

The Cavalier Ballads of the English Civil War

Ballad: I Love My King And Country Well

From Songs and other Poems by Alex.
Brome, Gent. Published London
1664; written 1645.

I love my King and country well,
Religion and the laws;
Which I'm mad at the heart that e'er we
did sell
To buy the good old cause.
These unnatural wars
And brotherly jars
Are no delight or joy to me;
But it is my desire
That the wars should expire,
And the King and his realms agree.

I never yet did take up arms,
And yet I dare to dye;
But I'll not be seduced by phanatical charms
Till I know a reason why.
Why the King and the state
Should fall to debate
I ne'er could yet a reason see,
But I find many one
Why the wars should be done,
And the King and his realms agree.

I love the King and the Parliament,
But I love them both together:
And when they by division asunder are rent,
I know 'tis good for neither.
Whichsoe'er of those
Be victorious,
I'm sure for us no good 'twill be,
For our plagues will increase

Unless we have peace,
And the King and his realms agree.

The King without them can't long stand,
Nor they without the King;
'Tis they must advise, and 'tis he must
command,
For their power from his must spring.
'Tis a comfortless sway
When none will obey;
If the King han't his right, which way
shall we?
They may vote and make laws,
But no good they will cause
Till the King and his realm agree.

A pure religion I would have,
Not mixt with human wit;
And I cannot endure that each ignorant knave
Should dare to meddle with it.
The tricks of the law
I would fain withdraw,
That it may be alike to each degree:
And I fain would have such
As do meddle so much,
With the King and the church agree.

We have pray'd and pray'd that the wars
might cease,
And we be free men made;
I would fight, if my fighting would bring
any peace,
But war is become a trade.
Our servants did ride
With swords by their side,
And made their masters footmen be;
But we'll be no more slaves
To the beggars and knaves
Now the King and the realms do agree.

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Ballad: A Coffin For King Charles, A Crown For Cromwell, And A Pit For The People

From a broadside in the King's Pamphlets, vol. viii. in the British Museum, with the direction, "You may sing this to the tune of 'Faine I would.'" The tune sometimes called "Parthenia," and "The King's Complaint," is to be found in Mr Chappell's Popular Music of the Olden Time. The King was beheaded in January, 1649. This Ballad is dated the 23rd of April in the same year.

CROMWELL ON THE THRONE.

So, so, the deed is done,
The royal head is sever'd,
As I meant when I first begun,
And strongly have endeavour'd.
Now Charles the First is tumbled down,
The Second I do not fear;
I grasp the sceptre, wear the crown,
Nor for Jehovah care.

KING CHARLES IN HIS COFFIN.

Think'st thou, base slave, though in my grave
Like other men I lie,
My sparkling fame and royal name
Can (as thou wishest) die?
Know, caitif, in my son I live
(The Black Prince call'd by some),
And he shall ample vengeance give
To those that did my doom.

THE PEOPLE IN THE PIT.

Supprest, deprest, involved in woes,
Great Charles, thy people be
Basely deceived with specious shows
By those that murther'd thee.
We are enslaved to tyrants' hests,
Who have our freedom won:
Our fainting hope now only rests
On thy succeeding son.

CROMWELL ON THE THRONE.

Base vulgar! know, the more you stir,
The more your woes increase,
Your rashness will your hopes deter,
'Tis we must give you peace.
Black Charles a traitor is proclaim'd
Unto our dignity;
He dies (if e'er by us he's gain'd)
Without all remedy.

KING CHARLES IN HIS COFFIN.

Thrice perjured villain! didst not thou
And thy degenerate train,
By mankind's Saviour's body vow
To me thy sovereign,
To make me the most glorious king
That e'er o'er England reign'd;
That me and mine in everything
By you should be maintain'd?

THE PEOPLE IN THE PIT.

Sweet prince! O let us pardon crave
Of thy beloved shade;
'Tis we that brought thee to the grave,
Thou wert by us betray'd.
We did believe 'twas reformation
These monsters did desire;
Not knowing that thy degradation
And death should be our hire.

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CROMWELL ON THE THRONE.

Ye sick-brain'd fools! whose wit does lie
In your small guts; could you
Imagine our conspiracy
Did claim no other due,
But for to spend our dearest bloods
To make rascallions flee?
No, we sought for your lives and goods,
And for a monarchy.

KING CHARLES IN HIS COFFIN.

But there's a Thunderer above,
Who, though he winks awhile,
Is not with your black deeds in love,
He hates your damned guile.
And though a time you perch upon
The top of Fortune's wheel,
You shortly unto Acharon
(Drunk with your crimes) shall reel.

THE PEOPLE IN THE PIT.

Meanwhile (thou glory of the earth)
We languishing do die:
EXCISE doth give free-quarters birth,
While soldiers multiply.
Our lives we forfeit every day,
Our money cuts our throats;
The laws are taken clean away,
Or shrunk to traitor's votes.

CROMWELL ON THE THRONE.

Like patient mules resolve to bear
Whate'er we shall impose;
Your lives and goods you need not fear,
We'll prove your friends, not foes.
We (the ELECTED ones) must guide
A thousand years this land;
You must be props unto our pride,
And slaves to our command.

KING CHARLES IN HIS COFFIN.

But you may fail of your fair hopes,
If fates propitious be;
And yield your loathed lives in ropes
To vengeance and to me.
When as the Swedes and Irish join,
The Cumbrian and the Scot
Do with the Danes and French combine,
Then look unto your lot.

THE PEOPLE IN THE PIT.

Our wrongs have arm'd us with such strength,
So sad is our condition,
That could we hope that now at length
We might find intermission,
And had but half we had before,
Ere these mechanics sway'd;
To our revenge, knee-deep in gore,
We would not fear to wade.

CROMWELL ON THE THRONE.

In vain (fond people) do you grutch
And tacitly repine.
For why? my skill and strength are such
Both poles of heaven are mine.
Your hands and purses both cohered
To raise us to this height:
You must protect those you have rear'd,
Or sink beneath their weight.

KING CHARLES IN HIS COFFIN.

Singing with angels near the throne
Of the Almighty Three
I sit, and know perdition
(Base Cromwell) waits on thee,
And on thy vile associates:
Twelve months (35) shall full conclude
Your power - thus speak the powerful fates,
Then VADES your interlude.

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THE PEOPLE IN THE PIT.

Yea, powerful fates, haste, haste the time,
The most auspicious day,
On which these monsters of our time

To hell must post away.
Meanwhile, so pare their sharpen'd claws,
And so impair their stings,
We may no more fight for the Cause
Or other NOVEL things!

The Reformation

Written in the year 1652, by Samuel Butler. From his Posthumous Works.

Tell me not of Lords and laws,
Rules or reformation;
All that's done not worth two straws
To the welfare of the nation;
If men in power do rant it still,
And give no reason but their will
For all their domination;
Or if they do an act that's just,
'Tis not because they would, but must,
To gratify some party's lust.

All our expense of blood and purse
Has yet produced no profit;
Men are still as bad or worse,
And will whate'er comes of it.
We've shuffled out and shuffled in
The person, but retain the sin,
To make our game the surer;
Yet spight of all our pains and skill,
The knaves all in the pack are still,
And ever were, and ever will,
Though something now demurer.

And it can never be so,
Since knaves are still in fashion;
Men of souls so base and low,
Meer bigots of the nation;
Whose designs are power and wealth,
At which by rapine, power, and stealth,
Audaciously they vent're ye;
They lay their consciences aside,

And turn with every wind and tide,
Puff'd on by ignorance and pride,
And all to look like gentry.

Crimes are not punish'd 'cause they're crimes,
But cause they're low and little:
Mean men for mean faults in these times
Make satisfaction to tittle;
While those in office and in power
Boldly the underlings devour,
Our cobweb laws can't hold 'em;
They sell for many a thousand crown
Things which were never yet their own,
And this is law and custom grown,
'Cause those do judge who sold 'em.

Brothers still with brothers brawl,
And for trifles sue 'em;
For two pronouns that spoil all
Contentious MEUM and TUUM.
The wary lawyer buys and builds
While the client sells his fields
To sacrifice his fury;
And when he thinks t' obtain his right,
He's baffled off or beaten quite
By the judge's will, or lawyer's slight,
Or ignorance of the jury.

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See the tradesman how he thrives
With perpetual trouble:
How he cheats and how he strives,
His estate t' enlarge and double;
Extort, oppress, grind and encroach,
To be a squire and keep a coach,
And to be one o' th' quorum;
Who may with's brother-worships sit,
And judge without law, fear, or wit,
Poor petty thieves, that nothing get,
And yet are brought before 'em.

And his way to get all this
Is mere dissimulation;
No factious lecture does he miss,
And 'scape no schism that's in fashion:
But with short hair and shining shoes,
He with two pens and note-book goes,
And winks and writes at random;
Thence with short meal and tedious grace,
In a loud tone and public place,
Sings wisdom's hymns, that trot and pace
As if Goliah scann'd 'em.

But when Death begins his threats,
And his conscience struggles
To call to mind his former cheats,
Then at Heaven he turns and juggles:
And out of all's ill-gotten store
He gives a dribbling to the poor;
An hospital or school-house;
And the suborn'd priest for his hire
Quite frees him from th' infernal fire,
And places him in th' angel's quire:
Thus these Jack-puddings fool us!

All he gets by's pains i' th' close,
Is, that he dy'd worth so much;
Which he on's doubtful seed bestows,
That neither care nor know much:
Then fortune's favourite, his heir,
Bred base and ignorant and bare,
Is blown up like a bubble:
Who wondering at's own sudden rise,
By pride, simplicity, and vice,
Falls to his sports, drink, drabs, and dice,
And make all fly like stubble.

And the Church, the other twin,
Whose mad zeal enraged us,
Is not purified a pin
By all those broils in which th' engaged us:
We our wives turn'd out of doors,
And took in concubines and whores,
To make an alteration;
Our pulpitors are proud and bold,
They their own wills and factions hold,
And sell salvation still for gold,
And here's our REFORMATION!

'Tis a madness then to make
Thriving our employment,
And lucre love for lucre's sake,
Since we've possession, not enjoyment:
Let the times run on their course,
For oppression makes them worse,
We ne'er shall better find 'em;
Let grandees wealth and power engross,
And honour, too, while we sit close,
And laugh and take our plenteous dose
Of sack, and never mind 'em.