

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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The Ladies Case

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(Compos'd by Mr. Henry Carey. [Wrong!])

How hard is the fortune of all womankind,
Forever subjected, forever confined,
The parent controls us until we are wives,
The husband enslaves us the rest of our lives.

If fondly we love, yet we dare not reveal,
But secretly languish, compelled to conceal,
Deny'd every freedom of Life to enjoy,
We're sham'd if we're kind, we're blamed if we're coy.

[If fortune we have Oh! then we must be joyn'd,
To the Man that is by our Parents Design'd,
Compel'd for to have the Man we never see,
No matter if Ugly or Handsome he be.

Then who would be Wealthy or Strive to be great,
Since so many Dangers upon them does wait,
That Couples most happy that Love uncontroul'd,
That marrys for nothing despises the Gold.]

The first verse is familiar as one in most versions of the traditional song 'The Wagoner's Lad.' The text here is from a single sheet song with music, but evidently an unauthorized issue.

Henry Carey is elsewhere credited with the first two verses here, which was his complete song, "The Ladies Case". I do not know exactly when it first appeared, but can narrow down the range. The song was printed without credits and without music in a book of 1734, 'The Vocal Miscellany', II, p. 159, and noted in a book with music, 'The Universal Musician', [1737], to have been sung by Miss Raftor (trained by Carey) at the Theatre Royal. She made her debut in 1728 and became Mrs. (Kitty) Clive in 1732. Mr. Gouge (whose first name seems to be unknown) was credited with the music in later printings, e.g., 'The Muses Delight', p. 143, Liverpool, 1754 (slightly revised and retitled 'Apollo's Cabinet', 1757). The song then can be definitel

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Apr98