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**Original Poems And Translations, By John Dryden, Esq;
Now First Collected and Publish'd together, In Two
Volumes**

Containing Poems on several Occasions

Dryden, John

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Epistle To The Whigs.

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E P I S T L E

TO THE

W H I G S.

FOR to whom can I dedicate this Poem, with so much justice, as to you? 'Tis the representation of your own Hero: 'Tis the Picture drawn at length, which you admire and prize so much in little. None of your Ornaments are wanting; neither the Landskip of the Tower, nor the Rising Sun; nor the *Anno Domini* of your new Sovereign's Coronation. This must needs be a grateful undertaking to your whole Party; especially to those who have not been so happy as to purchase the Original. I hear the *Graver* has made a good Market of it: All his Kings are bought up already; or the value of the remainder so inhanc'd, that many a poor *Po-lander*, who would be glad to worship the Image, is not able to go to the cost of him; but must be content to see him here. I must confess, I am no great Artift; but Sign-post-painting will serve the turn to remember a Friend by; especially when better is not to be had. Yet for your comfort the Lineaments are true: And though he sat not five times to me, as he did to B. yet I have consulted History; as the *Italian Painters* do, when they

they would draw a *Nero* or a *Caligula*; though they have not seen the Man, they can help their Imagination by a Statue of him, and find out the Colouring from *Suetonius* and *Tacitus*. Truth is, you might have spar'd one side of your Medal: The Head wou'd be seen to more advantage, if it were plac'd on a Spike of the Tower; a little nearer to the Sun; which would then break out to better purpose. You tell us, in your Preface to the *No Protestant Plot*, that you shall be forc'd hereafter to leave off your Modesty. I suppose you mean that little, which is left you: For it was worn to rags when you put out this Medal. Never was there practis'd such a piece of notorious Impudence in the face of an Establish'd Government. I believe, when he is dead, you will wear him in Thumb-Rings as the *Turks* did *Scanderbeg*; as if there were Virtue in his Bones to preserve you against Monarchy. Yet all this while you pretend not only zeal for the Publick Good, but a due Veneration for the Person of the King. But all Men, who can see an Inch before them, may easily detect those gross fallacies. That it is necessary for men in your Circumstances to pretend both, is granted you; for without them there could be no ground to raise a Faction. But I would ask you one civil question: What right has any man among you, or any Association of men (to come nearer to you) who, out of Parliament cannot be consider'd in a publick Capacity, to meet, as you daily do, in Factious Clubs, to vilify the Government in your Discourses, and to libel it in all your Writings? Who made you Judges in *Israel*? Or how is it consistent with your Zeal for the publick Welfare to promote Sedition? Does your Definition of Loyal, which is to serve the King according to the Laws, allow you the

Licence

Licence of traducing the Executive Power, with which you own he is invested? You complain, that his Majesty has lost the love and confidence of his People; and, by your very urging it, you endeavour, what in you lies, to make him lose them. All good Subjects abhor the thought of Arbitrary Power, whether it be in one or many: If you were the Patriots you would seem, you would not at this rate incense the Multitude to assume it; for no sober Man can fear it, either from the King's Disposition or his Practice; or even, where you would odiously lay it, from his Ministers. Give us leave to enjoy the Government, and the benefit of Laws, under which we were born, and which we desire to transmit to our Posterity. You are not the Trustees of the publick Liberty: And if you have not right to petition in a Crowd, much less have you to intermeddle in the management of Affairs, or to arraign what you do not like; which in effect is every thing that is done by the King and Council. Can you imagine, that any reasonable man will believe you respect the Person of his Majesty, when 'tis apparent that your seditious Pamphlets are stuffed with particular Reflections on him? If you have the confidence to deny this, 'tis easy to be evinc'd from a thousand Passages, which I only forbear to quote, because I desire they should die and be forgotten. I have perus'd many of your Papers; and to shew you that I have, the third part of your *No-protestant Plot* is much of it stolen from your dead Author's Pamphlet call'd the *Growth of Popery*; as manifestly as *Milton's Defence of the English People* is from *Buchanan, de re regni apud Scotos*; or your first Covenant, and new Association, from the holy League of the *French Guisards*. Any one, who reads *Davila*,

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may

may trace your Practices all along. There were the same pretences for Reformation, and Loyalty, the same Aspersions of the King, and the same grounds of a Rebellion. I know not whether you will take the Historian's Word, who says, it was reported, that *Poltrót* a *Huguenot* murder'd *Francis* Duke of *Guise*, by the Instigations of *Theodore Beza*: Or that it was a *Huguenot* Minister, otherwise called a *Presbyterian* (for our Church abhors so devilish a Tenet) who first writ a Treatise of the lawfulness of deposing and murdering Kings, of a different Persuasion in Religion. But I am able to prove from the Doctrine of *Calvin*, and Principles of *Buchanan*, that they set the People above the Magistrate; which, if I mistake not, is your own Fundamental; and which carries your Loyalty no farther than your Liking. When a Vote of the House of Commons goes on your side, you are as ready to observe it, as if it were pass'd into a Law: But when you are pinch'd with any former, and yet unrepealed, *Act of Parliament*, you declare that in some Cases you will not be obliged by it. The Passage is in the same third Part of the *No-protestant Plot*; and is too plain to be denied. The late Copy of your intended Association you neither wholly justify nor condemn; But, as the Papists, when they are unoppos'd, fly out into all the Pageantries of Worship, but, in times of War, when they are hard press'd by Arguments, lie close intrench'd behind the *Council of Trent*; so, now, when your Affairs are in a low Condition, you dare not pretend that to be a legal Combination; but whensoever you are afloat, I doubt not but it will be maintain'd and justify'd to purpose. For indeed there is nothing to defend it but the Sword: 'Tis

the proper time to say any thing, when men have all things in their power.

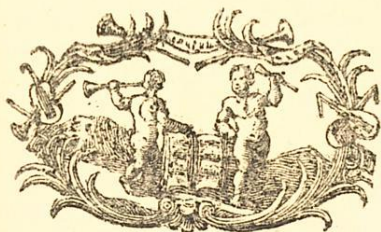
In the mean time, you wou'd fain be nibbling at a Parallel betwixt this Association, and that in the time of *Queen Elizabeth*. But there is this small difference betwixt them, that the ends of the one are directly opposite to the other: One with the Queen's approbation and conjunction, as head of it; the other without either the consent or knowledge of the King, against whose Authority it is manifestly design'd. Therefore you do well to have recourse to your last Evasion, that it was contriv'd by your Enemies, and shuffled into the Papers that were seiz'd; which yet you see the Nation is not so easy to believe, as your own Jury. But the matter is not difficult, to find twelve men in *Newgate*, who wou'd acquit a Malefactor.

I have one only favour to desire of you at parting; that, when you think of answering this *Poem*, you wou'd employ the same Pens against it, who have combated with so much success against *Abraham* and *Achitophel*: For then you may assure yourselves of a clear Victory, without the least Reply. Rail at me abundantly; and, not to break a Custom, do it without wit: By this method you will gain a considerable point, which is, wholly to wave the answer of my Arguments. Never own the bottom of your Principles, for fear they should be Treason. Fall severely on the miscarriages of Government; for if Scandal be not allow'd, you are no free-born Subjects. If God has not bless'd you with the Talent of Rhiming, make use of my poor Stock and welcome; let your Verses run upon my feet: And

for the utmost Refuge of notorious Blockheads, reduc'd to the last extremity of sense, turn my own lines upon me, and, in utter despair of your own Satire, make me satirize my self. Some of you have been driven to this Bay already : but above all the rest commend me to the Non-conformist Parson, who writ the *Whip and Key*. I am afraid it is not read so much as the Piece deserves, because the Bookseller is every week crying *Help* at the end of his *Gazette*, to get it off. You see I am charitable enough to do him a kindness, that it may be publish'd as well as printed ; and that so much skill in *Hebrew* Derivations may not lie for Waste-paper in the Shop. Yet I half suspect he went no farther for his Learning, than the Index of *Hebrew* Names and Etymologies, which is printed at the end of some *English* Bibles. If *Achitophel* signify the Brother of a Fool, the Author of that Poem will pass with his Readers for the next of kin. And, perhaps, 'tis the Relation that makes the kindness. Whatever the Verses are, buy 'em up, I beseech you, out of pity ; for I hear the Conventicle is shut up, and the Brother of *Achitophel* out of service.

Now Footmen, you know, have the generosity to make a Purse, for a Member of their Society, who has had his Livery pull'd over his Ears : And even Protestant Socks are bought up among you, out of veneration to the name. A Dissenter in Poetry from Sense and *English* will make as good a Protestant Rhimer, as a Dissenter from the Church of *England* a Protestant Parson. Besides, if you encourage a young Beginner, who knows but he may elevate his style a little, above the vulgar Epithets of *preppane and saucy Jack*, and *Atheistical Scribbler*, with which he

he treats me, when the fit of Enthusiasm is strong upon him? by which well-manner'd and charitable Expressions, I was certain of his Sect, before I knew his Name. What wou'd you have more of a man? He has damn'd me in your Cause from *Genesis* to the *Revelations*; and has half the Texts of both the *Testaments* against me, if you will be so civil to your selves as to take him for your Interpreter, and not to take them for *Irish* Witnesses. After all, perhaps, you will tell me, that you retain'd him only for the opening of your Cause, and that your main Lawyer is yet behind. Now if it so happen he meet with no more Reply than his Predecessors, you may either conclude, that I trust to the goodness of my Cause, or fear my Adversary, or disdain him, or what you please; for the short on't is, 'tis indifferent to your humble Servant, whatever your Party says or thinks of him.



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