





T H E
T I M E S
A
P O E M

BY
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WITH NOTES AND QUERIES

To — —

SIR:

Seeing thou art the undoubted assertor, supporter and protector of all our religious and social liberties, neither the world nor you will, I presume, think the following Poem unaptly address'd to so distinguish'd a character. Is it not you who have always boldly stood in defence of the liberties of this people against the encroachments of the prerogative, or the evil designs of wicked and corrupt men to destroy them?—Is it not you who have council'd again and again a prudent acquiescence to that greatest of blessings the *S(tamp) A(ct)* rather than a bold and noble opposition, like an uncommon patriot *not* preferring your own interest to the loss of your country's love? Is it not you who with a patriotism unparalleled, propos'd and supported the bold and manly word *Privilege*, against the pusillanimous one *Rights*, in a certain spirited address?—Is it not you who contriv'd, fram'd and got pass'd into a law the W-rd-n A-t by which agreeable to the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, we are *not* pharisaically deny'd the free use of the air and our limbs, or the free enjoyment of the benign influence of the Sun which shines as bright on that day which is set apart for social worship and religious converse as on any other?

Is it not you who in a populous assembly asserted in support of the same Act, that the Sabbath was *nowhere* so remissly kept as in this town; an assertion as remarkable for its truth as for the un-hypocritical gravity with which it was delivered?

In short, you are so continually exerting your abilities in defence of our rights, liberties and immunities, both religious and civil, *in this way*, that it would be endless to enumerate them. I shall therefore take my leave of you with wishing that the just reward of such unfeign'd regard for religion and your native country, without one interested view to popularity or *Honor, which you have experienced in this life* may prepare you for the smiles of Him who abhors hypocrisy, slavery and tyranny.

I am your humble Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

THE PREFACE

*I*T was observed by Sir William Temple, that none can be said to know things well, who do not know them in their beginnings. There are many very noisy about liberty, but are aiming at nothing more than personal grandeur and power. Are not many, under the delusive character of Guardians of their country, collecting influence and honour only for oppression? Behold Cæsar! at first a patriot, a consul, and commander of the Roman army. How apparently noble his intentions, and how specious his conduct! but unbounded in his ambition, by these means he became at length a perpetual dictator, and an unlimited commander.

GOD gave mankind freedom by nature, made every man equal to his neighbor, and has virtually enjoined them to govern themselves by their own laws. The government which he introduced among his people, the Jews, abundantly proves it, and they might have continued in that state of liberty, had they not desired a King. The people best know their own wants and necessities, and therefore are best able to rule themselves. Tent makers, cobblers and common tradesmen composed the legislature at Athens. "Is not the body (said Socrates) of the Athenian people composed of men like these?"

THAT I might help, in some measure, to eradicate the notion of arbitrary power, heretofore drank in; and to establish the liberties of the people of this country upon a more generous footing, is the design of the following impartial work, now dedicated by the Author to the honest farmer and citizen.

THE TIMES
A
POEM

BY AN AMERICAN

*Omnes profecto liberi libentius
Sumus, quam Servimus*
—Plaut. in Captivis

POLLIO be kind! nor chide an early crime,
Spawn of chagrine, and labour'd waste of time;
This heart misguides me with a bent so strong
It mocks restraint, and boldly errs in song:
Thus crimes indulg'd such vigorous growth obtain,
Your friendly caution frowns rebuke in vain.

'Tis not great *Churchill's* ghost that claims your ear,
For even ghosts of wit are strangers here,
That patriot-soul to other climes remov'd,
Well pleased enjoys that liberty he lov'd;
No pang resents for W— to Exile driven,
Exults that worth and *Pratt* are dear to Heaven:
Young sure it is not, from whose honey'd lays
Streams a rank surfeit of redundant praise;
For guilt like his what genius shall atone?
D—n the foul verse that daubs a *Stuart's* throne.

Curs'd lack of genius, or thou soon should'st know
This humble cot conceals a tyrant's foe;
By nature artless, unimprov'd by pains,
No favour courts me and no fear restrains.
Wild as the soil, and as the heav'ns severe,
All rudely rough, and wretchedly sincere;

Whose frowning stars have thrown me God knows where,
 A wild exotic neighbor to the bear;
 One globe supports us, brethren cubs we run,
 Shoot into form, as foster'd by the sun;
 No tutoring hand the tender sapling train'd
 Thro' walks of science, nor his growth sustain'd;
 Such fruit he yields, luxuriant wildings bear,
 Coarse as the earth, and unconfin'd as air.
 No Muse I court, an alien to the Nine,
 Thou chaste instructress, NATURE! thou art mine.
 Come, blessed parent, mistress, muse and guide,
 With thee permit me wander side by side;
 Smit with thy charms, my earliest joy I trace,
 Fondly enamor'd of thy angel face;
 Succeeding labours smother not the flame,
 Still, still the dear attachment lives the same.

No idle task the earliest MUSE began,
 But mark'd the morals, e'er she prais'd the man.
 To struggling worth supply'd no feeble aid;
 And wove the honest wreath for virtue's head.
 Uncourtly grave, or thro' the lessen'd page
 Shed wisdom's lore, and humaniz'd the age;
 Pour'd wholesome treasures from her magic tongue,
 Instructed, rul'd, corrected, blest by song;
 How chang'd! how lost! in these degenerate days,
 She stuns me with the clamour of her praise:
 Is there a villain eminent in state
 Without one gleam of merit?—she'll create;
 Is there a scoundrel, has that scoundrel gold?
 There the full tide of panegyrick's roll'd;
 From venal quills shall stream the sugar'd shower,
 And bronze the wretched Lordling—if in power.
 Stamp me that blockhead, which (kind heav'n be blest)

My Maker form'd my temper to detest,
 If sacred numbers I again desert,
 The native bias of an honest heart;
 Basely to truckle to a wretch in rule,
 Or spread a feast for Gods, to cram a fool.

Not for a Monarch would I forge a lie,
 To nestle in the sunshine of his eye.
 The paths of Error if in youth I trod,
 Dress'd a gay idol in the garb of God,
 The pageant shrinks, I weep my folly past,
 Heav'n frown me dead, but there I've sinn'd my last.
 G(eorge) scarce one lustrum numbers out its days
 Since every tongue was busy in thy praise;
 (O make it nameless in the tale of time,
 Nor consecrate to ages such a crime;
 We lov'd him, love him still, by heav'ns do more,
 But make us B(ritish) subjects, we'll adore)
 Successful WAR had added wide domain
 And crouded oceans scarce his fleets sustain.
 United *Gaul* and *Spain* his easy prey,
 And but *compact* to give their realms away.

Where'er he bids, consenting B(riton) s fly,
 For G(eorge) they conquer or for G(eorge) they die.
 Bless the glad hour, the glorious strife approve,
 That sounds his glory and proclaims their love.
 Ah, sad reverse! with doubling sighs I speak,
 A flood of sorrow coursing down my cheek,
 The salient heart for G(eorge) forgets to bound,
 Dark disaffection sheds her gloom around.

Fair LIBERTY, our soul's most darling prize,
 A bleeding victim flits before our eyes.
 Was it for this our great forefathers rode

O'er a vast ocean to this bleak abode?
 When *Liberty* was into contest brought
 And loss of life was but a second thought;
 By pious violence rejected thence
 To try the utmost stretch of Providence.
 The DEEP, unconscious of the furrowing keel,
 Essay'd the tempest to rebuke their zeal.
 The tawny natives and inclement sky
 Put on their terrors, and command to fly.
 They mock at danger: what can those appal
 To whom fair LIBERTY is all in all?
 See the *new world* their purchase, blest domain.
 Where *lordly tyrants* never forg'd the chain;
 The prize of valour and the gift of prayer,
 Hear this and redder, each degenerate heir!
 Is it for you their honour to betray
 And give the harvest of their blood away?
 Look back with reverence, aw'd to just esteem,
 Preserve the blessings, handed down from them;
 If not, look forward, look with deep despair,
 And dread the curses of your beggar'd heir.
 What bosom beats not when such themes excite?
 Be men, be gods, be stubborn in the right.

Where am I hurry'd? POLLIO, I forbear,
 Again I'm calm, and claim thy sober ear.
 To *independence* bend the filial knee
 And kiss her sister sage, *economy*.
 Economy you frown! "O hide our shame!
 'Tis vile profusion's ministerial name
 To pinch the farmer groaning at the press,
 Commission leeches to adopt the peace;
 That peace obtain'd, S(cotch) armies to augment
 And sink the nation's credit two per cent;
 With barren S(cottish) bards the lists to load,

Both place and pension partially bestow'd.
 Nay more, the *cave of famine* to translate
 Within the purlieus of the R(oya)l gate.
 While brats from northern hills, full, bat'ning lie,
 Their meagre southern masters pining by."

Peace, peace, my POLLIO! sluice thy sorrows here;
 Thy country's ghost now points thee to its bier;
 Of foreign wrongs, and unfelt woes no more,
 While dogs cry *havock* on thy natal shore.
 Yon funeral torch that dimly gilds my cell
 Comes fraught with mischiefs terrible to tell.
 It dawns in sables—too-officious ray!
 Yet, yet compassionately roll away.
 All, all is o'er but anguish, slavery, fear,
 The chains already clanking in my ear
 O *Death!* tho' awful, but prevent this blow,
 No more thou'rt censur'd for the human foe.
 O'er life's last ebbs thy dregs of sorrow fling,
 Point all my pangs and stab with every sting.
 I'll bless th'alternative, if not a slave,
 And scorn the wretch who trembles at the grave.

Art thou persuaded, for a moment cool,
 That nature made thee slave and mark'd thee fool?
 That what we won by hardy war was *given*,
 That non-resistance is secure of Heaven;
 That persecution in our infant state
 Was nursing kind compassion in the GREAT?
 That emigration was not to secure
 Our liberties, but to enslave the more;
 That charters, privileges, patents, powers
 Were ours till now, and now no longer ours?
 To claim exemption by the charter-seal
 Will rashly violate the Commonweal?
 Juries are nuisances and *Traffick* worse,

And to be blind, sagacity of course.
 The STAMP and LAND TAX are as blessings meant,
 And opposition is our free consent
 That where we are not, we most surely are,
 That wrong is right, black white, and foul is fair,
 That M(ansfiel)d's honest and that Pitt's a knave,
 That Pratt's a villain, and that Wilkes' a slave.
 That godlike Temple is not greatly good
 Nor B(ute) a rigid Jacobite by blood.
 That sordid Gr(envil)le lately is become
 The patron of our liberties at home,
 (For whom, now hear me, gods! be hell inflamed
 And murderers of their country doubly d—d)
 Now stretch thy pliant faith, adopt this creed
 And be a J(ared) Ing(erso)l* indeed.)
 If not, thou'rt wretched, crawling in the dust,
 Condemn'd, despis'd and herded with—the just.
 Frown, honest SATYRE! menace what you will
 Rogues rise luxuriant and defeat you still.
 Fatigu'd with numbers, and oppress'd with gall,
 One general curse must overwhelm them all.
 But O ye vilest vile, detested FEW!
 Eager, intent, and potent to undo;
 Come out ye parricides! here take your stand,
 Your solemn condemnation is at hand.

Behold your crimes, and tremblingly await
 The grumbling thunder of your country's hate,
 Accurséd as ye are! how durst ye bring
 An injur'd people to distrust their K(ing)?
 Accurséd as ye are, how could ye dare
 To lisp delusion in your M(onarc)h's ear?
 How do I laugh when such vain coxcombs lour,

*An ingenious Stamp Distributor who modestly asserted in the public papers that the Stamp Act was design'd to make America happy by her indulgent Mother, and that it would certainly prove so, if his country would suffer him to continue in office.

Some grave pretence of dread from lawless power.
 To hear a scribbling fry, beneath my hate,
 Adopt the fraud, and sanctify deceit.
 With mean importance point regardless stings,
 To aid injustice menace mighty things.
 Nay to such heights of insolence they've flown
 The knaves crave shelter underneath a throne;
 A throne all-gracious, such is GEORGE'S praise,
 Nor shall oppression blast his sacred bays.

Witness ye Fathers! whose protracted time,
 Fruitful of story, chronicles the clime;
 These howling *Deserts*, hospitably tame,
 Erst snatched ye, martyrs, from the hungry flame;
 'Twas heavn's own cause beneath whose shelt'ring pow'r
 Ye grew the wonder of the present hour.
 With anxious ear we've drank your piteous tale,
 Where woes unnumber'd long and loud prevail.
 Here savage demons sporting with your pains,
 There boding mischief in a *Stuart* reigns,
 Mark the glad æra when prevailing foes,
 The state's fell harpies, doubling woes on woes,
 Had wing'd destruction—VENGEANCE slept no more,
 But flung the tyrant from the British shore.
 Learn hence, ye minions! rev'rence to the law,
 Salvation died not with the great NASSAU.
 And shall such sons, from such distinguish'd sires,
 Nurtured to hardships, heirs of all their fires,
 Shall they, O pang of heart! thus tamely bear
 Who stalk erect, and toss their heads in air?
 Let beasts of burden meanly woo the chain,
 WE talk of masters with a proud disdain.
 "Prythee forbear, rash youth! conceal thy fears,
 A modest silence best becomes thy years.

Submit, be prudent,—in some future hour
 You'll feel the iron gripe of ruthless power.”
 Truce, spawn of phlegm! thy frozen heart conceal.
 Benumb'd, unerring, and unapt to feel.
 No deed of glory can that soul entice,
 Involv'd in adamantine walls of ice.
 Within that bosom is a nook so warm
 That vice or virtue kindles to a storm?
 Could nature ever lure thee into sin,
 Or bursts of passion thaw the frost within?
 Thou happy Cynick! still thy senses lull,
 Profoundly cautious and supinely dull.
 And should some hero start his rash career
 Eccentric to thy lazy, drowsy sphere;
 Be wondrous wise, thy frigid temper bless
 That never wrought thee to a bold excess.
 Call truth a libel, treason, honest zeal,
 So strange is virtue, and so few can feel.
 Call *Churchill* blockhead, Freedom madness, rage.
 Call injur'd Wilkes a monster of the age.
 To make me blest, unite this lay with those,
 And then, then kindly rate yourselves my foes.

Fop, witling, fav'rite, st(am)p m(a)n, tyrant, tool,
 Or all those mighty names in one, thou fool!
 Let mean ambition, sordid lust of pride,
 League thee, vile Pander! to a tyrant's side;
 Sport with thy country's groans, and be the first
 To stab the bosom which a traitor nurs'd.
 Rifle the womb and on those bowels prey,
 To plague mankind that spawn'd thee into day.
 Be eminent, thy little soul exert,
 And call forth all the rancour of thy heart

But should the eye of merit on thee lour,
 (Tho' lowly crush'd beneath the wheel of power)
 Thou art my pity, monster! I forgive,
 And beg one only curse—that thou may'st live!
 Where lies our remedy—in humble prayer?
 Our lordly butchers have forgot to hear.
 'Tis rank rebellion, rashness to complain,
 And all submission tighter tugs the chain.
 Go, ask your heart, your honest heart regard,
 And manumission is your sure reward.
 Would'st then be blest, thy sov'reign pride lay by,
 To tyrant custom give the hardy lie.
 Your shag will warm thee, in thy country fleece
 Sleeps *independence* lin'd with balmy *peace*.
 Would'st then be blest? be diligent, be wise!
 And make a chaste sufficiency suffice.
 Ye lovely fair! whom heaven's best charms array,
 The proud Sultanas of some future day,
 Sweet as ye are, compleat in every grace
 That spreads angelic softness o'er the face;
 Go ply the loom—there lies the happy art
 By new avenues to attack the heart
 With labours of your own; but deck those charms,
 We'll rush with transport to your blissful arms.
 Amid this wreck—from all aspersions clear,
 Nay blush not, Peter*, honest truths to hear;
 Base adulation never stain'd my lay,
 But modest merit must be brought today.

What though thy great DESERT *mounts* far above
 The mean expression of thy country's love.
 In praise like thine the rustic muse will soar,
 Then damn'd to endless silence—sing no more.

*Oliver?

"With great contempt of power, alone to stand.
 Thy life and spotless honours in thine hand.
 To wage unequal wars,—and dare the worst,
 And if thy country perish, perish first;
 With pious vigilance the state to guard,
 And eminent in virtue, shun reward.
 No force of avarice warps thy steady heart
 To meanness, falsehood or dishonest art.
 A tyrant's mandate thy supreme disdain,
 Our last, best bulwark in a Sc(ottish) r(eign)."
 These are the honours we to fame consign,
 Nay, blush not, *Peter*, these are *surely* thine.

To close—dread Sov'reign at whose sacred seat
Justice and *Mercy*, spotless maidens, meet,
 GEORGE! Parent! King! our Guardian, Glory, Pride,
 And thou, fair REGENT! blooming by his side!
 Thy offspring pleads a parent's fostering care.
 Reject not, frown not, but in mercy spare;
 Besprent with dust the lowly suppliant lies,
 A helpless, guiltless, injured sacrifice.
 If e'er our infant efforts could delight,
 Or growing worth found favour in thy sight,
 If warm affection due returns may plead
 Or faith unshaken ever intercede
 With modest boldness we thy smiles demand,
 Nor wish salvation from another hand.
 Deprest, not helpless, while a Brunswick reigns,
 Whose righteous sceptre no injustice stains.

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