SATIRE ON BENT[IN]G

[March, 1689]

From June 10, 1688, when a son ("the Old Pretender") was born to King James and Queen Marie, through the fearful summer and autumn, the Dutch invasion on November 5, the flight of the King and Queen, the triumph of William of Orange, and the deliberations of the Convention Parliament, Englishmen had little interest in scandalous Court libels. When the dust had settled and the Court satirists went to work again, they found that scandal was in short supply. If the Court of gloomy King James offered little nourishment to sinners, that of William and Mary starved them. Surly King William had his private vices, but he kept them private, and Queen Mary was forbiddingly virtuous. The writer of "Satire on Bent[in]g" (c. March, 1689) could do little more than sneer at Bentinck and Overkirke, rake up some past scandals, and descend to attacking such naughty ladies as the old bawd Sue Willis, the actresses Moll Davis and Elizabeth Barry, and the aging Duchess of Cleveland. Like most Englishmen, the poet detested the Dutch, even though William and his army had saved them from the bigoted tyranny of King James II.

The copy text is "Satyr 1688/9," in Bodleian MS. Firth, c. 15, p. 311. A version in "A Choyce Collection," p. 299, lacks the last fifty-seven lines, on Barry.

Long had my pen lain dull and useless by,
My fancy dozed, as in a lethargy,
The charms of satire could not raise it up,
My spleen still palled, nor could one notion hope.

The government (which ever was the theme
Of witty malice) so correct did seem
That I resolved to sit contented down,
Scorn the transactions of the Court and Town,
To some dear solitary place retire,
Where groves and rivers should my muse inspire;
But such a lump of whores and fools fell in
My way that to compel my tickled spleen
I found was harder far than to devise
How to make bishops humble or South’ton wise.

Bent[ing], that topping favorite at Court
(The King, though, has some private reasons for’t),
To whom all for preferment now resort,
As mercenary as Petre or [as] Brent,
As proud as Mulgrave, fitter to be sent
To Italy with Villiers and Kildare
Than nose his master with his buttocks here;
Who, like a coxcomb, made blunt Grafton wait
To show’s Dutch breeding in his English state.
Could the tarpaulin get him once from Court,
He’d spoil his parts for e’er more making sport.

Sue Willis has this darling’s heart secured;
He too has hers; the damsel is ensured,
Two only by themselves to be endured.
This whore at first her life with Moseley led,
The bawd’s least profit and her bully’s bread,
Thence in a playhouse, where a goatish peer,
Feeling her cunt, liked it but never her.
So much though to this cunt he was allied
He sacrificed his all to feast her pride.
And when he had made over his estate,
She put him to board wages and to wait,
Fucking with all but him; which heavy fate
So violently on his spirits fell
He’s gone before to keep her a place in hell.
May Bent[ing] Culpeper’s ill usage find,
And all who to the prostitute are kind.

Davis was looking out too for a hero,
Weary already of her piping lero.
O Peaceable! thy own sad farewell set,
And make words to it of thy want of wit.
A fiddler’s name alone is vile, we know,
Must thou then be a pimp and cuckold too?
This lady must a Dutchman somewhere get,
For they've huge pricks, much money, and no wit.
She would have had Count Solmes, but he being told

How she beshit King Charles, cried, “Though I'm old,
I want no dung to fertilize my land.”

Her nature was too strong for his to stand;
And if she wanted fuck in her old age,
She might set up with Boutell on the stage.

That whore, we hear, poor Armstrong's life betrayed
And passed upon Maccarty for a maid.

Queer Overkirke, our Master of the Horse,
That came into his place, forsooth of course
Because he did i'th' Hague the title bear,

Is there no difference in the office here?
I think as much 'twixt England and his home
As distance 'twixt a helper and a groom.

Norfolk or Somerset, the best i'th'land,
Are only fit for such a great command;

A place i'th' royal bedchamber or so,
A troop of guards, had recompensed the beau.
That dressing, whining, peaking, creeping mien,
Which he affects because 'tis like the King,

He'd better leave it off and take more pains
To imitate his master in his brains.
He's farther from him yet than truth is from Jo. Haynes,
From Rivers honor, or from Oxford wealth,
From Cleveland virtue, or from Goodman health.

How poor and despicable is she grown,
The most famed beauteous harlot of the Town,
Nelly and she long struggled for the crown;
One strove the other always to outlive,
And likewise both each other to out-swive.

Nelly is dead and left St. Albans more
Than Cleveland can her bastards or the poor,
A duchess though she die and Goodman's whore.
Who can to such a spendthrift grant relief
That gives her children's birthright to a thief?
The vaunting vagabond lives high, looks great,
Whilst she not plays, but begs gold at basset.
Pretending 'tis a purse for charity.
Indeed it is, since her it must supply.
In Goodman's grave may fate her carcass lay,
And every man avoid that foul highway.

Another lass, whose virtues far exceed
The arts of Moseley's, Cresswell's, Strafford's breed,
Expert in all the arts of thriving sin
From Posture Mall to Machiaevellian Behn,
Who can the pride of the late queen affect,
And all the lewdness of the Hintons act;
Shameless, mercenary, always craving,
Dextrous in wheedling, scandalous in saving,
Whose cunt, as Paradise by priests, is sold,
You cannot want that Heaven if you have gold.

More languages at Babel were not known
Than into it have different seeds been thrown;
An issue in it too it has, that flows
Enough to stock her sex almost with those.
Had she been living in famed Pharaoh's reign,
He and even all his fierce and num'rous train
In her red sea might have been surely slain.
'Tis Barry, the illustrious of her kind,
Whose charity the poor could never find.

Rochester taught her first how to be lewd,
Fathered a cheddar child as his own brood;
And had he lived to Hesty's fifteen year,
He'd fucked his girl t'have been a grandfather,
But dying left it to his niece's care.
She likewise dies and leaves three thousand pound
To dower the girl provided she be sound.
T. Wharton is to have her maidenhead,
And if not sound, the dowry's forfeited.
If he to gain the sum should pox her now,  
And swear before the judge he found her so,  
The mother would (if she were him) all know.
Oh Barry, Barry, speedily repent,  
Or else be doubly damned by my consent.  
Bring forth thy mighty magazine of lust,  
And in thy vile account be sure, be just.  
As thou expectst to waste thy crimes away,  
The trophies of thy countless fuckings lay  
Sincerely at the shrine of Modena,  
With a strict catalogue of every sin,  
If paper can be found to put 'em in.  
That wonder-working dame and none but she  
Can intercede for such a bitch as thee.
Thy Jewish presents, howsoe'er they're prized,  
Give 'em the duchess, 'tis well advised;  
They'll [stink?] of trading with the circumcized.  
Unlucky Whitmore's presents, all that pride,  
The locket too that changed the day [he] died,  
The citizens' rich silks and their fine linen,  
The necessaries which thou ne'er wert seen in,  
But shoes and stockings which thou ne'er went clean in.  
Bring Goring's medals, all the wealth he gave  
To purchase of a punk a shameful grave,  
Which, though foreseen, himself he could not save.  
Bring too the name of every occupation,  
Each bidding fair, according to his station,  
A list of every sect thou'st swived with, of each nation;  
And if the duchess can thy pardon gain,  
I'd not despair, though I'd my father slain.

14. bishops humble. An allusion to James's conflict with the seven bishops who refused to read his Declaration of Indulgence during divine services. Tried for seditious libel, the seven bishops were pronounced not guilty on June 30, 1688. South'ton.
Charles Fitzroy, Duke of Southampton (1662–1730), first son of the Duchess of Cleveland by King Charles II, was generally considered a simpleton.

15. Bent[nig]. Hans Willem Bentinck (1649–1709) had long been Prince William's devoted servant as Page of Honor and later Nobleman of the Chamber. On February 13, 1689, King William appointed him Groom of the Stole, First Gentleman of the Bedchamber, and Keeper of the Privy Purse. On April 9, 1689, William created him Earl of Portland. Thereafter the King heaped wealth upon Bentinck until Parliament protested. The "private reasons" were presumed to be homosexual.

18. Petre. Father Edward Petre, S.J., was a Privy Councillor and King James's most reckless adviser. Brent. Robert Brent, "the Popish attorney," was an extremist Catholic and a justice of the peace for Westminster. After James fled, Brent was arrested, bailed, and fled to France. A reward of £200 was offered for his capture (Luttrell, I, 388, 496, 506).

19. Mulgrave. ("King John"), Earl of Mulgrave.

20. to Italy. The poet is suggesting that Sir Edward Villiers, the Earl of Kildare, and Bentinck, all reputed homosexuals, should be sent to Italy, the reputed center of epicene vice.

22. Grafton. Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Grafton, a rough sailor, was out of favor because on January 29, 1689, he had voted for a regency. In March he lost his commission as Colonel of the First Footguards.

26. Sue Willis. A notorious bawd and whore; see Appendix. I have found no evidence that she was ever an actress. The "goatish peer" was Thomas, Lord Colepeper of Thoresby (1635–January 27, 1689).

42. Davis. In December, 1686, Moll Davis, actress and whilom mistress of King Charles II, married James Paisible, French musician (1636–1722). On May 12, 1687, Etherege commented on the match: "Mrs. Davis has given a proof of the great passion she always had for musick, and Monsieur Paisible has another (guess) Bass to thrum than that he playd so well upon" (Letters, p. 118).

43. lero. Properly "lira." A lira tedesca was a bowed instrument of the viol class.

50. Solmes. Heinrich, Comte de Solmes, an arrogant old Dutch general, was slain at the Battle of Landen, July 19, 1693.

51. beshit. The story of Nell Gwyn's giving her rival a dose of purgative jalap before Moll's engagement with the King has often been told and may be true. For a verse account of the affair see Samuel Butler's "The Court Burlesqued," 1678 (Posthumous Works, 1715, II, 19–23).

55. Boutell. Elizabeth Boutell, ingenue (King's United, and Lincoln's Inn Fields companies to 1696) returned to the stage after ten years' absence in May, 1688.

56. Armstrong. Sir Thomas Armstrong (1624–84), a follower of Monmouth, was outlawed for complicity in the Rye House Plot, captured in Holland, brought back to England, and executed without a trial on June 20, 1684. I have found no evidence that Mrs. Boutell was involved in his capture; however, her husband, Barnaby Boutell or Bowtell, was a lieutenant in the Holland Regiment of Foot. She might have been in Holland with him at the time of Armstrong's capture (Wilson, "Biographical Notes on Some Restoration Actresses," Theatre Notebook, XVIII, 2 (1963–4), 43).

57. Maccarty. Justin, third son of Donogh McCarty, first Earl of Clancarty, and colonel of a regiment of foot, was created Viscount Mountcashel on May 23, 1689 (Dalton, I, 207). He was said to be very nearsighted.

58. Overkirke. Henry van Nassau, Heer van Ouwerkerk, Master of the Horse to William III.

72. **Haynes.** Joseph Haynes, actor, farceur, and famous liar (d. April 4, 1701).


74. **Cleveland.** Notorious Barbara, Duchess of Cleveland; see Appendix. **Goodman.** Cardell Goodman (c. 1653–c.1714), actor and the Duchess of Cleveland’s Gentleman of the Horse.

77. **Nelly.** Nell Gwyn died November 14, 1687.

80. **St. Albans.** Charles Beauclerc, Duke of St. Albans, son of King Charles II by Nell Gwyn.

84. a **thief.** In 1681 Goodman was arrested, charged with highway robbery. The case never came to trial, but on April 18, 1681, King Charles II gave him a pardon for “all felonies, robberies upon the highways or elsewhere” (Wilson, *Mr. Goodman the Player*, p. 73).

86. **begs gold.** This was a frequent charge against the duchess. For example, Mrs. Manly (*The New Atlantis*, 1720, 1, 57) asserts that one night the duchess lost all her money at basset and begged Lord Marlborough, her former lover, to “lend her twenty pieces, which he absolutely refused.”

92. **Moseley, etc.** “Mother” Moseley was a famous bawd. In the Epilogue to Duf- fett’s farce, *The Empress of Morocco*, 1674, healths are proposed to five bawds: Madam Cresswell, Mrs. Gifford, “Sister” Temple, Betty Buly, and finally,

> But of all the brisk bawds, 'tis M[oseley] for me,  
> 'Tis M[oseley], the best in her degree;  
> She can serve from the lord to the squire and clown,  
> From a guinea she'll fit you to half a crown.

*Cresswell.* “On Tuesday last the famous Madam Cresswell was in a trial at nisi prius at Westminster convicted after above 30 years practise of bawdry, some, of her ‘Does’ most unkindly testifying against her” (*Impartial Protestant Mercury*, no. 64, November 29–December 2, 1681). Madam Cresswell is the chief character in *The Whore’s Rhetorick*, 1683 (rpt., London, 1960). **Stratford.** In *The Female Fireship*, 1691, Richard Ames listed a number of famous bawds as candidates for monuments of brass,

> Then would no Buly, Stratford, Temple, Whipple,  
> Cresswell nor Cozens, who so loved the nipple,  
> Nor other female fachesses unknown,  
> Want that disgrace is due to vice alone.

In May, 1695, Sarah Stratford was “convicted of being a woman of ill fame, and for enticing Elizabeth Farrington into a common tavern in the parish of St. Clement Danes.” She was fined twenty nobles, condemned to the pillory three times, one hour each time, and to spend three months in Newgate (*Middlesex County Records*, 1689–1709, p. 133).

94. **Posture Moll.** Apparently a woman who made her living doing Italian posture dances in a stall or booth at one of the London fairs. In the prologue to his comedy
The Banditti, 1686, Thomas D’Urtey represented a “rusty dry’d up Debauchee” com­
plaining about bawdry on the stage,

“Their plays are cramm’d with such a Bawdy Rout,
Damme if I’ve the Face to sit ’em out.”
Yet this Nice Spark whose modest Tast we pall,
Shall sit Two Hours admiring Posture-Mall.

Behn. Aphra Behn, playwright (1640–April 16, 1689). In “To Julian. 1688” (Harleian
MS. 7317, f. 58) she is called a “lewd harlot” and a “poetic quean.”

96. the Hintons. Whores like Mall Hinton; see Appendix.

103. those. A common euphemism for menses. At regular intervals Pepys would
write such phrases as “my wife sick of those in bed,” or “my wife, being ill of those,
kept her bed all day” (Diary, February 7, May 12, 1664).

108. Barry. Elizabeth Barry (1658–1713), the greatest English actress in the years
1674 to 1709, had a scandalous reputation as a mercenary whore.

111. a cheddar child. A child with many fathers. In December, 1677, Mrs. Barry,
then mistress to John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, gave birth to a daughter, named
Elizabeth Clerke. When Rochester died in 1680 he left the child an annuity of forty
pounds, secured on the manor of Sutton Malet (V. de S. Pinto, Enthusiast in Wit,
1962, p. 228). Betty (not “Hesty”) died in 1689 or 1690.

114. his niece. This is probably fiction. Rochester’s niece Anne, daughter of his
half-brother, Sir Henry Lee of Ditchley, was the poetess Anne Wharton. She married
Thomas Wharton on September 16, 1673, and died in 1685.

117. T. Wharton. Thomas Wharton (1648–1715), eldest son of Philip, Lord
Wharton, was a famous libertine; see Appendix. The poet suggests that Wharton,
apparently Betty’s guardian, will seduce her and “pox” her in order to get the forfei­
ture of her dowry.

121. if she were him. If Mrs. Barry were the judge, she would know who was
responsible for her daughter’s disease.

128. Modena. Laura, Duchess of Modena, mother of Queen Marie Beatrice, died
in Rome in July, 1687. King James’s priests attributed the Queen’s pregnancy to a
pilgrimage her mother had made to the shrine of Loretto, shortly before she died;
hence “wonder-working dame.”

133. Jewish. Obtained by haggling and sharp practise.

135. stink. Conjectural; there is a blank in the MS.

136. Whitmore . . . [he]. The copy text has “Whitmore . . . she,” clearly a mis­
take. Whitmore may have been Sir Thomas Whitmore of Bridgenorth, who died in
1682. When his widow, Frances (Brooke), who had remarried, died in 1690, Dryden
wrote an “Epitaph on the Lady Whitmore.”

140. Goring. Henry Goring was a captain in Lord O’Brien’s Regiment of Foot
Deering . . . on Wednesday night at the playhouse, had the misfortune to kill Captain
Goring. . . . They were both very drunk, and upon a sudden quarrel that arose they
both drew in one of the tiring rooms, where none were there present, and Mr. Goring
received a wound in his throat and never spoke more” (Egmont MS, II, 153). This
may be the episode referred to by Robert Gould in “The Playhouse. A Satyr,” 1685;
he mourned the death of a friend “behind the scenes,” one who “fell the victim” of a “sudden death,”
SATIRE ON BENT[ING]

The shame, the guilt, the horror and disgrace
Light on the punk, the murderer, and the place.

Subsequently it is clear that "the punk" is Elizabeth Barry.

147. *the duchess*. The Duchess of Modena.