

B13 The Divell men say is dead in devonshire late

Notes. Charles Blount, Earl of Devonshire, died in April 1606. This punning libellous epitaph alludes to Devonshire's scandalous illegal marriage to his longtime mistress Penelope Rich, wife of Robert, Lord Rich. In 1605 an ecclesiastical court had granted Lord and Lady Rich a formal separation on the grounds of her adultery. Penelope Rich married Devonshire almost immediately thereafter; however, the terms of her separation seem to have given her no legal right to remarry.

“On the L. Rich¹ Earle of Devonshire”

The Divell men say is dead in devonshire late
Of late did devonshire live in rich estate
Till Rich with toyes did devonshire bewitch
That Devonshire died & left the Divell rich

Source. Huntington MS HM 116, p. 65

Other known sources. Bodleian MS Eng. Poet. e.14, fol. 89v; BL Add. MS 21433, fol. 102v; BL Add. MS 25303, fol. 98r; Brotherton MS Lt. 25, fol. 9r; V&A MS D25.F.39, fol. 66v

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¹ *L. Rich:* the scribe who added this title has confused Devonshire's name with that of his wife's former husband.
