In the late summer of 1679, the Duchess of Portsmouth, a Frenchwoman and a Roman Catholic, was so frightened by the "Popish Plot" hysteria that she talked of fleeing to France. Our poet imagines her offering for sale her place as chief mistress to King Charles II. Following the model of "sessions" satires, the poet brings a number of disreputable candidates into court to make their bids, with the King acting as judge. Colin (a pastoral name for a shepherd) looks on with cynical amusement. Of course no candidate is successful, and the Duchess of Portsmouth remains as favorite mistress.

"Colin" may be the poem referred to in the following note dated September 11, 1679, "There's a satyr against several named ladies of the Town, which J. Ste[wkesley] has promised to send you, else I would have done it" (Seventh Report, p. 475A). The poem is frequently ascribed to Charles, Earl of Dorset.


As Colin drove his sheep along
By Whitehall, there was such a throng
Of early coaches at the gate,
The silly swain was forced to wait.
Chance threw him on Sir Edward Sutton,
The jolly knight that rhymes to mutton.
"Colin," said he, "this is the day
For which poor England long did pray,
The day that sets our monarch free
From buttered buns and slavery.
This hour from French intrigues, 'tis said,
He'll clear his Council and his bed.
Portsmouth, he now vouchsafes to know,
Was the cast miss of Count De Soe,
Each night with her dear as a sessions
Of the House, and fuller of petitions,
Which drained him till he was not able
To keep his Council, nor a table;
So that white-staves and grooms and pages
Lived all alike upon board wages.
She must retire and sell her place;
Buyers, you see, come in apace."

Silence in the court being once proclaimed,
Up stepped fair Richmond, once so famed.
She offered much, but was refused,
And of miscarriages accused.
They said a cunt so used to puke
Could never bear a booby duke;
That Mulgrave, Villiers, and Jack Howe
For one salt duchess were enow;
Nor would his Majesty accept her
At thirty, who at eighteen left her.
She blushed and modestly withdrew.
Next Middleton appeared in view,
Who soon was told of Montague,
Of baits of Hyde, of clothes from France,
Of armpits, toes, and sufficance,
At which the court set up a laughter;
But then she pleaded for her daughter,
A buxom lass fit for the place
Were not her father in disgrace,
Whose monstrous chin 'twas thought begun
Her pretty face to over-run;
Besides some strange, incestuous stories
Of Harvey and her long clitoris.
With those exceptions she's dismissed,
And Morland fair enters the list,
Husband in hand most decently,
And begs at any rate to buy.
She offered jewels of great price
And dear Sir Samuel's next device,
Whether it be a pump or table,
Glass-house or any other bauble.
But she was told she had been tried
And for good reason laid aside.
Next in steps pretty Lady Grey,
Offered her lord should nothing say
Against the next Treasurer accused,
So her pretense was not refused.
Rowley enraged bid her begone
And play her game out with his son;
Or, if she liked an aged carcass,
From Lucy get the noble marquis.
Shrewsbury offered for the place
All she had gotten from his grace;
She knew his ways and could comply
With all decays of lechery;
Had often licked his amorous sceptre
Until the jaded stallion leapt her;
But long ago had the mishap
To give the King Dick Talbot's clap.
Though for her all was said that can be
By her lean drudge the Earl of Danby,
She was dismissed with scorn and told
Where a tall page was to be sold.
Then in came dowdy Mazarin,
That foreign antiquated quean,
Who soon was told the King no more
Would deal with an intriguing whore,
That she already had about her
Too good an *equipage de foutre*;
Nor was our monarch such a cully
To bear a Moor and swinging bully.
Her grace at this rebuke looked blank
And sneaked away to villain Frank.
Fair Lichfield, too, her claim put in;
'Twas urged she was too near akin.
She modestly replied, no more
Of kin than Sussex was before;
Besides she had often heard her mother
Call her the daughter of another.
She did not drivel and had sense,
To which all his had no pretense.
Yet for the present she's put off
And told she was not whore enough.
Loftus smiled at that exception,
Doubting not of good reception,
Put in her claim, vowing she'd steal
All that her husband won of Neale,
To buy the place, all she could get
By his long suit with Mr. Pitt.
But from Goliath's size of Gath
Down to the pitch of little Wroth,
The court was told she had lain with all
The roaring roist'fers of Whitehall.
For which Rowley, lest she grudge,
Gave her the making of a judge.
She bowed and straight bought her six grays
To haunt the Court, the Park, and plays.
In stepped stately Carey Frazier,
Straight the whole room began to praise her,
As fine as hands or point could make her.
She vowed the King or jail must take 'er.
Rowley replied he was retrenching
And would no more of costly wenching,
That she was proud and went too gaudy,
Nor could she swear, drink, and talk bawdy,
Virtues requisite for that place
More than youth, wit, or a good face.
Cleveland offered down a million,
But she was soon told of Chatillon;
At that name she fell a-weeping,
And swore she was undone with keeping,
That Jermyn, Churchill had so drained her
She could not live on the remainder.
The court said there was no record
Of any to that place restored,
Nor ought the King at these years venture,
When his prime could not content her.
Young Lady Jones stepped up and urged
She'd give the deed her father forged;
But she was told her family
Were tainted with Presbytery.
She said her mother, with clean heart
And hand, had lately done her part
In bringing Mazarin to bed,
Nor was't her fault the babe was dead.
Her sister, too, as all men know,
Had fucked as high and married low
As Belasyse or any punk
Of late with royal seed made drunk.
For her Rowley owned his passion,
But said he stood by declaration,
Engaged no matters of great weight
To pass till after some debate
In his great Council. So they adjourned,
And Colin to his flock returned,
Swearing there was at every fair
Blither girls than any there.
47. *Morland.* Anne (Fielding), who died February 20, 1680, was the beautiful third wife of Sir Samuel Morland, a Gentleman of the Privy Chamber and a famous inventor; see Appendix, Morland.

56. *Lady Grey.* Mary (Berkeley), wife of Ford, Lord Grey of Werke; see Appendix.

58. *treasurer.* Variant: “Gainst next the treasurer’s accused.” Thomas Osborne, Earl of Danby and Lord Treasurer, was impeached by the House of Commons for asking King Louis XIV for money for King Charles. He was sent to the Tower on April 16, 1679, and imprisoned there for five years without a trial. Lord Grey, a strong Whig, was a leader of the anti-Danby forces in the House of Lords.

60. *Rowley.* King Charles was so called after a famous stallion.

61. *his son.* James, Duke of Monmouth, said to be Lady Grey’s lover.

63. *Lucy.* Probably Theophila (Berkeley), widow of Sir Kingsmill Lucy and Lady Grey’s older sister. The marquis would be Henry Somerset, third Marquis of Worcester, aged fifty. In “A Ballad to the Tune of Cheviot Chace” (see below), Lady Lucy is accused of having once been too free “with the President of Wales,” Lord Worcester.

64. *Shrewsbury.* Anna-Maria (Brudenell) Talbot, Countess of Shrewsbury; see Appendix. “His grace” was her former lover, George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham.

66. *his ways.* I.e., the King’s tastes and habits. There is no evidence that the King was once Lady Shrewsbury’s lover. The pension he gave her in 1674—£1,600 a year—was for her support after the House of Lords ordered Buckingham and Anna-Maria to separate.

71. *Dick Talbot.* Colonel Richard Talbot (1630–91) was created Earl of Tyrconnel in 1685. Grammont (Memoirs, II, 24) implies that he had been one of Lady Shrewsbury’s lovers.

73. *Danby.* There is no reason to believe that Lord Danby, a tall, lean man, was ever Lady Shrewsbury’s lover. Perhaps the poet meant to suggest that he was her pimp.

76. *Mazarin.* Hortense de Mancini, Duchess Mazarin, came to England in January, 1676. King Charles gave her apartments in Whitehall and £4,000 a year. The Duke of York bought for her Lord Windsor’s house in St. James’s Park.

77. *quean.* Prostitute. The duchess was notably promiscuous, and King Charles was only one of many bedfellows.

81. *equipage de foutre.* “Foutre” [Fr.] to thrust. In brief, too many lovers.

83. *a Moor.* The Duchess Mazarin’s page boy was a Moor (or Turk) named Mustapha. Her “swinging” (powerful) bully may have been Luigi I, the handsome young Prince of Monaco, who had followed her to England. The duchess fell in love with him, and King Charles had to stop her pension to bring her to her senses.

85. *villain Frank.* Francis Villiers, second son of George, fourth Viscount Grandison, was at this time Lieutenant of the Band of Gentleman pensioners. He was called “villain Frank” partly in derision and partly to distinguish him from “bold Frank” Newport.

88. *Lichfield.* Charlotte (Fitzroy), daughter of King Charles and the Duchess of Cleveland, was wife of Henry Lee, Earl of Lichfield.

89. *Sussex.* Anne (Fitzroy), daughter of King Charles and the Duchess of Cleveland, was wife of Thomas Lennard, Earl of Sussex. In the summer of 1678, in France, Lady Sussex was seduced by Ralph Montague. There is no ground for the suggestion of incest with King Charles.

29
96. **Loftus.** Lucy (Brydges), daughter of George, sixth Lord Chandos, and first wife of Adam Loftus, an Irish squire; see Appendix, Loftus. Lucy died in April, 1681.

99. **Neale.** Thomas Neale was Groom Porter and *ex officio* manager of a gambling casino in his lodgings at Whitehall.

101. **Mr. Pitt.** He was probably Mrs. Loftus's stepfather, George Pitt of Strafieldsea, Hants.; see Appendix, Loftus. A Mr. George Pitt was one of the farmers of the Irish revenue in 1675 (Carte, *Ormonde*, IV, 501).

102. **Goliath.** Colonel Richard Talbot was one of the tallest men in England.

103. **Wroth.** Henry Wroth, a very small man, was page of honor to the King and a cornet in Lord Gerard's regiment of horse. On July 21, 1678, he distinguished himself by abducting Bridget Hyde, step-daughter of a city merchant, Sir Robert Viner. The lady was rescued and Wroth lost all his places but escaped arrest (Browning, *Danby*, I, 288-89).

107. *a judge.* I.e., the privilege of selling a judge's appointment.

110. **Carey Frazier.** Daughter of Sir Alexander Frazier, royal physician; see Appendix. In December, 1677, while the Duchess of Portsmouth was enduring a long illness, a gossip reported that "Mrs. Frazier (the doctor's daughter) and Mrs. Elliott and one or two more strive for the preferment" (*Seventh Report*, p. 469).

112. *point.* Lace. For Carey's finery, see Appendix, Frazier.

120. **Cleveland.** Barbara, Duchess of Cleveland, arrived in England on July 26, 1679, and was back in France by late November. Evelyn saw her on November 6, 1679, at the remarriage of her son, the Duke of Grafton, to Isabella, daughter of the Earl of Arlington.

121. **Chatillon.** Alexis Henry, Marquis de Chatillon, a handsome but penniless young gentleman with whom the duchess had had a liaison in Paris.


131. *the deed.* Although Lord Ranelagh's dealings with Ireland as vice-treasurer and one of the farmers of the revenue are shot through with chicanery and deceit, there is no evidence that he ever forged a deed.

134. *her mother.* Katherine's mother, Elizabeth, second daughter of Francis Willoughby, fifth Baron Willoughby of Parham, married Richard Jones on October 28, 1662. I have found nothing about her acting as midwife to the Duchess Mazarin. The duchess had four children by her husband, Armande de la Porte, Duc Mazarin.

138. *her sister.* Lady Ranelagh's sister, Frances, married in 1659 William, third Baron Brereton of Leighlin, in Ireland. Her amatory exploits have not been recorded.

140. **Belasyse.** Susan (Armine) daughter of Sir William Armine of Osgodby, Lincs., married on October 20, 1662, Sir Henry Belasyse, son of John, Lord Belasyse. Sir Henry was slain in a duel with Thomas Porter on July 28, 1667. Susan became the Duke of York's mistress. After the death of his first wife, the Duke wanted to marry Susan, but King Charles forbade the match. In compensation for Susan's loss of
5. **Sutton.** Sir Edward Sutton, an Irishman knighted by Charles II on June 14, 1660, was a gentleman usher of the Privy Chamber, who played well on the Irish harp (Evelyn, November 17, 1668). On July 30, 1695, Luttrell (III, 506) reported the death of Sir Edward Sutton, "aged near 100 years old."

10. **buttered buns.** Over-ridden prostitutes.

13. **Portsmouth.** Louise Keroualle, Duchess of Portsmouth; see Appendix.

14. **cast miss.** Discarded mistress. *De Soe.* The Comte de Sault, son of the Duc de Lesdiguieres, was said to have been Keroualle's lover in France before she came to England. On September 23, 1671, Ralph Montague wrote to Lord Arlington from Paris, "The Conte de Seaux has been sick ever since I came; he pretends it is for love, and some of his friends have been very inquisitive how Mademoiselle de Querualle governs herself in England. I give them an answer that will not conduce much to the Conte's recovery" (Buccleuch MS, I, 505).

19. **white-staves.** The wands of office borne by officers of the royal household. On May 26, 1679, King Charles prorogued Parliament and "strictly retrenched his household expenses" (Bryant, *King Charles II*, 1931, p. 289).

24. **Richmond.** Frances Stuart, widowed Duchess of Richmond; see Appendix.

27–28. The couplet, not in the copy text, is from Harleian MS. 6913, p. 80. "Booby duke" seems to have been a favorite term for any of King Charles's illegitimate sons by Barbara, Duchess of Cleveland.

29. **Mulgrave.** John Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave; see Appendix. *Villiers.* "Villain Frank" Villiers; see Appendix, Villiers (Grandison). *Jack Howe.* John Grubham Howe. For his supposed connection with the Duchess of Richmond in August, 1679, see Appendix, Howe.

32. **left her.** Variant "leapt her."

34. **Middleton.** Mrs. Jane Middleton; see Appendix.

35. **Montague.** Ralph Montague, recently Ambassador to France, was in disgrace in 1679. Formerly one of Mrs. Middleton's lovers, he was an arrant rogue and surprisingly homely.


37. **armpits, toes.** On October 3, 1665, Pepys heard that Mrs. Middleton was "noted for carrying about her body a continued sour base smell, that is very offensive, especially if she be a little hot." *sufficance.* From Harleian MS. 6913, p. 80; The copy text has the meaningless "sustenance." "Sufficance" [Fr.] is conceit. Other variants are "suffocance," "nauseance," and "concupiscence."

39. **her daughter.** In 1678 Jenny Middleton was a candidate for the post of royal mistress (*Rochester-Savile Letters*, p. 56). Ralph Montague had a very heavy chin, but it is unlikely that he was Jenny's father.

44–45. The couplet is from Harleian MS. 6913, p. 80. Lady Anne Harvey, widow of Sir Daniel Harvey (Ambassador to Turkey, 1668–72), was the sister of Ralph Montague. Apparently Lady Harvey was unusual in her sexual equipment. She was a woman of bold and eager spirit, deep in the political intrigues of the day, and famous for her "gallantries." In 1669 she is said to have killed one of her pages, "a young knight of fourteen or fifteen years, and with his own sword," because, she claimed, he tried to attack her. But the rumor was that she stabbed him because "he had boasted of having received some favor from her" (W. Westergaard, *The First Triple Alliance*, 1947, p. 111).
greatness, the King created her in 1674 Baronness Belasyse of Osgodby. A Lady of the Bedchamber to Marie Beatrice, second Duchess of York, Lady Belasyse married, before 1684, one of the King’s Grooms, James Fortrey of Chequers. She died January 6, 1713.

146. *his great Council.* The new Privy Council of thirty members announced by the King to Parliament on April 21, 1679, was “great” only in the sense that it was much enlarged.