
To be short and brief with him: It is granted him that he is a very Ironical Gentleman all over: That he has a very Ironical Name, but is still more Knave than Fool: That he has a very Ironical Style, but what abounds with more Malice than Wit: But that he is free from any seditious Design, is such an Irony, that it must move Laughter more than Attention or Belief, and make a Jest of himself and the Government together; at this rate of Explanation, Mrs. Cellier’s *Meal-Tub*, Fitz Harris’s *Libel*, Robert Young’s *Flower-Pot Association*, and Fuller’s *Shams* upon the Parliament, and some of our best Ministers of State, were all Ironies too; but such a fatal Irony it was to Fitz Harris, that he was fairly hang’d for it in good earnest, and so should the rest have been if they had met with their due. Mr. Foe’s Ironical Vein has only this for its Vindication, which must make it too the greater Jest, That those Knights of the Post only design’d their Libels and Associations for the Pockets of particular Persons; but Mr. Foe, with a Shorter Way indeed, paums [sic] his upon the whole Government and Constitution at once; and very Ironically dresses up the Church and State in the Lions and Bears Skin, and such Ironical Figures as are not to be found in the Tropes of our Modern Rhetorick, but a barbarous Irony that was much practised by the Old Romans on the Primitive Christians, the better to bring their Dogs to worry them.

If his Libel had no relation to the publick Proceedings of the Parliament and Government at this juncture, how came it to be publish’d? As if written to shew what Spirit they were of: If he had not design’d it for a general Character of our Constitution, and the present Temper of our Church, Court, and Parliament, it had been but Justice and Honesty in him, for nothing less than that could have cleared it from a Seditious Design, by way of Advertisement or Appendix; or, to use his Ironical Stile by way of Prologue or Epilogue, to have given the World some intimation of those Papers and Pamphlets, Books and Sermons which had vented their Gall in such a Satyrical vein against the Dissenters; which, had he notForgot his Farnaby, or read any Rhetorick at all, instead of Irony, he must have call’d it the most bitter Satyr or Sarcasm; for Saturns, tho’ they have some humane shape above, are known by their Tails or Cloven-feet below: And, if our Author had been bred a Scholar instead of a Hosier, he would have found another kind of Figure for making other Peoples Thoughts speak in his words. But, after all, his *Brief Explanation* falls very short of clearing him from Seditious Design; for, all the while, not a Syllable of all that Satyr or Sarcasm, Virulence or Malice, or persecuting Spirit is to be seen in those Sermons and Pamphlets upon which he would so Ironically sham it; for if it be not to be seen in their Words and Works, plain, and at length, (as himself allows) he is the more malicious and wicked, to charge them with it; so that his plain English, ’tis plain, was not without Design. It plainly told them, That God’s peculiar People were to have their Tryals again of Mockings and Scourgings, Bonds and Imprisonments, of the Gallies and Gallows: And come, my Brethren, come up and help the Lord against the Mighty, was the darker English of it. If this were Irony too, so was Guy Faux’s dark Lanthorn, when it came to blow up the Government!

But then, for so rigid a Dissenter, so strict a Nonconformist! Who hath so consistently opposed (as he says) all Occasional Conformity; for such an one to lay about him with Fire and Faggot, at the same time the Pious, Charitable Bill was
passing, for the suppressing of this damnable Hypocrisie, to which, even the Calvinists of Holland, in their Harlem Courant, have given their Approbation: This, I confess, seems a very odd sort of Irony; and with all his splitting of Words, (and tho’ he could split Hairs too) not to be distinguished from seditious Design.

We thank him, in Short, for the short Explanation of the meaning of this Paper, and the telling of us the plain English of the Thing that other People mean; but is it not the greatest Irony in the World, for him to pretend to know other Peoples meaning better than his own?

Was this the way to rectifie their Mistakes? To set the mistaken Gentlemen aright in every Particular? To let them know, that it will not go down? That the Queen, the Council, the Parliament are all offended to have it so much as suggested? And all this to be told them, and learnt by them, out of the most virulent Satyr that ever was writ for their Persecution ever since the first Reformation: If this be the Sense of it, it is then the most dextrous Hocus Pocus, or Diabolical Conjuring! And he must have a very transforming Maw, or a very good slight of Hand, that will spew us up Claret or Blood, Knives or Daggers, and at the same time, to make us believe, ’tis all the same Wine and Sugar-Plumbs that he swallow’d before.

’Tis hard, indeed, after all, that this should not be perceiv’d by all the Town; That not one Man can see it, neither Church-man nor Dissenter!

I must confess only for my self; for the Dissenters, he knows best the texture of their Opticks: I would no more have my Nose saddl’d with his Spectacles, than I would make Spectacles for a blind Bear; for if we must see as Mr. Foe sees, ’tis plain, we must see double; and if Church-man and Dissenter must believe as Mr. Foe would have them believe, we had as good never have made the stand in K. J. Reign, but swallow’d Transubstantiation with the Wafer: I do assure him, without the help of any Spectacles at all, I did, as soon as I saw this Short Way with Dissenters, assert it to be a piece of their own Party’s putting out; and wonder’d the Government let it go unregarded so long: At this rate, Mr. Foe is the only seeing Man, and Wise Man in the Nation, and all the rest a parcel of Blind Fools, only fit to be banter’d. Surely this Author is all Conceit as well as all Irony: The Dissenters were only angry, that no Church-man in Sermon or Print, would oblige them with such a virulent Satyr; and so, with the Assyrain Captain’s Reply, let Mr. Foe remember too the words of Rabshekah, and consider how most Ironically, he has brought himself to eat his own Dung, and drink his own Piss.

The Dissenters must thank him now for making a Shorter Way for their Occasional Bill to pass both Houses, or, if it fail, to be soon reviv’d, since here we have a Rigid Dissenter, and a constant Opposer, (as he calls himself) of their Occasional Hypocrisie. (for that is the plain English of it, and we can’t without Irony too, call it Conformity) bringing us all the Arguments for a speedy and bloody Persecution of his own Party; and giving us the most strenuous Answers to all the most reasonable Objections that might be alleged against it, and both with more Malice, Satyr and Cruelty, than ever a Protestant People, or ever they could have met with under a Popish Persecution. If the Government had let it go unregarded, the Bantling had been infallibly laid by them at St. James’s Gate, or the Chappel-door. Qui non prohibit tenentur, had been the word; and since we have found the true
Father; ’tis surely most fitting that he should keep the Child too. But can any Body of common Sense, say or think (without making a Jest or Irony of himself) that this was no Seditious Design, to put a Bastard upon the Government.

I have that good opinion of the Moderation and Temper of the Government, that if this virulent, and flagitious Paper had been found upon one of these High-flyers of the Church (as this our Monsieur Foe most Ironically calls them) Our Ministers, I am perswaded, would have done themselves and the Dissenters that Justice, so as to have made him a publick Example: But the Malice is surely the more Propensive and Mischievous, when all this nefarious and false Politicks shall be so injuriously, and unjustly, paum’d upon them by a Zealous Biggot, and High-flyer of their own Party.

This Spirit of Persecution which they would charge upon the Church with more Spight and Malice than ever their Proceedings against them have deserve’d (what ever were the just Resentments of some Church-men upon the Restoration; for those Cruel Usages they had from themselves before it, beyond what ever they met with after, or, what ever were the Influence of Popish Counsels, (which make Toleration Occasional too; and allow or Deny it according as they find it convenient) after all, ’tis certain, there is none of this Persecuting Spirit has appear’d among Church-men these Twenty years, and what they may not hear of these Forty more: If they had had the modesty or ingenuity to have consider’d how open, even those High-flyers, as they make them, were in King James’s time, to meet and receive them; and how Obstinate and Sullen, Insolent and Daring their own High-flyers were when got upon the Wings of Toleration, and which were only Waxen ones too, which would soon have failed them, and made their fall the greater: If they would Consider how the very Church-men (for such they must be, unless they could imagin that Occasional Conformity made the Majority of the Two Houses, and that even the High-flyers, among our Bishops, were Occasional Conformists too;) were those that helped them to that Establish’d Toleration they now enjoy: If they would reflect upon their own High flights, or that grateful Condescension which they shew’d to the Church Party, for the great moderation shewn them; how they turn’d even those out of all Commission, who had Frankly voted for their Toleration, and how strongly they labour’d to turn that Toleration into a National Establishment: If Mr. Foe had remembred that Occasional Judge, as well as his Occasional Lord Mayor, who in the Charge of his Circuit, settled the Conventicle on the same Foundation with the Cathedral: they would all have found but little Occasion to reflect upon the fiery Spirit of the Church Party, but more upon their own Puritanical Zeal, which of course is always accompany’d with so much Imprudence and Ingratitude.