

“We Are Not Amused”

By C. Claypool

Unlike Marie Antoinette’s purported statement, “Let them eat cake,” Queen Victoria’s oft-quoted phrase appears to have truly been an expression of her displeasure at an off-color remark, and not just a myth.

One of the tales about its first appearance involved a Lieutenant Bruce, a youthful subaltern in the British army in India. One evening over dinner, he dared to tell a slightly spicy story to his neighbor. The following burst of laughter drew Queen Victoria’s attention, and she demanded to know the inspiration. A mortified subaltern repeated the story, and when he finished, the queen supposedly issued her famous statement.