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What a Court Hath Old England

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(George Stevens, in 1775)

What a court hath old England of folly and sin
Spite of Chatham and Camden, Barre, Burkes, Wilks and Glynn
Not content with the game act, they taxed fish and sea
And America drench with hot water and tea

Derry down, down, down, derry down

But if the wise council of England doth think
They may be enslaved by the power of drink,
They're right to enforce it; but then do you see?
The colonies, too, may refuse and be free.

There's no knowing where this oppression will stop
Some say there's no cure but a capital chop.
And that I believe each American's wish
Since you've drenched 'em with tea and deprived 'em of fish.

The birds of the air and the fish of the sea
By the gods for poor Dan Adam's use were made free,
Till a man with more power than old Moses would wish
Said, "Ye wretches, ye shan't touch a fowl or a fish!"

Three generals these mandates have borne 'cross the sea
To deprive 'em of fish and make 'em drink tea;
In turn, sure, these freemen will boldly agree
To give 'em a dance upon Liberty Tree.

Then freedom's the word, both at home and abroad
So out with each scabbard that hides a good sword
Our forefathers gave us this freedom in hand
And we'll die in defense of the rights of the land.

parody of Liberty Hall, 1757

printed in Burl Ives Songbook, 1953

tune: derry down

SOF, AJS