

## A LETTER TO JULIAN FROM TUNBRIDGE

[*October, 1685*]

King Charles II died on February 6, 1685; his brother was crowned as James II on April 23. The Duke of Monmouth invaded England on June 11, and on July 15 went to the block on Tower Hill. "The Bloody Assizes" took up much of the summer. King James, pressing ahead with his plan to Catholicize England, was rapidly alienating the Protestant lords who had made the reign of Charles so lively—and sinful. Nevertheless, the Court satirists, ignoring politics, religion, and the cruelties of Kirke and Jeffreys, still found material for scandalous libels.

The title of this shotgun libel is not important. Tunbridge Wells was a popular summer resort in Kent, some thirty-four miles from London. Gentry repaired to it in the summer to drink the chalybeate waters of the wells and to enjoy the town's facilities for gaming, dancing, and gallantry. In spite of the title, our poet is clearly writing from London, and only the first part of the satire deals with what "passed last season at the Wells."

The copy text, undated, is Harleian MS. 7319, p. 405. The poem is undated also in Harleian MS. 7317, p. 113, and in Dyce MS. 43, II, 487. Internal evidence places the poem in the early autumn of 1685.

Dear friend, I fain would try once more  
To help thee clear thy brandy score,  
But London is so empty yet,  
Intelligence is hard to get;  
Yet fame of some adventures tells  
That passed last season at the Wells:  
How Rider conquered Blutworth's heart,  
Rider that never uses art,  
I mean with a design to cheat,

5

For 'tis so plain all needs must see't; 10  
 So greasy, does such flavors send  
 No neighbor can his nose defend.  
 Each moment with redoubled wounds  
 That poisoned martyr she confounds.  
 Her practised looks and sidelong bow 15  
 Has oft caused mirth, we do allow,  
 But never could give love till now.  
 In which we her good fortune see  
 To find a greater fool than she,  
 A sot so stupid and unheeding 20  
 He takes affectedness for breeding,  
 Her very singing can admit,  
 And calls a load of tattling, wit;  
 Believes all gold in glist'ring Phillis,  
 And mistakes mercury for lilies; 25  
 So heretofore the Egyptian race  
 Worshipped a calf with a white face.  
 The fop in vain has tried all ways  
 To quench the flame her washes raise;  
 But were his father now in case, 30  
 Were it no more than London's was—  
 Good man!—he'd piss it out with ease.  
 But none received so many vows  
 As Adam Loftus his fair spouse;  
 Loftus, the kindest man that lives, 35  
 And blest by Heaven with as kind wives.  
 No sooner was his first wife gone,  
 But to a second, fair and young;  
 Yet though she's much obliged to nature,  
 Her Irish husband's her best feature. 40  
 In London she met Norfolk's duke;  
 At Tunbridge Cholmley's letters took,  
 But waters were a just excuse:  
 No paper's fitter for that use  
 Than my Lord Cholmley's *billets doux*. 45

Warcup and Whitaker will have it  
 That Berkeley follows strutt'ring Brathwaite;  
 'Tis not impossible that he  
 Should speed with such a fool as she;  
 Their wits and beauties both agree. 50  
 Yet some that know him much admire  
 His humble love should e'er aspire  
 Above a wench that bulks for hire.  
 Women of quality despise  
 A man that ogles with sore eyes; 55  
 Keep (my good lord) to your old trade  
 Of common whore and chambermaid;  
 There triumph in your boundless joys  
 O'er jilted footmen or link-boys.  
 No rival will disturb you there 60  
 Unless that tradesman's ghost appear  
 You killed so barbarously last year.  
 Arran, by some ill planet cursed,  
 Still aims at what becomes him worst;  
 Has broke himself and many a shop 65  
 To be esteemed a first-rate fop.  
 Affecting to appear sublime,  
 Talks, as he dances, out of time,  
 And is at length become the sport  
 Both of the French and English Court. 70  
 He'll quickly to the King's Bench come,  
 Or (which is worse) to live at home,  
 If Conway, who has lost her wits,  
 Don't marry him in her mad fits. 75  
 But for a worthy officer,  
 All must give way to Manchester,  
 Who prudently was pitched upon  
 To raise men, not to lead 'em on.  
 Pleased with himself, and pleased alone,  
 For being born an eldest son. 80  
 Dancing is now his greatest care,

- Or dogging Lady Cartwright's chair.  
 The fate which that poor lady rules  
 Dooms her to have to do with fools,  
 Which every day itself discovers 85  
 Both in her husband and her lovers.
- Of all our traveled youth, none dare  
 With Newburgh vie for the *bel air*.  
 He is so French in all his ways,  
 Loves dresses, swears *a-la-Francaise*, 90  
 Sings to the spinet and guitar,  
 Those genteel ways to charm the fair;  
 And though Sir Edward Villiers's gone,  
 Is able to support alone  
 Sir Courtly Nice's character. 95  
 Thus Atlas fell indeed, but Hercules was near.
- Sir Edward, though he hates fatigue,  
 With much ado has reached The Hague,  
 The fittest country for him, where  
 His wit and humor will appear 100  
 As good as any he'll meet there.  
 Yet that unwholesome foggy air  
 His fine complexion may impair  
 Unless his favorite picarre  
 His master to his old course keeps 105  
 Of a cool clyster ere he sleeps.
- To beauties turn we now our style,  
 But they're so thin 'tis scarce worth while;  
 In all the Court 'tis hard to find  
 One woman that one would wish kind. 110  
 Some Yarburgh's beauty like and say  
 'Tis glorious as the God of Day;  
 In this respect 'tis like the sun,  
 'Tis never at the height till noon,  
 But then breaks forth with such a light 115  
 Those that she wounds would die outright,  
 Did not her tongue (which nature made

For tonguing only) lend 'em aid,  
 And by insipid, dull replies  
 Release the captives of her eyes. 120

Just so 'tis with her little grace,  
 Whose charms lie only in her face,  
 That face, though none can praise too much,  
 Her shape and understanding's Dutch;  
 Who else but she would for a lover 125  
 Accept of antiquated Dover,  
 Long since drained by her husband's mother,  
 And with him every day repair  
 In vizor mask to Smithfield Fair,  
 For which her husband does not care. 130  
 His soul is so extremely thick  
 His horns don't touch him to the quick.  
 Nature him for some drudge designed,  
 And framed his body to his mind:  
 Strong limbs but weak capacity, 135  
 And Georgeish to the last degree;  
 Yet treacherous, for all so dull,  
 Both parent's image to the full.  
 Thus we see plainly in his grace  
 And in some others of his race, 140  
 Brains are not needful to be base.  
 Here's all this season will afford,  
 Which for all sorts of trades is hard;  
 But better times are coming on,  
 Now everybody flocks to town. 145  
 The winter's like to prove more kind,  
 For those that write are sure to find  
 In Betterton's or Trevor's house  
 Matter much more ridiculous.

7. *Rider*. Probably the wife of William Rider, a minor courtier and racing man, commissioned a captain in the Earl of Oxford's Regiment of Horse in 1685 (Dalton,

II, 10). On March 14, 1684, there was a rumor that the Duchess of Portsmouth was out of favor, and that Major Oglethorpe (a commissioner for executing her son's place as Master of the Horse) was "turned out, and Mr. Rider in his place" (Luttrell, I, 303). The rumor was false. *Bludworth*. Sir Thomas Bludworth, son of the Sir Thomas who had been Lord Mayor of London in 1666 (he died May 12, 1682). On February 23, 1685, the younger Sir Thomas was appointed Standard Bearer of the Band of Gentleman Pensioners (*CSPD*, 1685, p. 40), probably by the influence of Lord Chief Justice Jeffreys, who, on June 10, 1679, had married Bludworth's sister Anne, widow of Sir John Jones.

25. *mercury*. Washes of mercury, often used for cosmetic purposes, were dangerous. On April 24, 1686, Henry Savile wrote, "My Lady Henrietta Wentworth is dead, having sacrificed her life to her beauty by painting so beyond measure that the mercury got into her veins and killed her" (*Savile Correspondence*, p. 286).

27. *a calf*. Possibly Hathor, goddess of love and laughter, represented as a woman with a cow's head.

31. *London's*. The allusion is to the great fire of London, September 2-6, 1666, and Lord Mayor Sir Thomas Bludworth, who is said to have boasted that he would put out the fire by the same means that Gulliver used in Lilliput.

34. *Loftus*. Adam Loftus (1657-91), an Irish squire, lost his first wife, Lucy (Brydges) in April, 1681. In May, 1682, Loftus married Dorothy, daughter of Patrick Allen, Esq. See Appendix, Loftus.

41. *Norfolk's duke*. Henry Howard (1655-1701), seventh Duke of Norfolk, was a famous wench.

42. *Cholmley*. Hugh, third Viscount Cholmondeley (1662-1725).

46. *Warcup*. Captain Lenthal Warcup of the Royal Regiment of Footguards was a well-known courtier and gossip. *Whitaker*. See below, "soft Whitaker" in "The Lovers' Session." Probably this was "Charles Whitacre of New Windsor, gent," who in 1670 was appointed "Foreign Apposer" in the Exchequer Court, with a fee of £40 a year. He held the post for more than thirty years. He seems to have been a man of means: in 1688 he received £1,000 for two houses at Windsor which he had sold to Charles II (*CTB*, 1669-72, pp. 448, 603, 619; *CTB*, 1685-89, p. 1723). Very probably our "Foreign Apposer" was the Charles Whitaker engaged by Tonson, along with a host of other gentlemen, to do translations for *Plutarch's Lives*, 1683-86 (see *The Works of John Dryden*, University of California Press, 1971, XVII, "Life of Plutarch," ed. A. E. W. Maurer, p. 430, note 3).

Whitacre was a friend of Sir George Etherege, yet on April 28, 1687, commenting on Whitacre's changing his lodgings, Etherege wrote, "If he happens into a house with Mr. [John] Crowne, John's songs and Joseph's voice will charm the whole family" (*Letters*, p. 113). Either this was a different Whitacre, or Etherege's memory betrayed him.

47. *Berkeley*. John Berkeley (1660-97) succeeded his brother Charles as third Lord Berkeley of Stratton in 1682. In April, 1685, he was a first lieutenant in the Navy. He is not to be confused with "Whistling John" Berkeley, ten years his senior and an officer in the Guards, who inherited in 1690 as fourth Viscount Fitzharding. *strutring*. Probably "stuttering." *Brathwaite*. Unidentified, but apparently a woman of the town. She is addressed in "A Faithful Catalogue of our Most Eminent Ninnies," 1687 (Harleian MS. 7319, p. 471):

But why to Ireland, Brathwaite? Will that clime,  
Dost thou imagine, make an easy time?

## A LETTER TO JULIAN FROM TUNBRIDGE

That battered fort, which they with ease deceive,  
Pillaged and sacked, to the next foe they leave.

53. *bulks*. A prostitute who plied her trade by night on empty stalls, or bulks, in front of shops, was said to bulk.

59. *link-boys*. Members of "the black-guard" who led pedestrians through the streets by night with flaming links, or torches.

61. *tradesman's ghost*. On April 20, 1684, a Middlesex grand jury brought in a true bill that John, Lord Berkeley, had assaulted Ralph Tonycliffe, gentleman, and had run his rapier into Tonycliffe's belly near the navel (*Middlesex County Records*, IV, 234). On May 12 a pardon was granted to Lord Berkeley for the manslaughter of Ralph Tonycliffe (*CSPD*, 1684-85, p. 13).

63. *Arran*. James Douglas, Lord Arran (1658-1712), the future Scots Duke of Hamilton.

71. *King's Bench*. The King's Bench prison in Southwark. The poet suggests that an even worse fate for Arran would be to "live at home" in Scotland.

73. *Conway*. Ursula (Stawell), nineteen-year-old widow of Edward, Earl of Conway (1623-83), was very rich and much sought after, but there is no evidence that she had lost her wits. On March 18, 1686, she married the Earl of Mulgrave.

76. *Manchester*. Charles Montague (1662-1722) inherited as fourth Earl of Manchester on March 14, 1683. On June 20, 1685, he was commissioned as captain of an independent troop of horse; hence "to raise men." He resigned his commission on December 15, 1685 (Dalton, II, 15).

82. *Cartwright*. Grace (Granville), 1667-1747, wife of George, Baronet Carteret of Hawnes.

88. *Newburgh*. Charles Livingston (c. 1666-94), Earl of Newburgh, was frequently attacked as a pattern of foppery and folly. See "The Complete Fop" (Dyce MS. 43, II, 618),

If thou wouldst a fop have drawn to the life,  
A coxcomb made up of nonsense and strife,  
That does in one character comprehend all,  
Draw Newburgh the sot come late to Whitehall,  
And then draw him drunk at her Majesty's ball.

93. *Villiers*. Edward Villiers (1656-1711), knighted in 1676, went to Holland in 1677 as Master of the Horse to Princess Mary. He was frequently in England. See Appendix, Villiers (Jersey).

95. *Sir Courtly Nice*. A foolish fop in John Crowne's farce, *Sir Courtly Nice*, Theatre Royal, May, 1685.

103. *his fine complexion*. This is irony; in earlier days Villiers was called "scabby Ned."

104. *picarre*. From Spanish *picaro*, a rogue or servant.

106. *clyster*. An enema.

111. *Yarburgh*. Henrietta Yarborough, one of Queen Marie's Maids of Honor, was a daughter of Sir Thomas Yarborough, of Snaiiths, Yorkshire, by Henrietta Maria (Blague), once Maid of Honor to Queen Catherine. On December 9, 1686, Henrietta was granted £2,000 as a marriage portion (*CTB*, 1685-89, p. 1054) and dismissed. Evidently there had been a scandal. On January 25, 1687, Thomas Maule wrote to

## COURT SATIRES OF THE RESTORATION

Etherege, "poor Robin Sayers . . . has blown . . . Mrs. Yarburch into the north, there to lead apes in hell [the fabled consequence of dying an old maid]; for she has left the Court, and her Court portion is paid without any obligation of marrying" (*Letters*, p. 274). Eventually she married Sir Marmaduke Wyvill, Bart. (Mark Noble, *Biographical History*, 1806, I, 360).

121. *her little grace*. Isabella (Bennet), wife of Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Grafton, was the daughter of Henry, Earl of Arlington, and Isabella, a daughter of Lewis of Nassau, Lord Beverwaert and Count of Nassau. The duchess was "counted the finest woman in town" (*Rutland MS*, II, 99).

126. *Dover*. Henry Jermyn, once one of the Duchess of Cleveland's lovers, was created Baron Dover of Dover in May, 1685.

129. *Smithfield Fair*. Bartholomew Fair, held annually in Smithfield, East London, for two weeks beginning August 23. It was famous for its booths, drolls, rope dancers, puppet shows, Merry Andrews, and music and gambling houses.

132. *horns*. The mythical horns of a cuckold.

136. *Georgeish*. I.e., Henry, Duke of Grafton, physically powerful, is as stupid as his younger brother, George, Duke of Northumberland.

148. *Betterton's*. In the autumn of 1682 the King's and the Duke's Companies of players had merged, and the famous actor Thomas Betterton was manager of the new United Company. *Trevor's*. Sir John Trevor was speaker of the House of Commons. The new Commons, which first met on May 19, 1685, was adjourned on July 2, to meet again on November 9, and was adjourned again on November 20. Usually members came to London a week or two before the session.