

Oi17 There is a man, a Plauge uppon him

Notes. A variant source of this poem on Buckingham presents it as a song, with the refrain, “take him divell divell divell take him / god forsake him divell take him” (NLS Advocates MS 33.1.7, vol. 24). The fiddlers at Staines and Ware who performed “Come heare, Lady Muses, and help mee to sing” in the spring and early summer of 1627, also performed “There is a man, a Plauge uppon him”.

There is a man, a Plauge uppon him
who hathe taen many thinges uppon him
Papistes, Protestants, curse and banne him
the Devill his Father scarce can stand him
They Lower House they did thunder itt 5
the upper house they did grumble itt,
his necke from his shoulders they could not sunder itt,
which made the people much to wonder itt:¹
Indeade he was but a younger brother
the fourth Sonne to the knight his father 10
A Chambermayde he had to his mother,²
and this from his cuntryefoulkes wee gather
he came to the courte and grewe Cupp bearer,³
unto the Kinge he still grew nearer,
In his eye he semed a Pearle 15
sate downe a viscount, and rose upp an Earle⁴
Indeade he had a verie faire face
wich was the cause he came in grace
Fairely he could tripe a Gallyard⁵
and please⁶ the ladies with his stalliard,⁷ 20
when warres did plauge the palsgraves land⁸
this man in favour great did stand
goode Kinge James he ruled so

iff he said yea, none durst saye no.
thus I learne my soung to singe
off the tale off the begger and the kinge,
and I wishe when death undoes him
he maye rest in the Devills bosome.

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Source. CCRO MS CR 63/2/19, fol. 58r

Other known sources. NLS Advocates MS 33.1.7, vol. 24, fol. 78r

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¹ *They Lower House...much to wonder itt:* allusion to the attempted impeachment of Buckingham by the 1626 Parliament.

² *Indeade he was...to his mother:* slurs on Buckingham's obscure social origins were common. He was the fourth son of Sir George Villiers of Brooksby, Leicestershire. His mother, Mary Beaumont, was Sir George's second wife. They met when Mary was, in Roger Lockyer's words, "serving as companion and waiting-woman to her richer relatives" (Lockyer 5).

³ *Cupp bearer:* Buckingham's first court office was as a Cupbearer to King James I.

⁴ *sate downe a viscount, and rose upp an Earle:* Buckingham was made Viscount Villiers in August 1616 and Earl of Buckingham in January 1617.

⁵ *Gallyard:* galliard; a type of dance.

⁶ *plaise:* i.e. please.

⁷ *stalliard:* obscure; the NLS Advocates MS version has "talliard", which is equally obscure. Presumably the word had some bawdy meaning.

⁸ *when warres did plauge the palsgraves land:* allusion to the invasion and occupation of the Lower and Upper Palatinate in 1620-21 by Spanish and Bavarian forces. The Palsgrave was Frederick V, Elector Palatine, and son-in-law of James I.
