

### A13 Chamberlaine Chamberlaine, one of her graces kinn

*Notes. Internal evidence indicates that this poem was written shortly after the fall of Essex in February 1601. It mocks the behaviour of many courtiers, but directs its most bitter comments at Sir Robert Cecil and Sir Walter Raleigh, who are here presented as the chief beneficiaries of Essex's death.*

Chamberlaine<sup>1</sup> Chamberlaine, one of her graces kinn

Foole he hathe ever binn, with his Joane silver pinn<sup>2</sup>

Rawe without and Foule within, she makes his Coxcombe thinn

and shakes in everie Lymm

quicksilver is in his head.

but his witt all is Lead.<sup>3</sup>

Lord for thy pittie

Partie Beard<sup>4</sup> was a feard, when they Ran at the heard<sup>5</sup>

The Raynedeare<sup>6</sup> was Imbost,<sup>7</sup> the white do she was Lost,

Pembroke he strooke her downe, and tooke her from the Clown,<sup>8</sup>

Lord for thy pittie

Little Cecill<sup>9</sup> tripps up and downe, he Rules bothe Court & Croun

with his great Burghley Clowne,<sup>10</sup> in his Longe fox-furd gowne

with his Longe proclamacion, hee saith hee saved the Towne<sup>11</sup>

is it not Likelie

Litle Gray, Litle Gray, made a souldier in the monthe of may<sup>12</sup>

hee made a Ladies Fray, turnd aboute & ran away<sup>13</sup>

he shalbe advanced as men say, for to bear some great sway

Lord for thy pittie.

Bedford he ran awaie when wee had lost the day

yet moste his honor pay, so it is assigned

yf his Fyne Dauncing Dame, do not their hard harts tame<sup>14</sup>

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15

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and say it is a shame, Fooles should bee Fyned:

Foulke and John,<sup>15</sup> Foulke and John:

Yow two shall rise anon 25  
when wiser men be gonn

Yow two can reache as farre  
when honors riffeled<sup>16</sup> are  
as the best men, of warr.  
yf non your hands doe Barr: 30  
Lord for thy pittie

Rawley doth tyme bestride  
yet uphill he can not ryde<sup>17</sup>  
for all his blooddie pride  
he lieth twixt tyme and tyde 35  
sekes Taxes in the Tynn<sup>18</sup>  
strips the poore to the skynn,  
yet sais it is no synn  
Lord for thy pittie

**Source.** BL MS Harley 2127, fol. 34r

**Other known sources.** PRO SP 12/278/23

A13

<sup>1</sup> *Chamberlaine*: George Carey, Lord Hunsdon, Lord Chamberlain and a cousin of the Queen.

<sup>2</sup> *Joan silver pinn*: unclear; probably either an allusion to a mistress of Hunsdon, or to mercury (“quicksilver”), which was used as a treatment for syphilis, but had debilitating and potentially fatal side-effects.

<sup>3</sup> *Rawe...Lead*: description of the physical manifestations of Hunsdon’s syphilis, which brought him close to death in May 1601. A “coxcombe” is a cap worn by a jester in the shape of a cockrel’s comb and symbolic of foolishness. As well as emphasizing his addled wits, the thinning of Hunsdon’s

“coxcombe” may refer to the loss of his hair and/or to sexual impotence.

<sup>4</sup> *Partie Beard*: Sir William Knollys, the Comptroller of the Queen’s Household. He was so-called because his beard showed a mix of white, black and fair hair (Haynes 46).

<sup>5</sup> *the heard*: the young women at court; perhaps more specifically the Queen’s maids of honour.

<sup>6</sup> *Raynedeare*: the Queen. Presumably the reindeer’s large horns represent the Queen’s crown. The reference to the reindeer as “she” and the fact that this verse was apparently written after Essex’s execution mean that this cannot be an allusion to Essex, whose stag crest was sometimes called a reindeer.

<sup>7</sup> *Imbost*: foaming at the mouth, driven to exhausted fury; hence an allusion to the Queen’s furious reaction to events.

<sup>8</sup> *the white do...the Clown*: the “white do” (i.e. “doe”) is Mary Fitton, a young Maid of Honour who became pregnant to William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke. On Elizabeth’s orders, Pembroke was sent to the Fleet prison in early February 1601, but refused to marry Mary Fitton. The “Clown” is another reference to Sir William Knollys, who was besotted with Fitton, but trapped in an unhappy marriage and bound by his promise to Fitton’s family to act as her protector at court (Hammer, “Sex and the Virgin Queen” 84, 94, 96; Haynes 44-49).

<sup>9</sup> *Little Cecill*: Sir Robert Cecil.

<sup>10</sup> *his great Burghley Clowne*: Thomas Cecil, 2nd Lord Burghley, Cecil’s older brother.

<sup>11</sup> *Longe proclamacion...Towne*: Essex and his followers were publicly proclaimed as traitors during their attempt to rally armed support in the City of London. The proclamation was read out by Lord Burghley. The government subsequently claimed that Essex had sought to capture London.

<sup>12</sup> *Litle Gray...monthe of may*: Thomas Grey, Lord Grey of Wilton, a bitter adversary of Essex and personal enemy of Southampton. In May 1600, he went to fight in the Low Countries where he subsequently took part in the great Dutch victory over the Spanish army at Nieupoort.

<sup>13</sup> *hee made...ran away*: probably a reference to Grey’s notorious feud with Southampton, which stemmed from the former’s alleged insubordination during Essex’s campaign in Ireland in 1599. Grey repeatedly sought a duel with Southampton, but failed to back his words with action.

<sup>14</sup> *Bedford...tame*: comment on Edward Russell, Earl of Bedford, who accompanied Essex on his march into the city on the morning of 8 February 1601, but abandoned Essex’s band when it was clear the Earl’s cause was lost. Although not charged with treason, Bedford was heavily fined for his action. The fines imposed upon Essex’s followers (very few of whom were charged with treason) were levied by special commissioners, some of whom were supposedly prone to favouritism and even susceptible to

bribery. Bedford's "fyne dauncing dame" is his wife, Lucy Russell (née Harrington), Countess of Bedford, who became one of the leading hostesses in courtly society during the early years of James I's reign.

<sup>15</sup> *Foulke and John*: Fulke Greville, a close friend of Essex who subsequently distanced himself from the Earl and cultivated Cecil's friendship. The identity of "John" is uncertain; however, this may be Greville's friend and protege, John Coke. Greville was Treasurer of the Navy and Coke ultimately became Secretary of State under Charles I. Since Coke was not a major figure in the final years of Elizabeth's reign, this identification would suggest that the author of this poem had a close personal knowledge of the circles in which Coke (and Greville) moved.

<sup>16</sup> *riffeled*: rifled, plundered.

<sup>17</sup> *yet uphill he can not ryde*: perhaps suggesting that Raleigh could not rise any higher in the social order (i.e. become a peer).

<sup>18</sup> *Tynn*: Raleigh was Warden of the Stannaries, which gave him jurisdiction over the tin-mining regions of Cornwall and Devon. This is a biting reference to his efforts to maximize his income from that office.

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