may surely get him for twelve Pounds if not for less".⁹⁸ One servant who was to go abroad in the capacity of a children's nurse, asked for thirty pounds a year in 1739, ten pounds more than her mistress thought fit. But she declared that she could not subsist on less, since she had one child "to put out prentice and two to keep in cloathes, besides an old mother that [I] would allow forty shillings a year to, ... (and) that with less [I] could not have a hundred pounds to keep her in her old Age ... ".⁹⁹ Such was the persuasive bargaining that some servants employed. Sir Edward Gascoigne did not always come off best when he settled wage rates with his employees. One suspects that they took liberties and played on his forgetfulness or generosity. They were certainly not shy about expressing their feelings. When Sir Edward paid a servant, Bowser, the balance of his wages, the entry in his account book reads: "He says £2 10s is too little so tho' I had bargined with him for that yet I gave him £3 per annum and if he is to have less work for ye future he is to have no more than £2 10s".¹⁰⁰

Wages were also used to entice servants to leave their posts and go to work elsewhere. Indeed the financial rewards of service sometimes overrode considerations of loyalty to one's master. In 1774 one servant due to leave Wentworth Woodhouse to take up a post elsewhere had to leave earlier than agreed, as his predecessor in the new place, "has lately hired himself to a young Gentleman who wants him immediately and tho' he has not shown the greatest degree of gratitude yet his Master could not wish by detaining him to prevent him getting a good place, his wages 14 Guineas what will this World come to ...".¹⁰¹

Few Servants were willing to take new places at a reduced wage from their last. James Lister wrote resignedly in the back of his account book that "James Tattersall came to be Servt from June 17 1717. He had in his last Service 4^L 10s and I suppose if he stay his year out he expects ye same".¹⁰²

Usually wages were paid yearly, half-yearly or quarterly, though an employer might also pay smaller sums to his staff at other times, in part of their wages. Sir John Vanbrugh paid his regular servants half-yearly at May and November each year, coinciding with the customary hiring times of Mayday and Martinmas. Once a year he also included a Godspenny with their wages, an amount of anything up to about half a crown, depending on the status of the servant, by which master and servant agreed to renew the contract for another year. In such households it was also a sort of goodwill offering on the part of the master and a subtle way of securing their continued loyalty. Most servants seem to have been paid yearly from the time of their arrival in the household so that payments were staggered throughout the year.

Nevertheless, the regularity with which servants received their wages varied. Since servants lived-in and received board and lodging they therefore had little need of ready cash. Where this was requested however, masters did provide it, as the odd payments of one pound or one shilling to various servants in lieu of their wages, sometimes testifies. But some wages mounted up and up and when balance was made, were years in arrears. Thus, in June 1745, when William Spencer "Accounted with Ann Smithson, [he] paid her Nine Year Wages 36 [pounds]

due 27 May"; similarly William Groome received from Lord Irwin "five and twenty pounds ten shillings w[hi]ch with two pounds ten shillings rec[eive]d before is in full for seven years wages due to me", on 8 February, 1699.¹⁰³ This was more the exception than the rule, but it is interesting to speculate on why this occurred. Long established servants may simply have had their wages held in trust for them by their masters until they left or retired.

Employers were occasionally brought to task for their laxity in payments to their servants; this once occasioned an angry letter from the parent of a maid servant who had served William Gossip "from the 19th of March to the 19th of July at 4^L per Ann: being one pound six shillings and eight pence which I hope you will pay her without any further trouble", including "for her self and Box one shilling more".¹⁰⁴ William Martin also had to remind his master, Lord Rockingham, in December 1768, that the payment of wages was due, adding that the servants were "in General, rather Clamerous for their Money".¹⁰⁵ Masters who neglected payment could be accused of an attitude of indifference towards their inferiors, although they were not always allowed to get away with this, as servants, or others who interceded for them, were quick to point out their neglect.

The arrival at a suitable wage rate depended on certain factors. Allowances for tea, clothes and washing were taken into account. Boardwages too, by which a servant received food and accommodation during their master's absence, were calculated according to the servant's rank and wage. Besides these, the system of perquisites in upper class households, which a servant might receive in addition to their wage, may also have affected the latter. These included profits from the sale

of candle ends, and kitchen leftovers, though the most common, and notorious of these, were vails, gifts of money bestowed on servants of the household by visitors and guests. J J Hecht points out that geographical location also influenced wage rates, whereby "rates in the country tended to be lower than in the Capital and other urban centres".¹⁰⁶ A brief comparison between London wage rates, outlined by Hecht, and those of Yorkshire households, does not show such a glaring difference as one might expect from this statement. One reason for this is probably the status of the employers, many of whom were titled and had connections with London. Ultimately, of course, wage rates were decided by the master himself who judged the value of each post by the particular needs of the household.

As can be seen from the tables of servants' wages below, taken from the account books of country houses in Yorkshire, the higher a servant's rank in the household, the greater his or her wage. The highest ranking female servants, the lady's maid, housekeeper and cook, enjoyed an almost equal status with the steward, or valet, but their wages did not always reflect this. Nevertheless, the housekeeper's wages maintained a comparatively high level throughout the eighteenth century and were not infrequently rivalled by those of the cook. Hecht noted thirty pounds as the highest wage recorded for London housekeepers in 1734.¹⁰⁷ The housekeeper at Wentworth Woodhouse received this in 1768 and 1782. Lesser maidservants, who included maids of the laundry, chamber, store room, kitchen and dairy, fared worst of all the household staff. Evidence from both London and Yorkshire shows that they usually received lower wages than the grooms or stable staff. In Lord Rockingham's household at Wentworth, the wage rates compared generously

TABLE 1

WAGES OF SERVANTS IN TWELVE COUNTRY HOUSES IN POUNDS

	TN 1663	DDEV 1690s	TN 1702	TN 1716	SH 1720	GC 1728-34	VAN 1730s	SH 1740s	DDCC 1752	TN 1752	VAN 1752	ZQG 1755-60	DDSY 1755-60
Lord Steward													
House Steward	10 ^a		60 ^a									15	
Chaplain													
Steward's Clerk													
Man Cook													
Confectioner													
Valet/Personal Servant												ManServt 9.9s - 12	
Butler		6							10				
Gardener	12					4							16gns
Gamekeeper												6	
Porter													
Coachman		5-8 10	MenServts 5,6,7		2 Men Servts 8		ManServt 2 Men 7-7.5s Servts						12gns
Footman			10		4gns- 6	4		5.15s - 7.10s					
Under Butler									7				
Waiter of the Lobby													
Usher of the Servants' Hall													
Groom									7				5gns
Under Groom												Stables 7	
Postillion						4			4-7				3gns
Lady's Maid				c.4 ^o						5			
Housekeeper									10				8gns
Nurse													
Cook		6				6			10				
Chambermaid		5				4			3				3gns
Housemaid			Women Servt 3			2.10s	Ordinary Maids 5.5s		3				
Cookmaid/Under Cook		6,7		6		3	6,7		3				3.10s-4
Store Room Maid													
Kitchen Maid													
Laundry Maid						4			4				
Dairy Maid						3							3.5s
Poultry Maid													
Baker Maid													
Farm Maid													

TABLE 1 continued

TN	Gossip	ZGG	DDOC	WMM	NH	WMM	DDEV	SpSt	ZGG	Gossip	DDOC	WMM	
1755-60	1760s	1760s	1763 ^e	c1763	1763	1768	1770	c1775	c1775	c1775	1780	1782	
				50									Lord Steward
				30								100	House Steward
						20						20	Chaplain
												40	Steward's Clerk
				52.12s									Man Cook
				42									Confectioner
		1760-6											Valet/Personal Servant
		1768-10											
			26.5s	25			25		12gns				Butler
	10.15s ^b			25		30		19				50	Gardener
		6	9							6			Gamekeeper
				8								20	Porter
			18	22.10s ^g			10					33	Coachman
				8			4gns					(London)	12gns-16Footman
				6-8			6gns	5gns					(London)
				5		7						7 ⁿ	12gns-16(London) Under Butler
						7						7	Waiter of the Lobby
												7	Usher of the Servants' Hall
			9-13	10-10gns	8-20	20	10	10gns			c15 ^l	20 ^m	Groom
		Stables											Under Groom
		8		8					Stables			10gns	
									12				
	4-6gns		9	5	7					7gns-9gns			9(London) Postillion
				10			6gns						Lady's Maid
	8		20	20		30	14	14gns		12	20	30	Housekeeper
			11gns ^d for 5 mths							43.17s ^{6d} ^k			Nurse
			12 ^f				10gns	10		6			Cook
	(2 ^c	Maids		7					5gns	Maids	Maids	(London)	Chambermaid
	(2.10s	3-7 ^c		2.10s		5	4			4-8 ^c	3-3.10s ^c	10	Housemaid
	(7								10gns	7	
				5			c4						Cookmaid/Under Cook
				2.10s		5-7						6-7	Store Room Maid
				2.10s		4.10s							Kitchen Maid
			6	2.10s ^h		5						6	Laundry Maid
3			6					3.10s			7gns	5	Dairy Maid
								4					Poultry Maid
				4		7gns							Baker Maid
				2gns		4gns							Farm Maid

For References see overleaf/

KEY TO TABLE 1

- a Not stated specifically as being a steward, but would appear to have acted in that capacity, eg overseeing servants and household accounts.
- b Plus washing.
- c Figures for ordinary maidservants probably include housemaid, chambermaid, laundrymaid etc, though none of these posts were specifically stated. In these two households, of lesser size than the more formal ones, the work of the maidservants combined the duties of two or more of the above positions.
- d Not a permanent member of the household. She was called upon in 1767 to nurse Mrs Cholmeley, who died in that year.
- e Compare these figures with those for DDCC 1752. There is a very significant rise.
- f William Constable declared in 1780 that he would not have a woman cook. But it is hard to see how the sum of twelve pounds represented the wage of a male cook. It is more compatible with the wages of the other female servants in this household.
- g John Theobalds, who was in receipt of this sum, was also coachman in 1753.
- h Ordinary laundry maids at Wentworth received two pounds ten shillings per year. A Lady's laundry maid received five pounds per year.
- k In 1780 the nurse received forty three pounds seventeen shillings and six pence for two and a quarter years' wages.
- l Ranks of these servants (a groom and two maidservants) are not specified in the accounts, only suggested.
- m The Hackgrooms at Wentworth received eight pounds per year, the stableboy five guineas.
- n The steward's room also had its own waiter who received seven pounds per annum.
- o The two servants whose wage is here indicated were not stated specifically as lady's maids. They did however, appear in Lady Ingram's personal account book and were distinguished from her other maids by this, and by the fact that she bestowed clothes and small money gifts on them.

with Hecht's figures for around 1765, with the exception of his maidservants who, at two pounds ten shillings per year, were well below the average London rates of around five to six pounds. At Burton Constable in the same period William Constable paid his laundry and dairy maids six pounds, while the cookmaid got five pounds, and the housemaid seven pounds. Five years later in 1768, Rockingham had increased the wages of several of his servants; those of the maidservants had almost doubled though some were still below the average. Variations in wage rates existed from one household to the next. For example, there were marked differences in rates between Sir John Vanbrugh's and Sir Edward Gascoigne's households in the 1730s.

Cooks were not accorded the same degree of importance in terms of wages, in each household. At Burton Constable in 1752 the cook received the same wage as the butler, though by 1763 this had fallen to less than half his wage. In 1775 the cook at Cannon Hall was receiving ten pounds a year, but William Gossip at Thorp Arch was paying his cook only about six pounds. However, we do not know if these cooks were male or female - this might have made a difference to wage figures. The only evidence of a wage for a male cook comes from Wentworth Woodhouse, where in the early 1760s he received fifty two pounds, twelve shillings, more even than the steward. The Confectioner, a specialist in his own field, received forty two pounds. The superiority of male cooks in this period is undoubted. In 1780 William Constable insisted that his male cook stay with him, despite being told that his presence had "probably made an increase in the Expences of Housekeeping of £200 a Year at least".¹⁰⁸

TABLE 2

COMPARISON OF WAGE RATES FOR TWELVE COUNTRY HOUSES WITH HECHT, pp. 142-149 IN FOUNDS

	1702	1716	1720	1730	1735	1745	c1752	c1757	c1765	1770	1775	1780
Land Steward			(1722) 30-100	(1732) 40					(1760-75) 200-700		(1772) 30grns	(1784) 30grns
House Steward	(1708) 50	(1712-42) 40		(1732) 80						100	(1772) 50grns	
Chaplain												
Steward's Clerk												
Man Cook												
Confectioner												
Valet/Personal Servant	4		(1725) 20	(1731) 16		(1748) 6	(1755) 8		(1768) 14	12-15	(1774) 15-25	(1784) 30grns
Butler	(1705) 6	(1712) 10		(1732) 10	(1732) 57.10s				(1769) 20	10-30		
Gardener	(1705) 20		(1721) 12	(1732) 30		(1748) 9		(1756) 16	(1764) 11	12-25	(1774-7) 26,35	
Gamekeeper												
Porter										8		
Coachman	(1708) 6		(1721) 8	(1732) 12	(1735) 10		(1751) 10	(1756) 12-16	(1766) 8-15	11-20	20	(1784) 16
Footman	6	(1718) 5	5	5-6	5.15s	7-8	(1750) 6-10	10	9-17	6-10	12-16	(1782) 4grns
Under Butler				(1732) 6					(1763) 12	14		
Groom									(1761) 10grns		(1773) 15-21	12
Under Groom												
Postillion				(1734) 6					(1763) 6	10-12		12

TABLE 2 continued

	1702	1716	1720	1730	1735	1745	c1752	c1757	c1765	1770	1775	1780
Lady's Maid	(1705) 6		6-10	(1734) 10				(c1760) 8-20	(1764) 10grs		16	
Housekeeper		(1719) 10		(1734) 30	(1743) 10			10	(1766) 12	12-16	16grs	
Cook	(1700-05) 6			(1732-4) 18	(1742)(1744) 15 4	(1753) 8-10		8	8-20grs	5-15grs	8-14grs	(1784) 10grs
Chambermaid									(1769) 12grs	(1771) 6-7	10	
Housemaid	4			(1734) 6		(1750) 5-6			(1767) 6-7	4.10s-7grs	8	(1784) 8grs
Laundry Maid	(1705) 2.5s			(1734) 6	(1749) 6					(1772) 7	(1774) 7-8	(1784) 7
Dairy Maid	(1707) 3		5.10s		(1743) 2					10	(1774-6) 5-6grs	
Kitchen (Scullery) Maid										(1772) 6-7	7	(1785) 6

Sources: Advertisements in London papers
Diaries
Letters
Account Books

Wages did rise over the period, though there were many fluctuations, as Hecht's figures also show, and rates appeared to rise and fall randomly from one year to the next. The twelve households under consideration generally appear to have kept pace with each other; wage rises occurred at about the same time, though they did not all conform to a uniform rate.

One household which lends itself to closer analysis is Burton Constable. The wage books which have survived for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries record servants' names and wages, and occasionally their status.¹⁰⁹ This information allows us to trace servants' careers in the household, and how long they remained there. A period of thirty two years, from 1748, the year after the wages books began, to 1780, has been studied for this discussion.

Servants' ranks were first noted in 1752. In that year, as can be seen from the chart, the butler received ten pounds, along with the housekeeper and cook. Two other servants received wages higher than this; the park keeper got twenty pounds and another male servant, who may have been the steward, received twenty guineas. Most of the other male servants received seven pounds a year, except the postillion, who received four, while the maidservants received three pounds and the laundry maid four. These rates were much the same as four years previously. In 1764 came a major change, with nearly every servant receiving a rise. The butler's salary now stood at twenty six pounds, five shillings, though this was not as large a rise as would at first appear, for in 1755 it had doubled from ten to twenty pounds a year. The rise of 1764 thrust nearly all the servants' wages into double figures, except the lower maidservants, who

received six or seven pounds a year; this was nevertheless about double what they had previously received. The housekeeper's wage was thereafter fixed at twenty pounds. Such a significant rise, for the whole household, demonstrates the importance of the system of vails to the servant's pocket, as it was probably the abolition of these, in the previous year, which brought about the increase in their wages. In theory, servants of all ranks, benefitted from vails, since upper servants, on receipt of them, customarily shared them with the lower ones, though this happened only if they were so disposed. In any case, when a group of servants were given a rise in wages it was expedient that the others received likewise.

The next rise occurred around 1767 when some of the lesser male servants received sums of between one and four pounds more, and at Lady Day 1777, a note instructed that from henceforth the female servants were to receive their wage in guineas instead of pounds, thereby giving them a few shillings extra. By 1780 therefore, wages had risen slightly from the 1764 figures, though the rise was more substantial in the case of the male servants. The difference between the wages of lesser male and female servants was greater than it had been in 1748, although their wages in 1780 were equal to, if not more than, the average rates suggested by Hecht. Nevertheless, whereas the wage of an ordinary maidservant had risen overall by about four pounds seven shillings, that of a groom or postillion had risen by about ten pounds.

Some interesting case histories are revealed by the wage books. Elizabeth Kipling, for example, entered William Constable's service in 1754 as undercook and received three pounds a year.

In 1758 she received a sum combining the salaries of three pounds a year as chambermaid, and eight pounds as cook. Thereafter she received eight pounds as cook, which rose to twelve pounds in 1764. She served the Constable family for about twenty four years, disappearing from the wage books after 1778. Her predecessor as cook appears to have been Susanna Richardson, whose career at Burton Constable was shorter - she served ten years, from 1747 to 1757 - but almost as varied. In 1747 she was undercook and received three pounds a year. In 1754 she was described as head cook and in receipt of ten pounds. In May 1756 she was apparently discharged, but her name reappears again in 1757 as undercook for which she received a year's wages of five pounds. If this was the same person some interesting speculations are raised as to the nature of the relationship between herself and Elizabeth Kipling, since both had, in effect, swapped roles.

Another servant who rose from a lowly position was Ann Clegg. She started as housemaid in 1754 on three pounds a year, and was, by the time she left in 1763, receiving ten pounds; thus suggesting her promotion to the post of housekeeper. In 1764 a Mrs Webster headed the list of female servants, receiving ten pounds a year. Perhaps Ann Clegg had married and retained her post, though we shall never know. Nevertheless, as a good housemaid she would have been a natural choice when the post of housekeeper became vacant. The practice of promoting lower servants, who had acted as understudies of a sort to their superiors, was sensible and convenient. Thus, when Walter Spencer Stanhope's cook left him in 1779, his first thought was that "the under cook may do".¹¹⁰ It is worth noting that the rise to senior posts of servants from the lower ranks

in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries marked a change from the times when only the gentry and sometimes the nobility occupied these posts. Upward mobility was now possible for a greater number of talented younger and lower servants.

Amongst the menservants whose positions in the household changed were William Ravell and William Ryder. Ravell was a footman in 1748 receiving seven pounds a year, but in 1752 he was described as butler and in receipt of twenty pounds. Ryder was an assistant in husbandry in 1749; he became under-butler in 1752 and finally manager of the pheasants in 1754. But his wages did not change so dramatically. Over the twenty one years or so during which he appeared in the wage books, from 1749 to 1770, he received only one wage rise, from seven to ten pounds in 1764.

A change in rank did not always involve a corresponding change in wages. At Burton Constable, David Wright, who became gamekeeper in 1754, received seven pounds a year, the same as he had received as third groom before that. Likewise, Elizabeth Stringfellow, who was serving in the house in 1747 and left in 1754, was cook at the beginning of the period, and became housekeeper in 1752, though her wages remained constant at ten pounds throughout. Also, Elizabeth Wright was a laundry maid in 1754 and became a housemaid thereafter, until she left in 1763, and her wages correspondingly fell from four to three pounds.

Quite clearly, staff in this household were used according to their abilities. Several held different posts during their stay. Wages compared favourably with other households but wage rises were erratic and by no means regular or uniform. But as an example of the movements of staff and their wages

in a large household, Burton Constable is particularly good.

The affair over vails in 1763 also affected the wage rates at Wentworth Woodhouse. In 1768, when it had had time to take full effect, all stated wages of the staff had risen. It is interesting to compare the wage rates of servants in Rockingham's London household with those in his northern country residence.¹¹¹

In London the chambermaid received ten pounds and footmen between twelve and sixteen guineas, in comparison with the four guineas quoted by Hecht for 1782. The coachman in London received thirty three pounds, more than the housekeeper and chaplain at Wentworth. But wages in the London households did not always exceed those at Wentworth. The London housekeeper in 1782, for example, received twenty pounds a year, whereas Mrs Crofts at Wentworth received thirty. Wages for maids of the dairy, kitchen, house and laundry ranged from five to seven pounds at Wentworth, in the same year, equalling those in London, where six or seven pounds was the norm, though the head laundry maid in London received nine guineas. Lady Rockingham set great store by her laundry, and the abilities of the girls who worked in it. At Wentworth the porter received twenty pounds per year, while at Lord Rockingham's Wimbledon residence the porter there, who had served upwards of twenty one years, received only sixteen pounds and the housekeeper a mere nine guineas. The size of the household was clearly a factor in this.

Wages were not the only financial reward of service. As we have seen earlier, (see page 75), wages were sometimes adjusted to take into account bonuses such as perquisites and allowances.

These played a more significant role than would at first appear. They were an important extension of the paternalistic relationship and a reaffirmation of the master's superiority and authority, an idea which will be discussed further in the following chapter on master and servant relations.

The first payment of any sort which a servant might receive was the Godspenny, a seal of the contract undertaken by master and servant.¹¹² It was perhaps more associated with the statue or hiring fair, but some gentlemen such as Sir John Vanbrugh gave their servants a token Godspenny once a year, even when they were not newcomers to the household, as an indication of their continued service. The Godspenny was a time-honoured custom though like all such payments, given at the discretion of the master.

Allowances for tea seem to have followed a fashion rather than a necessity and were certainly not given by all masters. A correspondent to Mrs Gossip at Thorp Arch informed her that, "The Serv[an]t which Mr Brown mentioned could not do without Tea, therefore have Hired [another]".¹¹³ Catherine Lister, however, at Shibden Hall, paid two of her maidservants twenty and fifteen shillings a year for tea in 1757 and 1760, on top of their wage of four pounds.¹¹⁴ A pound or a guinea was the usual rate for tea at this time, though at Wentworth Woodhouse an entry in the steward's Cash Book in 1777 refers to £2 10½d being allowed for "Tea and Sugar for Mr Clarici", one of the master craftsmen working in the house.¹¹⁵

Boardwages were usually given to servants when their master was away or to those servants who accompanied him on his travels. Sir John Vanbrugh gave his cook boardwages in December 1739,

"the time I was at Mr Norths", and in March the following year "when I was out of town", amounting to around six pounds on each occasion for an unspecified length of time.¹¹⁶ As with wages, boardwages were fixed according to the rank and sex of the servant, though because only a servant's name is often given, and their boardwages paid for odd weeks and days, it is difficult to determine exact rates. The Duke of Leeds' Servants' Bills in the late 1730s and early 1740s reveal that his servants received around five and seven shillings a week for board wages, the male servants usually receiving the higher sum.¹¹⁷ This was generous compared with the three shillings Walter Spencer Stanhope gave to his maidservants in the 1780s.¹¹⁸ John Potts considered three shillings to be the minimum rate which could be allocated to maidservants in the 1780s, after the maid at Everingham Hall had given warning, "alleging that she could not live of her board wages haveing only five pound ten shillings per annum, which will not be 2s 1½ per week. I am satisfyed she cannot wheat being 5-6 per bushel and Rye 4-6 per bushel".¹¹⁹

As with other methods of payment, boardwages were subject to criticism and abuse. Servants who were given them were, it was felt, allowed a certain freedom which encouraged drunkenness, extravagance and also the cheating of their masters, by entertaining other servant friends at his expense in his absence.¹²⁰ They might also pocket the money. One servant presented his master with a bill for his board, although he had been left provisions by the housekeeper, and was discharged for his duplicity. In 1711 the Spectator contained a letter maintaining that board wages were an "instance of false economy [which was] sufficient to debauch the whole nation of servants", and complained that

they allowed menservants to "wait at taverns [where] they eat after their masters and receive their wages for other occasions".¹²¹ John Macdonald, quick to spot a way to make some money, described how sometimes when his master dined out, "the servants asked me to dine where my master dined and by that means I had it in my power to save a shilling or two".¹²² Nevertheless, board-wages remained the cheapest and most convenient way of keeping their servants while employers were absent, and were not in any state of decline, as the eighteenth century progressed.

Clothes were also sometimes negotiated in the wage agreement, quite apart from those given as gifts. In most cases the employer provided his servants' clothes, although these were allocated at the master's discretion and were not always provided. A lower servant was to have "6 (pounds) clear wages for a year but no Cloathes" when he went to serve William Spencer in 1738.¹²³ Economies were exercised. Many servants were given old clothes, sometimes from ex-servants, or even wore their own. This was usually allowed for in the wage when reckoning was made. Edward Popplewell was given five shillings on top of his wage "because he wore his own Breeches some time".¹²⁴ John Mackelworth, a stableman to the Vyners, was given one guinea "for a fustian work(?) to be provided by himself which will be cheaper and more serviceable than if provided by the Taylor".¹²⁵ Even liveried servants were made to economise. When John Dickinson entered Lord Rockingham's service he "took a Livery which had been wore 17 weeks, Mr Hall promised him a new Livery at ye Expiration of half a year".¹²⁶

A livery was usually provided once a year. Marmaduke Constable agreed to give his coachman, Robert King, hired in 1692, "a

livery at Mayday" besides his wages of ten pounds.¹²⁷ Specific items made up each livery. Two liveried servants of John Spencer Richard and Mark, were given liveries which differed in accordance with their station. Richard, presumably the superior of the two, received two dress coats a year and two scarlet waistcoats, in addition to breeches, great coat, hats and jackets; one year, when he travelled with a lady, he was allowed a second blue jacket, instead of the usual one. Mark's livery included one great coat every two years, one scarlet jacket and waistcoat, breeches, boots and hats, but only one dress suit of livery a year.¹²⁸ A liveried servant, therefore, had two sets of clothes, for "better and worse" as John Potts explained, "some when he appears in (his master's) business abroad, and others to trash att home".¹²⁹

Clothes worn by servants of the Marquis of Rockingham were a mixture of the practical and the ostentatious.¹³⁰ His two porters, coachmen and five footmen each had a grand livery coat and a pair of white silk stockings every two years as part of their ceremonial or official uniform, while they received an ordinary livery of frock, waistcoat, breeches, hat, thread stockings and drab frock each year. The two grooms' livery included a velvet cap, while the postillion had "a velvet Capp with Silver Tassell and Band", touches which added a certain panache. The gamekeeper was distinguished by his green shagg frock, breeches and cloth waistcoat, while the undergrooms, coachmen and the postboy, wore a basic great coat, frock, buckskin breeches, caps in velvet or leather, and boots. Money was sometimes given in lieu of a livery. When Sir Edward Gascoigne was bargaining with his servant, John Wild, over his wages,

he agreed that two pounds a year "should be allowed towards his livery".¹³¹ In this way, if a servant's clothes were not due for renewal, he would not lose out as far as his wage was concerned. Moreover, John Spencer sought to reimburse his servants for their loss of vails in part by giving them a whole new livery suit each year, adding a memorandum that, "I expect every one of them to keep himself neat and clean and to appear so and wait at Table every day when he is Home".¹³²

The livery had wider ranging implications on the servants' role in society. It represented a sort of psychological barrier for both servants and observers alike. Some servants, who wore a livery, often considered themselves superior to certain other people, but for others it represented a badge of servitude and merely enhanced the stigma attached to service. One servant who advertised for a place in the York Courant desired not to wear a livery, possibly for this very reason.¹³³ A livery set servants apart, as unique but also servile. It emphasised the differences between their state and that of ordinary citizens. Servants who wore a livery and who were haughty and domineering may have assumed a role which they believed was theirs by right. On the other hand, such behaviour may also have been the unconscious psychological effect of wearing the livery which hid a sense of inferiority.

If the livery detracted from the prospect of service for some, however, vails were very much an attraction, so much so that a master was often asked how much company he kept in order for a prospective servant to calculate whether a reasonable profit could be realized. A foreign writer to a newspaper described the process whereby vails were collected; "In England,

at your leaving the House where you have dined, you find all the Servants drawn up in the Passage like a File of Musquteers, from the House Steward down to the lowest livery Servant, and each of them holds out his Hand to you in as deliberate a Manner, as the Servants in our Inns do on the like Occasion".¹³⁴ Vails were accounted for in the wage. Thus William Spencer's groom received wages of "six pounds a year and three parts vales".¹³⁵ Vails were often pooled and shared with one or more other servants though sometimes greed got the better of certain characters. When the young John Macdonald was serving his early years as a postillion under the coachman, John Bell, for "two pounds a year, all my clothes, and a third part of the vails", Bell ill-treated him and sometimes flogged him, suspecting that John was not giving him the vails he had collected.¹³⁶

The amounts received by servants were not insubstantial. Sir Edward Gascoigne parted with three or four pounds a time when dining out, thus making him a popular visitor especially with the servants. This did not deter him from making frequent visits. In July 1729 he went to Nunnington Hall and gave the housekeeper one guinea, the butler half a guinea, the cook and chambermaid seven shillings and sixpence each, two footmen ten shillings, the coachman and groom seven shillings and sixpence each and the postillion and undercook two shillings and sixpence. Their own rank and that of their employer dictated the amounts servants would receive. When he dined at Tadcaster with Sir William Milner, Sir Edward gave the "Butler 2-6 and by mistake y^e Footman 2-6".¹³⁷ Another generous guest was Sir John Vanbrugh.¹³⁸ The reaction against vails on the part of some gentlemen was quite understandable, though many may have felt that it was better to pay up than face the consequences of not doing.¹³⁹

A correspondent to a newspaper pointed out that vails were particularly "burthensome to People of moderate fortunes who have the Madness to keep Company with great Men". Horror stories were told of gentlemen judged by servants to be tight with their money, who had food spilled on them at table, or were ignored altogether, or as one writer described, "accidentally" served the wrong accompaniments to a dish, "so that I am forced to eat mutton with fish sauce, and pickles with my apple-pie".¹⁴⁰ Much contemporary criticism was directed against vails. Daniel Defoe complained that "the giving of Vails to Servants ... is now grown to be a Thorn in our Sides"; interestingly, he likened servants to a supernatural force - "Thus have they Spirited People up to this unnecessary Piece of Generosity", and lamented the days of "our forefathers who only gave Gifts to Servants at Christmastide".¹⁴¹ Besides being costly to maintain, vails were unpopular with employers and gentlemen possibly for another reason. In the power relationship between a master and servant, vails clearly demonstrated servants' power over their masters. This involuntary method of payment gave servants the upper hand. They were the manipulators; paternalism and authority were temporarily turned upside down. Vails seemed to bring the worst out in servants, making them self-seeking and greedy. Although they met with much support, chiefly among the servant class, the suppression of vails came about in the 1760s although masters found that servants thereafter expected higher wages to make up their financial loss. Writing to William Gossip, one man surmised that "the late Scheme of suppressing Servants Vails has made their Expectations and Demands of Consequence rise very high".¹⁴²

* * *

Servants' living space in large houses gradually contracted in the early modern period, so that by the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries they were living and working at the extremities of the house, in attics and basements. Their daily contact with their employers was also restricted so that it was frequently only upper servants who communicated directly with them. Upper servants not unnaturally had the best accommodation. In the eighteenth century, stewards and housekeepers in mansions and town houses sometimes had small suites of rooms combining offices and storage space with living quarters.¹⁴³ The housekeeper's room was also a sitting room for upper servants and was of modest comfort, while the steward's room functioned as their dining room. Lady Rockingham noticed that her dismissed housekeeper "had put too nice a bed in her Room which might do for some other".¹³³

Little information exists with regard to servants' actual living and working conditions, accommodation and diet. Conditions were not altogether unpleasant and, as Hecht has pointed out, were very spacious in these large country houses.¹⁴⁵ Moreover, servants' accommodation in these houses, although mean, was no worse than the homes they had left, or those in which many of them were destined to live after service.

The Servants' Hall was one of the most companionable rooms of the house. Here the lower servants could congregate when they were not on duty, as well as eat. A description of the hall indicates some of the furniture within, examples of which still survive; "The Servants Hall, near to the kitchen, always had a comfortable fireside and was usually furnished with a mural clock, to aid good time-keeping, long ash tables and forms, a dresser and perhaps private lockers".¹⁴⁶ A list of

the "Names of Persons that Dine in the Servants Hall" at Wentworth from March 1773 to May 1774 reveals that this room was also a thoroughfare through which visitors' servants, tradesmen and casual labourers passed. Some of the people who shared its hospitality were "Mr Farran's Servant", various "Boys", "Too Women come to see William Whiteley", "Tinker and Wife", "Too Friends of David Smith", "Mr Wolland and Made", and "Too Swe[e]ps from Sheffield".¹⁴⁷

The conception of servants' quarters as unpleasant and dingy has been nourished by the words used to describe them, such as "attic" or "garret". An undated eighteenth century inventory of furniture in Newby Hall shows that while the rooms were furnished simply they were not without a little domestic comfort - feather beds with hangings, bedsteads, quilts and blankets, were present in the garrets over the brewhouse, the stable chambers and the maid's room. The stable chamber also contained two rugs.¹⁴⁸ The quality of accommodation varied from house to house but sometimes furniture was relegated to upper servants' rooms which had once graced the family quarters, thereby adding a touch of elegance and style. Thus, a handsome chest of drawers with an elm veneer served Mr Price's room, an upper servant at Newby, in the later eighteenth century.¹⁴⁹

The lower female servants could expect to sleep several to a room, often sharing beds too, while the upper servants sometimes had their own rooms. At Everingham Hall, the housekeeper shared a bedroom with two of the maidservants; propriety was obviously not her strong point, for "she has her spark to lye with her in her bed ... in the same Room".¹⁵⁰ Certain servants slept

near their place of work - the doorman by the entrance door, the kitchen boy or scullion in the kitchen, the personal servant alongside his or her master or mistress on a small "truckle bed" in the room. For such servants, any convenient place was adopted as a bed - a closet or chest might suffice.

A heightened social awareness, and desire for greater privacy in the eighteenth century meant that servants of the rich, who could at one time be seen all over the house, were increasingly relegated to its hidden recesses. Ascending or descending to different storeys was done by means of the "Back stairs". Mark Girouard traces this to its seventeenth-century origins, with the introductions of closets and servants' rooms off the main ones, so that domestics could be conveniently tidied away, out of sight and sound of the family.¹⁵¹ The cold and damp of attic bedrooms might often go unnoticed due to servants' extreme weariness. But employers might go to some pains to ensure that their servants did not live in squalor. It was after all, in their best interests to promote their health and well-being. Marmaduke Constable's steward thus wrote in disgust of a maidservant who had left her service, preferring "a married state and a very mean cottage ... before your service and a very good house".¹⁵²

Household account books also attest to the variety of food which provisioned the household, in which undoubtedly the servants lower and upper, had a share. Servants in wealthy households never had to worry about where their next meal was coming from. Vegetables and meat were plentiful, and eggs and cheese were often supplied by locals and tenants. Many country houses

were indeed, more or less self-sufficient in these products. John Potts complained of the fare presented to the household by the new housekeeper because it was unvaried, "good beafe our daily food, saveing now and then a goose or pullet", but despite this he ate much better than the majority of the working population, a point noted also by Richard Baxter.¹⁵³ Travelling servants also ate well. An undated voucher from Temple Newsam lists the servants' expenses for food and drink at various stages along the road. Supper at Stratford included "half a mutton and a Brest, 3 joynts of veale, a ham ... butter and eggs ... oringes ... sugar", while for breakfast they dined on veal, mutton, sugar, oranges, butter and eggs, bills for both meals amounting to nearly four pounds.¹⁵⁴

Interestingly, it was often through their servants' lifestyles that gentlemen earned their particular reputations for largesse or austerity. John Spencer's household had gained a bad reputation with Thomas Wentworth's servants in 1767, for according to his sister, Anne Stanhope, they "said when they din'd here they was sorry you was so poor, y^t next time they came they would bring their Dinner along with them", another indication that the servants of the wealthy could be as status-conscious as their masters.¹⁵⁵ Beer, the most common drink for servants, was, however, plentiful at Cannon Hall, the seat of the Spencers. So much so that jugs of it were reputedly placed in the rooms of the men servants.¹⁵⁶ A more stately household, that of the Duke of Leeds, provided wines and spirits for its servants, as well as the family. Visiting servants were entertained with quantities of wine which varied according to their rank.

Sick servants usually received a bottle of port to aid their recovery, whilst all the household staff benefitted at funerals. When Mr Tranlow, the late house-steward was buried in 1724, the servants enjoyed twelve bottles of red and nine of white port, and a bottle of canary. Even the working animals were not forgotten. In April 1720 "one of the Cart horses when sick" got a bottle of canary.¹⁵⁷

Such leisure hours as a servant officially got were few. They were sometimes allowed time off to go to the fair or to see a play. In London, play-going was a common pastime for such as footmen who were "often seen passing away their time in Sets at All-Fours, in the Face of a Full House, and with a perfect Disregard to People of Quality sitting on each Side of them".¹⁵⁸ Many of these were undoubtedly passing the time awaiting their employers' return to the coach. The large household itself afforded some diversions of course. When servants of visiting gentlemen came down to the Servants' Hall for ale, there was the chance to swap stories and information.

Servants were indeed, the means by which much information was passed to and fro, and a master's reputation often hung on the integrity of their servants' tongues.¹⁵⁹ The fictional party held by Lovell's servants in Townley's play High Life Below Stairs must have been an employer's nightmare.

Few probably dared to go to the lengths of Philip and Kitty and their colleagues, but socialising was sometimes undertaken at forbidden times and places. Thus one maidservant declared that James Macdonald had given "wine in the kitchen to people" while an upper servant of Sir Marmaduke Constable's retorted that "it was Christmas and he was invited to supper" when he

was upbraided "for staying out in the Town till one o'clock in the morning".¹⁶⁰

Ale houses were also popular places for servants to congregate. These were mostly male, lower servants. Unfortunately, these visits sometimes had adverse consequences for their behaviour and ultimately their work. One errant became involved "in a drunken Quarrell which was at an Ale House".¹⁶¹ Moreover, Lady Rockingham discharged her footman in 1775 because of his strange behaviour due to "staying out at Alehouses gambling without our knowlege almost all day till eleven o'clock at night".¹⁶² The writer of a popular conduct book was certain that drink was the cause of all the faults in servants' characters, "for nothing more exalts a Servant into a Master before his time than this ... it gives Boldness and Rashness and such a contempt of their superiors as amounts to Phrenzy and even Madness".¹⁶³

The amount of leisure servants were allowed depended of course on their employers. In a large and wealthy household there were perhaps more opportunities for leisure time by reason of the greater numbers of staff who could if necessary cover for absent colleagues and because of the tradition of entertainments within the life of the house. At Christmas or New Year, for example, Sir John Vanbrugh's servants usually celebrated by being allowed to see a play, in the nearby city of York, or perhaps even within the house itself. City servants had even better facilities by which to spend their leisure time than those in country households. Samuel and Elizabeth Pepys frequently took a favourite maidservant with them when they went to card parties, or to the famous Barthomolew's fair and sometimes dancing.¹⁶⁴

Leisure time was granted, snatched or stolen depending on the time and place. It was a fairly elusive aspect of servants' lives but there would be few servants, even in quite humble households, who did not experience some leisure time or moments of light relief, at times of celebration within the household, or in the village, for example, or at a nearby fair.

* * *

One of the most obvious speculations about service is how long servants remained with their masters. Was service a potential career undertaken for the best part of a working life, or was it something one left as soon as an opportunity allowed? How long indeed did servants remain in their posts and how or why did they leave?

Evidence for lengths of service is again fairly scanty if we are to rely on account books, diaries and so on. But we can look at two northern households in more detail due to the survival of the long run of wages lists at Burton Constable and the stewards' lists of servants for random years at Wentworth Woodhouse. These may indicate general patterns with regards to lengths of service in households of the gentry and upper classes.

The wages lists at Burton Constable begin in 1747.¹⁶⁵ From then until 1780 approximately one hundred and forty two servants received wages, and of these, the lengths of service of about one hundred and four can be estimated. Some of these figures are speculative. It is not known, for example, for how long

those present in 1747, when the servants were given legacies from their late master, Cuthbert Constable, had already served the family, while several of those present in 1780 continued in the household for several more years. Some servants also received only spasmodic payments over a period of years so that while they did not appear one year in the wage lists, they crop up again later on. Sixteen servants were recorded as being discharged, and another five died while in service, leaving the dates of departure for a fair proportion unaccounted for.

Of the sample of one hundred and four servants whose lengths of service can roughly be deduced, sixty four served between one and five years; twenty from six to ten years; nine from eleven to fifteen years; seven from sixteen to twenty years, and four over twenty years.

Most of those who served for just two years at Burton Constable were lower servants. A fairly rapid turnover of these was the norm in most households. For these service was most often a transitory state between leaving home and marriage, entered with the intent of saving enough for a small dowry. The restlessness of youth may have encouraged young servants not to stay for longer than one or two years and many did not acquire the skills necessary for promotion, although there were exceptions. But short terms did not always apply merely to lower servants. Between 1748 and 1780 there were at least eight housekeepers at Burton Constable. None of these stayed longer than five years, and two years was a more common length. Two of these had previously been a housemaid and cook in the household, and so had actually served for longer. Nevertheless, these are rather surprising figures, and not compatible with the

popular idea of the housekeeper as a matronly figure who had served several generations of the same family.

There were servants who stayed for outstanding lengths of time. John Lundy had served for sixteen years by 1780, James Lithgow had served for nineteen years, and William Maudsley fifteen years as under waggoner, from 1747 to 1762. By 1780 Ann Jackson had been an undermaid for about nineteen years. Mary Pickering served for about eleven years as dairy maid from 1759 to 1770 while Elizabeth Kipling had served for twenty four years from 1754 to 1778. She started as undercook on three pounds a year and later became cook with twelve pounds. The longest serving member of the household was Francis Anderson. He had served for thirty two years by 1780, being present amongst the recipients of the legacy back in 1747, and described as fourth groom in 1754. His wages fluctuated from seven to nine pounds in 1764, rising again to thirteen pounds in 1766, although ten years later they fell to ten pounds. Such long years of service certainly countered the attacks of critics who blamed servants for disloyalty and fickleness.

The steward's lists of household staff at Wentworth, which have survived for the 1750s, 1760s and 1770s, are useful for a comparison of the household from decade to decade.¹⁶⁶ The earliest list, of 1753, records the legacies left to his servants by the first Marquis who died in 1750. Fifty four servants are listed, both indoor and outdoor staff. Another, undated list, which may have been for the early 1760s, indicates that thirty one out of fifty five servants had been present in the household in 1753, though by 1768 the composition of the household had changed somewhat. While some names can be identified from

the earlier lists, one of which was Mrs Jennet, housekeeper then, as in 1753, the majority of servants, mostly at the lower levels, had changed. An example of how rapidly the household could change from year to year is shown by comparing the lists for 1766 and 1767. Out of seventy names recorded in the earlier year, only thirty three appeared in the following year's list. None of the footmen, store-room, house or farm maids appeared in the latter year, while only one each of the maids from the laundry and kitchen remained. This follows the pattern established in the Constable household, in which the underservants were found to come and go with greater frequency than the upper and more established ones. However, the Gossip household was perhaps notable because of its frequent changes of cooks. These averaged about one a year.¹⁶⁷

But the gentry were by no means over-eager to rid themselves of good servants. New faces amongst their household staff took time to get used to, and were attended by certain inconveniences as the servant settled down, besides being hard to find in the first place. Thus one correspondent to Lord Rockingham, commenting on the recent dismissal of several staff, exclaimed, "this to us who hate new faces appears enough to make one sick".¹⁶⁸

But bad servants and those who committed misdemeanours were discharged. Drunkenness was a common offender, all the more evil because of its effects. Lady Rockingham's footman, as we have seen, lost his place because of his drinking habits, as did Thomas Beet, a servant of Walter Spencer Stanhope; "In consequence of his drunkenness and absenting himself from his Service" he was discharged on 25 August 1784.¹⁶⁹

Servants could also be turned off to effect change within the household, or when a new heir inherited. At Burton Constable, on receiving a legacy from their late master, Cuthbert Constable, in 1747, many of his servants were turned off, to make room for those of the new owner, William Constable.¹⁷⁰ A new owner naturally wished to implement his own new methods of household organisation and management. But sometimes the reverse was the case. When John Spencer succeeded to the estate of his father at Cannon Hall in 1756, his new housekeeper and cook objected to his old-fashioned methods of household management, through his insistence that they sleep with the ordinary maids, a decision which he enforced in spite of their complaints.¹⁷¹ Moreover, at Wentworth Woodhouse in 1773, the steward effected a "purge" of the household which marked the extent of his authority. When Benjamin Hall took over from William Martin as steward, one of the first acts of his new office was the immediate discharge of several servants, to the great amazement of one correspondent, who remarked to Lord Rockingham of the "explosion" in his household and hoped that "your Engineer has done nothing rashly" in discharging forty servants all at once.¹⁷²

The prospect of greener pastures in another household also tempted servants to move on. Their present positions were a useful stepping stone from which to launch themselves into more prestigious places, and many used their employer's influence, as has been seen, to procure such posts.¹⁷³ There was, however, occasionally a sense of annoyance, or surprise even, when some servants left their places. One writer sympathised with Mrs Gossip on losing her servant to another employer, adding that "I was in hopes she would not have thought of changing her

Situation this long time, for I think they are much better as they are if they could think so ... ".¹⁷⁴ Such an attitude also exposed the selfishness of employers who showed little regard or understanding for their servants. Naturally they thought their own service the best but failure to understand a servant's need for change implied rather that they did not credit them with human feelings and ambition and thus that they almost forgot that they were humans at all. John Macdonald's master showed great displeasure when John told him he wished to leave him to serve another man who was going to India. In a fit of petty annoyance, "He threw down his pen, with which he was writing a letter, on the floor, and went out ...".¹⁷⁵

Some paragons served their employers until death. Five of William Constable's servants died in his service between 1748 and 1780. Mrs Gisborne, a vicar's wife, noted in her diary the deaths of both her old servants who had served her for over twenty one and forty years. The oldest, a manservant had "declined in his Health many years butt [was] Confin'd to his Room only part of the day before he died ...".¹⁷⁶ If death was not the deciding factor old age and incapacity were. Cuthbert Constable, not without some affection for the old man, discharged his butler, Mr Street, in 1737, "as he is now growne old and sickly having had a Rheumatisme above halfe a year and being altogether incapable of serving any longer ..."; and when Walter Spencer Stanhope succeeded to the estate of Cannon Hall on the death of his uncle John Spencer, the old and long-serving steward, Benjamin Dutton, was shortly afterwards retired, and a new man, John Hardy, took his place; he served "until old age unfitted him for the task", as Walter's son wrote in 1836.¹⁷⁷

Marriage also meant a decisive break from service for most ordinary domestics. Few married servants were tolerated by employers. For most, marriage involved a considerable drop in their living standards, and a relinquishing of the security and comfort experienced in their masters' homes. Nevertheless, most would have preferred to marry than continue their lives in service despite the precariousness of their life ahead. Liaisons between servants and masters or masters' sons did occur, and the lucky few married and thus became mistresses themselves.¹⁷⁸

Servants who had given long and loyal service, might be rewarded with a tenancy or pension, enabling them to live out their lives in modest comfort, while years of service and a careful management of their wages enabled some servants to establish themselves in their own business. The York Courant regularly advertised the businesses of ex-servants who wished to offer a different service to "Gentlemen, Tradesmen and Others". William and Anne Johnson, "late Servants to John Twilleton Esquire", took the Golden Lion in the market place at York; Richard Holt, who had served Robert Plumpton and Jaspar Kingsman of Essex as butler, took the George Inn in Askrigg and offered "the best accommodation of all sorts in the Sporting Season"; John and Helen Place, both ex-servants at other inns, took the Black Bull in Settle; and John Wriglesworth, an ex-butler at the Mansion House in York, took the Red Lion in Monk Bar.¹⁷⁹ Service obviously offered the skills needed for such an enterprise as innkeeping, although an anonymous writer regretted that ex-servants should "pine away their small Gaine in some petty Shops or Publick Houses".¹⁸⁰

A minority of the more talented servants took up writing. Most imparted the knowledge which they had gained from service and the publication of their books enabled them to retire and become independent. Elizabeth Raffald, who had risen to become housekeeper at Arley Hall, wrote a recipe book which she dedicated to one of her former mistresses. She also ran an employment agency for servants, managed a confectioner's shop and helped her husband to run an inn, during her varied career.¹⁸¹ Robert Dodsley also acquired fame and fortune from his writings. He is perhaps best known for his poem Servitude, addressed to footmen, one of which he himself had been.¹⁸² Also John Macdonald, of whom mention has already been made, wrote his memoirs which include his travels with various masters. Today they still provide very entertaining reading. It was not unheard of therefore, for servants to launch successful careers later in life, some with the blessing and support of their former employers.

* * *

In summary, the main features which distinguished houses of the gentry and nobility from those elsewhere, were their numbers of servants, and also the many different servant offices which fitted into a fixed scheme. Servant life in a large household was carefully organised and regimented - each servant had his or her functions to perform in relation to the others, which in effect led to the "departmentalisation" of the household.

Within a large household, the full range of servant offices and the pattern of relationships and ranks is more clearly defined. A hierarchy existed amongst servants which mirrored that of society generally. There was a strict division between

upper and lower servants with the upper ones exercising an almost unlimited power over the lower servants. Some upper servants might themselves have claims to gentility by birth while lower ones tended to come from humble families. Upper servants often lived in modest comfort within the house in their own private quarters; they ate superior food and in general conducted a lifestyle far removed from the menials at the other end of the servant scale. The word of these high-ranking servants was law - it was they to whom the lower servants were essentially subject. Upper servants came into more frequent contact with their master and mistress than lower servants, who might rarely communicate with or even see them. It was to the few upper servants that the employer left the organisation of the household, the management of his affairs, and thus the regulation of his staff.

The divisions within the upper class household then, were twofold - between the family and its servants on the one hand, and between the servants themselves on the other, amongst whom rank and status, and the relation of various offices to one another, were as rigid and socially distinct as society itself.

But there was a significant offshoot of service in a gentleman's household. It was a peculiar quirk of English society that because the master they served ranked high on the social scale, his servants, upper and lower, were superior in status to most other labouring people and servants, including those of the middling ranks. This often gave them an exaggerated sense of their own importance and some servants of the gentry, certainly the more senior ones, were known for their haughtiness and overbearing manner. They were sometimes said to be more status -

conscious than their own masters. This jostling for position went on within the gentry household too, where rivalries were not uncommon between servants. But because the scale of rank was so wideranging it was not out of the question that a young lower servant might work his or her way up several steps of this scale if they remained long enough within the household. But the turnover of servants, especially amongst the lower ranks, was high, even in upper class households, most remaining for one or two years. And though some servants were able to use service in a gentleman's household as a stepping stone to greater things, many servants of lower ranks reverted back to their humble origins and lifestyle when their careers as servants were over.

Nevertheless, service to a gentleman or nobleman benefited servants of all ranks. Although lower servants received the worst treatment, mainly at the hands of the senior ones, they lived in a style generally superior, and certainly no worse than the homes from whence they had come; they were guaranteed good food, clothes and shelter and moreover the protection of their influential master, which was one of the most significant aspects of the master and servant relationship at this level.

CHAPTER 2

SERVANTS OF THE GENTRY: MASTER AND SERVANT RELATIONS

"Let it for ever be your plan
To be the Master not the Man,¹
And do as little as you can"

The master and servant relationship was quite unique. In virtually no other area of society did inferior and superior exist in such close interdependence. The experience of service was very widespread and affected most people at some point in their lives. Details about many aspects of the relationship were committed to paper and had repercussions beyond the household in which they took place.

An investigation of master and servant relations encroaches upon the wider issues of the nature of authority and particularly of the concept of patriarchalism and its influence on the household and family. In addition, the social status of an employer to some extent defined his relations with his employees at home.

Paternalism or patriarchalism functioned by virtue of two opposite poles - an upper superior one and an inferior, deferential one. The terms on which it was based were unequal, but they were reciprocal in that each side functioned because of the other. Most relationships between master and servants at all levels of the social hierarchy were founded on patriarchalism, which implied a level of control. This level varied according to the master's public role and function, which played as much a part in the relationship as his own particularities in the running of his household. Gentlemen and titled people had a very public image to maintain, and the way they conducted

their relations with their servants reflected this.

As has been indicated earlier, the fundamental difference between the gentry as employers, and the rest of society was the very size of their households. One of the key symbols of their wealth and status was their country house, the increasing grandeur of which in the eighteenth century, proclaimed a family's particular pride in their inheritance and the manner by which they exercised their role as landowners and public figures. These were built to impress, not just the local community over whom their owners presided, but also and more importantly, their social equals. The profusion with which they sprang up in the countryside, especially in the south in the later seventeenth century, attests to their importance as symbols of this power through their functions and administration.² There were close parallels between the roles of the country house as a single household unit, wherein family and servants lived together, and as symbols of "state, beauty and convenience", as Sir John Vanbrugh aptly described, within the surrounding countryside.

The external appearance of the country house focused attention on the status and power of the owner. Internally, the layout of the house reflected the owner's increasing desire for privacy and separation from his servants. New houses built in the eighteenth century incorporated features such as backstairs and corridors, and made use of basements for the full range of servants' offices and accommodation. By these means, servants could go about their business unseen and unheard by family and guests. More and more only carefully hand-picked personal and upper servants came into contact with their masters and

mistresses. The effect of this on attitudes between masters and servants was more subtle and pervaded the relationship over a gradual period. It accompanied changes within family life, between husband and wife, and parents and children, all of which were seen as part of the general metamorphosis in the character of the "family", about whose exact nature debate still continues.³

Family life and the authority of the head of the household over his wife, children and servants, were traditionally sanctioned in the Scriptures which were reiterated by writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. They extolled the duties of fathers to children and masters to servants and vice versa, and of the family in relation to the state, the order of the one guaranteeing the stability of the other. Even in the early eighteenth century, one author wrote that "Every family bears a likeness to a kingdom, for as a Family is a contracted Government, a kingdom is an extended Family".⁴ The fifth commandment, "Honour thy Father and thy Mother", was taken as the keystone on which familial relations were to be based, those of lesser status paying due deference to those in authority over them.⁵ This theoretical ideal was extended to the whole of society, and governed relations between its various tiers. The religious motivation behind the relationship, whereby servants were bound in theory by ordinance of God to serve and obey their master, precluded any sense of it as being merely a contractual one, reached by mutual agreement. The obligations were already inherent in the relationship; in return for their loyalty and submission to their master's will, servants could console themselves that they had few or no worries on other counts - they were "only concerned in one matter, to do the work that lies

before them, whilst others have a world of work to look on".⁶

Masters were seen to be the mentors as well as the employers of servants. They were responsible for the moral, spiritual and physical welfare of all persons living under their roof.

Daniel Defoe stated categorically that the masters of families were "parents, that is, guides and governors to their whole house, though they are fathers only to their children".⁷

Prayers and religious instruction played an important part in family life. Family prayers, in which the whole household took part, featured at regular intervals each day in the lives of some households. Lord Derby would insist that his servants appear at set times of eleven and six along with the rest of the family. If they did not, they were discharged.⁸ Richard Baxter writing in the late seventeenth century, exhorted servants to "willingly submit to the teaching of your masters about the right worshipping of God, and for the good of your own souls", while he suggested that masters who were "persons of quality ... may imploy a child or Servant to read a chapter in the Bible while you are dressing you, or eating your breakfast".⁹

William Gouge, writing in the early seventeenth century, counted it amongst the duties of masters to "endeavour the salvation of their servants", for such would profit both their souls and the quality of family life.¹⁰ They must therefore instruct them at home, encourage them to go to church and exhort them to pray. Where master and servant were of differing religious inclinations, this, according to Thomas Seaton, should not impair their relationship. The servant was under just the same obligation and owed as much loyalty to his master whether the latter were "Papist, Presbyterian, Quaker, Anabaptist, Independant ...

so long as the Relation of Master and Servant continues and is undissolv'd by a mutual Parting from each other".¹¹

Gouge, writing in the early seventeenth century, revealed the extent to which a master's authority theoretically touched the lives of his dependants in almost every other respect. Sections on the duties of masters in his treatise included advice on servants' marriage, their allowance of food, recreation, punishment and clothes, even to the extent of the "master's power to dispose of their servants' persons". Masters, he reminded servants, "may not only keep them himselfe for his owne service, but also passe them over, and give, or sell them to another".¹² A master's power was virtually all-wielding. Richard Mayo informed servants that, "when you hired yourselves, you sold your time and labour to your Masters", a point which was repeated by Thomas Broughton in the mid-eighteenth century, who also exhorted gentlemen masters to "see that the Lords day be religiously kept in your household", an interesting comment to observe at this later date.¹³

Eighteenth-century writers still expounded these ideals on the nature of the family and the relationship between masters and servants. But the tone of such writing seems more urgent in the face of complaints against the abuse of these hitherto sacred elements of family life. Naturally, servants received most criticism. The Servants Calling of 1725 stated that "the faults of servants are a general theme of Complaint. Some Families have been ruined, others made uneasy, and great Sufferers by the Frauds and Falshood, Idleness and Obstinacy of their Servants".¹⁴ One of the chief critics of servants was

Daniel Defoe, whose Every-Body's Business is No-Body's Business mercilessly divulged the "Private Abuses and Public Grievances, Exemplified in the Pride, Insolence and Exorbitant Wages of our Women Servants, Footmen etc."¹⁵ Defoe and his contemporaries railed constantly against the servant class and exhorted them in ever louder and more insistent tones to mend their ways. Whether these complaints were exaggerated or not, the public revelled in the outpourings of indignant critics, of servants who felt themselves unjustly abused and of anyone with an amusing or exemplary tale to tell concerning this most intriguing of problems. Whether servants posed any more of a problem in the eighteenth century, or were noticeably less submissive and hardworking than before, is questionable, but the volume of complaints against them at this later date, reached a pitch unrivalled before. The far greater numbers of servants now probably highlighted these problems.

Was it that servants changed, or society, or society's expectation of them? The answer was probably a little of each. But contemporaries were convinced that the "servant problem" lay at the door of servants themselves although much of what was conveyed in literature dwelt on the theoretical ideals of service. The reality was often different.

The major complaint levied against them was that they displayed too great an independence of spirit, which meant not only a lively disposition, but also a tendency to answer back and be too self-opinionated. By such behaviour, masters feared too much self-interest on the servant's part, which ignored the traditional notion of dependency and willingness to submit

to their master's wishes. This sort of behaviour was exemplified by the servant who tried to take his master to court after he had been thrashed, or by those who registered their complaints by giving notice and leaving.¹⁶

This self-interest extended in other directions too. Their increasingly shorter terms of service were said to indicate the general faithlessness with which they regarded their duties towards their employers. Daniel Defoe complained that, "the Custom of Warning as practis'd by our Maid Servants is now become a great Inconvenience".¹⁷ Ever on the look out for betterment, some servants made frequent moves from one master to the next. Again, Defoe remarked on them "quitting Service for every idle Disgust" while one servant of the Gossip family left without a by your leave to go abroad.¹⁸ Later, William Gossip was asked to send him his wages by post, which he did but with the admonition that the four pounds, fourteen shillings and sixpence was, "more than you deserve or are intitled to. I would advise you to behave better in y[ou]r new place. They know very well in Jamaica how to treat misbehaving servants". Servants were also sometimes dishonest, tempted no doubt by the frequent opportunities that arose. Employers were often sever with those suspected of dishonesty, because the act was a breach of trust, which was a central element in the relationship. Sir William Chaytor considered dismissing his manservant, George, a long-standing servant, when he suspected him of having stolen money, and lying that it had fallen through his pocket.¹⁹

Servants' interest in their looks and clothes, and their avariciousness, also went against the grain with employers.

Vails, were, as we have seen, a source of great trouble to masters and discontent amongst servants who felt they did not profit enough by certain gentlemen. "Being an eye servant", wrote Mrs Haywood, was to appear diligent in sight, and be found neglectful when out of it".²⁰ Eye service was "mere outward Service, which is imperfect because it deceives", and the opposite of "singleness of heart", with which sincere servants undertook their duties.²¹

Servants' anger at dismissal, or correction sometimes provoked them to retaliate out of spite or revenge against their employers. We recall the manservant who, flogged for his insolence, went straight to an attorney to try to extract money from his master.²²

In another example, a servant maid of Lord Malton was reported to her mistress as saying that her allegiance lay on the opposite side when her master was contesting an election. In a fit of pique on being discharged, she announced "when she went out of the house [that] now she would cry 'Stapleton for ever'".²³

Nevertheless, for every servant who was disloyal or fickle there were countless others who showed a true "singleness of heart" towards their employers. Molly, an ex-servant of the Gossips, received high praise when she was called upon to minister to a member of the family who was ill. It was said of her that, "ever since she was Married [she] has promis'd to come at any time when she can be of service".²⁴ An old servant of Sir William Chaytor wrote to his master, a debtor in Fleet prison, of events at the squire's home in Yorkshire. He hated the housekeeper, Ann Wastell, vehemently, for the liberties she took with her master's belongings, and ended his letter with a simple declaration of his loyalty and love; "I desire no greater riches in the world than to see you at Croft again".²⁵

It is impossible to doubt the motives of such servants who, by these spontaneous gestures, revealed a genuine affection and loyalty for the masters and families they served, which sometimes extended beyond the normal call of duty. Such declarations also reflect a master's conduct. It was an excellent master who could so appeal to the hearts of his servants and command such loyalty from them.

If masters complained of servants who were idle, fickle and insolent, they did not stop to consider that they themselves might have encouraged this. When those in control started "breaking up the old pattern of the household and substituting new patterns that changed with changing fashions", this was bound to affect relations between its members.²⁶ Signs of the distance that was growing between servants and masters were the increasing lack of contact between them, and the growing importance attached to the wage. On the other hand, masters who encouraged their servants to dress like them, wear elaborate liveries, or be indulged as if they were pets, risked losing their servants' respect. Over familiarity bred contempt in servants. But there were other possible reasons for deterioration in standards of servants' behaviour. This may well have been a sort of defence mechanism unconsciously provoked by such changes, which served to threaten a servant's position in the household and family, relegating them to still more inferior status and transforming the relations with their employers that they had previously enjoyed.

Of course people had always complained about unruly, ungrateful servants. They were easy scapegoats for society's grievances

about its ills. But the dynamic character of late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century society, very much open to new ideas and fashions, probably made it particularly prone to what it saw as the shortcomings of servants, on whom some of these ideas not unnaturally rubbed off.

Dress, as we have said, was a bone of contention amongst employers. The subject of servants' attire was one on which writers argued and exhorted with great fervour. Jonathan Swift cynically advised servant maids to "Wear your Lady's Smock when she has thrown it off", while telling footmen that they were "sometimes a Pattern of Dress to your Master, and sometimes he is so to you", and lamenting with them the times when they were down at heel and forced to dress in "translated red-heeled Shoes, second-hand Toupees and repaired Lace Ruffles".²⁷ Daniel Defoe considered that "our Servant Wenches are so puff'd up with Pride now-a-days that they never think they go fine enough".²⁸ Some writers presented a more serious moral tone. The anonymous author of The Servants' Calling declared "how ill-matched are servants and soft cloathing", and that their masters and mistresses did them a disservice in encouraging them to dress up for in the long run, "where is the Advantage of having a Dress that cannot be maintained when they are displaced? It only makes 'em the more unfit for the low Condition they must live in ... when out of Service".²⁹ Despite this, some employers seemed unaffected by these exhortations. Mistresses such as Lady Isabella Irwin at Temple Newsam, seemed to have no qualms about giving their maidservants clothes. Her two personal maids, usually received six shillings from their mistress on top of their wages, though in 1754 when she paid them a year's wage, she "gave them over and above each a gowne".³⁰ At Cannon Hall

Mrs Anne Stanhope gave ribbons to the maids, paying six shillings and sixpence in 1770.³¹ Miss Catherine Constable noted paying one shilling and seven pence halfpenny "for a ribbin for Betty Tomlynson's head" in 1701.³² Nevertheless, these mistresses had discovered a very pleasing way to reward their staff, knowing that such ornaments would probably go down well with the female servants.

Despite the disadvantages, servants who were in such close contact with the luxury of their employers' lifestyles provided an important link between upper and lower social levels, and were largely responsible for the dissemination of many ideas from the higher to the lower ranks. Servants who lived in their employers' large households in town and country took back to their humbler homes ideas of the fashion and manners of the upper classes. Servants working in a country mansion might receive news of the latest fashions in the capital through fellow servants who travelled to and from London with their masters and mistresses. This contact with two distinct social worlds made domestic service a unique occupation, and a key factor in the changes that took place at all levels of society during the eighteenth century. It might also be argued that servants helped bring about a higher standard of living through their improved appearance and habits. As one historian explained, "no gentleman wanted to be surrounded by lousy, stinking ragamuffins. It was in masters' interests to supply wigs and bodices, medical treatment and even some education for those who served and waited."³³

Money was also a powerful factor in the master and servant relationship. Its importance in the relationship grew in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and both master and servant used the financial side of the relationship to bargain or manipulate. Wages were often withheld for example, if a servant's conduct or work was poor. In their turn, servants sought to gain the most from their service and shopped around for a position that offered most remuneration. As the cash nexus assumed a greater importance, the relationship between the two was transformed. The wage overrode "former relationships of fixed status, based on reciprocal duties, in which cash payments rarely changed hands".³⁴ A regular wage gave servants greater independence. One instance of its growing importance to servants was the affair over vails in the mid-eighteenth century. As vails became less popular with employers and were eventually abolished in the 1760s, servants demanded higher wages, to make up for their loss of profit from vails. Daniel Defoe was convinced that the insolence and bad behaviour of servants was due to the rise in wages and he suggested that one way of dealing with this would be to "Settle and limit their wages ... according to their Merits and Capacities",³⁵ a not unreasonable suggestion, but one which would occasion a great deal of arguing on both sides when the wage came to be settled.

But there was more to the wage than appeared on the surface. On one hand the rise in its importance seemed to devalue the relationship and turn it into one based purely on monetary values in which effective relations declined. On the other hand it is through the wage that we can partly see the master and servant relationship at work. Both servants and master

used the wage as a means of manipulation. Servants would bargain with their employers for a higher wage, or were attracted elsewhere by the prospect of better financial rewards. Masters also used the wage as a means of confirming and maintaining their position.

By definition the master was the dominant partner in the relationship; his authority was automatically assumed by virtue of his superior position. But at the same time it also had to be earned and maintained. There was always the servant who would overstep the mark and assume above his station or become dissatisfied with his treatment or position. In addition the master had to fulfill another vital function, his paternalistic role towards his inferiors and dependants. This he did by a series of manipulative techniques, using the wage and other material and monetary rewards.³⁶ Through wage rises, rewards and gifts, and even the promise of a legacy in his will, masters exercised a persuasive power over their servants. Astute masters were aware that by bestowing gifts they were encouraging the continued loyalty and diligence of their servants. Servants who felt themselves neglected or lacking in their fair share of what was due to them might refuse to obey orders, or withdraw their loyalty. Such was the case with John Heap at Cannon Hall who, "found fault with his Victuals and had not the allowance of Liquor as usual", although the steward impressed upon him how "very indiscreet" he was.³⁷

Servants looked for gifts and bonuses from their employers. At such times as Christmas and the New Year, or fair and feast days, servants might look upon their employers as particularly ungenerous if they did not receive some token. Sir John Vanbrugh's

accounts record the giving of Christmas boxes to his servants, which amounted to five pounds in 1757, and in January 1750 he gave gifts of a guinea and a half crown to two of his servants for the New Year.³⁸ Lady Irwin of Temple Newsam likewise "gave away in Christ[mas] Boxes 10s" in 1711, and over two pounds in 1753.³⁹ Her accounts also include payments to servants in the form of "fairings", traditionally gifts of money for spending at the fair. Thus three servants received four shillings apiece, at the time of the "Easter Fair 1754". Plays were another entertainment to which servants were sometimes treated. The housekeeper at Burton Constable gave her maids five shillings in 1780 "to go to the Play at Sproatley", and Richard Weddell of Newby Park gave five shillings each to ten servants to go to a play in December 1760.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, Sir Miles Stapleton offered a reminder that gifts were entirely voluntary on the master's part. When giving a servant a bonus to his wage, he recorded that he did so "out of good will, not obligation".⁴¹

Servants who performed tasks in addition to their manual duties were given small rewards. One shilling was paid to a maidservant "for Puling out a Tooth"; another shilling went to Mrs Anne Stanhope's servant, Molly Hinchliffe, "for finding a Ring"; and in 1738 a payment of six shillings was made "To the Cook for her Trouble", by John Lister of Shibden Hall.⁴² What that trouble was is not stated, though three days earlier extra provisions including eggs, ducks, meat had been purchased, which suggested that the Cook was preparing for a large gathering. In 1726 Molly at Shibden was paid two shillings "for learning Pastry". Her employers obviously appreciated this culinary art, and deemed it worth the extra payment.⁴³

Employers acknowledged servants' good performance of their work. Servants were rewarded for their "diligence", "care" and "trouble", and their "prudential care", "civility" or "dutiful attention". This was especially welcomed at times of anxiety or stress within the household, when a servant's true worth was displayed. Such a time was during illness in the family. Thomas Gossip paid his servants five shillings "for sitting up at sundry times with my Dear Wife", and Richard Weddell paid his Cook, housemaid and kitchenmaid, a total of five pounds, two shillings and sixpence between them, "for their Care and trouble in my Wife's Illness".⁴⁴ Servants' extra care was noted by their employers, mindful of their dependency on them. Richard Weddell realized that his own advancing age meant more work for his manservant, George Cooke, and made a note in his accounts, "to pay him for ye future at ye rate of Twenty five pounds per Annum from this Day ye 10 February 1761 in consideration of ye small advantage he had from him place last year at Newby and ye greater trouble he has now in attending me as I grow olde and more helpless".⁴⁵ In February 1774 John Chapman received two guineas at the hands of the steward "as a Reward by his Lordship for his Care and Assiduity", and in July 1732 Sir Edward Gascoigne, somewhat alarmed by a four hour journey to Sheffield, "by a very bad road", gave one shilling to Tom the postillion, "for riding well".⁴⁶ These were fairly minor rewards for tasks that were nevertheless expected of servants. But they do at least recognise and place a value on such work. Masters who acknowledged their servants encouraged their greater loyalty.

Masters defined the relationship by their attitudes towards their servants. A master's behaviour in front of his servants

told a great deal about what he thought of them, as could his methods of reprimand and punishment. One area which was most revealing was that of servants and children. Parents became increasingly mindful about exposing their children to servants, supported by advice from authorities such as John Locke, who warned that children "frequently learn from unbred or debauched Servants such language, untowardly Tricks and Vices, as otherwise they possibly would be ignorant of all their lives". He added that, "You will have very good luck, if you never have a clownish or Vicious Servant, and if from them your Children never get any infection".⁴⁷ Possibly Locke's sentiments were shared by Ann Worsley who, writing to the Robinsons at Newby, reported that, "Miss Molly learnt everything vulgar and disagreeable I fancy with ye servants since her Mama was ill".⁴⁸ But children clearly enjoyed the company of servants and for many, such as Molly's brother Thomas, time spent with them provided hours of happiness and pleasure in what must sometimes have been a lonely childhood. Thus Tommy, who had "never been loved or minded at all, seem[ed] quite surprised and pleased at being played with and taken notice of" by the servants.⁴⁹ Sometimes masters fears were not unfounded regarding their children in the care of servants. In 1643 William Lowther wrote to Captain Adam Baynes reporting the deaths of two children, caused in his opinion by wrong medication, and their parents, "Leaving those children ... so often and so long with Servants ... let this be a warning never father and mother both trust poor tender infants so long as they have done to Servants".⁵⁰ Servants themselves were thought to be little more than children in intellect and behaviour. Ralph Thoresby regularly catechised servants along with children and orphans, a duty he felt to

be necessary in families, since "children and servants ... are generally the most ignorant part of mankind".⁵¹ Robert Dodsley, lamenting the treatment of footmen, took this a step further: "we are not ... to be employ'd in any Business of Importance; nor in short to transact any thing which requires Thought or Conduct: And in this View it is not probable that we should ever possess any Place in any Gentlemen's Esteem beyond that of his Dog or his Horse".⁵²

Wetnursing was another instance of servants' notoriety concerning children. Many children of the upper classes were left to the mercy of these women at an early age, sometimes in the latter's own homes, where they were prey to all manner of dangers and diseases.⁵³ But despite the hazards, some infants grew up to be very fond of their surrogate mothers. The bonds which could develop between some nurses and children illustrate the closeness and importance of servants in children's formative lives.⁵⁴ However much the two were thought to be incompatible, the presence of servants in the household was almost bound to impinge in some way on the lives of the children. In humbler households many servants shared the bedchambers of their master's children and there may, indeed, have been little difference in age between the servants and children of the household.⁵⁵

Ironically, although employers were so condescending towards their servants they displayed childish traits themselves in their relations with them. Masters were intrigued by black servants and flattered by their presence in their own households which could so enhance their prestige amongst upper social circles. At the same time, they tended to be wary of them, and many expressed doubts as to the success of relations between

them. One mistress wrote of her underlying dislike of her new dark-skinned servant and of the consequences on her child; "ye poor little soul don't mind ye tincture of a skin ... but I'm afraid when she finds she is not so much diverted she won't be so happy".⁵⁶ But the possession of a dark servant more often had the opposite effect on employers. They over-indulged them and treated them like pampered pets. Yet this treatment also implied an underlying attitude towards them as inferior beings no more than children, or worse still animals. The very worst manifestations of this attitude were the steel collars which some blacks were made to wear, and humbly follow their owners round like an obedient dog.⁵⁷ Dressed in rich fabrics and adornments with the names of classical authors or figures of antiquity, these black oddities were paraded alongside their master or mistress for the sole benefit of the latter, to enhance their prestige or looks. Fashionable ladies liked to be seen with their black servants as it was thought the fair complexion of their skin was highlighted by the dark colouring of their servant.

Not all black servants were treated harshly by their employers. Some even became famous through their exploits. Amongst these were Francis Barber, manservant to Dr Johnson, who served him for thirty two years and received a generous legacy at his master's death; Jack Beef who served John Baker, a solicitor general of the Leeward Islands, and was friendly with his master's white servants and a renowned cook and bottler of wines; and Ignatius Sancho, who set up shop as a grocer in Westminster on leaving a Duke's service, and was acquainted with eminent literary and theatrical figures. There was also the lesser

known black servant of the Yorkshireman John Reresby, who called him "my fine More".⁵⁸

Masters' attitudes towards servants were also registered by the extent and frequency of their admonition. Tempers were easily roused by insolence, bad behaviour or slack work, and the offence registered by physical or verbal reprimand. In theory, masters had free reign over the punishment of their servants, although authors such as William Gouge stressed moderation in their dealings with them. Some servants had to accept beatings and angry words from their masters as a matter of course. But the servant's voice was becoming more audible with respect to such treatment. Robert Dodsley explained the servant's situation very aptly:

"to hear ourselves despis'd, degraded, and call'd a thousand Fools and Blockheads upon every Trifling Occasion, is certainly to human Nature the most irksome Thing imaginable ... one would be tempted to think that some Gentlemen conclude when a Man becomes a Servant, he ought no longer to look upon himself as a human Creature, but relinquish his Passions and retain no sense of Anger or Resentment".⁵⁹

The speed and severity with which masters sometimes chastised their servants was similar to that meted out to dogs and other animals, and reinforces the idea that some masters had little regard for the human feelings of their servants.

But this period was by no means noted for its softness of temper. Beatings and physical injury were commonplace, most inflicted by the upper orders on their social inferiors. Masters were

outraged if their servants dared to complain at such treatment. A groom, turned away by his master for his "ill Quallityes", complained to the quarter sessions and was granted three times the value of the wages due to him. His master then beat him and found himself before the court for this action, a rare example of a superior being punished for his ill-treatment of a servant.⁶⁰ Even Samuel Pepys, who showed such affection for some of his young maidservants, beat one of them and left her all night in the cellar.⁶¹ A beating moreover, reflected social hierarchies and status. Beatings were usually inflicted on social inferiors. Gentlemen generally reserved their swords and pistols for their social equals. Occasionally masters went too far and chastisement had tragic consequences. Thus Charles Jackson, a gentleman of Rothwell, was brought before the assize court in 1665 for killing his servant by administering a blow on the head with a shovel. It was done in momentary anger at his servant's drunkenness and his "haveing been abroad all day". He sorrowfully said that, "Browne had beene his Servant long and that he loved him very well because they frequently tooke tobacco together".⁶² The servant and master relationship could provoke quite intense feelings of affection and hatred, and it could bring out the best and the worst in both parties.

A master's authority dictated many aspects of his servants lives, including their leisure time and relationships outside the household. A servant should have no business of which his master was unaware. Martha Bairstow's trials over her father's will were common knowlege to her master, Oliver Heywood. His knowledge of it reveals how close an account he must have kept over its progress.⁶³ Any business a servant desired to keep

private had to be conducted largely in secret. But this frequently involved activities of which the head of the household would strongly disapprove, including liaisons with suitors, or staying out to drink with friends, and so on.

Suitors and marriage were strictly taboo in many households. Sir Marmaduke Constable instructed his steward, John Potts, that the housekeeper was not to marry and when she did, without his permission, she was dismissed.⁶⁴ There were large households in which upper servants were married, as at Wentworth Woodhouse, although these were perhaps the exceptions. But Lady Rockingham was wary about suitors to her lower maidservants. Her bakermaid had, a few years ago, made herself unpopular with her mistress with "her saucy Temper and a connection with two lovers at a time ... but of late I believe she has loss'd them both w[hi]ch may acc[oun]t for her amendment in humility and meekness". Another servant was treading upon dangerous ground, partly because of her "air and appearance [and] the knowing she has already one admirer and passes for a Beauty, makes her situation where she is very unsafe".⁶⁵ But it was almost inevitable that maids who entered service at a young age would eventually marry. Mrs Haywood advised them that after service in one place for eight or ten years, "You will be then of a fit Age to marry and besides being entitled to the advice of your Mistress, will be certain of her Assistance in any Business you shall take up".⁶⁶ Most employers probably accepted a servant's departure to marry as part of the natural course of things, although some relinquished a good servant with little grace. Thomas Gossip wrote to his father in annoyance that his maid Mary "very foolishly threw herself away into the hands of a Soldier without giving me the least notice". He felt her action "undutiful" and "ungrateful".⁶⁷

There was sometimes not a little selfish motivation on the part of masters and mistresses where their servants' marriage was concerned. Some were very surprised when their servants chose to leave, and here again, there are overtones of servants not having human feelings like ordinary people. Nevertheless, those who made service their life's work, or remained with one family for many years, were valued. Mrs Haywood said that, "An old Servant is looked upon as a Relation; is treated with little less respect and perhaps a more Hearty Welcome".⁶⁸

Masters and mistresses were sometimes very difficult to please, and constantly found fault with their servants. Thus a relation of Sir John Reresby's asked him to enquire about a new maid for, she wrote, "I cane not suffer the present one any Longer".⁶⁹ Lady Chaytor of Croft discharged her maid servant, calling her an "ill-humord Creature".⁷⁰ There was clearly no love lost in some relationships. Of course, the fault was not always on the employer's side. Many may have been sorely provoked by their servants. There is no indication of the causes of a breach between Oliver Heywood's wife and their maidservant Martha, but relations between them soured so much that Mrs Heywood would not communicate with Martha even after her marriage, and was angry when she learned that her husband had done so. The breach was a source of much distress to him, especially because of his affection for Martha, and he was thankful when the two met later on without animosity.⁷¹ Instant dismissal was a punishment inflicted quite frequently for bad conduct or insolence, but not all employers were able to exercise this prerogative without some cost to their conscience. Lady Rockingham disliked undertaking the task personally, and she wrote to her steward in 1773; "I must tell you that I have

just got over the unpleasant task of discharging my little wasp ... it is a most terrible affair to me to grieve people". Rather, she felt that she tended to indulge her servants. Of the replacement for Mrs Tuppett she wrote, "I only hope I shall not spoil her which I fear I am apt to do".⁷²

Servants were sometimes treated as if they were something apart from ordinary humans. When they were being hired, some employers subjected them to a detailed scrutiny, as if they were buying a horse at market. Sir William Chaytor noted the "clumsy coarse hands and arms" of one maidservant, "which looks like a workhorse (and) may not please".⁷³ Mrs Gossip also wondered whether one prospective maid squinted or not.⁷⁴ Servants were regarded as objects and chattels, as if they were non-persons, with no human feelings. They were therefore not expected to react to their employers' undressing, or discussing private affairs in front of them. They were beaten and verbally abused, and were not supposed to retaliate or show resentment. They were criticised at almost every turn by employers and the public alike. The Spectator published an imaginary letter from a servant whose feelings were heartfelt by many; "I confess my despair of pleasing (my master) has very much abated my endeavour to do it".⁷⁵ Such behaviour did little to enhance the relationship. Instead it often served to create a distance between master and servant and a gradual breakdown in effective relations between them.

But masters' behaviour might have been provoked for other reasons. Firstly, fear of disorder within the household, as we have seen, mirrored a fear of disorder in society generally. One

way by which masters could contain this fear was to distance themselves from their servants, both socially and often physically. In any case, lower servants rarely communicated with their employers directly since upper servants acted as mediators between them. This behaviour may have the opposite effect, however. A distant and unapproachable master could lose his servants' respect and loyalty. Secondly, masters might have feared servants gaining power over them, through the information at their disposal. The relationship was, after all, an intimate one in the sense that both master and servant lived alongside each other. Some servants were notorious for gossiping with others about their master's family and household. Adopting a superior and critical attitude was a sort of unconscious defence mechanism on the part of masters to keep their personal integrity.

But the relationship was not always negative. Paternalism, though waning in the eighteenth century, was by no means extinct, and examples of masters' fatherly concern for their staff, as well as their charity and indulgence towards them, abound. A personal servant who spent much time each day alongside his or her master or mistress often established a close bond with them which might grow into more of a friendship than a mere contractual relationship. Many masters felt the loss of such servants when they died or departed.

Very often, the real worth of a servant was not recognized until his or her absence. Then their employers might bestow their bounty upon them, or their relatives, in the form of aid, or an annuity. In so doing, they exercised paternal obligations which extended not just to the servants within their household, but to neighbours and relatives, as well as

to ex-servants who looked to them for support in their adversity or old age.

The second Marquis of Rockingham and his wife showed genuine concern for their servants in ill-health and old age. Even though they were absent from the household at times, they took the trouble to order the arrangements for sick servants by letter. John, a coachman at Wentworth Woodhouse in the 1770s, suffered a long illness during which Lady Rockingham supervised his medication, at the same time writing to her steward, Benjamin Hall, of the "incessant trouble I shall be tempted to give you for I have a natural anxiousness in my temper where I interest myself". She was not content until she had "done to the uttermost of my power for his soul as well as his health".⁷⁶ As to another servant's impending death she wrote that, "he may depend upon our kindness to his Wife and Child", and when the daughter of Molly and Joshua Cobb who lived at the Lodge, was seriously ill, she sent word to Hall that, "I love those folks at the Lodge so much that I beg both you and Crofts (the housekeeper) will do all you can to advise and comfort them".⁷⁷ Sending a greeting to the steward she added in a postscript that "We heartily Wish our Family a good and happy New Year"; sentiments which, judging by the above letters, were genuinely meant. Her use of the term "Family" to describe her household suggests that she and the Marquis, childless themselves, may have regarded some of their servants at Wentworth with an affection and consideration normally reserved for offspring.

Paternal obligations to one's servants sometimes extended beyond their actual term of service. Old servants were not forgotten.

The Marquis, hearing of the poor state of health of James Forrester, who had accompanied him on his grand tour as a young man, wrote to him to advise him to take a trip to the south of France, and aware that this "may not so well suit your Pocket", sent him a banker's draft "for your use and I beg you not to be Scrupulous".⁷⁸ Ex-servants also applied to their former masters for aid, their ties with the family sometimes extending to one or two generations ago. An old servant of Sir William Robinson's grandfather, a ploughboy in 1715, petitioned Sir William for help to reach friends at Topcliffe, his sickness having reduced him to straits so that he could no longer work as a labourer.⁷⁹ Another distress letter came in 1758 from an old servant, Jane Clark, who had "lived Thirteen Years in the Family", and on being widowed "was your Aunt Hayeselbyes [Aislabie's] maide Servant and wrought betimes for all the Family". She further substantiated her claim to his generosity by informing him that she was "Samuel Allan's Daughter, Taylor, that wrought for all the Family so long as he was whole".⁸⁰ Young, lower servants who moved away were apt to lose contact with their employer, only renewing it, as in the case of the ex-ploughboy, when it would prove beneficial to them. Servants who lived in the family to old age, such as Betty Dixon at Wentworth Woodhouse, were often pensioned off under the wing of their employers, remaining in their charge until death.⁸¹ Lord Rockingham's reputation was so far-reaching that even those who had not served him felt it within their rights to apply to him for aid. Thus Susannah Spencer, an ex-housekeeper of Esquire Lascelles of Leeds, who "will give a Character of me", appealed directly to his "great Goodness [as she was] Deprived of any method of Getting my Bread".⁸²

As an extension of this, the idea of securing a gentleman's "protection" when in his service is an interesting one. One man applied to Sir William Robinson for help in getting payment from another who had caused him bodily harm while he was on business for Sir William. The letter suggests that this fact should have given him immunity from such an attack, since he was "under [Sir William's] protection".⁸³ Lady Chaytor also intervened in her husband's decision to dismiss his personal servant in 1701. Writing to Sir William Chaytor, she pointed out that "An honest servant deserves one's care". Being a gentleman's servant had saved George on one occasion prior to this. Sir William recorded that while he was at Wapping "some of the press (gang) men took notice of him but they lett him pass because he was a gentleman's servant".⁸⁴ Nothing could have been of greater advantage to the ordinary person than to have had the patronage of an eminent man. In this sense, there was a lot to recommend service to the great.

* * *

To summarise, the master and servant relationship was sanctioned in the Scriptures which also laid down the foundations upon which the family, and household, were to be governed. The authority of the master gave him power over his servants and dependents, but also imposed obligations upon him towards them. He was guardian not only of their physical welfare, but also of their spiritual well-being. But the relationship was reciprocal, an exchange of obligations and responsibilities inherent in the agreement made at the outset. In return for the care and "protection" of their master, servants owed him loyalty, obedience

and in theory, complete submission to his will. The failure of one party to fulfill his or her side of the agreement was a serious abrogation of his responsibility. The contractual bargain struck at the outset was thus only the framework on which the actual relationship was built.

The relationship was based on a formal and theoretical ideal, which was often very different in reality. Most relationships, while broadly exhibiting the theoretical guidelines, largely accommodated the individual needs of the two parties and therefore differed in character from the rest. For instance, proximity to his servants played a major part in determining a master's relationship with them. His authority, although assumed, also had to be maintained. This was done by subtle means of persuasion and manipulation - by the proffering of gifts, or the master's protection and influence, while the wage itself, played an increasingly influential part in the relationship. A successful relationship also depended on the most fundamental element of human contact - the correct balance and co-operation of personalities with each other.

But, while documentary evidence allows us an insight into the workings of the relationship, it also presents a distorted image of it. By focussing mainly on the extraordinary elements and usually the poor relations between masters and servants we are often presented with a negative picture. Furthermore, the evidence is also heavily biased in the master's favour and, as these two chapters have shown, also in favour of the gentry and upper orders. The basic theoretical relationship outlined above applied to all masters and servants throughout

the social scale, but the reasons for employing servants and master and servant relations at a practical level, differed from one social level, and household, to the next. The gentry and nobility employed certain servants to maintain a style of life and for public display, whereas in many lesser households, servants and labourers worked alongside the family, striving to maintain a fairly fragile economy. It is hoped that the following chapters will help to elucidate some of these differences.

During the eighteenth century, the master and servant relationship changed gradually from a more affective one, to one in which the contractual element was uppermost. Market relations and the material rewards of service played an increasingly important role. These changes were not peculiar to the master and servant relationship; they occurred alongside changes in society generally. The gradual "polarisation" of the upper and lower orders was promoted by a gradual withdrawal of obligations by both sides. The more personal side of the relationship declined, and complaints about servants' avariciousness accompanied those about their independence and self-interest. Masters as well as servants contributed to this decline, but despite the changes, service remained a foremost and important working relationship. The time had not yet arrived when servants were relegated almost solely to the households of the middle and upper classes and service took on the more contractual nature of the nineteenth century. Master and servant relations in the late eighteenth century were in a transitional stage, but still retained many characteristics of the previous two hundred years.

CHAPTER 3

SERVANTS IN HUSBANDRY

"I have observ'd at some of these fairs, that the poor servants distinguish themselves by holding something in their hands, to intimate what labour they are particularly qualify'd to undertake; as the carriers a whip, the labourers a shovel, the wood men a bill, the manufacturers a wool comb, and the like. But since the ways and manners of servants are advanc'd as we now find them to be, those ... Fairs are not so much frequented as formerly ..."¹

The popular image of servants is that they were the prerogative of the wealthy and powerful. But it is important to remember that servants in the seventeenth century existed at all levels of the social scale. As we have already noted, "servant" was a term applied to a wide range of working people in early modern England, and it follows that they were also to be found in households of a much lower degree than gentlemen's.

Many people who laboured in the countryside and towns lived and worked amongst the lower levels of society. While those in the towns were often involved with the many crafts and commercial enterprises that existed, very many of those in the countryside were servants in husbandry, a term which covered a wide variety of working people. These included servants, both male and female, whose lives and work revolved around the agricultural cycle. They existed in virtually all farming households from the squirearchy downwards, and since most people who lived in the countryside depended on husbandry for all or most of their livelihood, this included households at all levels of the social scale in the village and parish community.

Servants in husbandry or farm servants form the subject of a book by Ann Kussmaul which is the most definitive statement on this topic to date.² They have been dealt with by other writers in the context of agricultural life and work. But Kussmaul's is by

far the fullest and most detailed investigation.³ At the outset, Kussmaul points out that one of the major problems of dealing with farm servants is that of definition. Who indeed were farm servants?

They were not, as we shall see, like the domestics found within the fashionable country or town house of a wealthy gentleman or businessman. Farm servants included females who worked within the domestic sphere of the household, but also performed outdoor and agricultural tasks. The majority of servants in husbandry were males who performed agricultural work outdoors. The work of farm servants was largely productive as opposed to unproductive.⁴ That is, the co-operation of all members of the household, masters, servants, wives and children, and the success of their labours, was generally more crucial to the survival of the household and farming enterprise, than was the presence of certain servants in a great house. Certainly, many servants of such a household were necessary for its smooth running, but some positions were mere sinecures, created for the sake of maintaining an image and a style of life rather than an economy. This was probably one of the major differences between servants of the gentry and those who served masters of a lower social status.

In this chapter therefore, we shall be dealing with servants of a different kind to the previous two. The discussion will include less of dress, leisure and perquisites and concern more practical matters relating to life lower down the social scale. At this level, the emphasis was largely on simply keeping life going, and servants in such households not so much ministered to their master and his family, as worked alongside them outdoors as well as indoors.

One of the criticisms levelled against Kussmaul's book is that it does not go into enough detail about the daily life and work of farm servants.⁵ One reason for this is that the surviving evidence does not reveal as much as we should like to know about this aspect of service. The lower down the social scale one looks, the less likely one is to find evidence relating to personal experience and such matters. In the same light another criticism of the book is that while it concerns farm servants of early modern England, which would include the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, much of the discussion is based on nineteenth-century evidence. Again, one is more likely to find evidence relating to the nineteenth century than the seventeenth because of the rate of survival of relevant documentary evidence.

One of the best sources for a study of servants in husbandry and other ordinary domestic servants, are settlement examinations. These were official documents, produced to assess the eligibility of a person for gaining a settlement in a particular parish which enabled them to live there and receive support from the parish rates should they need it. They lack much of the personal spontaneity of private documents produced by individuals, but their merit lies in the fact that, as one author wrote, they "are virtually autobiographies of persons in a class of which other biographical records are rarely found"; as such they offer valuable information.⁶ They are an important source for another reason. They add an extra dimension to the concept of service. They take it out into the realms of the vast mass of unskilled working people in early modern England. In a sense they help to give servants an identity and place them in a social context. Most servants were a part of "society's flotsam and jetsam" forming a substantial proportion of the poor in early modern England.⁷ They were in theory subordinate and landless; they had

no rights, no home or position of their own and most of all, no freedom. In this sense they were perhaps worse off than the rest of the poor, most of whom were not bound by the barriers which service placed on them and were at least allowed "a certain social and psychological space of [their] own".⁸

The plight of the poor, their treatment, and the machinery of government surrounding them have been dealt with in sufficient detail to need little explanation here. An important early study was produced by Dorothy Marshall in 1936, and more recent historians have added their own work to this.⁹ Keith Wrightson identified a "culture of Poverty" which grew up surrounding the poor in the seventeenth century.¹⁰ The existence of the poor became an established and accepted fact and moreover, one which was felt to be necessary for the good of the rest of the nation. If there were not poor people, the rich could not prosper and grow.¹¹

At certain times of the year servants were indistinguishable from the rest of the poor and vagrants. These were when servants, unemployed and in search of work, travelled on their way to the nearest hiring fair and their next place of service. Then, there was nothing to distinguish them from vagrants and the idle poor. It was wanderers of this kind which the Acts of Settlement were instituted to dispel.¹² These were also an attempt to deal with the growing mass of poor within parishes, all of whom were to be allocated a place of Settlement where the responsibility would lie for their maintenance from the parish rates.¹³ A settlement had to be earned by a term of residence in a certain place, or birth there, or by marriage. Servants who

were hired and remained in their service for a full year, also gained a right to a settlement. If these conditions did not apply, the authorities could transport the individual to his last place of settlement, thereby relinquishing themselves of the burden of maintaining him or her. The thousands of remaining settlement certificates and removal orders attest to the widespread poverty of much of England's labouring population. Sadly, many servants and ex-servants had already fallen to this state of poverty by the time they came to give their testimony in the Settlement examination. These are the "lowlife" servants of the rural world with which we are primarily concerned in this chapter.

Servants in husbandry were therefore inextricably bound up with the lives of England's labouring population. They lived and worked alongside independent labourers in the countryside and their prospects and movements were as much, if not more so, the concern of the parish as those of ordinary people. Masters were under strict supervision as to the wage rates they allowed, the numbers of servants they employed and also how long they kept servants within their employment. Servants in husbandry never really entered any other world other than that they had always known. The customs of the countryside, and fairs and so on, had always been a part of their lives; the only difference now was that they took on a different meaning as these young people now participated as servants in search of employment. Often, their masters were small farmers, or local craftsmen, themselves not very far removed from the social status of those they employed. A young person who went from this environment to that of a great landowner's or nobleman's household however, exchanged this set of values for a completely new and alien one.

A sense of "community" existed at both levels, though in a different sense. The communal life of the country house, with greater numbers of servants and the existence of a strict servant hierarchy, was different from that of the community of the parish, farmstead or village, in which farm servants worked. What is perhaps surprising about this local community is the number of servants within it. Turning to quarter sessions records and depositions, it is plain to see that some very ordinary people kept servants. Householders who pleaded poverty, or absconded through debt, sometimes employed servants, and families who sent their own children out to service, might substitute them for a young servant, who could be expected to undertake a larger volume of work, with slightly less cost to his master's conscience than if he were his own child. Laslett estimated that "at any moment a quarter or a third of the households of a community would contain servants".¹⁴ Servants in poorer households were maintained in return for their labour services, by which the productive but precarious economy of the household was kept going. Hence the importance of every single member of the household unit pulling their weight and performing tasks; this included even the youngest children who were not yet old enough to be put out to service, but who could nevertheless be useful in undertaking minor chores. The fate of a servant therefore, was very often determined by the fortunes of his or her employer. Young apprentices in both town and country were not infrequently left homeless and unprovided for by their masters who had run away because of the failure of their business, and occasionally removal orders indicate that a servant or apprentice was to be transported to another parish along with his master's family. Most often, the humblest families in the community would supply servants to the more superior ones, as Laslett found in his study of the parish of Goodnestone-next-Wingham in Kent, in 1676.¹⁵

But these children were not all taken into the households of the gentry. Of fifty-two servants in this community of two hundred and seventy six people, fifteen were to be found in the three gentry households, while thirty-four were present in the twenty-six yeomen households, and two in the nine tradesmen's households. The labourers and poor in this parish did not have servants. Goodnestone served as a model on which Laslett estimated the structure and size of the typical parish community at this time. Here, the average size of the household was 4.45, "quite a normal figure for pre-industrial England, though below the mean".¹⁶ This seems to be a fairly accepted figure. The records of quarter sessions and the assize courts, reveal that servants existed in ones or twos in the households of people below the level of the gentry, including those of the labouring class. Diaries of men like Ralph Josselin, James Woodforde, and Oliver Heywood also indicate the numbers of servants employed in households of this degree. All three men were clergymen of reasonably substantial means, who ranked in the upper hierarchy of their village social structure. Josselin and Heywood appear to have had no more than one maidservant at a time, on whom a great deal of work undoubtedly fell, while Woodforde, who typified a more worldly English country churchman of the mid-eighteenth century, had several living-in servants, including two females and at least one man.¹⁷

In a farming household, of course, there were living-in and casual servants and labourers as well as the normal domestic servants, the numbers depending on the status of the head. Most servants were living in households of a higher degree than themselves, but as one descended the social scale, the differences in status between a master and servant grew narrower. Servants were therefore in the unique position of existing amongst all ranks of society, of living

and working alongside their masters and therefore experiencing varying cultural and domestic standards.

How then, were servants and masters in the rural world brought together, and what were the conditions of work for farm and other servants lower down the social scale? The following discussion is based on approximately one hundred and eight settlement examinations, from parishes in Halifax, Sheffield, Leeds and the North Riding. Of these examinants about sixty five were male, and forty three female. Relatively few of the examinations actually contain the term "servant". More common are phrases which imply a hiring, or a conscious move to a place of work, such as "hired with" or "went to live with". That the examinant went in the status of a servant is an assumed fact. The exact nature of their work remains indefinite because their duties are rarely stated and we can only guess at them by inference. It is likely that most of the female servants were employed in a domestic capacity, or as farm servants, where their work would probably include both indoor and outdoor tasks. Some of them mentioned their mistresses, suggesting that their work was mostly within the domain of the household. About five women were apprenticed to their masters, three as poor apprentices, although most probably the only work they performed was as maidservants. Dorothy Marshall pointed out that a child apprenticed to a farmer "had a much better time than the child apprenticed to a petty craftsman", since the farmer had greater means by which to care for the child.¹⁸ The plight of some of these apprentices will be discussed in the following chapter.

One of the problems with documentary evidence is terminology. In settlement examinations the distinction between the terms "servant" and "apprentice", is sometimes unclear. In one case, the two are taken to mean the same thing - Ely Crosland was "hired as an apprentice

or Servant in Northowram for two years ... to learn to weave". This dual terminology, plus the fact that some of those apprenticed were described later merely as labourers, having undertaken work of varying kinds spasmodically, seems to diminish the status of the apprentice. The system certainly seemed, in the rural areas at least, to have been very casual indeed, a point also noted by Keith Snell when he described the system of "clubbing out".¹⁹ Men apprenticed to craftsmen often did not continue their craft when their apprenticeship expired. One married and only did labouring work for nineteen years, while another farmed rather than practice his trade.²⁰ This suggests a difference between apprenticeship in the towns within the established trade guilds, and apprenticeship at the parish level, where it operated amongst small men and local craftsmen, alongside which the parish apprenticeship system "sacrificed the tradition of providing work to the necessity of keeping down the numbers of the poor".²¹ Arthur Jessop, a Yorkshire apothecary, once advised a neighbour who wished to put her son apprentice to a similar trade, that if she were to live at Netherthong, she had better only consider binding him to a tanner".²²

Apprentice, farm servant, labourer, hired or domestic servant - all these categories were encompassed by the term "servant". Usually, they implied a menial worker under the supervision of a master, and living under his roof. It therefore applied to workers of all kinds, outside the formal world of the gentry and upper classes and has led to claims that just about all young people at some point in their lives, probably experienced servanthood of some kind.²³

One thing that is evident from the settlement examinations is that farm service involved a period of frequent mobility and successive hirings with several masters. Forty eight mentioned only one master although this may not have been an accurate figure, since the final year of service established the place of settlement, and some examinations may have been undertaken solely to determine this rather than the whole history of the servant's working life. Twenty four had served two masters; eleven had served three; five, four; five, five; two, six; four named over six masters, although the exact number cannot be estimated; and five had served "several" masters. Of course, factors such as the age of the examinants and their lengths of service with each master, must be taken into account, and as these were not always available, the information above must be treated with caution. Human memory was also likely to deceive or fail under the circumstances of the examination.

Lengths of service were a major influence on servant mobility. As these tended to be on a yearly basis, most servants therefore experienced several moves during their careers. Other factors intervened, however, to create a very mobile workforce which served short terms. Not the least of these were the settlement laws themselves, which encouraged masters to force their servants out of work prematurely. John Crowther, a weaver of Ovenden, stated in 1761, that he was hired to serve David Mitchell for one year, but that he only served "according to the said agreement for fifty weeks wanting two days, and then his said master told him that he might be loose from the agreement ... [he] saith he believes that his said master dismissed him ... in order that he might not gain a settlement in Ovenden ... tho[ugh] his said master did not say so".²⁴ Thus, even if

servants wished to remain with their masters for a second term, they very often could not. A youthful restlessness which demanded the constant stimulation of new activities, environments and relationships was perhaps another reason why farm servants did not stay for long in one place. Their single status and lack of responsibilities enabled them to be mobile. Young servants may also have outgrown their particular duties in one place, and sought more skilled work elsewhere, since some agricultural tasks were what Kussmaul terms "age-related".²⁵ In this way, servants helped the spread of farming techniques.

For several reasons then, farm servants frequently found themselves out on the road, mainly at specific times of the year, when it was customary to hire a fresh workforce. This frequent though regulated movement made servants one of the most mobile occupational groups, but it provided a contrast with the mobility of vagrants. As Kussmaul pointed out, their being temporarily unemployed and homeless was not as destructive to social stability, because it occurred "as if in a closed container of customs and agricultural practices", and at regular times of the year, so that "when the new term began, movement ceased as abruptly as it had begun".²⁶

The mobility of farm servants also contributed to the continuation of traditional customs; communities "found it convenient to use the labour of young adults before they "settled down" and added new mouths to the community".²⁷ Often without recognising these advantages, society classed servants of all kinds as idle, disorderly, and potentially disruptive, and advertised the social problems caused by them, while yet forgetting that it could not function without them.

Most farm servants were young, having left home in their early teens to go into service. The ages at which they left depended on the availability of places and the ability of their families to maintain them.²⁸ Several of the examnants did not leave until they were in their late teens or early twenties; they were more fortunate and could earn their keep working alongside their parents. The longer girls stayed at home, the more they had the chance to acquire the domestic skills which would help them in service, and in the establishment of their own homes later on. Thus Hannah Ashworth did not leave until she was twenty one, while the death of Betty Murgatroyd's father when she was eighteen probably caused her departure from home, to go out into the world to earn her living.²⁹

Sarah Fearnley, on the other hand, born illegitimately, whose mother married when she was six, was able to contract with her stepfather, in 1788, at the age of sixteen, to remain in his family "sometimes as a Boarder and sometimes as a hired servant by the week".³⁰

One or two youngsters were put out at the ages of seven or eight, as parish apprentices, but such children would necessarily be limited in the types of work they could undertake. Oliver Heywood recorded in his diary that his maidservant Martha "was sent abroad into service and hardship when but ten yeares of age", while John Hobson noted in 1735 that "Jane Lindly, aged 7 years, came to our house as parish apprentice".³¹

The lengths served by these young servants varied from a few weeks to several years in one place. The yearly hiring was the norm in most cases, and if a servant continued to serve within the same parish afterwards, he or she was entitled to a settlement.

But there were exceptions to this. Elizabeth Greenwood, a widow of Heptonstall, agreed to serve her master on a weekly basis "as long as both parties liked", which ended totalling sixty two weeks.³² Some were bound to their masters for a fixed term. Thomas Scourage of Shelf also served his first master for fourteen years, seven as his apprentice and the following seven as his hired servant.³³ Terms of nine, ten and twelve years were also served; these were not uncommon generally amongst such servants in poorer households and, as Ralph Houlbrooke has pointed out, "long apprenticeships and an early age of entry were common in poor crafts".³⁴ Farm servants, on the other hand, stayed for considerably shorter terms. Terms of one to four years were the most common. Servants who served by the year received their wages at the end of it, and then either went on their way, or else renewed their contracts with their old masters for another year. If both were satisfied then the latter would have been a natural step to take, and was certainly not uncommon. For example, Charles Barrat of Sowerby hired with the same master on three separate occasions, remaining with him in all for about three and a quarter years. One of his hirings ended "about a fortnight after Martinmas" and he was then rehired "till the Martinmas following".³⁵

Some terms were exceptionally long. One or two people were found to have stayed with the same master for around ten years or upwards. Thus Samuel Vickers stated in 1769 that he "hired to a Farmer for a year, and then for the succeeding 10 years"; he served another master for two years more before marrying.³⁶ John Kitching of Guiseley left home at the age of twenty two or three, and served a succession of masters and mistresses before hiring with William Kitching, his brother, with whom he stayed for about fifteen years

until his marriage.³⁷ Although servants quite frequently did remain with one master for more than a year, a lot also left after a year. About sixty nine per cent of Henry Best's servants left after one year.³⁸ These people confirm our impression that once young people left home to go into service, they generally remained on the move, until their careers came to an end. The eighteenth century farmer, William Ellis, cautioned "I never knew a Farmer thrive that let his servants stay long or lie out at nights".³⁹ Young people, occasionally, returned home for brief periods between places; home served as a refuge for them while out of work. Thus Sarah Nowell of Heptonstall went to a place at Langfield when she was fifteen, but after seven weeks she "returned to her father again and lived there and at several other places untill she was about twenty four years of age".⁴⁰ Likewise Betty Carr of Sowerby, after leaving her master's service prematurely, "went and lived with her father about half a year and soon after went and lived with Ellcanah Holroyd".⁴¹ These cases emphasize the casualness of service at this level with its dependents moving constantly between employment and unemployment and from place to place.

Terms of service could last under a year. Sarah Fletcher, examined when she was twenty nine, said that she had left home at the age of fourteen, and in fifteen years had served at least twelve masters, her longest term being three years. She had had few formal hirings. Sometimes she even lodged away from her master's house. She lived in this way while working for Francis Steward, "making Lantern Lights for about three years", and in her next lodgings she "worked in the same way and sometimes char'd out as a chairwoman". She served in Ovenden, her place of birth, and also at Bradford, but it was at Northowram that the law finally intervened, the inhabitants having "ordered her out of the town as not belonging to it".⁴²

She lived a very irregular life as a servant, seemingly taking work as and when it appeared in various forms. Other servants' careers were equally transitory. At fourteen, Nancy Holding went to live with Joshua Ingham of Ovenden for half a year, after which she served John Morrish, also of Ovenden, for another half year, then she "agreed with Mrs Dean of Ovenden to serve her one year and continued with her for five years more then went to live at Brigh[ou]se about half a year, then came back to Ovenden and lived there about half a year, then went and lived with John Crabtree of Northowram about half a year, then agreed with James Starfield of North[ow]ram ... to serve him one year ... and continued about ten weeks afterwards".⁴³

There seemed to be little planning or structure to their employment pattern outside that of the traditional agricultural cycle and hiring seasons. To such people, constant movement and change, often brought about by themselves as much as by the system, was an accepted way of life.

Distances travelled by these servants were not usually very long, although moves were frequent.⁴⁴ Sarah Fletcher, mentioned above, travelled about five and a half miles between her places in Ovenden and Bradford. Nancy Holding travelled about five miles when she moved from Ovenden to Brighouse. Their other places were just over two miles apart in Northowram and Ovenden.⁴⁵ Most servants in the examinations tended to serve within their parish of origin or parental home, or in villages adjacent, but not usually very far away. This may have been partly due to the wishes of their parents. Houlbrooke has pointed out that sometimes these, "especially mothers, did not want their children to travel too far when they left home, lest they lose touch with them".⁴⁶

The value of family life and relationships is evident, even in settlement examinations. Some historians have concluded that parental affection for children was minimal, but the obvious willingness of parents to receive their children back into their homes, even for brief spells between places, reveals the strength of family ties which were sometimes maintained after offspring had initially left. Some parents kept an eye on their children and were not slow to act if the latter were ill-treated or neglected.⁴⁷ Some families also supported daughters who had left their service in disgrace and returned home with their illegitimate children. One woman also left her four year old child with her father when she entered service, returning home once a week to see them.⁴⁸

Several examnants did originate from, or travel outside the county, in the course of their careers. Of those born outside, most came from the adjacent counties of Lancashire, Derbyshire and Durham, although one or two others came from father afield, from Northumberland, Staffordshire and Hertfordshire. One girl, born in Hertfordshire, was apprenticed in Northowram, the place of her father's settlement.⁴⁹ Another, born in Lancashire, first served in a neighbouring parish but came to Sowerby when her uncle requested her to go and live with him there as a servant at his inn.⁵⁰ One servant left his place of birth, Harthill, and was hired at the age of ten in Worksop, but he returned home later to serve there.⁵¹ Others, no doubt a minority amongst the servant class, but not altogether untypical, had more colourful careers. One, after serving as an apprentice and later a servant in Skircoat and Elland, joined the army, following that with day work and further service at Elland Hall where he met his wife, a fellow servant there; he became a soldier again, serving in Ireland, and afterwards worked in Oxford and Cambridge

as a day labourer during the harvest, before he was sent back to Elland by the authorities.⁵² Two more servants had served gentlemen in London. One was a servant to the Reverend Mr Hewitt of Harthill, "and always attended his Master at Harthill, Bath, Tunbridge and London". He eventually fell into the hands of the parish overseer. His sad condition indicates the precariousness of this life, even for those who mixed with gentlemen and noblemen.⁵³

The desire to remain near friends or family may have discouraged them from moving too far away, and servants may also have preferred to remain within a specific area in which they knew the farmers, and could themselves become known and establish reputations amongst employers.⁵⁴ To some extent also, the fairs at which they were hired regulated mobility, tending to draw masters and servants from within a certain geographical area. The normal pattern of mobility for farm servants therefore, was frequent moves over short distances, in contrast to, as we shall see, apprentices, who tended towards fewer moves over longer distances.

Settlement examinations are generally silent about the methods of hiring servants. The Statute Sessions or hiring fair was a popular source of labour. The timelessness of this established tradition is revealed by its existence into the early twentieth century. Fred Kitchen wrote of such a fair at Doncaster in the early twentieth century, and there are numerous scattered references to similar fairs in Yorkshire throughout the nineteenth century.⁵⁵ Prospective masters and servants gathered there to assess each others' suitability, and settle wage rates, the servants sporting some tokens or indication of their particular skills. Yearly hirings took place according to custom, at Michaelmas, Martinmas, or Lady Day, as described by Henry Best in 1641.⁵⁶ Unfortunately, the popularity of such fairs is probably one reason why they are

so little noted in settlement examinations and elsewhere, being so recognised a feature of working life at this time. Nevertheless, one or two servants speak of fairs. Jane Palmer, for example, mentioned that her hiringstook place at Martinmas Candlemas and Mayday.⁵⁷ Another, Elizabeth Coates of Northallerton stated in her examination that she was hired to her master "upon a Statute hiring day at Thirsk a little before Martinmas 1777".⁵⁸ The diaries of some local figures also offer glimpses of these practices. Jacob Bee recorded in his diary that "the first day that men and women servants presented themselves to be hired in Durham markett was the 6 day of May 1682".⁵⁹ Whether or not he was an eye-witness cannot be told, though it is possible, since he employed servants of his own.

Kussmaul pointed out the advantages of the fair: "It differentiated job seeking servants, legitimately abroad in the country at year's end, from vagrants ... It was also a convenience to master and servant alike to know ... that at one time in the year masters would be seeking servants and servants new places".⁶⁰ The functions of such fairs ranged from the economic and administrative to the social, wherein servants enjoyed each other's company and the merrymaking and festivities for a short time before embarking on another year's work. Fairs thus had other associations for servants besides the practical one of finding a new place. They were also times for celebration; some of them were held at significant times of the year, after the harvest for example, when provisions for the winter had been gathered successfully, and the community relaxed after the weeks of toil. It was a good time to have a holiday and not merely for servants seeking work.

William Marshall wrote in 1784 that "farm servants ... consider themselves so liberated from servitude on this day; and whether they be already hired, or really want masters, hie away, without leave, perhaps to the statute".⁶¹ The importance of the fair as a holiday for servants is revealed moreover, by the present to servants of a "fairing", traditionally a gift of a few shillings given to them to spend at the fair.⁶² The fair was a major feature of country life, and attracted people from all over the district, and from high and low estates, for both practical and social reasons. The fair described by Fred Kitchen at Doncaster, gives us some idea of the scenes and atmosphere of these earlier ones, with, of course, certain variations. Martlemas Fair maintained all the old traditions, "with its ale-drinking, singing and fighting; its merry-go-rounds and side-shows ... there were fightings and uproars, embracings of old friends and introductions to new ones, for you must bear in mind that these lads had known no holiday for a twelvemonth, and were now let loose with a purse full of golden sovereigns".⁶³

Servants might, at times, approach prospective masters on their own initiative to seek work. Some stated that they "went and hired with" their master, though the formalities of their agreement remain unknown. Within the localised parish or market town community there was scope for a widespread knowledge of other people's affairs, and a master wanting a servant, or vice versa, or a family with an elder child of an age to be placed out in service, would be public knowledge.⁶⁴ Thus Mary Hoyle moved from Sowerby to Langfield to her first place of service when she was sixteen, as she "heard that John Ingham ... wanted a Servant and accordingly she went and made an Agreement with him."⁶⁵ Masters also sometimes approached

prospective servants, having heard of their suitability beforehand. Thus Martha Terrey of Shelf was sent for by a gentleman to fill a vacancy in his household until he could find another servant. Her stay turned out to be more permanent than at first intimated, for within a year her master died and she was asked by his son "if she would choose to serve him upon the same Terms that she had served his father".⁶⁶ Adam Eyre likewise occasionally acquired maid-servants from acquaintances who had daughters. On 19 April 1647 his diary records that "This morne I rid to Langset, and spoke to Jo[hn] Greaves for one of his daughters to come and live with my wife; who promised to come and speak with my wife this week ...". On 3 May he approached John Micklethwaite "to let me have one of his daughters for a maid, and he promised mee I should, but hee could not spare one yet by reason of his wive's being ill".⁶⁷ Occasionally too, relatives of the servant would offer the work, thereby giving aid to poorer kinfolk. Thus Betty Murgatroyd "was applied to by Mary ... [this Examinant's Sister] who requested her to come and live with her and Her Husband in the Capacity of a Servant ... " and an innkeeper hired his niece "to go and live with him as his Housekeeper".⁶⁸ Ralph Josselin's sister, Mary, lived with him as his servant and Mr John Fretwell employed his niece as his housekeeper until her marriage at eighteen. But Alan Macfarlane thought that Mary was exceptional and that generally kinfolk beyond the nuclear family did not share the same household.⁶⁹ Parents also sometimes negotiated a hiring for their son or daughter, often with the purpose of teaching the youth a skill or trade. John Crowther's mother "agreed with David Mitchell of Ovenden for (him) to serve ... Mitchell for one year for his victuals and to be instructed in combing wool".⁷⁰ Daniel Hellowell was sent to his first master for three months or so from Michaelmas

to Christmas, seemingly on a sort of trial basis, "without any Contract or agreement", after which his father "came over to him at his Master Hill's ... and there it was agreed by this Examinant, his said father and Master that he should serve for the term of two years ... as his servant".⁷¹ Just as parents were instrumental in putting their children out into service, they also sometimes had them removed if the need arose. The father of John Towne of Halifax, put out apprentice at the age of ten, on hearing that his son "was not well used in his place, went over to James Wadworth's and said he was willing to take his son home again".⁷²

Some servants never had a formal hiring. One such was Sarah Nowell who "saith that she never was either hired for a year or served any one Master one year", but that she had been paid weekly, receiving "as many shillings for her wages as she served weeks".⁷³ The significance of the weekly hiring is also evident elsewhere, in the case of Betty Murgatroyd for example, who said that though she had served her master for nearly three years, "never any other time or hiring was mentioned betwixt them than weekly hiring and weekly wages".⁷⁴ This system appeared to give the servant more freedom and flexibility than a yearly hiring, though it was also advantageous to their master because it meant that their service could be terminated at any time. Thus, Elizabeth Crosley had the free will to leave her service when she wished, for she "told her Mistress that she would not hire for a year and her Mistress told her that she should be at Liberty to go when she pleased".⁷⁵ Likewise James Hepper of Carlton said that one of his masters, while paying him a yearly wage, "reserved to himself a power to discharge [him] at any time if he disliked him on paying wages as far as he had served, And this Examinant had ... a power to leave his Master in case he disliked his Service ...".⁷⁶

A weekly hiring also freed masters from some obligations towards their servants. These might include not having to oversee them at weekends. Mary Hoyle said that the conditions of her service to both masters were such that "there never was a year mentioned when she hired ... but she was always to be loose from her service at Every weekend".⁷⁷ Moreover, James Mason stated that though he was hired to his master for one year, he was nevertheless "to find himself washing and meat on Sundays", which he solved by going to "his friends at Garsdale ... on Saturday nights and returning to his Service on Monday mornings".⁷⁸ The weekly hiring system was disadvantageous to servants for another reason. As they came to be hired less and less by the year, they virtually assumed the status of day labourers.⁷⁹ The effect of this was, of course, to make their jobs less secure. The day labourer increasingly found himself laid off at quiet times of the agricultural year, and his dependence on a weekly wage caused his living standards to fall dramatically. More immediately however, weekly wages were suspect as an insurance against the servant earning himself a settlement. Some masters remained ambiguously non-committal about the value of a hiring or else tried to avoid a servant being granted one. Samuel Mitchel said that, "at the time of his hiring ... there was nothing mentioned betwixt his Master and him about Gaining or not gaining a Settlement at Halifax by such hiring and Service".⁸⁰ The case of William Brown therefore, is interesting. Born in Staffordshire, he was brought to Sowerby by his mother, and having no father through whom he could gain a settlement, he was hired by his grandfather for a year, and paid wages, "in order that he might gain a Settlement in Sowerby".⁸¹

Agreements and conditions were concluded between masters and servants at the time of hiring. These included such aspects as wages and

the amount of clothing or leisure the servant was to be allowed. Settlement examinations give some clue as to the various agreements which were undertaken. Some have already been mentioned above. Clothes and food were two common considerations. Meat, drink, washing, lodging and apparel were frequently concluded as part of the bargain, the master undertaking to furnish his servant or apprentice with all or some of them, though the provision of clothes for example, might sometimes fall to their parents. William Widdup's mother made an agreement for him to serve William Greenwood for four years, who undertook to find him "meat, drink and lodging" in his first year instead of wages, while his mother "was to receive his wages and find him Cloaths during (the) said four years".⁸² When William Wild agreed to serve Beckwith Spencer of Southowram for a second year, the latter was to give him "the wages of five pounds and Two pair of New Shoes".⁸³

Clothes were very often part of the "necessaries" which masters and mistresses were expected to provide for their servants. But they were not always obliged to provide them, as the following examples imply. When a woman asked Hannah Ashworth to be her servant, she added as an incentive that, "as she was bad in shifts she would give her a couple of new ones".⁸⁴ Moreover, clothes were the reason that another servant departed from her service. Mary Crooke told the magistrates that she and her master "quarreled about Clothing", with the result that Mary, obviously feeling hard done by over the matter, told him that "she could do better than live with him, and her Mother ... said she might go where she pleased as soon as she would".⁸⁵

Masters also allowed servants to see their friends or relatives at certain times, although this was probably not a common occurrence

as a servant's duties would keep them very much tied to their master's household. James Heap's master at Eccleshill gave him leave to pay a visit to his parents at Worstham, though having got into the company of his family and friends again, Heap stated that he "neglected to return to his said service".⁸⁶ On another occasion, when the wife of Thomas Webster asked Hannah Ashworth to be her servant, she agreed to let her "serve her father half a day in every week".⁸⁷

* * *

In making his agreement with his master, Daniel Hellowell, agreed to "wrought good Stand good Hire with his father till he married".⁸⁸ This is probably a modified version of the term "Good Hand, Good Hire", interpreted as, "good servant, good wages".⁸⁹ Substituted instead of a fixed wage agreement, this probably worked well for cautious masters, in order to get the best from their servants. It was a good tactic for ensuring conscientiousness, but it also gave prominence to the wage, which was blamed for undermining the traditional values of the master and servant relationship.

Indeed, the wage seemed to be contradictory to the whole ethos of service. Writers and commentators in general advocated that the wage should be secondary to the servant's willingness to serve his or her master faithfully and conscientiously. The ideal servant laboured for little or no reward. Since they had food, drink, clothes and shelter at their master's expense what else could servants require?

Nevertheless, wages came to play an ever more significant part in the contract between a master and servant. This applied to servants of all types, but is perhaps more significant in the case of farm servants because it accompanied a change in the status of many of them. The swing towards employing day labourers as workers on farms rather than full time, regular, living-in servants, created a more independent labour force for whom the wage was paramount. In effect, the more important the wage became, the fewer the obligations either master or servant exercised towards each other.

The wage agreement between a master and servant was a mutual bargain, agreed at the hiring fair and sealed by the proffering of a godspenny to the servant. Henry Best describes the procedure when hiring servants at the statute: "When you are about to hyre a servant, you are to call them aside and to talke privately with them concerninge their wages ... If the servants stand in a church-yard they usually call them aside and walke to the backe side of the church, and their treat of their wage".⁹⁰ His description made it sound a most secretive business. As the tendency to employ day labourers increased so did the importance of the rise and fall of real wages on the supply of labour. Kussmaul has highlighted the trends.⁹¹ When real wages were high young people preferred day labouring to service because the rewards were higher, as well as giving them more freedom to choose when and where they worked. Moreover, families which had previously sent their children out into service to relieve the burden on the household economy, could afford to keep them when real wages were high. On the other hand, at such times farmers preferred to hire living-in servants because they were cheaper to maintain, and more reliable, being unable to work to their own timetable.

From 1650 to 1750 there was a general rise in real wages.⁹² This had the effect of maintaining the supply of living-in servants on farms, rather than encouraging the increase of day labourers. For most farmers, economic motives overrode status-conscious ones. Nevertheless, historians have attributed the gradual change in masters' attitudes towards living-in servants in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, to the marked social differences between the upper and lower orders which were becoming more apparent. As farmers' lifestyles changed in response to this, they no longer desired to live alongside farm servants in their house.⁹³

At a more localised level wage trends are difficult to observe. The wages of farm servants occur randomly in the settlement examinations, and are therefore difficult to assess or reconstruct in much detail. We can, however, gain some insight into the methods and frequency of payment, and the importance of wages to the servant over time.

The Justices of the Peace fixed the wages of servants of varying ages and abilities at the Quarter Sessions. These should have been reassessed regularly, but Quarter Sessions evidence suggests that this was not so. It is possible though, that not every assessment was recorded in the order books and that "an absence of recorded assessments must not be taken to indicate negligence or inaction on the part of the justices".⁹⁴ The assessments, like the settlement examinations, represent an aspect of the official regulation of labour at this period which affected the lives of labourers and servants alike. Also, they are one of the few sources we have

for wages at this time, despite their fragmentary nature and the problems encountered when trying to compare them with other evidence. Kussmaul, for example, is dubious about their usefulness because they are so "highly formalized". Although wage assessments were made to bind masters to pay a fixed wage, quarter sessions order books seem to reveal few instances of masters being presented for paying their servants over or under the assessed rate, or indeed of servants for receiving them. Moreover, some of the assessments, for example those at Pontefract, seem to be quite substantially lower than the annual wages paid to examiners elsewhere; this is not surprising since the wages assessments at Pontefract had not changed for decades, remaining the same from 1647-1732.

Alice Clark on the other hand, felt that "the actual wages paid confirm the truth of the figures given in the wage assessments". Her discussion confirms the suspicion that the wage of the labourer was low and inadequate. "His money wages seldom exceeded the estimated cost of his own meat and drink as supplied by the farmer, yet these wages were to supply all the necessities of life for his whole family".⁹⁵

These assessments also usefully show the distinction between the various types of servants in husbandry. The sessions at Pontefract in April 1695 identified eight categories of servants, and this was the usual formula through into the eighteenth century.⁹⁶

At the top of the list was the bailiff, usually hired with a gentleman or yeoman, who was to receive not more than "four pounds tenn shillings and a Livery or tenn Shillings for it". A chief servant in husbandry to a yeoman or husbandman received three pounds, ten shillings with meat and drink. An "ordinary" servant in husbandry, "that can sow and plow", received three pounds, while a common

servant, and one less skilled, received two pounds, five shillings. A youth of between twelve and sixteen received one pound, sixteen shillings and eightpence, with meat and drink. Women servants were divided into three categories. A superior servant "that taketh charge of Brewing, Baking, Kitching, Milkhouse or Malting that is hired with a Gentleman or Rich Yeoman whose wife doth not take the pains and charge upon her", was to receive not more than forty shillings with meat and drink; a woman servant serving a husbandman or farmer as an ordinary servant, received thirty shillings, while a young maidservant of sixteen years or under, received only one pound. These were the divisions of servants in the rural north. Thus, the most experienced woman servant only received just over half the amount in real wages of a chief male servant in husbandry. Women's wages as servants were generally significantly lower than men's. This was a fact throughout the whole range of service.

Wage assessments took place at the Pontefract sessions in the following years: 1647, 1662, 1671, 1684, 1695, 1696, 1700, 1703, 1706, 1732.⁹⁷ It is plain to see at what irregular intervals these occurred, ranging from one year, to twenty-six years. Wages were supposed to be fixed to reflect the prices of the time, but there is a sense here that servants were felt to be immune to these and in a sense disassociated from the outside world because they lived under the wing of their master. Nevertheless, the assessments for the West Riding are the best for the whole of Yorkshire. Those for the East Riding no longer exist. Comparison with the wages of Best's servants in the same area is thus impossible. Answers to other related problems remain only speculative.

D M Woodward questioned whether wage rates, as laid down by justices,

were observed and also, whether the general level of prices at the time, and standards of living, were taken into account when the assessments were being made.⁹⁸ The answer to the first was concluded to be a general "no"; there is "general agreement that there was wholesale evasion" of the justices' recommended rates by the eighteenth century. Kussmaul, on the other hand, maintains that generally, "wages did not exceed the assessed wages", although she does also concede that more quarter sessions entries "concern hiring outside Petty Sessions or Statute Sessions than they do the payment of excessive wages; prevention of illegal contracts was better than payment after the fact".⁹⁹ To the second question, Woodward concluded that "the willingness of judges to take price changes into account varied from place to place"; it would seem that in the West Riding the justices were quite unresponsive to these fluctuations. The assessments balanced the scales heavily in favour of masters, of course. Heaton has pointed out that as the rate fixed only a maximum wage "there was therefore nothing to stop the master paying the labourer as little as he could persuade him to accept", while the punishments for offering or receiving a higher wage were always more severe for the servant than for the master.¹⁰⁰ In most cases, the servant was liable to imprisonment, while the master was let off relatively lightly with a fine of five pounds, as at Pontefract in 1695.

Clearly, therefore, the quarter sessions cannot be taken as a reliable indicator of wage rates. From the evidence in the settlement examinations, masters allowed their servants wages according to what they considered fit for their individual abilities. It would be helpful to know the age of each particular servant, and the type of work they undertook, and thereby be able to judge the real value of their wage according to these. Only about half

the examnants in the sample stated what amount they received as wages in their various places. The wages of women were generally lower than those of male servants. Though they worked no less hours than men, and often undertook work which was equally heavy, women's labours were considered less productive and less valuable in a male-dominated society. Women servants received annual wages ranging from fourteen shillings, a sum which was supplemented by the girl's extra earnings, to about four pounds. One woman received five pounds a year. Interestingly, another servant maid's wage of three pounds, ten shillings, was supplemented by what she received from vails, suggesting that she must have lived in a fairly prosperous household.¹⁰¹ Male servants received from about twenty shillings a year to nine pounds. Two male servants, who said they received eight and nine pounds a year respectively, in 1736 and 1756, were described merely as "servants in husbandry", so we are not able to discover whether this relatively high wage was due to their being skilled in any particular branch of husbandry, or how they ranked in relation to other servants on the farm.¹⁰² Weekly wages were usually around one to two shillings for both men and women, although one male servant, a former parish apprentice who later hired himself to a master in Halifax, received only sixpence a week plus meat, drink, washing and lodging, and three shillings for a godspenny.¹⁰³ Another male servant, hired to his master for an annual wage of five pounds, ten shillings, married during his year's service, and thereafter renewed his contract with his master whereby he was to receive the relatively princely sum of six shillings and sixpence per week, not counting his food.¹⁰⁴

Roughly a quarter of the examnants received a weekly wage. Some of these had previously been accustomed to an annual one. As has been suggested above, a weekly wage was perhaps of less value to a servant in terms of their hiring and later status, than an annual one, and it certainly made for a more precarious existence in terms of employment security. Nor did it facilitate the saving of the wage. On the other hand, living-in servants, who received part payment of their wage in kind, had little need of cash.

Servants who were paid annually received small sums at odd times throughout the year, as and when they needed them. Thus William Wallbank said that he had "received a Deal of odd payments but not all" of his wage of five pounds, four shillings per year.¹⁰⁵

Wages were sometimes paid quarterly or half-yearly, but the whole lot could also be accumulated by the master over the whole year. "Forced savings", whereby the employer acted as a sort of banker for his servants, holding their wages in trust, meant that servants did not spend their wages unnecessarily during the year. James Woodforde kept his servant's wages for her "purely to encourage her to be careful and to make her saving".¹⁰⁶ The annual hiring at least ensured that servants would be paid at the end of the year, unlike some of their counterparts in wealthier households, who were frequently owed payment for several years' service, as the account books of their employers testify.

Wages could be augmented, as we have seen, in various ways. Wealthier farmers, yeomen and Squires, may have subscribed to the system of vails, by which their servants received "tips" in the form of money, from visitors. This could work to the advantage of their master, who usually adjusted their wage according to the

amount a servant could expect to receive from vails in his place. The godspenny, proffered at the outset of the hiring, was a small token of goodwill on the part of the master towards his servant, and was usually worth a few shillings. It was offered at the start of each new contract, whether the servant was new or old. Wages amongst farm servants, as we have seen, generally remained fairly static. But if they did stay with their master for a second term, this might be accompanied by higher earnings. Lucy Sutcliffe served her master for the rate of forty shillings a year, but a subsequent agreement with him earned her fifty shillings, and Hannah Ashworth hired a second time with Thomas Ibbotson, "for an advanced wage".¹⁰⁷ At other time, movement to a new place might be worth a greater sum, especially if this also involved promotion to a more skilled or responsible position. Servants probably shopped around at hiring fairs for masters who were prepared to offer them an advance on the value of their last place. They, too, appear to have had a certain amount of bargaining power, as was noted with servants elsewhere.¹⁰⁸ Thus Sarah Nowell, when asked "what wage she would have, she Replied one shilling a week, and her mistress said she would give it her as long as she would stay there".¹⁰⁹

Wages could be withheld for various reasons. The docking of wages for work not performed, or poorly executed, for example, was commonplace. Thus Isaac Illingworth's master stopped six shillings of his wage "on Account of [his] falling short of his work". Relations between the two do not seem to have been good since they parted because of "some Difference".¹¹⁰ When Daniel Hellowell finally left his master because of his lameness, "he left some work unfinished at his said Master's which he allowed ... for in his wages".¹¹¹

But the system was open to abuse from masters, and servants could sometimes find themselves at the mercy of an unfair employer, who took advantage of the situation to avoid paying. The mistress of a young servant girl withheld a substantial proportion of her wage because she had been ill, which the servant felt to be excessive.¹¹² The loss of even a small proportion of the wage could mean hardship for some servants.

Equally unpardonable were those masters who refused wages, or simply avoided coming to an agreement over them. Some of the culprits were relatives of their servants and it is not hard to see how poorer kinfolk were put upon and whose work sometimes amounted to little more than slave labour for little or no reward. Thus Betty Murgatroyd, who "particularly desired that her Wages might be fixed that then she might know what to expect", had to pester her sister, who replied ambiguously that she should have "as much as she deserved and more than she c[oul]d earn anywhere else". She eventually received forty-six shillings for a year and thereafter one shilling a week.¹¹³ Another example was that of Richard Tessey, who was hired to his grandfather. When, at the age of eighteen, Richard asked him for wages, his grandfather refused, and the youth registered his protest by going off to London and enlisting in the army.¹¹⁴ Though servants were entitled to wages, the system of payment in kind meant that the actual payment of these could be postponed or avoided, and even when servants asserted their rights, as in the instances above, they were frequently the losers. Cases occur in quarter sessions records of masters who were brought to court for non-payment of their servants' wages, or for refusing to hand over items, such as clothes

that were due to them. Thus, Richard Grosvenor of Normanton was ordered to "pay unto Jane Dixon his late Servant the sum of eighteen shillings due to her for wages"; William Ellis was ordered to "pay his Brother Richard Ellis Twenty Shillings within a month being the remainder of his Wages due for forty weeks service".¹¹⁵ Some of these were presented by servants themselves, perhaps with the aid of friends or relatives, but it is much more likely that many more instances passed without prosecution because the servant was helpless to initiate justice. On a brighter side, there were fair and more principled masters who stuck to their side of the bargain. Most of the servants who were examined said that they "received (their) wages accordingly", at the end of their terms.

* * *

As we have said, master and servant relations in rural, farming communities were governed mainly by the practicalities of maintaining a stable economic unit. There was little time or occasion to develop relations of the sort between masters and servants in a more family orientated household. Besides, the quality of the evidence relating to farm servants and masters is understandably poor compared to that existing higher up the social scale.

Another problem with the sources is that they give a biased impression of master and servant relations. Nearly all the cases which come to light from the quarter sessions for example, involve disputes between master and servants, while many of the examnants from the poor law records also gave evidence of unsuitable relations,

which usually ended with their departure. Servants were frequently ignored in diaries and letters too, unless they had done something outstanding or were at fault. We have therefore to look hard for some evidence of a healthy relationship, or other redeeming features. But they may be found. Masters and servants who remained together for several years are evidence of a compatible and successful working partnership, and even after this was over, friendly communication was sometimes maintained, as in the case of Francis Lister. He served John Lodge for just over twelve years and had several subsequent masters, though he "saw his master Lodge several times and ... his master often when he saw him gave him sixpence or a shilling and always asked him where he lived".¹¹⁶

"Differences" were commonly cited as the reasons for a servant having left his or her master. But masters were not always to blame. Servants could sometimes give as good as they got, and settlement examinations, along with other sources, afford some rare examples of servants' own behaviour and attitudes. Thus Thomas Bright was indicted "for assaulting and beating Thomas Renton his Master and Mary his Wife ... and was fyned fortye shillings which ... hee refused to pay ... ". Another, Dennis Brown was reported to be of "very irregular behaviour ... and (hath) struck his Master and his Wife".¹¹⁷ Sometimes they left in a fit of stubbornness and self-righteousness. Thus Mary Crooke told her master that "she could do better than live with him", while Sarah Barstow left her service because of a difference between her master and mistress, and herself, even though her mistress, "at the time she came away ... asked her to stay her year out".¹¹⁸ Betty Carr said that the "reason for her coming away before her year was

expired [was that] she did not like her Place and gave her Master a month's warning", while John Towne grew to dislike his apprenticeship after a dispute arose between himself and his master's son.¹¹⁹

Clearly servants were not always the subservient creatures their masters would have liked them to be; some were not afraid to stand up to their masters when they felt their rights infringed, or that they could be better off elsewhere. It was this behaviour which gave servants a bad name; they were complained of as disloyal, untrustworthy and fickle. But running away was an extreme action to take, and one occasioned probably by the experience of great misery and desperation on the servant's part. It would be helpful to know more of the details of the various disputes and quarrels which arose. Nevertheless, the evidence does suggest that many resented their master's authority and his attempts to instill the duties of obedience, loyalty and humility with too great a zeal.

While a servant therefore sometimes initiated his or her own departure, it was mostly due to factors outside his control, as the examinations show. The indirect intervention of the law, and a fear of the servant gaining a settlement, sometimes provoked a deliberate move on the part of the master, to rid himself of his servant before the completion of a full year's service. Servants were clearly aware of this, and some voiced their suspicions in their examination, but there was little they could do to avoid it. At other times, unfortunate or unforeseen circumstances prevailed, such as could overtake any servant in any other station or environment. The death of both his "Master and Dame" prompted Jeremiah Allen to return to his father, while Thomas Chadwick stated in an affidavit that, "my Dame dying before my years was out And my Master being forced to give up house wee by consent of both sides p[ar]ted

And he payde mee my wages soe fare as wee had gone".¹²⁰ On this occasion, master and servant "parted friendly". This case is quite unusual in that in most others the reverse happened; that is, the master died and his widow, unable to maintain his business, trade, or the home in which they had both lived, had to release his servants. This was not always necessary of course. William Wild said that "his Master died before he served his year out but he contrived with his Mistress in the same place several years".¹²¹ Dinah Mosley of Royston moreover, after the death of her master, a widower, almost a year after she hired with him, continued "in the House where he resided with two of his Children and ... she has never received any wages for such service".¹²² By remaining with his children she secured a settlement in Royston.

Illness could also put an end to service. Daniel Hellowell was a healthy youth until he became lame playing at football. A five week visit to his father "to get cured of his lameness", did not prove successful, and he eventually had to return home for good. Though still able to spin for his master while lame, he was nevertheless unable to fulfill his agreement "to weave eighteen flanks a day for the first year and twenty flanks ... the second".¹²³ Other servants had to leave their service through illness or injury, thereby throwing them prematurely onto parish relief, unless they were lucky enough to receive maintainance at home.

The precariousness of working life amongst the lower orders meant that sometimes masters failed in their enterprises, and could no longer maintain their workforce. Elizabeth Crosley's mistress turned her away, "her Master having failed and they not being able to keep her any longer".¹²⁴ Again, quarter sessions reveal

many more cases of masters having no work to give their servants, or who had run away to escape debt and financial ruin, or simply shut up shop and turned their servants and apprentices onto the streets.

Pregnancy was also a reason for departure from service. About five in our sample of examiners mentioned a pregnancy, which according to their testimony, probably occurred while they were in service. Ann Taylor "quitted her ... Service with the Consent of her master and returned to her Father", when she became pregnant, but Jane Bate's master turned her away "for fear she should gain a settlement she being then and now with child of a Bastard child".¹²⁵

Pregnant servants were especially vulnerable because of the double burden on the parish in which they bore the child. We shall see elsewhere the lengths to which maidservants sometimes went to conceal their pregnancy from their masters and fellow workers.¹²⁶ Frequently, too, they had the problem of disposing of a dead child before suspicion was aroused. The psychological and physical effects of this were extremely debilitating.

Master and servant relations not unnaturally often took second place to the more important business of keeping the economy of the household and farming unit running efficiently, and to the consideration of the wage. Moreover servants who did not live in the house itself, usually men servants and labourers, were not constantly under their master's supervision, nor had they frequent contact with him, which did not allow for much of a bond between them. This pattern was mirrored in the large establishments of the gentry, where the personal and upper servants, who came into frequent contact with their employers, enjoyed a far closer, and more slightly equal, relationship with them than did the lower

servants living and working behind the scenes. It is therefore not surprising to hear people speak of their maidservants with affection, as though they were one of the family, for often they were very much a part of it, and shared its trials and tribulations, its sorrows and celebrations. Oliver Heywood grew very fond of his maidservants, Martha Bairstow and Susannah Tillotson, expressing this in his diary. Martha was a special favourite, living with him for about sixteen years until she left to marry, an occasion which caused him great distress. "I loved her as a child", he wrote in his diary.¹²⁷ She was certainly not an insignificant figure in the household. Heywood knew a lot about her family background and she too, knew many personal details about her master's family. For example, it was she who found his son, "weeping bitterly" over his sins, and when she pressed him as to the cause, he poured his heart out to her.¹²⁸ Another Yorkshire diarist, James Fretwell, writing of the death of his former servant, referred to him as "my old friend and neighbour"; obviously their relationship in later life had transcended that of the master and servant.¹²⁹

Official records, despite their concern with getting just the essential facts, sometimes offer snippets of very useful information about the duties and type of work undertaken by servants. Servants giving evidence at the assizes sometimes recalled what they were doing when a particular incident took place. One servantmaid told how a man approached her for a drink while she sat one evening by the fireside in her master's house, "Scowering of Pewther"; another, who had "satt upp to Brew", detected a thief entering the house.¹³⁰ Servants' work may often have kept them up very late.

Pepys once recorded that his maid stayed up until the early hours of the next day in order to finish the washing. Another was still up at six "making clean of the yard and kitchen".¹³¹ The demands of the farm also meant that the servant's day was long. Dairymaids began milking at the hours of three or four in the morning, while labour itself was generally exhausting, involving carrying heavy implements and undertaking manual work. Even young children put to work on farms as apprentices, sometimes worked an eighteen hour day.¹³² Alice Clark concluded that, "There was hardly any kind of agricultural work from which women were excluded"; they were expected to labour alongside the men outdoors, in addition to their domestic duties.¹³³ If the household laid claims to gentility and the mistress did little housework herself, the responsibility for this fell totally on the maid-servants. An example of just how much responsibility for the domestic side of the household fell to some maids, is to be seen in Oliver Heywood's diary. When a pan stolen from his kitchen was retrieved, his maidservant went alone to identify it, presumably because her mistress did so little of the cooking herself that she had no idea of what domestic utensils she possessed. Moreover, this single maidservant coped with upwards of ten people at his house regularly every Sunday, with many more on a Sacrament day - "sometimes my maid ... she hath 50 upon her hands to serve".¹³⁴ When the burden of some tasks was too great for one person alone, others would often be called in to aid them. Thus Heywood noted that "we had Lydia Booth to help Susan in brewing", on 23 January 1700.¹³⁵

Servants' work was hard, and heavy; hours were long. It could also be extremely lonely. Servants giving evidence in the

depositions revealed that sometimes they were left alone in the house, while their employers went to market or elsewhere. They also went off to market by themselves, or worked in the fields at a remote distance from the house. At such times servants especially women, were at their most vulnerable. They repeatedly told of how they were assaulted in fields, lanes and highways, or alone in the house. Mr John Hobson recorded an incident in his diary, which took place at a man's house, where his maidservant, alone with his two children, bravely defended them and her master's property, and risked her own life in the process.¹³⁶ Indeed, the loneliness of the servant's life in this environment, is borne out by the many women servants who managed to conceal their pregnancy, and bare their child alone, sometimes because there was no one available to help them, rather than by choice. It was also alluded to by Thomas Broughton, a young servant to his uncle, a distiller, who asked Peter Ridson over to the house on Christmas day, "to beare him Company".¹³⁷

It is not surprising then, that when servants were given the opportunity to make merry with friends and fellow servants, they did so with relish. Drunkenness, a common offence, was no doubt the result of time spent convivially at an ale-house. Jacob Bee's servant, Christopher Maskell, appeared to make a point of regularly leaving his service to join others in social activities elsewhere. Thus he "went without leave to play" at football on 18 September 1683, and in the July following, Jacob noted that he was "so drunke that he spew'd all (over) his clothes and hatt, cravate and lay all night in the entry".¹³⁸ Twice he recorded that Christopher had stayed out all night. Hiring fairs were of course, customary times at which servants made

merry. Another time for celebration during the year, was at the end of the harvest when, with all safely gathered in, farmers and servants alike would reward themselves for their hard work with a harvest supper and merriment, vividly described by Henry Best in his Farming Book.¹³⁹ Freedom at the week's end was a feature of some servants' working life, when they might stay with friends or relatives, while occasional visits to these were sometimes allowed by masters, if illness intervened. Leisure did figure in the lives of farm servants, officially and unofficially, usually snatched between places, or indeed whenever an opportunity occurred.

But many were not destined to live this life for more than a few years. Generally it was as youths and young adults that people experienced servanthood. Service was thus regarded as a transitional occupation, occupying the time of life between extreme youth and maturity. The settlement examinations confirm this overwhelmingly. Many of the examinants were servants for only a few years, drifting in and out of various places; some others remained in service, perhaps with a succession of masters, until their late twenties, or until marriage, illness, pregnancy, or some other reason, put an end to the yearly round of hiring fairs.

Indeed, life beyond service, as testified by many of the examinants, frequently involved marriage and the setting up of an independent unit. But independence was a mixed blessing, because while it was attractive for a servant whose life had hitherto been restricted by the authority of a master, it did not necessarily bring a higher standard of living. Freedom from service invariably meant relinquishing the security this offered, of shelter, clothes

and food. As settlement examinations show, years of struggling alone trying to maintain themselves on a labourer's wage, eventually brought many in search of poor relief. In the countryside, agricultural work was perhaps the only opening to male servants, wherein they could put to use the skills they had acquired as farm servants. But the life of a labourer was precarious and subject to factors such as the weather, the supply of jobs, and his own health. Few could expect to work all the year round and the wages they earned were not supplemented by board and lodging, but probably had to feed, clothe, and shelter a growing family. Some servants did manage to become small farmers, probably the desire of most of them, but for the rest, and indeed the great majority, their lot was cast as a labourer. The decline in their standard of living which this entailed is pertinently phrased by Kussmaul: "To be a servant was to be a potential farmer, but to be a labourer was to be a realised failure".¹⁴⁰ Nevertheless, Alice Clark pointed out that "the full misery of the labourer's lot was only felt by the women; if unencumbered they could have returned, like the men, to the comfortable conditions of service, but the cases of mothers who deserted their children are rare".¹⁴¹ The "comfort" of service is supported by pictures of rustic idealism and well-fed servants, though it is countered elsewhere by a very different picture. "Sent out into service and hardship" was Oliver Heywood's description of the fate of his maidservant at ten years old.¹⁴²

Roughly one third (thirty four out of one hundred and eight) of the examinants stated that they had been, or were, married. Some of these had left their master on marrying, while others appear to have been living out of service for a time beforehand. Only five of these were females. Settlement examinations are

not a good source for evidence of the marriage of female servants in any case, since married women took their husband's settlement, and thus only single women were examined. Some male servants evidently continued as servants with their old master after their marriage, though perhaps in a different capacity, as labourers who did not live in, for example. Thus John Neville married during his year's hiring and contracted thereafter to serve the same master for a weekly wage.¹⁴³ Gregory Holroyd stated that "notwithstanding his marriage he served his master the year out and Received his wages and also served some time further".¹⁴⁴ Although exceptional, it was not unknown for female servants to remain in their service after their marriage. One maidservant who appeared before the assize court on a charge of infanticide, stated that though married, she remained in her place and her husband came to visit her there.¹⁴⁵ Most however, left their masters on marrying. Thus Anthony Douthwaite of Northallerton said that "Eight days before the year Expired he married (and) ... thereupon he and his Master agreed to part and be allowed out of his ... wages four shillings".¹⁴⁶

Several stated that on their marriage they took a cottage or small farm. This would involve not only a certain outlay of cash, which would first have to be accumulated, but also often the necessity of waiting until vacant accommodation occurred within the community.¹⁴⁷ Both these factors, especially the first, meant that several years would usually have elapsed before servants could contemplate marriage with a view to maintaining themselves and a family without recourse to poor relief. Nevertheless, most appear to have married within a short time after leaving service, if not before. According to Kussmaul, "marriage and exit from service were most often nearly coincident events ...

leaving service meant establishing an independent household".¹⁴⁸

Marriage and service were therefore not generally compatible, especially in the case of women, though the fact that so many of both sexes departed from service to marry suggests that life as a servant did offer opportunities to procure a spouse.

* * *

This chapter has mainly considered servants in husbandry but the aim has also been to include servants in households of lower degree generally by way of comparison with servants of the gentry in the preceding two chapters; comparison that is with their lives and work as servants, because it was an almost universal fact that most servants, in whatever type of household they served, came from humble families, and returned to their former status once their lives as servants were over. Service in an agricultural household differed from domestic service in the household of a gentleman in several respects. Servants in husbandry were not as dependent on the patronage of an important master, nor did they work in such a rigid hierarchy of functions and departments as existed in a large, wealthy household. Also, they often worked alongside their master and his family and even the lowest ranking servant came into more frequent contact with his or her master than would their counterparts in a gentleman's household. Service in husbandry was seasonal; life and work was based on the agricultural cycle and this included the times at which servants were hired and changed places. Such servants tended to move regularly every

one or two years. There were few old hangers-on as there were in some large households because the heavy and manual nature of farm work outdoors generally meant that only the younger people could cope with this and the continual round of hiring fairs. Also, moves generally took place over a fairly limited area, farm servants preferring to stay where farming practices were familiar or where they were near friends or family.

Most servants generally left service when they married. Many servants in husbandry became independent husbandmen in a world they had always known. Although service in husbandry was based, like service in a wealthy household, on the acquisition of skills by which a servant was promoted to a more skilled and responsible position as they gained more experience, upward social mobility was not as much a feature of the rural world as it was in the world of the town or great house. Here servants entered a largely alien world which often taught them to aspire above their station. Servants in husbandry probably considered themselves to have made a success of their lives if they eventually acquired a small holding of their own and managed to survive as an independent unit after their lives as servants were over.

Describing the changes which took place in the village community, Hasbach said that they were caused in part by contact with the sophisticated lives of the townspeople and "roused by ... acquaintance with the servants of the gentry".¹⁴⁹ This is further evidence of such servants influencing public opinion and manners, as we saw in chapters one and two, and of the differences between servants of the gentry and those of more ordinary working people. But it also highlights changes in the form and practice of service that had more or less reached their conclusion in some parts

of the country at the time of Hasbach's remark. For it was partly the gentrification of some farmers as they grew wealthier and more sophisticated, that discouraged them from keeping living-in farm servants, and caused them increasingly to employ day labourers instead. But as we have seen, fluctuations in the cost of living and wages themselves were also factors which could influence demand for living-in servants. The rising cost of living in the late eighteenth century discouraged farmers from accommodating large numbers of living-in servants, though when real wages were high they were preferred to day labourers because they were more economical to maintain.

But their move towards the status of day labourers rather than living-in servants was a mixed blessing for young working people. It freed them from the shackles of living and working constantly under a master's authority, but at the same time it weakened the traditional bonds of loyalty and obligations on either side of the relationship. The contract between them became increasingly to be dominated by the wage alone. Moreover, the old system of boarding with their masters sheltered servants, in the early stages of their working lives, from the struggles of independence and the poverty they might face later on. Although poor as servants and with no status and few rights, they were at least guaranteed shelter, clothes and plentiful food as well as a small wage; this was by no means the lowest rung on the ladder to which they could fall.

The changes in farm service, discussed in detail by Kussmaul, were not sweeping changes.¹⁵⁰ Servants who lived with their masters did not become uncommon until the late nineteenth and even the twentieth century especially in norther parts, where

traditional values and practices remained firmly entrenched for longer. Arthur Young noted the beginnings of change at the end of the eighteenth century and prophesied that they were for the worst:

"A curtain is coming in around Waterden ... of allowing board wages to farm servants instead of the old way of feeding in the house ... This is one material cause of an increased neglect of the Sabbath, and looseness of morals ... A most pernicious practice, which will by-and-by be felt severely in its consequences by the farmers".¹⁵¹

But at the times of the examinations in our sample, the full implications of these changes was a long way off. The lives of these servants had existed in much the same form for the past hundred years or so, and a similar existence was extolled almost two centuries later by a philosophical Fred Kitchen.¹⁵²

CHAPTER 4

APPRENTICES

"There is a different manner of acting to be exercised towards those whom you shall take as Apprentices for their concerns are much different from those of an ordinary Servant ... they giving no small part of their portion for their Education under you, and expending a considerable part of their lives in doing your service ..."¹

The rapidly expanding towns and cities of England containing people of varying social degrees and from all walks of life, provided a stark contrast to the rural areas in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The phenomenon of the town attracted people from all walks of life.

They became centres of social life, attracting many local gentry.

In larger cities such as York and Norwich, the Season became as marked in feature as in London. Sir Arthur Ingram of Temple Newsam had a

town house near the Minster in York, where he stayed during the winter with his household.² An elderly citizen of York recalled how, in the

mid-eighteenth century, various noblemen, including the Marquis of Rockingham and the Earl of Carlisle, had come "to their lodgings in High Ousegate, with their splendid equipages, running footmen and other luxurious appendages of rank and fortune".³

There were reasons why people of much lower degree also enjoyed and sought town life. The many inns and taverns provided conviviality;

fairs and street games provided entertainment. The quarter sessions for the city of York refer to the playing of football

in the streets.⁴ But most of all, there was the widespread

expectation that town life offered unique opportunities for

advancement. Young people flocked to the town to make their fortunes and better themselves, having heard accounts from friends

or fellow servants. Some were reasonably successful, perhaps

securing a place with a good family. But there was a significant element of poor in all urban centres, forming a stark contrast with the well-to-do citizens. According to the Hearth Tax, one fifth of the householders in York in the 1670s were regarded as poverty stricken.⁵ Various charities and bequests appear in the House Books for the city, and offerings from benefactors to help ease the plight of the poor. One such was Jane Wright's charity; in her will she gave the parish of Goodramgate one thousand pounds to purchase lands and to use the rents to place poor children as apprentices.⁶

Amongst the many immigrants to towns were servants. Their numbers raised the usual complaints from commentators. A popular journal in the 1730s announced that, "There is scarce a Mechanic in Town who does not keep a Servant in Livery".⁷ The many well dressed servants who did little worthwhile but stand around in the streets were a bone of contention. The town was seen as being both the downfall and fortune of servants. A popular image was that of the young woman who immediately fell into the hands of a procuress on stepping out of the coach that first brought her to the town and began on the downward slope to degradation.⁸ Conversely, there were stories of servants who more than fulfilled their ambitions. One such was Alice Grey, who married her mistress's grandson and went on to inherit York's first newspaper, begun in 1719 by her mistress. Her second husband married her in York Minster.⁹ Many ex-servants established themselves as tradesmen or publicans in towns, thereby earning a right to full citizenship. The York Courant and the Leeds Intelligencer frequently advertised these businesses; the previous employers of these people served as a reference for their reliability.¹⁰

In many ways, town life contained elements of life familiar to those in the country or in a large country house. Hiring fairs, for example, were still a common feature in towns. In York, a fair was held at Martinmas where, according to Francis Drake, "in the market place on the Pavement is kept the Statutes for hiring all sorts of household servants, both men and women. At which fair there is always great plenty of such servants to be hired".¹¹ In the large town household there were as many people coming and going to and from the kitchen and house as the great country house. So much so that in 1785 the new incumbent of the Mansion House was advised by his predecessor that "There will be a sett of Idle porters and labourers come about the House for Drink, when they bring Dues of Coals, Turf ..." and "beggars other ... are so audacious as to get into the kitchen".¹² But it placed greater temptations in the way of young people too, who were accused of imitating the fashions and mannerisms of their superiors, and of being easily enticed away from their work by entertainments and other servants. Masters such as Samuel Pepys encouraged this behaviour. His maid frequently accompanied her master and mistress to fairs and parties.¹³

Towns brought together servants of all types and ranks who served masters from the wealthy aristocrats and gentlemen, down to the humble craftsman and tradesman. Their experiences were not unlike those of servants we have seen in the preceding chapters. But in this chapter we are concerned primarily with a particular group of servants, those apprenticed to their masters for a fixed term to learn a specific trade or skill. Although not peculiar to towns, they were more prevalent in that environment because of the important part played by commerce in urban life. This was dominated by the influential guild system, a legacy

from the middle ages. The guilds and companies of major cities such as York and London maintained a strict control over their standard of membership and existed almost as exclusive communities. Full membership of one of these, by which one was admitted to the freedom of the city, established one's social and economic position, but attaining such status was a lengthy process, undertaken through the system of apprenticeship. In many towns there were hundreds of young apprentices, in addition to the ranks of domestic servants, many of whom would eventually become Freemen, but many also, who served petty craftsmen and tradesmen with little hope of becoming more than journeymen for the rest of their working lives. Records of all those apprenticed were kept since the Indenture was a legally binding document which had to be signed by witnesses and stamped.¹⁴

Nevertheless, despite this, the term "Apprenticeship" seems to have defied precise definition. Philip Ariès pointed to the crux of the matter in the following statement: "Looking at [contracts of apprenticeship] without first ridding ourselves of our modern habits of thought, we find it difficult to decide whether the child has been placed as an apprentice (in the modern sense), as a boarder or as a servant ... Our distinctions are anachronistic, and a man of the Middle Ages would see nothing in them but slight variations on a basic idea - that of service".¹⁵ An apprentice was bound by indenture to his master for a definite period which, like a servant, placed him under the latter's control. The terms of the indenture stated quite clearly what behaviour was expected of him. Among other things, he was not to visit alehouses, nor marry or liaise with any women, and never leave his master's property without leave and thereby neglect his service, but

always "be a true and faithful servant".¹⁶ In his turn, the master made provision for the apprentices' food, drink, lodging, washing and clothes, or some combination of these. In addition private agreements could be made between a master and apprentice, or the latter's parents or guardians, setting out special conditions. In effect, the indenture bound the apprentice more or less as his master's menial servant, answerable to him in both workshop and household. Misson, during his travels in England in 1784 concluded that "An Apprentice is a sort of slave ... he can't marry nor have any Dealings in his own Account".¹⁷ One reason for his situation was the apprentice's extreme youth, which placed him in the same league as his master's children, making him almost totally dependent on him for maintenance and guidance.¹⁸ Another was the tradition of an apprenticeship as being also an education, in which the master took on the roles of provider, master, guardian and teacher, and endeavoured, ideally, to equip his apprentice with "the knowledge, practical experience and human worth he was supposed to possess".¹⁹

The whole ethos of apprenticeship was governed by the laudable precepts of educating the youth, not just in his master's trade, but in a much broader sense, providing him with a general background of literacy, religious instruction and social communication. This fitted him for entry into the outside world, and more importantly, for adult citizenship of his chosen calling. The apprenticeship system was carefully regulated; the premiums demanded by some trades excluded men of lowly status from apprenticing their son to these. The more illustrious guilds such as goldsmiths, mercers and merchants, adopted an elitist attitude to the numbers and backgrounds of apprentices they took, and property qualifications

also existed to prevent the sons of labourers and husbandmen from becoming members.²⁰ In the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when guilds were wavering in their influence and prosperity, such restrictions were relaxed, and this, along with the growing numbers of poor apprentices being bound in townships, may have diminished the prestige formerly accorded to an apprenticeship. Elitism still survived however, as did the fashion amongst gentlemen of apprenticing their younger sons to one of the higher class of trades, primarily as a means of securing them a livelihood, but also of finishing their education as befitted their status, and training them for their entry into society. An apprenticeship to a merchant in the eighteenth century could cost anything from forty to four hundred pounds, but was a popular calling for young gentlemen, providing "instruction in trade, accounts and languages". The training usually included a period abroad learning to conduct their master's business.²¹ Two Yorkshire gentlemen who apprenticed their sons were William Spencer Stanhope and William Gossip. The former sent two of his sons, William and Benjamin, to be apprentices in Liverpool and London respectively.²² William Gossip apprentice his son, George, in the hosiery trade in Leicester. Because he was a young gentleman, George received privileged treatment from his master - "I am never huff'd nor look'd upon in angry or disrespectful manner. These are liberties which were never before granted to any Apprentice whatsoever in this Town ... ". But despite his rank he was nevertheless kept from certain tasks until he proved himself capable. Thus, "Mr Bunny said he would send the Orders and allow me to make the Invoice in my own Name but as I was his Apprentice he would

not permit me to sell any goods till I was free from my Servitude".²³

An apprenticeship was, like most terms of service, undertaken during the years of adolescence. It was therefore an important and formative stage in a young person's life.²⁴ The ages at which boys were sent out as apprentices appears to have been anything from seven or eight years and upwards. Evidence from the registers of York apprentices seems to suggest this. In certain guilds and urban societies, the apprentice's completion of his term, and entry into the freedom of his craft or trade, was marked by an official public ceremony which also celebrated his coming of age into full adulthood and citizenship. In the fifteenth century, the guilds and companies exercised a most important influence on the economic status of citizens engaged in commercial activities. Charles Phythian-Adams illustrated the importance of ceremony in the lives of the citizens of Coventry, and how non-participation in this aspect of urban life effectively meant exclusion from this "restricted communal membership". Thus, "exclusion from the fellowship of building workers or journeymen dyers automatically meant the stigma of inferior status as only "comen labourers" or "mere servants".²⁵ To a large extent, this was true of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries too. Many cities ordained that tradesmen or craftsmen were not allowed to set up a commercial enterprise who had not first completed a seven year apprenticeship. An apprenticeship therefore established the craftsman's economic position and his right to full citizenship within the town, as well as ideally providing him with a basic education.

During the seven years - at least - of his apprenticeship,

a youth lived alongside his master's household or family and became part of this unit. Like a domestic servant, he swapped his own family and the authority of his father, for that of his master's. Ann Yarbrough concluded that, "It was in the master's household that the apprentice learned what it was to be a citizen", and pointed to "the operations of the household, the fraternal and informal association of guild and parish, and the ceremonial life of the town" as being the most important and influential elements contributing to the learning process of the apprentice.²⁶ The place of the apprentice in his master's household was ambiguous. He was often of the same age as his master's children and young servants. Though his age provided that he be dependent on his master for his welfare and maintenance, his status did not suggest so ready a classification. In many ways, an apprentice was a form of domestic servant, often called upon to perform chores in the house, as well as be a pupil and helper in the workshop. Relations with their masters were undertaken on the same terms as servants; an equal show of deference was expected from them, and masters exercised as much right to chastise them as their servants. But the social status of an apprentice necessarily affected the type of treatment he received. A young gentleman apprenticed to a wealthy merchant or professional person was probably not set to work on menial chores in the household by his mistress. He may even have been accompanied by his own private servants. He lived alongside members of his master's immediate family, and while achieving proficiency in his master's occupation, also acquired a broader knowledge related to the manners and customs of his social class, and hopefully made suitable contacts in the outside world. On the other hand, a young boy apprenticed

from a very ordinary craftsman's, tradesman's or farming family, attempted, by his apprenticeship, not to maintain, but to improve his status. His experience of apprenticeship was that of a menial to his master, and his work was undertaken in both workshop and household.

There was even some rivalry for position among the ranks of servants and apprentices living together in one household.

Apprentices were superior in social status to servants in two ways, though these were negligible in reality. The first was that they may well have come from a family of equal status with their master's, whilst servants of urban tradesmen and craftsmen were often, though not always, from a humbler background. The second was that apprentices could, at the completion of their term, generally look forward to life on a higher social level than most servants. Moreover, Eliza Haywood advised that apprentices were to be treated as more important than servants. While apprentices were in effect "servants only to become masters", it was well to remember that they were "often of a better birth and education than those they serve ... It may hereafter lie in their power to recompense any little favour (servants) do them, such as mending their linnen".²⁷ But there were servants who would have none of that, and considered themselves to be of greater status. Thus, when Pepys' maidservant went to help her mother retrieve her possessions from the Fire of London, the latter replied to her mistress's exhortations to return, that her daughter "was not a prentice girl, to ask leave every time she goes abroad".²⁸ Daniel Defoe bemoaned the passing of the days when apprentices were servile. The gentry class, many of whose sons became apprentices in his day, now scorned such tasks as "cleaning their Master's

Shoes, bringing Water into the House from the Conduits in the Street ... also waiting at Table ... but their Masters are oblig'd to keep Porters or Footmen to wait upon the Apprentices".²⁹

Nevertheless, Ralph Houlbrooke described the sort of treatment given both servants and apprentices in some households, wherein both sat "at the lower end (of the table), and they had pudding without suet or plums, and meat of poorer quality. By such small but very tangible distinctions it was made clear to apprentices and servants that they did not belong to their employer's family, in the sense in which we use the word".³⁰ Their segregation from their master's immediate family indicates the division of the household into two distinct halves, of superior and inferior persons.

Keith Snell, however, sees the inter-relationship of the two environments as entirely normal and logical. He does not see the occupations of "domestic drudgery" and "learning the trade" as in any way distinct from each other. He is convinced that "the integration into another productive household for the purposes of education ... and general upbringing was inextricably concerned with the associate training in the artisan skills of that family".³¹ In this light it was not exclusively a trade to which an apprentice was bound, but rather a family and a way of life, in whose domestic, social and economic affairs, he would participate. Given the quality of family life in this period, and the fact that a servant or apprentice effectively exchanged their own home and family for that of another, their total "subsumption" into the family of their master was entirely possible.

One of the people most qualified to tell us about his apprenticeship, the diarist Roger Lowe, lived away from his master's house, and so affords less insight into living and working relations between

the two, than we might have hoped. Roger's experiences as a Lancashire apprentice between 1663 and 1674, nevertheless offer a very illuminating portrait of his life and work in Ashton-in-Makerfield, where he kept his master's shop.³² He appears to have had the freedom to come and go more or less as he pleased, whilst keeping frequent company with other servants of the town, meeting them socially at the alehouse. One one occasion he met William Scofield, a mercer, at an alehouse where "we talked about trading and how to get wives", thereby mixing business with pleasure.³³ Having attempted unsuccessfully to set up trading on his own account after being released from his Indenture, he returned to service, only to find that he could not abide living alongside his mistress, and finding her "of such a pestilential nature that I was weary in a few weekes", he quitted his service and married shortly after.³⁴

* * *

Outside the household, apprentices sought the companionship of others, congregating in "taverns, theatres, gaming houses, pleasure gardens and brothels".³⁵ Because of their detachment from their own families at an early age, and placement in "other families of which they were a part, yet always apart", they had not the stabilising effect of family life to keep them at home during their leisure time.³⁶ Apprentices sometimes developed a sort of "fraternal affection", a solidarity in each other's company which has lead historians to conclude that an apprentice subculture grew up, particularly in urban communities. This subculture was noisy, lively, and sometime slightly subversive. On Shrove Tuesday, for example, a traditional holiday, authority was customarily disregarded and a certain air of charivari ruled.³⁷ Football

matches were common on such days and the general excitement sometimes spilled over into more riotous activities. One such was the chastisement of sexual offenders, when prostitutes were publicly and ceremoniously whipped by apprentices.³⁸ Sometimes there was only a very fine threshold between the high spirits and sense of liberation which accompanied these events, and the eruption of violence and chaos, which had far more serious undertones. In London Burke notes that "Shrove Tuesday violence was as regular as pancake-eating".³⁹

In addition to carnivals, apprentices also took part in public protests. Tracts and broadsheets illustrate the interest taken by apprentices in political affairs and certain incidents serve to prove this point.⁴⁰ In York, for example, 500 apprentices were said to be present at the funeral of the Countess of Stafford in 1686, during which there was rioting. Samuel Pepys also records that apprentices, carrying banners entitled "Liberty of Conscience" and "Reformation", took part in serious riots at Moorefields in London in 1668.⁴¹

These activities pose interesting questions about the psychology behind apprentice culture. Steven Smith, discussing the psychology of London apprentices in the seventeenth century concluded that, inspired by cult heroes such as Dick Whittington and Robert Eyre, two humble boys who found fame and fortune in the capital city, and by their own corporate brotherhood, they "saw themselves as moral agents, defending the right", which spilled over into religious and moral issues.⁴² Beloff identified apprentices' "corporate loyalty", which encouraged apprentices to band together when one or other of their kind were threatened or punished. He cites examples of rioting after the imprisonment of two apprentices for beating their master, and of the threat to order due to economic

restrictions, when apprentices felt their positions at risk.⁴³

The presence of large numbers of young apprentices and servants was sometimes viewed as a problem in towns. Ann Yarbrough noted that the apprentices of Bristol in the sixteenth century were a "conspicuous and often troublesome presence ... They were rude and lewd, heedless and immature and their behaviour excited the constant worry of their elders".⁴⁴ Yarbrough and Smith placed a large measure of responsibility for the behaviour of young apprentices on the unfamiliarity and constraints of the world into which they had been placed. Adolescence did not marry well with service. This, coupled with the insecurities of adolescent experience and the search for meanings and identities, led to "role confusion" and ultimately provoked problems of communication and discipline in the household and everyday life. Yarbrough suggests that apprenticeship was an attempt to direct a young man "through a series of rituals that articulated his loyalty and obedience to his master, his craft, his town and his sovereign".⁴⁵ It was in effect a form of conditioning, whereby a youth was carefully channelled into urban life and made to conform to accepted notions of adulthood and society. Apart from these relatively isolated examples, the psychological effects of an apprenticeship on a young person, male or female, are not easy to gauge. Nevertheless, it is not hard to imagine the effects on a young person of being placed in an alien family nor to understand the reasons why they joined forces with other youths at every opportunity, for companionship and to relieve pent up energies. Furthermore, the psychological effects on a young pauper child put out to service by the parish authorities may have been even more devastating, particularly since these children were often unwanted by their masters and often spent much of their young lives being shunted back and forth from parish to parish.

The general apprentices registers for the city of York include few pauper children.⁴⁶ Our attention is thus divided between ordinary apprentices, that is, those whose father's name appears on the Indenture, or whose premium was paid by a relative or friend, and pauper apprentices, those bound by the parish authorities. It is the former that we shall discuss first.

Of particular interest is the information the registers provide of the social origins of apprentices, and the distances travelled to York. The trades to which they were bound may also be related to social origin although without some idea of the scale of rank which existed between these trades, it is impossible to comment in much detail on occupations.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, the ten most popular trades in each period have been calculated, revealing some interesting comparisons. It is also interesting to note how many apprentices were bound to fathers and mothers, and how many to women. The question also arises whether girls were treated any differently to boys. In addition, the records of quarter sessions are a useful supplementary source to show relations between master and apprentice and the treatment received by the latter, although it must be remembered that these examples only show one side of the relationship, which was not usually the norm.

A study of the trades to which apprentices were bound, and those, if any, practised by their fathers, may shed some light on social distinctions in early modern England (see Table 3). Almost a quarter of the whole number of apprentices in each period were sons of yeomen.⁴⁸ In 1761-70 over two thirds of these came from, or dwelt in rural areas outside the City of York. Some of these boys may have been younger sons, with elder brothers who stood to inherit their father's estate or farm. An apprenticeship was perhaps the best method of ensuring that remaining sons received an education

TABLE 3 TOP TEN TRADES TO WHICH APPRENTICES BOUND IN YORK¹

1650-1688

	TRADE	NUMBER OF APPRENTICES ²
1	Silkweaver	62
2	Barber/Surgeon	31
3	Cooper	29
4	Wine Cooper	23
5	Baker	17
6	Translator	15
7	Blacksmith)	12
	Butcher)	12
9	Sadler	9
10	Carpenter/Joiner	8
	TOTAL	218

TOTAL NUMBER OF APPRENTICES
IN REGISTER FOR THESE
DATES: 318

TOTAL NUMBER OF TRADES
REPRESENTED: 50

1721-1730

	TRADE	NUMBER OF APPRENTICES
1	Carpenter/Joiner	63
2	Barber/Surgeon	57
3	Bricklayer	37
4	Cordwainer	36
5	Merchant Taylor	34
6	Baker	30
7	Butcher	28
8	Mariner/Fishmonger)	23
	Innholder)	23
	Translator)	23
	TOTAL	354

TOTAL NUMBER OF APPRENTICES
IN REGISTER FOR THESE
DATES: 676

TOTAL NUMBER OF TRADES
REPRESENTED: 89

1761-1779

	TRADE	NUMBER OF APPRENTICES
1	Carpenter/Joiner	79
2	Merchant Taylor)	33
	Translator)	33
	Cordwainer)	33
5	Bricklayer/Tyler/ Plasterer	30
6	Butcher	28
7	Barber/Surgeon	23
8	Combmaker/Hornbraker	21
9	Milliner/Spinster	19
10	Whitesmith	18
	TOTAL	354

TOTAL NUMBER OF APPRENTICES
IN REGISTER FOR THESE
DATES: 636

TOTAL NUMBER OF TRADES
REPRESENTED: 87

1 Figures taken from Registers of Apprenticeship
YORK CITY ARCHIVES D12, D13, D14

2 Numbers are approximate due to incomplete registers etc

and a decent start in life. Several gentlemen also appear in each list as the fathers of apprentices, although the standard by which a gentleman was assessed may well have changed over the period. Again, their apprentice sons were probably younger ones set to make their way in the world by the labours of their hands, unlike their elder brothers. Gentlemen's sons appear to have been apprenticed to some of the more exclusive trades. Between 1650 and 1688 the twelve sons of gentlemen were apprenticed to only four different trades which included silkweavers - to which seven were apprenticed - and barber surgeons. From 1721-30, sixteen gentlemen's sons were bound to merchants, merchant tailors, apothecaries, barber surgeons and an armourer. In the 1760s gentlemen's sons were apprenticed to an apothecary and laceweaver, although ordinary trades were also represented in the latter two decades. The gentry also apprenticed their sons to butchers, millers, carpenters, booksellers and haberdashers.

The same pattern occurred for the sons of clergymen. Silkweavers claimed two of the five apprentices in the first period, while the others were bound to an armourer, a barber surgeon and a combmaker. The York guild of silkweavers was founded in 1610 and flourished in the seventeenth century. In the period from 1650 to 1685, sixty-two apprentices were bound to silkweavers. But in the eighteenth century there was a dramatic decline in the popularity of this trade - only two apprentices were bound in the 1720s and 1760s.⁴⁹ The trade of an apothecary was growing in stature in the eighteenth century and clergymen's sons were bound to these in the 1700s, as well as those of gentlemen. In 1721-30 other trades to which they were bound included a stationer, mantuamaker and haberdasher, while in 1761-70 milliners, gilders and carvers claimed two apprentices each from the ranks of clergymen's sons.

Yeoman's sons were also apprenticed to some of the better trades. Silkweavers, wine coopers and butchers appear as the most common employers from 1650 to 1688, with barber surgeons and an armourer appearing also. In the eighteenth century, apothecaries and druggists, barber surgeons, merchant taylor and butchers also employed them. Many of the humbler crafts are also represented; these included bakers, shoemakers, translators, bricklayers and smiths. Merson has pointed out, in his study of the Southampton apprenticeship registers, that "entries referring to Yeomans' sons usually reflect their declining status"; this also seems to be reflected in the evidence for York.⁵⁰ The range of trades to which yeomen's sons were apprenticed number thirty-five, forty-eight and one hundred and six in each of the three periods respectively, so that by the 1760s they were entering many lesser trades. The majority in the latter period were employed by carpenters, joiners and cabinetmakers, butchers and bricklayers. Carpenters and joiners were united in 1530 to form one Company, but their policy whereby only sons of freemen were admitted appears to have contributed to their decline in the eighteenth century.⁵¹ Those trades which were gaining prestige, such as apothecaries and merchants, claimed only one apprentice each from the yeomanry in the 1760s. Another factor affecting the representation of some trades in the registers, was the restrictions placed by some companies on the intake of apprentices and the numbers allowed to each master.

An apprentice's background therefore very often influenced the trade to which he was bound. The sons of labourers for example, appear mainly to have been bound to craftsmen of the lesser trades such as bakers, clothworkers, blacksmiths, translators and cord-wainers. But there were exceptions to this. In the 1760s one labourer's son was apprenticed to an apothecary, one to a barber

surgeon and two to merchant taylor. There are other instances of upward social mobility. Thomas Gamble, the son of a husbandman, was, in 1766, bound to Samuel Maud, Gentleman, as a "Gentleman's Servant", to learn the "art and trade of a Gardiner".⁵² The size of the premium often prevented poorer men from apprenticing their sons to certain trades. It was probably more likely to be this than deliberate social barriers, which created the pattern.

Comparison with the register of the Merchant Taylors' Company for the decades 1650-60, 1721-30 and 1761-70, reveals that entry to this distinguished guild was not limited to the sons of wealthier families.⁵³ The children of humbler craftsmen, such as clothworkers, bakers and weavers, were admitted as apprentices, although in lesser numbers than those of yeomen, gentlemen, clergymen and merchants. Many fathers of apprentices were husbandmen and labourers, especially in 1650-60. Even poor children were noted amongst the apprentices in the 1720s and 1760s, and the numbers of those whose fathers were dead is quite substantial in the earlier two decades.

Not even a company with the reputation of the Merchant Taylors could exclude apprentices from the lower orders. A further example of how the Merchant Taylors' Company could not remain immune, was the admittance of women into its ranks of freemen, and the taking of girls as apprentices. This innovation occurred in the 1690s. Between 1650 and 1688 twenty-five apprentices were bound to masters of the same trade as their fathers, and twelve of these to men with the same surname, possibly their fathers. If a craftsman was fairly successful and could afford to take on an apprentice, it may have been only logical that he undertake to teach his own son, since by doing so he could avoid having to pay a premium to bind him elsewhere, and would have no more outlay for the boy's welfare than had been necessary hitherto. Thirty-one were bound

to their fathers between 1721 and 1730, and twenty-seven between 1761 and 1770. These figures may have been higher. Those above represent only those employers actually stated in the register as being the fathers of their apprentices, though brothers and uncles of the apprentices may also have employed them. It is more surprising to find apprentices being bound to their mothers. The numbers apprenticed to their mothers in each of the three periods were three, two and one, respectively and three of the six were widows. Women as employers in their own right were making their mark in the eighteenth century. The general register for York from 1650 to 1688 numbers only six women employers, but these figures rise to twenty-five in the 1720s and fifty-four in the 1760s. However, numbers indicating women as employers may include the same woman several times. In the 1720s, for example, Joanna Bellingham was the most prominent female employer of apprentices. She took seven of the twenty-five apprentices bound to women. Nor were these figures due altogether to women taking up their husbands' trade after his death. In the 1720s, only eight are stated as being widows, and eighteen in the 1760s, leaving the status of the majority unaccounted for. It may be the case that they were employers in their own right. Snell points to evidence indicating that women entered guilds and practised trades independently of their husbands; some female apprenticeships must therefore have involved serious study of a particular trade or craft, as opposed to mere "housewifery".⁵⁴ The ability of widows to carry on their husband's trade, also points to their direct involvement in the business during his life. P Goldberg found evidence in late medieval York to suggest that wives regularly assisted their husbands in their trade or craft and that this practise was tolerated by the guild. These skills did not appear to enhance a woman's economic status, however.⁵⁵ Legally, a woman was entitled to possession

of her husband's business and apprentices after his death. Those without the means or capability to carry this on handed the responsibility over to another person; the records of quarter sessions frequently note the transference of an apprentice from one master or mistress, to another.

In York, women were mostly involved in trades of a domestic nature, relating to needlework. In the 1720s, seven apprentices were bound to one woman, Joanna Bellingham, who was a merchant tayloress, and obviously a successful businesswoman. Two more were bound to a merchant draper, a buttonmaker and seamstress. In the 1760s, the majority of those apprenticed to women entered the trades of mantuamakers and milliners, and others were apprenticed to a laceweaver, a staymaker and a spinster. Such work was closely associated with the skills required of a competent housekeeper; since a large number of female apprentices were bound to such trades, they may in reality have been set to learn "housewifery", which was frequently indicated in the indenture. The problem here is of knowing how many female apprentices actually learnt a specific trade and went on to become mistresses in their own right. Indications that women, some of them widows, traded as barber surgeons, shoemakers, butchers, whitesmiths, bricklayers and periwig-makers attests at least to their business acumen, if not to their own mastery of the trade or craft. An astute woman could probably survive in a business world without the latter, through the help of apprentices and journeymen.

The appearance of women as employers in a male-oriented world of commerce and craft guilds, seems to have been a logical step from their role as wives and mothers. If we are to accord to the business household the general level of co-operation and intercommunication between the domestic and business spheres that has already been suggested, then a mistress might well be involved in her husband's

affairs, and his apprentices and journeymen fall under her influence and authority also. Thus, when forced into widowhood, many women were highly suited to succeed their husbands at the head of the business concern, having for so long worked alongside them in the household. The fact that widows were admitted to the freedom of their husbands' trades, and later employed their own apprentices, indicates that many women made this transition successfully.⁵⁶ Alice Clark concluded that a wife's "capacity was so much taken for granted that public opinion regarded her as being virtually her husband's partner".⁵⁷ In the event of their husband's absence on business many women were expected to maintain and run the household single-handedly. The partnership also worked both ways for, according to Clark, "men were much more occupied with domestic affairs then than they are now".⁵⁸ The idea of a commercial partnership between husband and wife is further emphasized by entries in the apprentice registers. For example, in 1768 John Capes was apprenticed to Sarah and Thomas Plowman, Coachmakers.⁵⁹ Others record the husband's trade as well as that of his wife even though the apprentice was to be bound only to the wife. This hints at the priority given to the husband in all business matters, despite the fact that the wife employed her own apprentices.⁶⁰ Thus, Mary Mills was registered in 1768 as being bound to Elizabeth, a mantuamaker and wife of Thomas Silburn, wine cooper, "to be taught mantuamaker"; similarly, in 1765 Mary Hutton was apprenticed to Richard Whittle and Ann his wife, to learn the trade of a mantuamaker. Nevertheless, these entries strongly evoke a picture of the wife occupying an important position by her husband's side in his business. Snell is firmly of the opinion that "where the wife was named in the indenture she was heavily involved in the trade, either entirely in her own right, or more probably alongside her husband".⁶¹

The appearance of women as employers in the registers coincided with that of girls as apprentices. In York, no females were recorded between 1650 and 1688 in the general register, but in the 1720s seventeen appeared, and thirty-one in the 1760s. These low figures are borne out by others elsewhere. Snell estimated that, "for eighteenth century parish apprentices, between 23 and 35 per cent were female, but for those apprenticed by their family it seems generally to have been under 10 per cent",⁶² an indication of class distinctions which will be discussed later. Similarly, Sue Wright discovered that in Salisbury between 1603 and 1614, only five out of over one hundred and thirty registered apprentices were girls.⁶³ Real figures may well have been higher. The actual apprenticeship of women seemed to be very erratic. In the words of one historian, the registers fail to "adequately ... encompass women's work as non-apprenticed members of an artisan family, and as widows".⁶⁴ They do not indeed take into account many wives and daughters, not formally bound to a trade, who were used by their craftsmen husbands and fathers as cheap labour.⁶⁵ Of these we have little or no evidence, although some of them may occasionally have risen to prominence as widows who continued their husband's trade after his death, and appeared in the records of freemen or apprenticeship, as employers.

What were the implications of the relatively low rates of female apprenticeship? Were girls actually taught the trades to which they were bound? While both parish and ordinary female apprentices were bound to similar trades, often of a domestic nature, historians have questioned whether the quality of instruction was the same in both cases.⁶⁶ Most of the girls bound as ordinary apprentices in York, were apprenticed to women to learn needlework-related trades, as we have already seen. In the 1720s nine out of the

seventeen girls were apprenticed to women. This gap was closed in the 1760s, when about twenty-eight out of thirty-one girls were apprenticed to women. The majority of girls therefore entered occupations with a domestic bias. Keith Snell, in his study of six southern counties, found that the predominance of needlework occupations amongst ordinary female apprentices was a major feature distinguishing them from their parish counterparts; such occupations were often considered "genteel".⁶⁷ In the eighteenth century, the numbers of girls apprenticed to these trades appeared to increase. Turning to the registers of the Merchant Taylors' Company, the complete dearth of women up to 1693 was in contrast to the first quarter of the eighteenth century, where forty-four women entrants appeared alongside one hundred and twenty-five men.⁶⁸ Women had already begun to appear in the Freeman's Lists as mantuamakers and milliners in this period.⁶⁹ From 1721-1730, out of sixty-three apprentices bound to women in the General Registers of Apprentices for the City of York, sixty-two of them were girls, and from 1761-1770 forty-seven out of a total of fifty-four children apprenticed to women, were girls.

Many female parish apprentices were bound to learn "housewifery", but few other occupations are specified. One way of unburthening the parish of its female children was to apprentice them to learn the "art of housewifery", which often meant in effect that they were kept as household servants. This was commonly the case with girls sent out from the Grey Coat charity school, in York. The acquisition of household skills was, of course, by no means negligible to the girl in later life. They made her a marriageable asset, and fitted her for the upkeep of her own home. As Goldberg suggested, "Service might be a craft or commercial training that might be of value to a young woman whether married or otherwise".⁷⁰ Nevertheless,

the quality of such work may have differed considerably, depending on the girl's status and that of her master or mistress; many may have been put simply to "common household work", and not taught any of the related skills. There was thus a discrepancy between the fact of a girl having been bound apprentice to a "trade", and the probability of her being taught one properly.

Did female apprentices continue to practise their "trade" in their own right, after their term of apprenticeship? The opposition of men to women traders, and the unspecific nature of girls' work, were two possible obstacles to this. The predominance of their attachment to specifically female work such as housewifery and needlework also suggests that many were geared to the marriage market. Snell, however, is of the opinion that those girls who were apprenticed to a trade, as with all parish children, "were generally taught the trade and later practised it".⁷¹ He points to testamentary evidence from settlement examinations from women as well as men, who had become masters and mistresses of their trade. He also stresses that females in the eighteenth century were apprenticed to a much wider range of trades than later on, including many more male-oriented ones, and had not retreated as far into the domestic sphere as they were to do in the nineteenth century.⁷² Certainly not all of the females in our sample were apprenticed to domestic-related trades. In the 1760s, two girls were apprenticed to a painter and a marriner. Moreover, girls apprenticed to certain tradesmen as domestic servants were often employed in tasks directly related to the business. Innkeepers and victuallers for example, used girls as servers in their inns and shops; while they may not have been taught the trade, they might by this means pick up some basic ideas and enjoy a more sociable working life than a kitchenmaid. Sue Wright concluded that as

far as girls working as maidservants in a business enterprise were concerned they would probably also gain some knowledge of a trade - "A good deal of inteaching existed between kitchen and workshop".⁷³

It is important to note that evidence of female parish apprentices is as prolific as that for boys, at this level. Higher up the social scale evidence does exist of girls being bound as ordinary apprentices, but it is less profuse. This fact points clearly to distinctions of status and degree, as suggested earlier. As Snell has said, "the legal background to apprenticeship placed virtually no restrictions on female apprenticeship"; the restrictions were placed on them by the guilds, and social opinion.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, their presence, and that of women as employers, indicates that they were beginning to infiltrate the system of guilds and formal apprenticeship in the early eighteenth century in York, and that they entered a variety of trades. Many more girls and women as we have noted, must have been kept at home who, employed by their fathers and husbands in tasks relating to a trade or craft, did not benefit from a formal apprenticeship, which would enable them to practise acquired skills independently, and legally.

* * *

The apprentice registers also indicate the geographical origins of apprentices. These are best shown in a table in which the dwelling places of apprentices' fathers have been calculated up to a distance of thirty miles from the city of York, and thereafter those coming from over thirty miles away but still within Yorkshire, and then those from outside the county (see Table 4). Not all the entries

TABLE 4 ORIGINS OF APPRENTICES - DISTANCES TRAVELLED TO YORK¹

	D12 1650-1688	D13 1721-1730	D14 1761-1770
YORK CITY (ie within city walls)	95	102	265
0 - 5 miles ²	23	50	56
6 - 10 miles	26	36	33
11 - 20 miles	32	49	79
21 - 30 miles	29	38	49
Over 30 miles	46	37	39
Outside Yorkshire	21	15	15
Unidentified ³	9	4	10
Total	281	331	546
Total number of apprentices registered	318	676	636

1 Figures have been taken from the York General Registers of Apprenticeship, see footnote 46

2 Location of places: Where a place occurs more than once in Yorkshire, for example Gilling, Goldsbrough, the distance of the one nearest to York has been calculated.
(Places have been identified from J Bartholemew's, Survey Gazetteer of the British Isles, 9th Edn (Edinburgh, post 1951) and Thomas Langdale's, Topographical Dictionary of Yorkshire, 2nd Edn (Edinburgh, 1822))

3 Unidentified places: These are assumed to be in Yorkshire, since no county has been named alongside

in the register stated the place of origin; in the 1720s for example, under fifty per cent are recorded.

Some points can be made about these figures. As expected, substantial proportions of apprentices in each period were drawn from within the city itself, from among the ranks of craftsmen and labourers who worked there. In the later eighteenth century, more apprentices appear to have been recruited from native city dwellers than previously; the proportion in the 1760s is just under half that of the total number of apprentices, whereas in the two earlier periods the numbers originating from within the city represented about one third of the total, or less. Possibly a growth in population within the city is one reason for this rise, though another could have been that the expanding industrial towns of the West Riding were now competing for apprentices from the surrounding rural areas. Nevertheless, the numbers of apprentices recruited from between ten and twenty miles from York, and indeed from farther afield, were as high as ever in the 1760s, so the city was still maintaining its pull from outlying areas.

The majority of apprentices from outside York came mainly from rural districts in North Yorkshire, although one or two did originate from major towns elsewhere, coming from Wakefield and Leeds in the West Riding, Scarborough in the North, and Hull in the East Riding. Doncaster, Bradford, Halifax and Huddersfield were also recorded in the 1760s, and in the 1720s, one apprentice came from each of Manchester and Newcastle. Nearby market towns such as Thirsk, Ripon, Knaresborough, were also represented. But the number of apprentices from each of the above towns was only small, around four being the highest number recorded from any one of them in any one period.

The sons of yeomen feature amongst those who migrated from outlying rural districts, while several apprentices whose fathers were described as such also came from within the city, especially in the 1760s.

Rural craftsmen also sent their sons to the city to take up apprenticeships, possibly in the hope that they could expect greater prospects at the end of their term there, than in the smaller rural community.

The number of apprentices who came from outside the county was fairly small. Most hailed from counties adjacent to Yorkshire - Nottinghamshire, Durham, Cumberland, Lincolnshire, Lancashire and Derbyshire. Places of origin farther afield included London, Edinburgh and Lyth in Scotland, Dublin, Haverhill in Suffolk, Birmingham, Warwickshire and Huntingdonshire. The number from London amounted to five in all three periods; the other places probably represent stray examples and because of the very small number coming from them, no great significance can be attached to them. It does not seem to be the case, even in the later eighteenth century, that poor children from London parishes were being sent in increasing numbers to provide the workforce in York, as they were in industrial towns, such as Sheffield, where E J Bukatsch observed entry into the cutlery trades in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁷⁵

Migration from areas of between ten and thirty miles outside York was, therefore, as high, if not higher, in the 1760s as it had been in the thirty years from 1650. The city appeared to exert as strong an attraction as ever for apprentices, probably due to its history of guild organisation and its established trading connections.

Compared with farm servants, apprentices made fewer, though longer, moves to their place of service. Whereas farm servants moved frequently from master to master, apprentices would usually experience one major move, from their familial home to their place of apprenticeship,

where they were bound to stay usually for the next seven years. Moreover, this move might be one of fairly substantial distance, and involve a major change in environment and culture; a farm servant might well experience no greater gathering of people than that at a hiring fair, or on a market day.

The apprenticeship registers for the city of York, and those of the Merchant Taylor's Company, include few poor children among their entries. More information can be gained by looking at indentures from parish collections. In one such parish, Holy Trinity in

Goodramgate, one hundred and sixty indentures of parish children have survived, and it is these on which we shall focus attention.⁷⁶

The evils of the system of apprenticing poor children are well documented.⁷⁷ At least by apprenticing them to a trade, it was acknowledged that they had more potential for bettering themselves than more hardened vagrants and paupers. But, in reality, and in the hands of the parish officials who administered the law, the desire to remove them from the care of the parish tended to override more humanitarian feelings towards these helpless children, and many found that the perils of being pauper apprentices equalled, if not exceeded, their former harsh existence.

Minutes of parish meetings, and orders and resolutions from Quarter Sessions, offer some insight into the system of pauper apprenticeship in practice. They serve to emphasize in some cases the isolation of the child, both physically, from friends and family, and legally, from aid and protection from ill-treatment. They had less of the securities of the ordinary apprentice through fathers and friends who sometimes intervened if they felt the apprentice was being mistreated. As Dunlop has said, "it was no-one's business to see

that parish apprentices were not overworked or ill-used".⁷⁸ If and when pauper apprentices were released, it was back into the hands of the parish officers, who were directed to use their own discretion in binding them to someone else whom they thought fit. Admittedly, there was no way of really knowing whether a master might turn out to be good or bad, but the circumstances into which some children were placed indicates that overseers often could not have cared anyway; their main concern was to divest themselves of the responsibility for the child's welfare. The money they offered with the apprentice often attracted masters with little intention of seriously teaching them a trade, or fulfilling their part of the indenture.

Many parish apprentices were well under age to be apprenticed, a fact which rendered them useless in their master's house and added to the antagonism which was already felt towards their presence. Entries in the general register usually state the length of their term to be until they reached the age of twenty-four years for boys and twenty-one for girls, though the indentures suggest that seven and eight years were the most common terms, with only three bound to serve above eight years. For those bound at the young age of nine or ten, as many were, the years until they reached their twenties could seem of unendurable length. The premiums offered with them were meagre. Five pounds was the usual sum and few exceeded this, although the premiums offered with children from Holy Trinity ranged from two to eight pounds. The parish officers of Carleton near Leeds, resolved in 1773, that three pounds was a proper sum "for the putting or placing out of each and every Apprentice".⁷⁹ The apportioning out of the sum at regular intervals during the early stages of the apprenticeship was an attempt on

the part of the parish officers to ensure that the money went towards its intended purpose.⁸⁰ Thus, when Katherine Platers was apprenticed, her indenture stated that "Three pounds was given this girle 20 May 1678 and 40s at Michaelmas after and also 20s more is given towards apparell".⁸¹ The withholding of part of the sum for a period was an incentive to masters not to ill-treat or neglect their apprentices.

Between 1679 and 1729 forty-nine girls were apprenticed from the parish of Holy Trinity; the earliest indenture for a girl in this collection was 1680. As has been seen, girls did not begin appearing in the general registers, or those for the Merchant Taylors' Company, until later in the seventeenth, or early eighteenth centuries.

Merson felt that they were more often placed out "simply to be taken off the town's hands and made to earn their keep as household servants".⁸² Generally, indentures are not specific about the work to which pauper apprentices were to be put; although the minutes of the Blue Coat School of York from 1770 to 1780 state quite clearly that while boys were apprenticed to a trade, all the girls put out as apprentices were to perform "the Dutys of a Maid Servant", usually for a term of four years. Occasionally, boys were apprenticed for a similar purpose. When Robert Hall, a poor boy from the children's hospital, was apprenticed to an inn holder in 1765 for nine years, until he was twenty-four, it was agreed that he should "be employed in household business".⁸³

Such an ambiguous statement begs the question posed earlier; were poor children actually taught the trades to which they were bound? Keith Snell is of the opinion that they were. Moreover, the indentures for Holy Trinity do not seem to suggest otherwise; all of them stated the trade of the apprentice's new employer. The thirty-three

different trades ranged from that of a merchant taylor, to which twenty-seven children were bound, a barber surgeon and an apothecary, to the humbler trades of basketmaker, shoemaker, buttonmaker, spinster, bricklayer. But the rate of failure to fulfill one's term and become a master oneself must have been fairly high, often because masters failed to teach their apprentices a proper trade, and were sometimes ill-equipped themselves to practise such a one, being of lesser means and poor ability. These poor children faced a future with few prospects once their term of apprenticeship was over.^{83a} Nevertheless, poor apprentices were also bound to wealthier masters where they often found themselves competing with ordinary apprentices.

Snell offers a less gloomy picture of parish apprenticeship. In his view, they received sufficient instruction in their trade to enable them to practise it in later life, while the poor law provided "extensive legislation covering parish apprentices, which provided legal protection for them, at times exceeding that to which other apprentices had access".⁸⁴ He also concludes that the ill-treatment of ordinary apprentices was as likely as that of parish apprentices, and suggests that in any case, parish authorities took "obvious care ... over the future of their charges", so as to ensure that they did not fall back into their charge. Nevertheless, the sense that parish children were worse off than ordinary apprentices still prevails. There is overwhelming evidence against the parish system, but in the end it was perhaps not the intention of the poor law which was at fault, but the enforcement of it which "with all its complexities, depended on local circumstances and usually fell short of its objectives".⁸⁵

A parish apprentice was bound, like his ordinary counterpart, by indenture, which stated the terms and conditions of his apprenticeship. The pauper apprenticeship indentures for the parish of Holy Trinity are fairly consistent in the conditions laid down. The provision of meat, drink, washing, lodging and apparel by the master was standard. The latter usually included linen and woollen clothes, for the appropriate seasons, and stockings, hats and shoes. Some indentures reveal a practice that was becoming common in the later seventeenth century, which was for parents to be responsible for some part of the apprentice's welfare. Five of the indentures stated that parents were to provide clothes or some other necessary.⁸⁶ It is to be assumed that such conditions considerably stretched the means of the child's family. Provision for ordinary apprentices followed much the same pattern. Mark Stead, apprenticed to Christopher Horner, a coachmaker, in 1769, was to be provided with victuals by his parents for the first three years of a seven-year term, perhaps returning home daily for them. A note alongside the entry of Edward Gibson, an apprentice to Thomas Denken, merchant taylor, in 1651, adds that "cloth, lynnige wollen hose shoos are all excepted" from the agreement.⁸⁷ It was also agreed between some parties that, "no money was paid or contracted for", when the apprentice was bound.⁸⁸ This suggests suspiciously that since no premium was being paid, the apprentice would not be taught a trade and might end up as a mere servant. Moreover, the abrogation of masters' obligations suggests a similar shift in relations between master and servant, as that discussed in Chapter Three. Dunlop and Denman suggest that this was because apprentices were becoming less easy to control, but by omitting to make full provision for the apprentices' maintenance masters thereby relinquished full authority over them and gave them greater freedom to move outside their master's

influence. This culminated in the "clubbing out" or outdoor system, whereby the apprentice lived away from his master's home, only entering it for the purpose of work during the day.⁸⁹

Apprentices did not normally receive wages during their term. Those who successfully completed their terms and served their masters faithfully could anticipate a token at the end in the form of money and/or clothes. However, apprenticeships which exceeded the standard seven years sometimes allowed payment to the apprentice for the extra years. The register of the Merchant Taylors' Company notes in the 1650s that in their eighth year of service most of the apprentices were to receive sums of money ranging from half a crown to fifty shillings. Pauper indentures also show that most apprenticeships which were for eight or more years were rewarded with payments in the later years. Some of these were as generous as five pounds agreed in 1694 to be paid to Robert Johnson in the eighth year of his service to a whitesmith.⁹⁰ Joshua Turner, apprenticed for ten years to a Merchant Taylor in 1697, was to receive five, ten and twenty shillings a year for the eighth, ninth and tenth years of his service respectively.⁹¹ By the eighth year of a term, an apprentice was sufficiently skilled in his craft or trade to be able to work largely on his own; his wages were similar to a journeyman's earnings, part of which would be claimed by his master.

Settlement examinations also indicate the wages received by some apprentices outside the major towns and cities. Usually they did not earn wages until they were more experienced at their work. Nevertheless, William Widdup received wages in the second and third years of his service, amounting to twenty and forty shillings respectively, although he never saw them, for they were sent home to his mother.⁹² But even when apprentices graduated to become

journeymen, they were not always guaranteed a wage. John Schofield of Elland agreed to serve John Milner "for fifty weeks for meat and lodging in order to learn the Business of a Woolcomber", and later worked for him as a journeyman, not for a fixed wage, but "for what he could earn", presumably by his own merits.⁹³ In this case, however, the short term agreed in the first place, suggests that this "apprenticeship" was of a much more casual nature than usual.

For girls apprenticed out by the Blue Coat School, there was the incentive of a payment of three pounds "by way of Encouragement to Charity Girls who behave well during their Service", at the end of their term. Thus, in 1778, the Treasurer was ordered to pay Mary Byas, "late a Charity Girl, Three Pounds, she having faithfully served four years as a School apprentice to different Masters and Mistresses". Elizabeth Mason, sent at fourteen to work for Thomas Estill of Scarborough, flaxdresser, as an apprentice and maidservant, was to help contribute to her upkeep from the money she received as vails. Her master was "to apply all Monies received for Vails in the wearing Apparel of his said Apprentice and if not sufficient to make up the deficiency in necessary Cloathing, and if more than sufficient the money to be applied for the use of the apprentice instead of the usual wages". This was clearly an extraordinary circumstance, for the entry further states that it was to be "no precedent in future of putting out Girls apprentice from that school".⁹⁴

The indentures for the parish of Holy Trinity show that a common provision for 138 of the pauper apprentices was the gift of sixpence from their masters on Shrove Tuesday. This day was traditionally an annual holiday for apprentices, especially in London when, as Thomas Dekker portrayed, "upon every Shrove Tuesday, at the sound

of the pancake bell ... they shall clap up their shop windows and away" to the feast prepared for them by the Lord Mayor.⁹⁵ Shrove Tuesday was not only a time of feasting, but of boisterous activities, and the releasing of youthful, pent-up spirits and energy. The records for York show that apprentices here enjoyed themselves as much as their London counterparts. The nearest equivalent in the life of a domestic or farm servant, particularly in rural areas, would be the yearly hiring fairs, when they enjoyed a few days of freedom and recreation before the new hiring season began. The terms of the indenture also accommodated specific individual needs or circumstances. One or two interesting ones arise. In 1694 Richard Cattell, apprenticed to a marriner for eight years, was to be placed for the last three years of his term, "with some skillful and Experienced Marriner as that he shall during that time be employed on the high seas".⁹⁶ Another indenture gives a rare glimpse of the accommodation of an apprentice's religious principles. When Esther Trueman was apprenticed to Thomas Evans, a buttonmaker, in 1705, it was agreed that he "shall not compell or persuade his said apprentice to go to the Prisbiterran meeting but shall permit and suffer (her) to goe to the Church of England ... on Sundays".⁹⁷ Daniel Defoe illustrated in The Family Instructor the misery that servants suffered who were not of the same religious inclination as their master, and vice versa.⁹⁸

Other conditions stipulated in the indenture indicate the kind of work to which the apprentice was sometimes to be put. In 1760, when Francis Barrowby was apprenticed to John Sanderson, an apothecary, a note was inserted alongside the entry in the register that, "It is intended in this Indenture that ye apprentice is to look after a House, clean shoes and like business".⁹⁹ Clearly this did not

suit the apprentice, for he ran away at the end of 1762. Similarly, when John Lawson was bound to his father in 1768, he was to be "taught the business of a drayman and also in the duties of a Man Servant". From evidence such as this it may well have been the case that many apprentices were employed in menial household tasks rather than learning a trade and that this happened more frequently than was indicated by the indenture. The indenture of Francis Bell, the son of a labourer bound to a wholesale woollen draper (in the late 1770s), reveals this more clearly than most; there was to be "no consideration" and "no (compulsion?) to teach but merely as a Servant".¹⁰⁰

Francis Barrowby's action was a mark of his discontent with his circumstances. Being the son of a gentleman he had probably hoped for a great deal more from his apprenticeship than this. More seriously, it revealed a breakdown in relations between himself and his master, and a revocation of the terms of his indenture, by which he had promised to serve his master "at all times willingly ... and in all things as a good and faithful servant". The misery sometimes endured by apprentices is evident in the many cases brought before the court of Quarter Sessions, where they sought discharge from their masters for various reasons. Quarter Sessions records are a mine of information as to the circumstances into which young people were apprenticed. The Order Books document the cases brought before the courts on which judgement was pronounced. From them, the factors which contributed towards the breakdown of relations can be seen.^{100a} Table 5 shows the most common reasons for which cases between masters and apprentices were brought to the courts. Sometimes the relationship started off on completely the wrong footing, with the master unwilling to take the apprentice bound to him, usually a poor child whom all able citizens were under

TABLE 5 SOME COMMON REASONS FOR DISCHARGE OF APPRENTICES, BROUGHT TO QUARTER SESSIONS; NORTH AND WEST RIDING AND YORK CITY

	NORTH RIDING 1 c 1651-1754	WEST RIDING 2 c 1653-1754	YORK CITY 3 c 1662-1768
APPRENTICES			
Absconded from masters	8	28	7
Unfit:physically	1	48	7
:morally/bad behaviour ⁴	2	21	7
:accused of stealing	1	14	5
MASTERS			
Absconded	12	27	10
Dead/Infirm	4	6	4
Destitute/Unable in means ⁵	3	19	4
Refusal to take apprentice	2	11	6
Appeal against taking apprentice	-	27	-
Ill usage of apprentice			
:violence	4	16	17
:turned away	-	-	5
:failure to teach trade	4	7	5
:failure to provide maintenance	3	13	7
TOTALS	44	237	84

1 North Yorkshire County Record Office (Quarter Sessions Minute and Order Books) QSM 2/9, 10, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 (MICS 99-105)

2 West Yorkshire Archive Service, Quarter Sessions Order Books, QS 10/3-17 inc; QS 10/21. There is a gap between 1737 and 1751. In the mid and later eighteenth century, quarter sessions orders deal less with the earlier types of cases, and more with regulation regarding cattle, highways, game laws and so on

3 York City Archives, (Quarter Sessions Minute Books) F8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 17, 18, 20

4 Includes apprentices discharged for pregnancy

5 Includes masters in gaol and therefore unable to teach, or maintain apprentice

obligation to accommodate. These were unpopular and people would frequently go to the expense of a court presentment to rid themselves of this burden. At Knaresborough for example, the sessions heard in 1678 that Joseph Ellis, was "a man of noe abillitye to take ... an apprentice", while in 1679 Henry Bailes, having had a poor child bound apprentice to him, "made his appeale at the court that one Thomas Walker ... is a man that hath att present a better estate in lands ... than himself".¹⁰¹ If such a claim was genuine, the court usually discharged the apprentice, but where a master based his claim on no other grounds than that he did not wish to maintain his apprentice, he was not always let off so lightly. Thus Anthony Simpson "contemptuously refused to receive and p[ro]vyde for ... James Calvert", but it was ordered that he should "from henceforth maintain and p[ro]vyde for the said apprentice according to the ... Indenture unless hee cann showe good cause to the contrary".¹⁰² It is not hard to see how such circumstances led to more serious cases of neglect and ill-treatment by masters who saw the child as nothing but a useless burden on the household economy.

Cases of ill-treatment on the master's part were by no means rare. This took different forms, and included plain neglect, and the turning away of the apprentice, but often manifested itself in violence towards the child. Some apprentices suffered severe physical abuse. Francis Dawson, apprenticed to William Birtaile, a carpenter, was "unmercifully beaten ... whereby hee hath beene disabled to doe and performe his worke and hath languished for three months and it is supposed he hath broken his backe".¹⁰³ "Hard and inhuman usage", "immoderate correction" from the master, sometimes to the extent that it endangered the apprentice's life, were frequent

complaints that came before the courts. Some cases were more explicit about the manner of treatment, which went far beyond mere overzealous correction, but seemed to indicate sheer brutality and cruelty on the master's part. John Johnson was reported to treat his apprentice "not after the manner of an Apprentice, beating him, pulling his haire of his head by dragging him about the house thereby, and almost strangling him in a Brydle Raine".¹⁰⁴ Desertion by the apprentice was met with tough punishments by the Justices. It did nothing to help John Atkinson of Skelton, for after serving a term in the House of Correction, he was returned to his master who was exhorted to "be not too cruell with him but use him accordingly as an Apprentice ought to be".¹⁰⁵

A master's failure to fulfill his part of the indenture was not always due to neglect. It could be accounted for by other reasons, which might include the master's own infirmity or lack of success at his trade, so that he had not the work by which to keep his apprentice employed. One master's illness led him to seek a discharge for his apprentice.¹⁰⁶ These circumstances were beyond the control of either master or apprentice. Death and sickness could put an end to a partnership, as could a misfortune such as bankruptcy. John Coats of Sowerby, a flaxdresser, had to give notice to the court for the discharge of his apprentice because he did not have the "Goods for Business to keep his apprentice employed".¹⁰⁷ Frequently, when faced with debt, a master took flight, thus leaving his apprentice unprovided for. In 1734 the court heard that William Dawson "hath run away for debt soe that ... Matthew Hutchinson ... cannot be instructed in the Business of a Cooper".¹⁰⁸ Many such masters shut up shop and absconded, with or without their family, leaving their apprentices to shift for themselves; some sold their shops and fled.¹⁰⁹ Other cases of apprentices being left without

maintenance involved their masters being imprisoned. In 1705 William Jackson reported that his master was "sometime since committed to her Ma[jes]tys Gaol at Yorke without hopes of being released soe yt ye said William Jackson is not merely destitute of maintenance but wants employment whereby to get his livelihood".¹¹⁰ Moreover, it was noted in 1770 that James Richardson's master, George Ellis, a merchant taylor, "has been in the poor house and in Lady Hewlay's Hospital", thereby rendering him incapable of instructing his apprentice.¹¹¹

Apprentices who fell sick could not work properly and this probably exacerbated their masters' dislike of them. Sick and infirm children were often placed out by the parish authorities, regardless of their condition which made them unfit for service. As many as twenty such cases involving sick, lame or otherwise physically infirm children, appear in the Order Books for the West Riding in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and these can only have been a handful of the true number. One was Jane Downes "who hath a scald head". Another girl was put out "very infirme with a running Sore upon her w[hi]ch is supposed to be the King's Evill".¹¹²

Apprentices did desert their masters, although it has been estimated that in general this was not a common occurrence in the eighteenth century - only 1.4% of all apprentices registered in the eighteenth century apparently deserted.¹¹³ James Hirton may have voiced the feelings of many others when he "threateneth to hange or drowne himself before hee stay with his said Master".¹¹⁴ Nevertheless, his action was considered by the authorities to be rebellious, and he was sent to the House of Correction for one month. Settlement Examinations also reveal some interesting examples of apprentices who had run away, and their position with regard to the law. The

evidence of Anne Haste reveals the power of the indenture while it lasted. Bound a parish apprentice at the age of nine to Joseph Pollard, until she was twenty-four, she served only nineteen weeks before she was assigned to Charles Stead. Though she served another master in Elland, she states in her examination that, "her master Stead never claimed her as his apprentice nor Received any Benefit from her Service after she ran away from him though he knew where she lived"; by rights he could have made her return as she was still legally bound to him.¹¹⁵ In the eyes of the law, even an apprentice who left his service prematurely with his master's consent was still, if his indenture had not expired, little better than a runaway. Dorothy George pointed out that "anyone who employed or harboured (such an apprentice) could be prosecuted by his master and, till the indentures were cancelled, all the earnings of the apprentice were legally his master's property".¹¹⁶ Apprentices also sought discharge from their masters because of the latter's failure to teach them their trade. Neglect, or lack of enough work to give the apprentice were reasons for this, but sometimes the apprentice complained of being put to work other than for the purpose of his own education. Robert Hill's mother complained that her son's master, James Roades of Wetherby, a shoemaker, "hath for six years last made a slave of his said apprentice and seldome employed him but at plowe and harrow soe that hee is never likely to be capable of his trade".¹¹⁷ In another case, heard at Wakefield in 1674, Thomas Easburne, a blacksmith, did not only torture his apprentice with hammers and hot irons, but also commanded him to "steale and pull of shooes from other mans horses and put his said Master his horse into other mens ground".¹¹⁸

On the other hand, masters were not always to blame for the behaviour of their apprentices. Many came to court complaining of the apprentice's

misbehaviour and the impossibility of them teaching such children a trade. William Nightingale said that his apprentice was "a lewd and Idle Servant and disobedient to the lawfull commands of his master ... and is not to be reformed".¹¹⁹ Another, Peter Waddy, a town apprentice, had run away several times from his master, and was deemed to be "in danger of proving an incorrigible rogue if not severely corrected".¹²⁰ An apprentice's misdemeanours could extend to the more serious crimes of assault on his master, as well as stealing. A gentleman at Pontefract complained that his apprentice, Dennis Brown, was of "very irregular behaviour and hath departed (his) service without consent and Assaulted and struck his ... Master and his Wife".¹²¹ The court also heard in 1666, of a "difference" between John Buisant Esqr, and Edward Rusholme, a poor apprentice bound to him, who "hath severall tymes purloyned and stollen his goods and is in all manner incorrigible and not to bee restrained from his evill course of life".¹²² The sheer ignorance of some apprentices, particularly those from poorer homes, made them all the more repugnant to the better class of employers. In these cases, of course, we have only the master's word to judge by; an apprentice had little chance to speak in his own defence. Punishment of a master was rare; authority could not be seen to be castigating itself. But the courts tried on the whole to be impartial. Adam Eyre's father-in-law was presented by the parish officers for his treatment of Jane, his apprentice, and ordered to pay the town to take her back and maintain her.¹²³ By discharging an apprentice, they were in some ways protecting his interests and possibly even in some cases, his life.

Parents were sometimes responsible for an apprentice being discharged from his service. Several of the petitions brought before the courts were those of parents acting on behalf of their sons or

daughters. Obviously, those who had paid a premium for their child to be apprenticed to a trade, were concerned to see that he or she actually received an education under the terms of the indenture. Their intervention indicates that apprentices must have kept in touch with their paternal homes, however infrequently. At times, the parents' role was destructive of justice. In 1685 Mary Whyte of Halifax was sent to the House of Correction "for taking her daughter Agnes Hoyle a poor apprentice to Nathanyell Howden from the House of John Gawkroger in Halifax being there placed by the said Nathanyell Master to the said Agnes".¹²⁴ Besides parents, other people also intervened between a master and servant, usually in the interest of the latter. A case was brought before Sir John Grimston, a rare instance in which some people, suspicious of "marks of violence" upon an apprentice boy, were moved to take action against their neighbour on the boy's behalf.¹²⁵

Not all relationships between masters and apprentices ended unsatisfactorily. Some indentures were cancelled on amicable terms and with the consent of all parties, as is testified in settlement examinations. Some, after leaving one master, went on to complete their term of apprenticeship with another. Happier circumstances under which an apprentice abandoned his indenture are to be found. One apprentice, for example, was bound in 1722 at the late age of thirty; within ten days, so a memorandum stated, he had married his master's daughter, thereby transforming a seven-year relationship with his master into a lifelong one.¹²⁶

* * *

Apprenticeship was a common experience in the lives of many young people, male and female. Like ordinary servants, they came from varying backgrounds, rich and poor, and in most cases, their background necessarily determined the quality of their training and education, as well as the trades to which they were bound. Like servants too, they lived within their master's household and were subject to his authority, although their actual place within the household was not always clear. They were generally considered to be of slightly higher status than servants within the domestic sphere but to all intents and purposes most were treated in the same manner as ordinary servants. One reason for this as has been suggested earlier, may have been because they were often similar in age to the servants and master's children.

Nevertheless, an apprenticeship was a different form of service to that undertaken by ordinary domestic servants. The strict rules and regulations surrounding membership of guilds and companies, the implications of ceremony and citizenship which accompanied this, added a degree of formality that was lacking in many agreements between masters and ordinary servants. A serious apprenticeship also meant that the apprentice received a thorough and formal education from his or her master, thus linking in with the idea that the apprenticeship qualified them for entry into full citizenship when the indentures were completed and therefore marking their transition from childhood to adulthood. An apprenticeship was thus undertaken on a different plane to ordinary service. Apprentices were first and foremost, pupils, not servants, and their relationship with their master was mainly conducted across a workbench in a commercial or business environment, rather than within a household. When

an apprentice left his or her master, it was in theory almost as his equal save for the latter's greater experience, and not still as his inferior, as with ordinary servants. Nevertheless, it is not to be denied that, as with service, theory differed from reality and during the period of his indenture an apprentice was in practise, often little more than his master's servant.

Another important distinction between servants and apprentices can be made, on a more practical level. While apprentices were learning a skill or trade which could substantially alter their prospects in life, many servants on the other hand lived better in their master's houses than they would do once their lives as servants were over. Of course, there were exceptions to this as we saw in Chapter One, just as the idea of apprenticeship discussed above was not always practised in every relationship between a master and apprentice. Nevertheless, as in the servant world, there was a hierarchy in apprenticeship by which privileged youngsters and those from wealthy families, entered the better trades and received a superior education to their poorer counterparts. The system was clearly open to abuse, specially at the local level where pauper children were left to the responsibility of the parish officers. Their prospects were undoubtedly worse at the outset than those of the ordinary apprentice, who had the support of his parents and could pay for a good education, although by no means all such poor apprentices were failures.

As we saw in Chapter Three, the system of apprenticeship was not peculiar to the urban environment. Apprenticeships of sorts were undertaken in rural areas too, though perhaps the standards of instruction were not as high as could be found in the more competitive and commercial urban world, nor were the apprentices' prospects

for advancement as promising at a more parochial level. Returning therefore, to the opening theme of this chapter, town life seemed to offer opportunities to servants of all kinds which life in the countryside did not. The pull which towns exerted on youthful labour from the rural areas grew stronger in the late seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries as towns became more a feature of everyday existence. Young people flocked to them, spurred on by their almost mesmeric effect and enticed by the prospect of advancing their fortunes. This illusion produced many stories of country bumpkins and naive young maids, which were so brilliantly portrayed by contemporary dramatists. Many such young people, on entering a town, became its servants and labourers and were subsumed into the masses of ordinary working people and paupers, but given the choice, chose to stay rather than return to their former existence.

CHAPTER 5

DEVIANT SERVANTS

"I could give you Account of Servants robbing, ay and murdering their Masters and those now more than ever; but among such nothing is to be wondered at"¹

Of all the sources studied, official ones and specially those concerned with the regulation of offenders and the poor, reveal most about low-life servants. Poor law records, for example, may highlight the mobility of servants, their wages and lengths of service and they may also offer insights into the master and servant relationship. In addition we gain information, albeit fragmentary, about ordinary everyday servant life and work. This is fairly mundane stuff, but it is not something we find much elsewhere, and is therefore worth noting.

Similarly, judicial sources such as quarter sessions and assize court records provide evidence of servant deviance and crime and also its wider associations including the master and servant relationship and the psychology of servanthood. We cannot hope to understand this fully, but the evidence from depositions prompts ideas about what motivated servants to take certain actions, and how they responded to the restrictions placed on them and the authority of their masters. Conversely, we are sometimes shown glimpses of local people interacting with servants. This takes service out into the realms of the community as a whole and gives it meaning and context in society, away from the isolation and insularity of the individual household.

An investigation of servant deviance does not at once set it apart as unique or different from deviance in society generally. But,

because service was an occupation which placed its participants in such a unique position, and was bound up with the principles of order and authority, such an investigation provides a useful dimension to this particular study of service. Crime in early modern England is an area which has received growing attention in recent years.^{1a} Historians of crime have used theories of "social crime" to test the regulation of offenders by the community itself, to see what ideas and values were popular in the parish world at this time and to highlight the interaction of the power elite and the lower orders in early modern England. Again, an investigation of servant crime can be linked to other aspects of communal and social life.

A deviant act is essentially distinguishable from a criminal one. In early modern England, as today, deviance had wide ranging annotations. It applied to those actions which had less serious consequences than a criminal one and did not normally result in a public prosecution. Deviance occurred for example, on a frequent, but relatively inconsequential level in the household sphere, as well as in the community at large. But a deviant act only became a criminal one when it involved the serious disruption of the status quo. In this chapter we are concerned with both deviant and criminal acts, committed by servants, and will try to elucidate what motivation lay behind such behaviour. The difference between the two is to some extent reflected in the court records. The depositions from the assize courts detail serious offences such as murder and theft, while the quarter sessions dealt with more minor ones, including matters of dispute between masters and servants, and settlement related cases. These nevertheless omit a frustrating amount of detail about cases of

servant deviance, nor can they be relied upon to give a representative idea of the numbers of such cases. In this sense, they add to the problems of estimating the extent of, and motives for, deviance.

The measure of deviance depended on circumstances and individuals. The customs, and opinions, of a particular community, and even social degree, could determine the severity of a crime.² A fairly minor crime such as petty theft may have been considered of greater seriousness if performed by a member of the lower orders than if a gentleman had committed it, and the degree of punishment might reflect this. Certain crimes may also have been peculiar to specific areas. But others occurred nationwide and included theft, murder, infanticide and assault.

A sample of around two hundred depositions from the assize courts and quarter sessions orders have been taken as the basis for this discussion.³ The offences range from the playing of football to theft and murder (see Table 6). Theft and fornication and related crimes appear high up on both lists. The quarter sessions order books also show that many servants brought before the court had absconded. Threats, drunkenness and unspecified bad behaviour were amongst the other offences. Also, a number of servants were accused of infanticide and murder. As we have already said, these offences were not peculiar to servants. Felony, homicide and infanticide were also found to be common offences in a "well-established and national pattern".⁴ But we shall try to establish in the following discussion why it was that servants committed them, and under what circumstances.

TABLE 6

TYPES OF CRIME IN THE QUARTER SESSIONS AND ASSIZE COURT RECORDS

<u>QUARTER SESSIONS</u> ¹		<u>ASSIZE COURT</u> ²	
<u>Offence</u>	<u>No of Cases</u>	<u>Offence</u>	<u>No of Cases</u>
Absconded	61	Theft ³	45
Theft	27	Infanticide ⁴	10
Fornication/with child	22	Master assaulting servant	6
Bad behaviour	17	Enticed by others - Theft	5
Fathering a bastard child	7	Absconded	4
Refusal to work/enter service	6	Threats	4
Previous hiring/indenture still existing	5	Murder	3
Assault/Violence	5	Fornication	3
Threats	3	Drunkenness ⁵	2
Playing football	1	Suspected of arson	1
		Enticed by others - murder	1
		- aiding and abetting	1
		Assault	1

1 Information taken from Quarter Sessions Order and Minute Books

2 Information taken from Assize Court Depositions for the North Eastern Circuit

3 Includes those suspected of theft

4 Includes all women who said their child was stillborn. Suspicion of Infanticide fell on the mother in such cases

5 This was often the cause or related to a more serious offence

Servants who absconded form the largest category of offenders in the quarter sessions order books. This was not in itself a crime although it could have been the result of a criminal act. Absconding is perhaps the easiest offence to explain. An interesting and varied number of reasons are given for this. One apprentice, who gave her reason as being her master's "ill usage towards her", must have been typical of other similarly ill-treated and unhappy youngsters, whose action was provoked by their particular circumstances. Many children placed as servants or apprentices may have found adjusting to life in their new homes difficult and disturbing. Some may have been frightened by domestic incidents such as those described by Sarah Turner, a young apprentice who witnessed "several Quarrells and fallings out" between her master and mistress, which sometimes "proceeded to Blows".⁵ Some of those apprehended were punished in the House of Correction; others were returned to their masters, but the majority were discharged, either through the mercy of the justices, or the petitions of parents or friends, and even of their masters, who saw them as being of little use to them economically. But masters were not always to blame. Many apprentices, described as being unruly and undisciplined, deserted their service through their own bad behaviour, simply refusing to work for even a moderate master. One apprentice who ran away to his parents was a "continual terror" both to them and their neighbours.⁶ Other reasons for departure were less psychologically motivated. Some servants and apprentices who absconded had been enticed or taken away by others, commonly their parents, perhaps acting in what they thought were their sons' or daughters' interests. And as has already been said, absconding could also have been prompted by an earlier crime,

such as theft, from which the culprit fled to escape detection or capture.

Of the more serious crimes, theft was by far the most common, and therefore perhaps the most useful to offer an explanation of servant deviance. The types of goods stolen, along with the number of cases in which they occur, are as follows - Money 27; Clothes 20; Food/Ale 11; Linen/Cloth/Yarn 9; Livestock 6; Plate/Household goods 3; Jewellery 1; Lime 1; Pistols 1; Nails 1; Hay 1; Horsehide 1. Money was probably the easiest to hide and could always be spent, thus disposing of the evidence. Sums taken varied from a few shillings to the three hundred and two pounds, sixteen shillings and sixpence taken by one maidservant, who gave all but two and a half guineas to a labourer. Sums of £105, £110, £187 19s, were also taken. More common were sums of a few pounds or shillings, which were disposed of shortly afterwards in a variety of ways. Some hid the money amongst their own possessions or away from the house; a sandy bank was chosen as the place for three pounds stolen by a maidservant from a gentleman's house.⁷ Sometimes it was given to another person, presumably for safe keeping. One maidservant gave five shillings to an old goosewoman to keep for her, and another gave half a guinea to a woman who refused to return it to her when the servant, charged by her master with taking it, asked for it back.⁸ Another maidservant likewise tried to return one shilling and sixpence she had stolen, frightened by hearsay that her master might take action against her.⁹ Stolen money was also given to others such as relatives, for their use. One maidservant who stole money, clothes and food from her master, gave much of this to her father, and a young boy who stole twenty-five shillings bought himself some clothes with it, and gave some

to his uncle, aunt and grandfather.¹⁰ A male servant moreover, got his master's son to steal money for him, which he used to "help pay the fifty shillings ... for killing some pheasants in Calverley and to help to buy him and his family some meal to live upon."¹¹ Stolen money was quite frequently spent in items such as drink and clothes, the latter especially by women servants.

Clothes and linen which were stolen could be sold and were frequently also hidden. Under beds, and inside boxes and trunks, were common hiding places, as were outhouses such as barns and sheds housing livestock. One maidservant took the pair of sheets she had stolen and hid them on Breakon Hill, presumably away from her mistress's house. Goods were also altered, possibly to disguise the theft.

A male servant who stole a drapecoat and breeches from his master "took them to John Bell tailor in Jubbergate, York, to be altered".¹²

A maidservant who stole a hen and took it to her mother, burnt its tail, possibly so that it would not be recognized, while a labourer who stole a silver spoon, broke it in two so that he could sell it more easily.¹³ Small items such as handkerchiefs, underwear, shifts and hats were commonly stolen, although servants confessed to having taken clothes by the bundle too, as well as larger items such as coats and breeches. Many servants absconded after taking these, thereby indirectly pronouncing their guilt. The attraction of clothes to servants is obvious. Many were taken for their aesthetic value. Ruffles, lace, silks, buckles, were among items taken, which might fetch a pretty penny, but which may also have been coveted by a servant without anything so attractive of their own. Servants may often have resented or envied their masters and mistresses having such things that were beyond their own reach, and they seized the opportunity to possess them for

themselves. Thus a female servant who stole two guineas from her employer, decked herself out with "a new gown, petticoat and pair of stays".¹⁴

Sometimes, a servant absenting himself from his employment might take something with him in a final act of revenge. One apprentice, who quarrelled with his mistress when his master was absent, asked for his indentures so that he might leave his service, which his mistress duly gave him, and before leaving the premises, he cut himself a piece of cloth of about four yards in length, from his master's workshop.¹⁵ Another servant, charged with stealing three cheeses from his master, took them out of a garner about a week before Martinmas, when he was presumably to be released from his service, and "upon his back carry'd ym on Martinmas day to Tadcaster where he sold them".¹⁶

Food and drink were also quite commonly stolen, sometimes in conjunction with other items. Some of the food taken was not consumed by the servant himself, but given to someone else, such as parents. One maidservant declared she and her mistress stole turnips, barley and livestock for the latter's use. On two occasions, servants testified that they had been asked by neighbours to procure victuals and malt from their masters. Servants were taken advantage of to procure goods for people from the houses of other folk, because they were useful go-betweens, and also scapegoats, should the thefts be discovered. One woman thus obtained food in the form of oatcakes and bread from a male servant who brought them from his mistress's house and she later added money to her requests which he also supplied from his mistress's purse.¹⁷ The parents of an apprentice boy also got him to leave his master's doors open at night to enable them to steal all manner of things including

corn, brandy, linen, money, meat and tobacco.¹⁸ Ale and wine were also common targets especially where large stocks existed in wealthy houses. At Bramham Park the butler discovered that wine had been taken from Lord Bingley's cellars. He was given orders to search the room of Richard Backhouse, another servant, where he found two of the purloined bottles.¹⁹ At Nostell Priory, some of Sir Roland Winn's ale was drunk in his cellars, by his blacksmith who, arriving home one evening with two friends, found the under-butler asleep and the house unguarded, and took this opportunity to make merry with his companions. They were found sitting in the cellar by an upper servant.²⁰

Servants in large and wealthy households may have been under more of a temptation to steal. It was easier to take small items of food, for example, without being detected. Even upper and lower servants stole and pilfered although theft could not as easily be ascribed to upper servants' own particular necessity or neediness. Pilfering especially, tended to be continuous and calculated. Even small amounts from the kitchen or pantry or tradesmen's accounts, mounted up over a period of time. The greater numbers of staff in large houses also meant that it was less easy to detect the real culprit when incidents occurred. But the distinction between actual theft and what was a servant's by right, was sometimes hard to define, especially in a large, wealthy household. The cook was usually entitled to "perquisites" in the form of leftover dripping and other scraps; the butler was allowed old playing cards and candle ends, all of which could be translated into useful pocket money. A mistress might give her personal waiting women discarded clothes and trinkets, and the master likewise his valet. Such servants were so used to handling their masters' possessions that they might have come to regard them as their own. Thus, an ex-servant of Sir John Bland,

Baronet, of Kippax, who had served him for over eleven years, claimed that when he returned to the house to visit a sick servant he saw "three pair of Pistols which were comitted to his Care when in the Family and he seeing them Rusty and out of order took them along with him to his own House ... in order to clean them ... and Enquiry being made for the Pistolls before he had clean'd them he ... den'd that he had them and afterwards privatly Convey'd two pair of them to Kippax ... and put them in the Coach Budget"; the third pair he later gave to his brother to return likewise to Sir John.²¹ Was this an act of theft or were his motives genuine in seeing the pistols, in which he had formerly taken pride, now in disuse and decay, and removing them to restore them to their former glory? In another example, a maidservant, found in possession of several of her mistress's goods, gave evidence at the quarter sessions in 1732, that her mistress, when she went to London, "told her she could have what odd things she could find in the house ... she found ... 1 pair of stays, one shift, 3 aprons ... a coarse cambrick handkerchief and a blue necklace which she took as Mrs Gile's gift and put them in a flat case on the cook-maids bed teaster ... ".²² Perhaps she took her mistress's bidding too literally. As servants were increasingly encouraged to imitate their fashionable masters and mistresses, who was to tell which garment or trinkets belonged to whom?

Despite this insubordination, their misdemeanours racked the consciences of some servants. One young maidservant, dismissed by her mistress, Lady Yarbrugh, on suspicion of her having stolen a petticoat, was so haunted by this shame that it was believed to have contributed to her suicide while serving her new mistress in Hull.²³ Some employers were prepared

to forgive, and give relatively slight, or unproven offenders a second chance. Lord and Lady Rockingham issued warnings to certain of their servants who had behaved badly, yet kept them in their service. Thus "Joseph" was re-employed to the ranks of the upper servants although Lady Rockingham wrote to her steward that, "I expect very correct behaviour from him for the future and so much diligence and civility as to retrieve your confidence and good opinion".²⁴

Why did servants steal? Apart from the purely spur of the moment reasons, there were possibly psychological reasons for this. The evidence seems to suggest that they stole because they wanted to be like their masters and mistresses and have the material things which brought security, independence and status. Sometimes stolen goods were stored up for the future and thus kept hidden rather than sold or passed on. The servantmaid who spent stolen money on clothes, or another who carefully stored away stockings, shifts and small clothes in a box, perhaps showed a desire to emulate their mistresses.

Servants stole out of resentment of their master's position, who seemed to live like a king in comparison with themselves. This was closely linked to emulation, because while resenting his or her master's superiority, a servant may also have desired to be his equal in status, either by bringing him down to their level, or by raising their own status to match his. This is clearly suggested by the mother of one female apprentice who had tried to entice her daughter away from her master and mistress saying that "she hoped to see them in as mean a condition as her self".²⁵

Theft could result from much less deep seated factors. Many servants

found the temptation of a sudden opportunity too great to resist. Money stored away was a great temptation. One or two said that they had taken money from shelves, or out of their employer's purse, or his pockets while he was asleep. Masters who handled money in front of their servants were asking for trouble. Ralph Whittaker suspected his maidservant of having stolen one pound, two shillings from him, which he had "laid in his chest [before going to market with his wife] and charged her to be carefull of it till his returne and not to goe forth but to locke the doores".²⁶ Another maidservant confessed that she had watched her master count his gold and silver, "and leaving 2 guineas on a table, she put them into her own pocket".²⁷ Opportunities could present themselves unexpectedly. Thus, "Sarah Smirthwaite, borrow'd a parcel of keys of Grace Eyley in order to open the doors of a cupboard ... with a design to take a pot of honey out ... while the said Sarah and Elinor Smirthwaite was Eating the Honey near the Window (the Examinant) searching the ... Cupboard found two baggs of Gold out of which she took and carried away a certain Quantity of Guineas but doth not certainly know the Number ... which is now in a red purse and hided under a Bed in Joseph Baton's house in Wakefield her present Master".²⁸ Some male servants said they had been overtaken by strangers while about their daily business, who offered them the chance to make some money from the sale of livestock at the market.²⁹ One ex-servant was himself the stranger who came upon an unsuspecting cordwainer and promised him never to want money. The two then embarked upon a spate of stealing horses and later became highwaymen.³⁰

Some servants were easily lured away from their service or encouraged to do wrong by outsiders.³¹ The minutes of the York city quarter sessions reveal instances of servants being enticed away from their

work by irresistible attractions. In 1638 James Darke appeared before the court "for keepinge other mens servants at unlawfull tymes of the nyght ... playing at shovelgroate"; in 1653 Henry Shields was presented "for keepinge an Alehouse and harbouring bad Company and mens servants"; while in 1658 Anthony Dawson was likewise presented for "pretendinge to tell fortunes and thereby seduceinge mens servants and young people".³² Enticements to commit crimes came in the form of rewards promised to servants if they obliged. Thus, one woman who persuaded a servant to bring her some of his master's malt with which to make ale, promised him "that he - might have a little to drink at any time when he pleas'd"; another was promised a pair of breeches if he accompanied two thieves who stole clothes.³³ One servant testified that his master promised him one hundred pounds if he would murder his rival by administering poison to him, an offer which he refused.³⁴ Playing on servants' lack of material possessions was one way of encouraging them to do wrong. Threatening them was another. The same servant who was promised breeches, was also told by his enticer, that "he would mischeefe or lame him if ever he told or discovered these doings". Threats also were used to force other servants to co-operate. One maidservant said that she was at first "unwilling to meddle" when a strange woman brought her a bundle of clothes and two purses containing money, "but was prevailed with and laid the moneys in the swine shed and put ye clothes into a Tease in the wash house", while another said that she had taken goods with her former mistress, though she "never accompanied her Mistress unless constrained to do so".³⁵ Moreover, one young servant boy of the age of thirteen who had never done anything of the like before, believed that he was "moved by the instigacon of the devill" when he took his master's keys and removed

twenty-five shillings from a chest in the house.³⁶ It is doubtful whether the supposed intervention of this malevolent external force acquitted him of blame.

Servants stole for other reasons which they indicated in their examination. Drunkenness was the cause of one servant stealing two shifts; he later confessed that "he was so drunk he cannot tell where Mr Dunne's shift is".³⁷ Another manservant was examined for having a neighbour's cockerel in his possession, but he stated that he "planned to restore it after he had bred chickens from it".³⁸

Others deliberately planned and premeditated acts of theft. One woman arrived at a house in Kirbymoorside asking for clothes as she was going into service in York. When refused, "she seemed satisfied and stayed the night and left next morning". An hour later, clothes were found to be missing and when she was pursued and searched, she had taken away with her, "a muslin hood, a black silk hood, some quoifs and 4 yards of feather bed ticking".³⁹ In some other cases thieving was regulated over a period of time. One maidservant confessed that she accumulated a boxful of blankets, children's clothes, pillows, shifts, velvet caps and a table cloth and so on, stealing them "at divers times" and from different rooms in her master's house.⁴⁰ In another case, a male servant returned to his ex-master's shop on three separate occasions and stole ribbons, threads, silk and money, breaking a window to get in, and was finally discovered by a maid "who satt upp to Brew".⁴¹ On the whole, theft does not appear to have been an organized crime. Moreover, it was mostly a solitary act occurring at random, often when a sudden opportunity came about. Sometimes outsiders would be confided in afterwards perhaps to help conceal the stolen article, or else the goods would

be delivered to another on whose behalf they had been stolen.

Opportunities for servants to steal were fairly frequent. There were times when they were left alone within the house, when their master and mistress were at market for example, or when the rest of the household was asleep. Servants' work might keep them up outside the hours kept by their master and his family, which had its advantages - they could thus move around at night without appearing overly suspicious. Servants were also in the position of knowing where most of their employer's goods and valuables were kept. Places frequently plundered were drawers and cupboards. The layout of the house was also known to them. Thomas Mosley of York suspected his former servant, John Hill, of having stolen twenty pounds from a cupboard in his house. Hill confessed to stealing the money, having entered the house about midnight and gone through the kitchen into the parlour where he "broke open a Cubbert with his knife"; he appeared to know exactly where the money was.⁴² Another ex-servant said that she could get her master's money "if his Mistall [cowhouse] door was as it were when (she) liv'd as a Servant with him", to facilitate her entry to his property.⁴³ Indeed, the knowledge which some servants had of certain of their employer's goods sometimes surpassed that of their master himself. The diary of Oliver Heywood presents us with an interesting example. In December 1681 he recorded that a brewing pan was stolen from his house, and in the following January "we sent our maid (who knew the panne better than either I or my wife) to the constable's house, to know the panne wch she did, and by two marks wch she found in it confidently affirmed it was ours ...".⁴⁴

One problem which faced servants who stole from their employers was that of hiding the goods and therefore escaping detection. Trunks or boxes were useful places to hide stolen items, and some hid or buried them away from the house, while others entrusted them with some one else or sold them. The ultimate problem of this nature was faced by female servants who had to disguise the birth of an illegitimate child, and in nine times out of ten, conceal a dead one. But men and women servants stole; there was no great distinction between them. But while men and women stole clothes, menservants were generally more likely to take things such as nails, hay and livestock, with which they worked more often than women. Theft by females tended to take place in and around the household. Menservants too, stole from within the house, but they also committed misdemeanours further afield. Servants who dealt with stolen livestock and took it to market, were mostly male. Similarly, crimes which were the result of drunkenness were almost always performed by men.

Other male-dominated crimes were assault and murder, although these figures do not include cases of maidservants accused of murdering their new babies, the numbers of which far exceeded those above.

The victims of these attacks can be identified as follows - masters and/or mistresses; fellow servants or workers, and

people whose relation to the servant is not stated. The majority of these offences took place within a domestic environment, with which servants were most familiar, spent most of their time, and would form their closest and most influential relationships. Moreover, the victims of two females accused of assault and murder were also female, one a fellow servant, the other a mistress. A woman might more rarely assault a male, for who she was often no match in strength. In addition to this J M Beattie found that their victims were usually known to women, thus reflecting the "narrower range of their social contacts", and the fact that their lives revolved around the household.⁴⁵ Implements used in the assault were primitive (a stone), more sophisticated (a rapier) or else whatever came to hand easily - whatever the servant was working with at the time, such as a pitchfork or shears. Hands and feet were also commonly used. Again, these assaults occurred on the spur of the moment. Some were sparked off for the most trivial of reasons and reveal a frighteningly low level of tolerance. Thus one servant assaulted his master and called him a "coxcorn", after he had been asked about the mending of a hedge.⁴⁶ Another death occurred accidentally, but with equal ferocity; when Joseph Viccars, asleep in his master's house, was woken a second time by John Bowers, he "struck at (him) with a Case knife but not with any intention to kill him", although Bowers died from his wound.⁴⁷ Likewise, a servant who threw his shears at a tailor with whom he was working, during a quarrel which flared up, also killed him.⁴⁸ There is probably no real significance in the fact that these incidents involved servants. Tempers easily flared into physical violence and masters were just as guilty of hitting out

at their servants in anger. More telling, however, is the incident which occurred in John Dawson's barn at Blacktoft, in 1730; "Henry Jackson [Dawson's] hired Servant ... came to (him) with a fork in his hand and said he had forborn him a long time and could not forbear him any longer upon which this Informant asked him if he designed to put the fork in his Belly, who replied he scorned to be hanged for him and called him ... an Old Knave ... ".⁴⁹ Jackson's action suggests a manifestation of resentment and anger towards his master. It also seems to have been premeditated, again suggesting the build-up of complex, deep seated emotions tying in with the servants' menial position. Masters were frequently the victims of servants' anger and frustration over their inferior status and lot in life. They may have been held responsible for this because they represented the authority and oppression which the servant rebelled against. Assault and violence were a quick means of expression at their disposal and they could be easily sparked off unwittingly by a sudden word or action on the master's part.

This is one explanation for sudden outbreaks of violence against masters and mistresses and it is probably the most common, although other incidents occurred which did not indicate so obvious or direct a reason as the above. One youth said that his mistress had told him to "fire the house of Henry Coultas" and he was later seen to throw a stone at Coultas's child.⁵⁰ Drink was also another factor contributing to threats and violence; one servant stated that "in his drinke he has some times threatened to do his Master and Dame some mischefe", saying he was enticed by the devil who offered him silver.⁵¹ Many outbreaks of violence occurred "without lawful cause of Provocation", because of some reason or history of which we shall never know. Thus, John Ward, a servant in Pocklington, was said

to have "wilfully driven a loaded Waggon against the ladder on which John Jenkinson and his son Matthew were thatching a House whereby ... the Waggon went over the body of ... Matthew and maim'd him"; Robert Harrison, a hired servant, assaulted his master and mistress "with a great stone in his hand and did endeavour to do them some bodily harm"; and one maidservant was apprehended for "assaulting, beating and abusing ... Leviniah Charlton her partner in the service of John Little of Kilnsey, gent".⁵² In one case, that of the murder of a mistress by her former servant, the act appears to have been deliberately planned and coolly executed. The maidservant, Margaret Green, was said to have come to her ex-mistress who was "nearly blind but recognized her servant by her voice", and "upon pretence of kindness she had sent for a quart of drinke ... immediately upon taking of which (her mistress) took a violent purging". As it was, she was living with the woman's husband and later married him, after her mistress's death.⁵³ This is the only murder case which seems to have been premeditated; the other incidents were sparked off by quarrels in which the intention was not to kill.

There is an underlying sense in all the above examples, that servants saw their masters or mistresses as oppressors and in some cases, possibly as standing in the way of their independence or happiness. By using violence, servants attempted, in sudden moments of irrational anger, to punish or eliminate the source of their frustration. Nevertheless, one thing that emerges from the quarter sessions order books is the degree to which servants and apprentices were the victims as much as, if not more so, the perpetrators of such crimes. There is a strong sense that they were often more sinned against than sinning.⁵⁴

The number of cases of ill-treatment of apprentices and servants is very revealing. This could take several forms, including physical violence or plain neglect, perhaps through the master having run away or left off his trade. In the York City quarter sessions, cases of masters who had absconded and deserted their apprentices outnumber apprentices who ran away by about ten to seven. A number of masters abused their apprentices and were violent towards them and others turned their apprentices away prematurely. Some cases were very pathetic. Mary Rhodes, an apprentice to Thomas Ingleton, had the misfortune to have a master who brought her up "in a debauched and wicked course of Life by sending her for Whores ... for refusing which she was imodestely beat by [him] and Mary his Wife".⁵⁵

The punishments meted out to servants were frequent and often harsh. Servants and apprentices could be whipped, transported, or sentenced to the House of Correction for their misdemeanours, but masters and mistresses who inflicted injury and psychological terror on their menials often merely had the inconvenience of having their servant discharged from them. In 1661 the meagre fine of ten pounds was imposed on Francis Settrinton, a yeoman of Redness, who was charged and convicted of assaulting and attempting to hang and strangle Anna Trimmingham, his servant.⁵⁶

Domestic violence also extended to masters' punishments of their servants. Sometimes immoderate punishment was administered - even for minor offences. At times, masters' anger knew no bounds and was unleashed with tragic consequences for their defenceless servants. One mistress thus beat her maidservant to death for supping a quart of cream; another mistress beat her servant so hard that she died.⁵⁷ She said that she wanted her "pennyworths of her" for leaving her service, but it was more probable that the servant was beaten because she was pregnant. One gentleman master killed his servant with

a blow from a barber's block which he threw at him in anger for staying out late and being abusive.⁵⁸ Finally, another master nearly killed his maidservant by running at her with a pitchfork, angry because she and her fellow servant had kept the Sabbath.⁵⁹ This incident also recalls the constraints under which servants lived and worked in sometimes being unable to observe religious regulations, which no doubt added to their own discontent and frustration. Levels of tolerance were sometimes very low indeed although it is impossible to tell just how much a master or mistress had been provoked to such action by an unruly servant.

* * *

In 1681 Oliver Heywood referred to another offence although one in which it was often very difficult to determine where the real blame lay.

"I have seldom heard of so many young women with child by fornication as lately, and some of them to cover the shame doe marry".⁶⁰

Infanticide was a crime of which female servants were often accused. Related offences were fornication and bastardy. As a citizen and parish ratepayer Heywood was concerned about the potential burden on the parish of any illegitimate children and helpless mothers.⁶¹ In view of this, fornication and bastardy were offences which were treated with severity. Infanticide was a much more serious matter.

Twenty two cases of maidservants with child occur within our sample from the quarter sessions order books, and seven of male servants

fathering children. The assize court depositions reveal ten cases of infanticide. A further possible source are the bastardy bonds which exist in large numbers in poor law papers, but they are limited in their use because they rarely give the occupational status of women, describing many simply as "spinsters" or "singlewomen".⁶²

The size of this category indicates that bastardy was widespread and that maidservants were a particularly vulnerable occupational group. The reasons for this will become clearer as we analyse the evidence.

Many women said that they were "prevailed upon", which implied both persistent persuasion on the part of their seducer, as well as more forcefulness which in many cases might have amounted to rape. But it is often impossible to distinguish between the two from the evidence given. However, ten women stated that they had been enticed with promises of marriage, while two said they had been promised "great kindness", and one succumbed to "flattering words and other temptations". About half of those who promised marriage were masters, or masters' sons. Such promises, whether illusory or not, could seem very attractive to a servant because of the rise in status marriage could bring, as well as a more certain future. The problem of the master's present wife, if he had one, was sometimes easily explained away, and a convenient solution found to ease servants' misgivings. One master thus "inveigled (his servant) to lie with him ... on pretence that his wife was an old woman and could not live long and then he would marry her".⁶³

Menservants also promised marriage, one only if the woman became

pregnant, and another promised "he would make her as good as he was by marrying her".⁶⁴

The potential success with which these promises met is not hard to see. They appealed to both servants' social ambitions, and their need for security. Promises of marriage temporarily eased women's fears that they would never find a partner. In addition the promise of marriage brought that of children. As servants they were theoretically denied both. But, as many a maidservant found out to her dismay and regret later on, many promises were uttered with little intention of fulfillment. They held good, however, as long as she consented to sleep with her seducer, believing her future to be secure. Many women mistakenly thought that a pregnancy would fulfill their ambition and possibly bring them closer to marriage. The desire to be free from service, which robbed them of opportunities for marriage, probably encouraged many servants to pursue relations with their masters or a suitor. On a more basic level, however, the need for sexual gratification was another, possibly more common reason, which in itself brought a fleeting sense of security.

Servants were seduced within their master's house, in outhouses such as a barn or stable and in fields. Five maidservants said this occurred as they were going about their daily duties. These might have been the most convenient places and times, when there was less chance of discovery. Maidservants' work might take them to isolated or enclosed parts of the house or farm. A "singlewoman" of Snape, for example, gave evidence that "William Symson, then servant to Matthew Heslop of Snape ... came into the barn of John Braithwaite of Snape where she was turning a cheese, and had carnal knowledge of her body".⁶⁵ Another woman was followed

into the stable by her master where she had taken his horse.⁶⁶

Two were seduced in fields, one when she was working alongside her master in a close, and the other by her master's son when they were out shearing corn.⁶⁷ Moreover, twenty three servants, male and female, stated that they slept with their partner more than once, and sometimes in different places. Locations were sometimes makeshift and chosen for convenience rather than comfort. The parlour appeared to be a favourite place, presumably where the couple would not be disturbed during the daytime; one couple made use of the long settle "in the foare house", and two more fellow servants met in the parlour where the woman slept along with another female servant.⁶⁸

The master's house was the most common place for sexual relations. More often than not, these were between members of the same household, although outsiders were sometimes entertained. Maidservants said that they had had relations with male servants, some of whom were fellow servants in the same household; with their masters, with their master's sons and with outsiders, amongst whom were a labourer and a workman who came to help her master. One servant stated that her master seduced her while she was "making (his) bed in a foreroom";⁶⁹ this task carried with it obvious risks. Quiet corners of the house, and bedchambers especially, were obvious "danger spots" for maidservants. Moreover, where sleeping arrangements sometimes involved servants of both sexes in the same room or bed, the opportunities for sexual relations were obvious.

Some relations were, nevertheless, conducted outside the place of work and with relative strangers. One maidservant, returning to Harwood

to see some of her friends one Christmastide, met an old admirer, "one James Watson who had formerly courted her when she lived as a Servant with his father and had borrow'd money of her, and that (he) through wheedlings and promises of marriage did then offer to lie with her and did prevail on Thursday night 26 December ... and again on Saturday 28 December whereby she is now big with Child".⁷⁰

Five servants also confessed that they had sexual relations during or after, social events, when spirits were high and possibly more than a little inebriated. Two stated that this happened around fairtime, one at Candlemas, and one after a social evening when the maidservant, leaving her host's house at eleven o'clock, was accompanied home by William Johnson who "prevailed upon her to have carnal knowledge of her body (while) her master and family were in bed".⁷¹ One maidservant could recall the occasions when her master had seduced her since they coincided with local fairs and festivals; he had slept with her "about 2 or 3 weeks before the last Brough Hill Fair" and again a week after and "again on Martinmas Day last as they were coming from Barnard Castle".⁷²

Male servants too, actively became involved in sexual relations and would rove beyond their place of work to conduct liaisons. One servant to an innkeeper, went regularly to the house of Mary Hodgson, whom he knew already and who lived with her mother, and courted and seduced her "under pretence of promising to marry her".⁷³

The reasons why servants pursued relationships of this kind may well have been to obtain the sense of security and companionship which service denied them. "Kindness" and friendship brought some couples closer together who lived and worked within the same household. One male servant who had slept with a female servant, stated that he "never saw any kindness shown her by Robert Goodricke" their master.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, it was also likely that there was

a stronger desire on the part of some servants purely for sexual fulfillment and the diversion from service that this provided.

Masters' shallow promises to their maidservants and their behaviour when the servant became pregnant, all testify to the low esteem in which these unfortunate women were held. A youthful maidservant was very often a great temptation to her master, especially if he was a bachelor, widower, or his own wife was old, past child-bearing, or no longer excited the attraction she once had done. The days were not very far gone when, in gentry circles especially, maidservants sometimes fulfilled the function of their masters' bedfellow if his wife was absent or otherwise unable to do so.⁷⁵

One extraordinary case reveals the lengths some men would go to fulfill their lust. When one man's relations with his wife had gone sour, and desiring his mistress to live with him, he "pretended to hire Mary Wilson as a servant", and afterwards tried to make his wife "go to the Rev Mr Cooper to desire he would give leave that the said Mary Wilson should be allowed to live in the house with her husband".⁷⁶ Moreover, servants were sometimes considered so much the property of their masters that outsiders were sometimes frightened to interfere with them. Thus Thomas Durkett of Ripon told the justices of the assizes how Anne Wright, a servant of William Wrigglesworth "was fallen very sick about sup tyme (one) night and went into the parlour not being fitt and able to give this Informant and the rest of the family their sup as she used to do". He suspected she was in labour and later, looking through the parlour window, he saw her holding a baby, which confirmed this. But he told the neighbours that "neither (he) nor any other neighbours durst att all medle to search or busie themselves about the matter by reason the s[ai]d William

Wrigleworth was a troublesome man, the s[ai]d Anne Wright then being his servant in his house".⁷⁷

If a maidservant did become pregnant she was almost certainly dismissed, unless she had a very understanding and kind master, and the parties concerned went to great lengths to hide the fact. Few men who had fathered a child stood by these women. Many men fled, to avoid punishment and the burden of having to pay for the mother's and child's maintenance. Masters helped their sons and servants to escape. A recognizance was brought against Robert Jackson for "assisting his servant, Thomas Spencer, to escape, who had begot a bastard child on his sister, Ann Jackson", while Thomas Luty's father, "did not only advise his Son to run away but turn'd him out of Doors and gave him money at his Departure".⁷⁸ One man even persuaded his son to leave his maidservant, who was also his wife, and who now "hath a child by him dureing the tyme of their intermarriage".⁷⁹ The father was ordered to pay four pounds a year as maintenance to the maidservant, but the order was later discharged due to his poverty. Another man who got his servant pregnant, went so far as to "cause (her) to take Phisicke for to destroy the said Child".⁸⁰

But women did possess a certain weapon which they could use in their defence, or to avoid full blame. They could name another man as the child's father. Thus, when Mary Tunstall became pregnant by her master's son, he "gave her money to father the child on Thomas Kirby, a then deceased person, or on Robert Metcalf, a house carpenter".⁸¹ Thomas Newburne also went to great trouble to ensure that he was "not scandalized" when his servant, Mary Page, became pregnant with his child. He gave her mother twenty shillings to keep her daughter and the child, with a promise of "ten shillings

a quarter for six years and a bushell of wheat for the christening", while also sending someone to remove Mary when a warrant was issued. Mary's mother suggested that he gave "his servant Thomas Hugill 30 or 40s and she would father the child on him", notwithstanding that Hugill was a married man.⁸² The naming of the father could injure a man's reputation or social standing. Possibly Margaret Walker, maidservant to Robert Goodricke, "whom she has sworn a bastard child upon", did this out of hatred of her master who was not known for his kindness towards her, though the child was actually fathered by a fellow servant.⁸³ Another maidservant, described in a letter to Sir John Reresby, did not scruple to lay the blame on her master, "a very honest Man and never under such imputation before", when the real father, a fellow servant in the house, had run away.⁸⁴ Many masters, therefore, attempted to pay off or discharge pregnant servants, or otherwise deflect attention away from their household especially if they or their sons were responsible.

Desertion of the female servant was common despite promises to the contrary. The pathetic fate of many women is illustrated by that of the "Woman in the Scullery" at Wentworth Woodhouse. She became pregnant by Clarici, a master craftsman working in the house and though promised "Ten Pounds a Year for life and a Lodging provided she would never let it be known that the child was his ... " she was dismissed from the house and was left to the parish overseer of Ecclesfield. Her death was announced two months later.⁸⁵ A pregnancy led many to commit desperate actions. Fear of dismissal and shame was a prime cause of many a maidservant's attempts to conceal their pregnancy and bear their child alone. Unfortunately, the very motives which had forced their mothers into silence might later end in condemning them to death for infanticide.⁸⁶ Whether deliberate or not, the death of the child was perhaps a relief to many.⁸⁷

The horrifying circumstances under which some maidservants gave birth are seen in the depositions and examinations. A real sense of fear and desperation pervades some of these statements. The earnest desire that the birth remain unknown was revealed by one or two. The father of one child came upon the mother in her chamber at the time of the birth, but she told him to "hold his peace", while another maidservant had denied her pregnancy to her fiancé "to prevent shame", because she was still living, even after her marriage, as a servant in another house⁸⁸ One woman, who became pregnant by her widowed master, was promised marriage to him, but her hopes for a secure future and family life gradually faded as his attention was taken by preserving his livelihood in the face of great floods; in the end she bore the burden and shame of her condition alone.⁸⁹

Of those depositions in the sample which relate to the deaths of newborn children, all but one stated that the birth, not surprisingly, took place in the employer's house; that one occurred in a pasture nearby. Where possible, secluded rooms were chosen for the birth, to avoid disturbance. Often this was the maid's own chamber, although servants also gave birth in the kitchen and parlour. Six said that they were alone at the birth, while of the rest one was helped by her mistress, another had her sister with her, and a third was found by the child's father. Their loneliness was probably by design in many cases; if a woman had successfully disguised nine months of pregnancy why should she spoil it at the birth? For others, fear of the event overrode any desire to maintain secrecy. Thus one maidservant was taken unawares as the child arrived earlier than expected, spoiling her plans to go home to relatives to have it; she "shouted as loud as she could for assistance but no body came

to her".⁹⁰ Another, also taken by surprise, said that she "had not time to call in any to helpe her there being none in ye ... house at that time".⁹¹ The fate of the child depended on the circumstances of the birth as much as the intentions of the mother to either let it live or die. Ignorance and incapacity were two reasons for hampering the birth. The same servant told how "immediately after the delivery shee fell into a faint and as soone as she came out of it she tooke up the ... child which was (by now) dead and cold and wraping it in a Cloth, laid it in a chamber".⁹²

Servants could be strongly motivated to kill unwanted children, yet there was often no need since the child died anyway as a result of inadequate care during pregnancy and childbirth. But the concealment of the birth, and the disposal of the child, often condemned the mothers, although in the late eighteenth century, cases at the Old Bailey showed noticeably more leniency than before to women accused of infanticide.⁹³ Malcolmsen, moreover, is wary of suspecting that murder was the intent of most unmarried servants - "To say that servant maids were especially liable to unwanted pregnancy does not necessarily imply that they were uncommonly susceptible to the temptations of infanticide".⁹⁴ He is at the same time aware that the pressures which social opinion, and the nature of their work, placed them under, implied strong possibilities in favour of infanticide. Several of the women in our sample managed successfully to conceal their pregnancy and the birth at the time, as well as hide the dead child, which they said was stillborn. Some of the children were concealed near the place of birth - in a trunk or blankets in the chamber; in a ditch of water in the pasture where they had been born; by the fireside in the kitchen.⁹⁵ Other hiding places would suggest that the mother had had the time, and had recovered her wits sufficiently to think

of a suitable place and convey the child thither. One woman hid her child in a barrel of feathers, another took hers down to the kitchen and put it behind the kneading tub, and a third buried the child in the orchard.⁹⁶ But discovery often occurred afterwards, through the watchfulness or suspicion of other members of the household. In one case the mother laid in the same room as a woman employed by her master to spin wool, who seeing her "sickish", suspected her of having given birth and investigated.⁹⁷ In another, a fellow servantmaid entered their "garit chambers ... where she felt a strong smell" and on further investigation discovered a "blankitt ... which seemed to be heavy", and in which was hidden a child born, so said the mother, about five weeks beforehand.⁹⁸

Infanticide may have been committed in moments of despair and desperation when no other solution seemed possible. Fear of loss of livelihood and of becoming social outcasts, or perhaps an intense hatred for the father, seemed to override the maternal bond. But lack of due care during pregnancy and expertise at the birth were often more common factors leading to the child's death, although this could be difficult to prove before the justices. Even so, some women attempted some small preparations for the birth; the preparation of linen, which some women claimed in their defence, proved increasingly successful in acquitting them of this crime.⁹⁹

* * *

Deviance occurred in many forms. Other offences of a less serious nature included cursing and drunkenness, all of which servants were sometimes guilty of. Minor misdemeanours and bad behaviour were

answered for with customary punishments from masters and mistresses, a beating, remonstrance or perhaps dismissal. But the evidence can often make servants' misdemeanours appear blacker than they were. John Hobson, for instance, wrote in his diary that he "discharged Ann Turton for maliciously putting butter in the ale when it was working and several other faults". We do not know what provocation he had from her which led him to this action, but we only have his interpretation of her motive. Servants might also find themselves as scapegoats for some of society's ills and grievances. Words used to describe them were often negative, dwelling on their bad points. Two favourites were "disorderly" and "idle". One employer, bemoaning the fact the his maidservant had absconded, denounced the rest of "the Rabble who contemne and Dispise all Authority".¹⁰⁰ Such generalisations regarding servants occur constantly in literary evidence such as letters and printed works. As with all such generalisations, they may contain a certain element of truth, though they did many decent servants a great disservice.

Not all master and servant relations were bad, nor were the causes of all misdemeanours of such an intense nature. Very often servants who misbehaved were merely an inconvenience, and of little threat to the master personally. One gentleman wrote to John Reresby that "I have nothing but of ye kitchen Boy roming a wae of Satterday laste, without any occation mor than what y^e gave hem. I sent 2 dayes to Looke for hem ye Butler having Loste a Spoon and me more defient to have Catch hem then els I should".¹⁰¹ Many misdemeanours were dealt with privately by the master and no prosecution was undertaken.¹⁰² Unless the misdemeanour was serious or detrimental to the master, the offending servant was most often dealt with out of court. Failure to bring the culprit to court was sometimes also the result of ignorance in not knowing how to proceed in matters of law, but more frequently

because the victims had not the means to do so. One woman's statement at the Thirsk sessions in 1734 was probably typical of many. She advised her nephew John Scott, not to prosecute John Pinkney for stealing his waistcoat, "for the sake of the peace and to prevent expences as Scott was only a poor servant".¹⁰³ The offences we have witnessed here therefore represent only a small proportion of the whole.

* * *

Servant deviance draws our attention to the psychological complexities of the master and servant relationship. As we have seen, violence could easily be sparked off by an argument between master and servant, or even an order given by the master. The motive may have been the build-up of deep seated discontent or hatred on the servant's part. Likewise, theft, although not always premeditated, may have been the result of a servant's dislike of, or jealousy towards, his or her master or mistress. There is a strong underlying sense in many of the above incidents that resentment of their non-status and of their master's authority and relative wealth and security, was a key factor in motivating servants to take certain actions. A master after all had everything a servant did not - status, possessions and independence. Stealing fulfilled servants' desire to emulate their superiors, while violence was an outlet for pent-up emotions and feelings of anger and resentment.

Servants took these feelings out on those closest to them in the only way they could given the constraints of their position.

E P Thompson states the point most clearly; "It is exactly in servant-master relations of dependency in which personal contacts are frequent

and personal injustices are suffered, against which protest is futile, that feelings of resentment or of hatred can be most violent and most personal".¹⁰⁴ Such feelings of resentment also made them more open to persuasion and manipulation from outside influences. Indeed, they added to servants' vulnerability and sense of frustration at their position. It is telling that sometimes the only way servants felt themselves to be heard was through rebellion and defiance of the accepted code, which varied from relatively minor misdemeanours and insubordination, to serious crimes. Of course, we have so far neglected the idea that many people were deliberately out on the make, hardened thieves and criminals, whose peripatetic lifestyle as servants made it all the more easy for them to perpetrate crimes as they moved from master to master. But we cannot rule out the earlier suggestions that servant deviance was the result of a much more psychological problem which was caused by the fact that service as a general system kept people in a subordinate position, but also in a very insular environment and tightly controlled relationship with their masters which could easily lead to feelings of oppression and of being trapped. The need to break away from this intolerable situation sometimes gave rise to deviance, the outcome of which we have seen above.

CHAPTER 6

LITERARY IMAGES OF SERVANTS

"pray have your read M^{rs} Pamela? My unkle Fred sent me, you can't imagine how much I was pleased with it. My Maids got it, and one of them read it up, and they all Cryd for hours together excepting M^{rs} Poley, who was too wise ... "

Fanny Robinson to Madam Hitzendorf July 20 1741¹

Pamela will be remembered as one of the most famous servants in English literature. Her story has elements of both the fantasy and the real which makes it not only an entertaining read, but also a useful social document.

It is the purpose of this chapter to distinguish between the fantasy and the reality in fictional and other literary works of the period, and to show how they can make a contribution to the study of service in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The theory and ideal of service versus the reality, has been one of the most recurring themes throughout the study. In fictional works we see this taken to its limits as it becomes almost fantasy versus reality. Fictional literature could be said to have a fairly tenuous hold on the study of history; pertaining so much to imagination and invention, it bears little relation to true historical fact. This argument certainly bears weight and stems partly from the "larger than life" characters and situations, which merely exacerbate the problem of fiction and reality.

If indeed characters are "larger than life", how can they be held up to reflect reality? What is their relationship to reality? Reconciliation between the two is not easy and it largely depends on the reader's integrity when reading fictional works. But it is

inevitable that parallels are drawn with reality given that we already have a large body of evidence relating to actual master and servant relationships, and also because we may assume that the huge success of plays and novels was partly due to the audience's recognition of caricatured representations of their own social world. We may recall the words of T M Macaulay, "Fiction is essentially imitative. Its merit consists in its resemblance to a model with which we are already familiar, or to which at least we can instantly refer".² No fictional representation in whatever form, is autonomous from the age in which it was written.

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries produced some of England's most talented men of letters. In many ways they offer a detailed portrait of society highly conscious of its manners, dress and social status. The works they produced were not intended as serious commentaries on the social scene, but the audiences who flocked to the London theatres to see the plays of Congreve, Wycherley, Vanbrugh, Dodsley and Sheridan amongst others, might recognise in the highly stylized characters before them, something of their own social values. Fanny Robinson's maidservants cried at the sheer sentimentality of Pamela's story, but they may have recognised in her own vulnerability and helplessness and lowliness, that of many servants in reality. Drama and literature could claim to represent some truisms of English society.

We, the historians of today, come to the works largely to be entertained. Nevertheless, like the paintings of Hogarth, the plays and novels of the Restoration and the eighteenth century stand almost equally well alongside the diaries and letters on which we have drawn already, and treated with care, have much to offer the historian. In another application, Houlbrooke's remark

that the "techniques of realistic portraiture" bring us much closer to "the people of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, their attitude and opinions, the pattern of their lives and even their physical appearance", has some bearing on the idea that creative art forms, of which literature can be said to be one, offer some insight into reality.³

Drama is an interesting medium to use, because unlike the other sources used in this chapter, it was accessible to nearly all sections of the population, rich and poor alike, including many servants. Footmen sat in theatre galleries and lived up to their reputations for being noisy and nuisances; ordinary servants and apprentices on official and unofficial leave from their places, stood in the pit.⁴ The effect of the plays is impossible to gauge, although their popularity attests to their success. Footmen were known occasionally to rebel against the aspersions cast on them but since theatre going was a popular form of servant recreation especially in London, they cannot have found much to object to as a group, in the treatment of their fictional counterparts on stage.

The comedies of the restoration and eighteenth century are a rich source for servants. They gossip, scheme, retort, impersonate and merrymake their way through these in all types and guises. As in real life, they are ever-present, even though this may be only as an amorphous group at the end of the cast list. At some point they occupy all parts of the stage, taking front and back seats; their presence is even acknowledged off-stage, as in the wonderful line by Lady Rusport in The West Indian; "Sure I heard somebody. Hark! No, only the servants going down the back-stairs ... "⁵ They are

both passive and active characters, most often the latter, sometimes taking centre stage, and initiating sub-plots of their own. The major ones are vivacious, rarely dull or with little to say for themselves, they are more often than not close companions to their masters and mistresses. The "real" servants, who fulfill more ordinary and expected though necessary functions, are passive creations who glide on and off stage, sometimes without a word. They announce characters, bear letters to their masters, serve at table and run about at the beck and call of their master or mistress keeping the main action of the play running smoothly, as was their function in reality. These model servants would have brought joy to the hearts of the moralists and writers of conduct manuals.

Dramatic works and other fiction show servants as fully rounded people, with feelings and minds of their own rather than as the silent army of menials we find in other sources. They are capable of as much plotting and scheming as their masters and mistresses, and often successfully manipulate the action to suit themselves. They are sometimes united in a common bond to outwit their betters and upstage authority. At the same time, these fictional servants do not easily overstep the boundaries of the accepted master and servant relationship. Authority is not totally rejected; convention and justice usually prevail at the close of the story, thus serving as a timely reminder to all servants watching. Thus Robert and Tom are rewarded at the end of Townley's play, High Life Below Stairs, because they have remained loyal to their master throughout, although he misjudged them. The ringleaders, Philip and Kitty, are discharged.⁶

Servants are seen as important supports for the main action of the play. They act as go-betweens for their masters and mistresses

and at times they even initiate various stages of the plot. They are clever and adaptable. They know what is good for them, and they seek their own ends as well as those of the people they serve. Sharp, "the lying valet", is aptly named.⁷ His master, having spent his fortune, finds himself at the door of poverty. His servant is naturally in the same predicament, since servants' fortunes followed those of their masters. Sharp's scheming is, therefore, due to his own instinct for survival, and also that of loyalty to his master. In the end, his trickery prevails and his master is redeemed. Sharp himself does well, gaining Kitty, a fellow maidservant, for his wife and the benediction of his master, who offers to set him up in marriage.

As in real life, servant and master relations in fiction span a wide range of emotions. The careless cheek of many servants sometimes disguises a deeper loyalty and bond between the two. A cheeky retort is offered for the sake of raising a laugh from the audience, while the result, commonly physical punishment, is visually more entertaining than a verbal admonition. Dufoy is an amusing sight at the outset of The Comical Revenge with a bandaged head, the result of a beating by his master the night before. Dufoy's outburst, following his master's entrance, suggests one reason why many servants accepted such beatings as a matter of course; "Beggars you vil never keep de good serviteur had no one love you ver wel".⁸ As a general rule, love for their employer and loyalty to him or her overrides feelings of anger or discontent at occasional chastisement or anger. After all, fictional domestic relations could not be seen to fail as a matter of political expediency. Nevertheless, a servant is occasionally moved to express himself in momentary anger. Thus Handy in The Man of Mode takes exception to being called "Eternal Blockhead", reminding his master that "I have sense, Sir".⁹ Servants

thus counter their master's authority as much as possible for the sake of comedy, though at the same time generally acknowledging it, in order to maintain the status quo.

Servants' loyalty is evident in dramatic works, but it is not the thing by which we remember them. A truly loyal and obedient servant is usually passive and almost characterless. He or she is not the one who entertains during the course of the play. This is left to those who display a more independent, slightly rebellious character and give their employer some pains. In reality, the majority of servants displayed the former disposition but it is also true that many of the activities and behaviour which have been recorded of real servants is not so much their everyday diligence, but their misdeeds which were contrary to what was expected of them. Masters' complaints on stage of tardy or inconstant servants are thus sometimes recognisable. Mr Sealand is exasperated by the servant Daniel, from whom he cannot get a straight answer.¹⁰ Likewise Mr Dorimant in The Man of Mode becomes impatient because a footman is late in arriving.¹¹ At times, misbehaving servants imply an undercurrent of subversion and a threat to the established relationship between master and servant. After the servant Foible's deception her mistress exclaims that the tables have been turned; "What, then I have been your property, have I. I have been convenient to you it seems!"¹² Mellisa in The Lying Valet explains ruefully how servants may gain a position of power over their masters and mistresses, often through the latter's own fault: "We discover our weaknesses to our servants, make them our confidants, put 'em upon an equality with us and so they become our advisers".¹³ Instead of servants serving their masters and mistresses the implication is that the situation is reversed. The message is clear from

literary evidence; masters were content to liaise with servants, to gossip and scheme with them, but only in so far as they retained the upper hand.

Mistresses and manservants act as confidantes to each other, the latter consoling, advising and encouraging. Note, for example, the relations between Lucinda, Phyllis's servant in The Conscious Lovers; Aurelia and Letitia in The Comical Revenge; Wishfort and Foible in The Way of the World. Affection and loyalty are emotions which occur throughout the plays, but reprimand and reprisal are meted out in equal doses on both sides. As in real life, both master and servant are clearly dependant on each other for their good name, and the maintenance of their status. Both have the ability to ruin the other, although as expected, it is the servant who usually comes off worst in material terms. In the encounter between Lady Wishfort and her servant Foible, mentioned above, Wishfort saves herself from shame by the discovery of Foible's duplicity, but as retribution she threatens Foible with the misery of poverty and the house of correction.¹⁴

The fickleness on either side serves to heighten the disparity between the status and conduct of master and servants, while at the same time providing a lighthearted atmosphere in which to remind the audience and reader that these characters are both exaggerated and fictional.

The whole panorama of the late seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries scene comes before our eyes in fictional works. Servants are as important a part of this as in real life. Footmen are in profusion and often take major roles alongside their masters. They are frequently portrayed as foppish, lazy and even womanisers.¹⁵

Likewise, the subject of servants' clothes also arises, and their personal aspirations. Phyllis, for example, in The Conscious Lovers

has airs, wishing she did not have to walk everywhere but had a "coach or chair" to "twire and loll as well as the best of them".¹⁶

Archer also alludes to the practise of masters handing down their cast off garments to their servants and thereby encouraging them to desire fine clothes.¹⁷

The attraction of London was a major theme in plays as well as in real life. Scab, a very ordinary unrefined servant, as his name suggests, feigns sophistication when he introduces Archer to his mistress: "I understood he came from London and so I invited him to the cellar that he might show me the newest flourish in whetting my knives".¹⁸ The most popular reference to London in plays emphasized the differences between town and country. Servants from the country were often portrayed as plain speaking dolts, such as John Moody, servant to Sir Francis Wronghead, who is a typical country bumpkin.¹⁹

At the same time the corrupting effect of London is seen in servants who have become insolent under the influence of others in the capital. Thus Davy explains to his master that "Servants dont do what they are bid in London".²⁰

Servants in the plays are sometimes extremely status conscious, matching some of their counterparts in real life. The servant of a lord exclaims, "What wretches are ordinary Servants that go on in the same vulgar track every day ... But we who have the Honour to serve the Nobility are of another Species. We are above the common forms, have Servants to wait upon us, and are as lazy and luxurious as our Masters".²¹ Mrs Slipslop interestingly claims rank over a gentlewoman with whom she is travelling, because she serves "one of the great gentry".²²

Again, as with some servants in reality, servants in fiction are preoccupied with self-gain. The treatment of vails-giving serves to illustrate how, in the hands of an unscrupulous servant, they could be used to amass a fortune. Philip, for example, in High Life Below Stairs, has saved five hundred pounds as profit from vails even though he has Mr Freeman to contend with; He is "one of my Master's prudent Friends, who dines with him three nights a week and thinks he is mighty generous in giving me five Guineas at Christmas - Damn all such sneaking Scoundrels, I say".²³

The fantasy element in fiction is created by the characters themselves. Literature creates larger-than-life characters which pose a problem to the study of history. Nevertheless, they have certain advantages within literature itself. Servants cast off their deferential, semi-invisible state and force us to take notice of them. Moreover, they generally get away with much more than they would have done in real life. The gigantic Mrs Slipslop for example, vividly described in Joseph Andrews, is such a formidable figure at times that even her employer seems afraid of her.²⁴ One is reminded of Marmaduke Constable's housekeeper at Everingham, a rare example, who did exactly as she pleased, regardless of household rules and the other servants.²⁵ Mrs Jewkes equals, if not exceeds, Slipslop's ferocity, when she frightens and imprisons Pamela. Mrs Jervis, on the other hand, is too honest and loyal to be a really interesting character.²⁶

Pamela herself is quite a confusing character. Sympathisers see her as what she appears to be in the novel, an innocent, naive servant girl, the victim of her master's passion, for whom fortunately there is a happy conclusion. Critics accuse her of being artful and

scheming, deliberately playing hard to get and plotting every move, with an eye to eventually becoming Mrs B and living a life of luxury.²⁷

Pamela's story is a fantasy one in that it tells of a servant girl from a poor home who becomes mistress of a large and wealthy household through marriage to her mistress's son. Such happenings did occur in reality, but they were uncommon on the whole.²⁸ Pamela's story is revealed through a series of letters to and from her parents, itself an amazing fact for such poor people and for a busy servant. The letters enable her to tell her own story, again an unusual achievement for a servant; she is the central character around which all the other characters revolve and through which the themes of the novel are worked out.

One of these concerns virtue. Pamela's virtue is at stake throughout the first two thirds of the novel, until she consents to marry Mr B. Her determination to retain her virtue is laudable, although she could be accused of having designs above her station. As one commentator explained of eighteenth century society: "Middle and upper class young ladies have chastity most explicitly demanded of them ... but lower class girls are not supposed to set any such value on themselves".²⁹ Nevertheless, Pamela would have had a much easier life had she succumbed to her master. She is tricked, locked away and denied companionship, and withheld from her parents. But she remains true to her own sense of right and her happiness at the close of the novel is well-deserved.

Despite these anomalies in her character, the reality of Pamela is that she shows the mind and working life of a servant. It has been said of her that she is, "the first important heroine in English fiction who works for a living, and could earn a living by the work of her hands. She thinks like a servant, because she is one".³⁰

Throughout the novel, Pamela makes direct and indirect references to her humble background. When her mistress dies and the prop upon which she depended for her livelihood is thus lost, one of her first thoughts is of her potential poverty, while the four guineas that she received as a mourning gift are conveyed to her parents with the greatest secrecy.³¹ This "inelegant concern" with money betrays her lowliness.³² Moreover, work is nothing to her. She professes not to care about the work she must do when she returns to her parents. She talks of learning to "wash and scour, brew and bake" and of rough work which will make her hands "as red as a blood-pudding, and as hard as a beechen trencher".³³ Yet she returns to fantasy again with her idea of life at home with her parents. She imagines her life will include work "with a little time for reading", and with these, she and her parents could be "very happy over our peat fires".³⁴ But in all this she is deceiving herself. Though she would not believe it, even as a servant she has tasted enough of luxury and a cultured life through work in the mansion, not to be able to relinquish it as easily as that. In the same breath in which she talks of the hard work which lies ahead in her future, she also mentions the skills she has learned while serving her ladyship, singing and dancing, drawing and needlework. These distinctions between her life as it is in the great house and that with her parents, distinctions which existed for servants in reality too, already shows the mental separation she has made from her earlier existence, to which she will return only with great unease. She writes of "coming home" to her parents, yet in the next sentence she does not count herself as part of the same community, describing it as "your (that is, her parents') neighbourhood".³⁵ Also, when she initially decides not to take

the clothes given to her by her mistress, she tells Mrs Jervis, "I cannot wear them at my poor father's; for I should bring all the little village upon my back".³⁶ Her love of clothes is evident throughout the novel, from her first mention of the fine clothes belonging to her mistress, given to her by the latter's son. The "fine handkerchiefs" and "rich", "fine silk" clothes, dearly delight her, although elsewhere she makes a pretence about despising them.³⁷ Her behaviour is not really hypocrisy, but a natural desire to salvage what she can of a lifestyle she has become accustomed to, a dilemma possibly faced by many servants in the real world. The lure of fine things and a luxurious life was very great. Pamela is very quick to notice these. The rich settee upon which her master sat, for example, is the first thing she notes as she enters his room.³⁸ Possessions also mean a lot to Pamela. When she leaves Mr B's house, the servants give her presents - a silver snuff-box, "several yards of Holland" and a gold ring from Mr Longman the steward, which she accepts readily.³⁹ Such fine gifts as these anticipate her position later in the novel, as mistress of all these people. Even when this state is reached however, Pamela is locked in a bemusing state of lurching from one identity to another. She cannot fully throw off her servant status and values. Her hope is that she will always please her master, that is, her new husband, and the servants, and that none will have occasion to say "that I go too low, nor ... that I carry it too high".⁴⁰

Pamela is in many ways, therefore, a believable servant, much more so than Joseph Andrews or Moll Flanders. Her closest companions throughout the novel are servants with whom she works, and constant references are made to these. She sleeps, as we are told, with the housekeepers, Mrs Jervis and with Mrs Jewkes, in Lincolnshire.

Servants sharing the same bed was a common practice in households large and small. Again, witness the antics of Marmaduke Constable's unruly housekeeper in having her husband sleep in her bed, along with a maid servant!⁴¹ Pamela writes of sleeping in the loft at her parents' house, and of closets in her master's house and, on the occasions when Pamela's master approaches her in bed, she is in the servants' bedrooms.⁴²

Pamela is a typical servant in so far as we recognise several aspects of her working life and experiences that are true to the evidence of real life servants. But she is also stereotyped in that she is occasionally a passive character, who lets things happen to her; her protestations, such as they are, are ineffective against the will of her master. Stereotyped characters come in many forms. They can include a lot of exaggeration and be totally outrageous like Mrs Jewkes and Slipslop, or naive innocents such as Joseph Andrews. Footmen were also excellent vehicles for stereotyping; sophisticated, idle, rakish, impertinent, scheming, describe many footmen on stage, as well as some in real life too. Pert servant-maids, fashionable, purring french servants are all at home in plays, as are the clownish, slightly idiotic servants from waiting men to errand boys who supply the slapstick farce which was so visually entertaining.

Stereotyped characters may be fairly anonymous. By exhibiting set traits of character they are prevented from displaying much independence. Moreover, since servants were generally regarded as a low form of life, they could be manipulated at the author's will, without offending a section of society that particularly mattered. They were also dispensable. They could be made as much or as little of as was expedient to the plot or action, and retained

or discarded at will. But fictional servants can be made to answer to this treatment and thus show us a representation perhaps of the servant mind at work. They are given brief expressions of humanity as ordinary people, although some of them are treated almost as abnormal characters, who surface merely to be beaten back into submission with a rebuke or a box on the head. Nevertheless theirs is a key role as a suitable and effective antithesis to the superior, more powerful characters.

* * *

Servants are no more stereotyped than in the household manuals or domestic conduct books. Here in nearly every example, their duties and codes of conduct were outlined with "monotonous similarity."⁴³ Household manuals were instruction guides written for the benefit of servants and householders alike. They varied in form and purpose and, although not fictional, they nevertheless tended to present service more as an ideal than realistically. But they were part of a tradition of writing domestic conduct books. In 1760 Hannah Glasse published The Servants Directory, one of the best known of the eighteenth-century manuals, while writers such as William Gouge, Richard Baxter and Gervase Markham had been proffering advice on domestic relations in the preceding century.⁴⁴ Private individuals also wrote down advice and instructions for their household. One of the earliest of these was the Northumberland Household Book of 1520.⁴⁵ Mrs Elizabeth Forth, a Yorkshire housewife, also wrote a Memorandum Book in 1798 for the benefit of her servants with her own explicit instructions as to their duties.⁴⁶ Private books

were more practical than the printed works, which concern us here, because they pertained to a particular household. Printed works were of a more general nature and were written by enterprising authors who set themselves up as "experts" on household and domestic matters. They must not be taken as portraits of household life as it was necessarily lived and conducted, but as social commentators felt it ought to be lived within a general framework. They do not take into account the needs or peculiarities of individual households. Yet the manuals can be quite informative to the historian for the information they offer pertaining to servants' duties, ranks and household organisation.

These books achieved great popularity, but the extent of their circulation between different social levels must remain in some doubt, for the simple reason that many servants, to whom they were addressed, simply would not have had either the opportunity or ability to read them. But the books were obviously intended for employers and servants alike. Some of them contained recipes and advice on every conceivable aspect of housework. Very probably their popularity was as much due to their being in fashion as to the practical advice they offered. A housewife might well be deemed uninformed if she could not quote Mrs Haywood or Hannah Glasse.

Despite their practical uses, many of the printed manuals were also produced purely for commercial reasons, and to appeal to the public in a wider sense than merely for the advice they offered. This was true of one of the most popular and entertaining of them, the "mad looking Glass version of Susanna Whatman or Hannah Glasse", Jonathan Swift's "Directions to Servants" of 1745.⁴⁷ The work is a satirical look at the duties of servants and procedure that

surrounded household routine and etiquette. At the same time it warned indirectly of the consequences of an ill-managed household and the need for the regulation and training of servants.

Conduct books addressed specific subjects; servants and household management; female servants and religious matters were some. Attention to female servants' duties for example, was meticulous. Each office was considered in turn from the waiting women down to the scullion. Plagiarism was common; certain phrases appeared in several works; each writer merely adding her own ideas, opinions and recipes in the parts in between.⁴⁸ Most duties of the women servants were common throughout; these find parallels in many of the letters written by prospective employers setting out the qualities and accomplishments they expected a particular servant to possess. Thus personal cleanliness was one of the chief virtues of the cook, along with that of her equipment and surroundings. Snuff, for example, was not to be taken in the kitchen. Compare this with Jonathan Swift's mischievous recommendation to the cook that he or she combed their hair over the food as it was cooking in order to save time and improve their appearance.⁴⁹ The ladies' maid was expected to be able to sew and take care of linens, whilst a skill in penmanship was also generally recommended.

Hannah Glasse's Servants Directory or Housekeepers' Companion is one of the best known of the eighteenth-century manuals.⁵⁰ Her principal purpose was, as explained at the outset, to provide "everything necessary (for the young Servant) in regard to Household Affairs, and the Mistress saved a great deal of trouble in teaching them". The book was therefore clearly addressed to servants with the idea that their mistress should be relieved of much time and

effort spent with them, and have more leisure time of her own. Training took up a great deal of time, and one of the constant complaints of mistresses in their letters was that good servants who left their places were a nuisance because time would have to be spent seeking and training new ones. Hannah Glasse's tone was on the whole kindly and encouraging. She addressed the servant as if in conversation with her and at times seems almost maternal. The housemaid is addressed with the words, "Now for my little young housemaid", and she has encouraging words for her, "This may seem a great deal of work but it is nothing, done every Day and saves you immense trouble in rubbing and scrubbing once a week as most Servants do".⁵¹

Both Hannah Glasse and Mrs Haywood made the inevitable comparison between town and country. Hannah Glasse presented an idealised picture of work methods in the country: "I saw a Country-woman washing in her Rooms where she had no other place to dry them, and yet her Clothes by this Method were as white as Snow".⁵² Mrs Haywood's comparison is more sinister. She warned young girls from the country entering the town as servants to stay clear of "Emissaries at Inns watching the coming in of the Waggon" who hired them under pretence and thus "ensnared (them) into the service of the Devil".⁵³ The naivety of country people as opposed to the sophistication and cunning of urban dwellers was a theme already noted in earlier discussion.

Servants were warned against Slothfulness, sluttishness, tale-bearing, lying, wasting food and quarrelling. They were advised not to listen to fortune tellers, indulge in fashionable clothes or employ charwomen to do their work and thus risk the security of the household.⁵⁴

Maidservants were also warned of "temptations from your Master's Son" adding that they should not be lured by promises of marriage

as "Examples of this kind (ie the marriage taking place) are very rare, and as seldom happy". Also to be avoided were gentlemen lodgers, who, coming home late after drinking, made advances to the maidservant sitting up alone. Mrs Haywood's advice was to "get out of their way as fast as you can, and shew that tho' you are a Servant, you have a Spirit above bargaining for your Virtue ... ".⁵⁵ We are thus reminded of the less endearing aspects of a maidservant's life. The unsociable hours and loneliness, as well as the lack of respect which was afforded to her as a mere servant. Some of the advice was far from idealistic.

Mrs Anne Barker, in The Complete Servant Maid or the Young Woman's Best Companion, also had sound advice to offer maidservants which appears to have been borne out by evidence we have seen in earlier chapters. In her opinion one of a maidservant's most important virtues was her good temper by which she may avoid the anger of her master or mistress when they saw that her deficiency "is not occasioned by obstinancy or indolence".⁵⁶ Moreover, both she and Mrs Haywood exhorted maidservants to remember that apprentices were higher in status than them, and to beware that their behaviour to them could not be construed as having ulterior motives.⁵⁷ Mrs Barker also warned servants not to "accept of invitations to other servants to go and feast at the cost of their masters and mistresses".⁵⁸ One of the reasons for this was that it placed them "under an obligation of returning the treat". Townley's play, "High Life Below Stairs" was enough to frighten employers into banning this behaviour.

Mrs Barker's advice regarding the housekeeper also reflected current opinion and practice. This office was to be held by a capable woman

of middle age who would be virtual mistress of the house when the family were away.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, her charge over the lower servants was to be executed "with tenderness, not exacting more from them than is consistent with humanity, nor ever exaggerating their faults ... ". She recognised the personal dignity of even the lesser servants, stressing that they were no less human than their superiors: "By whatever means either man or woman procures a livelihood, if it be in a honest way, they ought not to be treated with contempt ... and the woman who does the most servile work in a family, is entitled to respect in proportion as her service is laborious ... ".⁶⁰

The stoical acceptance of the servant's lot was a common theme in manuals with a strong religious bias. Richard Baxter exhorted servants to, "Take your condition as chosen for you by God, and take yourselves as his servants ... and expect from God your chief reward ... ".⁶¹ Seventeenth century writers and moralists, many of them instilled with Puritan ideals, dwelt on this theme much more than eighteenth century writers.⁶² Every action and relationship was to be motivated by religious principles; there was very little flexibility and no alternative to this ideology. Richard Baxter and John Locke were two of the staunchest advocates of Christian principles being the guiding light in family relationships and they were unforgiving to those who did not adhere to these. The strong language used indicates this; Richard Baxter writes of servants who visited assemblies and alehouse as an "infection", which would spread like a contagion within the household; he also regarded weaknesses of character and misdemeanours as "intolerable frailties" bred by a weaker class.⁶³ Both he and John Locke classed servants along with children, in possession of as little maturity and responsibility. Interestingly, Baxter advises masters to let their servants learn to read, "(at spare hours) if they be of any capacity or willingness",⁶⁴ so it was not simply that

he thought of servants as so low as not to require or benefit from this skill. Godly masters felt that their servants should be able to read, if for no other reason than for the salvation of their souls, by reading the Bible. Locke was less charitable to servants.⁶⁵ Servants with religious principles would enhance family cohesion and happiness. The necessity of choosing such a servant was therefore of utmost importance. Richard Baxter warned masters that, "Servants being an integral part of the Family, who contribute much to the holiness or unholiness of it and so the unhappiness or misery of it, it concerns the Masters to be careful in their choice".⁶⁶ Honesty, humility and fidelity were the fundamental virtues of a good servant, and most authors agreed that one who possessed these traits of character had the makings of an excellent servant.

A further sign of godliness and respect of one's master, was to suffer correction at his hands even though that correction was unjustly proffered. Be he "altogether innocent ... yet an angry and passionate contradicting his Master, may chance to be of very ill consequence".⁶⁷

A godly servant was thus an ideal, eschewing love, fidelity and obedience in all things to his master. In reality, a truly godly servant was also an impossibility. Seventeenth and eighteenth-century moralists wrote with "pious wishful thinking".⁶⁸ Such paragons of perfection and self-sacrifice existed largely in their minds. In reality the opposite was often true. Many Masters, though not all, increasingly cared little for their servants' beliefs and morals, guided more by the economic aspect of the

relationship. Often servants and masters were ill-matched.⁶⁹ Conduct books and other didactic literature were a Utopian reflection of things as they ought to be, not always as they really were. On the other hand, some authors acknowledged certain practices and behaviour, including those of pride and arrogance, of which many servants were guilty. Two faults which were directed repeatedly against servants were those of pride in appearance, and drunkenness. Authors found plenty of ammunition to expound at length upon these subjects.⁷⁰ The question of dress, which gave servants most cause for pride, was apparently cause for concern. The author of The Servants' Calling pointed out that "as Pride breeds Rebellion in kingdoms, it does the same in Families", and there were certainly cases of jealousy amongst servants who resented fellow servants receiving gowns and other presents from their master or mistress.⁷¹ Employers were partly blamed for this behaviour. The Servants' Calling pointed out that those "thinking themselves honour'd by the Habit of their Domesticks", were nevertheless "instrumental ... to those Inconveniences they afterwards complain of".⁷² Thomas Seaton also argued that "Treats and Entertainment ... will go deep into Wages if they are but small, and sensibly abate them if large".⁷³ Moreover, repeated warnings against drunkenness, bad company, excesses in dress, lack of respect for authority and so on, suggest that these were common problems faced by masters and ones which contributed to the "servant problem" in the eighteenth century, giving rise to such verbal and written attacks on servants. One of the best known and most entertaining writers who discussed the problems of servant-keeping was Daniel Defoe. Defoe was no particular friend of servants. Indeed, he was not sympathetic towards the lower sort of people generally. His major criticism

of them, as well as servants, was the age-old one that they did not work as hard, or were as respectfully deferential, as they had been in the past. He was firmly rooted in the middling ranks of society and wrote from an employer's point of view. But like other contemporaries, he saw servants as necessary to perform a service to their betters; thus he wrote that "with all these Inconveniences, we cannot possibly do without these Creatures ...".⁷⁴ While he was happy to employ servants, he was also highly critical of them, no doubt especially as it was to his profit commercially.

In neither The Great Law of Subordination Consider'd, nor Every-Body's Business is No-Body's Business did Defoe have much to say that was complimentary about servants.⁷⁵ Indeed his tone was often unfriendly. In The Great Law of Subordination he stated that England was "rather the paradise than the purgatory of servants". Apprentices who once "submitted to the most servile Employments of the Families in which they served" now would not even sweep the shop floor, nor clean their own shoes, preferring to keep late hours in the tavern.⁷⁶ Moreover, apprentices who were the sons of wealthy gentlemen expected to have their own footmen to wait upon them. Lower servants, Defoe claimed, were equally guilty of insubordination and of aspiring above their place. Men servants displayed "Sauciness, Drunkenness, and abusive language" while with women servants it was their "gaiety, fine Cloathes, Laces, Hoops ... Patches and Paint", that so irked him.⁷⁷ Defoe also addressed the perennial problem of wages. Besides being less humble, he complained that servants were, also, lamentably, more grasping and self-seeking. "I never knew a Servant or a Workman

in England, one farthing the better for the Encrease of his Wages" he declared, "their whole Enquiry now a Days, is how little they shall do, how much they shall have".⁷⁸ But servants were not always to blame. Masters' follies were partly to blame for servants' bad attitudes. "Easy Masters make saucy Servants", he declared and amply illustrated this point.⁷⁹ Masters who overpaid their servants were at fault, as were those who showered gifts in kind on them, such as clothes and trinkets. By thus encouraging servants to dress and behave above their station, Defoe announced that, "the poor know not what it is to be Servants, so the Rich, I must acknowledge, know not how to be Masters".⁸⁰

But, for all his criticism, Defoe's tone was inconsistent and sometimes confusing. He sometimes made quite vicious attacks on servants; at others he adopted a less virulent attitude which almost suggests a sneaking fondness for them.⁸¹ These changes of mood, suggest a man slightly afraid of servants, and perhaps not without cause. Servants' increased self-awareness and instincts for survival sometimes made them quite powerful. With the knowledge they possessed of their employers' private lives and households, there was nothing except their consciences to stop them from spreading gossip. Servants were often the agents for the dissemination of news and tastes from one level of society to another. Higher wages also gave servants increased spending and bargaining powers, and more choice of place, and they soon discovered how to play off one master against another. In addition their greater numbers gave them a sense of corporate identity. Collectively therefore, they sometimes appeared a fairly formidable body. But to some extent, Defoe and others like him, were as much a cause of the

"servant problem" as the servants themselves; their increasing complaints served only to exacerbate the situation. Masters too, wanted the best of both worlds. They wanted servants to be menial, subservient and loyal; at the same time they withdrew their traditional obligations to them in favour of a more contractual based relationship.

Richard Dodsley, a contemporary of Defoe, wrote a counter attack against the criticisms of Defoe and others. Dodsley, an ex-servant, had started adult life as a footman, an office against which much criticism was directed.⁸² He was one of a small and fairly unique group whose moderate success at writing enabled them to leave service and pursue this as a career. His poem, Servitude was partly written in answer to Defoe's Every-Body's Business is No-Body's Business.⁸³ Because of Dodsley's sometimes unpleasant experiences as a servant we may believe that some of the points expressed by him were heartfelt. The poem takes a defensive attitude on behalf of servants, but it is not without touches of cynicism. At the outset, Dodsley declared "I presume it will be objected against me, that I have left Swearing, Whoring and Drinking, the most notorious Faults, and those for which we are more particularly Famous, quite untouch'd ..."⁸⁴ His concern was mainly to try to get employers to put themselves into the shoes of their servants and see things from this point of view. According to Dodsley, public opinion had a large part to play in giving servants a bad name: "we are look'd upon as incapable of performing any Service of a higher Nature than Waiting at Table, carrying a Message, or the like; we are not thought fit to ... transact any Thing which requires Thought or Conduct. And in this View it is not probable that we should ever possess any Place in Gentleman's

Esteem, beyond that of his Dog, or his Horse ... ".⁸⁵ Servants too, according to Dodsley, were the first to be blamed "when any Thing happens amiss, which might possibly have been prevented".⁸⁶ Harsh words, Dodsley reminded his audience, grated upon servants, as naturally as upon any human being. It was "one of the hardest lessons a Servant has to learn; to hear ourselves despis'd, degraded, and call'd a thousand Fools and Blockheads upon every Trifling Occasion ... ".⁸⁷ But he touched upon a central issue in the concept of service when he said that "some Gentlemen conclude when a Man becomes a Servant, he ought no longer to look upon himself as a human Creature ...".⁸⁸ Dodsley did not attempt to deny faults in servants, but he did point out reasons for some of them, which often implicated masters.

Much of what Dodsley said was pertinent to the issues surrounding servants in reality. He like others, such as Oliver Grey, also addressed the subject of vails. Possibly the controversy over vails brought other faults of servants to public attention.⁸⁹ But Dodsley was one of the few spokesmen for the servant class rather than against it, who wrote for a mass market. He and a few others like him were as rare as the ordinary servant in reality whose voice could be heard over and above those of his superiors.

The effects of household manuals and conduct books, unlike those of fictional works and drama, is almost impossible to gauge. The extent of their readership is largely unquantifiable and in particular, there is no way of knowing whether servants themselves, at whom they were directed, ever read or even knew of them. Nevertheless, the popularity of certain writers, such as Daniel Defoe,

Hannah Glasse and Richard Baxter, to name but a few, ensured their circulation amongst a certain section of the population, usually the middle and upper orders. In large and wealthy establishments they may even have found their way onto the steward's or housekeeper's shelves.

The themes and opinions discussed therein reflected current attitudes and issues relating to servants, and domestic matters in general. But we must be wary of thinking that the problem was actually greater than it was. Authors were intent upon commercial success and like all such things, the debate may have been hotter on the printed page than in reality. Nevertheless, masters in real life suffered from bad servants; for almost all the faults of which servants were accused in writing, an example can be found of them having been committed in reality. Some would say that there was no end to servants' perfidy and rebelliousness. But good servants did exist. Like much of the historical evidence, conduct books often suggest only a bad side to servants. Much of what is recorded of servants in private documents or written for public consumption by people such as Daniel Defoe, concerns only their misdemeanours. Fiction, in the form of dramatic works and novels, can counter this, since it demonstrates the activities not only of bad servants, but of good ones too, however insignificant these may be. In addition we also see servants as more rounded characters through fictional representation. They think and speak for themselves before our eyes, and do not rely on the reports of anyone else to bring them to the reader's notice. Although fiction has limitations as far as historical accuracy is concerned, it can nevertheless bring about a cultural acceptance of servants as humans, with emotions and aspirations, and not just silent and invisible forms.

Having said this, the treatment of servants in fiction and conduct books is largely without much respect for their feelings, although with some exceptions. A reader of works intended for household management and domestic relations, and moral edification, gains a number of impressions of servants, none of them particularly commendable. According to these writers, servants were dispensable, easily swayed and manipulated, childlike, argumentative, self-serving and generally lacking in warmth of feeling or emotions that characterise ordinary human beings. In plays and novels, they are often portrayed as comic characters for example, or buffoons larger than life and grotesque, or otherwise self-seeking and dissatisfied with their lot in life. Thus while pointing out that servants are people, fictional and other literary works generally fail to accord them the same degree of respect and consideration that they would to people of higher status.

Rather than doing justice to the servant cause, fiction tends more often than not to confirm and verify many of those attitudes held towards them in reality. But, as much as literature was used in criticism of servants, it was also used as a way of pointing a moral. This often came from the mouths of servants themselves, or through their own actions. Admittedly, at such times, the fault was not always on the servant's side. Servants occasionally had to point out to their masters that the treatment they received was unmerited and unjust. Masters could wrong their servants as much as the other way around. Many a time their actions on stage and in novels set a very bad example to their servants, a point which the latter were not slow to recognise. Fictional works were very good at pointing a moral and meting out justice. Most servants - and masters - receive justice at the end of the work.

Literary evidence makes a useful and lighthearted contribution to a study of domestic service. It offers an insight into society's attitudes to, and opinions of, servants and an antidote to the biased and sometimes dry documentary evidence at our disposal. Although much of this must largely be taken as poetic licence, it is an interesting supplement to factual and documentary evidence and one which is equally thought-provoking about the nature of the master and servant relationship.

CONCLUSION

This investigation of service and master and servant relations in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, has inevitably drawn us into the social and political attitudes and issues which concerned society in this period. However much we may conclude that service was a unique institution, and in a sense apart from the rest of society, it nevertheless embodied many of the central and fundamental ideals of that society. I want here to outline the key themes which have emerged from the study and identify the changes in society which took place over the period, and ultimately within service itself.

Service affected many, perhaps most, young people in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Those who became servants did so often in their early teens and generally remained in service until they reached their twenties. Service thus occupied their most formative years between childhood and adulthood. Most went into service when they became of an age to earn their living, and left their parental home in order to ease the burden on the family economy. Most also left service when they married, having saved a little during their years as servants to set up an independent unit within the community. Service was thus a transitional occupation which most entering did not expect to stay in for more than a few years. Servants were generally young and mobile, since they did not normally stay with one master for the whole of their careers. The most common length of time for which servants were hired was one year, after which their contracts were renewed yearly. But lengths of service differed according to the type of household and master one served, and according to one's own function as a servant. Although few stayed in one place all the time, there were indeed servants who stayed for many years with the same master.

One of the main characteristics of service in this period as opposed to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was its diversity. Servants existed at all levels of the social scale, and therefore worked in different environments, and different classes of household. The varying types of servant, farm servants, labourers and apprentices, as well as upper and ordinary domestic servants, reflected the social and economic differences between their employers. The type of servant also determined lengths of service, mobility, the degree of contact with other social spheres, the range of skills required and not least, prospects beyond service. Farm servants, for example, were extremely mobile and tended to move yearly from one master to the next. Apprentices normally undertook to serve their master for seven years, and may have travelled some distance to their place of service. Domestic servants, on the other hand, stayed for varying lengths of time. Upper servants in a large and wealthy household sometimes stayed longer with one employer than the lower and more menial servants, although the opportunities for promotion may have tempted some ordinary servants to stay for longer than normal. Very often a single servant in a yeoman household or one from the middling or lower ranks stayed for several years and became almost a member of the family. This diversity, and the fact that servants were present in households of all ranks, set service in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries apart from service in the nineteenth.

There were further distinctions between servants which made their experiences quite different. They were divided into upper and lower ranks, thereby mirroring the hierarchical divisions in society at large. The prospects for those at the top of the servant scale were obviously better

than for those lower down; upper servants themselves were sometimes of gentle birth. The differences between upper and lower servants also reflected different reasons for entering service, and different expectations from it. Moreover, the servant hierarchy was linked to the display of ritual and ceremony by which the power of the upper ranks of society over the lower was manifested. Masters who kept upper servants did so partly out of a desire to publicise and promote their self-image and status. By employing many servants who counted among them high ranking ones as well as a complement of liveried servants, they pronounced to the world at large how powerful, wealthy and influential they were. Servants gave meaning and identity to members of certain social ranks. But divisions of rank and status did not exist solely amongst servants of the gentry. It extended to servants at all levels of society. Farm servants, for example, were ranked according to their skills. Nevertheless, servants in households below the level of the gentry existed not so much to maintain a style of life, as a way of life, and a sometimes precarious household economy.

Servants gratified society's need for identity and status. They participated in a sort of two-way relationship with their employers but yet paradoxically, they were in a sense cut off from society. Servants were a part of society, and yet in many respects apart from it. Ordinary and lower servants especially, had little by way of status or privileges. When they became servants they effectively relinquished their freedom to their masters and in theory subjected themselves totally to his will. Indeed the place of servants in society was largely indefinable. They existed through their masters' identities rather than their own. Even their masters' behaviour towards them sometimes implied that they were non-persons, without human feelings; they were expected to obey him in all

things, even those which went against the grain. Servants were accorded less identity than even a pauper or vagrant in the outside world. The "psychological space" which even the lowest pauper possessed was in effect denied to servants. It was no wonder that demands such as those which society placed on its servants bred resentment and discontent amongst their ranks and accorded a stigma to service which was never shaken off. This nevertheless lies at the heart of the whole concept of service. Servants were not accorded full civil rights as long as they were servants, they theoretically had no say over their own lives whatsoever.

It was within the household that servants really came into their own. It is at this individual level from which our perspective of service is largely taken. Here, more detailed relationships are revealed as they are played out against a background of internal relations. The importance of the family in the later seventeenth century was paramount, as it had been from the fifteenth century. Sanctioned in the Scriptures, the family was the traditional and basic unit against which men measured their relationships with both God and their fellow men.

At the outset of our period the stability and good order of the family paralleled that within the state. Many mediaeval and early modern principles and ideals still applied to this most fundamental part of man's experience. The family included the father and master at the head, his wife, children and servants. Members of the extended, non-nuclear family were sometimes present in the household, but this was the exception rather than the rule in early modern England. Servants were as much a part of the

family as their master's children, and they were more or less equal to them in status. The degree of affection that grew up between a master and servant varied according to the type of household. It was not always so close as that between Samuel Pepys or, in a different way, Oliver Heywood and their maidservants, but when family and servants lived in such close proximity to each other, both physically and mentally, it was almost inevitable that some sort of relationship over and above that dictated by the contract, should develop. Even in a large and wealthy household, personal and upper servants could become close to their masters and mistresses, although this was rarely the case with the lower ones, who hardly ever came into contact with them. The structure of the family and its internal relations remained virtually the same throughout our period. But slight changes did take place which were the result of wider social and economic forces; these will be discussed later.

Patriarchalism was the means by which a master expressed his power over his dependents in early modern England. It infiltrated the whole social scale and affected all household and social relations. It remained largely intact throughout much of the eighteenth century although by this time in a slightly different form. It was most obvious within the intimate relationships of the household sphere, wherein masters of all ranks practised it, but it had repercussions on society as a whole. Patriarchalism was expressed through various forms of authority, control, protection and patronage. It operated on a reciprocal basis with both parties, upper and lower, owing obligations towards the other, be they a master and servant, or a gentleman and his tenant and so on.

The effects of patriarchalism are best seen in the upper levels of the social scale where the distinctions of rank between superior and inferior were greater. It was a powerful force in social terms, and formed a most interesting interplay between servants and masters. The patronage of a great or influential man was valuable to a person of whatever rank, but especially so to a servant who, according to the status of the person he or she served, was in theory granted a certain social superiority over others. The servant hierarchy itself came into play here; only upper servants were theoretically higher than a tradesman or person of lower gentry status or below. Thus a steward or valet effectively looked down on tradesmen and gentry of middling ranks, or were at least equal in status to them. But a groom or a chambermaid could not claim the same superiority. The servant and social scales were therefore more or less parallel; the lower down the servant's position the less influence he or she wielded. Nevertheless all servants who served an important man felt a sense of pride or superiority over others in lesser households. Servants were, despite the uncertainty of their own status, nevertheless very conscious of rank and place, and some of them were more hierarchical in attitude than the masters they served.

Because of this "cultural emulation" from below, servants, who were largely the initiators of this, formed an important link between the various layers of society.¹ They encouraged the dissemination of cultural ideals for several reasons. They were present in households of all ranks; they imitated the lifestyles and fashions of their employers, especially of the upper ranks; they worked in households of superior status to their own homes, and because of their mobility they came into contact with masters and people of varying ranks and degrees. Servants were perhaps the only

body of workers who experienced such different cultural and economic environments to their own and translated certain of the attitudes and manners for their own use. The outcome of this was frequently opposition from social critics of the day, who regretted that many of their actions marked a dangerous deviation from their true and lowly station in life. But by so doing servants bridged the gaps between the various layers of the social scale. They were an important "cultural nexus", and undoubtedly influenced the ideas and to some extent, the behaviour of members of different ranks to one another.² In this sense they also occupied an influential position in society because of their power to communicate all sorts of information to different people, not just on a social level, but to and from individuals also. A master's secrets and private life were not safe with gossiping servants!

The attitudes and behaviour of masters towards their servants is fairly well documented in letters and diaries. Other hints of financial arrangements which allude to the relationship can also be found in account books, while judicial records also offer clues to this. It is naturally much harder to judge what the relationship meant to servants and how they reacted to their masters.

The period 1650 to 1780 witnessed a subtle change within the master and servant relationship, a change which accelerated in the eighteenth century. It is difficult to pinpoint the exact causes of this, although historians have suggested that the importance of the wage and the growing independence of servants gave rise to a weakening of the reciprocal obligations upon which service was theoretically based. Critics of the time would seem to confirm this. These changes were spurred on by servants themselves as well as by masters, who in turn responded to external social, cultural and economic

changes. Nevertheless, the patriarchal relationship which had existed from the middle ages was still prominent. Masters may not have been their servants' guardians in the old sense of the word, but they still held considerable sway over their lives.

Thus servants were contracted to their masters from the outset. This was an agreement by which a servant was to serve a master and accept his authority for the duration of their stay, in return for board and lodging, a wage, and their master's care and protection. The master agreed to provide his servant with clothes, food and shelter as well as care for his or her spiritual and physical welfare. The relationship was in theory a reciprocal one, involving obligations on both sides, but also making both partners dependent on one another. The theory behind the relationship was laid down in countless manuals and guides which outlined how it should ideally be conducted.

In reality there were many different types of masters as well as servants, and the range of attitudes and behaviour was equally as various depending upon the individuals. There were masters who were so aloof from their servants as to be almost indifferent to them; there were those who treated them as if they were non-persons. This was an outright abuse of authority. At the other extreme, masters who were over-familiar with their servants, who undressed before them and discussed their private affairs within earshot of them were equally bad although still within the accepted conventions of the day. A master's treatment of his servants had to maintain the correct balance of authority, not too much to oppress nor too little to be held in contempt. There is fortunately more evidence of masters who were moderate, who cared for them during illness and made educative and religious provision for

them in their households, who gave them a small token when they departed in recognition of their work, and who provided for those in old age who had given long and loyal service. Very often, the relationship grew beyond the traditional theoretical precepts, to include no small amount of affection and even friendship on either side.

Social relations in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries took the form of a system of social interaction based on the rituals of authority and deference. Patriarchalism was part of this system. Deference was an inherent part of the relationship between superior and inferior, master and servant.³ It was automatically imposed on the powerless by those in authority, and was as much an obligation on the servant's part towards his master, as a master's authority demanded certain obligations towards his servants. But it could hide much more deep-seated feelings of anger or resentment towards that authority. Calculated deference could often not be distinguished from the sincere form, but it harboured undercurrents of contempt and anger which were potentially damaging to the relationship. Deference also had to be earned to some extent. A master who did not fulfill his obligations towards his servants would not earn their respect or loyalty, and his authority would thus be undermined. Again therefore, a correct balance of the two was necessary to maintain the order of the household and thus of society as a whole.

A master secured his servants' loyalty and obedience by means of manipulative techniques. These included wages, and the proffering of small rewards for good work. Nevertheless, there were many servants who offered their obedience freely and sincerely without the need for incentives. Claims in the eighteenth century that

servants were becoming less deferential led to peculiar variations on the perennial theme of the "servant problem". But the fault did not lie totally at the door of servants. When masters began to withdraw some of their traditional obligations, and increasingly disassociated themselves from their servants, they thereby removed some of the incentives and encouragement which servants had previously enjoyed; servants thus declined to offer their full co-operation and duty. The waning of these reciprocal obligations in the late eighteenth century coincided with the onset of dramatic social change.

We must reiterate that these obligations had never been idyllic or uncomplicated. One of the aims of this study has been to investigate the master and servant relationship from both sides, the servant's as well as the master's. This has raised interesting implications about the psychology of servanthood. The regulations imposed upon servants by society and by their individual masters, sometimes caused problems of discipline; feelings of anger and frustration manifested themselves at times in acts of violence or theft. But while it was the powerful in society who demanded obedience and total submission from their servants, it was the same people who despised and scorned them, who made them scapegoats for many social problems. The stigma of service was a burden that many servants could not escape and felt very deeply. Some tried to rid themselves of it by leaving service as soon as the opportunity allowed, or else by aspiring to be like their employers. Service was a different experience depending on the type of household and master one served, but it was undoubtedly one which few remained in for many years, in the belief, sometimes misguided, that there were better circumstances beyond.

Despite the need to recognise such complications, it remains clear that the changes in society in the eighteenth century ultimately affected the relationship between master and servant.⁴ Authority and deference shifted position slightly, causing reverberations throughout the whole social scale. On the face of things much remained the same. We must be cautious not to overestimate changes in the way in which society was organized, or in the supply and demand of labour for example. The changes were more subtle, involving relations between the upper and lower halves of the social scale. They marked an important progression in social relations for the future.

Changes in the position of servants in the family were also connected with changes in society at large. The composition of the family itself did not change much, but relations between some of its members did. As part of these processes, the place of servants within the family was slowly transformed. At the outset of the period they were very much more a part of the family than later on. Broadly speaking, while the nuclear family, the father and head, wife and children grew more affectionate, their relations with their dependents and non-nuclear members grew less close; they effectively closed ranks of such members. Servants were the losers since their relations with their masters had served as an intermediary between them and the social world. The contract between a master and servant was also affected. Whereas before this had involved more of a bond between the two, with reciprocal obligations, it later became merely a contractual relationship, dominated by the wage. Its function as being central to the order and organization of society as a whole, declined.

The changes within society have already been discussed at the

outset of this study. The "polarisation" of society which has been identified as early as the seventeenth century, caused the gap between the upper and lower social spheres to widen.⁵ The patriarchal principals which had previously existed to bind superior and inferior did so now to a much lesser degree. There was a general abandoning of mutual responsibilities between the two, so that although authority and deference still remained, they did so largely without the obligations incumbent upon the upper and lower orders to hold towards each other.⁶ The upper orders were no longer prepared to "oversee" the lower ones through patronage and protection, although they still expected their servants to be submissive and obedient, and complained bitterly at what they regarded as servants' growing insubordination. In fact, it was not so much general insubordination as an increase in independence brought about by a regular wage and less masterly control. Subordination really did become negotiation, as one eminent historian has suggested.⁷ The activities and behaviour of the lower orders were no longer so rigidly regulated, and so they began to find a collective voice.

In a sense, eighteenth-century society seemed more relaxed than the early seventeenth. This was largely due to a reaction after the constitutional and social upheavals of the mid-seventeenth century, when authority and loyalty had seriously come into question. More basically, as population growth slowed down towards the end of the seventeenth century, and agricultural output caught up, society was by implication less pressurised.⁸ Historians have noticed this attitude to be already characteristic of post-Restoration society. The eighteenth century also provided a contrast with the class tensions which were to follow in the nineteenth century.

As we have seen, servants were criticised for being independent and for their seeming lack of loyalty. A weakening of the principles of authority and order, and perhaps a simultaneous growth in individualism were among the wider social causes of their greater freedom. More directly, subtle changes in the master and servant relationship involved the slackening of traditional obligations on both sides, which ultimately had the effect of releasing servants from their masters' hitherto overwhelming authority. In response to these changes, servants began to pursue their own interests more noticeably. There was great competition in a lucrative market, for example, for the best posts and profits from service. Yet there was little that could be done to reverse this tide of change, and despite the rising volume of criticism levelled at servants, there was the faintest hint that some members of society rather enjoyed pitting their wits against lively and insolent servants, and that they provided much more entertainment and diversion than their more staid and passive counterparts. The eighteenth century had a sense of frivolity and extravagance about it especially at the highest levels of society that seemed to spill over into its relations with its servants.

Nevertheless, continuity was retained from the previous century. Two important aspects of the master and servant relationship still existed. Firstly, patriarchy had by no means died out, and more conscientious masters retained many of the old values and precedents. Secondly, while the social elite of the eighteenth century generally preferred to keep their servants at a distance, they were nevertheless just as dependent on them as before, to maintain their lifestyle and public image. Noblemen and gentlemen, although gradually reducing the numbers of servants in their vast households, continued to need them in their egocentric lust for

power and self-aggrandisement. At a more basic level they needed servants to help them fulfill everyday needs and functions.⁹ To the outside world then, little had changed. Servants who appeared better dressed and more self-assured were symptomatic of the rising levels of prosperity and the changing manners of the age. The real changes came within the master and servant relationship itself. This appeared to be generally less sociable in its increasing tendency to hide servants away behind the doors of the household, and banish them from the family apartments. Gradually, it came more and more to represent the master and servant relationship of the nineteenth century which was more matter-of-fact and business-like than either of the preceding two centuries, and lacked much of the affection of the earlier one.

In 1780 society was moving irrevocably towards industrialism. Trade and manufacturers were claiming a substantial proportion of the available labour, and much work was now undertaken on a piece-rate basis. In a county such as Yorkshire with its growing industrial towns of the West Riding, this change was increasing in momentum towards the end of the century, and affecting all branches of labour. Masters, by releasing many full-time servants from their obligations, virtually helped create a body of more or less casual workers, especially in the countryside.¹⁰ These men and women formed a pool of labourers who were thus free to migrate to the towns. In fact, service took on a more casual nature, except perhaps in the houses of the great and wealthy. These were the last bastions of the servant hierarchy. They survived into the twentieth century, where servants were still compartmentalised, and where the system of authority still retained many of its earlier overtones.

Nevertheless service in the nineteenth century was notably different to that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, embedded as it was in a more class-conscious society and devoid of many of the ideals that characterised it in the earlier two. In the latter period service applied mainly to domestic servants working within upper or middle-class households, most of whom were women. These are characteristics which are more recognisable to us today. In fact, it is the nineteenth century which has largely shaped our notions of service in the twentieth century. The socialibility and paternalism which was part of the earlier relationship, is almost an alien concept to us. But, it is the nineteenth century that allows us to get closer to the servants themselves. For once we can begin to see what servanthood was like for the people concerned, because of autobiographies and oral accounts which tell the story straight from the servants' mouths. These valuable sources have been made use of by historians investigating service in the nineteenth century, and from these later accounts, we may trace themes and attitudes that we recognise amongst servants in the earlier period. Indeed, there were many enduring aspects of service and the master and servant relationship at an individual level that survived into the twentieth century, despite the broader changes that were imposed upon it from outside.

Finally, we should consider what this study has demonstrated in terms of its regional importance, concerning Yorkshire in particular. A county of such social, cultural and environmental contrasts, facilitates an investigation of service. Yorkshire had its fair share of wealthy and titled families, and in its possession of one of the few great cities in the country

at this time, and one or two other towns of growing national importance, it more than made its mark on the country's economic and cultural prosperity and progression. Indeed the changes which took place in society in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are most profound in a county which was rapidly transformed by the effects of the industrial revolution, yet still remained remarkably diverse. Despite the growing urban sprawls the north retained its rural way of life, and the county town of York was still one of the greatest centres of craftsmanship and culture in England.

The evidence from Yorkshire provides supporting evidence for trends delineated for other areas of the country. National evidence, by which we often mean that based on works printed in London, can easily be applied to the experience of servants and masters in Yorkshire, as elsewhere. Ideas from the capital, thought to be the centre of civilised social and cultural life, were current in provincial Yorkshire, despite the fact that it was thought to be a far-flung and semi-backward place. Gentlemen brought many new fashions and ideas from London and abroad back with them when they returned to their Yorkshire homes. The concentration of gentry houses and centres such as York, Hull, and later Leeds and Doncaster, meant that the county kept pace with the fashionable society of London, and these ideas naturally filtered through to other parts and social groups within it, through the various channels.

But despite the similarity with national and other evidence, what this study has done has been to balance out the work done on servants to date. This has largely centred on London, and major printed works, such as the writings of Pepys, Defoe and their contemporaries. It has shown that there is a wealth of other material and regional evidence to draw upon. Good collections of family and estate papers are held in public record offices, while many more are still in

private possession, and remain an untapped but no doubt valuable resource. Further important evidence, although perhaps less rich, is provided by official records, notably Quarter Sessions and Assize Court records. The Quarter Sessions for the West Riding of Yorkshire, for example, are by far the most detailed and complete. Together, the evidence shows that there was an important and wide-reaching network of communication in the seventeenth century, and a flow of ideas out of London. This, naturally, was initiated and largely maintained by the gentry and wealthy elite, who alone had the means to adopt these fashions, and travelled constantly to and from London. But it also confirms the idea that servants were a "cultural nexus", a means of disseminating ideas both horizontally and vertically through the various social layers, by virtue of the fact that they moved amongst, and had contact with different ranks of people. They were in effect a pivotal element in society, a sort of focal point for social ideas, and a means of closing the gaps between different social ranks.

The importance of service in society in the period from 1650 to 1780 should therefore not be underestimated; it was, as we have argued, one of the characteristic and distinctive institutions in England during those years. Although the majority of servants were considered to be so low as not to count on the social scale, their unique circumstances enabled them to move between its various layers almost as if invisible, and experience different cultural and social environments. Servants formed a very important link between different social levels. In addition, because they existed on the edge of society, contributing to it but not really taking a full part in it, they afford an interesting and useful insight into society from their particular standpoint. A study of service

provides valuable social comment on the nature and values of a particular society and on the way in which it saw itself. Servants may have been society's minions, but they were also fairly influential within it. Again however, the process worked two ways. Social forces impinged on the master and servant relationship, and later transformed it, upsetting its theoretical balance and creating an acute shift in the nature of the relationship which went hand in hand with the changeover from the early modern, to the modern state in England.

APPENDIX

INDENTURE OF APPRENTICESHIP*

This Indenture Made the second day of Febbruary in the two & thirtieth Year of the Reign of Our Sovereign Lord Charles the second by the grace of God, King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, &c, Anno Dom. One Thousand six hundred and eighty - Between Mark Forster & Barbara his wife of the Citty of York Joyner on the Party, and Mary Lund daughter of Lawrence Lund deceased on the other Party, Witnesseth, that the said Mary Lund with her own free will, and consent of her friends, hath put and bound herselfe Apprentice to and with the said Mark & his wife to be Learned and Taught in the Trade, Mistery, or Occupation of huswifery sowing & knitting which they now useth, and after the manner of an Apprentice with them his Executors, Administrators, or Assignes, to serve from the Day of the Date hereof, untill the full end, and for the whole Term of six Years from thence next after ensueing, and fully to be compleated and ended: During all which said Term, the said Apprentice shall dwell and abide with her said Master and him his Executors, Administrators, or Assignes, shall truly and faithfully serve, his secrets shall keep, her Masters Commandments (being lawfull and honest) every way shall she be ready to do: She shall do no dammage or hurt unto her said Master, (nor none of his) neither in Body, Goods, or Name; nor cause, consent or see to be done by others, but she to her full power shall let and hinder the same, and forthwith her said Master thereof warn: Taverns, nor Ale-houses of custome, she shall not frequent nor use, except it be in and about her Masters business there to be done: She shall not Play at Cards, Dice, Tables, Bowles, or any other unlawfull Games, whereby her said Master may have any loss, either of his own Goods, or others, during the said Terme: She shall not waste, spend, purloyne, nor give away any of her said Masters Goods, nor them to any Person lend, without her Masters License: She shall not commit Fornication, nor Contract herself in Marriage with any Person during the said Term; nor shall absent,

nor prolong herself from her said Masters service neither day nor night unlawfully: Accounts of all her said Masters Goods committed to her charge she shall make, and render at such time or times as she shall be by her said Master, his Executors or Assignes, thereunto required: And in all things shall behave herselfe as a true and faithfull Servant and Apprentice should and ought to do towards her said Master his Executors Administrators, or Assignes; and all his, during the said Term. And the said Mark Foster her Master doth Covenant, Promise, and Grant for himself his Executors, Administrators, or Assignes, to and with the said Apprentice that in the Trade, Mistry, or Occupation of huswiferie which she now useth, after the best manner that he or they may or can, shall and will, well and truly Instruct and Teach, or cause to be well and truly Instructed and Taught his said Apprentice, as much as to the Trade of huswifery sowing & knitting belongeth, or in any manner of wise appertaineth; And in due and reasonable manner to correct and chastise her, and not otherwise: And also shall find and provide to and for his said, Apprentice, sufficient and enough Meat and Drink, in due seasons linen & woolen Clothes shooes stockins washing & lodging with other nessesarys Dureing the said terme of six years And for the true performance of all and singular the Covenants and Agreements, either of the said Parties, doth bind herself unto the other firmly by these presents. In Witness whereof the Parties above-named (to the present Indentures) enterchangably have set their Hands and Seals, the Day and Year above-written.

signed sealed, and Delivered in the presence of

Jane Lazenby

Mark Foster

Tho. Hutchinson

* BIHR, Holy Trinity Parish Records, Goodramgate,

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- 93 LDA, Gossip, Box 24, Bundle 4, June 1765.
- 94 YCL, The York Courant, 14 May 1765.
- 95 LDA, NH 2834/92, 17 October 1749.
- 96 LDA, Gossip, Box 3, Bundle 2, January 1734. See also Hecht, The Domestic Servant, pp 60-2.
- 97 RCL, Archives Division, Platt letters (microfilm), July 1795. See also a letter of November 1783 which reflects the same sense of loneliness.
- 98 SCL, Sp St 60687/8, 1 July 1772.
- 99 LDA, NH 2825/48.
- 100 LDA, Gascoigne papers, GC/F6/12c; see also GC/F6/12b.
- 101 SCL, WWM St 6(i)/40.
- 102 CDA, Lister of Shibden Hall, SH:1/SHA/4.
- 103 SCL, Sp St 60632/4, Diary of William Spencer 1745-6; LDA, TN/EA/12/19, Wages paid to Irwin retainers 1632-1760.
- 104 LDA, Gossip, Box 12, Bundle 3, 30 July 1768.

- 105 SCL, WWM R186-35a.
- 106 Hecht, The Domestic Servant, p 151.
- 107 Hecht has provided a useful model in his wage rates for thirty-six servant statuses, gathered from advertisements in London newspapers and printed diaries, letters and account books. See Hecht, The Domestic Servant, pp 142-149.
- 108 HCRO, DDCC/150/38.
- 109 *ibid*, DDCC (2), Box 9. These books are unnumbered.
- 110 SCL, Sp St 60635/4, 25 December 1779. See also Hecht, The Domestic Servant, p 183-4.
- 111 *ibid*, WWMA 1201, 1 July 1782.
- 112 The origin of the godspenny is explained in W Addison, English Fairs and Markets (London, 1953), p 114.
- 113 LDA, Gossip, Box 12, Bundle 3, 18 July 1768.
- 114 CDA, SH:3/AB/17. See also Hecht, p 156.
- 115 SCL, WWMA 1001, 11 August 1777.
- 116 BIHR, Vanbrugh Papers, YM VAN 17.
- 117 YAS, Duke of Leeds, DD5 39/3.
- 118 SCL, Sp St 60672/8.
- 119 Hull Univ, DDEV 60/86 f 60-1, 17 October 1735.
- 120 Hecht, The Domestic Servant, p 153-157.
- 121 D F Bond (Ed), The Spectator (Oxford, 1965), 5 Vols, Vol 1, p 374, No 88, 11 June 1711.
- 122 J Macdonald, The Memoirs of an Eighteenth Century Footman, 1745-1779, J Beresford (Ed) (London, 1927), p 38.
- 123 SCL, Sp St 60656/1, 29 September 1738; see also Hull Univ, DDEV 56/28.
- 124 SCL, Sp St 60632/4, 11 March 1746; see also BIHR, YM VAN 17, January, 1742.
- 125 LDA, VR 5993 (34/4), 8 October 1757; see also 8 February 1760.
- 126 SCL, WWMA 1380.
- 127 Hull Univ, DDEV/56/28.
- 128 BDA, Sp St 916/2. The livery was a very costly item. See also J C Cox, "The household Books of Sir Miles Stapleton 1656-1705" (continued), The Ancestor, No 3 (October, 1902), p 159; SCL Sp St 60687/8, 1 July 1772.

- 129 Hull Univ, DDEV/60/86 ff 8-9, 14 May 1731.
- 130 SCL, WWM R186-51.
- 131 LDA, GC/16/126, 3 October 1728; see also SCL, Sp St 60632/6, 6 November 1752.
- 132 BDA, Sp St 916/1.
- 133 YCL, The York Courant, 15 October 1765. See also S C Maza, Servants and Masters in Eighteenth-Century France: The uses of Loyalty (Princeton, 1983), pp 119-123.
- 134 YCL, The York Courant, 1 November 1748.
- 135 SCL, Sp St 60632/6, 22 March 1751; see also 9 March 1751; 6 November 1752.
- 136 Macdonald, Memoirs, p 31.
- 137 LDA, GC/F6/126.
- 138 BIHR, YM VAN 17, passim.
- 139 A hundred and ninety five Yorkshire gentlemen subscribed to a resolution in 1763 "not to allow their Servants to take Vails on any Occasion from the 22nd November". See SCL, WWM Pamphlets Literary and Miscellaneous 13.
- 140 Quoted in Hecht, The Domestic Servant, p 162.
- 141 Defoe, Every-Body's Business, p 10; Thomas Seaton called servants' expectation of Vails, "a kind of mercenary Sale of their Master's favour". See T Seaton, The Conduct of Servants in Great Families, p 92.
- 142 LDA, Gossip, Box 13, Bundle 3, 23 October 1764. The affair over Vails raised much debate. See Hecht, The Domestic Servant, pp 163-168; R Bayne-Powell, Housekeeping in the Eighteenth Century (London, 1955), p 144; O Grey, An Apology for the Servants (London, 1760), pp 17, 23.
- 143 See for example, the basement servants' rooms at Erddig, near Wrexham, a National Trust property.
- 144 SCL, WWM Stw 2/8, 24 July 1773.
- 145 Hecht, The Domestic Servant, p 104-5; 108-9.
- 146 Back Stairs Furniture (Catalogue of Exhibition at Temple Newsam, Leeds, in 1977.) Catalogue item No 10, "Introduction" (unpaginated).
- 147 SCL, WWMA 1530.
- 148 LDA, NH 2774.
- 149 Back Stairs Furniture, see Catalogue item No 3, "Introduction".
- 150 Hull Univ, DDEV/60/84g, 8 May 1727.

- 151 M Girouard, Life in the English Country House, p 138.
- 152 Hull Univ, DDEV/60/86, ff 102-3.
- 153 *ibid*, DDEV/60/84g, 12 October 1726. See also Richard Baxter's comment that "the condition of their Landlord's household servants is as farre above these poore Tenants as a Gentleman is above a day Labourer. They live in fullness to the satisfying of the flesh ... ": F J Powicke (Ed), "The Reverend Richard Baxter's Last Treatise (1691)", Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, Vol 10 (1926), p 183.
- 154 LDA, TN/EA/12/14.
- 155 SCL, Sp St 60537/93, 7 June 1767.
- 156 A M W Stirling, Annals of a Yorkshire House, 2 Vols (London, 1911), Vol 2, pp 58-9.
- 157 YAS, DD5/20/6 & 7.
- 158 Bond (Ed), The Spectator, Vol 2, p 163, No 168, 12 September 1711. See also Hecht, The Domestic Servants, pp 136-9.
- 159 See LDA, NH 2824/22, 15 September 1738; NH 2873/9, 7 July 1756.
- 160 Hull Univ, DDEV/60/86, 20 February 1742.
- 161 SCL, Sp St 60543/43, 13 May 1767; see also HCRO, DDGR 42/26, 19 April 1776.
- 162 SCL, WWM Stw 2/14, 1 July 1775.
- 163 Zinzano, The Servants' Calling, pp 19-20. see also Jonathan Swift's advice to butlers on how they may procure wine for themselves, Directions to Servants, p 18.
- 164 R Latham and W Matthews (Eds), The Diary of Samuel Pepys (London, 1970-83), 11 Vols, Vol 9, p 293; Vol 8, p 493.
- 165 See above note 109.
- 166 SCL, WWM R186-46 (1753); WWM R186-47 (nd possible 1760s); WWM R2A-40 (nd, possibly late 1760s); WWM R186-19 (1766); WWM R2A-39 (1767); WWM R186-35b (1768); WWM 187/9 (1770).
- 167 LDA, Gossip, Box 21, Item 4, Private Account Book of William Gossip begun 1 January 1759.
- 168 SCL, WWM R169/96/1, 3- August 1773.
- 169 SCL, Sp St 60672/8.
- 170 HCRO, DDCC (2), Box 9. See Wages Book for 1747.
- 171 Stirling, Annals, Vol 1, pp 127-8.
- 172 SCL, WWM R169/96/1, 30 August 1773; see also WWM R169/82/1, 19 September 1773.

- 173 See the following letters: SCL, WWM R168/57 (nd); LDA, NH 2834/100, 30 November 1749; SCL, Sp St 60635/8, 29 October 1747.
- 174 LDA, Gossip, Box 12, Bundle 3, 4 August 1768.
- 175 Macdonald, Memoirs, p 97.
- 176 SCL, Jackson papers, 1135, Diary of Mrs Gisborne 1746-69, 15 October 1765; 2 June 1768.
- 177 HCRO, DDCC (2) Box 9; see also Stirling, Annals, Vol 2, p 77.
- 178 See for example, HCRO, DDGR/42/4, 1 June 1754; LDA, NH 2833/56; see also notices in newspapers: LCL, The Leeds Intelligencer, 2 December 1755; YCL, The York Courant, 24 December 1728. See also S Richardson, Pamela (London, 1740). How much Pamela influenced other maidservants in the real world we shall never know.
- 179 YCL, The York Courant, 25 July 1749; 24 March 1752; 11 September 1753; 26 April 1768.
- 180 Quoted in Hecht, The Domestic Servant, p 190.
- 181 See Hecht, The Domestic Servant, p 196. See also E Raffald, The Experienced English Housekeeper (London, 1796).
- 182 R Dodsley, Servitude, A Poem (London, 1729). See also R Strauss, Robert Dodsley (New York, 1968).

CHAPTER 2 - Servants of the Gentry: Master and Servant Relations

- 1 J Townley, High Life Below Stairs (London, 1759), Act I, Sc ii.
- 2 L and J C F Stone, An Open Elite? p 295. Power and authority carried with it certain obligations. Richard Baxter exhorted gentlemen who were landlords, "not to be strangers to their poor tenants; but sometimes to go to their houses and see how it goeth with them ... ". See Powicke (Ed), "The Reverend Richard Baxter's last Treatise", p 199.
- 3 To these can be added the following works on the family; J L Flandrin, Families in Former Times (Cambridge, 1979); O Harris, "Households and their Boundaries", History Workshop Journal, 13 (1982), pp 143-152; P Laslett, "Characteristics of the Western Family considered over Time", in P Laslett, Family Life and Illicit Love in Earlier Generations: Essays in Historical Sociology (Cambridge, 1977); A Macfarlane, The Family Life of Ralph Josselin; E Shorter, The Making of the Modern Family (London, 1976); E A Wrigley, "Reflections on the History of the Family", Daedalus (Spring, 1977), pp 71-85.
- 4 Zinzano, The servants' Calling, p 17.
- 5 G J Schochet, "Patriarchalism, Politics and Mass Attitudes", pp 413-41.
- 6 W Fleetwood, The Relative Duties of Parents, Husbands, Masters (London, 1765), quoted in Schochet, "Patriarchalism, Politics and Mass Attitudes", p 418.
- 7 Daniel Defoe, The Family Instructor, (14th Edn, Edinburgh, 1755), p 199.
- 8 Trumbach, The Rise of the Egalitarian family, p 142.
- 9 R Baxter, Christian Directory, or a Summ of practical theologie and cases of conscience etc (2nd Edn, London, 1678), pp 70, 77.
- 10 Gouge, Domesticall duties, p 667.
- 11 Thomas Seaton, The Conduct of Servants in Great Families, p 78.
- 12 Gouge, Domesticall Duties, p 664.
- 13 Mayo, A Present for Servants, pp 29-30; Broughton, A Serious and Affectionate Warning to Servants, pp 22 and iii.
- 14 Zinzano, The Servants' Calling, pp 9-10.
- 15 Defoe, Every-Body's Business.

- 16 For an example of the former see LDA, Gossip of Thorp Arch, Acc 2401, Box 24, Bundle 3, London 29 November 1763. See also Hecht, The Domestic Servant, pp 79-80.
- 17 Defoe, Every-Body's Business, pp 11 and 14.
- 18 Defoe, quoted in Hecht, The Domestic Servant, p 81. See also LDA, Gossip, Box 3, Item 3, 24 October 1761.
- 19 Ashcroft (Ed), The Papers of Sir Henry Chaytor, ZQH 9/14/116.
- 20 Haywood, A New Present for a Servant Maid, p 5.
- 21 Zinzano, The Servants' Calling, p 47.
- 22 See footnote 16, Gossip papers.
- 23 J J Cartwright (Ed), The Wentworth Papers 1705-1739 (London, 1883), p 514.
- 24 LDA, Gossip, Box 13, Bundle 3, 4 September 1764.
- 25 Ashcroft (Ed), The Papers of Sir Henry Chaytor, ZQH 9/19/92.
- 26 D Jarrett, England in the Age of Hogarth (London, 1974), p 143.
- 27 Swift, Directions to Servants (see Chapter I, note 61), pp 56, 33, 43.
- 28 Defoe, Every-Body's Business, p 4.
- 29 Zinzano, The Servants' Calling, pp 22, 24; see also Anon, The Compleat Servant-Maid, p 114.
- 30 LDA, Temple Newsam papers, TN/EA/14/22, Personal Account Book of Lady Isabella Irwin 1752-56.
- 31 SCL, Spencer Stanhope papers, Sp St 60649/1, 9 July 1770; see also 60649/3, 1780.
- 32 HCRO, Chichester Constable papers, DDCC(2), Box 18, 1 May 1701.
- 33 R Porter, English Society in the Eighteenth Century (Harmondsworth, 1982), p 104. See also Hecht, The Domestic Servant, "The Servant Class as a Cultural Nexus".
- 34 Cissie Fairchilds, "Masters and Servants in Eighteenth-Century Toulouse", Journal of Social History, Vol 12, No 3 (Spring, 1979), p 378.
- 35 Defoe, Every-Body's Business, pp 4 and 14.

- 36 The monetary relationship between master and servant in eighteenth-century France has been discussed in detail by Sarah Maza. See S C Maza, Servants and Masters in Eighteenth-Century France, Chapter 4, "Life in the household".
- 37 SCL, Sp St 60518/77, 6 April 1748.
- 38 BIHR, Vanbrugh Papers, YM VAN 17.
- 39 LDA, TN/EA/14/18.
- 40 HCRO, DDCC (2), Box 12, Housekeepers Book 1778-83, August, 1781; 25 September 1780; LDA, Newby Hall papers, NH 2787, 31 December 1760.
- 41 Hull Univ, Stapleton of Carlton Towers papers, DDCA/48/1. Account book of Sir Miles Stapleton 1650-1661, May 1659.
- 42 HCRO, DDCC (2) Box 20a, 13 November 1752; SCL, Sp St 60649/3, 3 March 1781; CDA, Lister of Shibden Hall papers, SH:1/SHA/3A, January 1758.
- 43 CDA, SH:1/SHA/3A, 10 June 1726.
- 44 LDA, Gossip, Box 21, Item 20, 8 September 1770; NH 2787, 5 January 1762.
- 45 LDA, NH 1787, 10 February 1761.
- 46 SCL, Wentworth Woodhouse papers, WWMA 1001, 1 February 1774; LDA, Gascoigne papers, GC/F6/120, 6 July 1732.
- 47 Quoted in J L Axtell (Ed), The Educational Writings of John Locke (Cambridge, 1968), p 164. See also Haywood, A New Present for a Servant Maid, p 5.
- 48 LDA, NH 2826/50.
- 49 *ibid.*
- 50 BL, Baynes MSS, Add MSS 21417/2. See also LDA, NH 2825/41, 15 June [1739].
- 51 Rev Joseph Hunter (Ed), The Diary of Ralph Thoresby FRS; Author of the Topography of Leeds 1677-1724 (London, 1830), 2 Vols, Vol 2, p 395.
- 52 R Dodsley, Servitude, p 7.
- 53 See Houlbrooke, The English Family, p 133; Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage, p 430. Abroad, the English preferred servants of their own nationality to nurse their children, rather than foreigners; see LDA, NH 2824/1.

- 54 See Houlbrooke, The English Family, p 134; Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage, pp 106-7, 430.
- 55 See P Ariès, Centuries of Childhood (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1973), p 382-3. A Servant maid stated that she shared a bedroom with a child of her master's; see PRO, ASSI 45 25/3 53c, February 1755.
- 56 LDA, NH 2825/61.
- 57 See J J Hecht, "Continental and Colonial Servants", p 40; Shyllon, Black People, p 11.
- 58 See Hecht, "Continental and Colonial Servants"; F O Shyllon, Black Slaves in Britain (Oxford, 1974), pp 15-16; Shyllon, Black People, chapter 3, "Privileged Caste"; Reresby, Memoirs, p 108; see also pp 33-40, 120, 125-7, 150.
- 59 Dodsley, Servitude, p 12.
- 60 LDA, Reresby letters, MX/R 51/35.
- 61 Pepys, Diary, Vol 6, p 39, 19 February 1665. Pepy's diary is an excellent source of information about his, and his wife's relations with their servants.
- 62 PRO, ASSI 45 7/2, 69, 24 June 1665. C Jackson (Ed), "The Journal of Mr John Hobson, late of Dodworth Green", in Yorkshire Diaries and Autobiographies of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries (Surtees Society, Vol 65, 1875), p 291.
- 63 Heywood, Diary, Vol 3, p 159.
- 64 Hull Univ, Constable of Everingham papers, DDEV/60/84g, 27 March 1727.
- 65 SCL, WWM Stw 2/37.
- 66 Haywood, A Present for a Servant Maid, p 50.
- 67 LDA, Gossip, Box 13, Bundle 3, 7 August 1764.
- 68 Haywood, A Present for a Servant Maid, p 50.
- 69 LDA, MX/R 17/4.
- 70 Ashcroft (Ed), The Papers of Sir Henry Chaytor, ZQH 9/12/51.
- 71 Heywood, Diary, Vol 3, pp 166, 169, 175.
- 72 SCL, WWM Stw 2/4.
- 73 Ashcroft (Ed), The Papers of Sir Henry Chaytor, ZQH 9/14/102.
- 74 LDA, Gossip, Box 3, Item 2, 16 January 1734.
- 75 Bond (Ed), The Spectator, Vol 2, pp 40-1, 2 August 1711.

- 76 SCL, WWM Stw 2/26 and 61.
- 77 *ibid*, Stw 2/34 and 36.
- 78 *ibid*, R1-204, October 1761.
- 79 LDA, NH 2879/28.
- 80 *ibid*, 2881/97; see also NH 2880/104.
- 81 SCL, WWM Stw 2/40.
- 82 *ibid*, R1-1257.
- 83 LDA, NH 2881/103.
- 84 Ashcroft (Ed), The Papers of Sir Henry Chaytor, ZQH 9/14/44.
See also A S Turbeville, "Protection of the servants of Members of Parliament", English Historical Review, Vol 42 (1927), pp 590-600. Among the privileges which these servants enjoyed were freedom from molestation, imprisonment and arrest in certain cases, exemption which continued until 1892.

CHAPTER 3 - Servants in Husbandry

- 1 Daniel Defoe, A Tour through England and Wales, Vol 2, p 31.
- 2 A Kussmaul, Servants in Husbandry in Early Modern England (Cambridge, 1981).
- 3 See: Everett, "Farm Labourers"; W Hasbach, A History of the English Agricultural Labourer (London, 1908); G E and K R Fussell, The English Countryman: His life and work from Tudor times to the Victorian age (London, 1955); The English Countrywoman, A Farmhouse Social History 1500-1900 (London, 1953); G E Fussell, The English Rural Labourer (London, 1949).
- 4 Kussmaul makes this distinction. See Kussmaul, Servants in Husbandry, p 4.
- 5 See C Fairchilds, "Servants in Husbandry in Early Modern England" (review article), Journal of Social History, Vol 17 (Spring, 1983), pp 163-5.
- 6 W E Tate, The Parish Chest, p 202.
- 7 Porter, English Society, p 99.
- 8 R W Malcolmson, Life and Labour in England 1700-1780 (London, 1981), p 134.
- 9 D M Marshall, The English Poor in the Eighteenth Century (London, 1926). See also D M Marshall, "The Old Poor Law", Economic History Review, Vol 8 (1937), pp 38-47. For more recent work see: A L Beier, "Vagrants and the Social Order in Elizabethan England", Past and Present, No 64 (1974), pp 3-29; J R Poynter, Society and Pauperism: English Ideas on Poor Relief 1795-1834 (London, 1969), Chapters 1 and 2; P A Slack, "Vagrants and Vagrancy in England 1598-1664", Economic History Review, 2nd Series, Vol 27 (1974), pp 360-379; K M D Snell, Annals of the Labouring Poor: Social Change in Agrarian England, 1660-1900 (Cambridge, 1985); J S Taylor, "The Impact of Pauper Settlement".
- 10 K Wrightson, English Society 1580-1680 (London, 1982), p 226.
- 11 See Daniel Defoe's opinion on the state of the poor, in Porter, English Society, pp 67, 145.
- 12 See Wrightson, English Society, pp 141-2.
- 13 See Taylor, "The Impact of Pauper Settlement", for a discussion of Poor Law legislation and its consequences.
- 14 P Laslett, The World We Have Lost, p 16. Alan Macfarlane, in his analysis of Ralph Josselin's diary, concluded that Josselin's constant search for a servant suggested "the urgent need for a servant in a seventeenth century house of quite modest means". See Macfarlane, The Family Life of Ralph Josselin, pp 147-8. Certain other diarists confirm this view.

- 15 Laslett, The World We Have Lost, p 67. See also Laslett and Harrison, "Clayworth and Cogenhoe", for a similar pattern in these two communities.
- 16 Laslett, The World We Have Lost, p 66.
- 17 Josselin, Diary; Heywood, Diary, Vol 3, pp 270; Woodford, Diary, p 268.
- 18 Marshall, The English Poor, pp 182, 186-7.
- 19 Snell, Annals of the Labouring Poor, p 262.
- 20 SCL, Bolton-on-Deerne Parish Records, PR 9/93/10, 16 January 1769. LDA, Carleton Parish 124, Pauper Examinations, 6 May 1757.
- 21 Marshall, The English Poor, p 181.
- 22 C E Whiting (Ed), "The Diary of Arthur Jessop", in Two Yorkshire Diaries (YAS Record Series, Vol 117, 1952), p 11.
- 23 Laslett, The World We Have Lost, see p 16.
- 24 CDA, Ovenden township records, HAS 241/65.
- 25 Kussmaul, Servants in Husbandry, pp 34-5.
- 26 *ibid*, pp 67, 49. See also the following works for a discussion of the phenomenon of mobility in England and the ages at which young people left home: A Everitt, "Social Mobility in Early Modern England", Past and Present, No 33 (1966), pp 56-73; B A Holderness, "Personal Mobility in some rural parishes of Yorkshire 1777-1822", Yorkshire Archeological Journal, Part CLXVIII (1969), pp 444-454; A S Kussmaul, "The Ambiguous Mobility of Farm Servants", Economic History Review, Vol 34, No 2, (1981), pp 222-235; R S Schofield, "Age-Specific Mobility in an Eighteenth Century English Parish"; K D M Snell, "Agricultural Employment, the Standard of Living and Women's Work in the South and East 1690-1860", Economic History Review, 2nd Series, Vol 34, No 3 (1981), pp 407-437; P Spufford, "Population Movement in England", Local Population Studies, Vol 4 (1970); L Stone, "Social Mobility in England 1500-1700", Past and Present, No 33 (1966), pp 16-55; R Wall, "Age at Leaving Home".
- 27 Kussmaul, Servants in Husbandry, p 68.
- 28 See Wall, "Age at Leaving Home"; Schofield, "Age-Specific Mobility in an Eighteenth Century Parish".

- 29 CDA, Ovenden Township records, HAS 255/84; 255/66.
- 30 *ibid*, 241/135.
- 31 Heywood, Diary, Vol 3, p 159; Hobson, Diary, p 239.
- 32 CDA, HAS 255/54.
- 33 CDA, Shelf township records, MISC 347/2/1, 29 July 1760.
- 34 Houlbrooke, The English Family, p 173.
- 35 CDA, Sowerby Township records, SPL 94/6, 14 March 1744.
- 36 SCL, Bolton-on-Deerne parish records, PR 9/93/11.
- 37 LDA, Guiseley Parish records, 115, 28 July 1758.
- 38 See Best, Farming and Memorandum Books, "Introduction", p xxxviii.
- 39 William Ellis, The Country Housewife's Family Companion (London, 1750), p vii.
- 40 CDA, Heptonstall Parish records, HPC/A:11/115, 17 November 1754.
- 41 CDA, Sowerby Township records, SPL/94/18, 26 October 1767; see also Elland Township records, A/34/1, 12 December 1765.
- 42 CDA, Ovenden township, HAS 258/10, 10 January 1780.
- 43 *ibid*, 255/70, 15 October 1776.
- 44 This is in agreement with the conclusions of others. See Kussmaul, Servants in Husbandry, Chapter 4; see also P Clark, "Migration in England during the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries", Past and Present, No 83 (1979), pp 57-90. Other important studies on mobility were noted in footnote 26.
- 45 CDA, HAS 258/10; 255/70.
- 46 Houlbrooke, The English Family, p 174.
- 47 *ibid*, see pp 174-5.
- 48 CDA, HAS 255/84, 5 January 1784.
- 49 CDA, Shelf township records, MISC 347/2/1, 19 November 1776.
- 50 CDA, SPL 94/32, 3 July 1778.
- 51 SCL, Harthill parish records, PR 47/92/66, 16 July 1776.
- 52 CDA, Elland township, EG/A/39/7.
- 53 SCL, Harthill parish, PR 47/92/80. A letter accompanying this examination reveals the absurd complexities of the law and its total lack of sympathy for the poor wretches whose fate lay in its hands. See also, NYCRO, Northallerton parish records, PR 4/1/33, 30 April 1767.

- 54 Henry Best, on the other hand, warned farmers against hiring servants who were near their friends. See Best, Farming and Memorandum Books, p 140.
- 55 Fred Kitchen, Brother to the Ox (London, 1939, 1981), Chapter VI, "Martlemas Fair". See also Kussmaul, Servants in Husbandry, Appendix 4; Margaret Baker, Discovering English Fairs (Shire Publications, Tring, nd); K L McCutcheon, Yorkshire Fairs and Markets to the End of the Eighteenth Century (Thoresby Society, Vol 39, 1940).
- 56 Best, Farming and Memorandum Books, pp 138-42.
- 57 SCL, Bolton-on-Deerne parish, PR 9/93/2. 6 February 1766.
- 58 NYCRO, PR 4/1/59, 25 February 1779.
- 59 J C Hodgson (Ed), "The Diary of Jacob Bee of Durham" in Six North Country Diaries (Surtees Society, Vol 118, 1910), p 45. See also Thoresby, Diary, Vol 1, p 184.
- 60 Kussmaul, Servants in Husbandry, p 49; see also pp 62-3.
- 61 Quoted in R W Malcolmson, Popular Recreations in English Society 1700-1850 (Cambridge, 1973), p 24.
- 62 See Sir John Vanbrugh's account books: BIHR Vanbrugh papers, YM/AB 14; YM/VAN 17.
- 63 Kitchen, Brother to the Ox, pp 98, 101. Malcolmson, Popular Recreations, gives an account of eighteenth century hiring fairs; see pp 23-25. T E Kebbel objected to hiring fairs as being unnecessary to the yearly hiring system which he felt could exist independently of them, and condemned them as "the source of much immorality". See T E Kebbel, The Agricultural Labourer. A Short Summary of his position, partly based on the Report of her Majesty's Commissioners appointed to inquire into the employment of women and children in agriculture etc (London, 1870)
- 64 The subject of social relations and local kinship networks at the parish level has been considered by several historians. Keith Wrightson offers an interesting discussion of "neighbourliness" in English Society, pp 51-59. See also: Chaytor, "Household and kinship: Ryton in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries"; D G Hey, An English Rural Community: Myddle under the Tudors and Stuarts (Leicester, 1974), pp 185-231; K Wrightson and D Levine, Poverty and Piety in an English Village: Terling 1525-1700 (London, 1979), Chapter 4, "A Local Social System", pp 73-109.
- 65 CDA, Sowerby township, SPL 94/15, 17 March 1766; see also Elland township EG/A/39/35, 24 January 1763.
- 66 CDA, MISC 347/2/1, 4 May 1769.
- 67 H J Morehouse (Ed), "A Dyurnall, or Catalogue of all my Accions and Expences from the 1st of January 1646[7] - Adam Eyre", in Yorkshire Diaries and Autobiographies of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries (Surtees Society, Vol 65, 1875), pp 27, 31.

- 68 CDA, Ovenden township, HAS 255/64, 2 May 1775; Sowerby township SPL 94/32, 3 July 1778.
- 69 See Macfarlane, The Family Life of Ralph Josselin, p 149; C Jackson (Ed), "A Family History begun by Mr James Fretwell", in Yorkshire Diaries and Autobiographies of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries (Surtees Society, Vol 65, 1875), p 243.
- 70 CDA, Ovenden township, HAS 241/65, 4 March 1761.
- 71 *ibid*, 255/74, 4 April 1780.
- 72 CDA, HAS 239/33, 18 February 1777; 239/34, March 1777.
- 73 CDA, Heptonstall township, HPC/A:11/115, 17 November 1754.
- 74 CDA, HAS 255/66.
- 75 CDA, Sowerby township, SPL 94/28, 21 August 1777.
- 76 LDA, Carleton Parish 124, 3 September 1770.
- 77 CDA, SPL 94/15, 17 March 1766; see also LDA, Guiseley Parish 115, 12 May 1741.
- 78 CDA, MISC 347/2/1, 5 April 1755.
- 79 See Snell, Annals of the Labouring Poor, especially Chapter 2.
- 80 CDA, Sowerby township SPL 94/11, 6 August 1757.
- 81 *ibid*, 94/26, 2 June 1775.
- 82 CDA, Ovenden township, HAS 255/59.
- 83 *ibid*, 255/73, 6 September 1779.
- 84 *ibid*, 255/84, 5 January 1784.
- 85 *ibid*, 240/48, 4 May 1780.
- 86 CDA, Heptonstall township, HPC/A:11/158, 20 May 1777.
- 87 CDA, Ovenden township, HAS 255/84.
- 88 *ibid*, 255/74, 4 April 1780.
- 89 J Wright (ed), English Dialect Dictionary, 6 Vols (Oxford, 1961), Vol 3, p 47.
- 90 Best, Farming and Memorandum Books, p 140.
- 91 Kussmaul, Servants in Husbandry, see pp 103, 113.
- 92 *ibid*, p 112. The best study of wage rates and movements is by E H Phelps-Brown and S V Hopkins, A Perspective of Wages and Prices (London, 1981).
- 93 This was a situation which Kussmaul noted, especially in the early nineteenth century. See Kussmaul, Servants in Husbandry, p 129.

- 94 H Heaton, "The Assessment of Wages in the West Riding of Yorkshire in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries", Economic Journal (1914), p 221.
- 95 Clarke, Working Life of Women, pp 64-69.
- 96 WYAS, Quarter Sessions Order Books, QS 10/10, Pontefract 1695.
- 97 These dates have been taken from a list compiled from the order books for the West Riding: see WYAS, C197.
- 98 D M Woodward, "The Assessment of Wages by Justices of the Peace 1563-1813", Local Historian, Vol 8 (1969), pp 293-98.
- 99 Kussmaul, Servants in Husbandry, p 36.
- 100 Heaton, "The Assessment of Wages in the West Riding", p 225.
- 101 CDA, Ovenden township, HAS 255/84, 5 January 1784.
- 102 NYCRO, PR 4/1/21; PR 4/1/31.
- 103 CDA, HAS 236/90a, 27 December 1775.
- 104 CDA, Sowerby township, SPL 94/13, 25 November 1759.
- 105 CDA, Elland township, EG/A/39/7.
- 106 See Kussmaul, Servants in Husbandry, pp 38-9. See also Woodforde, Diary, p 30.
- 107 CDA, Elland township, EG/A/34/1, 12 December 1765; HAS 255/84.
- 108 See Kebbel, The Agricultural Labourer, p 176; Kussmaul, Servants in Husbandry, p 62. Henry Best speaks of servants "treating" of their wage with prospective masters. Solidarity in the market place appeared to give servants a great deal of confidence. See one servant's bold reply to an employer in Best, Farming and Memorandum Books, p 136.
- 109 CDA, Heptonstall township, HPC/A:11/115, 17 November 1754.
- 110 CDA, Ovenden township, HAS 255/60, 16 January 1769.
- 111 *ibid*, 255/74.
- 112 NYCRO, QSB Quarter Sessions Working Papers, Thirsk, 23 April 1723.
- 113 CDA, Ovenden township, HAS 255/64, 2 May 1775.
- 114 CDA, Elland township, EG/A:81/4, 14 February 1761.
- 115 WYAS, Quarter Sessions Order Books, QS 10/9, Leeds, 15 July 1686; 10/14, Rotherham, 24 July 1723; see also 10/7, Rotherham, 20 July 1680. See Chapter 5 for a discussion of the possible reasons for such behaviour.

- 116 CDA, HAS 255/71, 14 January 1777.
- 117 WYAS, Quarter Sessions Order Books, QS 10/7 Leeds, 1 August 1678; 10/14, Pontefract, 3 April 1722.
- 118 CDA, Ovenden township, HAS 240/48, 4 May 1780; MISC 247/2/1, 28 February 1758.
- 119 CDA, Sowerby township, SPL 94/18, 26 October 1767; Ovenden township, HAS 239/34, March 1777.
- 120 CDA, Elland township, EG/A/39/22, 28 January 1755; EG/A/93, 28 July 1701.
- 121 CDA, Ovenden township, HAS 255/73, 6 September 1779.
- 122 WYAS, Royston parish, D136/111, 23 October 1770.
- 123 CDA, HAS 255/74, 4 April 1780. See also: SCL, Bolton-on-Dearne PR 9/93/4a, 28 October 1768; 9/93/15, 29 December 1775.
- 124 CDA, Sowerby township, SPL 94/28, 21 August 1777.
- 125 SCL, PR 9/93/18a, 21 November 1778; 9/93/186, 25 January 1780. See also CDA, Elland township, EG/A/39/36, 26 April 1740.
- 126 See chapter V.
- 127 Heywood, Diary, Vol 3, p 137.
- 128 *ibid*, p 233.
- 129 Fretwell, Diary, p 238.
- 130 PRO, North Eastern Assize Circuit, Depositions, ASSI 45, 14/2/69, 26 December 1685; 18/2/10, 28 October 1724.
- 131 Pepys, Diary, Vol 1, 16 January 1660, p 19; Vol 4, 29 July 1663, p 253. See also Vol 1, 12 March 1660, p 85.
- 132 Fussell, The English Countrywoman, p 155.
- 133 Clark, Working Life of Women, p 150.
- 134 Heywood, Diary, Vol 2, pp 229-30; Vol 3, p 276.
- 135 *ibid*, Vol 3, p 288.
- 136 Hobson, Journal, p 259.
- 137 PRO, ASSI 45 14/2/113, 25 December 1685.
- 138 Bee, Diary, pp 47-8.
- 139 Best, Farming and Memorandum Books, p 98. See also Laslett, The World We Have Lost, pp 73-74.

- 140 Kussmaul, Servants in Husbandry, p 80. See also Everitt, "Farm Labourers"; Fussell, The English Rural Labourer, "Part Two 1714-1837"; Hasbach, A History of the English Agricultural Labourer, p 114 and Chapter 3.
- 141 Clark, Working Life of Women, pp 86-9; see also Chapter 3 for a discussion of the lives of women in three branches of agriculture, as the wives of farmers, husbandmen, and as wage-earners. See also Fussell, The English Countrywoman, pp 145-151.
- 142 Heywood, Diary, Vol 3, p 159.
- 143 CDA, Sowerby township, SPL 94/13, 25 November 1759.
- 144 CDA, Elland township, EG/A:39/20, 13 July 1751.
- 145 PRO, ASSI 45 15/4/140, 18 April 1690.
- 146 NYCRO, Northallerton township, 30 April 1767.
- 147 See Laslett, The world We Have Lost, p 94. See also Clark, Working Life of Women, p 88; Hasbach, A History of the English Agricultural Labourer, p 97.
- 148 Kussmaul, Servants in Husbandry, pp 83-4.
- 149 Hasbach, A History of the English Agricultural Labourer, pp 103, 112-113.
- 150 See Kussmaul, Servants in Husbandry, Chapters 6 and 7. See also Everitt, "Farm Labourers"; Snell, Annals of the Labouring Poor, Chapter 5.
- 151 G E Mingay (Ed), Arthur Young and his Times (London, 1975), p 119.
- 152 Kitchen, Brother to the Ox, see p 152 and Chapter IV.

CHAPTER 4 - Apprentices

- 1 [Sir J Barnard], A Present for an Apprentice or a sure guide to gain both esteem and an estate with rules for his conduct to his master ... By a Late Lord Mayor of London (London, 1740), p 50.
- 2 J J Cartwright. Chapters in the History of Yorkshire, being a collection of original letters papers and public documents illustrating the state of that county in the Reigns of Elizabeth, James I and Charles I (Wakefield, 1872), pp 332-3.
- 3 C B Knight, A History of York (York and London, 1944), p 595.
- 4 YCA, Quarter Sessions Minute Book 1712-1728, F12, 24 January 1726.
- 5 Tillot (Ed), Victoria County History: the City of York, p 165.
- 6 See, for example, YCA, House Books B41, f 15, 111; B43, f 41, 74. See also Drake, Eboracum, pp 315,319.
- 7 Quoted in Corfield, The Impact of English Towns, p 128.
- 8 Hogarth graphically portrays the fall of the unsuspecting country maid in his series of engravings entitled "The Harlot's Progress".
- 9 Knight, A History of York, pp 520-1.
- 10 See Chapter One, p 107.
- 11 Drake, Eboracum, p 218.
- 12 YCA, Mansion House, Acc 12, "Remarks on the Lord Mayors Ceremonial Functions including candid references to pillaging by servants 1785".
- 13 Pepys, Diary, Vol 8, p 493; Vol 9, p 293. See also Swift, Directions to Servants, pp 11, 13, 34, 38, 42, 48. Swift's satirical send-up of servants includes advice to servants in the town on how to behave so as to avoid the stigma of service.
- 14 See, for example, the Apprenticeship Registers for the City of York. (See below no 46).
- 15 Ariès, Centuries of Childhood, p 354.
- 16 See Appendix.
- 17 Quoted in P Cunnington, The Costume of Household Servants (London, 1974), p 92.
- 18 See Laslett, The World We Have Lost, p 3; Houlbrooke, The English Family, p 175.
- 19 Ariès, Centuries of Childhood, p 354.

- 20 See: Palliser, Tudor York, p 99; "The Trade Gilds of Tudor York", in P Clark and P Slack (Eds), Crisis and Order in English Towns 1500-1700 (London, 1972), pp 86-116; R G Wilson, Gentlemen Merchants: The Merchant Community in Leeds 1700-1830 (Manchester, 1971), p 25.
- 21 Wilson, Gentlemen Merchants, pp 63, 209 and 10.
- 22 SCL, Spencer Stanhope papers, Sp St 60531/84, 5 August 1744; 60528/14, 13 September 1746.
- 23 LDA, Gossip papers, Box 24, Bundle 1, 17 June 1758.
- 24 Two very useful articles on the psychological effect of apprenticeship are, S R Smith, "The London Apprentices as Seventeenth Century Adolescents", Past and Present, No 61 (1973), pp 149-161; A Yarbrough, "Apprentices as Adolescents in Sixteenth Century Bristol", Journal of Social History, Vol 13, No 1 (1979), pp 67-81.
- 25 C Phythian-Adams, "Ceremony and the Citizen: the Communal Year at Coventry 1450-1550", in Clark and Slack, Crisis and Order in English Towns, p 58.
- 26 Yarbrough, "Apprentices as Adolescents", p 69.
- 27 Haywood, A New Present for a Servant Maid, p 15.
- 28 Pepys, Diary, Vol 7, p 273, 3 September 1666.
- 29 Quoted in Clark, Working Life of Women, p 157.
- 30 Houlbrooke, The English Family, p 176.
- 31 Snell, Annals of the Labouring Poor, p 285.
- 32 Lowe, Diary (see "Introduction", note 45). Another diarist who recorded his apprenticeship in the late eighteenth century was Francis Place. See M Thale (Ed), The Autobiography of Francis Place (Cambridge, 1972), Chapter 4, "My Apprenticeship", pp 71-82.
- 33 Lowe, Diary, p 8. For an excellent study of the English alehouse, its clientele and the social and psychological philosophy surrounding it, see P Clark, The English Alehouse: A Social History 1200-1830 (London, 1983).
- 34 Lowe, Diary, p 34. Another apprentice, William Hutton, also had a difficult mistress: see J Rule, The Experience of Labour in Eighteenth-Century Industry (London, 1981), p 103.
- 35 Rule, Experience of Labour, p 103.
- 36 *ibid.*

- 37 For descriptions of Shrove Tuesday activities, see Malcolmson, Popular Recreations, pp 28-9, 48-9, 139; Yarbrough, "Apprentices as Adolescents", pp 70-1. P Burke analyses in detail the elements and implications of carnival and its related activities, using evidence from England and the Continent. See P Burke, Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe (London, 1978). First hand evidence comes from Jacob Bee, a Durham Craftsman, who recorded that, on 18 September 1683, "my man Christopher went without leave to play" at football on Shrove Tuesday. See Bee, Diary. p 47.
- 38 See Yarbrough, "Apprentices as Adolescents", pp 70-1.
- 39 Burke, Popular Culture, p 188.
- 40 Such tracts include: The Address of Above Twenty Thousand of the Loyal Apprentices of London (London, 1681); The Apprentices' Advice to the XII Bishops Lately Accused of High Treason by the Honourable Assembly of Both Houses (London, 1642); The Apprentices' Hue and Cry after their Petition (London, 1660); The Honour of a London Prentice (London, 1647); The Humble Demonstration of the Apprentices of London to the Lord Mayor (London, 1647); Two Humble Petitions of the Apprentices of London for Lawfull Recreations (London, 1647).
- 41 Reresby, Memoirs, p 409. See also: LDA, Reresby Letters, 43/29; Pepys, Diary, Vol 9, p 129.
- 42 Smith, "The London Apprentices", p 161.
- 43 M Beloff, Public Order and Popular Disturbances 1660-1714 (London, 1963), pp 30-1. Other historians have turned their attention to the problem of riot. The study of this form of public disturbance often raises more questions than it answers. It is not easy to isolate the motives of the rioters, nor the extent of their participation. For contrasting views see G Rudè, The Crowd in History (New York, 1964); J A Sharpe, Crime in Seventeenth-Century England: a County Study (Cambridge, 1983), Chapter 6, "Riot and Popular Disturbances"; E P Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century", Past and Present, No 50 (1971), pp 76-136.
- 44 Yarbrough, "Apprentices as Adolescents", p 67.
- 45 *ibid*, pp 75 and 77; Smith, "The London Apprentices", pp 159-60.
- 46 The Registers used in the following discussion are the General Registers of Apprenticeship for the City of York. See YCA, Register of Apprentices 1573-1688, D12; Register of Apprentices 1721-1756, D13; Register of Apprentices 1756-1786, D14.
- 47 Work on the trade guilds of York includes: B Johnson, "The Gilds of York", in A Stacpoole and others (Eds), The Noble City of York (York, 1972), pp 447-449. J Malden, "Freemen and Apprentices of York 1720-1820" (University of York M.Phil Thesis, 1984), p 19; D M Palliser, "The Trade Gilds of Tudor York"; H Swanson, "Craftsmen and Industry in Late Medieval York" (University of York D.Phil Thesis, 1980).

- 48 The exact status of the yeomen is not easy to define. The term was used to describe men of unequal status, ranging from husbandmen to substantial farmers whose living was gained from the land. Mildred Campbell accorded them an honourable status as "the backbone of the English nation". Peter Laslett defined them as "the most successful of those who worked the land". They were probably included amongst Gregory King's forty thousand "freeholders of the better sort" in his great scheme of the degrees of people in England in 1688. See: M Campbell, The English Yeoman under the Tudors and Stuarts (2nd Edn, London, 1967); Laslett, The World We Have Lost, pp 36-8, 45. See also K Wrightson, English Society, Chapter 1.
- 49 See Johnson, "The Gilds of York", pp 169; 890-894.
- 50 Merson (Ed), Southampton Apprenticeship Registers, p xxxii.
- 51 The history of the Carpenters and Joiners is told in detail by Johnson in "The Gilds of York", pp 557-569.
- 52 YCA, Register of Apprentices 1756-1786, D14.
- 53 BIHR, Merchant Taylors Company, Apprenticeship Registers, MTA 3/1; MTA 3/2.
- 54 Snell, Annals of the Labouring Poor, p 299.
- 55 P J P Goldberg, "Female Labour, Service and Marriage in the Late Medieval Urban North", Northern History, Vol 22 (1986), pp 34-5.
- 56 Sue Wright, on the other hand, found that few widows in Tudor and Stuart Salisbury, who had been left with their husband's apprentices after his death, still had them two years later. See Sue Wright, "Churmayds, Huswyfes and Hucksters: the Employment of Women in Tudor and Stuart Salisbury", in L Charles and L Duffin (Eds), Women and Work in Pre-Industrial England (London, 1985), p 114.
- 57 Clark, Working Life of Women, p 154.
- 58 *ibid*, p 5.
- 59 YCA, Register of Apprentices 1756-1786, D14.
- 60 See M Roberts, "Words they are Women and Deeds they are Men: Images of Work and Gender in Early Modern England", in Charles and Duffin, Women and Work in Pre-Industrial England, p 138. Roberts points out that women were frequently identified in terms of status rather than occupation and that "men were given priority over women by record keepers".

- 61 Snell, Annals of the Labouring Poor, p 302. See also Clark, Working Life of Women, pp 158-9. The history of women, their place in society, and the extent of their influence on, and involvement in, economic and political affairs, is an ever growing field of study. For general histories and articles see also, A Fraser, The Weaker Vessel, Women's Lot in Seventeenth-Century England (London, 1984); E A McArthur, "Women Petitioners and the Long Parliament", English Historical Review, Vol 24 (1909), pp 698-709; M Prior (Ed), Women in English Society 1500-1800 (London, 1985); E Richards, "Women in the British Economy Since 1700: An Interpretation", History, Vol 59 (1974), pp 337-357.
- 62 Snell, Annals of the Labouring Poor, p 294.
- 63 Wright, "Churmayds, Huswyfes and Hucksters", p 103. See also Goldberg, "Female Labour", p 21.
- 64 Snell, Annals of the Labouring Poor, p 301.
- 65 See A Clark, Working Life of Women, pp 150-235; J Dunlop and R D Denman, English Apprenticeship and Child Labour (London, 1912), p 150.
- 66 See Merson (Ed), Southampton Apprentice Registers, p lii; Wright, "Churmayds, Huswyfes and Hucksters", p 142.
- 67 Snell, Annals of the Labouring Poor, pp 293-4.
- 68 BIHR, Merchant Taylors Company, Apprenticeship Registers, MTA 3/1; MTA 3/2.
- 69 B Johnson, The Merchant Taylors of York (York, nd), p 81.
- 70 See Goldberg, "Female Labour", p 24.
- 71 Snell, Annals of the Labouring Poor, p 284.
- 72 *ibid*, p 278.
- 73 Wright, "Churmayds, Huswyfes and Hucksters", p 103. See also Goldberg, "Female Labour", p 25.
- 74 Snell, Annals of the Labouring Poor, p 277.
- 75 E J Bukatsch, "Places of Origin" (see above "Introduction", note 25). See also Dunlop and Denman, English Apprenticeship, p 258.
- 76 BIHR, Parish of Holy Trinity, Goodramgate, York, Apprenticeship Indentures, Y/HTG 48.
- 77 Detailed treatment of this subject is to be found in the following works: Dunlop and Denman, English Apprenticeship; D M George, London Life in the Eighteenth Century (London, 1925), Chapter 5, "Parish Children and Poor Apprentices"; D M Marshall, The English Poor in the Eighteenth Century; I Pinchbeck and M Hewitt, Children in English Society (London, 1969), 2 Vols, Vol 1, "From the Eighteenth Century to the Children Act 1948", Chapter 6. The most recent work is Snell's, Annals of the Labouring Poor, see Chapters 5 and 6.

- 78 Dunlop and Denman, English Apprenticeship, p 253.
- 79 LDA, Carleton parish records, 132, Resolution of a vestry meeting, 6 December 1773.
- 80 7 Geo III c.39.
- 81 BIHR, Holy Trinity, Goodramgate, Y/HTG 48/1.
- 82 Merson (Ed), Southampton Apprentice Registers, p lii.
- 83 YCA, Register of Apprentices 1756-1786, D14.
- 83a Malden, "Freemen and Apprentices", p 98.
- 84 Snell, Annals of the Labouring Poor, p 284.
- 85 See G C F Forster, East Riding Justices of the Peace in the Seventeenth Century (East Yorkshire Local History Society, No 30, 1973), p 52. See also C Wilson, "The Other Face of Mercantilism", Transactions of the royal Historical Society, 5th Series, Vol 9 (1959), pp 95-7.
- 86 See for example, BIHR, Holy Trinity, Goodramgate, Y/HTG 48/18; 48/22.
- 87 BIHR, Merchant Taylors Company Apprentice Register, MTA/3/1.
- 88 YCA, Register of Apprentices 1756-1786, D14; See 19 January 1765; 16 July 1765; August, September, October, November 1765.
- 89 See Dunlop and Denman, English Apprenticeship, pp 193-8; Snell, Annals of the Labouring Poor, pp 257-63.
- 90 BIHR, Y/HTG 48/22.
- 91 *ibid*, 48/25.
- 92 CDA, Ovenden township records, HAS 255/59.
- 93 CDA, Elland township records, EG/A/39/14, 23 June 1762.
- 94 BIHR, Blue Coat School, Minutes of monthly meetings 1770-1780, BCS 6, 6 October 1775.
- 95 T Dekker, The Shoemakers Holiday, D J Palmer (Ed) (London, 1975), Act V sc i, 50-1.
- 96 BIHR, Y/HTG 48/216. See also the Indenture of William Spencer; SCL, Spencer Stanhope papers, Sp St 60531/3.
- 97 BIHR, Y/HTG 48, (many of these indentures do not have an individual number). See also WYAS, Quarter Sessions Order Book, QS 10/10, 3 May 1698.
- 98 D Defoe, The Family Instructor (14th Edn, Edinburgh, 1755).
- 99 YCA, Register of Apprentices 1756-1786, D14.
- 100 *ibid*.

- 100a See also the interesting case between a master and his apprentice outlined by Paul Leaver, "A Social Contract? Master against Servant in the Court of Requests", History Today, Vol 39 (September, 1989), pp 50-56.
- 101 WYAS, Quarter Sessions Order Books, QS 10/7; see also, 10/8, 5 August 1684; 10/4, 14 January 1663.
- 102 *ibid*, 10/7, 7 October 1679.
- 103 *ibid*.
- 104 NYCRO, Quarter Sessions Minutes, QSM 2/10, Thirsk 1658. See also WYAS, QS 10/6, Wakefield 1674.
- 105 *ibid*, 2/14, Thirsk 12 April 1670.
- 106 NYCRO, QSM 2/14, Richmond 1671.
- 107 NYCRO, QSM 2/21, Thirsk 27 April 1742.
- 108 *ibid*, 2/21, Northallerton 1734.
- 109 *ibid*, 2/21, Guisborough 1745.
- 110 *ibid*, 2/20, Northallerton 1705.
- 111 YCA, Register of Apprentices 1756-1786, D14. See also NYCRO, QSM 2/21, Thirsk 1719 (Anne Flintoff).
- 112 WYAS, QS 10/4, 9 October 1662; see also 10/7, 1679/80.
- 113 Malden, "Freemen and Apprentices", p 92.
- 114 *ibid*, QS 10/5, Knaresborough 1668.
- 115 CDA, Elland township, Settlement Examinations, EG/A/81/24, 3 August 1769. See also Ovenden township, HAS 240/48, 4 May 1780 (May Crooke).
- 116 George, London Life, p 237.
- 117 WYAS, Quarter Sessions Orders, QS 10/8. Skipton 1682.
- 118 *ibid*, 10/6, Wakefield 1674.
- 119 NYCRO, Quarter Sessions Minutes, QSM 2/16, New Malton 1680.
- 120 WYAS, QS 10/11, Knaresborough 1701.
- 121 *ibid*, 10/14, Pontefract 1772.
- 122 *ibid*, 10/5, Doncaster 1665/6.
- 123 Eyre, Diary, *passim*.
- 124 WYAS, QS 10/8, Leeds 1683. See also NYCRO, QSM 2/20, Thirsk and Stoxley 1751 (Valentine White).
- 125 HCRO, Grimston papers, DDGR/42/25, 18 October 1775.
- 126 YCA, Register of Apprentices 1721-1756, D13.

CHAPTER 5 - Servant Deviance

- 1 D Defoe, The Great Law of Subordination Consider'd; or the Insolence and insufferable behviour of servants in England duly enquir'd into etc (London, 1724), p 174.
- 1a See for example, J M Beattie, "The Pattern of Crime in England 1660-1800", Past and Present, No 62 (1974), pp 47-95; J S Cockburn (ed), Crime in England 1550-1800 (London, 1977); D Hay, et al (Eds), Albion's Fatal Tree: crime and society in Eighteenth Century England (London, 1975); J A Sharpe, Crime in Seventeenth-Century England; J A Sharpe, Crime in Early Modern England.
- 2 See Sharpe, Crime in Early Modern England, Chapters 3, 4 and 5.
- 3 PRO, North Eastern Assize Circuit Depositions, ASSI 45. These have been studied at roughly five yearly intervals from 1650-1755. HCRO, Quarter Sessions Order Books, QSV; Quarter Sessions Working Papers, QSF; NYCRO, Quarter Sessions Minute and Order Books, QSM; Quarter Sessions Working Papers, QSB; WYAS, Quarter Sessions Order Books, QS 10; Quarter Sessions Working Papers, QS 1; YCA, Quarter Sessions Minute Books, F7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22.
- 4 Sharpe, Crime in Early Modern England, p 54.
- 5 PRO, ASSI 45 11/2 51, 29 November 1749.
- 6 NYCRO, QSB, 8 October 1717 (10 April 1717). (Please note that the first date indicates the sessions at which the case was heard. The date in brackets indicates the date of the examination or deposition.)
- 7 PRO, ASSI 45 14/2 109.
- 8 *ibid*, 13/1 54-6; WYAS, QS 1, Wakefield, January 1739-40.
- 9 WYAS, QS 1, Leeds, July 1695.
- 10 PRO, ASSI 45 5/7 99; 5/2 60.
- 11 WYAS, QS 1, 24 November 1730.
- 12 HCRO, QSF, D7, Michaelmas 1716.
- 13 Hull CRO, CQE 3/125. 16 June 1750.
- 14 NYCRO, QSB, Thirsk, 5 October 1736 (7 July 1736).
- 15 WYAS, QS 1, Bradford, July 1741.
- 16 *ibid*, Wetherby, January 1700.
- 17 *ibid*, Examination, Pontefract 1727.
- 18 *ibid*, Skipton, July 1719.

- 19 *ibid*, Information and Examination, Knaresborough, October 1726.
- 20 *ibid*, Examination, Leeds, October 1740. See William Ellis, The Country Housewife's Family Companion, p 181, for the tale of an ex-servant who persuaded his successor to give him access to the cellar and the two drank their master's beer.
- 21 WYAS, QS 1, Rotherham, July 1730.
- 22 NYCRO, QSB, Thirsk, 3 October 1732 (18 November 1731).
- 23 BIHR, Vanbrugh Papers, YM/CP 1, 17 January (nd). See also Hobson, Diary (Surtees Society, Vol 65, 1875), p 305, for a similar episode.
- 24 SCL, Wentworth Woodhouse papers, WWM Stw 2.25, 13 May (1777).
- 25 WYAS, QS 1, Information, Knaresborough, August 1705.
- 26 *ibid*, QS 1, Information, Barnsley, October 1671.
- 27 NYCRO, QSB, Thirsk, October 1736 (7 July 1736).
- 28 WYAS, QS 1, Examination, Pontefract, April 1738.
- 29 See for example WYAS, QS 1, Examination, Doncaster, 1700; PRO, ASSI 45 11/2 10; 11/2 128.
- 30 PRO, ASSI 45 11/2 137; 20 January 1675.
- 31 See C Herrup, "New Shoes and Mutton Pies: Investigative Responses to Theft in Seventeenth-Century East Sussex", Historical Journal, Vol 27, No 4 (1984), p 823.
- 32 YCA, F7, f 33, 354, 404.
- 33 WYAS, QS 1, Examination, Wakefield, January 1740; PRO, ASSI 45 11/2 133, 3 May 1675.
- 34 PRO, ASSI 45 17/1 21, 11 March 1698/9.
- 35 *ibid*, 15/4 106, 22 December 1689; NYCRO, QSB, Examination, Thirsk 1710.
- 36 PRO, ASSI 45 5/2 60, 7 March 1654.
- 37 NYCRO, QSB, Deposition, 1695 (24 November 1694).
- 38 *ibid*, Examination, 22 May 1700.
- 39 *ibid*, Deposition, Thirsk, 1706.
- 40 *ibid*, Deposition, Thirsk, 1730 (7 October 1729); see also PRO, ASSI 45 5/7 99, 17 October 1660.
- 41 PRO, ASSI 45 18/2 10, 28 October 1724.
- 42 *ibid*, 15/4 55a and b, 10 January 1689.
- 43 *ibid*, 15/4 106, 22 December 1689.

- 44 Heywood, Diary, Vol 2, p 230.
- 45 J M Beattie, "The Criminality of Women in Eighteenth-Century England", Journal of Social History, Vol 8 (1974-5), pp 84-5.
- 46 NYCRO, QSB, Deposition, Thirsk, October 1725 (22 March 1724/5).
- 47 PRO, ASSI 45 24/2 147b, 8 January 1749.
- 48 *ibid*, 18/1 50, 15 August 1724.
- 49 HCRO, QSF, Information E12, Easter 1731.
- 50 NYCRO, QSB, Thirsk 1703 (5 November 1702).
- 51 PRO, ASSI 45 15/4 17, 30 December 1690.
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- 54 See J A Sharpe, "Domestic Homicide in Early Modern England", Historical Journal, Vol 24, No 1 (1981), see p 38.
- 55 YCA, Quarter Sessions Minute Book F18, 7 May 1745.
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- 58 *ibid*, 18/7 1, 4 August 1729.
- 59 WYAS, QS 1, Pontefract 1727.
- 60 Heywood, Diary, Vol 2, p 279. See also Vol 1, p 357, Vol 2, p 258. See also G R Quaife, Wanton Wenches and Wayward Wives (London, 1979), *passim*, for mention of the sexuality of maidservants.
- 61 See for example HCRO, Grimston papers, DDGR 42/29/12 and 13, 26 and 27 January 1779 - an ex-servantmaid who became pregnant was shunned by the parish authorities who did not wish to take responsibility for her maintenance.
- 62 See the interesting article by Carol Z Wiener, "Is a Spinster and Unmarried Woman?", American Journal of Legal History, Vol 20 (1976), pp 27-31, for a discussion of the legal and historical implications of the term "singlewoman".
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- 64 *ibid*, Deposition, Thirsk, October 1724 (27 June 1724).
- 65 *ibid*, Thirsk, October 1724 (15 February 1723/4).
- 66 *ibid*, Deposition, Thirsk, October 1722 (9 July 1722).
- 67 *ibid*, Thirsk, October 1724 (9 July 1724); October 1728 (24 July 1728).

- 68 *ibid*, Thirsk, October 1716 (2 July 1716); October 1728 (28 April 1727).
- 69 *ibid*, Thirsk, 3 October 1732 (21 December 1731).
- 70 WYAS, QS 1, Skipton, July 1735.
- 71 NYCRO, QSB, Thirsk, October 1726 (23 July 1726).
- 72 *ibid*, D2 Midsummer 1716.
- 73 *ibid*, Thirsk, October 1734 (28 May 1734).
- 74 *ibid*, 1722 (16 November 1721); Thirsk, October 1731 (8 February 1730-1).
- 75 See M Slater, "The Weightiest business: Marriage in an Upper Gentry Family in Seventeenth-Century England", Past and Present, No 72 (1976), p 39.
- 76 NYCRO, QSB, Deposition, Thirsk, 24 April 1750.
- 77 PRO, ASSI 45 13/2 106, 20 February 1681.
- 78 NYCRO, QSB, Thirsk, October 1735 (31 March 1735); WYAS, QS 1, Knaresborough, October 1692.
- 79 WYAS, QS 10/7, Leeds, 1 August 1678.
- 80 NYCRO, QSM 2/10, 4 October 1659.
- 81 *ibid*, Thirsk, October 1728 (24 July 1728).
- 82 *ibid*, Thirsk, October 1716 (20, 23, 31 August, 24 September 1716).
- 83 *ibid*, Thirsk, October 1731 (24 December 1730, 8 February 1730/1).
- 84 LDA, Reresby letters, MX/R 40/3.
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- 89 *ibid*, 13/2 97 and 98, 3 July 1682.

- 90 *ibid*, 24/2 105, 3 July 1750.
- 91 *ibid*, 9/3 77, 4 June 1670.
- 92 *ibid*.
- 93 Malcolmsen, "Infanticide", p 197; see also Hoffer and Hull, Murdering Mothers, pp 65-72.
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- 96 *ibid*, 15/4 1, 1690; 18/2 20, 22 September 1724; 22/4 60 and 62, 14 and 22 June 1744.
- 97 *ibid*, 16/5 131, 1694.
- 98 *ibid*, 25/3 116, 22 June 1755.
- 99 See Hoffer and Hull, Murdering Mothers, p 69; see also pp 65, 71.
- 100 LDA, Resesby letters, MX/R 49/11.
- 101 LDA, Resesby letters, MX/R 35/1.
- 102 See Herrop, "New Shoes and Mutton Pies", p 823.
- 103 NYCRO, QSB, Thirsk, 23 April 1723.
- 104 E P Thompson, "The Crime of Anonymity", in Hay et al (Eds), Albion's Fatal Tree, p 307.

CHAPTER 6 - Literary Images of Servants

- 1 LDA, Newby Hall Papers, NH 2827/3, 20 July 1741.
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- 3 Houlbrooke, The English Family, p 6.
- 4 See Hecht, The Domestic Servant, pp 136-139.
- 5 R Cumberland, The West Indian (London, 1771), Act IV Sc ix.
- 6 J Townley, High Life Below Stairs (London, 1768). See also the fate of Barnwell in George Lillo's, The London Merchant, W H McBurney (Ed) (London, 1731: Regents Restoration Drama Series, London 1965), and the loyalty of Dufoy in George Etherege's, The Comical Revenge, M Cordner (Ed) (London, 1664: Cambridge, 1982).
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- 9 George Etherege, The Man of Mode, W B Carnochan (Ed) (London, 1676: Regents Restoration Drama Series, London, 1967), Act I, 482.
- 10 Richard Steele, The Conscious Lovers in S S Kenny The Plays of Richard Steele (London, 1722: Oxford, 1971), Act V Sc ii, 21-50.
- 11 Etherege, The Man of Mode, Act I, 14-21.
- 12 William Congreve, The Way of the World in H Davis (Ed), The Complete Plays of William Congreve (London, 1700: Chicago, 1967), Act V Sc i, 46-47.
- 13 Garrick, The Lying Valet, Act I Sc ii. See also Lady Booby's lament after she has revealed her feelings to Joseph and Slipslop in Henry Fielding's, Joseph Andrews, A Humphreys (Ed) (London, 1742, Everyman, London, 1983), p 83.
- 14 Congreve, The Way of the World, Act V Sc i, 54-58.
- 15 For examples, see Handy's comment in The Man of Mode, Act I, 17-18; Scrub's description of Archer in George Farquhar's "The Beaux' Stratagem", W D Taylor (Ed), Eighteenth Century Comedy (London, 1706-7: London 1969), Act III Sc i, 62-66. Some examples from real life can be found in the correspondence of several gentlemen. We have already encountered for example, the haughty footmen who plagued Sir John Grimston, HCRO, Grimston Papers, DDGR 42/18; 42/25; 42/28.
- 16 Steele, The Conscious Lovers, Act I Sc i, 255.

- 17 Farquhar, The Beaux' Stratagem, Act III Sc iii, 119-121.
- 18 *ibid*, Act III Sc ii.
- 19 J Vanbrugh and C Cibber, The Provoked Husband, P Dixon (Ed) (London, 1727/8: Regents Restoration Drama Series, London, 1975), Act I, 488-624.
- 20 David Garrick, Bon Ton or High Life Below Stairs (London, 1775), Act II Sc ii. See also Steele, The Conscious Lovers, Act V Sc ii, 32-33. Dorinda remarks that some footmen used their positions as stepping stones to greater things - "I have known several Footmen come down from London set up here for Dancing-Masters, and carry off the best Fortunes in the Country"; The Beaux' Stratagem, Act III Sc iii, 101-103.
- 21 Townley, High Life Below Stairs, Act I Sc ii. The same sentiments are expressed by Tom in The Conscious Lovers, Act I Sc i.
- 22 Fielding, Joseph Andrews, p 156.
- 23 Townley, High Life Below Stairs, Act I Sc ii.
- 24 Fielding, Joseph Andrews, Book 1, Chapter 6, p 70.
- 25 See the letters from Dom John Bede Potts (steward) to Marmaduke Constable: Hull Univ, Constable of Everingham papers, DDEV/60/849, 12 October 1726; 27 March 1727; 8 May 1727.
- 26 Samuel Richardson, Pamela, M A Doody (Ed) (London, 1740: Penguin English Library, Harmondsworth, 1980, reprinted 1984), *passim*.
- 27 See: R C Churchill, English Literature of the Eighteenth Century (2nd Edn, London, 1961), p 107; O Elton, Survey of English Literature 1730-1780 (London, 1928), 2 Vols, Vol 1, p167-8.
- 28 See for example, the story of the maidservant who lived happily with her mistress's son, and bore his child: LDA, Newby Hall papers, NH 2833/90.
- 29 Richardson, Pamela, Doody (Ed), "Introduction", p 14. See also stories of real life servants Agnes Sim and Nell in Fraser, The Weaker Vessel, pp 133, 169; Quaiife, Wanton Wenches and Wayward Wives, Chapter 3, "The Consenting Spinster"; Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage, p 404.
- 30 Richardson, Pamela, Doody (Ed), p 13.
- 31 *ibid*, Letter I, p 44.
- 32 *ibid*, p 13.
- 33 *ibid*, Letter XXIX, p 109.
- 34 *ibid*.
- 35 *ibid*, p 108.
- 36 *ibid*, p 111. See also Letter XX, p 76.

- 37 *ibid*, Letter VI, pp 49-50; Letter XXIX, pp 110-111.
- 38 *ibid*, Letter XXX, p 115.
- 39 *ibid*, Letter XXXII, p 131.
- 40 *ibid*, p 363.
- 41 Hull Univ, Constable of Everingham papers, DDEV/60/849, 8 May 1727.
- 42 See Richardson, Pamela, Letter XXV, p 95; pp 237-243.
- 43 K M Davies, "The Sacred Condition of Equality - how original were Puritan Doctrines of Marriage?", Social History (Hull University), No 5 (May, 1977), p 565.
- 44 Gouge, Domesticall Duties; Baxter, Christian Directory; Markham, The Compleat Housewife.
- 45 T P (Ed), The Regulations and Establishment of the Household of Henry Algernon Percy, The Fifth Earl of Northumberland at his Castles of Wresill and Leginfield in Yorkshire (London, 1827); see also the household regulations of the Stanleys of Derby: Rev F R Davies MA, FSA (Ed), The Derby Household Books; comprising an Account of the Household Regulations and Expenses of Edward and Henry, Third and Fourth Earls of Derby (The Chetham Society, Vol 31, 1853).
- 46 York City Archives, Munby Family Papers, 54:4, Housekeeping Account Book of Mrs Elizabeth Forth 1792-3. See also C Hardymont (Ed), The Housekeeping Book of Susanna Whatman 1776-1800 (London, 1987), p 39.
- 47 Whatman, Housekeeping Book, p 42; Swift, Direction to Servants.
- 48 See C L Powell, English Domestic Relations 1487-1653 (New York, 1917, reissued, 1972), p 128; "... except for greater detail ... the household section of the domestic book remained the same in content and point of view from start to finish ... to read one is to read all".
- 49 Swift, Directions to Servants, p 31.
- 50 Hannah Glasse, The Servant's Directory or Housekeepers' Companion etc (London, 1760).
- 51 *ibid*, p 27.
- 52 *ibid*, p 48.
- 53 Haywood, A Present for a Servant Maid, pp 6-7.
- 54 Haywood, A New Present for a Servant Maid, pp 8, 9, 10.
- 55 Haywood, A Present for a Servant Maid, pp 48-49.
- 56 Anne Barker, The Complete Servant Maid: or Young Woman's Best Companion (London, 1770?), p 5.

- 57 *ibid*, p 10. See also Haywood, A New Present for a Servant Maid, p 14.
- 58 Anon? The Compleat Servant-Maid, p 11.
- 59 Advertisements in contemporary newspapers required capable middle-aged women who would not mind serving a large family. See for example, YCL, The York Courant, 19 November 1765.
- 60 Barker, The Complete Servant Maid, pp 16, 44.
- 61 Baxter, Christian Directory, p 68.
- 62 See Gouge, Domesticall Duties; Anon, The Compleat Servant-Maid, p 1. Fewer instances of such advice in eighteenth century domestic conduct books may have reflected the growing secularism of society. For brief debates on this see, Porter, English Society, pp 244-5; Speck, Stability and Strife, pp 97-104.
- 63 Baxter, Christian Directory, p 71.
- 64 *ibid*, p 91.
- 65 See Axtell (Ed), The Educational Writings of John Locke, pp 130, 144, 154, 164, 171, 183, 211, 227, 371.
- 66 Baxter, Christian Directory, p 15. See also Zinzano, The Servants' Calling, p 11; Mayo, A Present for Servants, p 17; Houlbrooke, The English Family, p 175; R Burton, The Apprentices' Companion, Containing Plain and useful Directions to Servants especially Apprentices how to perform their Particular Dutys to their Masters (London, 1681), p 22.
- 67 Burton, The Apprentices' Companion, p 51.
- 68 P Earle, The World of Defoe (London, 1976), p 174.
- 69 See for example, the tale of the two apprentices attached to masters with opposing religious inclinations in Defoe's, The Family Instructor.
- 70 See for example, Broughton, A Serious and Affectionate Warning, pp 15, 21.
- 71 Zinzano, The Servants' Calling, p 17. See also Broughton, A Serious and Affectionate Warning; p 13.
- 72 Zinzano, The Servants' Calling, pp 22, 24.
- 73 Seaton, The Conduct of Servants in Great Families, p 159. See also that oft-quoted story told by Daniel Defoe of the Chamber-jade dressed so finely that he took her to be the mistress: Defoe, Every-Body's Business is No-Body's Business, p 15.
- 74 Defoe, Every-Body's Business, p 13.

- 75 D Defoe, The Great Law of Subordination Considered; Defoe, Every-Body's Business.
- 76 Defoe, the Great Law of Subordination Considered, pp 7, 12-13.
- 77 *ibid*, p 14.
- 78 *ibid*, p 78; Defoe, Every-Body's Business, p 6. Vails were also a part of the controversy over wages in the eighteenth century. Most authors discussed these. See especially Anon, Eight Letters to his Grace the - Duke of - on the Custom of Vails Giving to Servants (London, 1760).
- 79 Defoe, The Great Law of Subordination Considered, p 261.
- 80 *ibid*, p 258.
- 81 See for example, *ibid*, p 284.
- 82 See R Strauss, Robert Dodsley (New York, 1968).
- 83 R Dodsley, Servitude, A Poem (London, 1729).
- 84 *ibid*, Preface.
- 85 *ibid*, p 7.
- 86 *ibid*, p 10.
- 87 *ibid*, p 12.
- 88 *ibid*.
- 89 Oliver Gray claimed to be an ex-servant of sixty three years of age. See Gray, An Apology for the Servants. He made some very pertinent comments on vails; see especially pp 17 and 21.

CONCLUSION

- 1 Clark, English Society, p 104.
- 2 Hecht, The Domestic Servant, Chapter 8, pp 200-228.
- 3 See Newby, The Deferential Worker, pp 417-424.
- 4 For a useful and thought-provoking discussion of the differences between the servant's role in the eighteenth and twentieth centuries, see L A Coser, "Servants: the Obsolescence of an Occupational Role", Social Forces, Vol 52 (September, 1973).
- 5 See Wrightson, English Society, pp 140-142; 222-224.
- 6 A wider perspective of these changes in society is given in Speck, Stability and Strife, chapters 2 and 3. See also Thompson, "Patrician Society, Plebeian Culture"; Wrightson, "English Society" (see note 5). A Macfarlane's The Origins of English Individualism: The Family Property and Society Transition (Oxford, 1978), discusses the more deep-seated changes which took place in English society from its most fundamental basis, the peasant world of the thirteenth century, while Rabb's, Struggle for Stability in Early Modern Europe, discusses the "crisis" of the seventeenth century and reflects on how it paved the way for the less chaotic and frantic mental world of the eighteenth.
- 7 Thompson, "Patrician Society, Plebeian Culture", p 384.
- 8 See E A Wrigley and R S Schofield, The Population History of England 1541-1871: A Reconstruction (London, 1981). pp 531-4 and passim. See also C G A Clay, Economic Expansion and Social Change: England 1500-1700, 2 Vols (Cambridge, 1984), Vol 1, Chapter 1, "Population", and Chapter 4, "The progress of agriculture"; J Thirsk (Ed), The Agrarian History of England and Wales, Vol 5.2, 1640-1750 (Cambridge, 1985), Chapters 13 and 19.
- 9 See above, Chapter 1, note 81. The subject of the letter is in "great distress" since he has not a personal servant to help him dress and shave.
- 10 See D C Coleman, "Labour in the English Economy of the Seventeenth Century", Economic History Review, 2nd series, Vol 8 (1955-56), pp 280-295, for a discussion of the attitudes towards labour in the seventeenth century.

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- HCRO, Beverley corporation, DDBC 14/6.
- LDA, Carleton parish, 124.
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- NYCRO, Northallerton township PR 4/1.
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