

Nv4 False on his Deanrye? false nay more, Ile lay

Notes. This poem responds to Richard Corbett's "A Letter to the Duke of Buckingham, being with the Prince in Spaine" ("I've read of Ilands flotinge and removed"), seizing at its outset on Corbett's exclamation, "False on my Deanery". Its premise is an ironic claim that Corbett could not possibly have written such sycophantic work, and that he is now far more responsible and dignified than in his younger days. The poem is discussed by McRae (Literature 169).

"An Apologeticke ryme vindicating Dr. C. Deane of Ch. Ch.¹ from the aspersion of late adulatory verses published under his name"

False on his Deanrye? false nay more, Ile lay

As many poundes, as he, or-s freinds did pay
greate Phœbus dearling² for his dignity,

that noe such thought abusd his braine, that he
is growne in witt, as well as beard and place.

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Hees left his boyes play: scornes to be soe base
as bow his witts to those forgotten rime,

whose often Birthes endeerd his former time
to Tapsters, Ostlers,³ and that lovely crew

of soveraigne Bacchus⁴ witty mates, tis true

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his wanton youth and verse hath made them merry,

and servd to drawe downe white Canary, shery,

And by some was then deemed borne for nought

but to employ some ballad singers throate.

Those tymes are changd: hees greate, and tis the guise

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of raysd estates, (though madd men) to grow wise:

One patents power hath changd both mind and bloud
and made him at one clapp soe greate, soe good.

Tis blame to thinke him what he was; his coates

and Cassocks⁵ worth hath kild his wilder oates:

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His former toyes beleevt heel now disdayne

as much as Calvin or the Puritane.⁶

Sure twas some poetasters hungry braine
 whose hucstering rimes prevent the famin of Spayne
 In his owne gutts, who hath not what to eate 25
 or weare, butts witts; theres all his cloth and meate,
 Some taylour or some Fenner⁷ dare to lye
 and clapp his name to their false poetry.
 Or els perhaps twas some Satyrick quill
 that whip-d and scourgd our woodstock scene,⁸ who still 30
 beare malice in their inke: some such did doe it,
 and coynd a Deanry⁹ to steele credit to it.
 Beleeve or this or worse, but nere suppose
 heele yeeld to owne such flatterys as those:
 Such an extortion cannot but undoe 35
 the servilst mind; to pay and flatter too.
 Ist probable to thinke that ye should longe
 once more to be ground Pygeons songe?
 Or that he would provoke Court witts to singe
 the second part of th' bandstrings and the ringe?¹⁰ 40
 Or letts suppose, that he, which yet my braine
 will not admitt, made tryall of that veyne
 that earst his muse enrich him with, that he
 once more awakd his slumbring facultye,
 Yet sure he would provide his verse should be 45
 perfect, and round, without all knavery:
 the sacred volume¹¹ questionlesse shoulde scape
 the violence of a poeticke rape.
 The nicknamd mother Zebedee¹² could not
 proceede from one engrafft in Levies Lott¹³ 50
 Since each abuse of scriptures purer line
 gives stronger proofs of th-athist then divine
 In breife, his calling, place, degree disclaime
 this stupid act, this injury of fame.
 Nor will I ere beleve soe rich a Spirit

Should raise it selfe by ballads more then merit.

Source. Bodleian MS Rawl. D. 1048, fol. 53r-v

Other known sources. “Poems from a Seventeenth-Century Manuscript” 176; Bodleian MS Ashmole 36-37, fol. 155r; Bodleian MS Don. d.58, fol. 42r; Bodleian MS Malone 19, p. 30; BL Add. MS 21433, fol. 120v; BL Add. MS 25303, fol. 131r; BL Add. MS 61481, fol. 63r; Brotherton MS Lt. q. 11, no. 47; Nottingham MS Portland PW V 37, p. 319; St. John’s MS K.56, no. 65; Folger MS V.a.345, p. 133; Rosenbach MS 239/22, fol. 18v

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¹ *Dr. C. Deane of Ch. Ch.:* Richard Corbett, Dean of Christ Church, Oxford.

² *greate Phæbus darling:* i.e. James’s favourite, Buckingham. The charge here is that Corbett had paid Buckingham to secure the appointment at Christ Church.

³ *Tapsters, Ostlers:* those who draw the beer and house the horses at an inn or tavern.

⁴ *Bacchus:* the god of wine.

⁵ *Cassocks:* clerical vestments.

⁶ *disdayne...Calvin or the Puritane:* Corbett was renowned for his satires on Puritans (identified here with one of the leading Reformed theologians, John Calvin).

⁷ *Some taylour or some Fenner:* allusion to popular poets John Taylor and William Fenner.

⁸ *Satyrick quill...our woodstock scene:* allusion to the poet of the satire “The Kinge & the court desyrous of sport” which mocked the scholars of Oxford’s attendance on James’s court at Woodstock in the summer of 1621. The last stanza of the poem mocks Corbett’s performance as a preacher before the king.

⁹ *coynd a Deanry:* i.e. claimed the title of dean.

¹⁰ *th’ bandstrings and the ringe:* the last stanza of “The Kinge & the court desyrous of sport” had mocked Corbett for losing his place in his sermon as he became distracted by playing with a ring, given to him by James, that he had tied in his bandstring.

¹¹ *sacred volume:* the Bible.

¹² *Nicknamd mother Zebedee:* in Matthew 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”. Corbett alludes to this passage in his poem.

¹³ *Levies Lott*: unclear; perhaps the place of a cleric.

