

## K1 Some would complaine of Fortune & blinde chance

*Notes.* This poem presents a survey of Jacobean politics that is more detailed and thorough than any other piece in this edition. Written towards the end of James's reign (probably early in 1623), it looks back across the era, narrating the rises and falls of individuals and factions. Although it is not a straightforward polemic, in the manner adopted by most libels, the writer is clearly influenced by the events surrounding the 1621 Parliament, and the poem makes some pointed references to the sufferings of the "Countrie". The poem is discussed in McRae, "Political Satire".

"Fortunes wheele. or Rota fortunæ in gyro"

Some would complaine of Fortune & blinde chance

that durst their handes to heaven up advance

and cry, O God, which madest the glorious sunn

What hath poore England against Religion done?

That all her goodnes topsie turvie lies

derided geerde att, wrong'de by Contraries.

That such a mightie learned Prince<sup>1</sup> should see

how grossely men of honor blinded bee.

That persons mounted upp to greatnes durst,

unto their wealth & Princes favour trust:

Abuseinge both with pride and wantonnes,

which makes them stupid in forgetfullnes.

For though they sawe the downefall of the rest,

Yet worse and worse continued they unblest.

I saie, some would complaine of Fortune nowe

but I will plainer be, & tell you howe

this wheele of Fortune is turn'de round aboute

and soe the cause shall put you out of doubte.

As when the Prophett Balaam<sup>2</sup> did strive

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to make proud moab<sup>3</sup> against Judah thrive 20  
 And soe by God was curste for such a deede<sup>4</sup>  
 Which meerelie did from avarice proceede  
 He yet desisted not,<sup>5</sup> but founde away  
 their soules to sinne, as captive to betray  
 And unto Baal peor<sup>6</sup> did them bringe 25  
 to bee a wonder, and a ravishinge.  
 The beautie of the Lande came naked to them  
 and with their false embraces did undoe them.  
 Thus plaid the devill with our English courte  
 for firste he to the Romanes made resorte. 30  
 I meane the Pope & conclave of that sect  
 who soon a hellish stratagem<sup>7</sup> project.  
 Grudginge that our Religion shoulde soe flourish  
 or England constantlie the truth to nourish.  
 Thus they contrive with some strange powder blowe 35  
 into the aire, the Parliamente to throwe;  
 That with a whirlwinde, terror might appall  
 Gods worde professed, Courtlie state, & all.  
 But faileinge with base Balaam in this<sup>8</sup>  
 and fretted in blinde rage his ayme to misse, 40  
 He falls to contraries, readeinge a booke  
 from whence he strange alluringe lessons tooke  
 of pride, luste, avarice, & wretched hate  
 Which in fewe yeares dismembred Englands state.  
 For presentlie the kinge affects his peace<sup>9</sup> 45  
 proposinge nothinge but delights increase,  
 And as the kinge gives way, each one pretends  
 to honor him, though out of private endes.  
 Thus swarmes the Courte with youthfull gallants brave  
 and happie he, who can the kinges love have. 50

The kinge againe remembers Daniells storie  
and such admitts of, as becomes his glorie.<sup>10</sup>  
Yet all they doe is to resolve this doubt  
that Fortune's wheele is quicklie turn'de aboute.

Monntgomery<sup>11</sup> ledd this dance of greatnes firste  
but wiselie fearinge with the same to burste,  
He gave it over, & with true reclayme  
tooke out a shafte at honestie to ayme.  
For when the frye of Scotts had turn'de their capps  
to goulden bonnetts,<sup>12</sup> and outfac'de mishapps  
with outward bravery by makeinge knights  
and grewe to Courte it in the statelie sightes,  
Then with the rest some English had the grace  
in the kinges chamber to receave a place.<sup>13</sup>  
But some have blamed Fortune for his sake  
that he the time of Fortune did not take.<sup>14</sup>  
I might have nam'de Lorde Cobham,<sup>15</sup> litle Gray,<sup>16</sup>  
Raleighe,<sup>17</sup> and others, who contriv'de the waye  
of Essex fall-: <sup>18</sup> For after all those smiles  
See, see, howe Fortunes hate, their trust beguiles  
They as delinquents by the law are founde  
and in the tower caste upon good grounde,  
And in the Tower dye: but Raleighs fate  
makes us amased, him unfortunate.  
For after fowerteene yeares, release he had,<sup>19</sup>  
but see, his libertie prov'de too too badd.  
For in a voyage all his hopes miscarried  
and Gondomars complaint<sup>20</sup> him stranglie married  
to ougsome<sup>21</sup> death whereby he lost his head,<sup>22</sup>  
bewailed of his foes that sawe him dead.

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Thus Contraries doe still resolve this doubte  
that Fortune's wheele is quicklie turnde aboute.

Northumberland?<sup>23</sup> Northumberland was greate,  
by native excellence, and honors seate  
And yet the kinge, from whom greatnes doth flowe  
most willinglie him greater made then soe.

85

For first he sitts at that high sacred table<sup>24</sup>  
where, to advise the Councell, he is able.  
Then of East Marches is Lorde Waden<sup>25</sup> still  
tho nowe the kingdome feares noe forraine ill.

90

In the third place, he many places guides  
Haveinge the Cuntrey at Commande besides.  
And last of all the Captaine of the bande  
of Pentioners,<sup>26</sup> before the kinge doth stande  
But somethinge blocked upp his hansome walke  
and men at randon durste against him talke.

95

Till in the tower he as prisoner lyes<sup>27</sup>  
and many yeares greate affliction tryes:  
Yet out att last he comes,<sup>28</sup> confyn'de to places  
where he must nowe expecte more princelie graces.

100

unconstant tymes, what contraries bee these?  
but sure it shewes, that men did God displease;  
And God doth showe, for to resolve this doubte  
that Fortunes wheele is quickly turn'de aboute.

Nowe little Cecill,<sup>29</sup> too too greate doth growe  
rydinge to Windsore with a pompous showe:  
He workes himselfe an Earle,<sup>30</sup> with some smale charge  
and doth his house and famylie enlarge.

105

He rules the state, makinge the king beleewe  
he can his wants and greevances relieue:

110

Thus he invents a newe device of honor,<sup>31</sup>

Yet not soe greate, as when the Prince his Banner

advanced is within a martiall feilde

a Baronett, to Bannerett doth yeilde.<sup>32</sup>

But after all this flourish-: to accompt

115

he suddenlie is called, wich doth surmounte

his former Items: soe, he somms the rest

and findes a call for mercie is the best

Thus death cleers his greate scoore, but men growe wilde,

and with uncertaine rumors are beguilde.<sup>33</sup>

120

As if he amy'de at pollicies of state,

and still to be reputed fortunate,

without a thought of faire Religions corse

Soe they, cry'de out, Badd lief, hath death farre worse

Oh God: if this the end of greatnes bee,

125

God send me honest lief, with povertie:

But all wee talke of still, resolves this doubt

that Fortunes wheele is quicklie turn'de aboute.

Nowe steppes a faction upp, through princelie grace

which they with manglinge doe almost deface,

130

Convertinge it to their owne state and pride

with many foule enormities beside.

Thus Suffolke<sup>34</sup> bringeth in our handsome Carr<sup>35</sup>

and he uprightlie doth walke, but went to farr

For after Suffolk, honors did obtaine

135

with the Courte-title of Lorde Chamberlaine:<sup>36</sup>

And that Northampton was Lord Privie seale<sup>37</sup>

thus with the state they presentlie doe deale.

Lorde Walden (Suffolks sonne) must Captaine bee

Of Pentioners,<sup>38</sup> and their attendance see.

140

His other sonnes unto the Prince resorte  
 and many are his favorites in Courte.  
 Northampton liveth Lorde of all the Portes<sup>39</sup>  
 and chief Commander of the Princes fortes.<sup>40</sup>  
 The yonger Mounson is vice-admirall;<sup>41</sup> 145  
 the elder they did, master Falkoner call.<sup>42</sup>  
 A Dallison the ordinance doth keepe:<sup>43</sup>  
 and Ellois cannot long in quiet sleepe  
 untill he paie 2000 pound at least  
 to have the Towers high Comand<sup>44</sup> increaste: 150  
 wich made suspicion many doubts to caste  
 as if their greatnes they woulde holde so fast,  
 That nether Queene, nor any of her freindes  
 should once prevent them in their private endes.<sup>45</sup>  
 But Suffolke moveinge in a proper sphere 155  
 is not contente soe fairlie to appeare:  
 But will have Somersett Lor Chamberlaine<sup>46</sup>  
 and he himselfe in office of more gaine,  
 Great Englandes Treasuror<sup>47</sup> and thus they live  
 to have both Court and Citie honor give. 160  
 By this tyme, Cooke (from the Attorney) growes  
 to be chiefe Justice:<sup>48</sup> thus he proudlie showes  
 himselfe at last a Councillor of state  
 till Fortune made them all unfortunate:  
 I think of purpose to resolve this doubt 165  
 that Fortunes wheele is quicklie turn'd aboute.  
  
 For Sommersett must love Essex faire wife<sup>49</sup>  
 by wich his deerest servant lost his life.<sup>50</sup>  
 losse upon losse, all things grow cleane contrary  
 and thus our sinfull times themselves doe vary. 170

Northampton still suspected, stranglie dies<sup>51</sup>

and in his passion, to our Ladie cryes,<sup>52</sup>

Because he had contriv'd the wanton meane  
wich made brave Somersett act such a sceane

But he is youthfull, pardon him in this  
for woemens love, goe many thinges amisse.

175

Amisse said I? yea luste doth soe exceede,  
that it doth death to Overbury breede.

For wich (by way of true digression)  
nothinge succedes but strange confusion.

180

The Lorde and Ladie are by equall Peers  
founde guiltie and condemn'de:<sup>53</sup> (lawe nothinge cleers)

And soe comitted to the towers charge  
as interdicted not to goe at large.

Thire ministers and panders hanged dye;<sup>54</sup>  
and knighted Ellwis, the like doome doth trye.<sup>55</sup>

185

The Munsons likewise are to Tower sent,<sup>56</sup>  
but at their fall men made a merrymente.

When all is done, Suffolke & Suffolks wife  
disgraced live for this their daughters life:

190

And from disgrace, doe to more mischief fall  
for suddenlie, the kinges accompts him call  
unto a reckoninge, which he cannot finde  
and so arrerages caste him behinde.<sup>57</sup>

untill a prisoner he is likewise caste  
and in the tower with the other faste.<sup>58</sup>

195

The use of all is to resolve this doubt  
that Fortunes wheele is quicklie turnde aboute.

For after thies affrightinge tymes of bloode  
even such as in the Courte more firmelie stoode

200

subjected were to ruinous extremes,  
 and accidents: which like a Rivers streames  
 runne ore his banke.- The Queene did sober sitt  
 markeinge the course of Fortunes wanton Fitt,  
 untill she dyed,<sup>59</sup> lamented of us all. 205  
 (thus Princes answere muste, when god doth call.)  
 For soe she sawe the Prince her eldest sonne  
 pluckt like untimelie fruite,<sup>60</sup> wich newe begunn  
 to apple on the tree. Oh fearefull storie  
 that we so suddenlie should loose our glory. 210  
 But blessed might, where Hymen did soe shine  
 and brought such honor to the Palatine.<sup>61</sup>  
 yet see, what times have done? the crowned Queene  
 besides her lives escape hath changes seene.  
 Then by mischance doth Arabella flye, 215  
 and sent a prisoner in the Tower doth dye:<sup>62</sup>  
 Att wich her cousen Shrewsbury<sup>63</sup> doth storme  
 and for undecencies (wich wrought her harme)  
 must to the Tower goe, and their is still:<sup>64</sup>  
 for such greate women talke at randome will. 220  
 Then falls Lord Cooke out with his wife;<sup>65</sup> or shee  
 cannot soe well with his lawe talke agree:  
 But howsoe're, from the Tribunall seate  
 He quicklie is throwne downe:<sup>66</sup> not halfe soe greate  
 as once he was. O wondrous change of times 225  
 unfitt (indeede) for thies poore idle rymes.  
 Then comes a Secretarie to the stake  
 I neede not name him: yet Sir Thomas Lake<sup>67</sup>  
 muste with the rest, the curse of Fortune trye  
 For, for his daughter he contriv'de a lye.<sup>68</sup> 230  
 But when the reckoninge is up better caste



all men exclayme; sayinge, what soe is paste  
Upon thies Lordes, be dangerous woemens sinne  
whoe still unto the men, theire woe begin.  
But I doe saie, T'is to resolve this doubt  
that Fortunes wheele, is quicklie turnde aboute.

235

Our noble James sitts wondringe at thies things  
Yet with the constancie of other kinges  
derides them all: and soe at further leasure  
inventas devices to mainteyne his pleasure.

240

But firste he stepps to act a monarches parte  
and to the Comforte of each English harte  
In the Starrchamber sitts in supream sight<sup>69</sup>  
and like a sun, dispelling vapours quite  
prevents the babblinge lawier, where he stands  
keepeinge the Judge from fowleinge of his hands.

245

he still preserves the Statutes of the crowne  
preserves the weaker from the greater frowne:  
yea, to the Contrys honor, and faire joy,  
doth punish all who durst her peace annoy.

250

But yet he must his favorites embrace  
supposeinge still to alter soe the case:  
noe question he doth meane, that all were well,  
did not the issue, the Contrarie tell.

As I suppose still, to resolve this doubt  
that Fortunes wheele, is quicklie turnde aboute.

255

Young Villiers<sup>70</sup> nowe stepps forth, awhile obscur'de,  
but at the last, is of the kinge assur'de:  
whoe thus farre did him love, that for his porte  
the people as petitioners resorte,  
thronginge aboute his dore in everie place

260

yea, noble men are glad to have the grace  
 of faire admittance; but a thousand moe  
 returne unspoken with, & homewarde goe.  
 within three yeares, wee Marquess him salute<sup>71</sup> 265  
 and noe man dare the matter so dispute.  
 But hee, two greatest offices doth keepe,<sup>72</sup>  
 and many times in the kings chamber sleepe.<sup>73</sup>  
 Hee still, the glorious starr of England shines  
 resemblinge splendant gould, wich fire refines 270  
 And Commett like appeares with wondrous streames,  
 yea as a Commett spreadeth forth his beames.  
 For with himselfe, he bringes his mother in  
 his brothers, sisters, cousins;<sup>74</sup> who begins  
 to shewe themselves advanc'de soe well, soe soone 275  
 as this their sun affordes light to the moone  
 yea, for his sake, and for the Princes pleasure  
 the alteracion doth exceed all measure:  
 Yet all the doe, is to resolve this doubt  
 that Fortunes wheele, is quicklie turn'de aboute. 280  
  
 Oulde Egerton, surrender must the Seale,<sup>75</sup>  
 and the<sup>76</sup> noe other reason will reveale  
 but the kinges pleasure; yet they promise faire  
 to leave an Earledome, to his onelie heire.<sup>77</sup>  
 Oulde Admirall must goe noe more to Sea;<sup>78</sup> 285  
 nor Cooke (as Justice) heare the lawiers plea.<sup>79</sup>  
 Suffolke must not sitt as Lorde Treasurer<sup>80</sup>  
 but all the right, unto the kinge transferr:  
 Worcester, though that he boast of princilie bloode  
 noe longer maister of the Stable stoode, 290  
 but must resigne, the king doth thinke it meete,

and soe Lorde privie seale, they doe him greete.<sup>81</sup>

Lorde Wallingford must maister be noe more  
of that high Courte of wardes;<sup>82</sup> nor stand before  
the Prince in office of soe greate accounte  
wich soone is knowne his reckoninge to surmount.

295

The Secretaries they are changed too,<sup>83</sup>  
and all thinges turn'de aboute with much adoe  
For Bacon (but Attorney) steppeth in<sup>84</sup>

& doth his greatnes with such grace begin  
that quicklie he is keeper, Chancellor,  
a viscount statelie, & high Councillor.<sup>85</sup>

300

The maister of the horse is Buckingham  
& Englands Lord high Admirall by name,<sup>86</sup>  
yea named is the kinges delight and joy  
how o'er his mother, like a Countess coye<sup>87</sup>  
doth with the rest abandon whom shee knew  
before, shee to such supream greatnes grewe.  
Lord Chamberlaine the noble Pembroke is,<sup>88</sup>

305

& to his greife sees manie things a misse.  
for presentlie doth Montague stepp upp

310

and with the rest, tastes of ambitions cupp:  
for, from Recorder, he chiefe Justice sitts<sup>89</sup>  
& highlie lookes with strange and loftie fitts.

Then from the Citie Cranfielde changeth aire  
and to the Courte doth handsomelie repaire:<sup>90</sup>

315

yea is soe well accepted for his skill  
that the kinge grace him, in his fortunes will;  
yet all this change, is to resolve this doubt  
that Fortunes wheele is quicklie turn'de aboute.

320

O God, what mixtures are amongst us wrought?

& men of honor topsie turvie brought:

Her's griefe that any should deserve soe ill,

Hers gladnes, that the kinge suppress them will,

but of their faults I will not speake at all,

325

I onelie knowe, who prosper did, or fall.

Cranfeild is maister of the wardes,<sup>91</sup> & bringes

a just accomte; with manie other things

Fulk Grevill is Lorde Brooke, & soe it stands

his office is transposde to others hands.<sup>92</sup>

330

Naunton, & Calvert, Secretaries bee<sup>93</sup>

but somethinge is amisse; for wee doe see

Naunton suspended, which makes manie sorie<sup>94</sup>

but kinges (with God) doe in their mercy glory.

The Kings Attorney Yelverton did prove

335

worthie the Cities, and the Contries love,

yet he is tardie founde: for he doth trye

a sentence in Starrchamber, & doth lie

a Tower prisoner close, & close againe.<sup>95</sup>

For all's not well when kings doe once complaine,

340

of faulty subiects, yet be not mistaken

that honest men should alwaies be forsaken.

Not an inferior officer I name

who changed are for somethinge worthie blame.

nor how the kinge is not soe pleas'de, but may

345

condemne the rest, who dare his will gainesay.

my poore pretences still resolve this doubt

that Fortunes wheele is quicklie turn'de aboute.

By this tyme Europe hurried is in armes,<sup>96</sup>

but what have I to doe with warrs alarmes,

350

I homeward came unto our contrey peace

& finde a Spanish faction to increase.

for great king James, would not have us complaine

that he intendes to match the Prince with Spaine<sup>97</sup>

Thus Buckingham, & Arundell<sup>98</sup> combyne

355

and manie others to the secte incline.

The kinge Earl Marshall Arundell doth make<sup>99</sup>

and welcomes all who doe him not mistake.

Thus Gundomar<sup>100</sup> doth boast himselfe what he hath done

and how the Lordes unto his side are wonne.

360

Thus doe the papists moste presumptuous growe

not doubtinge of Religions overthrowe.

But that the kinge doth love his god indeede

and will by noe meanes such suspicion breede

Thus doe the Cuntries all amased stande,

365

& hearts are fearefull made throughout the lande

Thus manie foule enormities creepe in

and men without impunitie doe sinne.

For under couler of the kinges displeasure

noe man dares talke of things above their measure.<sup>101</sup>

370

Yet when the Prince perceiv'de this discontente

he cheeres them upp with name of parliamente,<sup>102</sup>

wich giveth warmth unto their frozen joyntes

as if, our God the remedie appointes.

For soberlie doe men express their minde

375

against the Spanish match, in manie a kinde.<sup>103</sup>

one of incestuous mariages doth write

& would gainesay the Pope to his despite.

Another preacheth against the unequall yoake

with Infidell. another strikes a stroocke

380

at Spanish crueltie, from that true tale

wherein a Friar could noe whit prevaile

with a poore Indian; who deneyd to goe  
to heaven, if Spaniards thither went alsoe.

Another would not bee to England debter  
but to the marquesse writes a prettie letter.<sup>104</sup>

385

Another (to mocke Gondymar) doth crye  
to reade, & hearken to Vox Populi.<sup>105</sup>

Another makes, some thinke with English boaste  
a book the call Sir Walter Rawleighs ghoste.<sup>106</sup>

390

Another: yea, a many others saye  
o fearefull tymes, that ere wee sawe this daie  
But all is done for to resolve this doubt  
that Fortunes wheele is quickly turn'de aboute.

Yet God be thanked, nobly at the laste  
the kinge remembers what is done & paste

395

And he doth call a Parliament<sup>107</sup> indeede,  
at wich, a many storme, & many bleede.

For Monopoles are rent in sunder quite,<sup>108</sup>  
and Francis Mitchell is noe more a knight<sup>109</sup>

400

Mompesson flyes,<sup>110</sup> and manie Pattents fall  
and true complaints are heard amongst them all.

A manie foule enormities are righted  
and blinded Justice is made nowe quickesighted.

For Englands loftie Chancellor is founde  
a foule delinquent,<sup>111</sup> and on speciall grounde

405

Is to the Tower as a prisoner sente:  
nor cares the state, who showe their discontente.

And yet he scapes not soe. for some sharpe witts  
(in their full charged & disordered fitts)

410

observe it thus. that once a Clergie man  
(when Queene Elizabeth her raigne began)

kept the greate seale (one Doctor Heath by name)  
and gives it unto Bacon of good fame.<sup>112</sup>

But wise kinge James, from Bacon takes the same, 415  
of purpose to prevent all future shame,  
and to a Clergie man gives it againe<sup>113</sup>

regardinge not who murmur or Complaine:

And they do reason yeelde. & with a trice  
that the greate Seale, is a pure pearle of price 420  
which in a supream throne must dailie shine,  
and therefore is not fitt to be lefte with swine;<sup>114</sup>

Well, let them passe: But god shall have the praise  
whoe such a Daniell for us all did raise;  
to vexe the Judges, who meant to beguile, 425  
and would Susanna's chastitie defile.<sup>115</sup>

But all concludes, solucion of this doubt  
that Fortunes wheele is quicklie turn'de aboute.

Yet for all this men will noe warninge take,  
nor naturall infirmities forsake. 430

The kinges chiefe Justice must a Courtier bee  
and Montague doth to the same agree:<sup>116</sup>

But will not change, except supreamely seated,  
and soe he is Lorde Treasurer created:  
with character of Vicounte in greate state 435  
supposinge that his honors breed noe hate.

But some doe laugh outright, and some doe smile  
to marke how Fortune doth this man beguile.

For whie? before he warme is in his seate,  
faults are founde out intollerably greate, 440  
and he deposed is:<sup>117</sup> yet doth the kinge  
another way unto him Comforte bringe:

and of the Councell makes him Præsident<sup>118</sup>

wich diverse Courtiers thought a merrymment.

For Cranfeilde presentlie stepps in the place<sup>119</sup>

445

not careinge for the others strange disgrace

soe that the kinge be pleas'de. But nether he,

nor yet the kinge, can nowe well pleased bee.

For whie? the busines of the Parliamente

doth his greate majestie much discontente,

450

And therefore like a kinge of worthie glorie

scornes to insert itt, in heareafter storrie

that he affronted was:<sup>120</sup> Thus he resolves

to Crosse them all; and soe the same dissolves.<sup>121</sup>

Then like poore deare, unheard from the rest

455

some fewe are chased, as he thinketh best:

Cooke is to prison sente,<sup>122</sup> in pitteous case

and quite undone, without a speciall grace.

Phillips and Marlory,<sup>123</sup> with diverse other

who could not their true zeale to England smother

460

ar singled out, to beare afflictions crosse

thus all things turne unto the Countries losse.

For still the kinge doth want; must be supplide

and sends unto the rich on everie side,<sup>124</sup>

getting greate sommes: and greater then is thought

465

could ever by such pollicie be wrought.

But whether this doth out of kindnes growe

I may not, will not, dare not, cannot showe.

All yet concludes solucion of this doubt

that Fortunes wheele is quicklie turn'de aboute.

470

Oh wondrous world: a mapp of inconstante fashions;

O tymes of sinne, soe full of frantike passions?



O strange unheard-of changes in a state,  
 Soe full of pride, lust, avarice, and hate.  
 where is Religions puritie? where is 475  
 Gods worde? a touchstone to trye what's is amisse.  
 But triall is soone made: For all can say  
 the people (as the Jewes) nowe runn astraye:  
 yet noe man is reform'de; who lives upright  
 is ether foole, or mad man in despight. 480  
 This makes a sadd colleccion of thinges  
 wich as ill newes terror and sorrowe brings.  
 For in one yeare, to add unto the rest  
 thies accidents noe good harte can digest.  
 The Kinges Embassadors retorne in vaine,<sup>125</sup> 485  
 and may without their remedie complaine.  
 a hopefull yeare is turn'de to dearth and want<sup>126</sup>  
 and country blessings fall out verie scante.  
 The voyage of Argier did badly thrive,<sup>127</sup>  
 and yet the souldiers doe retorne alive. 490  
 Our great Archbishop kills a man by chance<sup>128</sup>  
 and many censures, att the mischiefes glance.  
 A battaile by the staarrs is fought at Corck<sup>129</sup>  
 and setteth superstitious witts on worke.  
 The Crowes of Barkshire doe likewise the same<sup>130</sup> 495  
 and men run forward with prodigious fame.  
 Great fiers,<sup>131</sup> Court, and Citie doe affright  
 and in the Contrey makes a piteous sight.  
 The kinge himselfe doth scape a dangerous fall<sup>132</sup>  
 and strange mishapps: yet blesseth God for all. 500  
 The heavens doe three sunnes<sup>133</sup> at one time showe  
 yet who the secretts of the heavens knowe?  
 The Earl of Barkeshire doth as desperate dye

as he a Crossebowes strength would foundlie trye.<sup>134</sup>

I could saie more: but men besotted are

505

and for the particulars doe search too farre

to lay some imputacion on another,

but their own sinnes the caste behinde and smother

Thus dare the saie, the Clergie are soe badd

from whom all good example should be hadd.

510

That other men be Covetous and proude

as if to live like worldlinges were allowde.

But I doe saie, Tis to resolve this doubt

that Fortunes wheele is quicklie turn'de aboute.

**Source.** Bodleian MS Eng. Poet. c.50, fols. 1r-7r

K1

<sup>1</sup> *mightie learned Prince*: James VI and I.

<sup>2</sup> *Balaam*: Balaam was hired by the King of the Moabites, Balak, to curse the Israelites; however, his oracles in fact blessed Israel and cursed its enemies (Numbers 22-24).

<sup>3</sup> *proud moab*: probably Balak, ruler of the Moabites, who is referred to as “Moab” in Numbers 22.3-4.

<sup>4</sup> *And soe...deede*: presumably again referring to Balak rather than (as the syntax suggests) Balaam.

<sup>5</sup> *He yet desisted not*: presumably referring to the Moabites’ continued efforts to undermine Israel; as narrated in Numbers 25.1-5, the Israelites mixed sexually and spiritually with the Moabites, thus provoking the wrath of God.

<sup>6</sup> *Baal peor*: false god of the Moabites (Numbers 25.3).

<sup>7</sup> *hellish stratagem*: introducing a narrative of the Gunpowder Plot, 1605.

<sup>8</sup> *But faileinge...in this*: presumably referring back to Balak’s, and the Moabites’, unsuccessful reliance on Balaam; the latter is probably described as “base” because he lacked the spiritual insight of his ass (Numbers 23.22-34).

- <sup>9</sup> *For presentlie...peace*: in 1604 James declared an end to the long-running war with Spain.
- <sup>10</sup> *The kinge...glorie*: probably an allusion to Daniel 1, in which King Nebuchadnezzar, having conquered Israel, commands that the most handsome and talented youths of the nobility be brought to his court. Daniel is one of these, and after being educated in court ways he and his Israelite companions prove to be the wisest and best informed among the courtiers.
- <sup>11</sup> *Monntgomory*: Philip Herbert, Earl of Montgomery, one of James's early favourites.
- <sup>12</sup> *turn'de...bonnetts*: cf. the charges of sartorial transformation in "Well met Jockie whether away".
- <sup>13</sup> *in the kinges...place*: Herbert became a Gentleman of the Privy Chamber in 1603.
- <sup>14</sup> *the time...take*: while the poet tries to represent his career as a failure, Herbert in fact remained in favour throughout James's reign (though he was never as prominent as some subsequent favourites).
- <sup>15</sup> *Lorde Cobham*: Henry Brooke, Lord Cobham, implicated in the 1603 "Main" or "Cobham's" Plot to overthrow James and place Arabella Stuart on the throne.
- <sup>16</sup> *Gray*: Thomas Grey, involved in the 1603 "Bye" or "Priest's" Plot against James.
- <sup>17</sup> *Raleighe*: Sir Walter Raleigh, arrested with Brooke in 1603 for suspected conspiracy.
- <sup>18</sup> *others...Essex fall*: while Brooke, Grey and Raleigh all opposed Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, the poem gestures here towards a wider conspiracy (see Section A).
- <sup>19</sup> *For after...release he had*: Raleigh was eventually released in 1616.
- <sup>20</sup> *Gondomars complaint*: Don Diego Sarmiento, Count of Gondomar, the powerful Spanish ambassador in London, reputedly obtained James's promise that if Raleigh attacked Spaniards on his final voyage to America, James would ensure his execution.
- <sup>21</sup> *ougsome*: ugly.
- <sup>22</sup> *lost his head*: Raleigh was executed in 1618 (for poems on his death, see Section I).
- <sup>23</sup> *Northumberland*: Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland.
- <sup>24</sup> *that high sacred table*: i.e. the Privy Council.
- <sup>25</sup> *Waden*: i.e. "warden".
- <sup>26</sup> *Captaine...Pentioners*: Percy was made a privy councillor and Captain of the Band of Gentlemen

Pensioners in 1603.

- <sup>27</sup> *Till...lyes*: though he protested his innocence, Percy was implicated in the Gunpowder Plot, tried in the Star Chamber in 1606, fined £30,000 and imprisoned indefinitely in the Tower.
- <sup>28</sup> *Yet out...he comes*: Henry Percy was released from the Tower in 1621.
- <sup>29</sup> *little Cecill*: Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury (see Section D).
- <sup>30</sup> *workes himselfe an Earle*: Cecil became Earl of Salisbury in 1605.
- <sup>31</sup> *newe device of honor*: the Order of Baronets was instituted in 1611.
- <sup>32</sup> *a Baronett...yeilde*: a banneret was an ancient title conferred for valiant deeds done in the King's presence on the field of battle; on the institution of the Order of Baronets, precedence was given to these over bannerets.
- <sup>33</sup> *but men...beguilde*: reference to the libelling that followed Cecil's death (see Section D).
- <sup>34</sup> *Suffolke*: Thomas Howard, Earl of Suffolk.
- <sup>35</sup> *Carr*: Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset, Jacobean favourite c.1607-c.1616.
- <sup>36</sup> *Lorde Chamberlaine*: Thomas Howard was appointed Lord Chamberlain at the beginning of James's reign, and held the position until his appointment as Lord High Treasurer of England in 1614.
- <sup>37</sup> *Northampton...seale*: Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, was appointed Lord Privy Seal in 1608.
- <sup>38</sup> *Lorde Walden...Pentioners*: Theophilus Howard, 2nd Earl of Suffolk and 2nd Baron Howard de Walden, succeeded his father as Captain of the Band of Gentlemen Pensioners.
- <sup>39</sup> *Northampton...Portes*: Henry Howard was appointed Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports in 1604.
- <sup>40</sup> *and chief...fortes*: probably still referring to Howard's role as Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, since this office included responsibility for garrisons and soldiers within the ports.
- <sup>41</sup> *The yonger...vice-admirall*: Sir William Monson, younger brother of Sir Thomas Monson, was appointed Admiral of the Narrow Seas in 1604. An associate of the Howards, Monson was briefly imprisoned on suspicion of involvement in the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury.
- <sup>42</sup> *the elder...Falkoner call*: Sir Thomas Monson, Master Falconer to James.
- <sup>43</sup> *A Dallison...keepe*: Sir Roger Dalyson, Master of the Ordnance.

- <sup>44</sup> *Ellois...Comand*: Sir Gervase Elwes, an associate of Henry Howard and Sir Thomas Monson, paid £1400 in 1613 to secure the position of Lieutenant of the Tower. He was later executed for his role in the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury.
- <sup>45</sup> *That nether Queene...endes*: Queen Anne consistently opposed the Howard faction, but with limited effect.
- <sup>46</sup> *Somerset Lor Chamberlaine*: Carr was appointed Lord Chamberlain in 1614.
- <sup>47</sup> *Great Englandes Treasurer*: Thomas Howard was appointed Lord High Treasurer of England in 1614.
- <sup>48</sup> *Cooke...Justice*: Sir Edward Coke was reappointed Attorney-General in 1603, promoted to Chief Justice of Common Pleas in 1606, and transferred (unwillingly) from Common Pleas to become Chief Justice of King's Bench in 1613.
- <sup>49</sup> *For Sommersett...wife*: introducing a narrative of the scandal surrounding the Essex nullity (see Section F).
- <sup>50</sup> *dearest...life*: reference to Sir Thomas Overbury, friend and counsellor of Carr, who opposed Carr's proposed marriage to Frances Howard, and was murdered in the Tower at Howard's behest (see Section H).
- <sup>51</sup> *Northampton...dies*: Henry Howard died in June 1614 after a botched operation on a tumour in his thigh, still suspected (as he had been throughout his life) of Catholicism.
- <sup>52</sup> *in his passion...cries*: Henry Howard acknowledged his Catholic faith in his will.
- <sup>53</sup> *The Lorde...condemn'de*: Carr and Frances Howard were tried and convicted in May 1616 by the Peers of England convened as a special court of the Lord High Steward. Both were sentenced to die, but both were spared.
- <sup>54</sup> *Thire ministers...dye*: reference to three people executed for their roles in the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury: James Franklin, a cunning-man and apothecary who helped procure the fatal poisons; Anne Turner, a friend and confidante of Frances Howard; and Richard Weston, Overbury's keeper in the Tower. Like much contemporary comment, the poem suggests that the agents are paying for the sins of their patrons.
- <sup>55</sup> *Ellwis...trye*: Sir Gervase Elwes, also executed for the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury.
- <sup>56</sup> *The Munsons...sent*: both Thomas and William Monson were imprisoned on suspicion of involvement in the murder of Overbury; however, both were eventually released without a completed

trial.

<sup>57</sup> *for suddenlie...behinde*: in 1618 Thomas Howard was suspended from his office as Lord High Treasurer and accused of embezzling state funds.

<sup>58</sup> *untill a prisoner...faste*: Howard and his wife, Catherine, were briefly imprisoned in the Tower.

<sup>59</sup> *untill she dyed*: Queen Anne died in 1619.

<sup>60</sup> *Prince...fruite*: Prince Henry died in 1612.

<sup>61</sup> *Hymen...Palatine*: allusion to the 1613 marriage of Princess Elizabeth to Frederick, Elector Palatine of the Rhine.

<sup>62</sup> *Arabella...doth dye*: Arabella Stuart, cousin of James, was imprisoned in the Tower in 1611 after her marriage to William Seymour, to which the King objected. She died in 1615.

<sup>63</sup> *her cousen Shrewsbury*: Mary Cavendish, Countess of Shrewsbury, aunt of Arabella Stuart.

<sup>64</sup> *must to the Tower... goe*: Mary Cavendish was committed to the Tower on suspicion of having aided Arabella Stuart in her flight after her marriage, charges which Cavendish refused to answer. Contrary to the poem's claims, however, she was free by the time of her husband's death in 1616.

<sup>65</sup> *Then falls...wife*: Coke and his wife, Lady Hatton, had a notoriously stormy relationship. Their most public confrontation came in 1616-17, when Coke tried to marry their fourteen-year-old daughter to John Villiers, the elder brother of George Villiers, future Duke of Buckingham, without the consent of either the daughter or her mother.

<sup>66</sup> *He quicklie...downe*: Coke fell from favour in the summer of 1616, after a series of political missteps and legal quarrels with both the King and the Lord Chancellor, Thomas Egerton, and was dismissed from the office of Lord Chief Justice later in the year.

<sup>67</sup> *Secretarie...Lake*: Sir Thomas Lake, appointed Secretary of State in 1616.

<sup>68</sup> *for his daughter...lye*: when Lake's daughter was involved in a bitter property dispute with the family of her deceased (and, at the time of his death, estranged) husband, Lake was implicated with her in a defamation case, which brought about his imprisonment and political downfall (see Section J).

<sup>69</sup> *In the Starrchamber...sight*: probably an ironic reference to James's 1616 Star Chamber speech, in which he rebutted Coke's ideas on the relation between royal power and the law.

<sup>70</sup> *Young Villiers*: George Villiers, royal favourite from c.1616, and Duke of Buckingham from 1623.

<sup>71</sup> *Marquess him salute*: Villiers was created Earl of Buckingham in 1617 and Marquis of Buckingham

in 1619.

<sup>72</sup> *two greatest...keepe*: presumably the offices of Lord High Admiral (held from 1619) and Master of the Horse (held from 1616).

<sup>73</sup> *many times...sleepe*: reference to Buckingham's position (from 1615) as a Gentleman of the Bedchamber, and possibly also alluding to rumours of a sexual relationship between the King and his favourite.

<sup>74</sup> *he bringes...cousins*: cf. libels on Buckingham's family (see Section L).

<sup>75</sup> *Oulde Egerton...Seale*: Sir Thomas Egerton, Lord Ellesmere, the long-serving Lord Keeper, retired from that office in March 1617, shortly before his death.

<sup>76</sup> *the*: read "they".

<sup>77</sup> *leave an Earledome...heire*: Egerton was promised an earldom while on his deathbed; his only son, John, was created Earl of Bridgewater shortly afterwards.

<sup>78</sup> *Oulde Admirall...Sea*: Charles Howard, Earl of Nottingham, retired as Lord High Admiral in 1619, aged 83, to make way for Buckingham.

<sup>79</sup> *nor Cooke...plea*: as noted above, Coke lost his position as Chief Justice in 1616 and did not regain it after his September 1617 restoration to the Council.

<sup>80</sup> *Suffolke...Treasurer*: Thomas Howard was suspended from his office in 1618. (This repeats material from earlier in the poem.)

<sup>81</sup> *Worcester...greete*: Edward Somerset, Earl of Worcester, served as Master of the Horse from 1601, and became Lord Privy Seal in 1616.

<sup>82</sup> *Lorde Wallingford...wardes*: William Knollys, Viscount Wallingford (and, from 1626, Earl of Banbury), suffered due to his connections with the Howards, and was forced to resign the mastership of the Court of Wards in 1618.

<sup>83</sup> *The Secretaries...too*: there were two secretaries of state. In 1618, Sir Robert Naunton succeeded Sir Ralph Winwood, who died in office; in 1619, Sir George Calvert replaced Sir Thomas Lake, after the latter's fall from power.

<sup>84</sup> *Bacon...steppeth in*: Francis Bacon, appointed Attorney-General in 1613, rose rapidly under Buckingham's patronage.

<sup>85</sup> *keeper, Councillor*: Bacon was appointed to the Privy Council in 1616, Lord Keeper in 1617, Lord

Chancellor in 1618, and Viscount St. Albans in 1621.

<sup>86</sup> *The maister...name*: Buckingham became Master of the Horse in 1616 and Lord High Admiral in 1619.

<sup>87</sup> *his mother...coye*: Buckingham's mother, Mary Villiers, was created Countess of Buckingham in 1618.

<sup>88</sup> *Lord Chamberlaine...Pembroke is*: William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, was Lord Chamberlain from 1615 to 1628.

<sup>89</sup> *for presentlie...sitts*: Sir Henry Montagu (Earl of Manchester from 1626) resigned his position as Recorder of the City of London in 1616 in order to succeed Sir Edward Coke as Chief Justice of the King's Bench.

<sup>90</sup> *from the Citie...repaire*: Lionel Cranfield, a successful London merchant, was appointed Lord Treasurer and Earl of Middlesex in 1622.

<sup>91</sup> *Cranfeild...wardes*: Cranfield rose under Buckingham's patronage. He was appointed Master of the Court of Wards in 1619 and held that position at the time this poem was written; however, he was impeached, and fell from power, in 1624.

<sup>92</sup> *Fulk Grevill...hands*: Sir Fulke Greville was made Baron Brooke in 1621, shortly after resigning his position as Chancellor of the Exchequer.

<sup>93</sup> *Naunton...Secretaries bee*: in 1618, Sir Robert Naunton succeeded Sir Ralph Winwood, who died in office; in 1619, Sir George Calvert replaced Sir Thomas Lake, after the latter's fall from power. (This repeats material from earlier in the poem.)

<sup>94</sup> *Naunton suspended...sorie*: Naunton, who presumably appealed to the poet on account of his reputation for anti-Catholicism, was removed from his post early in 1623.

<sup>95</sup> *The Kings Attorney...close againe*: Sir Henry Yelverton, Attorney-General from 1617, was brought down by his ambivalent stance on monopolies. His failure to defend monopolies with the full rigour of the law might in part explain the poem's comment that he is "worthie the Cities, and the Contries love"; however, his lenience also led to his own 1620 Star Chamber trial on the grounds of having passed a charter to the City of London containing unauthorized provisions. In a subsequent House of Lords examination Yelverton, summoned from the Tower, confirmed his status as an anti-Buckingham hero by launching a scathing attack on the favourite, comparing his relationship with James to that between Hugh Spencer and Edward II. He was fined heavily for this outburst.

<sup>96</sup> *Europe hurried is in armes*: the Thirty Years' War began in 1618.



<sup>97</sup> *he intendes...Spaine*: reference to the planned Spanish match (see Section N).

<sup>98</sup> *Arundell*: Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel.

<sup>99</sup> *The kinge...make*: Arundel was appointed Earl-Marshal of England in 1621.

<sup>100</sup> *Gundomar*: Count of Gondomar, the Spanish ambassador, widely feared for his influence at court at the time of the Spanish match negotiations.

<sup>101</sup> *under couler...measure*: allusion to two royal proclamations “against excesse of Lavish and Licentious Speech of matters of State”, issued in 1620 and 1621 (*Stuart Royal Proclamations* 1.495-6, 1.519-21).

<sup>102</sup> *he cheeres...parliamente*: the much-anticipated parliament of 1621, discussed in the poem’s following stanza, was the first since the Addled Parliament of 1614.

<sup>103</sup> *For soberlie...kinde*: although not all of the three individuals referred to in the following lines are traceable, they are clearly among the numerous preachers and polemicists who risked imprisonment by speaking out against the Spanish Match c.1620-22.

<sup>104</sup> *Another...letter*: reference to Thomas Alured’s letter of advice to Buckingham, that circulated widely as a manuscript separate in the early 1620s, and was printed in 1642 as *The coppie of a letter written to the Duke of Buckingham concerning the match with Spaine*.

<sup>105</sup> *Another...Vox Populi*: reference to Thomas Scott’s pamphlet *Vox populi, or Newes from Spayne* (1620).

<sup>106</sup> *Another...ghoste*: reference to “Vox Spiritus or Sir Walter Rawleighs Ghost”, an anti-Spanish tract written by Thomas Gainsford which was circulating in manuscript from 1621.

<sup>107</sup> *Parliament*: the 1621 Parliament.

<sup>108</sup> *For Monopoles...quite*: attacks on monopolies and patents dominated the 1621 parliament (see Section M).

<sup>109</sup> *Francis Mitchell...knight*: Sir Francis Michell, appointed in 1618 to a commission intended to uphold a patent on gold and silver thread, became a target of the 1621 parliament on account of his perceived harshness and corruption. In 1621 he was tried in the House of Lords and was subsequently degraded from knighthood.

<sup>110</sup> *Mompesson flies*: Sir Giles Mompesson, a commissioner for gold and silver thread and also for licensing inns, fled the country in order to avoid facing charges in the 1621 Parliament.

- <sup>111</sup> *Chancellor...delinquent*: Bacon was impeached by the Parliament for accepting bribes from suitors.
- <sup>112</sup> *once a Clergie man...fame*: although Queen Elizabeth kept the great seal herself on her accession, the duties of the office were performed by Sir Nicholas Bacon, who assumed the post of Lord Keeper in place of the existing Lord Chancellor and Archbishop of York, Nicholas Heath.
- <sup>113</sup> *But wise...again*: after confessing to corruption, the great seal was taken from Francis Bacon, and he was succeeded as Lord Keeper by Bishop John Williams.
- <sup>114</sup> *lefte with swine*: i.e. punning, like many contemporary poems, on Bacon's name.
- <sup>115</sup> *such a Daniell...defile*: allusion to a story from Daniel 13 (placed in the Apocrypha in the Authorized Version). When Susanna rejects the advances of two elders, they accuse her of illicit relations with a young man. The young Daniel saves her by exposing discrepancies in the men's testimony.
- <sup>116</sup> *The kinges...agree*: Sir Henry Montagu, previously Chief Justice of the King's Bench, became Lord High Treasurer (a court position), and Viscount Mandeville, in 1620.
- <sup>117</sup> *before he warme...deposed is*: at Buckingham's insistence, Montagu resigned the lord-treasurership in 1621, to make way for Lionel Cranfield.
- <sup>118</sup> *of the Councell...Præsident*: Montagu was made President of the Council soon after resigning the lord-treasurership.
- <sup>119</sup> *Cranfeilde...the place*: Lionel Cranfield replaced Montagu as Lord Treasurer.
- <sup>120</sup> *scornes...affronted was*: on 30 December 1621 James tore from the journals of the House of Commons the controversial Protestation, concerning the liberties and rights of parliament.
- <sup>121</sup> *the same dissolves*: in the first week of 1622 James dissolved parliament.
- <sup>122</sup> *Cooke...sente*: Coke, who emerged as a key intellectual spokesman for the Commons in the 1621 session, was punished more severely than any other parliamentarian, spending nearly seven months of 1622 in the Tower.
- <sup>123</sup> *Phillips and Marlory*: William Mallory and Sir Robert Phelips were among those members of the 1621 Parliament who were sent to the Tower after the dissolution. Phelips had been vocal in attacks on Spain.
- <sup>124</sup> *For still...everie side*: as no subsidy had been voted in the 1621 Parliament, James immediately called for a benevolence (a kind of forced loan).

- <sup>125</sup> *The Kinges...in vaine*: though James employed ambassadors to sue for peace on the continent on numerous occasions, this probably refers to his failed attempts in early 1622 to secure toleration for the French Protestant Huguenot communities.
- <sup>126</sup> *a hopefull yeare...wante*: the harvest of 1622 was poor.
- <sup>127</sup> *The voyage...thrive*: in 1620 a fleet sailed to Algiers, seeking restitution of English ships and sailors taken by pirates. The voyage was largely unsuccessful.
- <sup>128</sup> *Our great...chance*: George Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury, killed a gamekeeper in a hunting accident in 1621.
- <sup>129</sup> *A battaile...Corck*: reference to a much-commented upon portentous event from the autumn of 1621, in which flocks of starlings fought around the Irish city of Cork.
- <sup>130</sup> *The Crowes...same*: presumably another event in which a bird-battle was interpreted as a portent.
- <sup>131</sup> *Great fiers*: bird portents were connected by some to the outbreak of fires. A significant fire occurred in Chancery Lane in December 1621.
- <sup>132</sup> *The kinge...fall*: James fell from his horse in January 1622.
- <sup>133</sup> *The heavens...sunnes*: Simonds D'Ewes notes in his diary entry for 13 February 1622 that three suns were seen in the sky in Shropshire, "the like of which was in Richard the seconds time. God forbid the like consequents as succeeded them" (*Diary* 65).
- <sup>134</sup> *The Earl...foundlie trye*: Francis Norris, Earl of Berkshire, committed suicide early in 1622 by shooting himself with a crossbow (i.e. "fondly", or foolishly, testing the strength of the weapon).
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