

Pi8 England was sick, a plewresey possest her

Notes. Missing pages in the manuscript mean we only have an abruptly truncated version of this poem. What remains in the fragment, however, suggests that we can date the poem to the period after Buckingham's assassination in August 1628. The past tense of the opening clause suggests that the sickness caused by Buckingham has now been cured, and in all likelihood the rest of the poem would have continued on to describe how, after parliament and the King had failed to do so, John Felton's actions bled the patient and cured the nation's disease.

“Other verses made of the said Duke about the same time”

England was sick, a plewresey¹ possest her
a raging greife did long molest her
Two senates to fynde out this sore long sought²
& found a member³ neare the head,⁴ was naught
full fraught with blouddy humors,⁵ sweld so high
the head was scarcely seene when it stood by
To cure this bodie straight it was decreed
this ulcerated member needs must bleed⁶
It was so faire, that though the head did see
it caus'd the greife, & fear'd the remedie,

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Source. CUL MS Gg.4.13, p. 106

Pi8

¹ *plewresey*: in contemporary usage, “a pleurisy” could refer either to the chest ailment (caused by an inflammation of the sacs around the lungs), or more generally to the existence of dangerous excess.

² *Two senates...long sought*: reference to the attempts by the 1626 and 1628 Parliaments (the “Two senates”) to remove or curb Buckingham's power through impeachment (1626) and a Remonstrance to the King (1628).

³ *a member*: a part of the body; here signifying Buckingham.

⁴ *the head*: here signifying the King, Charles I.

⁵ *blouddy humors*: in classical medicine, blood was one of the four essential fluids or humours in the human body. An imbalance in the bodily humours, in this case an excess of blood, would cause sickness.

⁶ *To cure this bodie...must bleed*: bloodletting was the common cure for humoral excess.
