

Oi10 The Kinge and his wyfe the Parliament

Notes. Charles I dissolved the 1626 Parliament on 15 June after a tumultuous session in which the House of Commons had attempted to impeach the favourite Buckingham. This highly sexualized libel, prompted by the dissolution, is good evidence of the intensifying hostility to Buckingham outside as well as inside Parliament. Holstun (158-59) offers a provocative reading of some of the poem's sexual imagery, while Bellany ("Raylinge Rymes" 301) offers a reading focusing on the evolving "popish" image of the duke.

The Kinge and his wyfe the Parliament

are parted both in discontent,

the cause I can not knowe:

Fooles say, the fates brought it about

knaves say, the husband is too stout

some say, the wyfes a shrewe.

Unto the later I give noe name,

But it is just they beare the blame,

they shall be styled mad:

for who but such would thinke a spouse,

that hath as many wits as browes,

would ere prove halfe soe bad.

fault with the fates let noe man fynd,

Let none dare say the kinges unkynd,

he scornes to be soe poore:

Unles the Parliament his wyfe,

hath given him any cause of stryfe

by playinge of the whore:

Which sure she hath if it be true,

that she of late hath had to doe,

with Englands wanton Duke:¹

But as I better call to mind

5

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15

20

she did quite in another kinde

solace his curled peruke.²

Soe as if either deserves blame

25

t'is he who sought to sinke his fame,

by rape committed on her:

for he did stryve with all his might,

To robbe her of her antient right,

and that is this wyves honor:

30

But it is well, he of his dede did fayle,

and that she ne're turnd up her tayle,³

to him unles to kisse:

As shee will do to all his faction,

Who were the cause of this distraction,

35

That hindred once our blisse.

An art sprunge from a blacker seed,

then that which he powred in that weed

Whom we call Guido Faux:⁴

Who if he fiered had his vessell,

40

of Sulphure standeinge on beare tressell,

in his sepulchrall walkes:

Could not have soe disperst our state,

Nor opened Spayne soe wyde a gate,

as hath his gracelesse grace:

45

for till time comes which is at hand,

that all speake Spanish in our land,

We are bound to curse his face.

And yet I guesse we neede not doe it,

for France hath sent one to undoe it

50

her Countryman the Pox:⁵

A hungry Mounsieur that will eate,

his joyntes past cure of any sweate,

that Poes⁶ great art unlockes.
But yet as longe as they can laste 55
Say what you will, his foote is fast,
the kinge will nere rebuke him:⁷
but love him dearely, for in case,
hee would withdraw from him his grace,
he knowes he must unduke him. 60
Which he may not unlesse he make
him lower by the head,⁸ and shake
the reste of that lewd faction:
A thinge to which they'le ne're consent,
however parliaments are bent 65
to purge that putrifaction.
What cares the kinge to urge the house⁹
for's people, what cares he a lowse
For kingdomes transitory:
Don Fredericke¹⁰ he may have these 70
But hee'le to heaven & take [word missing] ease
to joyne in lastinge glory.
Meane tyme hee'le give them to his minion,¹¹
a pretty toy, his whole dominion
will serve his wife for pynns. 75
Then Turner, Eliot, and Digges,¹²
Shall scourged be like whirlegigges
and suffer for their dinns.
But those that with the Duke combinde
shall from base mettle be refinde 80
to shine like rotten wood¹³
At midnight in a darkesome night,
noe devill shall appeare soe bright
in shape of angel good.

Then shall the effeminate Holland Count,¹⁴
 vile worme, all Englands Lords surmount, 85
 then the Nothumberlands girle
 Shall cease repininge that she stoopt
 to wed a man whose fortunes droopt
 the brave Carlelian Earle.¹⁵
 For he an Embassage shall goe 90
 if he but prevent our foe,
 of findeinge money here:
 Or els when all the land is sack'd,
 perhaps our bodyes might be rack'd 95
 to tell them where it were.
 To these if Carlton¹⁶ goe not next,
 how with his wife¹⁷ will he be vext,
 her tongue will never lye,
 But that were strange for in good sooth 100
 I never knew that it tould truth
 since first I did her spye.
 But see her I must needs confesse
 I never did, nor can, unlesse
 her visage she uncase 105
 which buried is in payntinge¹⁸ white
 and red for shee's a modest wight
 as loath to shewe her face.
 Then Ragles Lord,¹⁹ and Wimbleton,
 and Dorsette,²⁰ with his nimble tongue, 110
 May looke without a bribe,
 To have in Court the cheifest graces,
 and in the state the highest places
 next the Villerian tribe.
 But now my story is too longe, 115

& therefore here Ile end my songe
with prayinge for our kinge
God graunt him life & with his wyfe
graunt he may never have more strife,
she is a pretty thinge.

120

I meane the Parliament for she
When all trickes else quite helpeles be
may helpe her man to monye²¹
Soe he will heare her most just groanes
and chase from him those busy droanes
that eate up all the hony.

125

Source. Bodleian MS Eng. Poet. c.50, fols. 14r-15r

Oi10

¹ *Englands wanton Duke*: George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham.

² *peruke*: wig.

³ *tayle*: backside.

⁴ *Guido Faux*: Guy Fawkes, leading conspirator in the Catholic Gunpowder Plot to blow up James I as he addressed parliament in November 1605.

⁵ *France hath sent...Countryman the Pox*: syphilis was commonly referred to as “the French pox” or “the French”.

⁶ *Poes*: Dr. Leonard Poe’s. Libellers writing at the death of Robert Cecil alleged that Poe had treated him for syphilis (see Section D).

⁷ *the kinge will nere rebuke him*: Charles had made clear and public gestures of support for Buckingham during the 1626 Parliament.

⁸ *lower by the head*: i.e. behead him.

⁹ *the house*: i.e. the House of Commons.

- ¹⁰ *Don Fredericke*: Charles's brother-in-law, Frederick V, Elector Palatine.
- ¹¹ *minion*: favourite; i.e. Buckingham.
- ¹² *Turner, Eliot, and Digges*: Dr. Samuel Turner, Sir John Eliot and Sir Dudley Digges, vocal advocates for Buckingham's impeachment in the 1626 Parliament.
- ¹³ *to shine like rotten wood*: a line probably stolen from Sir Walter Raleigh's attack on the court in "The Lie" ("Goe soule the bodies guest").
- ¹⁴ *Holland Count*: Henry Rich, Viscount Kensington and Earl of Holland.
- ¹⁵ *Nothumberlands girle...Carlelian Earle*: Lucy Percy, from one of the most ancient of English noble families, the Percies of Northumberland, had married the Scotsman James Hay, Earl of Carlisle. Hay was a notorious profligate, and it is possible the drooping "fortunes" here are financial ones.
- ¹⁶ *Carlton*: Sir Dudley Carleton, ally of Buckingham, who was sent on an embassy to France in the late summer of 1626.
- ¹⁷ *his wife*: Lady Anne Carleton.
- ¹⁸ *payntinge*: cosmetics.
- ¹⁹ *Ragles Lord*: Sir Edward Conway, Secretary of State, made Lord Conway of Ragley (Warwickshire) in 1625.
- ²⁰ *Dorsette*: Edward Sackville, 4th Earl of Dorset.
- ²¹ *helpe her man to monye*: parliament could supply the King with money through a grant of subsidies.
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