LAMPOON

[March, 1676]

All the King’s mistresses were obvious targets for the Court satirists, but Barbara Palmer, Countess of Castlemaine, was their favorite. On August 30, 1670, Barbara was created Duchess of Cleveland—and mistress emeritus. Thereafter her influence over King Charles waned with the rising star of the new royal mistress, Louise Keroualle, created Duchess of Portsmouth on July 23, 1673.

Early in 1676 it was rumored that the Duchess of Cleveland was going to France, “and saith she intends to put herself into a monastery” (Hastings MS, II, 169). Ostensibly she was going for the sake of her sons’ education; actually so that she could live with more splendor on her very large income. The immediate occasion for “Lampoon” was her departure; she sailed from Dover on March 13, 1676, with her three sons, forty servants, and a retinue of horses and carriages (CSPD, 1676, p. 25). The copy text for “Lampoon” is Harleian MS. 6913, p. 177; see also MS. Don. b. 8, p. 212, and Harleian MS. 6914, p. 17.

Cleveland was doubtless to blame
On such a he-whore to dote,
Who, wanting both wit and shame,
Betrayed her with a laced coat.

But lechery so overswayed her,
She had no discretion at all;
The cunt that first had raised her
Was now the cause of her fall.

Churchill’s delicate shape
Her dazzling eyes had struck,
But her wider cunt did gape
For a more substantial fuck.
LAMPOON

Which made her in pattens, they say,
To the Temple so often to trudge,
Where brawny Wycherley lay,
Who performed the part of a drudge. 15

'Twas bad in such as did know it
To go about to betray her.
Why might she not fuck with a poet,
When his Majesty fucks with a player? 20

Jermyn should not be forgot,
Who used to fuck her before;
'Tis hard to say who did not—
There's Brumwych and thousands more.

The number can never be reckoned; 25
She's fucked with great and small,
From good King Charles the Second
To honest Jacob Hall.

But now she must travel abroad
And be forced to frig with the nuns.
For giving our sovereign lord
So many good buttered buns.

2. he-whore. Ensign John Churchill (1650–1722), the future great Duke of Marlborough, became one of the Duchess of Cleveland's lovers in 1670. She is said to have given him £5,000, with which he bought a £500 annuity from Lord Halifax. According to one account, King Charles found Churchill hiding in the duchess's closet and said to him, "Go. You are a rascal, but I forgive you because you do it to get your bread" (Winston Churchill, Marlborough, 1933, 1, 61). On July 16, 1672, the duchess gave birth to a daughter, Barbara, supposedly fathered by Churchill.

4. laced coat. A uniform coat decorated with lace or gold braid.

13. pattens. Clogs, designed to keep shoes off the wet ground.

14. the Temple. William Wycherley, the playwright (1640–1715) became the duchess's lover soon after the production of his first play, Love in a Wood, March, 1671. At the time he may have been living at the Inner Temple, one of the Inns of Court. In an MS note to Langbaine's Account of the English Dramatic Poets, 1691, William Oldys wrote, "The Duchess of Cleveland used to visit Wycherley at his chambers in the Temple, dressed like a country maid in a straw hat, with pattens on, a basket
or box in her hand, etc." In his MS Commonplace Book (Stratford Shakespeare Library), Sir Francis Fane tells an agreeable anecdote. "The King being jealous of the Duchess of Cleveland, and having intelligence by her maid that she and Mr. Wycherley lay at Mrs. Knight's, the famous singer, in Pall Mall that night, early the next morning went thither and found him muffled in his cloak upon the stair head, and then went into the chamber where he found the duchess on a bed, whom he asked what she made there, who replied it was the beginning of Lent and she retired hither to perform her devotions. The King replied, "Very likely, and that was your confessor I met on the stairs."

20. a player. Nell Gwyn.

21. Jermyn. Henry Jermyn (1636-1708), nephew of Henry, Earl of St. Albans, was Master of the Horse to the Duke of York, 1660-75. He became Baron Dover of Dover in 1685 and Earl of Dover in 1689 (a title conferred on him by the deposed king, James II). On July 29, 1667, Pepys wrote of Lady Castlemaine, "She is fallen in love with young Jermin, who hath of late lain with her oftener than the King, and is now going to marry my Lady Falmouth; the King he is mad at her entertaining Jermin, and she is mad at Jermin's going to marry from her: so they are all mad; and thus the kingdom is governed!"

24. Brumwych. Probably Captain Francis Bromwich, a cousin-german of James, Duke of Ormonde. A noted duelist, he was killed on January 9, 1669, by Mr. Symonds, one of Queen Henrietta Maria's servants (Bulstrode, p. 83). Bromwich is not listed elsewhere as one of the duchess's lovers.

28. Jacob Hall. A famous ropedancer who usually performed at Bartholomew Fair. He was one of "his Majesty's servants as vaulters and dancers on the rope and other agility of body" (PRO. Lord Chamberlain, 3/25, p. 172). In 1674, Nell Gwyn commissioned John Coques, silversmith, to construct for her a silver bedstead. As a symbol of her triumph over the Duchess of Cleveland, she had him make, among other decorations, a miniature figure of Jacob Hall, "dancing upon a rope of wire work" (Wilson, Nell Gwyn, Royal Mistress, p. 169).

30. frig. Masturbate.

32. buttered buns. Busy prostitutes, over-ridden jades.