

Written Upon the Occasion of the Martyrdom of Edmund Campion SJ

Thomas Pounce SJ (1539 – 1614)

A true reporte on the death & martyrdom of M. Campion, iesuite and preiste, & M. Sherwin, and M. Bryan preistes, at Tiborne the first of December 1581, obseruid and written by a Catholique preist, wich was present thereat.

What iron heart that would not melt in grief?
what steel or stone could keep him dry from tears?
to see a *Campion* hailed like a Thief,
to end his life, with both his glorious peers.
in whose three deaths unto the standers by :
even all the world almost might seem to die.

England must lose a sovereign salve for sin
a sweet receipt for subtle Heresy :
India a Saint her silly souls to win,
Turkey a bane for her idolatry.
the Church a soldier against *Babylon* :
to batter hell and her confusion.

The scowling skies did storm and puff apace,
they could not bear the wrong that malice wrought,
the sun drew in his shining purple face,
the moistened clouds shed brinish tears for thought,
the river *Thames* awhile astonished stood
to count the drops of *Campion's* sacred blood.

Nature with tears bewailed her heavy loss,
honesty feared herself should shortly die,
religion saw her champion on the cross,
angels and saints desired leave to cry,
even heresy the eldest child of hell,
began to blush, and thought she did not well.

And yet behold when *Campion* made his end,
his Humble heart was so bedewed with grace,
that no reproach could once his mind offend,
mildness possessed his sweet and cheerful face,

a patient spectacle was presented then,
in sight of God, of angels, saints, and men.

The heavens did clear, the sun like gold did shine,
the clouds were dry, the fearful river ran,
nature and virtue wept their watered eyen,
religion joyed to see so mild a man,
men, angels, saints, and all that saw him die,
forgot their grief, his joys appeared so nigh.

They saw his patience did expect a crown,
his scornful cart a glorious heavenly place.
his lowly mind a happy high reknown,
his humble cheer a shining angel's face,
his fear, his grief, his death & agony,
a joy, a peace, a life in majesty.

From thence he prays and sings in melody
for our recure, and calleth us to him,
he stands before the throne with harmony,
and is a glorious suture for our sin.
with wings of love he jumped up so high,
to help the cause for which he sought to die.

Rejoice, be glad, triumph, sing hymns of joy,
Campion, Sherwin, Brian, live in bliss,
they sue, they seek the ease of our annoy,
they pray, they speak, and all effectual is,
not like to men on earth as heretofore,
but like to saints in heaven, and that is more.