

13歳の女の子へのプレゼント

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A Little Collection of Prayers and Instructions for a Thirteen-Year-Old

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One manuscript book stored at Chawton House Library, Hampshire, UK, presents a window to see literary and religious lives of eighteenth-century women. The book is associated with 'Elizabeth Rushout', apparently the author but actually she was the thirteen-year-old girl who received the carefully hand-written book. Though the eighteenth century saw the rise of the novel, the press and the emphasis on secular aspects of life, this was a product of one person's hand writing who shows her piety to encourage the receiver's religious practice in everyday life.

The book mainly consists of examples of prayers the teenage girl should use: when she wakes up, in the morning, when she does something virtuous, at church, in the evening, before going to bed, on her birthday, and so on. The beginning of the book emphasizes that she is no longer a child who obeys what adults have decided but a responsible individual who can choose what she does, while the book's main purpose is to instruct her daily life minutely and carefully.

The author of the book might have been the senior member of the family. One of the candidate is the second wife of the girl's grandfather. She was one of the sisters of her father, so she was her aunt. The aunt married her maternal grandfather. At the moment this can be only assumed and needs to be confirmed, possibly by identifying the handwriting or the decoration gilded on the book.