

*The Adventures of Master Headstrong and Miss Patient* . London: E. Newbery, [n.d].  
8vo, 94 pages, 21 woodcuts.

In this story, Miss Patient is guided by Reason on the path to Happiness. In contrast, Master Headstrong is first led by Passion, then by Reason, yet is distracted along the way by False Pleasure and Hope. After many missteps, Master Headstrong encounters Experience, Caution, Care, and Fortitude who lead him to the “bitter water of Repentance.” Master Headstrong is then reunited with Reason and Miss Patient, and they proceed to the Temple of Virtue. They are joined by Fortitude and Religion, after which Master Headstrong is conducted down the road to Happiness. The illustrative woodcuts are accompanied by instructive couplets; the penultimate, which reads “Reason, Religion, Patience, show | The way to every bliss below,” points the way to the core message—to be good is to be happy.

*The Adventures of Master Headstrong and Miss Patient* was published by Elizabeth Newbery, a successor to John Newbery (1713–1767), the Englishman considered by some to be the inventor of children’s literature and by others to have been the first to recognize its commercial potential. Eventually John Newbery’s publications became the property Elizabeth and numerous publishers came to specialize in children’s literature. The American Library Association’s annual Newbery Medal commemorates John Newbery’s contributions to the genre.

This book is from the Douce Collection at Oxford’s Bodleian Library. Francis Douce (1757–1834) was a British antiquary and the Keeper of Manuscripts at the British Museum from 1807 to 1811. His bequest of more than 19,000 volumes contained printed books from various periods, including nearly 500 incunables, as well as roughly 425 manuscripts. Eighteenth- and early nineteenth- century children’s books numbered among Douce’s wide range of collecting specialties. This copy of *The Adventures of Master Headstrong and Miss Patient* is in a contemporary binding of boards covered with Dutch floral paper. The title page is signed “M. L. Haskoll | 1819” and bears the stamp “EX DONO FR. DOUCE | BIBL. BODL.”

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