Cavalier Songs and Ballads of England from 1642 to 1684

Edited by Charles Mackay

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INTRODUCTION.

The Cavalier Ballads of England, like the Jacobite Ballads of England and Scotland at a later period, are mines of wealth for the student of the history and social manners of our ancestors. The rude but often beautiful political lyrics of the early days of the Stuarts were far more interesting and important to the people who heard or repeated them, than any similar compositions can be in our time. When the printing press was the mere vehicle of polemics for the educated minority, and when the daily journal was neither a luxury of the poor, a necessity of the rich, nor an appreciable power in the formation and guidance of public opinion, the song and the ballad appealed to the passion, if not to the intellect of the masses, and instructed them in all the leading events of the time.In our day the people need no information of the kind, for they procure it from the more readily available and more copious if not more reliable, source of the daily and weekly press. The song and ballad have ceased to

deal with public affairs. No new ones of the kind are made except as miserable parodies and burlesques that may amuse sober costermongers and half-drunken men about town, who frequent music saloons at midnight, but which are offensive to every one else. Such genuine old ballads as remain in the popular memory are either fast dying out, or relate exclusively to the never-to-be-superseded topics of love, war, and wine. The people of our day have little heart or appreciation for song, except in Scotland and Ireland. England and America are too prosaic and too busy, and the masses, notwithstanding all their supposed advantages in education, are much too vulgar to delight in either song or ballad that rises to the dignity of poetry. They appreciate the buffooneries of the "Negro Minstrelsy," and the inanities and the vapidities of sentimental love songs, but the elegance of such writers as Thomas Moore, and the force of such vigorous thinkers and tender lyrists as Robert Burns, are above their sphere, and are left to scholars in their closets and ladies in their drawingrooms. The case was different

among our ancestors in the memorable period of the struggle for liberty that commenced in the reign of Charles I. The Puritans had the pulpit on their side, and found it a powerful instrument. The Cavaliers had the song writers on theirs, and found them equally effective. And the song and ballad writers of that day were not always illiterate versifiers. Some of them were the choicest wits and most accomplished gentlemen of the nation. As they could not reach the ears of their countrymen by the printed book, the pamphlet, or the newspaper, nor mount the pulpit and dispute with Puritanism on its own ground and in its own precincts, they found the song, the ballad, and the epigram more available among a musical and song-loving people such as the English then were, and trusted to these to keep up the spirit of loyalty in the evil days of the royal cause, to teach courage in adversity, and cheerfulness in all circumstances, and to ridicule the hypocrites whom they could not shame, and the tyrants whom they could not overthrow. Though many thousands of these have been preserved in the

King's Pamphlets in the British Museum, and in other collections which have been freely ransacked for the materials of the following pages, as many thousands more have undoubtedly perished. Originally printed as broadsides, and sold for a halfpenny at country fairs, it used to be the fashion of the peasantry to paste them up in cupboards, or on the backs of doors,and farmers' wives, as well as servant girls and farm labourers,who were able to read, would often paste them on the lids of their trunks, as the best means of preserving them. This is one reason why so many of them have been lost without recovery. To Sir W. C.Trevelyan literature is indebted for the restoration of a few of these waifs and strays, which he found pasted in an old trunk of the days of Cromwell, and which he carefully detached and presented to the British Museum. But a sufficient number of these flying leaves of satire, sentiment, and loyalty have reached our time, to throw a curious and instructive light upon the feelings of the men who resisted the progress of the English Revolution; and who made loyalty to the person of the

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monarch, even when the monarch was wrong, the first of the civic virtues. In the superabundance of the materials at command, as will be seen from the appended list of books and MSS. which have been consulted and drawn upon to form this collection, the difficulty was to keep within bounds, and to select only such specimens as merited a place in a volume necessarily limited, by their celebrity, their wit, their beauty,their historical interest, or the light they might happen to throw on the obscure biography of the most remarkable actors in the scenes which they describe. It would be too much to claim for these ballads the exalted title of poetry. They are not poetical in the highest sense of the word, and possibly would not have been so effective for the purpose which they were intended to serve, if their writers had been more fanciful and imaginative, or less intent upon what they had to say than upon the manner of saying it.But if not extremely poetical, they are extremely national, and racy of the soil; and some of them are certain to live as long as the language which produced them. For the convenience

of reference and consultation they have been arranged chronologically; beginning with the discontents that inaugurated the reign of Charles I., and following regularly to the final, though short-lived, triumph of the Cavalier cause, in the accession of James II. After his illomened advent to the throne, the Cavalier became the Jacobite. In this collection no Jacobite songs, properly so called, are included, it being the intention of the publishers to issue a companion volume, of the Jacobite Ballads of England, from the accession of James II. to the battle of Culloden, should the public receive the present volume with sufficient favour to justify the venture.

The Editor cannot, in justice to previous fellow-labourers, omit to record his obligation to the interesting volume, with its learned annotations, contributed by Mr Thomas Wright to the Percy Society;or to another and equally valuable collection, edited by Mr J. O.Halliwell.

December, 1862.

Ballad: When The King Enjoys His Own Again

This is perhaps the most popular of all the Cavalier songs - a favour which it partly owes to the excellent melody with which it is associated. The song, says Mr Chappell, is ascertained to be by Martin Parker, by the following extract from the GOSSIPS' FEAST, or Moral Tales, 1647. "By my faith, Martin Parker never got a fairer treat: no, not when he indited that sweet ballad, When the King enjoys his own again." In the poet's Blind Man's Bough (or Buff),1641, Martin Parker says,

"Whatever yet was published by me Was known as Martin Parker, or M. P.;"

but this song was printed without his name or initials, at a time when it would have been dangerous to give either his own name or that of his publisher. Ritson calls it the most famous song of any time or country. Invented to

support the declining interest of Charles I., it served afterwards with more success to keep up the spirits of the Cavaliers, and promote the restoration of his son;an event which it was employed to celebrate all over the kingdom.At the Revolution of 1688, it of course became an adherent of the exiled King, whose cause it never deserted. It did equal service in 1715 and 1745. The tune appears to have been originally known as MARRY ME, MARRY ME, QUOTH THE BONNIE LASS. Booker, Pond,Hammond, Rivers, Swallow, Dade, and "The Man in the Moon," were all astrologers and Almanac makers in the early days of the civil war."The Man in the Moon" appears to have been a loyalist in his predictions. Hammond's Almanac is called "bloody" because the compiler always took care to note the anniversary of the death,execution, or downfall of a Royalist.

What BOOKER doth prognosticate Concerning kings' or kingdoms' fate?I think myself to be as wise As he that gazeth on the skies;My skill goes beyond the depth of a

POND,Or RIVERS in the greatest rain,Thereby I can tell all things will be well When the King enjoys his own again.

There's neither SWALLOW, DOVE, nor DADE,Can soar more high, or deeper wade,Nor show a reason from the stars What causeth peace or civil wars;The Man in the Moon may wear out his shoon By running after Charles his wain:But all's to no end, for the times will not mend Till the King enjoys his own again.

Though for a time we see Whitehall With cobwebs hanging on the wall Instead of silk and silver brave,Which formerly it used to have,With rich perfume in every room, Delightful to that princely train,Which again you shall see, when the time it shall be,That the King enjoys his own again.

Full forty years the royal crown Hath been his father's and his own;And is there any one but he That in the same

should sharer be?For who better may the sceptre sway Than he that hath such right to reign?Then let's hope for a peace, for the wars will not cease Till the King enjoys his own again.

[Did WALKER no predictions lack In Hammond's bloody almanack?Foretelling things that would ensue,That all proves right, if lies be true;But why should not he the pillory foresee,Wherein poor Toby once was ta'en?And also foreknow to the gallows he must go When the King enjoys his own again?] (1)

Till then upon Ararat's hill My hope shall cast her anchor still,Until I see some peaceful dove Bring home the branch I dearly love;Then will I wait till the waters abate Which now disturb my troubled brain,Else never rejoice till I hear the voice That the King enjoys his own again.

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