The Rich Merchant Man, or, What the Punishment of Greed Sounded Like in Early Modern English Ballads

Una McIlvenna

ABSTRACT This essay explores how the ballad melody of the “Rich Merchant Man” was fundamentally linked to a drive to educate the serving classes and apprentices of seventeenth-century England in the expectations for the ever-growing merchant class that they hoped to join. They were taught to be charitable and to shun greed primarily through negative exemplars, who were punished in these ballads. The essay offers a case study of the multimedia methods by which the moral lessons of frugality and even charity—so seemingly out of character for a merchant class that defined itself by the accumulation of wealth—could be inculcated in the youth it was attempting to train. **KEYWORDS:** reuse of tunes in ballads; morality lessons for apprentices; seventeenth-century conceptions of charity; execution ballads; Lillo’s *The London Merchant*

A London ’Prentice ruined is our theme,
Drawn from the fam’d old song that bears his name.
We hope your taste is not so high to scorn
A moral tale esteem’d ere you were born;
Which, for a century of rolling years,
Has fill’d a thousand thousand eyes with tears.

—Prologue to *The London Merchant*¹

❧ **THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY PLAY** *The London Merchant* claimed to be based on a “fam’d old song” with “a moral tale esteem’d . . . for a century of rolling years.” This essay reveals that the song and the tale were even older, and that they were integrally associated with a specific melody, a ballad tune that for its sixteenth- and seventeenth-century listener-singers conjured up a cluster of associations around the

1. George Lillo, *The London Merchant*, ed. William H. McBurney (Lincoln, Neb., 1965).

Pp. 279–299. ©2016 by Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery. ISSN 0018-7895 | E-ISSN 1544-399X. All rights reserved. For permission to photocopy or reproduce article content, consult the University of Pennsylvania Press Rights and Permissions website, <http://www.upenn.edu/pennpress/about/permissions.html>.

themes of greed and punishment. This tune, “The Rich Merchant Man” (fig. 1) was used for at least twenty-six known seventeenth-century ballads and can be traced back to a ballad by Thomas Deloney, “A Most Sweet Song of an English Merchant Born in Chichester,” about an English merchant sentenced to be executed in Emden, Germany.² That ballad was licensed in 1594, but may well have been much older. Many of the ballads set to the melody indicate the tune with a variant of that original title—“The Merchant,” “The Merchant Man,” or “The Merchant of Emden,” for example—but Claude M. Simpson’s nomenclature “The Rich Merchant Man” will be used here.

FIGURE 1. “The Rich Merchant Man” from Simpson, *The British Broadside Ballad*, 602.

If we examine the themes of the ballads set to this tune, we see a striking continuity: with few exceptions, they concern the interrelated themes of punishment, repentance, greed, and desperation, with a particular focus on material wealth, the sins that it could drive people to commit, and the subsequent punishments. While ten of the twenty-six ballads deal with accounts of crimes and their state-sanctioned punishments, the others depict retribution in supernatural or divine form, or instead encourage their listener-singers to repent, employing millenarian language that foresees such divine punishments as imminent.³ These themes were inspired by the typical audience for such ballads: the servant or apprentice class that made up a large part of the market for broadside ballads in seventeenth-century England.⁴ While some of the ballads tell stories about servants or apprentices, others address them directly with advice on how to conduct themselves. This essay explores how the melody of the “Rich Merchant Man” was fundamentally linked to a drive to educate the serving classes and apprentices of seventeenth-century England in the expectations for appropriate behavior among the ever-growing merchant class, via a negative model of punitive retribution that stressed the need to be charitable and to shun greed for material wealth. In so

2. Claude M. Simpson, *The British Broadside Ballad and Its Music* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1966), 602–4.

3. See the appendix for ballads to this tune; all ballads discussed here with an EBBA identification number can be listened to via the English Broadside Ballad Archive website, <http://ebba.english.ucsbs.edu>.

4. For the ways in which ballads were regularly marketed to servants and apprentices, see Patricia Fumerton, *Unsettled: The Culture of Mobility and the Working Poor in Early Modern England* (Chicago, 2006), 133. On the disposable income of servants and apprentices, see Paul Griffiths, *Youth and Authority: Formative Experiences in England, 1560–1640* (Oxford, 1996).

doing, it offers a case study of the multimedia methods by which the moral lessons of frugality and even charity—so seemingly out of character for a merchant class that defined itself by the accumulation of wealth—could be inculcated in the youth the merchant class was attempting to train.

The “Rich Merchant Man” tune comprises a four-line stanza known as a “poulter’s-measure quatrain,” with iambic feet of 3, 3, 4, and 3 stresses, and rhyming second and fourth lines. This was an extremely popular measure for both balladry and poetry from the Elizabethan era onward, and made the melody simple to sing and thereby may have helped it become well known. I have written elsewhere about the significance of certain melodies for the transmission of meaning in ballads.⁵ By reusing familiar tunes, a technique known as *contrafactum*, ballad writers exploited the cultural and emotional associations that listener-singers brought to that melody and to its textual reworkings. Researching the various ballad texts set to a particular tune is key to understanding the overlapping and intertextual meanings that they carried for their audience, and the “Rich Merchant Man” is a good example of the rich matrix of melody, moral lesson, and class commentary that the multimedia early modern ballad could transmit.

The melody itself has an interesting feature which has potential ramifications for the text’s meaning when performed. It is in the major key of B♭, so the tonic, or main chord, of the melody is B♭ and the dominant, or second most common chord, is F. The melody starts in the tonic (B♭) before shifting up to the dominant (F). On the last long note of the second line of verse, it then drops to F♯. In the next phrase the melody returns to the tonic of the original key.⁶ This dissonant use of F♯ draws the listener’s attention more strongly to the final word of the second line of verse, which, given the *abab* rhyme scheme, rhymes with the last word of the stanza. This emphasizes the stress on the two words already created by the rhyme and also offers performers the option of drawing out the note on particularly significant or emotive lyrics. Take, for example, a verse from the ballad “The Unfaithful Servant,” about a servant who conspires to murder her mistress, recently delivered of a child:

Strong poyson we contriv’d
 this was our haniuous Sin,
 That she of Life might be depriv’d
 poor Soul when she lay in.⁷

5. Una McIlvenna, “The Power of Music: The Significance of *Contrafactum* in Execution Ballads,” *Past & Present* 229, no. 1 (November 2015): 47–89. See also Christopher Marsh, *Music and Society in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2011), 288–327; Kate van Orden, “Female Complaints: Laments of Venus, Queens, and City Women in Late Sixteenth-Century France,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 54, no. 3 (Autumn, 2001): 801–45; Robert Darnton, *Poetry and the Police: Communication Networks in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Cambridge, Mass., 2010), 79–102; Rebecca Wagner Oettinger, *Music as Propaganda in the German Reformation* (Aldershot, U.K., 2001); *Grove Music Online*, s.v. “*Contrafactum* (2. After 1450),” by Martin Picker, and s.v. “Parody,” by Michael Tilmouth and Richard Sherr, accessed November 22, 2012, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/>.

6. I would like to thank Matthew Ingleby for his assistance with the music theory.

7. “The Unfaithful Servant; and The Cruel Husband. Being a perfect and true account of one Judith Brown, who together with her Master Iohn Cupper, conspired the Death of her Mistris, his

The drop to F# focuses the listener's attention on the word "Sin," a potent term that becomes even more emotive when it is juxtaposed with the rhyming "lay in." Thus, in this particular ballad the melody helps to increase the emotional impact of the shocking news of the murder of a woman who has only just given birth. This ability of the "Rich Merchant Man" melody to guide its listeners in the appropriate emotional response may explain its use in so many ballads that preach a message of repentance for the sin of greed. While early modern ballad tunes are often quite versatile, being used for ballads on a range of topics and in a range of moods, this particular tune was associated from its origins with a didactic message about the punishment of greed.⁸

The plot of the original "Rich Merchant Man" ballad, "A Most Sweet Song," depicts for its audience the model repentant sinner. After killing a man "through quarrels," a rich merchant from Chichester is sentenced to be executed in Emden, Germany. He represents the ideal successful merchant both in appearance and behavior. Dressed "all in Velvet black as jet,"

Bare-headed was he brought,
his hands were bound before
A Cambrick Ruff about his neck
as white as milk he wore,
His Stockings were of silk
as fine as fine might be,
Of person and of Countenance,
a proper man was he[.]⁹

That the ballad devotes two-and-a-half stanzas to the merchant's dress alerts us to its significance for the audience.¹⁰ The merchant appears in black velvet with a white

Wife, which accordingly they did accomplish in the time of Child-bed, when she lay in with two Children, by mixing of her Drink with cruel Poyson; for which Fact she received due Sentence of Death at the late Assizes in the County of Salop, to be Burned; which was accordingly Executed upon the Old Heath near Shrewsbury, on Thursday the Twenty-first day of August, 1684" (1684), Pepys Library, Magdalene College, Cambridge (hereafter PL), Pepys 2.151, EBBA 20769.

8. Christopher Marsh gives several examples of ballads whose tunes seem, to a modern ear, incongruous with the topic of the song; Marsh, *Music and Society*, 295–99.

9. "A Most Sweet Song of an English Merchant Born in Chichester. To an Excellent New Tune" (1658–64), University of Glasgow Library (hereafter UGL), Euing 232, EBBA 31747.

10. The woodcut—the same on all extant versions of this broadside ballad—matches the narrative remarkably well: the condemned prisoner on the gallows is stepping down to take the hand of a lady as if her offer has released him; he is bareheaded and wearing an extremely fine, detailed ruff. He even appears to be showing us his fine stockings as he steps down. The clothing shown in the woodcut, which matches that described in the ballad, especially the cambric ruff, was out of fashion by the 1630s, the earliest printing dates that we have for any extant broadsides. However, we know the song was registered as early as 1594. While it is impossible to make a definitive argument that the woodcut was originally custom-carved for earlier, non-extant editions of the ballad, the details suggest that the woodcut was strongly associated with this ballad in printers' minds and probably in the minds of the public as well, and that the appearance of the merchant was of significance. I thank Megan E. Palmer of EBBA for her assistance in my investigation of the woodcut.

FIGURE 2. “A Most Sweet Song of an English Merchant” (1658–64). Euing 230, EBBA 31745. By permission of University of Glasgow Library, Special Collections. Note the detailed dress of the protagonists in the woodcut.

cambric ruff and silk stockings, luxury items and fabrics that would have distinguished him as wealthy, and yet his choice of colors would have muted claims of ostentation or extravagance (fig. 2). In this period, as Ulinka Rublack reminds us, “black denoted constancy and sombreness; white symbolised faith and humility.”¹¹ Our first impression of the merchant is therefore—despite his conviction for murder—overwhelmingly positive. This is notable because of the potentially problematic role of merchants in the developing seventeenth-century English economy. Between 1520 and 1700 the population of England doubled, producing inflation along with what has been called “the steady pressure of a prolific population on inelastic resources.”¹² The need for expanded trade, both internal and international, in order to feed and clothe the populace meant that merchants were in a position both to help and to exploit their fellow citizens. Such power could be viewed with suspicion: the contemporary economist and politician Charles Davenant noted that trade was “in its nature a pernicious thing,” creating excessive luxury and corruption.¹³ A positive depiction of a merchant—one who, given the German location, is clearly an international merchant—therefore implied a lesson for those who were themselves merchants and for the apprentices they were training.

11. Ulinka Rublack, *Dressing Up: Cultural Identity in Renaissance Europe* (Oxford, 2010), 70. The choice of colors would also have suggested that the merchant was Protestant; see Graeme Murdock, “Dressed to Repress?: Protestant Clerical Dress and the Regulation of Morality in Early Modern Europe,” *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture* 4, no. 2 (May 2000): 179–99.

12. Keith Wrightson and David Levine, *Poverty and Piety in an English Village: Terling, 1525–1700* (New York, 1979), 3.

13. Quoted in Paul Slack, “Material Progress and the Challenge of Affluence in Seventeenth-Century England,” *Economic History Review* 62, no. 3 (2009): 576–603 at 594.

This portrayal is reinforced by the actions of the other merchants of the town, who offer “a thousand pound” to set him free. The condemned merchant refuses these gifts to secure his liberty, however, accepting his execution as just. Totally repentant of the murder, which he depicts as rash and unintentional (“sore against my will”), he bemoans the fate of the dead man’s widow and children, bequeathing them “a hundred pound a piece / their comforts to restore.” His only request is that “They will speak well of Englishmen / though I have done amisse,” a request that would have made him an endearing figure to English listeners. Then, inspired by the popular belief that were a virgin to offer herself in marriage to a condemned man he would be pardoned, multiple women come forth to offer him their hands in marriage; he refuses all their offers, instead giving them a thousand pounds in gold to share equally.¹⁴ Finally, at the very moment at which the executioner steps forward to decapitate the merchant, a damsel steps forward and offers up her life for him:

I’le dye within thy arms,
if thou wilt dye (quoth she)
Yet live or dye sweet English-man,
i’le live and dye with thee[.]

This selfless act impresses the merchant enough to accept her offer and, to the crowd’s delight, he is pardoned and released to marry her “that day.” The ballad offers a model of spectacular selflessness, in the actions of both the merchant, who refuses all previous offers to spare his life, and the damsel, who is prepared to sacrifice herself for true love—notably, after he has given his wealth away. The merchant is endowed with characteristics and traits associated with the ideal aristocrat: immaculate appearance, bravery in the face of death, and great wealth wisely managed. His claim that “your Country Law is such, / It takes but hold upon my life, / my goods it cannot touch” reminds us of the theme of material wealth that runs throughout the ballad.¹⁵ What the merchant does with his wealth is central to the ballad’s moral lesson: he refuses monetary gifts to save his life and willingly gives his money to the most vulnerable of the community.

14. In Germany, where the ballad is set, this popular belief survived until the nineteenth century, although it had no legal status; see Richard van Dülmen, *Theatre of Horror: Crime and Punishment in Early Modern Germany*, trans. Elisabeth Neu (Cambridge, 1990), 110–11. The belief was also strongly held in Britain: Andrea McKenzie relates that in 1722, six or seven “young women dressed in white and carrying white wands carried a petition to St. James’s, promising one of them would marry the condemned robber John Hartly if his life were spared; the petition was unsuccessful”; McKenzie, *Tyburn’s Martyrs: Execution in England, 1675–1775* (London, 2007), 219.

15. This claim that German law was unable to seize the merchant’s property seems to be included as a plot device, allowing the merchant to demonstrate his generosity. The claim has no basis in fact: although the 1532 *Constitutio Criminalis Carolina* (often referred to as the “Carolina”) mandated a unified criminal law for the Holy Roman Empire, laws were not universally enforced across the German lands in the early modern period. For more on the German penal system, see Richard Evans, *Rituals of Retribution: Capital Punishment in Germany 1660–1987* (Oxford, 1996); and van Dülmen, *Theatre of Horror*.

Although it is about an execution, “A Most Sweet Song” does not follow the structure of a traditional execution ballad. It neither details the crimes of the condemned nor portrays him as a wicked sinner who has led a life of wickedness leading up to the crime for which he is to be executed.¹⁶ Moreover, it supplies no identifying dates or names and instead presents itself as a general exemplar of positive behavior in the guise of total selflessness. Specifically, it depicts a model of ideal conduct of the merchant class. Although the ballad’s plot is centered around punishment, there is implied redemption through charity: the merchant is pardoned after he demonstrates concern for the now-impoorished widow and children of his victim.

Teaching Charity through Song

This concern for the poor is a theme that runs through many of the ballads set to the “Rich Merchant Man” tune. Several employ a narrative that was common across early modern Europe, characterized by what Tom Cheesman calls “the hard-heartedness motif.” In his study of German balladry, Cheesman identifies thirty-six distinct chap-book-ballad versions of this theme.¹⁷ In these songs, a poor person is driven to beg for food in the form of corn, flour, or bread in order to feed numerous small children at home. The poor person is rebuffed by a wealthier citizen, who can be a merchant, farmer, or member of the nobility but who is often a family member, usually an in-law. This greedy person is inevitably punished in a supernatural manner, while the poor parent is miraculously given the means to feed the hungry children. Such ballads may reflect nostalgia for an earlier, less commercial time: Joyce Appleby notes that the Tudor statutes regarding food production had envisioned the growing of corn, the milling of flour, and the baking of bread as principally social activities rather than economic ones; such social underpinnings were shaken by the economic crises of the early 1620s, which forced the government to buy grain abroad and allowed merchants to manipulate the market.¹⁸ We find elements of the dissatisfaction with mercantile greed in “The Kentish Miracle,” a ballad whose protagonist is a widow with seven children; she sells her coat and gown at market but has her purse stolen before she is able to buy any food.¹⁹ Her brother-in-law, a corn merchant, refuses her even “a peck of corn” and scolds her for being foolish. But she is aided by a baker’s boy who out of charity gives her a burnt loaf, which miraculously goes on to feed her family for seven weeks. While the poor family is delighted with their spartan meal of bread, apples, and water,

16. Sandra Clark, *Women and Crime in the Street Literature of Early Modern England* (Houndmills, U.K., 2003), chap. 3; V. A. C. Gattrell, *The Hanging Tree: Execution and the English People, 1770–1868* (Oxford, 1996), 123–96.

17. Tom Cheesman, *The Shocking Ballad Picture Show: German Popular Literature and Cultural History* (Oxford, 1994), 50–51.

18. Joyce Oldham Appleby, *Economic Thought and Ideology in Seventeenth-Century England* (Princeton, N.J., 1978), 27–36.

19. “The Kentish Miracle: or, A Strange and Miraculous work of Gods Providence, shewed to a poor distressed Widow, and her Seven small Fatherless Children, who lived by a burnt sixpenny Loaf of Bread, and a little Water, for above seven Weeks, in the wild of Kent, to the Praise and Glory of Almighty God” (1672–1702?), National Library of Scotland, Crawford.EB.1105, EBBA 33677.

the thief who stole the widow's purse breaks his neck before spending her money, and the brother-in-law's crops are destroyed in a flood. In the end, kindly "Gentlemen" who witness the miracle give the widow material gifts such "that ner more wanted she." The biblical overtones of the song, particularly the parallels with the New Testament miracle of feeding the five thousand with loaves and fishes, are a reminder of God's generosity to those who are faithful.²⁰ The family's great delight in and gratitude for the frugal meal stands in direct contrast to the greed of the cutpurse and the corn merchant, who represent the negative aspects of the country's new economic restructuring and are punished accordingly.

In another "poverty" ballad to the same tune, "A New Ballad, Shewing the Great Misery Sustained by a Poore Man in Essex," a poor father's desperation to feed his starving family drives him, after being refused by hardhearted farmers, to accept a bag of gold from a man who is the devil in disguise.²¹ He is barely rescued from betraying his entire family to damnation by the charity of "the chiefest man, / that in the Parish dwelt," who "With meat and mony thither came, / which liberally he dealt." Again and again the ballads depict poverty leading desperate people to betray (or almost betray) their families and depict generosity as the only antidote to evil.

Even the non-narrative ballads to the "Rich Merchant Man" tune—those that are simply didactic and moralizing—continue this theme of generosity toward the poor. These songs, with titles such as "A Warning-Piece for All Wickd Livers," explicitly warn that divine punishments will ensue if their listener-singers mistreat the needy. The refrain to "A Warning-Piece" offers a generic moral lesson, advising repentance to all social groups:

Then fear God and Repent,
spend not your time in waste,
For old and young, both rich and poor,
must yield to Death at last.²²

However, the verses of the ballad are much more specific about the kinds of behavior it seeks to root out, most of which involve greed for financial wealth. Although other sins, such as pride, blasphemy, vanity, idleness, and drunkenness, are mentioned in the ballad, listener-singers are encouraged to focus their energies on greed, eradicating such sinfulness through charity to the vulnerable in society:

20. Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1999); Brodie Waddell, *God, Duty and Community in English Economic Life, 1660–1720* (Woodbridge, U.K., 2012), esp. chap. 2, "Judgement, Providence and the Prayers of the Poor."

21. "A New Ballad, Shewing the Great Misery Sustained by a Poore Man in Essex, his Wife / and Children: with other strange things done by the Devill" (1601–40?), British Library (hereafter BL), Roxburghe 1.286–287, EBBA 30202.

22. Thomas Lanfiere, "A Warning-Piece for All Wickd Livers, or, A Caviert for all People to remember their Latter End. Being very good instructions for Old and young, Rich and Poor, to amend their Lives, and repent before it be too late" (1681–84?), National Library of Scotland, Crawford.EB.1199, EBBA 34083.

Pray Love the Fatherless,
 to the Widdow be a Friend,
 Relieve those that are in distress,
 then God will thee defend:

 A Covetous mind don't bear,
 if thou art blest with store,
 But spare some part of what thou hast,
 for the help of the poor:
 Although that wealth thou hast,
 yet it is but lent to thee,
 Then comfort and give alms to those
 that are in misery.

However, it appears that the ballad's author, Thomas Lanfiere, had little confidence in his audience's willingness to act on his call to charity. In the final section of the ballad, in which he specifically encourages "Young people" to have respect for their parents and warns them against "Idleness and Sloth," he reminds them to

Indeavour and get in Youth,
 to keep you when you are old
 For if Poverty doth come you'l find,
 that Charity will be cold.

Although the Poor Law had been in place since 1601, and there were systems established for the social welfare of those most vulnerable in society, these ballads incessantly preach the need for charity and bemoan the ill-treatment of the poor. They testify both to the popular belief that charity should begin at home, rather than with the state, and to the fear that it was all too often absent in the community.²³ As the seventeenth century saw a gradual movement from open, indiscriminate philanthropy to a more selective concern for the "respectable" poor, the truly needy could be left behind.²⁴ Ballads to the tune of the "Rich Merchant Man" are repeatedly eloquent in their support for the most vulnerable, and the popular melody thus became associated with the necessity of sharing one's material wealth with those most in need, especially members of one's family.

"A Warning-Piece for All Wickd Livers" promises only a lack of charity and eventual death for those who ignore its warnings. Evidence of more spectacular supernatural punishment for mistreating the poor, however, can be found in the ballad—also to the tune of "The Rich Merchant Man"—about Dorothy Winterbottom, better

23. Steve Hindle, *On the Parish? The Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England, 1550–1750* (Oxford, 2009).

24. Paul Slack, *Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England* (London, 1988), esp. chap. 8, "The Growth of Social Welfare," 162–87.

known to her friends (and enemies) in Southwark as “Dirty Doll.” Already “notorious” for her many vices, such as drinking, begging, and cursing, Winterbottom was most despised for exploiting the poor by lending out money “upon the Tally” (offering high interest loans; the records of debtors were kept on a “tally,” or register). This exploitation of the poor at their most vulnerable moment is criticized in the verse:

Extortion is a thing
by Heaven is quite forbid;
And often doth to ruin bring;
such sins will not lye hid.²⁵

Winterbottom was an early modern loan shark, whose thin patience with her debtors eventually led to her threatening to imprison them and invoking the devil as her witness. This was a rash gesture, especially in the world of broadside ballads: on August 17 or 18, 1684, the devil (or devils, depending on the account) entered her home and physically assaulted her, leaving her arm “as black as jet” and “her Thumb almost pinched off.”²⁶ Gangrene quickly set in and killed her only a week later, on August 25, 1684. Her funeral, the ballad tells us, was attended by crowds of rejoicing spectators. Dirty Doll’s lack of repentance is made explicit in the ballad, and the singer fears that she is therefore doomed:

So that at last she dy’d
a sinfull Soul I fear,
Not one do give her a good word
that I do come a near.

Dirty Doll therefore stands as the antithesis of the original English merchant in Emden, whose wealth had come from honest dealings and who happily shared that wealth with those less fortunate. Doll is offered as a counterexample of how not to conduct oneself in business, a cautionary tale reinforced by the chorus, “For cursed Cheats and false Deceits / do never prosper long.”

25. “Dirty Dolls Farewel. Being an account of a certain Woman, known by the Name of Dirty Doll, once living near Horslydown in Southwark, who was in her Life-time so notorious for several misdemeanours, that it is said, The Devil about the 17th, or 18th, of August 1684. appeared to her, between whom there hapened a terrible Combat, in which Dirty Doll was much bruised, so that one of her Arms was as black as a Cole, and her Thumb almost pinched off: She dyed on the 25th. of the same month, and was buried the 28th. Being accomodated to the Grave with whooting and hallowing, in a strange manner” (1684), PL, Pepys 3.233, EBBA 21247.

26. The story is discussed in Waddell, *God, Duty and Community*, 58–59. Dirty Doll’s story is also told in the ballad “Sad and Dreadful News from Horsly-Down, in the Parish of St. Mary Magdalen Bermondset; or, A Warning to Brokers, Tally-men, and such like unconscionable Carter-pillars; by the sad Example of Dorothy Winter-bottom, Alias Dirty-Doll, late of Horsly-Down, who according to her own Report, as ’tis Credibly attested, by contending with the Devil, received such mortal Bruises, as occasioned her death, she dying on the 27th. of August, and war buried at St. Olives Southwark, on the 28th. of the same month, 1684” (1684), PL, Pepys 2.152, EBBA 20770.

“Dirty Doll’s Farewel” warned its listener-singers about the potential supernatural—and thus inescapable—nature of punishment for greed, and thus resembles the hardheartedness ballads discussed above. But the song about Dirty Doll and her punishment is also linked to the genre of execution ballad, even though her death was the result of divine retribution rather than a sanctioned state execution. While execution ballads addressed the punishment of a broad range of crimes and motives, the execution ballads set to the tune of “The Rich Merchant Man” conspicuously deal with crimes originating from material greed. Thus “The Golden Farmer’s Last Fareweel,” a ballad about William Davis (or Davies), a highwayman and robber, better known as the “Golden Farmer” because of his habit of taking only gold coins from his victims, lists some of the many violent ways in which he and his gang extorted money from victims:

We always gaggd and bound
 most of the Family,
 That we might search until we found
 their hidden Treasury;
 Which if we could not find,
 a Pistol cockd streightway,
 Presented at their Breast, to make
 them shew us where it lay.²⁷

Unlike contemporary ballads that romanticized the deeds of highwaymen, Davis’s execution ballad follows the pattern of ballads set to the “Rich Merchant Man” tune in excoriating Davis’s evil ways and presenting him as remorseful and repentant:

I solemnly declare,
 who am to Justice brought,
 All kind of wicked Sins that are,
 I eagerly have wrought;
 No Villains are more rife,
 than those which I have bred;
 And thus a most perfidious Life
 I in this world have led.

It would appear that the choice of the “Rich Merchant Man” melody required portraying Davis in a repentant posture. To depict him as a traditional “game” outlaw would have been incongruous to listeners familiar with the tune and its associated themes. By comparison, the portrait of the highwayman Claude Du Val in the ballad “Devol’s Last

27. “The Golden Farmer’s Last Fareweel Who was arraigned and found Guilty of wilful Murther, and likewise many notorious Robberies; for which he received a due Sentence of Death, and was accordingly Executed on the 22d. of December, 1690 in Fleetstreet” (1690), PL, Pepys 2.187, EBBA 20802.

Farewel,” set to the tune “Upon the Change,” is full of accounts of his dashing appearance and bold adventures, a romanticization of his criminal exploits as “frolicksom Intreigues”:

When I was mounted on my Steed,
I thought myself a Man indeed;
With Pistol cockd and glittering Sword,
Stand and deliver, was the word,
Which makes me now lament and say,
pity the Fall of great Devol,
Well-a-day, well-a-day.²⁸

Such a “frolicksom” account of crimes is eschewed in the execution ballads set to the “Rich Merchant Man” tune, which without exception portray the crimes as heinous and the condemned as remorseful.

Training the “Young People” through Melody

The same is true for the ballad “The Unfaithful Servant; and The Cruel Husband” (fig. 3) which relates the crimes of Judith Brown, a maidservant convicted in 1684 of conspiring with her master to murder his wife:

Young Maidens all beware,
that sees my Dismal state,
Endeavour now to shun the Snare,
before it is too late.

I was a Servant Maid,
and liv’d most happily,
Until at last I was betray’d,
to this Debauchery.

.

Then with my Master I,
did take the cause in hand,
Resolv’d my Mistris she should dye
by our most cruel hand.

.

Strong poyson we contriv’d
this was our hanious Sin,
That she of Life might be depriv’d
poor Soul when she lay in.

28. Devol’s Last Farewel: Containing an Account of many frolicksom Intreigues and notorious Robberies, which he committed: Concluding vvith his mournful Lamentation, on the Day of his Death” (1683–1716?), UGL, Euing 77, EBBA 31760.

THE Unfaithful Servant; AND The Cruel Husband.

Being a perfect and true account of one *Judith Brown*, who together with her Master *John Carps*, conspired the Death of her Mistress, his Wife, which accordingly they did accomplish in the time of Child-bed, when she lay in with two Children, by mixing of her Drink with cruel Poyson; for which Fact she received due Sentence of Death at the late Assizes in the County of *Salop*, to be *Executed*; which was accordingly Executed upon the Old Heath near *Shrewsbury*, on *Thursday* the Twenty-first day of *August*, 1684.
To the Tune of, *The Rich Merchant-man*: Or, *George Barnwell*.

Young *Carps* adens all beware,
that for my Dismal fate,
Gone about now to shun the Snares,
before it is too late.

I was a Servant Spaid,
and liv'd most happily,
till at last I was betray'd,
to this Debauchery.

Too late I do lament,
my very heart doth bleed,
That ever I did give consent,
to that most wicked deed.

My yielding to his ways,
his wicked bale desire,
has by that means I end my days,
in cruel flames of Fire.

Our Sins was at their growth,
that none but them we blame,
So he indeed the cause we both
did end our days in shame.

We could not be content
till what the fiend had done,
But afterwards we did invent,
in worse extremes to run.

Then with my Master I
did take the cause in hand,
And bid my Mistress the should dye
by our most cruel hand.

For I see we did betray,
to satisfy our will,
When the alas! in Child-bed lay,
poor Soul she thought no ill.

Strong poison we contriv'd
this was our banious Sin,
That she of I life might be deprived
poor Soul when she lay in.

My conscience strobe with me,
but I a wicked elf,
Desired that my Master he,
should give it her himself.

But we did disgrace,
as you may understand,
For Conscience would not suffer me
to put it in her hand.

Though neither he nor I
had power to do this deed,
Yet all this would not satisfy,
but still we did proceed.

Printed for J. Dwyer, at the Angel in *St. Dunstons*.

In what the Wags do drink
we mix the poison strong,
That she might take it & not think,
the least of any wrong.

By which at length she dyed,
and I was left behind,
To dye a cruel death beside,
the hypocrite of my mind.

Was you man behold,
my sad and dismal doom,
Both hands & heart, and every part,
in flames you'll see consume.

The Sorrows of my heart,
in this extremity,
Although it is my due desert,
I do for mercy cry.

Farewell my worldly Friends,
and my offences soul,
Good Lord forgive me all my sins,
have mercy on my Soul.

In this devouring flame,
my life must now expire,
Alas my sins I needs must blame,
I end my days in fire.

To you that come to see,
a woful sinners fall,
Let those cruel flames now be,
a warning to you all.

By this a warning take,
and do not run astray,
And God will never you forsake,
if you his Warnings obey.

.
To you that come to see,
a woful sinners fall,
O let those cruel flames now be,
a warning to you all.

The ballad is in the voice of the condemned criminal herself, who sings to “Young Maidens” of her slide from virtue into vice, first giving into her master’s lustful desires and then conspiring with him to poison his wife. It closes with her expressions of dread at the thought of her punishment by burning and a final warning to spectators at the execution to learn from her example and turn away from sin. Significantly, the long detailed title offers much more information than the song itself: the singer’s name and that of her master, the location of the assizes court where she was prosecuted, and the exact date and location of the execution (see note 7). It is important that these details were reserved for the title, because although it is possible for us to read the broadside and so locate this event in time and space, many members of its early modern audience would never have read the ballad, either because they were not literate or because they only heard it sung. Although establishing literacy rates in early modern England is problematic and the source of endless scholarly dispute, we can be confident that the group of people least likely to have been literate in seventeenth-century London was female servants.²⁹ If they only heard the ballad sung, they may never have learned anything more about the tale than that a maidservant conspired with her master to replace her mistress and was burned to death for it. The ballad in its purely aural reception therefore becomes an interwoven group of moral imperatives applicable to any young woman in service: avoid amorous relations with your master, respect your mistress, and above all avoid the temptation to get ideas above your station that will lead you to ruin.³⁰

Offering a contrasting depiction to the ballad version was a prose account of the event: *A Just Account of the Horrid Contrivance of John Cupper, and Judith Brown his Servant, In Poysoning his Wife*, by William Smith, rector of Bitterley. This six-page account provides more detailed information about the case than the ballad.³¹ The pamphlet focuses much more on the husband, John Cupper, whose punishment is elided in the ballad (the pamphlet’s title page tells us he was “hang’d in chains”).³²

29. David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge, 2006); Eve Rachel Sanders and Margaret W. Ferguson, “Literacies in Early Modern England,” *Critical Survey* 14, no. 1 (2002): 1–8; Keith Thomas, “The Meaning of Literacy in Early Modern England,” in *The Written Word: Literacy in Transition*, ed. Gerd Baumann (Oxford, 1986), 97–131.

30. For the interplay between oral and written culture as it relates to early modern balladry, see Adam Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England, 1500–1700* (Oxford, 2000), esp. chap. 6, “Ballads and Libels.”

31. *A Just Account of the Horrid Contrivance of John Cupper, and Judith Brown his Servant, In Poysoning his Wife* (London, 1686).

32. M. Rebecca Livingstone, “Unsettled Households: Domestic Homicide in Seventeenth-Century England” (PhD diss., Tulane University, 2007), 224–26.

Smith's pamphlet also features a Latin inscription on its title page, which explicitly markets its contents to those most likely to have an understanding of the language: educated men of the upper classes. The inscription "Hippomanes carmenque loquar, coctumque venenum, uxorique datum?" which translates as "Why tell of love potions and incantations, of poisons brewed and administered to wives?" is a modification of a quote from Juvenal's Satire 6, "Hippomanes carmenque loquar, coctumque venenum, *privignoque* datum?" (. . . administered to stepsons? [by murderous stepmothers]).³³ The adaptation of one of the most famously misogynist works of the classical period alerted its readers to the pamphlet's themes: Judith Brown is referred to on the first page as "a Notorious Strumpet," and the central message appears to be about the need for husbands to protect their wives from dangerous female servants.³⁴ The prose pamphlet is therefore directed at elite men and offers them a very different version of the news events than the ballad, which may include the elite among its audience but is directed at young women both explicitly, in its opening address to "young maidens" and implicitly, by virtue of its aural nature and by its first-person voice, which would have enabled a more acute identification with the condemned by its young female singers. The ballad, set to a tune now firmly associated with the chastisement of greed, "The Rich Merchant Man," presents the story of Judith Brown as a didactic exemplar of the righteous and inevitable punishment of the misplaced ambitions of lowly maid-servants.

The pitfalls of failing to live by the expectations of one's social class were also the focus in what was arguably the most popular ballad set to the "Rich Merchant Man" melody, "An Excellent Ballad of George Barnwel, an Apprentice in London," a ballad found in almost every major English ballad collection today.³⁵ It was such a popular contrafact that "George Barnwel" became another widely used name for the melody, and so, for example, the song about Judith Brown gives its tune indication as "To the tune of, *The Rich Merchant-man: Or, George Barnwel*." The ballad, which opens "All Youths of fair England," tells the story of an apprentice who, out of greed for money to lavish on the prostitute with whom he is besotted, murders his rich uncle. When the money runs out, she informs on him to the authorities, whereupon he escapes but then writes a confession implicating them both. They are both executed, and the final lines offer the summary of the moral lesson:

Lo heres the end of wilful youth,
that after Harlots haunt,

33. Juvenal, *The Satires*, trans. Niall Rudd, ed. William Barr (Oxford, 1991), 41.

34. For studies of the representations of "dangerous" female domestic staff in early modern England, see Frances Dolan, *Dangerous Familiars: Representations of Domestic Crime in England, 1550–1700* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1994); and Joy Wiltenburg, *Disorderly Women and Female Power in the Street Literature of Early Modern England and Germany* (Charlottesville, Va., 1992).

35. "An Excellent Ballad of George Barnwel, an Apprentice of London, who was undone by a Strumpet, who having thrice robbed his Master, and murdered his Uncle in Ludlow, was hanged in Chains in Polonia, and by the means of a Letter sent from his own hand to the Mayor of London, she was hang'd at Ludlow" (1674–79), BL, Roxburghe 3.26–27, EBBA 30382.

Who in the spoyl of other men,
about the streets do flaunt.

The choice of antihero and the specific address to youth make it clear that the ballad's primary intended audience was apprentices. This group was seen as particularly vulnerable to influence and in need of moral guidance. In his examination of seventeenth-century London apprentices, Steven Smith identifies them as "a separate order or subculture" populated predominantly by males in their teens and early twenties. Apprenticeship was

a transitory period between "the morality learned by the child, and the ethics to be developed by the adult." The large number of ethical warning pieces testifies to this and the ballads and stories of riotous apprentices show that many learned ethical behavior through "role experimentation" and adult punishment.³⁶

Although there were numerous ballads and stories about apprentices, as well as conduct literature to guide them through this transitory period, the ballad of George Barnwel in particular was thought so instructive that it was often included in their induction rituals.³⁷ Its popularity led to it becoming the inspiration for the play *The London Merchant (Or the History of George Barnwell)* by George Lillo.³⁸ First performed in 1731, *The London Merchant* was based directly on the events of the ballad, even using the same names and locations as the song. The manager of the theater in which it was performed, Theophilus Cibber, who also acted the part of Barnwell in the play, remarked on the audience's awareness of the play's source:

The old ballad of George Barnwell (on which the story was founded) was on this occasion reprinted and many thousands sold in one day. Many gaily-disposed spirits brought the ballad with them to the play, intending to make their pleasant remarks (as some afterwards owned) and ludicrous comparisons between the ancient ditty and the modern play. . . . But the play was very carefully got up, and universally allowed to be well performed . . . [and] in general, spoke so much to the heart, that the gay persons before mentioned confessed, they were drawn in to drop their ballads, and pull out their handkerchiefs.³⁹

The play was instantly popular, so much so that by the middle of the eighteenth century it had become the customary offering on the Lord Mayor's Day and Shrove Tues-

36. Steven Smith, "The London Apprentices as Seventeenth-Century Adolescents," *Past & Present* 61 (1973): 149–61 at 157–58.

37. *Ibid.*, 158.

38. Lillo, *The London Merchant*, ed. McBurney.

39. Quoted in McBurney, introduction to Lillo, *The London Merchant*, xii.

day, when it was traditional for apprentices to go to the theater.⁴⁰ Until this point, apprentices had usually been offered *The London Cuckolds* by Edward Ravenscroft, the story of apprentices cuckolding their masters.⁴¹ By contrast *The London Merchant* was “judged a proper entertainment for the apprentices, &c. as being a more instructive, moral, and cautionary drama, than many pieces that had usually been exhibited on those days with little but farce and ribaldry to recommend them.”⁴² The play’s message of edification for apprentices meant that it became “the centerpiece of a theatre for aspiring young men.”⁴³ The punishment of George Barnwell was felt to be, like his counterpart’s execution in the ballad, a powerful deterrent and didactic tool for a riotous and volatile group that was perceived as a potential threat to social order.

The power of the repentance voiced by Barnwell for the sins motivated by his greed was so enduring that the novelist Charles Dickens would use him as a plot device in *Great Expectations*. When Pip, on the eve of his apprenticeship, meets the aspiring actor Mr. Wopsle in the street, “Mr. Wopsle had in his hand the affecting tragedy of George Barnwell,” and “he appeared to consider that a special Providence had put a ‘prentice in his way to be read at.” When Wopsle forces Pip to act out the part of Barnwell, Pip is shocked by his own reaction:

What stung me, was the identification of the whole affair with my unoffending self. When Barnwell began to go wrong, I declare that I felt positively apologetic, Pumblechook’s indignant stare so taxed me with it.⁴⁴

As Dickens’s novel centers on a young apprentice’s ambition to achieve the trappings of a higher social class, his choice of George Barnwell as a cautionary figure who warns of the potential pitfalls of striving for material wealth demonstrates that the original moralistic message of the ballad had endured. Indeed, the observation in the prologue to Lillo’s play, that the ballad had for “a century of rolling years . . . fill’d a thousand thousand eyes with tears” turns out to have been an underestimate. Dickens’s contemporary readers were clearly still familiar with the story and would have recognized in Pip’s fruitless pursuit of Estella, the beautiful, wealthy, and unattainable woman, an echo of Barnwell’s pursuit of Sara Millwood the prostitute, which caused him to sink deeper and deeper into debt in order to maintain a lifestyle that is out of his reach. Of course,

40. It would go on to be translated into several languages; see Lawrence Marsden Price, “George Barnwell Abroad,” *Comparative Literature* 2, no. 2 (Spring 1950): 126–56.

41. *The Cambridge Companion to English Restoration Theatre*, ed. Deborah Payne Fisk (Cambridge, 2000), 277.

42. McBurney, introduction to Lillo, *The London Merchant*, xiii.

43. Lucinda Cole, “*The London Merchant* and the Institution of Apprenticeship,” *Criticism* 37, no. 1 (1995): 57–84 at 74. Cole credits Samuel Richardson’s *Vade Mecum*, an apprenticeship manual published three years after the initial production of *The London Merchant*, with promoting this new kind of didactic theater for apprentices.

44. Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*, ed. Margaret Cardwell and Robert Douglas-Fairhurst (Oxford, 2008), 106.

Dickens's nineteenth-century bildungsroman allows a development of character and social mobility that the seventeenth-century execution ballad simply could not. Nevertheless, ambition in the novel is still seen to be problematic, and in Pip's case is built on a base of crime and punishment, his benefactor being a convicted murderer.

Throughout its trajectory, the "Rich Merchant Man" melody accrued firm and enduring associations with ideas of appropriate behavior for the merchant classes and the young people who served them and trained with them. Moral imperatives of charity and of satisfaction with one's social place and income, and the threat of awful punishments that would ensue were one to ignore those imperatives, were closely linked with a tune that was known to all classes of society for centuries. Although economic historians have argued for increasing levels of prosperity through the seventeenth century, the ballads set to the "Rich Merchant Man" melody offer a contradictory viewpoint, in which poverty is prevalent, charity must be repeatedly encouraged, and the only way for the serving classes to avoid the temptations and pitfalls of financial avarice is to "know their place." At a moment in English history when affluence was on the rise yet perceived as increasingly problematic, the "Rich Merchant Man" melody acted—in all its versions—as an aural warning of the perils of the unequal distribution of wealth. As the English market economy developed through widening global trade, giving rise both to an increasingly complex relationship between workers and goods and to fears of market manipulation and greed, the ballads also appear to have transformed over time, from providing exemplars of noble behavior in the merchant classes to offering monitory visions of greedy and criminal behavior punished. That their lyrics and format addressed an audience of young, impressionable servants and apprentices as well as merchants themselves resulted in a powerful conjunction of melody, market, and moral lesson. For ballads set to the "Rich Merchant Man" tune, the recycling of the melody reinforced the ballad's didactic potency by aurally reminding its listeners of the cautionary tales it had told before.

UNA MCILVENNA is Lecturer in Early Modern Literature at the University of Kent. Her research into the early modern tradition of singing the news has resulted in articles in *Past & Present* and *Media History*. She is also the author of *Scandal and Reputation at the Court of Catherine de Medici* (2016).

Appendix: Ballads Written to the Tune of “The Rich Merchant Man,”
by Dominant Theme

Execution/Punishment

“A Warning to All Priests and Jesuites, by the example of two Masse-priests, which for seducing and stealing away the hearts of the Kings Loyall Subjects, were hangd, drawne, and quartered: whose execution was on Friday, being the 21. day of January, 1642. To the Tune of, A Rich Marchant Man.” 1643. Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ashm. H 23(47), Bod4933.

“An Excellent Ballad of George Barnwel an Apprentice in London, who was undone by a Strumpet, who thrice Robbed his Master, and Murdered his Uncle in Ludlow.” 1684–86. Pepys Library, Magdalene College, Cambridge (hereafter PL), Pepys 2.158–159, EBBA 20778.

“Dirty Dolls Farewel. Being an account of a certain Woman, known by the Name of Dirty Doll, once living near Horslydown in Southwark, who was in her Life-time so notorious for several misdemeanours, that it is said, The Devil about the 17th, or 18th, of August 1684. appeared to her, between whom there hapened a terrible Combat, in which Dirty Doll was much bruised, so that one of her Arms was as black as a Cole, and her Thumb almost pinched off: She dyed on the 25th. of the same month, and was buried the 28th. Being accomodated to the Grave with whooting and hallowing, in a strange manner.” 1684. PL, Pepys 3.233, EBBA 21247.

“The Golden Farmer’s Last Fareweel Who was arraigned and found Guilty of wilful Murther, and likewise many notorious Robberies; for which he received a due Sentence of Death, and was accordingly Executed on the 22d. of December, 1690 in Fleetstreet.” 1690. PL, Pepys 2.187, EBBA 20802.

“The Unfaithful Servant; and The Cruel Husband. Being a perfect and true account of one Judith Brown, who together with her Master Iohn Cupper, conspired the Death of her Mistris, his Wife, which accordingly they did accomplish in the time of Child-bed, when she lay in with two Children, by mixing of her Drink with cruel Poyson; for which Fact she received due Sentence of Death at the late Assizes in the County of Salop, to be Burned; which was accordingly Executed upon the Old Heath near Shrewsbury, on Thursday the Twenty-first day of August, 1684.” 1684. PL, Pepys 2.151, EBBA 20769.

“The Arrainement Condemnation and Execution of the Grand [Cutpurse] Iohn Selman who was executed at White-hall vppon Tuesday the seuenth of January. 1612.” 1612. PL, Pepys 1.131, EBBA 20057.

“The Cucking of a Scould. To the tune of, The Merchant of Emden.” 1630? PL, Pepys 1.454, EBBA 20029.

“The Merchant-Man and the Fidlers Wife: Discovering a pretty conceit how a Fidler, in hope of gain (and trusting too much to his Wifes honesty) was made a Cuckold by the Merchant; and lost his Fiddle to boot. He laid his Fiddle to a Ship, In hopes for to be made But Peggy let the Merchant flip, and Robin he was betray’d. To a Pleasant Northen Tune, by J. P.” 1678–80. PL, Pepys 4.163, EBBA 21825.

"The Fearefull Judgement of Almighty God, shewed vpon two sonnes who most unnaturallye murthered their naturall father. To the tune of The Marchant of Emden or Crimson Velvet." Shirburn Castle, Oxfordshire, Shirburn North Library 119 D44, fol. 177v. Transcribed in *The Shirburn Ballads, 1585–1616*, ed. Andrew Clark (Oxford, 1907), 164–69.

"The Unnatural Mother: Being a true Relation of one Jane Lawson, once living at East-Barnet, in Middlesex; who Quarreling with her Husband, urged him to strike her, and thereupon the same night, being the first of Sept. 1680. Drowned her self and two poor Babes in a Well. The Tune is, There was a Rich Merchant Man." 1680. PL, Pepys 2.191, EBBA 20806.

"The Wofull Lamentation of William Purcas, who for murtherin his Mother at Thaxted in Essex was executed at Chelmsford. To the tune of, The rich Merchant." British Library (hereafter BL), Roxburghe 1.444-445, EBBA 30299.

"The Ungrateful Son; or, An Example of God's Justice upon the abusefull Disobedience of a False-hearted and cruel Son to his Aged Father. To the Tune of Kentish miracle." National Library of Scotland (hereafter NLS), Crawford.EB.953, EBBA 33528.

"Treason Justly Punished: or, A full relation of the condemnation and execution of Mr. William Staley who was found guilty of high treason, at the Kings-bench-barr at Westminster, on Thursday the 21st. of Nov. 1678. For speaking dangerous, and treasonable words against his most Sacred Majesty the King. For which he was sentenced to be drawn, hang'd, and quartered. And was accordingly executed upon Tuesday the 26th. of this instant Nov. 1678. at Tyburn. Tune of, The rich merchant-man &c. With allowance." [1678]. Houghton Library (hereafter HL), Harvard University, p EBB65, Wing T2077A.

Noble Exemplar

"A Godly Ballad of the Just Man Job. Wherein his great patience he doth declare, His plagues and his miseries, and yet did not despair. The Tune is, The Merchant." 1678–80. NLS, Crawford.EB.1239, EBBA 32808.

"A most sweet Song of an English Merchant born in Chichester. To an Excellent new Tune." 1663–74. University of Glasgow Library Euing 230, EBBA 31745.

Poverty

"A New Ballad, Shewing the Great Misery Sustained by a Poore Man in Essex, his Wife and Children: with other strange things done by the Devill. To the tune of, The rich Merchant man." 1601–40? BL, Roxburghe 1.286-287, EBBA 30202.

"A True Sence of Sorrow: or The Poor York-shire-Man protected by Providence, in the greatest time of trouble. When Grief and Care, almost Dispair, does seem to overthrow; Men in Distress and heaviness, the Lord can kindness show." 1671–1702? PL, Pepys 2.53, EBBA 20677.

"The Kentish Miracle: or, A Strange and Miraculous work of Gods Providence, shewed to a poor distressed Widow, and her Seven small Fatherless Children, who lived by a burnt sixpenny Loaf of Bread, and a little Water, for above seven Weeks, in the wild of Kent, to the Praise and Glory of Almighty God." 1672–1702? NLS, Crawford.EB.1105, EBBA 33677.

Repentance

"A Warning-Piece for All Wickd Livers, or, A Caviet for all People to remember their Latter End. Being very good instructions for Old and young, Rich and Poor, to amend their Lives, and repent before it be too late." 1681–84. NLS, Crawford.EB.1199, EBBA 34083.

"Christ's Tears over Jerusalem; or, A Caveat for England to call to God for mercy, lest we be plagued for our contempt and Wickedness. 1686–88. PL, Pepys 2.6, EBBA 21664.

"Friendly Advice to Extravagants Shewing the Vanity of those, Who to themselves are cruel foes, By their delays for to prepare, grim Death he will not long forbear But unawares will give the blow, They'l mourn when they do find it so." 1678–80. NLS, Crawford.EB.927, EBBA 33423.

"The Doleful Dance, and Song of Death; Intituled, Dance after my Pipe." 1624–80? PL, Pepys 2.62, EBBA 20686.

"A Dittie Most Excelent for Euerie Man to Reade/that doth intend for to amende & to repent with speede." Tune: "a rich marchant man or John come kiss me now." Before 1625. BL MS Add. 15225, fols. 56–58.

"The Cruel Lover: or, The credulous maid. Being an account of a young man near London, who, after he had courted a young maid, and gain'd her consent to lie with him, cruelly murder'd her, and afterwards threw her into Ann-is-so-clear, near Shore-ditch, &c. Tune: George Barnwell." Ca. 1760. HL, p EB74 P4128C no.41, ESTC N1945.

"Strange Newes from Brotherton in Yorke-shire, being a true Relation of the raining of Wheat on Easter day last, to the great amaizment of all the Inhabitants. It hath rained Wheate more or lesse every day since, witnessed by divers persons of good ranke and quality, as the Lady Ramsden who gathered some her selfe, some of it was sent to Judge Green, and M. Hurst dwelling at the Fountaine Taverne in Saint Anns Lane neere Aldersgate in London. To the tune of The rich Merchant Man." 1648? Manchester Central Library, II, 39, Wing S5888A. Transcribed in Henry Rollins, *The Pack of Autolycus* (Cambridge, Mass., 1927), 40–43.

Minerva Access is the Institutional Repository of The University of Melbourne

Author/s:

McIlvenna, U

Title:

The Rich Merchant Man, or, What the Punishment of Greed Sounded Like in Early Modern English Ballads

Date:

2016-06-01

Citation:

McIlvenna, U. (2016). The Rich Merchant Man, or, What the Punishment of Greed Sounded Like in Early Modern English Ballads. *Huntington Library Quarterly: studies in English and American history and literature*, 79 (2), pp.279-299. <https://doi.org/10.1353/hlq.2016.0013>.

Persistent Link:

<http://hdl.handle.net/11343/124215>