ELIZA HAYWOOD'S LAST ('LOST') WORK:
THE HISTORY OF MISS LEONORA MEADOWSON (1788)

PATRICK SPEDDING

The main subject of the present paper is Eliza Haywood's last ('lost') work: The History of Miss Leonora Meadowson.1 But first, a few words about Haywood might be given for those who are not familiar with her.

Haywood lived in London from 1693 to 1756. She is best known today for her periodical, The Female Spectator, and her novel, The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless (which has recently been reissued in the 'World's Classics' series and by broadview press);2 but she was a remarkably versatile writer, and wrote a great many more books than the two I have mentioned – in fact, at least 71 more, and a further 40 have been attributed to her. Her books are of many types: she started with short erotic novellas, and ended with long moral novels; and there were many translations of the same from French in between. She wrote book-length biographies and gossip in the form of scandal 'histories'. She wrote advice books, and periodicals (The Female Spectator is one of the first written by a woman). She was an actress, a dramatist, and wrote dramatic criticism (again, she was the first Englishwoman to do so). She wrote poetry and helped turn Henry Fielding's play The Tragedy of Tragedies into a very successful mock-Opera. She wrote political works (and was arrested for it) and discussed the novel before it was officially born in 1740.

For all of her industry, Haywood received the enmity of Pope, Swift, Fielding and Johnson – indeed the whole male writing establishment. Pope, who hated most literate women, made her the prize in a urinating competition in the Dunciad;3 Swift, who never met her, described her as 'a stupid, infamous, scribbling woman';4 Fielding satirised her as Mrs Novel in 'The Author's Farce';

4. Jonathan Swift wrote, 'Mrs. Haywood I have heard of as a stupid, infamous, scribbling woman, but have not seen any of her productions'. Letter to the Countess of

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and Johnson entirely ignored her in his biography of Richard Savage (who was probably Haywood's lover for some time and the father of her first child). Most literary critics have followed Johnson's example by ignoring her completely, and only in recent times has there been a resurgence of interest in Haywood and other 'mothers of the novel'.

Among those who have taken an interest in Haywood, no one seems to be able to agree on what she wrote. She published all of her later works (and there are a lot of them) either anonymously or pseudonymously. And so, like Daniel Defoe, Haywood has been the subject of a steady flow of attributions, very few of which can be justified. As a result of the dearth of biographical information, and this confusion over what she wrote, Haywood remains a somewhat mysterious figure.

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In 1788, 32 years after her death, Eliza Haywood's *The History of Miss Leonora Meadowson* was published. The book was reviewed in *The Critical Review*, and again (briefly) in another magazine: and then it disappeared. Since 1788, the *Critical Review* has been the sole source for criticism, and the only evidence available that this last ('lost') work of Haywood's ever existed. Why *Leonora Meadowson* was published so long after Haywood's death and what its 'history' may have been have remained mysteries - until now.

The purpose of this paper is to dispel that mystery by announcing my discovery of a copy of *Leonora Meadowson*, and to attempt to explain its 200-year disappearance and its long absence from criticism. These issues I will deal with in reverse order, first explaining how completely *Leonora Meadowson* disappeared from criticism, before considering how such an extinction could have taken place. Finally, I will say something of my five-year search for this lost book, the systematic methods by which I tried (and failed) to find it, and the pure good luck I had in discovering a copy.


6. The copy located is in the Fales Library, at the University of New York. See my 'Bibliography of Eliza Haywood' (PhD forthcoming) for further details.
Leaving aside the extreme rarity of Leonora Meadowson for the moment, I will outline the most likely explanation for how this book came to disappear almost completely from the annals of literature. The explanation is surprisingly simple, for it has to do with the fact that every list of Haywood's works published between her death in 1756 and the publication of the British Museum Catalogue in 1811 was based on a single bibliographical entry—that provided by David Erskine Baker in his Companion to the Play House of 1764.

The Companion was a tremendously popular and influential work, which was twice revised and updated (first in 1782 and again in 1812), and remained the standard reference work on the subject for over a century. It included both a biographical dictionary and a dictionary of plays, and despite the fact that Haywood was best known as a novelist and essayist, Baker provided a lengthy biographical entry on her. (And it is just as well that he did, because we can thank him for almost all of the little we know about Haywood.)

Baker's entry included a list of 13 of Haywood's works, and he referred to a few more by title along the way. Since the publication of Leonora Meadowson postdates Baker by 24 years, and the first revision of his book by six years, it did not appear in the list in these editions. But, nor did it appear in the second revision of Baker's text, in 1812, though other changes were made to the entry. As a result, Leonora Meadowson disappeared for over a century.

Such was the authority and influence of Baker's work that the order, format, even the phrases, critical opinions and errors of his list, were repeated in all the major biographical and bio-bibliographical dictionaries for the next century. For

7. 'Haywood, Mrs. Eliza', in [David Erskine Baker], The Companion to the Play-House; or an Historical Account of all the Dramatic Writers (and their Works) that have appeared in Great Britain and Ireland, from the Commencement of our Theatrical Exhibitions down to the Present Year 1764, Composed in the Form of a Dictionary (London: T. Becket [and 4 others], 1764), v.2 (Q1v, col.1).

8. David Erskine Baker, Biographia Dramatica, or, A Companion to the Play House ... a New Edition: Carefully Corrected; greatly enlarged; and continued from 1764 to 1782 [by Isaac Reed] (London: Rivington [and 9 others], 1782), 2v.; and Biographia Dramatica, or, A Companion to the Play House ... originally compiled, to the year 1764, by David Erskine Baker, continued thence to 1782, by Isaac Reed, F.A.S., and brought down to the end of November 1811 ... by Stephen Jones (London: Longman [and 15 others], 1812), 3v.

9. The entry on Haywood in Baker's Companion of 1764 covers Q1r, col.1 to Q1v, col.2, but she is also mentioned in the entry on William Hatchett (P5r, col.1), and four of her plays are considered in volume 1: The Fair Captive (G5r, col.1), Frederick Duke of Brunswick-Luneburg (H4r, cols. 1-2), The Opie of Opies (P6v, col.2), A Wife to be Let (2A4r, Col.1 to 2A4v, col.1).
example, one distinctive error in Baker is the rendering of the title *The History of Nature as The History of Nature*. Baker's list, with this give-away error, appears in 1797, in the third edition of *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, in 1798, in the *New and General Biographical Dictionary*; in 1804, in *Betham's Biographical Dictionary of Celebrated Women*; in 1814, in Chalmers' *General Biographical Dictionary*; in 1824, in Watt's *Dictionary Britannica*; and in Allibone's *General Dictionary of English Literature* of 1859-71. These are just the more important of the reference works with entries on Haywood, entries which copy exactly Baker's list.

It was not until 1881 that Haywood's bibliography began to escape the influence of Baker, with the publication of the first part of the monumental *British Museum Catalogue of Printed Books*. Two years later Samuel Halkett and John Laing speeded up the process with their *Dictionary of the Anonymous and Pseudonymous Literature of Great Britain*, and another eight years later it was largely completed with Sidney Lee's entry for Haywood in the *Dictionary of National Biography (DNB)*. It is in Halkett and Laing that *Leonora Meadows* is first listed, and in the DNB that it is first listed under Haywood's name.

The end of Baker's influence was confirmed in 1915 when George Frisbie Whicher published a long, well-researched and detailed bibliography of Haywood in his book *The Life and Romances of Mrs. Eliza Haywood*. Like Baker, Whicher's


12. *British Museum Catalogue of Printed Books* (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1881-1899). The entry on Haywood was printed in 1888, but anonymous and pseudonymous items are to be found throughout.


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bibliography has been the source of almost all subsequent bibliographic notices; and so, for the last three-quarters of a century Leonora Meadowson has appeared in almost every list of Haywood's works.

Curiously, few critics since 1883 seem to have been aware of the fact (or rather, have bothered to mention or discuss it) that no one has seen a copy of this book since it was published. It is hard to imagine this oversight occurring with any of Haywood's male peers, that a book by Defoe or Swift, reviewed at some length when it was released but missing ever since, could escape comment; that in every list of the works of these authors, nobody would bother to record 'no copy known'. How this could have happened to Haywood obviously requires some explanation. Curious also, and possibly related to this silence, is the fact that a few critics, who had clearly not seen Leonora Meadowson, have tried to give the impression that they have, through judicious paraphrasing of the original review (something I will return to shortly).

Halkett and Laing seem not to have been particularly interested in identifying copies of the works in their Dictionary, and considering the scope of their book and the length of time it took to complete it, who can blame them! Their entry gives only the title, author, format of Leonora Meadowson and the fact that the work is in two volumes, details clearly taken from the Critical Review. What is missing is any indication of where this information came from, or, as I have said, whether a copy is known to exist. Likewise, Lee made no attempt to distinguish known from lost works in his DNB article, and sources are not given for individual titles (though Halkett and Laing's Dictionary is cited and is obviously the source of Lee's information).

I have already referred to the 1915 bibliography of Haywood, compiled by Whicher, as being a landmark. For the first time, a scholar approached the compilation of a bibliography of Haywood systematically, for it seems Whicher did try to see a copy of as many editions of every work of Haywood's as possible, giving locations for all the items that he had seen. Among the 71 titles that he lists, there are only seven with no location given for any edition, and with two of these he specifically states that he has not seen a copy of the book in the text of his study. Not surprisingly, Leonora Meadowson is one of those with no location

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16. Whicher is discussed in the text. See also Deborah Nestor, who wrote in a footnote to an article published in 1994: 'In Whicher's bibliography, he lists The History of Leonora Meadowson as being by Haywood, but I am less certain about the authorship of this work. It does not share the stylistic characteristics we find in those works Haywood did acknowledge during her lifetime'. Deborah J. Nestor, 'Virtue Rarely Rewarded: Ideological Subversion and Narrative Form in Haywood's Later Fiction', Studies in English Literature, 34 (1994), p.595.

17. See my 'Bibliography' for more details.
given, though the Critical Review is cited in his bibliography as the source of this 'lost' work.

However, it is not mentioned in the text that Whicher had been unable to locate a copy. Indeed, his discussion of the novel leaves the clear impression that he has seen and read it. He expresses the seemingly well-informed opinion that Leonora Meadowson 'is but a recombination of materials already familiar to the reading public', a statement that summarises and, in fact, misrepresents the opinion of the original reviewer.18 He congratulates the reviewer for his noble sentiments with the statement that 'though aware of the novel's shortcomings', like Whicher, he still laments the passing of Haywood. These statements, and the plot outline that follow, deceive the casual reader into thinking that Whicher had seen the book.

It might be partly for this reason that only two of the dozens of critics who have listed or discussed Leonora Meadowson in the 85 years since Whicher published his study, have specifically mentioned the fact that they couldn't find a copy of it, that it wasn't in the British Museum, or the Bodleian, or at Harvard, or Yale or anywhere else for that matter.19 It might be that critics felt that their inability to find a copy was a failing, not to be made public. That, since Whicher had seen it (or so it seemed), it obviously existed, and they ought to be able to find it. Whatever the reason, the fact remains that only Walter and Clare Jerrold in 1929 and Christine Bloch in 1991 have clearly stated that 'no existing copy is recorded' and that 'extant copies ... cannot be located'.

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While the Jerrolds admitted not being able to find a copy of the book, they unfortunately simultaneously introduced the idea that the 'lost' Leonora Meadowson of 1788 had a precursor in 1745, in a book by the title of Leonora; or, characters drawn from real life.20 Since this idea has gained a small following and is part of the 'history' of Leonora Meadowson, I will briefly elaborate.21

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18. Whicher (1915), p. 169. The reviewer comments on each of the four stories that make up Leonora Meadowson in turn, stating that two of the stories are well known and that one of these is told twice (once in verse). The main story, 'Leonora Meadowson', is original.


21. See, for instance, Marina Gross, 'La retorica della passione nel romanzo popolare del primo settecento: la narrativa di Eliza Haywood', in Sfrenazze in Inghilterra: Formule Narrative nell'evoluzione del 'romanzo' inglese, ed. P.N. Bellman (Milan: Cisalpino-Goliardica,
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The Jerrolds refer to the fact that no copy of *Leonora Meadowson* was known to exist because, they write, 'in 1745 there was published a novel which might possibly prove to be its original issue. This novel, *Leonora*, which was published by Mrs Haywood's bookseller, appears to be beyond much doubt that author's work.' The rapid movement from 'might possibly prove' to 'appears ... beyond much doubt' has encouraged some to infer that it 'is the original' of *Leonora Meadowson* despite the fact that the Jerrolds placed *Leonora* in square brackets in their bibliography of works by Haywood.22

The fact is, however, that *Leonora* is not an earlier printing or version of *Leonora Meadowson*, something that is immediately obvious to anyone who considers this suggestion, even without *Leonora Meadowson* in front of them. To begin with, Thomas Davies was not one of Haywood's regular publishers. In fact, far from being 'Mrs. Haywood's bookseller', his name does not appear in any imprint of the hundreds of books written by Haywood. More importantly, the bookseller's 'Advertisement to the Reader' in *Leonora* refers to the author as 'unknown' (Haywood was famous), and implies that this was her first book (where Haywood had written more than 60 books by 1745).23 Also, the names of the characters and the basic plot, given in outline in the review of *Leonora Meadowson*, do not match those in *Leonora* at all. Finally, if Haywood wrote *Leonora* then she was also the author of *Cassandra* and *Samartha*, *a dramatic history, by the author of Leonora*, a book published by Davies in 1764, eight years after Haywood was dead.24 It will come as no surprise that the 'Advertisement' to the reader in this later work does not imply that it is a posthumous publication.

1983), p.10, n.2: 'Questi i lavori della Haywood ristampati postumi (tra parentesi è la data della prima edizione): ... 1788 The History of Leonora Meadowson (forse rifacimento dell'anonimo Leonora Or, Characters drawn from Real Life, 1745).’ This can be translated as: These, the works of Haywood, were reprinted posthumously (with the date of the first edition between brackets): ... 1788 The History of Leonora Meadowson (perhaps a reworking of the anonymous Leonora Or, Characters drawn from Real Life, 1745).’ With thanks to Michelangelo Rucci for help with the translation. See also Dale Spender, *Mothers of the Novel: 100 good women writers before Jane Austen* (London: Pandora, 1986), p.110.

22. As is often the case, critics have shown more caution than cataloguers in accepting the attribution.

23. 'Lest any of my readers should be surpriz'd to see an unknown Author launch into the World without a Patroness'. Here 'unknown' could be taken to mean 'anonymous', but later references to the subscribers 'whose Indulgence first prompted me to this undertaking' imply that this was the author's first work, and so she is 'unknown' to the reading public. See 'Advertisement to the Reader', in *Leonora* (1745), v.1, p.[5]. For the number of works published by Haywood to 1745 see my 'Bibliography'.

24. 'Advertisement', *Cassandra* and *Samartha*, *a Dramatic History* (London: T. Davies,
Incidentally, the Jerrolds not only introduced a false attribution with *Leonora*, but they started the game of finding earlier versions of works by Haywood. Quite a lot of false attributions has been created by discovering 'earlier attempts' of known Haywood works, based on the similarity of titles. Thus, Haywood's *Table* of 1725 is supposed to have had a precursor in a 1724 work of the same name; her *Female Spectator* of 1745, in a 1731 work; and her *Parrot* of 1745, in a 1728 work. So many false attributions have been made on this basis that a recent critic has identified the use of 'genre-repeating titles' as being a characteristic of Haywood's.

I have expanded on this, partly to show the absurdity of the attribution, but partly because it was my familiarity with *Leonora*, its publisher and date of publication, that helped me to find *Leonora Meadwood* in 1997. Before I tell that story, I must explain how *Leonora Meadwood* disappeared in the first place, and disappeared so completely. For, if a copy had turned up, in any catalogued or accessible library, public or private, between its publication and today, then it would not have mattered that no edition of Baker’s *Companion to the Play House* had listed it and that so many writers copied his list, or that Whicher implied that he had seen it and that so many accepted that he had, or, indeed, that fanciful ancestors were created for it by the Jerrolds. But the fact is none turned up. And apart from the biographical dictionaries, such as I have already mentioned, it is not listed in any library catalogue, from the eighteenth-century circulating libraries to today’s union catalogues, such as the *National Union Catalog* (NUC) and *The Eighteenth Century Short-title Catalogue* (ESTC). It is not even listed in the recent bibliography of Francis Noble, the publisher responsible for printing it. It is with Noble however that the 'history' of *Leonora Meadwood* begins, and so something must be said about his business.

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'During the second half of the eighteenth century', James Raven writes, 'Francis and John Noble published over two hundred novels and miscellanies, sold many other titles, established the two leading circulating libraries ... and supplied dozens of London and provincial libraries with their wares.' Between 1744 and

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1764), v.i. p.4. Although there were a few books with the title *Leonora*, the fact that *Cheats and Sneraths* is anonymous, printed by Thomas Davies, published by subscription, and does not have the subscribers' names printed, as is the case with *Leonora* lends weight to the identification of the 'Leonora' mentioned on the title-page with the *Leonora* discussed above.

1778, when John Noble retired, ‘the Nobles promoted two of the largest and earliest commercial circulating libraries in London and developed a distinctive range of new popular fiction ... they were leading producers of novels from the mid-1750s to the mid-1770s, and the development of their library businesses and publishing style was a prominent feature of that surge in novel reading and writing that so alarmed literary critics in the late eighteenth century.’

Of particular relevance to this paper is the fact that the Noble brothers engaged not only in second-hand bookselling and running circulating libraries but also in publishing. They published and republished popular fiction, as well as bought remaindered novels to supply the shelves of their own libraries and those of many of the 250 country commercial libraries that relied on them for new stock. From John’s retirement in 1778 until 1789, Francis continued to water the ‘evergreen tree of diabolical knowledge’ through his publishing activities.

Leonora Meadowson's obituary is the second-last book that he published, and this fact probably explains a lot about its disappearance.

The reason that Francis Noble retired from business in 1789 is curious. In his obituary in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* we are told that ‘in consequence of his daughter’s obtaining a share of the first £30,000 [lottery] prize that ever was sold, he had some time retired from business.’ As a result of his daughter’s good fortune, in other words, Francis dropped his business like a hot potato and retired to a genteel Kentish town. Of his various business interests, we know that the ‘Dryden’s Head’ circulating library, which had been his brother’s until he had retired, was advertised by William Lane in March of 1788 and is not heard of again. The timing of this sale suggests that Francis had an interest in the operation, though it had been managed by someone else since John retired.

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30. *Gentleman’s Magazine*, 62 (June 1792), p.580. The English State Lottery for 1787 began to be drawn on 11 February 1788 and was heavily advertised in the preceding weeks. Fractions of tickets (a share in a ticket) were sold by a variety of agents at varying prices. A half-share sold for between £8 11s and £8 14s on 7 February (*The Morning Post and Daily Advertiser*). The first prize of this lottery was, however, £20,000 not £30,000, and was not the first with a prize this large (Mr Hodges mentions ‘many 20,000. Prizes’, ‘punctually paid’, in ‘the course of the last twenty-eight State Lotteries’). Despite the proximity of dates, another lottery may be intended by the obituarist.
33. Varma writes that ‘His business was taken over by R. Desbrow, who carried on
Francis’s stock, including recent publications, must have been disposed of soon after, because he was replaced in his shop late in the same year or early in the next. At about the same time, the last book Francis was to publish was released.

By a curious twist of fate, what was good news for Francis was bad news for *Leonora Meadown*. At the same time that Francis was winding up his businesses (in fact, in the same month that he was selling the ‘Dryden’s Head’ library [March of 1788]), *Leonora Meadown* was published. (Perhaps I should say ‘orphaned’ rather than ‘published’, since the author-mother was dead and the publisher-father seems to have abandoned it). While there is little evidence for what happened next to explain the near extinction of this newly published work, it is possible to have an educated guess.

Ordinarily, the Nobles published large enough numbers of their books for them to remain ‘in print’ and on their own backlists for years, sometimes for decades. In fact, Raven mentions one work that remained in print as a ‘new book’ for 34 years. This practice was also a cheap way of stocking the shelves of their circulating libraries, which, in turn, popularised the book. However, the main outlet for their new publications was through wholesale distribution to other circulating libraries and to retail outlets. *Leonora Meadown* appears never to have made it to this stage of distribution, or to have barely started it. If the book had been distributed, we would find it listed in the catalogues of dozens of the circulating libraries that the Nobles supplied; but, as I have shown above, it is not to be found in any of them.

If *Leonora Meadown* did not reach the stage of being sold on to other booksellers and to libraries, then it is possible that it was sold *en masse* with the rest of Francis’s stock in trade. Such sales were common in the trade, and at the British Library and the Bodleian there survive long runs of printed catalogues to them. Unfortunately, no catalogue survives from the sale of Francis’s stock.

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34. Between Michaelmas (29 September) 1788 and June 1789 Francis was replaced by John Bennell: Raven (1990), pp.296, 298, Varma (1972), p.38.
35. The last item in the Raven bibliography is *The Home of the Rock* (1789), cited above. Given the Nobles’ long-standing practice of putting the following year’s date on a publication, this could have been published as early as October 1788. Raven (1990), pp.312, 345.
However, the procedure at such a sale was well established. Copyrights, usually in fractions with the corresponding part of the edition, and stock were auctioned off to other booksellers. In the early part of his career Francis had regularly bought stock in this way, cancelling the title-pages of the books he bought and reissuing them with one of his own. While it is possible that *Leonora Meadowson* was remaindered in this way, and that the whole edition was reissued with a new imprint by another bookseller, the fact that no such copy has surfaced or that no record of one is to be found argues against it.

James Lackington, a famous bookseller of the period and a large-scale buyer of remainders, suggests another possibility in his description of the 'traditional' approach to remainders. Writing in 1791, he explains that:

> When I was first initiated into the various manoeuvres practised by booksellers, I found it customary among them, (which practice still continues) that when any books had not gone off as rapidly as expected, or so fast as to pay for keeping them in store, they would put what remained of such articles into private sales, where only booksellers are admitted, and of them, only such as are invited by having catalogues sent them...

> When first invited to these trade sales, I was very much surprised to learn, that it was common for such as purchased remainders, to destroy one half or three fourths of such books, and to charge the full publication price, or nearly that, for such as they kept on hand; and there was a kind of standing order amongst the trade, that in case any one was known to sell articles under the publication price, such a person was to be excluded from the trade sales.41

Here, at last, we seem to have an explanation that fits the facts. If Lackington is to be believed, and the newly-published sheets of *Leonora Meadowson* were sold off in the traditional manner, it is quite likely that most of them would have been destroyed. The extreme rarity of the book, and its almost immediate

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39. This is not remarkable in itself, as Francis was a bit of an 'outsider' to the trade: Raven (1990), p.293.

40. Raven (1990), pp.300-301.

41. James Lackington, *Memoirs of the Forty-Five First Years of the Life of J. Lackington*. A New Edition (London: J.D. Dewick for J. Lackington, 1803), Letter XXXV, p.222. The emphasis is Lackington's. While Lackington is at pains to show what a great benefit he has been to the public in this section of his *Memoirs*, and undoubtedly exaggerates his role in the rise of remaindering, there seems no reason to doubt that part of each edition thus bought was destroyed, as he claims.
disappearance, could well be taken as evidence that this is what happened to the sheets sold by Francis. Of the remaining copies, wear-and-tear could well have dealt fully with them. Even works which remained in print for over a decade and which were distributed to dozens of circulating libraries are extremely rare today. Of the 253 items in Raven's bibliography of the Nobles' publications, 56 (that is, more than a fifth) are 'lost', and many more survive only in single copies. An edition, reduced by as much as three-quarters, with a one in five chance of being read out of existence, has a low chance of survival.

Of course, it is quite possible that Francis sold his business intact, that _Leonora Meadowson_ was not remaindered at all, the whole edition being sold over the counter in the normal fashion, and that it was read out of existence anyway. However, because of the almost immediate and complete disappearance of the book, and the lack of any record of it after it had been published, I find this possibility less persuasive.

My theory as to what might have happened is summarised as follows. At some stage after _Leonora Meadowson_ goes to press, Francis's daughter wins a lottery prize, and so he decides to sell up his business. When the book returns from the printers, he binds up a few, sends them off to be reviewed, and maybe puts a couple on the shelf of his circulating library or in his bookshop; however, he is too busy selling his business to promote it actively, let alone distribute it. Soon afterwards, he sells the business, and in the process remainderers _Leonora Meadowson_. The new owner pulps three quarters of the edition in order to sell the rest at full price. These are read to pieces, and (as Gilbert Norwood puts it): 'they are drawn towards the pulping-machine by a force persistent as gravitation.'

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42. There is also the possibility that the whole edition was pulped because no buyer was found for it, but this seems highly unlikely given the strength of the market for fiction, and the fact that it was a new work.


44. If the 1/4th of the edition left in 1788, have only a 4/5ths chance of surviving until today, then the resulting probability of survival is, at best, 4/20ths or 20%. Since the book did not remain in print so long, and if the book was never properly distributed, this would further diminish its chances of survival.

45. The recently-discovered fact that the book was advertised immediately before the sale of the 'Dryden's Head' library (between 16 February and 1 March 1788), but not afterward, may be taken as support for this argument. See footnote 5 above.

Before I went on my first research trip overseas (in 1995) I had been through all the sources I have mentioned and many more. As well as ESTC and NUC, I went through as many electronic and on-line catalogues as I could find, from FirstSearch’s WorldCat to the many on-line catalogues listed on the Library of Congress’s ‘Gateway’.47 I had been through the early universal and national bibliographies of literature and dozens of dictionaries of literary biography. I had even gone through book auction records and book collector’s memoirs. The critical literature revealed no definite sightings, and the most promising leads (such as Raven’s bibliography of the Noble brothers and Terry Belanger’s index to trade sales) proved fruitless.48 Eventually, it seemed that the best I could hope for was to uncover some record, even if only a trace, of the fleeting existence of this ‘lost’ book.

I spent a couple of weeks at the British Library doing nothing else. I went through eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century circulating-library catalogues and early universal catalogues such as Bent’s.49 I conducted a systematic search of periodicals for reviews or advertisements. I went through the Monthly, Analytic and English reviews, the Gentleman’s Magazine as well as the Literary, Universal, European and General magazines, the Whitehall Evening Post and the New Annual Register.50 I found nothing.

I then called up every work published by Francis Noble between 1787 and 1789, in the hope that Leonora Meadowson may have been advertised in one of them. In the last of these publications, The Hermit of the Rock, at the end of the last volume, appears an advertisement for works published by Francis Noble, which includes Leonora Meadowson.51 Triumphant with this puny discovery, the result of my systematic research, I returned to Australia, finalised my bibliographic description and turned to other matters. Two years later, at the Fales library at the University of New York, I was forced to rewrite that description.

I had not planned to go to the Fales Library but was in New York researching in other collections. Consequently, it was the last library that I visited. Fortunately, as it turned out, I started early and was soon finished. With time on my hands, I decided to take the opportunity to double-check some of my earlier work, by looking at any uncommon Haywood items in the collection. I went

47. That is the ‘Z39.50 Gateway’: <http://lcweb.loc.gov/z3950/gateway.html#lc>.
51. Cited in footnote 5 above.
through the catalogue, until my eye, skipping ahead for something of interest, caught an unusual entry. It read:

LEONORA MEADOWSON HOL NOBLE 1755

The longer I looked at this garbled entry, the more bizarre it seemed. I had seen Leonora listed in many catalogues under Haywood's name, but the date of 1755 was wrong, and so it seemed that the record might refer to the 1745 Leonora rather than the 1788 Leonora. Then again, from where would a cataloguer get Meadowson and the publisher 'Noble' if they had only a copy of Leonora? With all the discussion of reissues and the reuse of titles by Haywood, I began to wonder whether the catalogue entry before me referred to an unknown and unsuspected first edition of Leonora Meadowson, printed in 1755 and reissued by Noble in 1788. Why Noble would have had the book published in Holland was beyond me, but with this possibility quickly becoming a conviction, I asked to see the book.

I explained to the librarian that I was probably wasting her time, that no copy of Leonora Meadowson was known to exist, that it had been missing since 1788, that I had searched every conceivable source for information about it and had found (practically) nothing, and that some critics seemed to doubt whether it had ever existed in the first place or that it was by Haywood at all. The librarian listened politely, went away, and came back with - not just a copy of Leonora Meadowson, but a copy in its original boards, as issued, untrimmed, never subjected to the maltreatment of a binder, as perfect a copy as a bibliographer could dream of.

I was ecstatic. The desk-clerk called in the rare-books librarian, and I spent two hours explaining what an exciting find it was. I spent a small fortune on telephone calls, waking up people all over Australia, to tell them about it. I went back to the Fales, wrote an exhaustive description of the book, then read it, and read it again. I typed up large parts of it and wrote detailed plot outlines. After three days of research, I thanked the ever-patient librarians, said goodbye, and prepared to move on to Yale. But on the morning that I was leaving New York, I took a detour from Grand Central Station, and (carrying my backpack) returned to the Fales Library to take photos of the book. These photos I keep as proof, and a reminder, that Leonora Meadowson really does exist.

Monash University, Clayton

52. This entry first appears in New York University Libraries, Fales Library Checklist, revised and edited by Theodore Grieder (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1970), v.1, p.434. It is not in the 1963 or 1968 in-house versions of this checklist mentioned by Charles Gornell in his 'Introduction' to this work.

53. Since London does not appear in the imprint, the cataloguer gives Holborn (abbreviated as 'HOL') for the place of publication, (which I had read as an abbreviation for Holland). The date '1755' for 1788 seems to be a simple misreading of the ranging 8s for 5s.
THE HISTORY OF MISS LEONORA MEADOWS.

A NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

VOL. I.

PRINTED FOR F. NOBLES,
AT HIS CIRCULATING LIBRARY, NO. 324, HOLBORN,
1788.
APPENDIX:
A Description of The History of Miss Leonora Meadowson.

Volume 1.

THE | HISTORY | OF | Miss LEONORA MEADOWSON | A NOVEL | — | In TWO VOLUMES | — | By the Author of BETSY THOUGHTLESS | — | VOL. I | [Oxford rule] | Printed for F. NOBLE, | At his Circulating Library, | No. 324, Holborn | 1788.

Half-title: [short tapered rule, 45mm] | THE | HISTORY | OF | Miss LEONORA MEADOWSON | A NOVEL | — | [short tapered rule, 50mm]

Collation: 192pp: [4], 188; no pagination errors. 96ll: π², A-G¹², H¹⁰; ½ signed; no signature errors. Tomaisson $1r: 'VOL. I.'

Catchwords: no errors.

Volume 2.

THE | HISTORY | OF | Miss LEONORA MEADOWSON | A NOVEL | — | In TWO VOLUMES | — | By the Author of BETSY THOUGHTLESS | — | VOL. II | [Oxford rule] | Printed for F. NOBLE, | At his Circulating Library, | No. 324, Holborn | 1788.

Half-title: [short tapered rule, 45mm] | THE | HISTORY | OF | Miss LEONORA MEADOWSON | A NOVEL | — | [short tapered rule, 50mm]

Collation: 192pp: 192; 8 misnumbered as '6'. 96ll: π², A-G¹², H¹⁰; ½ signed [-A1,2]; no signature errors. Tomaisson A3r, B-H1r: 'VOL. II.'
The History of Miss Leonora Meadowson (1788)

... [163] 164-191 'Oxford rule' | CORNARO | AND THE | TURK | A TALE.'
Catchwords: no errors.

The Two Volumes.

Collation: 2 vols; 12°; 178-89 x 110-15mm (NNU-F copy, uncut in original boards).
Price: 5s (sewn) or 7s (calf, lettered) [The General Evening Post].
References: Whicher (1915); 27; Jerrold (1929); 91; Grieder (1970), v.1, p.454; Forster (1997); 1864; Raven and Forster (2000); 1788:55.
Copies seen: NNU-F [Brit.].