

W. M. Thackeray (1811-63)

5 *The Excellent New Ballad of Mr. Peel at Toledo*

Says Bulwer to Peel,  
‘This note where my seal  
And Ambassador’s arms are displayed O,  
Is big with a freight  
Of secrets of weight, 5  
Concerning a town of Tolaydo.  
’Tis a delicate job,  
And I’ve chosen you, Bob,  
And beg you will hasten with speed O,  
And deliver the note 10  
Where you see that I’ve wrote  
The address, — at the town of Toledo.

‘So quit your cigars,  
And your twangling guitars,  
And the beautiful dames on the Prado; 15  
And haste and fulfil  
Your Ambassador’s will,  
By posting away to Tolaydo.’  
‘Some pangs I may feel  
To part,’ says young Peel, 20  
‘From music, and woman, and weed O!  
But to honour my Queen,  
I would run to Pekin,  
And shall I not go to Toledo?’

So he uttered a roar 25  
For his carriage-and-four.  
The order was straightway obey’d, O,  
And he bade his young man to  
Pack up his portmanteau,  
And was off in a trice to Tolaydo. 30  
‘My pistols I’ll load’  
(Says he) ‘for the road,  
And make the banditti to bleed, O.

With powder and ball,  
I'll massacre all  
The rogues between this and Toledo.' 35

Now galloping fast,  
The journey is past  
As quick as four animals may do.  
Till at length the postilions 40  
(Those faithful Sevillians)  
Drive up to the gates of Tolaydo.  
They pull up their mules  
(For such do the fools  
Employ, and not horses as we do), 45  
And say 'Monsignor,  
We are now at the door  
Of the elegant town of Toledo.'

Some carabineers  
Kept guard, it appears, 50  
At the gate, and imagine what they do?  
The rascals approach  
To examine the coach  
As it stops at the door of Tolaydo!  
'Let go my barouche,' 55  
With a scream and a push,  
Says Peel, as they ventur'd the deed, O.  
And, inspir'd with disgust,  
His pistols he thrust  
In the face of the men of Toledo. 60

'Have a care, my signors,'  
The gentleman roars,  
As fierce as a Western tornado,  
'Approach my coach panes,  
And I'll blow out the brains 65  
Of each carabineer in Tolaydo.  
I swear with an oath  
To murder I'm loath,  
But if ever you venture on me do;  
With powder and ball 70  
I'll murder you all,

As sure as you live at Toledo.'

The Carabineers,  
They heard him with fears,  
And stood, in their glory arrayed, O, 75  
All formed in long lines,  
With their big carabines,  
Across the main street of Tolaydo.  
'Be hanged to his shot,'  
Says the Captain. 'For what 80  
'Gainst fifty can one such as he do?'  
His pistols Peel cocks  
(They were Manton's or Nocks'),  
And prepares to encounter Toledo.

But what sudden alarms 85  
Make the soldiers ground arms,  
As if they were told on parade, O?  
What angel of peace  
Bids the hubbub to cease  
'Twixt Peel and the guard of Tolaydo? 90  
Inform'd of the rout,  
And what 'twas about,  
As quickly as if he were fee'd O,  
At double quick trot  
There comes to the spot 95  
The Political Chief of Toledo.

He beseeches his sons  
To fling down their guns,  
With a voice like the canes of Barbado,  
'Why seek, silly boy,' 100  
He says, 'to destroy  
The peace of the town of Tolaydo?'  
Young Peel, at his frown,  
Was fain to look down,  
As mute as a fish or torpedo; 105  
And, looking sheepish,  
Says 'It wasn't my wish  
To kick up a row in Toledo.

'It wasn't for quarrels  
 That these double-barrels 110  
 From out my coach-door were displayed O;  
 But to ask if a pistol  
 Was subject to fiscal  
 Or custom-house dues at Tolaydo.'  
 The Political chief 115  
 Expressed his belief,  
 Bob grinned at the simpleton's credo;  
 The Carabineers  
 They uttered three cheers,  
 And bade the young hero proceed, O! 120  
 And the name of the youth  
 Is famous for truth,  
 Henceforth, in Madrid and Toledo.

#### MORAL

My tale it is said,  
 And now it is read, 125  
 My jolly philosophers say, do,  
 If Bobby the old  
 Isn't sometimes as bold  
 As Bobby the young at Tolaydo?  
 Yes, the sire and the colt 130  
 Both know how to bolt,  
 'Tis the chivalrous blood of the breed O,  
 And we see in the youth  
 The Man of Maynooth,  
 And in Parliament House *his* Toledo. 135

1845

(From W. M. Thackeray, *Ballads and Contributions to  
 'Punch' 1842-1850*. Ed. with an Introduction by George  
 Saintsbury. London: Oxford UP, n.d.)