

Nv14 The Prince of Wales with all his royall traine

Notes. This lumbering exercise in anti-Catholic wit does not seem to have been occasioned by any actual mishap at a show staged for Prince Charles in Madrid. Rather, the poem attempts to make some mild polemical capital out of the death of Pope Gregory XV in the summer of 1623.

“On a Shew presented before Prince Charles in the Spanish Courte”

The Prince of Wales with all his royall traine

Was entertained in the Courte of Spaine:

The Catholikes theire respects disclose

Delighting him with Feasts, & Maskes, & Shewes.

Meane while the Romish Church is sick & dead,

Shee died a Noble death, she lost her head.¹

The holie father having clos'd his eies,²

The Spanish states among themselves devise

To grace Christs Vicar: The Catholicks

Before the Prince with antike shewes and tricks.

Within the Stage heav'n placed is on high

Opposd to which hells dreadfull gulfe doth lie.

Then in come Popelings³ Angells them defending

The Protestants black divells them attending

The Papists dying (as most joyfull happ)

By troops ar Carried into Peters⁴ Lapp

The Protestant no sooner yeeld their breath

But Divells dragg them to the second death

Poore Puritanes⁵ away by thousands pack

Carryed most swiftly on the divells backe,

Amongst the rest the Holy Father dies,

As soon he must be mounted to the skies.

And that they may the more advance the Pope

They wind him into heaven with a Rope

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Nor must he as the Common sort ascend, 25
But troopes of Angells must his grace attend.
Now is hee mounting up in glorious state,
The rope hath brought him hard to heavens gate.
The blessed host now meaneth not to brave him,
And Peter stands as Porter to receave him; 30
All watch his Entrance; But I feare to tell!
The Rope breaks! The Pope falls into hell!
Yet greive not for your Fathers losse of Glory
Yee Catholikes; Hee's gone to purgatory⁶
To purg some secrett sin by him committed, 35
Which by your masses soon may bee remitted.⁷
And then he may no doubt with little paine
Peepe out of hell, & mount to heaven againe.
But pittie 'twas his merits were so great
They weighd him downe so hard the rope to breake. 40
But tell mee friends, wast not a pretty thing
The Pope should go to heaven in a string?
What aild thee, ô thou that didst him pluck?
Towards the starrs that thou hast such bad luck?
Thou shouldst have borne him up upon thy back 45
If that thou hadst but foreseen the rope would crack.
Doubtles the fault will all bee laied on thee
That thou didst not this great mishapp foresee.
And might I but Conjecture this; I thinke
That thou that night too freely tookst thy drinke. 50
And so twixt hawke, & buzard⁸ in thy Liquor
Thou madst a Divell of Christs Cheifest Vicar.
And what a chance 'twas such an holy man
Should have his portion with the Puritan?
O how the minds of Papists this doth daunt, 55

Thir Pope should dambd be with th' Protestant?
 Hee thinks that they that then about him went
 Should by their powr have stopt this fatall vent⁹
 Did they take charg to carry him on high
 And let him play the breaknecke by & by? 60
 Where lay the fault? what did the man deceave thee?
 Or did hee not foresee the Pope was heavie?
 Methinks thou shouldst have considred that
 His greate revenues needs must make him fatt.
 Besides perhaps he carried up about him 65
 Copes, Miters, Crosses, pixes, roodes¹⁰ without him.
 Doubtles within there was wondrous weight;
 His Heart & Conscience was not very light.
 And drawing upward such a heavie Pope
 How could it be but he must breake the Rope? 70
 Since this it stands that heaven did deceave him,
 And that small Rope of such great Joyes bereave him;
 Yett Hell was ready alwaies to receive him,
 There was he found att first & there I leave him.

Source. Bodleian MS Eng. Poet. e.97, pp. 167-68

Other known sources. BL MS Sloane 542, fol. 37r

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¹ *lost her head*: i.e. the head of the Church—the Pope—had died.

² *The holie father...eies*: alludes to the death of Pope Gregory XV in the summer of 1623. The news of his death reached Spain in mid-July.

³ *Popelings*: Catholic clergy.

⁴ *Peters*: St. Peter in heaven.

⁵ *Puritanes*: mocking term for the hotter sort of Protestant.

⁶ *purgatory*: the middle place, neither heaven nor hell, where Catholics believed most sinners would purge their sins in suffering before ascending to heaven.

⁷ *masses soon may bee remitted*: Catholics believed that masses for the dead would remit some of the time the souls of the dead spent in purgatory.

⁸ *twixt hawke, & buzard*: a 1662 definition of this proverbial phrase renders it as “between a good and a bad thing” (*OED*). Here it seems to mean “in a state of confusion”.

⁹ *vent*: fall.

¹⁰ *Copes...roodes*: various Catholic vestments and liturgical implements. Copes are ecclesiastical vestments; miters are headdresses; pyxes are boxes in which the consecrated host was stored; roods are crucifixes.
