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Gerrard [Jerrard] Winstanley, 261 The Diggers Song 1649 (1649)

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261 THE DIGGERS SONG 1649

You noble diggers all stand up now
you noble diggers all stand up now
the wast land to maintaine seeing Cavaleirs by name
your digging does disdaine and persons all defame
5 Stand up now stand up now

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Your houses they pull down: stand up now stand up now,
your houses they etc.
your houses they pull down to fright poore men in town,
but the gentry must come down, and the poor shall wear the Crown
10 Stand up now diggers all.

With spades and hoes and plowes: stand up now, stand up now,
with spades and hoes etc.
your freedome to uphold seeing Cavaleirs are bold
to kill you if they could and rights from you to hold
15 Stand up now diggers all.

There self will is their law, stand up now stand up now,
their self will etc.
since Tyranny came in, they count it now no sin
to make a Gaole a gin, to sterve poor men therein
20 Stand up now stand up now.

The Gentry are all round, stand up now stand up now
the gentry are all round etc.
the Gentry are all round on each side they are found
there wisdomes so profound, to cheat us of our ground
25 Stand up now stand up now.

The Lawyers they conjoyne, stand up now stand up now,
the lawyers they etc.
to Arrest you they advise, such fury they devise
the devill in them lies, and hath blinded both their eyes.

30 Stand up now stand up now.

The Clergy they come in stand up now stand up now,
the Clergy they etc.
the Clergy they come in, and say it is a sin
that we should now begin, our freedom for to win.

35 Stand up now diggers all

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The Tiths they yet will have, stand up now stand up now,
the tiths they etc.
the tithes they yet will have, and Lawyers their fees crave
and this they say is brave, to make the poor their slave

40 Stand up now diggers all.

'Gainst lawyers and the Priests, stand up now, stand up now,
'gainst Lawyers etc.
for Tyrants they are both, even flatt against their oath
to grant us they are loth, free meat and drinke and cloth

45 Stand uppe now diggers all.

The Club is all their Law, stand uppe now, stand uppe now
The Club is all their Law, stand uppe now,
The Club is all their Law to keepe men in awe,
but they noe vision saw to maintaine such a Law.

50 Stand uppe now diggers all.

The Cavaleers are foes, stand uppe now, stand uppe now,
The Cavaleers are foes stand uppe now
The Cavaleers are foes, themselves they do disclose
by verses nott in prose, To please the singing boyes

55 Stand uppe now diggers all.

To conquer them by Love, come in now, come in now,
To conquer them by love, come in now,
To conquer them by Love, as itt does you behove,
for hee is Kinge above, and noe power like to Love.

60 Glory heere diggers all.

NOTES

261 See Notes on the Text for the probable occasion of the poem

261 Text: Worcester College, Oxford, MS Clarke 18, ff. 32r-33v. Edition: ed. C. H. Firth, *Clarke Papers: Selections from the Papers of William Clarke*, Camden Society, 4 vols., 1891-1901, ii. 221-4; cd. David Norbrook and H. R. Woudhuysen, *The Penguin Book of Renaissance Verse*, 1992, no. 211, pp. 464-6.

The poem is unattributed in the Worcester College MS, a manuscript which contains several writings by Winstanley. In 1649, the probable date of the poem, Winstanley, Henry Bickcrstaffe, and Thomas Star cultivated common land, paying no rent, at St George's Hill, Walton, Surrey. Their stock was attacked with clubs and they were prosecuted.

19 *gin* snare, trap

26 *conjoyne* join with

46 *Club* metaphorically, violence, as well as with specific reference to beatings of Diggers and their stock