

D2 Advance, advance my ill-disposed Muse

Notes. On 20 January 1613, James Carre sent a copy of this poem to the English diplomat William Trumbull. Carre informed Trumbull that this “libel on the life and death of the late Id. treasurer” had been “blazed abroad” by one Hessels, a servant of the Earl of Arundel and a “dangerous fellow, although a Protestant” (HMC Downshire 4.20; Croft, “Reputation” 62). Although the early parts of the poem allude to some of Cecil’s alleged financial exactions and oppressions, the bulk of the verse is an extended indictment of Cecil for his role in the downfall of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex.

Advance, advance my ill-disposed Muse
With uncouth stile and ill-disposed verse,
Largly relate the ill-disposed use
Of him that ties thee to bedeck his hearce:¹
With much evils then I may rehearse, 5
And leave the rest for circumstance of evils
To be debated not with man but Divells:
It should not be ascribed to his skill
That thorough his grace he gained estimation,
But that it pleased to be his Maysters will 10
To deeme him fitt a pillar for this nation
And so he was but in an evil fashion,
His timber sure was rotten at the first,
And so did make his building be accurst.
His deeds are written with an iron penn 15
In gods black book the register of greifs,
And sign’d and sealed with ten thousand men
Whom he hath banisht from their good relieves,
Leaving their goods to be the spoile of theives.
By his abusive and ungodlie actions. 20
His tricks, his plots, his nurceries of factions.

Monster of men, the worst of any evill
Gods by-marke shun'd by admonition.
His privie signat sealed for the divell,
Spoyle of orphanes leaft to his tuition.² 25
And everie good that was in his fruition,
Willing and wold he what he list commit,
Letting his passion overwhelme his witt.
One worke of darknes never be forgotten³
That was effected by a murthrous deed, 30
But let it live till everie one be rotten
That yet is yongest of his race and seede
For which one strok he caus'd 2000 weepe,
And everie drop that from that number came
Invokes revenge, dispaire, and endlesse shame, 35
On thee and thine. O were thy blood not mixt
Among the noble, honest, good, and just,
I should not feare what in my heart is fixt,
There dissipations by thy pois'ned dust.
Plowed, sowne, and reaped, in lascivious lust, 40
Packing and matching to uphold thy endes.
With divells, with anie either foes or freinds.
Still did thy envie waite at honours back
Choking desert with overweenig⁴ pride
And still thy envie shot at honours wrack, 45
In semblance still that vertue was thy guide,
Forceing the best things to the worsers side.
Thyne eye durst look upon the eyes of heaven,
Thy heart was vexed when all things went even.
It is observed in thy generall ends 50
Thy bad condition in thy best estate,
Thy private treasons to entrap thy freinds,

And malice others even with publick hate
 A dangerous pillar in so good a state
 Whose over running witt and only excellence 55
 Was envie, hate, and poisoned virulence.
 The Syre deemed the child of reprobation
 Brought a new forme of goverment in the state,
 Plotting our peeres for refuse of the nation,
 Forcing their vertues to contempt and hate 60
 Their fortune sone was rul'd by evil fate:
 That they which had their countries dearest places,
 Should so be cheated of their princes graces.
 The Arcane plots, and intricate desseignes
 Are now in common with the vulgar eares, 65
 Now the nefarious, hellish undermines
 Are much bemoaned with a world of tears
 Just like the losse of paris-garden beares.⁵
 Who being dead uncased of their furr
 Lyes bravely buried mongst the brauling curre. 70
 Well, you are gone, it is no matter whether,
 Your freinds may meet in Suffolke or in Kent,
 My charitie doth wish you altogether,
 That alters honor with so foule intent,
 And thus my sprite against you all is bent, 75
 Thinking you worthie of the vilest skernes
 That suffred basenesse blow in honours hornes.

Source. "Poems from a Seventeenth-Century Manuscript" 44-50

Other known sources. BL MS Trumbull Misc. V, fol. 11r

¹ *bedeck his hearce*: epitaphs traditionally were pinned to funeral hearses.

² *orphanes leaft to his tuition*: the orphans in question were under Cecil's control as Master of the Wards.

³ *worke of darknes*: this refers to the destruction of Essex, epitome of honour, and introduces the theme that dominates the rest of the poem.

⁴ Scribal error; read "overweening".

⁵ *paris-garden beares*: Paris Garden was a bear garden on the bank of the Thames in Southwark, where bears were baited for popular entertainment.
