God Save the King

"...written by Mr. Stansbury, at New York but a short time before the end of the war" (Sargent 88).

Time was, in defense of his King and the Right,
We applauded brave Washington foremost in fight:
On the banks of Ohio he shouted lustily
    God save the King!
Disappointed ambition his feet has misled;
Corrupted his heart and perverted his head:
Loyal no longer, no more he cries faithfully
    Glory and joy crown the King!

With Envy inflam'd 'tis in Britain the same;
Where leaders, despairing of virtuous fame,
Have push'd from their seats those whose watchword was constantly
    God save the King!
The helm of the State they have clutched in their grasp
When American Treason is at its last gasp:
When Firmness and Loyalty soon should sing valiantly
    Glory and joy crown the King!

Sargent seems, even in 1860, to have been able to print these lines only with difficulty. (Remember that not only was Washington the revered general and first president of the US, he was also a southerner!) He includes a lengthy endnote discussing Washington's career and character, concluding pompously, "It is not, at this day, too much to say, that the common suffrage of all that is wise and good in human nature, authorizes us to question that man's soundess of judgement or rectitude of purpose, who impugns the character of George Washington" (187).

When Good Queen Elizabeth Governed the Realm

Presumably "Hearts of Oak," the air for this song, is the familiar "Heart of Oak," which Simpson referred to as "part of the basic repertoire of British national song" (299). It first appeared in a pantomime by David Garrick, summing up the many good tidings of 1759 for Londoners, including Wolfe's success at Quebec. It was shortly after used as a Whig anthem by Pennsylvania writer John Dickinson, whose broadside version included the following chorus (in "the clear imitation of Garrick's original song"; Simpson 300):

> In freedom we're born, and in freedom we'll live;
> Our purses are ready,
> Steady, Friends, steady.
> Not as slaves, but as freemen our money we'll give.

When good Queen Elizabeth govern'd the Realm,
And Burleigh's sage Counsels directed the Helm,
In vain Spain and France our Conquests oppos'd;
For Valour conducted what Wisdom propos'd.
    Beef and Beer was their Food;
    Love and Truth arm'd their Band;
    Their Courage was ready—
    Steady, Boys, Steady—
To fight and to conquer by Sea and by Land.

Stansbury undoubtedly felt that he was merely reappropriating the song for the Loyalist cause!

Sargent found this item in a manuscript and suggests that it was "probably composed for a meeting of the sons of St. George in 1774 or 1775. According to Tyler, it was written "...in the midst of the political exasperation connected with the tea-business..." (83). The "tea-business" was a tax imposed on tea coming into the colonies; vigorous and witty though it was, perhaps Stansbury's solution to this injustice ("just drink beer," a home made, presumably untaxed, product) seemed a little flabby to radical ears.

But since Tea and Coffee, so much to our Grief,
Have taken the place of Strong Beer and Roast Beef,
Our Laurels have wither'd, our Trophies been torn;
And the Lions of England French triumphs adorn.
    Tea and slops are their food;
    They unnerve every Hand—
    Their Courage unsteady
    And not always ready—
They often are conquer'd by Sea and by Land.
St. George views with Transport our generous flame:
"My Sons, rise to Glory, and rival my fame.
"Ancient Manners again, in my Sons! I behold
"And this Age must eclipse all the Ages of Gold."

Beef and Beer are our food;
Love and Truth Arm our Band;
Our Courage is steady
And always is ready
To fight and to conquer by Sea and by Land.

While thus we regale as our Fathers of old,
Our Manners as Simple, our Courage as bold,
May Vigour and Prudence our Freedom secure
Long as Rivers, or Ocean, or Stars shall endure.

Beef and beer are our food;
Love and Truth arm our Band;
Our Courage is steady,
And always is ready
To fight and to conquer by Sea and by Land.

When good Queen E-liz-a-beth gov-ern'd the realm, And Bur-leigh's sage Coun-sels di-
rect-ed the Helm, In vain Spain and France our Con-quests op-pos'd; For

Val-our con-duct-ed what Wis-dom pro-posed. Beef and Beer was their Food; Love and

Truth arm'd their Band; Their Cour-age was read-y Steady, Boys, Steady- To

fight and to con-quer by Sea and by Land.

Doubtless the most enjoyable circumstances under which these songs can be given are those under which I have oftenest heard them—on canoeing voyages and around campfires. When two or more canoes are together on some quiet water, nothing is more delightful than to hear a voice from one of them start one of these songs, singing perhaps a couple of lines, which are repeated in chorus. Then may come more lines similarly echoed, and so on, the chorus forming by far the most important part of the performance. If the journey is a leisurely one, the song will very likely be "Isabeau S'y Promène," but if there is occasion for haste it will be "Derrière Chez Nous Ya-t-un Étang," with the ringing chorus, "En Roulant Ma Boule." Around campfires, the songs are not less fascinating than in the canoes....

We once had a considerable party of staid and dignified college professors. After a round of Canadian songs, these serious minded gentlemen stood up and sang "Johnny Schmoker," "Was Mach der Herr Papa," and a lot more of the college songs of thirty or forty years ago! It was a pleasure to see these earnest scholars recalling their sophomore days, joining hands and singing "Gaudeamus Igitur" with all the enthusiasm of youth.

William Parker Greenough, Canadian Folk-life and Folk-lore (Quebec, 1897)

I'll always be grateful for having heard traditional singers early in life, so that, when the time came, I could evaluate, say, the Kingston Trio in terms of O.J. Abbott rather than having to evaluate O.J. Abbott in terms of the Kingston Trio!

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