

Tom Taylor (1817-80)

1 *Ballad of the Judge and the Master*

The stout Master of Trinitie
A vow to God did make,
Ne Judge, ne Sheriff, through his back door
Their way from Court should take.

And syne he hath closed his big, big book, 5
And syne laid down his pen,
And dour and grimly was his look,
As he called his serving-men: —

“Come hither, come hither, my porter Watts!
Come hither, Moonshine, to me! 10
If he be Judge in the Justice Hall,
I’ll be Judge in Trinitie.

“And Sheriff Green is a lordly man
In his coat of the velvet fine;
But he’ll rue the day that he took his way 15
Through back gate of mine!

“Now bolt and bar, my flunkies true,
Good need is ours, I ween;
By the trumpet so clear, the Judge is near,
And eke bold Sheriff Green.” 20

Oh, a proud, proud man was the Master to see,
With his serving-men behind,
As he strode down the stair with his nose in the air,
Like a pig that scents the wind.

And they have barred the bigger gate, 25
And they have barred the small,
And soon they spy the Sheriff’s coach,
And the Sheriff so comely and tall.

And the Sheriff straight has knocked at the gate,
And tirlèd at the pin; 30
“Now open, open, thou proud porter,
And let my Lord Judge in!”

“Nay, Sheriff Green,” quoth the proud porter,
“For this thing may not be;
The Judge is Lord in the Justice Hall, 35
But the Master in Trinitie.”

Then the Master smiled on the porter Watts,
And gave him a silver joe;
And, as he came there with his nose in the air,
So back to the lodge did go. 40

Then outspoke the grave Lord Justice, — “Ho!
Sheriff Green, what aileth thee?
Bid the trumpets blow, that the folk may know,
And the gate be opened free.”

But a troubled man was the Sheriff Green, 45
And he sweated as he did stand;
And in silken stock each knee did knock,
And the white wand shook in his hand.

Then black grew the brow of the Judge, I trow,
And his voice was stern to hear, 50
As he almost swore at Sheriff Green,
Who wrung his hands in fear.

“Now, out and alas, my Lord High Judge,
That I this day should see!
When I did knock, from behind the lock 55
The porter thus answered me:
“That thou wert Lord in the Justice Hall,
But the Master in Trinitie.”

“And the Master hath bid them bar the gate
'Gainst kaiser or 'gainst king.” 60
“Now by my wig!” quoth the judge in wrath,
“Such answer *is not the thing*.”

“Break down the gate, and tell the knave
That would stop my way so free,
That the wood of his skull is as thick to the full 65
As the wood of the gate may be!”

That voice so clear when the porter did hear,
He trembled exceedingly;
Then soon and straight he flung open the gate,
And the Judge and his train rode by. 70

(From George Barnett Smith, ed. *Illustrated British Ballads, Old and New*. Vol. 1. London, 1881)