

When she saw that I was not pacified yet, she began to be angry with me. 'And what would you have?' says she; 'don't I tell you that you shall not go to service till your are bigger?' 'Ay,' said I, 'but then I must go at last.' 'Why, what?' said she; 'is the girl mad? What would you be -- a gentlewoman?' 'Yes,' says I, and cried heartily till I roared out again.

This set the old gentlewoman a-laughing at me, as you may be sure it would. 'Well, madam, forsooth,' says she, gibing at me, 'you would be a gentlewoman; and pray how will you come to be a gentlewoman? What! will you do it by your fingers' end?'

'Yes,' says I again, very innocently.

'Why, what can you earn?' says she; 'what can you get at your work?'

'Threepence,' said I, 'when I spin, and fourpence when I work plain work.'

Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders* (1722) [Everyone finds it amusing that the young Moll thinks a gentlewoman was simply someone who did not go into service and lived by ones own hand, the very definition of a “hand” in Dickens, and not at all “gentle.”]

I was not averse to a tradesman, but then I would have a tradesman, forsooth, that was something of a gentleman too; that when my husband had a mind to carry me to the court, or to the play, he might become a sword, and look as like a gentleman as another man; and not be one that had the mark of his apron-strings upon his coat, or the mark of his hat upon his periwig; that should look as if he was set on to his sword, when his sword was put on to him, and that carried his trade in his countenance.

Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders* (1722) [Apron strings and a hat the signs of a tradesman, and, again, not at all “gentle.” But as her “gentleman-tradesman” shows, the problem of the 18th century was that there was no clear marker between the two groups that couldn't be faked or bought on credit.]

On the other hand, as the market ran very unhappily on the men's side, I found the women had lost the privilege of saying No.

Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders* (1722) [Moll/Defoe often uses market and money trading as a metaphor (if not a fetishistic talisman) for all sorts of other social interactions (in this case, marriage). Moll/Defoe is much more attuned to what 18th-century commentators would call the monied interest as opposed to the landed interest.]

'Hence, child,' says she, 'man a Newgate-bird becomes a great man, and we have,' continued she, 'several justices of the peace, officers of the trained bands, and magistrates of the towns they live in, that have been burnt in the hand.'

Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders* (1722) [To what extent is the Americas a land beyond class distinctions, or is it simply an extension of the free-floating/mixing world of London social classes? Newgate is Newgate prison near Old Bailey. Burnt in the hand, of course, simply a marker of those who have received benefit of clergy/transportation. If they were caught again in London and brought before a magistrate, any new felony would be automatically a hanging matter.]

I waited a week, and two weeks, and with much surprise and amazement I waited near two months and heard nothing, but that, being recovered, he was gone into the country for the air, and for the better recovery after his distemper. After this it was yet two months more, and then I understood he was come to his city house again, but still I heard nothing from him.

Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders* (1722) [Not much here, although this follows Moll's experience of the Bath, where a man might often take a mistress, but rarely a wife, which, of course, is her exact experience. What this quote shows, however, is that the elite often had a country house and a city house (townhouse), and were quite amphibious. The non-elite take to the country regularly too, as little vacations to Oxford or wherever, which again shows both mixing and differentiation at the same time.]

We were also entertained at a merchant's house in Liverpool three or four days very handsomely; I forbear to tell his name, because of what followed. Then she told me she would carry me to an uncle's house of hers, where we should be nobly entertained....

We came, however, to a gentleman's seat, where was a numerous family, a large park, extraordinary company indeed, and where she was called cousin. I told her if she had resolved to bring me into such company as this, she should have let me have prepared myself, and have furnished myself with better clothes. The ladies took notice of that, and told me very genteelly they did not value people in their country so much by their clothes as they did in London; that their cousin had fully informed them of my quality, and that I did not want clothes to set me off; in short, they entertained me, not like what I was, but like what they thought I had been, namely, a widow lady of a great fortune.

Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders* (1722) [Clothes make the man, or, in this case, woman; but perception is all. Note that her "landed" friends entertain her a lot in merchants' houses not landed estates, but Moll/Defoe is largely unaware of the difference until it is too late.]

My husband having trusted one of his fellow-clerks with a sum of money, too much for our fortunes to bear the loss of, the clerk failed, and the loss fell very heavy on my husband, yet it was not so great neither but that, if he had had spirit and courage to have looked his misfortunes in the face, his credit was so good that, as I told him, he would easily recover it; for to sink under trouble is to double the weight, and he that will die in it, shall die in it.

Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders* (1722) [Her bank husband and his friends live entirely in the monied interest world. Unlike the more stable landed interest, it is a world of immense uncertainty (banking laws only slowly coming into force, and THE Bank of England only from the mid-1690s.)]

The mercer was very high with the constable at first; but the constable happening to be not a hired officer, but a good, substantial kind of man (I think he was a corn-handler), and a man of good sense, stood to his business, would not discharge me without going to a justice of the peace; and I insisted upon it too.

Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders* (1722) [Old-style constables (pre-Bobbies) are often unpaid, solid yeomen types of the middling sorts. Here a corn-handler is a grain jobber or minor merchant.]

All equality of alliance must rest with Elizabeth, for Mary had merely connected herself with an old country family of respectability and large fortune, and had therefore given all the honour and received none: Elizabeth would, one day or other, marry suitably.

Jane Austen, *Persuasion* (1816) [Contemplating the micro-hierarchies: Mary's marriage into the Musgroves, from Sir Walter's perspective, is simply one into wealth and respectability (Jeez, what does he want?), whereas what he intended for Elizabeth is upwards into a baronetage or, he hopes and expects, higher into full nobility.]

"Wentworth? Oh! ay,--Mr Wentworth, the curate of Monkford. You misled me by the term gentleman. I thought you were speaking of some man of property: Mr Wentworth was nobody, I remember; quite unconnected; nothing to do with the Strafford family. One wonders how the names of many of our nobility become so common."

Jane Austen, *Persuasion* (1816) [One hundred years later and we are still getting confused by the term gentleman, although here, I think, Austen is poking fun at the concept that gentleman does not apply to a mere curate. For Anne/Austen, feelings and sensibility make the man, not the clothes or the property. But she is just as keen to discover the "real" gentleman (in this case Capt. Fredrick Wentworth), so I don't think we can really say that she really overturns the class system--if that is what it is--merely focuses on the internalization of it, as opposed to surface values of looks, clothes, and place.]

The Harvilles silenced all scruples; and, as much as they could, all gratitude. They had looked forward and arranged everything before the others began to reflect. Captain Benwick must give up his room to them, and get another bed elsewhere; and the whole was settled. They were only concerned that the house could accommodate no more; and yet perhaps, by "putting the children

away in the maid's room, or swinging a cot somewhere," they could hardly bear to think of not finding room for two or three besides, supposing they might wish to.

Jane Austen, *Persuasion* (1816) [The Harvilles in Lyme Regis don't have the number of rooms, extra rooms, to which the Elliots and most of those in Austen's world are accustomed. The whole book may be seen as a meditation on giving up rooms and making do with smaller quarters—the Elliots at Camden Place compare to Kellynch Hall, Mrs Smith's lodgings in Westgate Buildings. But, again, Anne/Austen is concerned with the internal person not the surfaces, so, of course, the size and splendor of the room matters not to her at all.]

When Lady Russell not long afterwards, was entering Bath on a wet afternoon, and driving through the long course of streets from the Old Bridge to Camden Place, amidst the dash of other carriages, the heavy rumble of carts and drays, the bawling of newspapermen, muffin-men and milkmen, and the ceaseless clink of pattens, she made no complaint. No, these were noises which belonged to the winter pleasures; her spirits rose under their influence.

Jane Austen, *Persuasion* (1816) [Is Bath about the mixing or the separating of the classes. Lady Russell's pleasures are in the hustle and bustle which depends on the muffin-men as much as the carriages of Lady Russell.]

Their house was undoubtedly the best in Camden Place; their drawing-rooms had many decided advantages over all the others which they had either seen or heard of, and the superiority was not less in the style of the fitting-up, or the taste of the furniture. Their acquaintance was exceedingly sought after. Everybody was wanting to visit them. They had drawn back from many introductions, and still were perpetually having cards left by people of whom they knew nothing.

Jane Austen, *Persuasion* (1816) [What could be better than to be sought after by people of whom you know nothing (presumably people NOT in DeBret's *Baronetage*; as in *Alice in Wonderland*, 'You!' said the Caterpillar contemptuously. 'Who are you?')? Still, if is perhaps infinitely preferable to be in contact with the Dowager Viscountess Dalrymple, so the hierarchy and pecking order remains.]

"My idea of good company, Mr Elliot, is the company of clever, well-informed people, who have a great deal of conversation; that is what I call good company."

"You are mistaken," said he gently, "that is not good company; that is the best. Good company requires only birth, education, and manners, and with regard to education is not very nice. Birth and good manners are essential; but a little learning is by no means a dangerous thing in good company; on the contrary, it will do very well.

Jane Austen, *Persuasion* (1816) [Birth is, of course, surface. But would Anne/Austen do without manners and education? And cannot manners and education do wonders at maintaining class differences (well with a bit of crossover, but isn't that reproduction of the upper classes by patronizing a few of the non-elite what the British class system has long been about?) in spite of the sweeping away of the surface appearances?]

Mr Elliot was rational, discreet, polished, but he was not open.

Jane Austen, *Persuasion* (1816) [Aah, there's the rub. Anne/Austen finds William Elliot seductive, but his polished manners turn out to be not all she seeks.]

"When one lives in the world, a man or woman's marrying for money is too common to strike one as it ought."

Jane Austen, *Persuasion* (1816) [Mrs. Smith's comment strikes one that there are similarities between Defoe's and Austen's worlds. Austen more openly critiques the way of the world, but one finds that people marry for money and status more often than it is their parents "arranging" a marriage for money and status.]

He was a rich man: banker, merchant, manufacturer, and what not.... A man made out of a coarse material, which seemed to have been stretched to make so much of him.... A man who could never sufficiently vaunt himself a self-made man. A man who was always proclaiming, through that brassy speaking-trumpet of a voice of his, his old ignorance and his old poverty. A man who was

the Bully of humility.

Charles Dickens, *Hard Times* (1854) [Ch. 4. He is, of course, Mr. Bounderby. Would Sir Walter Elliot even have noticed him? His wealth, through the belching smokestacks of very Coalbrookdale-ish “Coketown,” makes him a self-made man, although we find out he exaggerates his self-made-ness. What is valued in Bounderby’s vision of class? What is valued in Dickens’s?]]

‘I never wear gloves,’ it was his custom to say. ‘I didn’t climb up the ladder in them. — Shouldn’t be so high up, if I had.’

Charles Dickens, *Hard Times* (1854) [Ch. 4. Again, the always quotable Bounderby emphasizes his lack of fashion. New values, not old surface, matters. But does Dickens like Bounderby? With what does Dickens think we should replace Bounderby’s vision of class?]]

‘You see, my friend,’ Mr. Bounderby put in, ‘we are the kind of people who know the value of time, and you are the kind of people who don’t know the value of time.’

Charles Dickens, *Hard Times* (1854) [Ch. 6. Bounderby’s vision of the “strollers,” the people of the horse riding is that they do not work by time, the factory clock, which so controls the world of Stephen Blackpool. That it controls Bounderby’s upper-class world is much less apparent.]]

The better class of minds, however, did not need to be informed that the Powlers were an ancient stock, who could trace themselves so exceedingly far back that it was not surprising if they sometimes lost themselves — which they had rather frequently done, as respected horse–flesh, blind–hookey, Hebrew monetary transactions, and the Insolvent Debtors’ Court.

Charles Dickens, *Hard Times* (1854) [Ch. 7. Mrs. Sparsit descended from the Powlers, who, however ancient their lineage (presumably with coat of arms and genealogical tree proven by Court of Heralds), tended to drink and gamble all their money away and be deeply in debt, a falling of class (what Mrs. Sparsit represents) that Dickens contrasted satirically with their airs and self-perception.]]

Body number three, wrote leaden little books for them, showing how the good grown–up baby invariably got to the Savings–bank, and the bad grown–up baby invariably got transported.

Charles Dickens, *Hard Times* (1854) [Ch. 8. The improving societies and religious charitable organizations distinguish between the deserving and undeserving poor (and we know where they would place Moll Flanders).]]

In the hardest working part of Coketown; in the innermost fortifications of that ugly citadel, where Nature was as strongly bricked out as killing airs and gases were bricked in; at the heart of the labyrinth of narrow courts upon courts, and close streets upon streets, which had come into existence piecemeal, every piece in a violent hurry for some one man’s purpose, and the whole an unnatural family, shouldering, and trampling, and pressing one another to death; in the last close nook of this great exhausted receiver, where the chimneys, for want of air to make a draught, were built in an immense variety of stunted and crooked shapes, as though every house put out a sign of the kind of people who might be expected to be born in it; among the multitude of Coketown, generically called ‘the Hands,’ — a race who would have found more favour with some people, if Providence had seen fit to make them only hands, or, like the lower creatures of the seashore, only hands and stomachs — lived a certain Stephen Blackpool, forty years of age.

Charles Dickens, *Hard Times* (1854) [Ch. 10. Vision of Coketown not unlike Engels’s vision of Manchester (1844), with the strict separation of the classes. Also, class here is viewed as clear to the sight as race (never mind, of course, that race is not all that clear, even to sight).]]

So many hundred Hands in this Mill; so many hundred horse Steam Power. It is known, to the force of a single pound weight, what the engine will do; but, not all the calculators of the National Debt can tell me the capacity for good or evil, for love or hatred, for patriotism or discontent, for the decomposition of virtue into vice, or the reverse, at any single moment in the soul of one of these its quiet servants, with the composed faces and the regulated actions. There is no mystery in

it; there is an unfathomable mystery in the meanest of them, for ever...

Stephen came out of the hot mill into the damp wind and cold wet streets, haggard and worn. He turned from his own class and his own quarter, taking nothing but a little bread as he walked along, towards the hill on which his principal employer lived, in a red house with black outside shutters, green inside blinds, a black street door, up two white steps, BOUNDERBY (in letters very like himself) upon a brazen plate, and a round brazen door-handle underneath it, like a brazen full-stop.

Charles Dickens, *Hard Times* (1854) [Ch. 11. Attack on the Utilitarians (followers of Jeremy Bentham and his principle of utility) for reducing the “hands” to numbers or cogs in a machine. But Dickens does not pretend that a class difference does not exist and uses the term “class” quite a lot.]

‘Sir,’ returned Mrs. Sparsit. ‘The proposal is like yourself, and if the position I shall assume at the Bank is one that I could occupy without descending lower in the social scale — ’

‘Why, of course it is,’ said Bounderby. ‘If it was not, ma’am, you don’t suppose that I should offer it to a lady who has moved in the society you have moved in. Not that I care for such society, you know! But you do.’

Charles Dickens, *Hard Times* (1854) [Ch. 16. Is *Hard Times* like *Persuasion* in that people are always moving into smaller rooms? Bounderby does not “care for such society,” by his own admission. But the fact that he keeps the captive Coriolanian Mrs. Sparsit around suggests otherwise.]

‘What are the restless wretches doing now?’ asked Mrs. Sparsit.

‘Merely going on in the old way, ma’am. Uniting, and leaguings, and engaging to stand by one another.’

‘It is much to be regretted,’ said Mrs. Sparsit, making her nose more Roman and her eyebrows more Coriolanian in the strength of her severity, ‘that the united masters allow of any such class-combinations.’

Charles Dickens, *Hard Times* (1854) [Book 2, ch. 1. Unions are class-based and thus not based on the individual and so to be regretted, and stopped if possible. Of course, the fact that “the united masters” of the various factories have their own group is not thought of as wrong to Bounderby and Sparsit. And Dickens?]

‘Nay, ma’am,’ said Stephen Blackpool, staunchly protesting against the words that had been used, and instinctively addressing himself to Louisa, after glancing at her face....

He spoke with the rugged earnestness of his place and character — deepened perhaps by a proud consciousness that he was faithful to his class under all their mistrust; but he fully remembered where he was, and did not even raise his voice.

Charles Dickens, *Hard Times* (1854) [Book 2, ch. 5. Stephen Blackpool is defined by class, of course, although the difference between his feeling world and Gradgrind’s world of facts is what Dickens is really on about. Doesn’t this show E.P. Thompson’s discussion of patrician and plebeian? The plebs are deferential (Stephen “remembered where he was”; but they are also defiant (his class mistrust and earnestness).]

The bank had foreclosed a mortgage effected on the property thus pleasantly situated, by one of the Coketown magnates, who, in his determination to make a shorter cut than usual to an enormous fortune, overspeculated himself by about two hundred thousand pounds. These accidents did sometimes happen in the best regulated families of Coketown, but the bankrupts had no connexion whatever with the improvident classes.

Charles Dickens, *Hard Times* (1854) [Book 2, ch. 7. Two sets of rules for the rich and the poor, for the factory owners and the “hands.”]

‘Oh, young lady, young lady,’ returned Rachael, ‘I hope you may be, but I don’t know! I can’t say what you may ha’ done! The like of you don’t know us, don’t care for us, don’t belong to us. I am not sure why you may ha’ come that night. I can’t tell but what you may ha’ come wi’ some aim of your own, not mindin to what trouble you brought such as the poor lad. I said then, Bless you for

coming; and I said it of my heart, you seemed to take so pitifully to him; but I don't know now, I don't know!

Charles Dickens, *Hard Times* (1854) [Book 3, ch. 4. Rachel, speaking to Louisa, makes it clear there is a class gulf that surpasses the meaning of mere words.]