

not this a greater offence against the public good than mine? Compel them then by law, either to marriage, or to pay double the fine of fornication every year. What must poor young women do, whom custom hath forbid to solicit the men, and who can not force themselves upon husbands, when the laws take no care to provide them any; and yet severely punish them if they do their duty without them; the duty of the first and great command of nature, and of nature's God, *increase and multiply?* A duty, from the steady performance of which nothing has been able to deter me; but, for its sake, I have hazarded the loss of the public esteem, and have frequently endured public disgrace and punishment, and therefore ought, in my humble opinion, instead of a whipping, to have a statue erected to my memory.

*Gentleman's Magazine, April, 1747.*

Curious as is the above document, its literary history is still more so. In the *Gentleman's Magazine*, for the month of May in the same year, a letter was published, signed William Smith, in which he says, that when he was in New England, in 1745, he saw *Polly Baker*, who was then, tho' nearly sixty years old, a comely woman, and the wife of *Paul Dudley*, Esq. of Roxbury, about two miles from Boston, and had fifteen children by him.

But in the *Magazine* for July 1748, the proprietors, probably fearing, or being threatened with, a prosecution by Mr. Dudley, for a libel on his wife, inserted the following apology.

“Whereas, through the wicked contivance of one William Smith, we unwarily published in our *magazine* for May 1747, a letter signed by him, which we are now fully sensible contains a most groundless, vile, and injurious slander and impu-