

Pi30 No sooner had the worlds most happy knife

Notes. This poem only survives in a printed copy, published in the 1644 anti-Royalist pamphlet Hell's Hurlie-Burlie. Since the other Buckingham libel in this pamphlet ("Make haste I pray, launch out your shippes with speed") survives in manuscript copies made before the 1640s, we have assumed that this poem also circulated originally as a manuscript libel in the aftermath of Buckingham's murder, and have thus chosen to include it in this edition.

"The Same Dukes entertainment: Written presently after his death"

No sooner had the worlds most happy knife

Took from the world the most unhappy life,

But straight th'infernall Rout¹ began to roare,

In hell was never such a noise before:

Silence proclaim'd, to th'utmost gate they post,

Which open'd, they admit his Graces Ghost.

Th'inferior Fiends, that horror lov'd so much,

Trembl'd at first sight, his aspect² was such,

But noting the free welcome to him given,

By him, that for his pride was thrown from heaven³

His fellowship with laughter all allow,

If ever there were joy in Hell, 'twas now.

After much complementall curtesie

Betwixt the Admirall of Styx⁴ and hee,

Along to Plutoe's⁵ court they passe in state,

(In what he living lov'd still fortunate)

A guard of Feinds and Furyes led the way,

I' the shape of men at armes in battell-ray,⁶

Much like our Citie Souldiers, lately prest,

T'attend his Highnes to my Lord Maiors feast.⁷

Pride went before him, ever in his sight,

Lust on his left hand, murther on his right,

5

10

15

20

Ambition rode, though pride & he were twins,
 Consorted with the other deadly sins⁸
 When neere to Pluto's palace-gate he came, 25
 Who should he meet withall but Dr. Lambe,⁹
 Who comming towards him, with cap in hand,
 The company began to make a stand,
 And note his gesture; when with bended knee,
 Welcome O high and mighty Prince, quoth he, 30
 Great Marquesse, Earl, and Duke of Buckingham.¹⁰
 His Highnes answering; thanks learned Lam,
 On went the Doctor without Prohibition,
 Of all his Titles¹¹ making repetition,
 Wherein he utter'd such a deal of geare, 35
 As made the Devill himself even stink to heare,
 And frighted Spirits of mean ranck and fashion,
 Who took his spect¹² to be a Conjurat[i]on.
 His huge high stile gone over, the Duke bowes,
 And of his language with his look allowes; 40
 Lam still proceeds, and thus delaies his Grace:
 O thou (of men most worthy of this place)
 Wheres thy deare mother,¹³ thy rare mother, tell,
 (For the word good must not be nam'd in hell)
 Will she be still her grandsir Devills debter? 45
 Hath she not yet perform'd the task he set her?
 Or are there in the world against her will,
 More honest Nobles to be poyson'd still?¹⁴
 At this his Highnesse (smiling) bad him hold;
 More fire the Devills cried, the Duke's acold. 50
 Now's the place enter'd that th'Infernalls call
 The King of lower Tartaries¹⁵ black Hall:
 At th'upper end, great Pluto sate in state;

The Duke (admitted) with majestick gate,¹⁶
 walk'd toward him, posses'd with constant hope 55
 T'obtain the grace he once receiv'd o'th' Pope;¹⁷
 Twice by the way he bow'd, then kneeled down
 Kist his cloven foot, and show'd his own ball'd crown;¹⁸
 His Majesty of hell smil'd at the sight,
 And all the rest o' the rabble laught out-right. 60
 Rais'd from his knee, and question'd, he relates
 His horrible abuse of times and States,
 Cales¹⁹ he makes mention of, and so goes on
 To's plot of Rochells sad destruction,²⁰
 Wherein so horrid was the tale he told, 65
 It made th'amazed hearers seem acold.
 From first to last, I could expresse it heere,
 But 'tis too harsh for any Christian eare
 Valour he had no doubt, that did not shrink
 To act what others are afraid to think. 70
 The story ended, Pluto (blushing) rose,
 Having before nere heard such truths as those:
 Though thy bad actions (thus he spake) are such
 As might amongst us merit more than much,
 Yet since thy fates have suffer'd thee to tell, 75
 (Perhaps against thy will) the truth in hell,
 Away with him, he cry'd: the cursed crew,
 Without more words, their Masters meaning knew,
 And hence they hurri'd straight the wretched thing,
 A shadow now, that lately rul'd a King.²¹ 80

Source. *Hell's Hurlie-Burlie* 7-8

- ¹ *Rout*: crowd.
- ² *aspect*: appearance, look.
- ³ *him, that for his pride...heaven*: Satan was cast from heaven for rebelling against God's rule.
- ⁴ *the Admirall of Styx*: perhaps intended as a reference to Charon, the ferryman who brought the souls of the dead across the River Styx into Hades, the realm of the dead. On the other hand, this may refer not to a specific denizen of Hades, but simply to the figure who held the same office of Admiral that Buckingham had held in England.
- ⁵ *Plutoe's*: Pluto was the ruler of Hades.
- ⁶ *battell-ray*: i.e. battle array; prepared for battle.
- ⁷ *Much like...Lord Maiors feast*: the "guard of Feinds and Furyes" are here compared to the armed bands of the City of London who accompanied "his Highnes" (which might refer either to the King or, sarcastically, Buckingham) to a feast held by the Lord Mayor.
- ⁸ *the other deadly sins*: the seven deadly sins included (in addition to pride and lust mentioned here), envy, avarice, gluttony, anger and sloth.
- ⁹ *Dr. Lambe*: John Lambe, astrologer-physician, convicted witch and suspected associate of the Duke, had been murdered by a London mob in June 1628.
- ¹⁰ *Marquesse, Earl, and Duke of Buckingham*: Buckingham held all three titles; he was created Earl in 1617, Marquis in 1618 and Duke in 1623.
- ¹¹ *all his Titles*: Buckingham held several aristocratic titles in addition to his dukedom, including Earl of Coventry and Baron Whaddon.
- ¹² *spect*: look, appearance.
- ¹³ *mother*: Mary Compton, Countess of Buckingham.
- ¹⁴ *More honest Nobles...poyson'd still?*: allusion to the widely reported allegations that Buckingham had poisoned James I and several prominent courtiers. In *The Forerunner of Revenge*, the 1626 tract that first explicitly made these allegations, George Eglisam implied that Buckingham's mother had assisted in the poisoning of King James.
- ¹⁵ *Tartaries*: Tartarus was deep below Hades in the classical underworld, but was often used as a synonym for the underworld as a whole.

¹⁶ *gate*: i.e. gait; bearing.

¹⁷ *T'obtain the grace...o'th' Pope*: allusion to Buckingham's supposed allegiance to and support from the papacy.

¹⁸ *ball'd crown*: this unique reference to Buckingham's bald head may allude to the Duke's supposed fondness for wigs.

¹⁹ *Cales*: i.e. Cadiz. The allusion is to the failed 1625 naval expedition to Cadiz, organized, though not commanded, by Buckingham.

²⁰ *plot of Rochells sad destruction*: the allegation here is that Buckingham deliberately worked for the fall of Huguenot La Rochelle to the Catholic French. Buckingham's disastrous 1627 expedition to the Ile de Ré had been designed to relieve La Rochelle, as had the abortive 1628 mission led by Buckingham's brother-in-law William Feilding, Earl of Denbigh. Buckingham was preparing another expedition to La Rochelle at the time of his assassination.

²¹ *lately rul'd a King*: the libel ends with a provocative claim about the extent of Buckingham's power in England.
