

Oii10 Oure crossrow's turnd, a signe off monstrous luck

Notes. This tricky verse from William Davenport's commonplace book is a lament on the defeat at Ré and a bitter indictment of Buckingham's personal responsibility for the disaster. While the general meaning of the poem seems clear enough, some of the allusions remain very obscure.

Oure crossrow's¹ turnd, a signe off monstrous luck
when D.² ledd the Englishe cross,³ over St. Gorges brooke,⁴
who better knewe to courte, and kiss his hande
then how to guide an hoste bye sea or lande
theire hath bene D D⁵ could conquer Townes, 5
and make all France to fflye
this D. can better conjure Crownes,
and runne away ffrom Ree
And leave oure noble English buddes,
a praye to'th pockye French, 10
when D. lyke Dorus⁶ darnige stode;
O: that the Madrille wenche⁷
had changde her smocke, for Hercules shirte,⁸
when this Adulterouse D.
was cousoned, with a common cutte,⁹ 15
and changde P. for a C.B.¹⁰
Our brave men had breathed still,
our Cuntrye loste no grace;
God graunte the next greatte Gennerall
better deserve, his place. 20

Source. CCRO MS CR 63/2/19, fol. 60r

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¹ *crossrow's*: cross-row; the alphabet.

- ² *D.*: Duke of Buckingham.
- ³ *the Englishe cross*: the battle standard of the English was the red cross of St. George.
- ⁴ *St. Gorges brooke*: the exact reference is unclear. St. George's Channel is between Wales and Ireland; however, this may simply refer to the English Channel.
- ⁵ *D D*: probably "Dukes" plural, or perhaps "fifty" (i.e. Roman numeral D) dukes.
- ⁶ *Dorus*: the poet is probably comparing Buckingham to Dorus, the shepherd pseudonym of the prince Musidorus in Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*. The allusion is possibly to the scenes in the *Old Arcadia* in which Musidorus, conquered by love, is, in Worden's words, "plunged into idleness and self-absorption", neglecting to take up the call of arms (*Sound of Virtue* 299).
- ⁷ *Madrille wenche*: Madrid girl. This and the following lines seem to allude to Buckingham's alleged womanizing in Madrid in the summer of 1623.
- ⁸ *Hercules shirte*: the Greek hero Hercules' jealous wife poisoned a garment he wore, burning his skin and precipitating his death.
- ⁹ *cutte*: northern slang for whore.
- ¹⁰ *changde P. for a C.B.*: meaning obscure; perhaps bawdy, developing in a coded manner the suggestions raised in the preceding lines.
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