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## Charles Stuart, Charles I King of England, Scotland and Ireland, 247 King Charles His Speech, and last Farewell to the World

Peter Davidson (ed.), Poetry and Revolution: An Anthology of British and Irish Verse 1625–1660

Published in print: 1998

Published online: September 2013

### 247 King CHARLES His Speech, and last Farewell to the World, made upon the Scaffold at Whitehall-gate, on Tuesday, January 30. 1648.

To the Tune of, *Weladay*.

Faire Englands joy is fled,  
*Weladay, weladay,*

Our Noble King is dead,  
Sweet Prince of love;

5 This heavy news so bad,  
Hath made three Kingdoms sad,  
No comfort to be had,  
But from above.

On Tuesday last his Grace,

10 *Chearfully, chearfully,*  
Went to his dying place,  
to end all strife,  
Where many a weeping eye  
With groans unto the skie,

15 To see his Majesty  
there end his life.

.....  
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His Foes he did forgive,  
*Graciously, graciously,*  
And wisht we all might live

20 in quiet peace.  
He wisht what ere was past,

That he might be the last,  
No sorrow we might taste,  
but wars might cease.

25 Theres nothing griev'd him so,  
*Weladay, weladay,*  
As when he thought that woe  
might light on all.

The tears stood in his eyes  
30 To heare the peoples cries,  
And think what miscarries  
on us should fall.

Upon the Scaffold then,  
*Weladay, weladay,*  
35 In hearing of all men  
this he made knowne,  
That Hee was innocent  
of all the blood was spent,  
He strove with Parliament  
40 but for his owne.

Quoth he, themselves confest,  
*Weladay, weladay,*  
And thus much have exprest  
in mine owne hearing,  
45 The *Militia* in mine hand  
was granted by the land  
To be at my command,  
none with me sharing.

The keeping of the same,  
50 *Weladay, weladay,*  
I know not who to blame,  
they did desire.

.....  
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Which made us disagree,  
The fault's now laid on me,  
55 This all the world may see  
set all on fire.

## NOTES

**247** Text: *King Charles his speech* [Broadside (fragment): John Rylands University Library of Manchester, II, 54]. Edition: ed. H. E. Rollins, *Cavalier and Puritan: Ballads and Broad-sides Illustrating the Period of the Great Rebellion 1640–1660*, New York, 1923, pp. 233–5. The ballad of which this is a propagandist variant would appear to be in origin a devotional ballad on the Passion of Christ. An earlier political use, equally daring, is recorded, dating from 1603: 'A lamentable Ditty composed upon the Death of Robert Lord Devereux late Earle of Essex'. It is also dittied to the tune of 'Welladay' and begins

Sweet England's pride is gone  
Welladay, welladay

(ed. William Chappell, *The Roxburghe Ballads*, 1871, pp. 563–70).

This is a propaganda poem working with some skill on two levels: emphasizing the status of Charles I as a martyr, and refuting, with the apparent authority of his (essentially invented) dying words the commonest charges laid against him.

**247** 2 *Weladay* alas

9 *his Grace* an older title than 'his Majesty'

31 *miscarries* calamities

41 *Quoth* said

45 *Militia* army