

THE LADY FRESCHVILE'S SONG OF THE WIVES
TO THE TUNE OF FOUR ABLE PHYSICIANS
ARE LATELY COME TO TOWN

(1682)

The opening lines of this satire indicate that it was intended as a sequel to "A Ballad to the Tune of Cheviot Chace." It deals with errant Court wives, most of whom were guilty of indiscretion and some of adultery. By this time the names of a few Court ladies—notably Mrs. Jennings, Lady Stamford, Lady Vernon, Lady Ogle (now Duchess of Somerset), Lady Lansdowne, and Carey, Lady Mordaunt—had become almost obligatory in satires. The satire must have been written very late in 1682. For the second title, from a tune called "The Tunbridge Doctors," see Simpson, *Broadside Ballad*, p. 568.

The copy text, dated 1682, is Harleian MS. 7319, p. 193. It is dated 1682 in MS. Firth, c. 15, p. 121; it is undated in Dyce MS. 43, I, 392; Douce MS. 357, f. 96v; and Harleian MS. 6913, p. 287.

You scribblers that write still of widows and maids,
I fear have not served half your time at your trades.
We poor innocent virgins have reason to huff,
When the widows complain you've not said half enough.

For Jennings does swear

5

She cannot forbear

To laugh at the fools who said nothing of her.
Old Freschvile and Stanhope laugh in their sleeves,
And have sent out a song to say more of the wives.

2.

When Stamford, her mightiness, first went astray,
Sh'ad a million of monsters still lay in her way;

10

LADY FRESCHVILE'S SONG OF THE WIVES

For prevention of horns her good lord had in store
All the Harveys and Derings and fifty such more.

Though some do presage,

That she did engage

15

At once both a lord, an esquire, and a page—

Nay, had not her spouse had the luck for to call,

She had found in her heart to have swived with 'em all.

3.

The young Lady Suffolk, that's newly come in

To the list of the wives, must have time to begin;

20

She rallies her feeble old husband and scorns

That we should not ere long wish him joy of his horns.

Mary Gerrard does stare,

And fain would prefer

Her ugly damned carcass, but none would have her.

25

Good Lord! What a monstrous strange sight it would be,

If a brat should be born 'twixt her husband and she!

4.

No sooner can Berkeley go whistling to play,

But straight, to meet Candish, his wife trips away.

When her business is done, she is scarce gotten in,

30

Ere the cuckold, contented, comes whistling again.

Nay, Vernon and Grey

Have each their own way

To practice in cuckoldom every day.

Sure they must be ladies well versed in their trades;

35

They've been both brought to bed and both married for maids.

5.

Old Macclesfield's daughter, whom Gerard did wed,

All the portion she brought him he wears on his head;

With art and much cunning, she's come to a pitch,
 Though her eyes cannot kill, yet she wounds with her breech. 40

Poor hobbling Dumblane
 With her kindness is slain.

Ev'n Parker and Duncan begin to complain.
 Nay, her husband and she never yet could agree,
 For he ne'er could abide a thing lewder than he. 45

6.

Great titles of honor we all do adore,
 And 'twas this very reason made Ogle a whore;
 For the name of a duchess had so taken place,
 Though she'd lain with the count, yet she married his grace.
 And Albemarle can 50

Dispense with her man,
 Though her husband's a duke, let him help't if he can.
 Hard fate that poor Fane should of luck be beguiled
 To marry the page who had got her with child.

7.

Fair Lansdowne's the likeliest of all to hold out, 55
 For she grants to her spouse the alternative bout.
 Lady Parsons with long-legged Sarsfield does do't,
 And none is secure of his nasty but Scroope.

For Mordaunt has swore 60
 She once was a whore,
 But swears by her Maker she'll be so no more.
 Hey, boys! What a time it would be for the men
 If everyone's wife should turn honest again!

3. *huff*. Take offense.

5. *Jennings*. Mrs. Frances Jennings, Court bawd.

LADY FRESCHVILLE'S SONG OF THE WIVES

8. *Freschville*. Anne Charlotte (De Vic), widow of John, Baron Freschville of Stavely, who died in April, 1682. A Lady of the Bedchamber to Princess Anne, she died "at a great age" in 1717 (*Complete Peerage*). *Stanhope*. Probably Catherine (Burghill), wife of Alexander Stanhope, a Gentleman Usher to Queen Catherine.

10. *Stamford*. Elizabeth (Harvey), buxom wife of Thomas Grey, second Earl of Stamford; see Appendix.

13. *Harveys*. The poet's argument seems to be that Lord Stamford kept his wanton wife happy with lovers of her own sex, so that she would avoid the "monsters," i.e., cuckold makers. Lady Stamford's mother, Lady Elizabeth Harvey, was commonly accused of Lesbianism (see "Colin. 1679"). *Derings*. Perhaps one of the daughters of Sir Edward Dering, either Katherine, who married Sir John Percival, or Jane, who never married.

19. *Lady Suffolk*. Anne (Montague) married, as his third wife, c. June 10, 1682, James Howard, Earl of Suffolk. Anne was twenty-two, the earl sixty-two. Contrary to prophecy, the countess proved to be a true and faithful wife (*Portland MS*, III, 374).

23. *Mary Gerard*. Mary (Berkeley), daughter of Charles, Earl of Falmouth, married Gilbert Cosins Gerard on May 2, 1681. She was sixteen, wild, wilful, and "a salacious jilt"; see Appendix, Gerard, G. C.

28. *Berkeley*. John Berkeley (1650-1712), an officer in the Guards, known as "whistling John." In 1677 he had married Barbara Villiers (1656-1708), third daughter of Sir Edward Villiers, Knight Marshall; see Appendix, Villiers (Jersey).

29. *Candish*. William, Lord Cavendish (1640-1707), inherited as fourth Earl of Devonshire in 1684.

32. *Vernon*. Mary (Kirke), wife of Sir Thomas Vernon, a Teller of the Exchequer, had given birth before marriage, with resultant scandal; see Appendix, Kirke. *Grey*. Mary (Berkeley), wife of Ford, Lord Grey of Werke, was married some time in 1674, and her only child, Mary, was christened on May 11, 1675. The poet is embroidering on her supposed affair with Monmouth before her marriage.

37. *Macclesfield's daughter*. Digby Gerard, Baron Gerard of Gerard Bromley (1662-84), married, on September 3, 1678, Elizabeth, nineteen-year-old daughter of Charles Gerard, Earl of Macclesfield. "The portion she brought him" was, of course, the mythical horns of a cuckold. Gerard, a very debauched young man, died October 10, 1684 "of a drinking match, and fell down on the spot" at the Rose Tavern in Covent Garden (*Ormonde MS*, VII, 278). His widow survived until January 11, 1700, reputedly lewd and promiscuous.

41. *Dumblane*. Peregrine Osborne, Viscount Dumblane (1659-1729), was second but first surviving son of Thomas, Earl of Danby. Apparently Dumblane's pox was contracted before 1678. In his *Diary* (December 22, 1677), Dr. Lake reported the affliction Lady Danby "groaned under" because her first son, Lord Latimer, "and his lady were sadly diseased with the pox, and did even begin to rot; and the Lord Dumblane (her second son and a very boy) was sent into France to be cured of the same disease." In the reign of good King Charles, a courtier who had never had the pox would be a rarity.

43. *Parker*. Lieutenant John Parker, of the Life Guards, was a bold, enterprising young man, "commonly known by the name of the Town Bull" (Dalton, I, 306); *Le Fleming MS*, p. 276). *Duncan*. Lieutenant Duncan Abercromy of Colonel Russell's Regiment of Foot; see Appendix, Abercromy.

COURT SATIRES OF THE RESTORATION

45. The line is from Harleian MS. 6913, p. 289. The copy text has "For he ne'er met a female more lewder than she."

47. *Ogle*. Elizabeth (Percy), Lady Ogle, twice widowed, married Charles Seymour, Duke of Somerset, on May 30, 1682, three months after the murder of her second husband, Thomas Thynne, at the instigation of Count Koningsmarck; see Appendix, Ogle. On February 18, 1682, a correspondent wrote, "The discourse of the Town is with great reflection upon my Lady Ogle, whom they represent to have had great intimacy with the count [Koningsmarck] in Holland, before he came over hither" (*Ormonde MS*, N.S., VI, 313).

50. *Albemarle*. Elizabeth (1654-1734), daughter of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, married Christopher Monck, second Duke of Albemarle, in 1669. In spite of the libelers, she seems to have been a faithful wife, but in the summer of 1682 she became mentally disturbed. On April 10, 1683, the Duke of Newcastle told Sir John Reresby that "his daughter, the Duchesse of Albemarle, had received and concealed a love letter, which her lord knew of, which had made her dissemble herself distracted" (*Memoirs*, p. 301). A likely story! In later years Elizabeth was known as "the mad duchess."

53. *Fane*. Also Vane. On April 20, 1682, Lady Campden wrote, "My Lady Katherine Vane is married to one that was her sister Exeter's page when she died, but he was a tall, young, handsome man, though still a page" (*Rutland MS*, II, 69). The page was Conyers D'Arcy, who inherited as Earl of Holderness in 1688. "Sister Exeter" was Mary, sixth daughter of Mildmay Fane, Earl of Westmoreland, and second wife of John Cecil, fourth Earl of Exeter (1628-78). Lady Exeter died in October, 1681.

55. *Lansdowne*. Martha (1664-89), fifth daughter of Thomas Osborne, Earl of Danby, married, on May 22, 1678, Charles Granville, Lord Lansdowne. See note to line 133, "Cheviot Chace," above.

57. *Parsons*. Catherine (Clifton), wife of Sir John Parsons, an intimate of Captain Patrick Sarsfield; see Appendix, Sarsfield.

58. *Scroope*. Sir Scroope Howe, whose "nasty" seems to have been his wife Anne (*Manners*).

59. *Mordaunt*. Carey (Frazier), wife of Charles, Lord Mordaunt; see Appendix, Frazier.