

Nv3 I've read of Ilands flotinge and removed

Notes. This poem is accepted as the work of Richard Corbett, and is published in the modern edition of his poems. Since it confronts libellers, and since it also elicited one of the best attacks on Corbett (see "False on his Deanery: false, nay more, I'le say"), it warrants a place in this edition. The poem is discussed by McRae (Literature 167-68).

"Doctor Corbets letter to the D. of Buck: beinge in Spaine"

I've read of Ilands flotinge and removed

In Ovids time,¹ but never heard it prov'd

Till now: that fable by the Prince and you

By your transportinge England is made true.

Wee are not where we were, the dogstarre reignes²

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No cooler in our climate then in Spaine.

The selfe same ayre, same breath, same heate, & burninge

Is here, as there will be, till your returninge.

Come e're the Card³ be alter'd, lest perhaps

Your stay may make an error in the Mapps.

10

Least England should be found, when you should passe

A thousand times⁴ more southward then it was.

Oh that you were (my Lord) oh that you were

Now in Black-fryers⁵ in a disguis'd hayre,⁶

Or were the smith⁷ againe, two houres to be

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In Paules⁸ next Sunday, at full sea at three,

There should heare the Legends on each day

The perils of your June, and of your May,

Your Enterprises, Accidents, untill

You could arrive at Court, and reach Madrill.⁹

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There should you heare, how the Grandyes flowte you,

With their twice diligence about you;

How our environ'd Prince walkes with a guard

Of Spanish spyes, and his owne servants barr'd:
 How not a Chaplayne of his owne may stay 25
 When he would heare a Sermon preacht, or pray.
 You would be hungry having din'd to heare
 The Price of Victualls, and the scarc'ty there:
 As if the Prince had venter'd there his life
 To make a famine, not to get a wife. 30
 Your egges are addle too, and full as deare
 As English Capons, Capons as sheepe here:
 No grasse for horse or Cattle; for they say
 It is not cutt and made; grasse there growes hay.
 And then it is so seethinge hot they sweare, 35
 They never heard of a raw oyster there.
 Your cold meate comes in reakinge, and your wine
 Is all burnt sack, the fire was in the Vine
 Item your Pullets are distinguisht there
 Into 4 quarters, as wee carve the yeare, 40
 And are a weeke in wastinge; Munday noone
 A Wing, at supper somewhat with a spoone.
 Tuesday a legge, and so forth, sunday more
 The Livor, and the Gizzard betweene foure.
 As for your Mutton to the best housoulder 45
 Tis fellony to cheapen a whole shoulder.
 Lord, how our stomachs come to us againe
 When wee conceive what snatchinge is in Spaine.
 I whilst I write, and doe the newes repeate
 Am forc't to call for Breakefast in, and eate. 50
 And doe you wonder at this dearth, the while
 The floud that makes it run, the middle Ile
 Poets of Paules, those at D: Humfrey's messe¹⁰
 That feede on nought, but Graves and emptinesse.

But harke you (noble Sir) in one crosse weeke 55
My Lord hath lost 4 thousand pound at Gleeke.¹¹
And though they doe allow you little meate
They are content your losses should be great.
False on my Deanery,¹² falsar then your Fayries¹³
Or then your difference, with Cond' Aslivares¹⁴ 60
Which was reported strongely for one tyde
But after 6 houres flowinge, ebbd and dyde.
If God would not that this designe should be
Perfect and round without some knaverie,
Nor that our Prince should end his enterprize, 65
But for so many miles, soe many lyes:
If for a good event, the heavens doe please
Mens tounge should be come rougher then the seas,
And that the expence of paper shall be such,
We dare not looke on, much lesse presume to touch 70
Corantoes, dyets, packets, newes, more newes¹⁵
Which soe innocent whitenes doth abuse.
If first the Belgicke Pismire¹⁶ must be seene
Before the Spanish Lady be our Queene
With that successe, and such an end at last 75
All's wellcome, pleasant, gratefull, that is past.
And such an end wee pray, then shall you see,
A type of that which Brother Zebedee,¹⁷
Wisht for his¹⁸ sonnes in heaven: the Prince & you
Att either hand of James, you neede not sue 80
He on the right, you on the left, the Kinge
Safe in the best,¹⁹ you both invironinge.
Then shall I tell my Lord, his word and band
Are forfeit, till I kisse the Princes hand.
Then shall I see the Du:²⁰ your royall freind, 85

Give you all other honours, this You earn'd:
This you have wrought; for this you hammer'd out
Like a stronge Smith,²¹ good workman, and a stout.
In this I have a part, In this I see
Some new addition smilinge upon mee;
Who in an humble distance clayme a share
In all your greatenes whatsoever they are.

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Source. BL Add. MS 22603, fols. 39v-41r

Other known sources. Corbett, *Poems* 76; Bodleian MS Ashmole 47, fol. 83v; Bodleian MS Malone 19, p. 27; Bodleian MS Rawl. D. 1048, fol. 51v; BL Add. MS 33998, fol. 8v; BL MS Harley 6931, fol. 6r; Nottingham MS Portland PW V 37, p. 317; St. John's MS K.56, no. 65; St. John's MS S.32, fol. 38v; Beinecke MS Osborn b.197, p. 119; Folger MS V.a.162, fol. 66v; Folger MS V.a.345, p. 135; Rosenbach MS 239/22, fol. 36r; Rosenbach MS 239/27, p. 11

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- ¹ *I've read...time*: the Roman poet Ovid describes such floating islands in his *Metamorphoses*.
- ² *the dogstarre reignes*: the Dog Star (Sirius) was believed to reign during the hot months of July and August.
- ³ *Card*: chart or map.
- ⁴ *times*: "miles", found in other versions, seems a better reading.
- ⁵ *Black-fryers*: an area of London; but, perhaps, given the rest of the line, more specifically an allusion to the theatre at Blackfriars.
- ⁶ *disguis'd hayre*: Charles and Buckingham reportedly wore false beards as they made their way out of England.
- ⁷ *smith*: Charles and Buckingham used the pseudonyms Jack and Tom Smith as they made their way out of England.
- ⁸ *Paules*: St. Paul's Cathedral, a centre of political gossip in early Stuart London. The following section of the poem summarizes the talk in Paul's Walk—the nave and aisles of the Cathedral—about the voyage to Spain. Many of the details Corbett describes can be found in contemporary newsletters,

some of which are cited in Corbett, Poems 147-48.

⁹ *Madrill*: i.e. Madrid.

¹⁰ *middle Ile...messe*: allusion to the newsmongers who haunted St. Paul's—those who troll Paul's Walk (the “middle Ile” for news), the scribblers of political poetry (“Poets of Paules”), and those of limited means who loiter around the supposed tomb of Duke Humphrey of Gloucester (“to dine with Duke Humphrey” was a colloquial phrase meaning “to go without dinner”).

¹¹ *Gleeke*: a card game.

¹² *Deanery*: Corbett was Dean of Christ Church, Oxford.

¹³ *Fayries*: “fare is” is a better reading.

¹⁴ *Cond' Aslivares*: Don Gaspar de Guzmán, Count of Olivares, who emerged as the chief minister of the Spanish king, and the chief negotiator with Charles and Buckingham during their stay in Madrid.

¹⁵ *Corantoes...more newes*: a list of various news media circulating in the early 1620s. Corantoes were serial printed news publications on foreign affairs.

¹⁶ *Belgicke Pismire*: a tract by the notorious anti-Spanish pamphleteer Thomas Scott, published in 1622, that urged an English alliance with the Dutch against Spain.

¹⁷ *Brother Zebedee*: a better reading is “Mother Zebedee”. In Matthew 20.20-21, “the mother of Zebedee's children” asked Christ to “Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom”.

¹⁸ *his*: “her” is a better reading.

¹⁹ *best*: “mid'st” is a better reading.

²⁰ *Du*: Duke. Buckingham was elevated to a dukedom by James while in Spain.

²¹ *Smith*: blacksmith; but also alluding to Buckingham's “Tom Smith” pseudonym.
