

R8 Landless Will: of Lambeth strand

Notes. This poem identifies William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, as twin figures of popular disdain. It was probably written some time after the collapse of the Short Parliament in May 1640, but before the opening of the Long Parliament in November of the same year, and thus highlights the fevered tone of political discourse surrounding these two men, each of whom was destined to become a martyr to the royalist cause. Notably, whereas Strafford and Laud would later be portrayed as staunch royalists, this poem typifies a period in which those opposed to the policies of the Crown sought to stigmatize Charles's closest advisors as his enemies, and themselves as truly loyal. A variant version presents the first stanza as a discrete poem (NLS MS Advocates 19.3.8).

Landless Will: of Lambeth strand¹
and blacke Tom Tyrant of Ireland²
like Fox and wolfe did Lurke
with many Rookes and madgepies
to picke out good King Charles his eyes
and then be Pope and Turke.³

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And still they have him by the nose
he cannot see his Freinds from's Foes
nor yett theire divellish plott,
but since the vermine are found out
and lately hunted by the Route
they stinke most Pestilent hott

10

Whilst that in ballance even stode
the Church, the state, like souldiers Good
bravely boare upp the heade;
and with them sweetly did conspire
Peace, wealth and honor to acquire
without Coercive dreade.

15

But these Inovators⁴ doe Indevoure
the King and Subjects for to severe 20
and them to subdivide,

Tom doth the Commons racke & teare,
and Will. the Clergies skull up reare
which weighs downe all with Pride

Will, faine would weare a Triple Crowne⁵ 25
and Tom with scepter⁶ would beate downe
and breake the Commons Pates,

For the poore Protestants sage knaves
would be good Subjects yet not slaves
to new found Rights and rates 30

Tom like a Turkish Mungarell
to whom noe fiend nor divell of hell
can with more Cruell dreade
squeeze the poore Irish Cramacrees⁷
and makes them peepe through Pilleries 35
as they weare smitten deade.

Through blood and Teares he hath gott In
a Cursed Treasure to the Kinge
which poysons all the reste
unprosperous to Kinge and State 40
their Counsells all unfortunate
God bless us from the beaste.

And nowe the beast I thinke uppon
tis tyme to leave this Bedlam Tom⁸
that soe hath rent the state, 45
unto his Pox and flux and stone⁹

that Justly racks his flesh and bone
although it be to late.

Now to the little fox againe
and that perkinge wretch the wrenn¹⁰ 50
that Peaetely¹¹ ginns to prate.
What domineeringe do they keepe
like Pigmies (hercules being asleepe)¹²
and stroute it or'e the state.

Till Prentises caught upp the clubb 55
and swore them with those flailles to dubb
which made them skip aside;¹³
and duck where noe high alter was¹⁴
To let the Peoples fury passe
Soe odious was their pride. 60

Each Petty Preist practisd with hope,
and state enough to be a pope,
which most the wife denies
whom to recompence doth raise his crest
and make him like the Roman beast 65
Fuller of hornes then Eyes;¹⁵

but Plott and pride beginn to fall
Scotland hath kickt them oute of all;¹⁶
and England lately Gauled
doth wince, and lift to throwe the loade 70
since Ireland is soe undertrode,
neare was poore Ile soe mau'ld

Nowe England sure wilbe noe slave
haveing sapt soe many a knave

that lewdly laboured Itt
 Tom Turke thy Paines and scepters lost
 Pope Will thy triple Crowne is Crost
 The triple Tree¹⁷ must fitt

Source. BL MS Harley 6947, fol. 210r-v

Other known sources. NLS MS Advocates 19.3.8, fol. 33r; TCD MS 806, fol. 535r

R8

- ¹ *Landless Will: of Lambeth strand:* as Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud's London residence was Lambeth Palace; however, the poet seems concerned to point out that Laud does not own this property, and perhaps also to remind the reader of his relatively humble background (as the son of a Reading clothier).
- ² *blacke Tom Tyrant of Ireland:* Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, was Lord-Deputy of Ireland, where he established a reputation for harsh and authoritarian methods.
- ³ *Pope and Turke:* Laud was commonly charged by his enemies with popish leanings; "Turk" stands as symbolic of arbitrary and tyrannous rule.
- ⁴ *Inovators:* in the years preceding the Civil War, it is notable that the representatives of various different political and religious interests used the charge of "innovation" against their enemies. To Laud and Strafford, the "Puritans" were innovators; here, as in other proto-oppositionist discourse, the charge is turned back against them.
- ⁵ *Triple Crowne:* i.e. of a pope.
- ⁶ *scepter:* i.e. of a king.
- ⁷ *Irish Cramacrees:* while it has not been possible to trace the term "Cramacrees", the poet clearly signals sympathy here for the native Irish, politically repressed and financially "squeezed" under Wentworth's rule.
- ⁸ *Bedlam Tom:* madman; inhabitant of the Hospital of St. Mary of Bethlehem, used in early modern London to house lunatics.
- ⁹ *Pox and flux and stone:* medical terms; loosely, venereal disease, dysentery, kidney-stone.

- ¹⁰ *that perkinge wretch the wrenn*: Matthew Wren, Bishop of Norwich and one of Laud's closest allies. Wren's persecution of Puritans had attracted considerable comment, most notably in the pamphlet *Newes from Ipswich* (1636), probably written (at least in part) by William Prynne.
- ¹¹ *Peaetely*: possibly "pertly"; i.e. boldly, audaciously.
- ¹² *What domineeringe...being asleepe*): the image is of small and insignificant people exploiting the lethargy of a ruler. "[H]ercules" here may be code for the King.
- ¹³ *Till Prentises...skip aside*: probable allusion to an incident that occurred soon after the collapse of the Short Parliament, in May 1640. A mob of over 1000 apprentices descended upon Lambeth Palace, Laud's London residence, to protest at his reputed role in the Parliament's failure. Laud dodged the protest (i.e. "skip[ped] aside") by moving into Whitehall.
- ¹⁴ *and duck...was*: allusion to Laud's controversial position on Church furnishings; the subtext is that the high altar cannot here protect him against the people's fury.
- ¹⁵ *Each Petty Preist...then Eyes*: the scurrilous suggestion here is that Laudian priests are so committed to proto-Catholic practices that they resist sex with their own wives, and as a result they are rewarded with the "horns" of a cuckold. The reference to "the Roman beast" draws on imagery of the Book of Revelation, which describes the Whore of Babylon sitting on "a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns" (Revelation 17.3).
- ¹⁶ *Scotland hath kickt...all*: reference to the Bishops' Wars of 1639 and 1640, and possibly also to the issue that prompted the Wars, Scottish resistance to the Laudian English Liturgy.
- ¹⁷ *triple Tree*: i.e. Tyburn (place of execution in London).
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