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FIFTY QUERIES

CONCERNING

The present *Oxfordshire* CONTEST,

IN A

LETTER to a CLERGYMAN

ON POINTS

Of the utmost Importance to

The CONSTITUTION.

“ ACTUM EST DE REPUBLICA,

“ *In plain English,*

“ THE GAME IS UP.”

O X F O R D

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propagated under the fair Guise of Truth, and asserted with all that pe-remptory Decisiveness, which belongs only to the best-known Facts. Like many of my Acquaintance, I have, therefore, receiv'd a strong Prepossession *against the Truth of Reports*, in general; and especially, when coming from any one of **That Party**, whom to compliment with a Belief in every Thing would be the ready Way not to be believ'd in any Thing.

BUT, upon losing the Pleasure of your Company, I took into my Hand a *Pamphlet* just publish'd, call'd *Serious Reflections on the Game of All Fours*, as *publickly play'd at Oxford, in 1754*. The Time of publishing the Pamphlet is so remarkable; the Tendency of the latter Part so enflaming; and the Conclusion so insolent with respect to the Honourable *House of Commons*, and at the same Time so very coincident with the strange *Report* you mention'd: that I
 now

now sit down to give you a few Observations upon *Both*. And, if the Publick shall favour this short Letter with a Perusal; I shall hope to furnish an Antidote to the Poison of the *Pamphlet*, and prevent any pernicious Consequences, that possibly might arise from such a false, yet alarming *Story*.

I AM, Sir, a Friend to *Peace*; and, I hope, no Foe to *Honesty*: and have some Notion, that the former is not easily attainable without the latter. I am a Friend also to *His Majesty King GEORGE*, to *the Protestant RELIGION*, to *true British LIBERTY*; and an hearty Well-Wisher to *the NEW INTEREST* in this County.

BUT, however favourably I think, at present, of That Cause; I am so far an Advocate for Truth and Justice, that from the Bottom of my Soul I wish, that those Two of the four Candidates may be *the Sitting Members*, who had

the greatest Number of *legal Votes* in their Favour. And I am so thoroughly convinc'd of the Honour and Integrity of the *House of Commons*, that I firmly believe, they will decide this grand Question *fairly*, and I will add, *undauntedly* : In Contempt of the baser Insinuations of *Venality* and *Corruption*, and in Defiance of the bolder Menaces of *Insurrection* and *Rebellion*. For these are Arts, which, however surprising, have been in fact adopted : 'till of late, indeed, sparingly and privately ; but they are now growing more frequent, more publick, and consequently more dangerous.

THE Publick has already been acquainted with a Cry, common in *Oxfordshire*, during our late Scrutiny, *No D d, No King!* And has heard likewise of the Report which has been spread, that *probably there would be A RISING in the County, in case Justice was not done to the Old Interest* ; that is, in other
 ther

ther Words, that there would be an *Insurrection*, if the *Old Interest* Candidates were not return'd singly, *right or wrong*, whether they had a legal Majority of Votes or not.

THESE Reports, however propagated with Art and Industry, never (I apprehend) dar'd to appear in Print. But there is just publish'd a *Pamphlet*, said to be sold by *Owen*, near *Temple-Bar*, call'd (as before observ'd) *Reflections on the Game of All Fours*, &c. which, with an Impudence almost unparallel'd, tells the Members of the House of Commons, that, if they do not discountenance the *New Interest* Candidates, and establish the *Old*, ACTUM EST DE REPUBLICA; or, in plain English, THE GAME IS UP: That is, in as plain English, *Gentlemen of the House of Commons; if you don't determine in favour of Lord W—— and Sir J. D——, look to it——, we declare the Nation ruin'd; we pronounce the*

*British Constitution dissolv'd: and so, To
ARMS! Britons, To ARMS!*

AND, Sir, how remarkably do these several Articles tally with the *Report*, which you yourself heard and communicated! How strongly do they countenance the *Tale*, which you say is now propagated in the North of *Oxfordshire*: namely, that *As soon as it was known in London, that the House of Commons had determin'd the first Motion in Favour of the New Interest, the People of London assembled in prodigious Numbers; and that the Soldiers, sent to disperse them, were themselves soon cut'to pieces!*

Sir, the Intention and Tendency of such alarming Reports, however groundless, are extremely evident. *The Country People here are to be founded.* And, if they are assur'd of *Risings* elsewhere, and particularly in the Capital; who knows, but *they* may be encourag'd to *rise* likewise? Who knows, but their
Minds,

Minds, enrag'd as they are already by ten Thousand Falshoods, may be kindled up into a Flame? Who knows, but the deluded Creatures may be led on from imaginary Grievances to real Evils; and may be work'd up from Fury to Frenzy—to such a Degree of Frenzy, as to cut the Throat of every Neighbour of theirs in the *New Interest*?

THUS, indeed, would the *Old Interest* reign triumphant and unoppos'd, for many Years to come. Unless (which every good Man would make his fervent Prayer) the AUTHORS, both the *Fomenters* of such an Insurrection, and the *Executioners* of such a Massacre, should fall themselves by the Sword of Justice, Victims to the Vengeance of their much-injur'd Country.

But, in the Name of Astonishment, let me ask, *What is THIS CAUSE* What is this *glorious Cause*? This Cause, *big with such mighty Blessings to the Nation?*

The

The Cause, thus confidently pronounc'd, the *Aggregate of all that is Right and Fair and Just?* What can be the real Merits of a Cause, thus supported by a publick SUBSCRIPTION in all Parts of the Kingdom, thus push'd by so extraordinary an ASSOCIATION; an Association, form'd by Men, and in favour of Men, who would not themselves associate in 1745? In short, what must the CAUSE be, to secure which even our very LAW-GIVERS are thus insolently threaten'd with Violence and Destruction!

WHY, Sir, it is a Cause! — It is a Cause, which, I presume, never could be carry'd without Violence; and, I trust in GOD, never will be carry'd by means of it. I confess, I am so fully convinc'd at present, of the Iniquities most abundantly practis'd in support of the *Old Interest*, and of their legal Minority upon the Poll; that I never question'd their Defeat, upon a fair and full Hearing in The House of Commons.

BUT

BUT I leave this important Contest at the impartial Tribunal, where it now stands ; where it has already been *most equitably* determin'd, to hear *the Merits and the Return together* ; and where I make no doubt, but the Whole (intricate and tedious as it may prove) will receive a righteous Judgment. And I shall now proceed to lay before You, and also before the Publick, a Set of QUERIES, in regular Succession ; the true ANSWERS to which, when publish'd by the *Old Interest*, will throw great Light upon the MERITS of their boasted Cause.

FIFTY QUERIES

Concerning the

G L O R Y

O F T H E

True Blues.

Are These Things so ?

QUERY I.

DID Lord *W*— and Sir *Y*— *D*—
associate with the Noblemen and
Gentlemen of *Oxfordshire*, at the Be-
ginning of the late Rebellion ?

Had

Q U E R Y 2.

Has not this been urg'd frequently and publickly, as a *Presumption* of the *Disloyalty* of those Candidates ?

Q U E R Y 3.

Did these Gentlemen ever, in any one Advertisement, declare themselves *loyal to his Majesty King GEORGE* ?

Q U E R Y 4.

Was it not the Study of the *New* Interest, during the whole Course of the Canvas, to *preserve the Peace*, at all publick Meetings in the *County* ?

Q U E R Y 5.

Was it not almost the constant Practice of the *Old* Interest, on these Occasions, to *break the Peace*, and begin Hostilities ?

QUERY 6.

Was not the Part of the City, *where the Booths were erected*, pitch'd upon by the Gentlemen of the *Old Interest*; in preference to the open Field, us'd at the last Contest, and *now* recommended by the *New Interest*?

QUERY 7.

Did not the *Old Interest* Mob, on the Morning of the first Day of the Poll, *seize every Access to the Front of the Booths*, and guard it almost *Twenty Men deep*?

QUERY 8.

8. Was not the same done, early, *every succeeding Day* of the Poll?

QUERY 9.

Did not the same *Blue* Mob continue the same Guard *to the very last*, even after every Pretender to a Vote on their Side (except the Managers) had voted?

Was

Q U E R Y 10.

Was not this a direct Attempt to prevent the *New Interest* from polling at all; and therefore, *an open Violation of the Freedom of the Election?*

Q U E R Y 11.

Did not the High-Sheriff declare in the Booths, that, if the Gentlemen of the *Old Interest* would remove some of their Friends from before the Booths, so that *both Parties might poll in Front*, the Back-Gate of *Exeter College* should immediately be shut; but, if this was refus'd by the *Old Interest*, the *New Interest* should continue to poll through the College: as he was determin'd to use his utmost Endeavours for *a free and fair Election?*

Q U E R Y 12.

Was it not *first* asserted by the *Old Interest*, that *Customary Freeholders were good Voters?*

*

Was

Q U E R Y 13.

Was it not prov'd upon the Scrutiny, that Sir J— D——, had, in the Booths, *insisted* upon the polling his Friends, who offer'd themselves as *Customary Freeholders*, and bid the Inspectors *refuse them at their Peril?*

Q U E R Y 14.

When the Council for the Candidates of the *New Interest* was call'd, was it not readily given as the Opinion of that Council, that, *if the Men propos'd were Customary Freeholders they were legal Voters?*

Q U E R Y 15.

Did not the *Old Interest* insist on their polling above twenty, whom they call'd *Customary Freeholders*, and who swore themselves *Freeholders*; who yet were afterwards prov'd to have been the lowest kind of *Copyholders*, holding by *base Tenure*, and at *the Will of the Lord?*

Had

Q U E R Y 16.

Had not the *Old Interest* Candidates set their Names to an *Agreement* with the other Candidates, *not to poll any Copyholders*; and was not this Paper, sign'd by all the four Candidates, printed and publish'd?

Q U E R Y 17.

Did not the *Old Interest*, notwithstanding this, a Day or two after, print, fix up at the Booths, and disperse through the County, A PAPER, declaring, that *Customary Freeholders* (then call'd by them *Copyholders*) if they voted, would certainly *have their Ears fix'd to a Pillory*, and be *fin'd Forty Pounds*?

Q U E R Y 18.

Did not the *Old Interest* erect a Pillory, in one of the most publick Streets of *Oxford*, the more effectually to enforce this extraordinary Threatening?

C

Was

Q U E R Y 19.

Was it not extremely surprizing, for Men of Honour and Consistency, publickly to pronounce the same Sort of Voters *legal*, when voting *for them*, on the *Thursday*; and *illegal*, on the *Saturday*, when voting *against them*?

Q U E R Y 20.

Did not the *Old Interest* Candidates, just before the Poll began, send a Note to the High-Sheriff; desiring to know, *Whether, after the Poll, he would grant a Scrutiny, if demanded?*

Q U E R Y 21.

Did they not add, in the same Note, that, *If a Scrutiny was to be granted, they would then take the Poll with less Exactness; marking the doubtful Voters, for a more particular Examination afterwards?*

*

Did

Q U E R Y 22.

Did not the High-Sheriff return for Answer, *He should certainly grant a Scrutiny, if demanded by either Side?*

Q U E R Y 23.

Was not the Poll taken accordingly, *with less Exactness*; and were not the doubtful Voters mark'd with a Q, as being questionable?

Q U E R Y 24.

Were there not FIVE HUNDRED and EIGHTY Voters mark'd in this Manner, in order to a further Examination?

Q U E R Y 25.

Must not *the Poll*, thus incompleatly, thus imperfectly taken, be necessarily consider'd as *incompleat and imperfect*; and consequently, incapable (by itself) of determining the Legal Majority?

QUERY 26.

Was not the Publick to judge, from the printed Poll, by the Q. affix'd *how many* of these questionable Voters were *on either Side*?

QUERY 27.

Was not the *Old Interest Poll* printed in such a Manner, as to deceive the Publick on this material Article?

QUERY 28.

Were there not in *Ewelme Hundred* 60 Qs in the High-Sheriff's Book; 59 on the *Old Interest* and 1 on the *New*? And did not the *Old Interest* Poll leave out 58 of their own 59, and insert 16 on the *New Interest*, which were not in the High-Sheriff's Book?

QUERY 29.

When the Poll was clos'd, and a Scrutiny demanded by the *New Interest* Candidates, did not the *Old Interest* Candidates

dates immediately *consent to it*, upon the High-Sheriff's putting the *Question* to them ?

Q U E R Y 30.

Did not the *Old Interest* Gentlemen vehemently insist, *in the Face of their Country*, on the first Day of the Scrutiny, that the High-Sheriff's Declaration at the close of the Poll had been *falsly* enter'd in the Book of the County Court; and would they not have insisted upon it to this Day, and for ever, had not *the Original Minutes* been fortunately found the next Day, and prov'd to *agree* with the *Record* ?

Q U E R Y 31.

Was it not prov'd in Court, that there was but *one Legal Method* for the High-Sheriff to proceed by in the Scrutiny; *first to hear the whole Complaint of the Party demanding the Scrutiny, and then the Defence of their Adversaries*: since this

this was the invariable Rule of proceeding in all *similar* Cases in Courts of Justice, and in all Cases of *the same Nature* before the House of Commons ?

QUERY 32.

Was not the Scrutiny carried on, *for at least eight Hours every Day*, without Intermission, from the very first Day to the last ?

QUERY 33.

Was it not evident to every fair Person attending the Scrutiny, that, though a loud Clamour was spread (not only thro' the County but thro' the Kingdom) on account of the *New Interest* protracting the Scrutiny; was it not, I say, evident, that *the Scrutiny was in Fact protracted*, unnecessarily, by the *Old Interest* ?

Did

Q U E R Y 34.

Did not Mr. *De Gray*, Council for the *New Interest*, repeatedly insist upon it, in the publick Court, in the Presence of all the four Candidates, at the Conclusion of several Days Business, that the *New Interest* (even when the *New Interest* were disqualifying) *had not taken up one Fourth Part of the Time?*

Q U E R Y 35.

Is not the Secret of this now well known; that the *Old Interest* had been assur'd by Council, that, *if the Scrutiny was not finish'd, the Return must be made according to the Poll?*

Q U E R Y 36.

Had this Assurance been founded on Truth, were not the *Old Interest* prudent in protracting a Scrutiny, which (I presume) they were conscious, if finish'd, must have prov'd their Destruction?

Did

QUERY 37.

Did it not appear upon the Scrutiny, that there was *not any one Species of bad Voters*, which had not been poll'd by the *Old Interest*?

QUERY 38.

Is not *FOURSCORE* a very large Number on the decisive Article of *not being assess'd to the Land Tax*.

QUERY 39.

Would it be a Breach of Charity to suppose, that the *Old Interest* Candidates knew of the many *Wretches* on this Head; from their refusing to get the *County Assessments* return'd properly, when call'd upon by the *New Interest* Candidates, who took great Pains for that purpose?

It

Q U E R Y 40.

Is it not strongly presumeable, that the *New Interest* Candidates refus'd to accept every Vote they knew to be bad ; when the Names of several Persons were mention'd publickly in the Court, who, having been actually refus'd by them, were readily accepted by the *Old Interest* ; poll'd for the *Old Interest* ; and were fully disqualify'd on the Scrutiny ?

Q U E R Y 41.

Was not a *New Species* of Voters introduc'd by the *Old Interest*, under the Title of *Contingent Freeholders*, i. e. such as may hereafter have a Right to vote, or may not ? *Ex. gr.* R— C— of *Pyrton* Hundred, and J— C— of *Wotton* Hundred ?

Q U E R Y 42.

Were not *Four* Gentlemen of one Town prov'd to have bought an Estate in the middle of *May* 1753, who yet

voted for it in the middle of *April* 1754 ;
and swore they had been in possession
Twelve Months ?

Q U E R Y 43.

Were not *three* poor Men, of the Parish
of *Kidlington*, brought and voted, though
they were ALMSMEN ; and were re-
moveable from their House of Charity
for *Marriage*, and *in case of their not*
attending Church every Day in the Year, on
which there were publick Prayers ?

Q U E R Y 44.

Was not one Man brought to poll,
who, after having *three times* declar'd
himself *no Freeholder*, and that *he could*
not take the Oath, was brought on a *fourth*
time by one of the *Old Interest* Candi-
dates ; and then took the Oath, and
voted for Lord *W—* and Sir *J— D—* ?

Were

Q U E R Y 45.

Were not *many poor Cottagers* prevail'd upon to swear themselves worth Forty Shillings a Year ; whose Tenements never had been let for more than 20, 25, 30, or 35 Shillings ?

Q U E R Y 46.

Did the bare telling them, that *surely their Houses must be worth 40 s. a Year* make them so in fact ?

Q U E R Y 47.

Or, did the giving them 40s. *for the single Year of the Election* make them worth 40s. a Year, *honestly and fairly* ?

Q U E R Y 48.

Or, did T— S— of Chadlington Hundred, by taking 2s. out of his own Pocket, and adding them to his Tenant's 38s, (in order that he might swear he had RECEIVED 40s,) at all clear him from the dreadful Sin of wilful Perjury ?

As

QUERY 49.

As the *Old Interest* had (by their own Contrivance) so short a Time to requalify, and so long a Time to pick out some of their most defensible Cases, and did pick where they pleas'd out of the 346 objected to; will not the World presume, that the 55 they attempted to requalify must certainly be *good Men and true*; and that *if their chosen Band should fail, the Remainder must be bad indeed?*

QUERY 50.

And yet, after *Proofs* produc'd, that several of the *Old Interest* Voters had not been possess'd of the Estates they voted for, above 9, 10, or 11 Months; was it not a most bare-faced Attempt, to endeavour to requalify *Two* of these by *Sleight of Hand*—to endeavour to requalify *P— P—* of *Binfield* Hundred, and *J— S—* of *Wotton* Hundred, by producing Deeds, where THE TRUE DATE was clearly ERASED, and A FALSE DATE clearly INSERTED in *all the Three Places?*

BUT

BUT ——— shall *a Majority*, obtain'd upon a Poll by CRIMES like **These**; shall *such a Majority* be deem'd decisive; without farther Doubt or Disputation? *Are these Things so?* ——— If they are, if the several preceding Charges (to which a Multitude of others might be added) cannot *honestly* be denied; shall the Freeholders, that *reverenc'd an Oath*, that, in Defiance of the Menaces of the Great, and of the *Madness of the People*, dar'd to oppose such a **Clau** of Voters; shall **THESE** be in danger of suffering, not only in their *Fortunes* but in their *Lives*, from *a Party so atrociously criminal in such numerous Instances?* Shall **this**, shall *such* a Body of Men usurp and confine to themselves every Claim of *Innocence* and *Integrity*, *Honesty* and *Honour*? Shall Men, thus **Black** in so many of their Transactions, erect their Crest with a triumphant Arrogance; boldly pronounce *themselves* the only Friends of RELIGION as well as LOYALTY; and thunder thro' the

the

the Nation THE JUSTICE OF THEIR CAUSE, so as to endanger *Insurrections*; and perhaps raise a *Rebellion*?—O my Soul, come not thou into their Secret! Unto their Assembly, mine Honour, be not thou united!

THUS, Sir, have I given You and the Publick my Thoughts on the *Merits* of the *Old Interest*. I can lay my Hand upon my Heart, and solemnly protest *my own Belief* of every preceding Article. If I have been *warm'd* with the Subject, could I honestly be otherwise? Would not a cold Indifference for my *Religion* and my *Liberty* be most criminal in one, on whom God has conferr'd the glorious Privileges of a *Protestant* and an *Englishman*? Against such a Complication of Crimes, as before enumerated; against such flagrant Indignities offer'd to *Truth* and *Honour*, to *common Honesty* and *common Sense*, Zeal must be a Virtue. I shall only, Sir, add my Prayers to yours—that *Bitter* may never more be put for *Sweet*, and *Sweet* for *Bitter*—that *Vice* may

may not henceforth dare to strut in the Robes of *Virtue*—that the *Mask* may be torn with Ignominy from the Face of every false *Patrician* and perjur'd *Hypocrite*,—that no Man may dare to *be* what he dares not *appear to be*—and that every *true Englishman* and *sincere Protestant* may have the Courage to pronounce himself, and *boldly appear to be, what he is.*

I am,

Reverend S I R,

Affectionately

Oxfordshire,
Nov. 27, 1754.

Yours, &c.

