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A

LETTER

TO THE

Oxford TORIES.

By an ENGLISHMAN.

*Ut demum Animis Salutique
Vestræ provideretis. CICERO.*

L O N D O N :

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A

LETTER

TO THE

OXFORD TORIES.

GENTLEMEN,

YOU may probably be inclined to afford a slender Attention to what I have to offer to You, when you find me setting out with an Acknowledgment of my Want of Abilities to discern the genuine and fixed Import of the Apellation by which you are addressed in my Title-Page.— I call you *Tories*, because such you call yourselves: But the real and essential Difference between a Church of England Academick *Tory* and a Church of England Academick *Whig* is, I confess, a Secret to my Understanding; both

A 2

these

these having subscribed the same Articles of *Religious* Faith ; Both having given to the same Government the same Solemn Security for their *Civil* Obedience : Surely then there can be no Absurdity in an Assertion that a Distinction made between Members of the same Communion, *sworn* Subjects to the same Prince, is a Distinction without a *Difference*, an Opposition in *Name* only, destitute of any Foundation in *Fact*.

Now as I see you eager on all Occasions to disavow the Creed of *Jacobitism* ; as I have known you fire at the most distant Imputation of any real Disaffection to the Government by which you are protected, I do here as expressly disavow any Intention on my Part directly or indirectly to lay this Crime to your Charge. If amongst you there are inrolled any Individuals of so *black* a Complexion, (the Number of which, I am persuaded, are inconsiderable) to Those *Few* I really do not write.—Men so absurd, so very impious place Themselves much below the Dignity of *Reason* and *Argument*.

He, who can, for his own Temporal Advantage, enter into Obligations *sacred* and *solemn*, as the Oaths of *Allegiance* and *Abjuration* are, and This done, dispute, clamour, drink, or riot
for

for the Person whom He has abjured, then wipe his Mouth and say " I have done no " Wickedness," must have a System of Morality peculiar to Himself, must be deaf to the Voice of *Persuasion*, must be left to the Lashes of a *Fiend* of his own creating, an *Evil Conscience*.—On such a one (how much soever his Folly may render him an Object of *Compassion*) Instruction must be lost; and if amongst you there are, as you affirm, and as I am forward to believe, *none* of this Cast of Mind, no avowed Advocates for *Perjury*, it follows that my Portrait of a *Chimera*, a *Juring Jacobite*, must give Offence to *no Body*.

But whatever you *affirm* of yourselves, or whatever I *believe* concerning you, the World, which has it's Eyes upon you, will be claiming a Right to form a Judgment of your Political Creed, from *External Appearances*: And if these shall happen to be against you, *where* is your Charter of Exemption from Worldly Censure?

Suppose, for Instance, (it is not in the Power of *Grimace*, *Buffoonery* or a Childish *Verborum Lusus* to deprive a Polemick Writer of his Privilege to form any possible *Supposition*) suppose, I say, on a fair Scrutiny into the
 Conduct

Conduct of the Leaders of your Party, for more than thirty Years last past, it shall appear that no one *Minister*, no one *Measure* of Government has obtained your Approbation, or escap'd your Displeasure, can you, in such Case, expect that the World should have such a Partiality for your Sentiments, as to pronounce that the Rulers of *Great Britain* are always *wrong*, and the Rulers of *Oxford* always *right*? And will not Those, to whom you are not thoroughly known, be rather led to conclude, from such a Continuance, such an Obstinacy of Opposition, that your Dislike to *every* Publick Measure proceeds from a determin'd Aversion to "*the Powers that Be?*"——Again;

If in the Election of Members into your several Societies (with an Exception to Two, or at most Three of your Colleges) such Candidates for your Favour, as labour under a Suspicion of any Zeal for the Government, have often been for that Reason *alone* rejected, when their Learning was unquestionable, and their Morals without a Blemish;—And if in certain Publick Elections, made by the whole Body of the University, the first Point resolv'd by the ruling Party hath been, "*that the Vote of every Whig Elector should be fruitless;*" it is to be feared

feared that the World, unacquainted with your *Local Policy*, may be apt to impute so extraordinary a Procedure to the Absence of a proper Zeal for the Government in That *ruling Party*.—And

Lastly, The Press has furnished the World with Evidence that one Academick (a Gentleman of confessed Learning, a Tutor of Acknowledged Abilities, a Citizen in high and deserved Esteem for his Probity, his Honour, his laudable Conduct in Moral and Social Life) has lately been treated as ill as, by the little low Arts of Ridicule and Malevolence, he could be treated: But for what Reason?—Why truly because this Tutor had the Conscience and Courage to publish a *Lecture of Loyalty*, and to oblige every Friend to *Great Britain* with a rational and cogent Defence of its present Constitution in Church and State.

This is the Offence which has raised a Storm of Obloquy against him; to which He is as much superior as the Approbation and Esteem of the intelligent World can make him.—But what is That World to think of his Libellers? May it not be said that the *Cause*, which he espoused, and not the *Man*, was the Object of their Venom?

These.

These, Gentlemen, are *some* of the apparent Errors in your Conduct, which has given Umbrage to *real* Patriots, to Those who have at Heart the inseparable Interests of their *Country* and of their *King*; and as they have no Method of attaining a Knowledge of your Political *Faith* but by your *Practice*, These Errors have created in them a Suspicion of the *First*, which it is incumbent on you to remove by an actual Reformation of the *Latter*. And to raise in you a proper Attention to a Measure so laudable is (on my Honour I aver it) my principal, my only Point in View, by giving You and Myself the Trouble of this inaccurate Address.

Let me then request you to look a very little Way back into the History of England, and to bestow some Reflections on the Conduct of your Predecessors (to their Honour I mean) the *Oxford Tories* at a Crisis when *your University* in particular, and the Kingdom in general trembled at the large Strides taken by *Popery* and *Arbitrary Power*; when *Royal Mandates* superseded the Authority of *Local Statutes*, and *Royal Dispensations* over-ruled the Obligation of *solemn Oaths*; when *Protestants*, because they were *Protestants*, were by Violence despoiled of their

their legal Possessions, and *Papists*, because they were *Papists*, were by Violence appointed to succeed them: When an Ambassador was delegated from *England* to the Court of *Rome*, and a Cardinal Nuntio from thence received in *England*; both which, even by the Laws then subsisting, were Acts of *Treason*. In a Word: When *Religion, Liberty, Property, Reason* and *Common-Sense* were just expiring: At this melancholy Crisis, I say, what was the Conduct of the Oxford Tories? With what Spirit, what Resolution, what Dignity did they maintain their own Cause and that of their Country against the mighty Arm of oppressive Power; and in the very Presence of a misguided Prince, who, under the Influence of Popish Counsels, was meditating Their Destruction? And when They found *Remonstrance* and *Submission, Reason* and *Truth* unavailing Advocates for Justice, how ready were They to disavow the Nonsense of "*Unlimited Passive Obedience*;" to have Recourse to the Primary Law of Nature, and to seek Their own Preservation by a Reliance on That Prince, who came to save Them and the Nation from Ruin; and to whom, on his first Landing, They delegated one of the most distinguished

Men * of their Body, with an Assurance that
 “ They would unanimously declare for Him,”
 with a Request “ that He would honour Them
 “ with a Visit in his Rout towards *London*,” and
 with something of higher Importance to a Cause
 at that Time undecided, *viz.* “ An Offer of
 “ all their College Plate for such Purposes as
 “ He should direct.”

Such was the Conduct of Oxford Tories
 when our *All* was at Stake : Infomuch that
 some Historians honour Them by a Surmise
 that these vigorous, these early Measures, pur-
 sued by so considerable a Body of Men, had
 at that Time their Weight with the Nation :
 Their Weight ! in securing a bloodless Conquest
 over *Papery*, in establishing the purer Doc-
 trines of *Christianity*, in procuring a “ Bill of
 “ Rights,” a Second *Magna Charta* for our
 Liberties.

Now these Historical Facts (faithfully re-
 ported) furnish me with a Sort of Authority
 for saying that the Modern Tories of Oxford
 must not only be destitute of Faith and Ho-
 nour, but They must be blind to their *own*
Interest, design their *own* Destruction, and be

* Dr. Finch, Warden of *All-Souls* College, Son to the
 Earl of *Winchelsea*.

esteemed Ideots as well as “ Transgressors,” should They seriously purpose “ to build again “ the Things which their Fathers have so “ wisely destroyed,” and voluntarily resume those “ Bonds,” which Prudence, Policy, and Self-Preservation have “ broken asunder.”—— It cannot be, Gentlemen! The World must be mistaken in you.

Thus have I aimed at a Defence of *your* Party against the heavy Charge of *Jacobitism*, and can therefore with the greater Freedom ask you to reflect that the next Political Evil, to that *Real Disaffection* to the *Government*, is the Pursuit of such Measures as the most *Disaffected* must approve. What these Measures are, has been already sufficiently hinted to you, and I shall here only add an Observation that Those, who have *no* Designs against their Country, may, by Indiscretion, become the *Dupes*, the Under-Agents, the Tools of Those who *have* such Designs, by retailing (as it were their *Virulence*, by propagating the Poyson of *Detraction*, and by a continued Commerce in railing at Those in Authority. Evils! arising from an Abuse of National Liberty (That Palladium of *Britain!*) Evils! injurious to every State, to every Mode of

Government : Evils ! which manifestly destroy the antient Plan of Policy, espoused by your own Party, *viz.* *A rational Subjection to civil Power*, and are highly unbecoming Men of a liberal and ingenuous Education.

But the Zealots, the Men of Clamour amongst you have, it seems, now placed Themselves in the Front of an Army of Advocates for *Liberty* ; and treat their own System of *Passive Obedience* as Cavalierly as the Whigs did in the Beginning of this Century.

“ We have (say these Patrons of Discontent) given to the Government all the Security for our Allegiance, which the Law requires : We have sworn Fidelity to the reigning Prince ; we have abjured the excluded Family : But these Oaths, these Obligations cannot be construed into Shackles on our *Understanding* : They don't divest us of a natural Right to judge of *Men, Ministers,* and *Measures* ; and when Those are such as We disapprove, Reason will exert it's Empire, will *censure*, will *condemn*, will struggle to *reform*.”

This is a plausible manner of arguing, an Apology for Opposition, borrowed from *Original Genuine Patriots* in Times of real Danger
to

to their Country; and to whom We are at this Day indebted for a full and free Enjoyment of our *Religious* and *Civil* Rights.—But it must be allowed that This Argument may, by the Mouths of *Murmur*, *Faction*, and *Ambition*, be prostituted to pernicious Purposes.

A wise Man therefore will examine for *himself*, and not take the Word of Obloquy for Facts of the highest Importance. A dispassionate, indeed an honest Man will call upon the *Railer* for sufficient *Evidence* of what He asserts, before he subscribes to his Calumny; and require him to point out the especial Measures pursued by Power, which give Birth to his Censures, and to prove the Tendency of such Measures “to hurt the
 “Common-Weal, to corrode, to weaken, or,
 “in any single Shape, to prejudice a happy
 “Constitution in Church and State, fixed on
 “the firm Basis of *Liberty*.”—If the Evidence of this appears altogether insufficient (as I am confident it will) how will you blush for having ever suffered yourselves to be hood-winked and led in the Dark through Scenes of Absurdity and Folly (to say no worse of them) by a Junctō of Demagogues, who (for ought you may know to the contrary) may have had Their
private

private interesting Views in the publick Execution of *Political Fury*.

To *disclaim* the Influence of such Leaders, to *think*, to *judge*, to act for *yourselves* will be a Conduct *becoming, rational, manly*.

Now as it is possible that by this Time certain Prejudices may have taken Place in your Minds against the Person and Character of One, by whom you are thus *freely* addressed, and that *Pensioner, Tool, Hireling, &c. &c.* may be the Reward of His Inclinations to serve you, in order to obviate such mean, such ungenerous Artifices to discredit the *Cause* which I espouse, I shall claim a Privilege, sacred to many a Modern Writer, (a Privilege most wonderfully exerted by your own Chiefs) *viz.* to engage your Attention to what concerns *Myself*.

Know then, ye Great and Powerful Patriots, that a Devotion to be paid to *Ministers*, purely because They are *Ministers*, and a continued, uniform Approbation of whatever They devise, resolve or execute (which, Heaven be thanked! is not *Law* in This Land) are no Articles in my Political Creed. The *Good* which they do, I gratefully acknowledge as a Benefit to my Country;

Country ; but, as I do not find them making any Pretensions to the Gift of *Infallibility*, I would not offer such an affront to Their Understanding as to suppose Them possessed of it. Ministers are *Men*, and, as such, liable to *err*: An eventual Miscarriage, attending wise and just *Measures*, brings with it no Reflection on the *Head*; and even Original Errors in *Judgment* are no Evidence of a wrong Bias in the *Heart*.

Now as there is no Admission for You and Me into the Cabinets of Princes and the Councils of Ministers ; as the Spheres wherein we move are placed at such a Distance from the High Orb of Power, that it is impossible for us to attain a competent Knowledge of the several Springs and Movements which give a Direction to the Great Machine of Government, what Method can We, as *wise* and *honest* Men, pursue in order to form a right Judgment of the *Motives* to Action in Those so much above us ?

None surely can with stricter Propriety offer Itself than a known Rule in *Religious, Moral* and *Civil* Life, *viz.* “ *To judge of the Tree by it's Fruits;*” of the Intention of Those in Authority by the visible Consequence of their Conduct.—And in this View let me ask you,
Gentlemen.

Gentlemen, (I am speaking to zealous *Churchmen*) at what Period of Time, since the Reformation, was the National Established Church of England (to which I wish as well as you can do) in a State more prosperous than in the Year 1750? When were All her just and legal Rights and Privileges more effectually ascertained, or fixed on a firmer Basis? At what Time was Ecclesiastical Authority placed in the Hands of Men of higher *Abilities*, more exemplary *Lives*, more distinguished *Learning*, more beneficent Minds and (to comprehend every amiable Endowment in one Christian Virtue) more Universal *Charity*?

Are not the Numbers of Protestant *Dissenters* from the Church Communion daily diminishing? Do not the Leaders amongst them see, feel and lament the Defection? Have They not publicly acknowledged the Fact, and it's real Cause, *viz.* The Absence of Persecution? What greater Honour can They pay to Those, whom the *Crown* has honoured with the Exercise of Church-Authority?

Facts will ever speak for themselves: Let the most invenom'd Railer at the Times either point out a Misrepresentation, or blush for insolent Insinuations that the Government of the Church

Church is delegated to Men unequal to the Province. Again,

As you are *Academicks*, I ask you once more to look back upon the Burden too grievous to be born by your Fathers in a former Reign, and then to shew a single Bruise in your Constitution, made by the Iron Rod of Power from that Day to This.—Your peculiar, your just immunities, as you are a Society of *Scholars*, are preserved to you entire; are revered (as it were) by the Laws of the Land; your Local Statutes have their full Authority un-impeached, unhurt; None of you ever felt the Force of a *Mandamus*, the Weight of a Royal Dispensation.

And here I cannot but remind you, that in a late Time of *real* Danger to our Constitution, when Rebel Ensigns were display'd in the Centre of this Island, when the choicest of our own Troops were engaged in the Service of Our Allies on the Continent, and many wise and good Men had their Fears for the Event, His present Majesty, conscious of his own Dignity, asserted his Claim to the Allegiance of his People, not by telling Them (as other Princes had done) that “*He was*”
 “*their King, and would be obeyed.*” but that

He had made the “ Laws of the Land the
 “ Rule of his Government, and the Rights
 “ of his People the main End and Aim of
 “ all his Actions.”

A Truth! worthy to be engraved on the
 Heart of every Briton. A Truth acknowledged
 and evinced by the Loyalty and Affection,
 the Associations, the Purfes, the Arms of
 Englishmen at that alarming Crisis: A Truth
 which does infinitely higher Honour to the
 Prince of a *Free People*, than ever could be con-
 veyed by the Politeft Slaves in ancient *Rome* or
Greece, or in modern *Gaul*, in Panegyricks on
 the most illustrious of their Tyrants.

But after all, Gentlemen, a *negative* Feli-
 city, an Indemnity from a^tual *Moleftation* in
 the Enjoyment of your Legal Rights is not
 furely the *whole* of your later Obligations to
 the Crown, which (if I miftake not) has been
 fomewhat more than *juft* to you, and has De-
 mands upon you for Acts of *Favour* and *Be-
 nevolence*.

What think Ye of the Profefforship of
Modern History, founded by his Majesty's
 Father, and attended by fuch Appointments
 out of the Treasury, as make that Office as
lucrative as it is *honourable*? How many of
 you

you have felt the Benefit of another Benefaction from the same Royal Hand, I mean the Establishment of Preachers at *Whitehall* out of your Body? And who amongst you can view the Front of one of your Colleges without a grateful Acknowledgment of her late Majesty's Munificence to *Oxford*?

By reminding you of what you owe to the present Royal Family, I am far from intending to cut off your grateful Remembrance of the Bounty, the extensive Bounty of a Great and Good Princess, the last of the House of *Stewart*, to all the inferior Clergy of *England*, and of Her more especial Benefactions to your University.—No, Gentlemen, may Her Royal Favours and Those of Her Successors be had in everlasting Remembrance amongst you; and be perpetual Monuments of your Obligations to a Succession of Princes, who owed Their own Royalty to the Wisdom of *England* and the Concurrence of *Oxford* in the memorable Year 1688.—And may your Republick of Letters be as great a Stranger to that Monster in Politicks a *Protestant Jacobite*, as to it's Honour it is allowed to be to that *Lunatick* in Religion a *Professed Deist*.

Let me then earnestly entreat you (I speak chiefly to the Young and Giddy amongst you) to look with Horror upon the Precipice, towards which you are hurry'd rather by *Folly* and *Wantonness*, than by *Black Design*.—For your own Sake stop short where you are; collect yourselves; let Prudence, let Gratitude, let your own Understanding, your own Safety have their just Weight with you; listen to these Monitors, and step over into a Path of *Consistency*, which alone can lead to *true Honour*.

I have been told by some of your Friends that the Fate of your last intended *Address* to the Throne created great *Dissatisfaction*, possibly something like *Resentment* amongst you.—I have heard others intimate the *Reason* why That *Address* was not, could not possibly be received; and I acknowledge the Concern which I felt both at the *Cause* and the *Effect*.

This is a Matter of too high Importance, too delicate a Nature to be canvass'd by any Private Pen: On the Occasion therefore I only venture to put this single Question to you. Was it *Wise*, was it *Prudent*, was it *Fitting* in a Speech to be spoken by your Chief Magistrate,

strate, in the *Presence*, and immediately to the Person of Your *Sovereign*, to afford the soft and tender Appellation of *Intemperate Sallies of Youth* to Crimes of a *Treasonable Tendency*, to an open and riotous Insult on the Government? Crimes! of which the Rioters were at that Time judicially *convicted* by an equal Jury, and for which they were at that Time under a Sentence of *Condemnation*, pronounced by a High Court of Judicature?

Surely, Gentlemen, Those, who penn'd That *Address* might have signify'd Their Abhorrence of such Crimes in Terms of stronger Import; and (if They themselves had pleased) have met with as Gracious a Reception as Any other Corporation was honoured with at That *Addressing* Season.

As I have not the smallest Degree of Ill-Will or even the least Personal Dislike to any Man breathing, I took my Pen on this Occasion, with a fixed Resolution not to suffer any Thing to fall from it injurious to the Character or Credit of any individual Member of your Learned Body; having ever been persuaded that all open *Calumny* and (what seems to be more in Taste with some modern

dern Writers) the flow *Poyson* of a *Sneer*, are foreign to the Defence of any Cause, and greatly beneath the Character of a serious Writer, who will have in View *Things* but not *Persons*, will *reason* but will not *rail*: And, I trust, I shall not be charged by any of you with departing from this Rule, if I defer the Conclusion of my Letter, 'till I have told you that I have read and considered a certain *Oration*, lately published in a Language familiar to you; An *Oration*! spoken (as the World informs me) in an uncommon Manner, and with extraordinary Applause in the Presence of your whole University on a late solemn Occasion. I have, I say, afforded a due Attention to this Astonishing Performance; am vain enough to think Myself Master of the *whole* Purport of every Period in the Composition; of every reported *Pause* in the *Action*, and cannot withhold an Intimation of my Concern that Prevalent Parts and masterly Talents should, at any Time, or on any Occasion, be disgraced by the Society of *Slander*, *Obloquy*, *Faction*, *Sedition*; and that a Head, well-instructed, is not always attended by a benevolent Heart.

Spleen and Malevolence in an able Writer, an admired Speaker, are to be lamented as a Publick Misfortune.

If the solemn Interdict of a *Translation*, prefixed by this Gentleman, to his Learned Work, is really a Snake in the Grass, and intended to propagate Political *Poyson* in the Language of our Country, “*Carveat Interpres.*” If He meant only the Preservation of a favourite *Brat* in it’s Birthday Suit, his Caution seems to be quite unnecessary; since whatever Reasons the Author may have to boast of the Impunity of *Latin* Invectives, a Translator, of Abilities equal to the Spirit of the Original, may, probably have Penetration enough to discover, that certain very disagreeable Circumstances attend the Ceremoniale of a Prosecution in the King’s-Bench for a Libel published in *English*, the Evil Tendency of which is open to the lowest of his Majesty’s Subjects.

One Writer, I find, (a Gentleman who lately was an Ornament, and will ever be a Credit to your University) has, with a Masterly Pen, animadverted on This Railer at Mankind. His Defence of the Cause of *Fidelity* and *Honour*, of the *Learning* and *Loyalty*, the *Modesty* and *Merit*, the *Candour* and *Calm-*

ness of an Injured, Insulted Friend is a laudable and generous Measure. But Good Nature is inclined to wish that his Warmth had not led him to so *close* an Engagement with the first Aggressor at his *own* Weapons. An Error which He himself seems to have acknowledged. Be This as it will : If Obloquy is silenced by his Animadversions, the World will have it's Obligations to him.

I have only to add, that if any Gentleman, (pray take Notice that I say any *Gentleman*) amongst you, whose Sentiments are not such as Mine, shall do me the Honour to think that what I have seriously advanced, deserves a *serious* Answer, He shall not want a proper and Gentleman-like Reply : But at the same Time I tell You that the little Efforts of *Malice* and *Scurrility*, low *Libels* in Prose and Verse, in *Monkish* or in *Modern* Rhime, the petulant Ingenuity of *Grubstreet*, or the more sonorous Oratory of *Billingsgate* shall not deprive me of a Moment's Rest, or of a single Sheet of Paper.

I am satisfy'd with my own *Intentions* in this *Address*, which are to promote your real Welfare, your undoubted Honour, your laudable

dable Interest. And now, Gentlemen, you may take your *Time to laugh* just as much as you think proper. I have already taken Notice of one particular Mode of *Reasoning* amongst you on these Occasions, I mean a delicate and humane Application of the Terms *Seeker, Time-server, Prebend-hunter, &c.* to All Those who have the Courage to espouse the Cause of their Country, the Honesty to write in Defence of the Constitution,

Now to render this curious Collection of Ideas absolutely Useless to you, as relative to my moderate Endeavours to suggest to you proper Reflections on your Political Absurdity, I here defy the most sharp-sighted Genius amongst you to dragg me out of a determined Obscurity: How then shall I be paid for my Pen and Ink?

To conclude: I well remember the Time when *Oxford* was esteemed in *England*, revered in *Europe*: A Redemption of That Time may still be effected by your Departure from irrational Prejudices, by a Reliance on your *own* Understanding: Once more:

Be not laugh'd out of your Allegiance ;
Think, Judge, and Act for Yourselfes ; an-
swer the Expectations of your Country, and
the earnest Desire of,

GENTLEMEN,

Your real Friend, and

Humble Sevrant,

MIDDLE-TEMPLE,

Jan. 1. 1750.

An Englishman.

E R R A T A.

- Pag.* 11. *l.* 13. read *That of real.*
11. *l.* 22. *r.* (as it were)
13. *l.* 26. instead of *may r. can.*

