

4 A Ballade to Queen Elizabeth: Of the Spanish Armada - by Austin Dobson

King Philip [*of Spain*] had vaunted his claims;
He had sworn for a year he would sack us;
With an army of heathenish names
He was coming to fagot and stack us; [*make into a bundle of firewood*]
Like the thieves of the sea he would track us,
And shatter our ships on the main;
But we had bold Neptune [*sea-god*] to back us,
And where are the galleons of Spain?

His carackes [*war-ships*] were christened of [*named after*] dames
To the kirtles [*petticoats*] whereof he would tack us;
With his saints and his gilded stern-frames,
He had thought like an egg-shell to crack us;
Now Howard [*English admiral*] may get to his Flaccus,
- [*the Roman poet Horace, read by Howard, who was also a patron of the arts*]
And Drake to his Devon again,
And Hawkins bowl rubbers [*decider games in bowls*]
to Bacchus [*god of wine*],
For where are the galleons of Spain?

Let his Majesty hang to St James [*patron saint of Spain*]
The axe that he whetted to hack us;
He must play at some lustier games
Or [*before*] at sea he can hope to out-thwack us;
To his mines of Peru he would pack us
To tug at his bullet [*prisoner's metal ball*] and chain;
Alas! that his Greatness should lack us!
But where are the galleons of Spain?

Gloriana! [*nickname for Elizabeth*] —
the Don [*Spaniard*] may attack us
Whenever his stomach be fain; [*he feels like it*]
He must reach us before he can rack [*torture*] us,
And where are the galleons of Spain?

9 Sonnet to Cromwell

- John Milton

Cromwell, our chief of men, who through a cloud
Not of war only, but detractions *[slanders]* rude,
Guided by faith and matchless fortitude,
To peace and truth thy glorious way hast plough'd,
And on the neck of crownèd Fortune proud*
Hast rear'd God's trophies and his work pursued,
While Darwen stream *[at the Battle of Preston]* with
blood of Scots imbrued *[stained]*,
And Dunbar field *[another victory over the Scots]*
resounds thy praises loud,

**Charles I and his son, who was crowned in Scotland*

And Worcester's *[great victory over Royalist army]*
laureate wreath: yet much remains
To conquer still; Peace hath her victories
No less renown'd than war; new foes arise,
Threatening to bind our souls with secular chains
[civil law restrictions].
Help us to save free conscience from the paw
Of hireling wolves *[corrupt clergy, not good shepherds]*
whose gospel is their maw *[belly, i.e. greed]*.

10 The Vicar of Bray

- (Author Unknown)

In good King Charles' golden days, when loyalty no harm meant,
A zealous High Churchman was I, and so I gained preferment.
To teach my flock, I never missed: 'Kings are by God appointed,
And damned are those who dare resist or touch the Lord's anointed.'

[The High Church Party believed the King was God's chosen head of Church as well as State.]

Chorus:

And this is law I will maintain, until my dying day, Sir
That whatsoever king may reign, still I'll be the Vicar of Bray, Sir.

[The C of E is part of the State and controlled by Parliamentary law.]

When royal James obtained the crown, and Popery came in fashion,

[James II was a Catholic]

The Penal Laws I hooted down, *[Laws banning Catholics from public office]*

and read the Declaration. *[suspending those laws]*

The Church of Rome, I found, would fit full well my constitution;

And had become a Jesuit, *[fanatical Catholic]* but for the Revolution.

[The 'Glorious Revolution' was Protestant William of Orange's eviction of King James.]

Chorus

When William was our King declared, to ease the nation's grievance,

With this new wind about I steered, and swore to him allegiance.

Old principles I did revoke, set conscience at a distance;

Passive Obedience was a joke, a jest was Non-resistance

[Now he supports William, the old ideas of how to resist or support James are something you can laugh about.]

Chorus

When gracious Anne became our queen, the Church of England's glory,

Another face of things was seen, and I became a Tory.

Occasional Conformists base, I damned their moderation,

[non-conformists attended C of E services just often enough to satisfy the law.]

And thought the Church in danger was from such prevarication.

['The Church in danger from Puritans' was a rallying cry of Queen Anne's Tory governments.]

Chorus

By now the Vicar would be at least 74!

When George in pudding-time *[slang for happy days]* came o'er

and Moderate Men looked big, Sir, *['Moderate Men' wanted to modify the law to conciliate dissenters]*

I turned a cat-in-a-pan once more *[slang of the time]*

and so became a Whig, Sir *[The Hanoverian Whig governments favoured the religious moderation that he 'damned' in the previous reign].*

For in my faith and loyalty I never more will falter,

And George my lawful king shall be - until the times do alter.

Chorus

16 Elegy written in a Country Churchyard

- (Excerpts) by Thomas Gray

Let not Ambition [*ambitious people*] mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals [*dates of birth and death on gravestones*] of the poor. ...
Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire; [*great ideas or abilities inspired by God*]
Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd, [*ruled as king or queen*]
Or wak'd to ecstasy the living lyre. [*been an inspiring poet or musician*]

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll; [*they received no education*]
Chill Penury [*poverty*] repress'd their noble rage, [*energy and enthusiasm*]
And froze the genial current of the soul. [*their natural flow of talent*]
Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flow'r is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.
[*The humble village folk are like undiscovered gems in caves under the sea and flowers in the desert*]

Gray suggests that in different circumstances they could have become household names:

Some village-Hampden, [*John Hampden MP*] that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood [*refused to pay tax imposed illegally by Charles I*]
Some mute inglorious [*unpublished, so without the chance of fame*] Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell, guiltless of his country's blood.

Th' applause of list'ning senates [*parliaments*] to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their hist'ry in a nation's eyes, [*become national leaders*]
Their lot forbade: [*circumstances prevented*]
nor circumscrib'd [*prevented*] alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confin'd;
Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne, [*become king by violent coup*]
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind ...

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife [*rioting*],
Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray [*they never deviated from their simple lifestyle*];
Along the cool sequester'd [*secluded*] vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way. [*their quiet, unnoticed way of life*]