

2000.11

Full transcript

“To the Independent Freeholders of the County of Sussex”

Gentlemen,

When the paper signed Philo-Fuller was first put into my hands, I could not help exclaiming, *O Tempora! O mores!* My astonishment, however, a little subsided when I considered that *de gustibus nil disputandum*. &c &c.

The paper so completely carried its own confutation with it, that to attempt to answer it seemed to be an useless task; and I was fully of opinion, and am so still, that it is beneath the notice of Colonel Sergison’s Committee, and that it ought to be treated with silent contempt. But as the Author, who no doubt thinks, otherwise, and some of his party, would most likely put a different construction on our silence, I have ventured, though no member of the Committee, to make a few desultory observations on it.

I have been endeavouring to discover what there could be in the Address of Colonel Sergison’s Committee that could give so great an offence to the opposite party. Surely their complimenting the Freeholders who voted for Col. Sergison, on account of their independence, could not give offence; and yet, from Philo-Fuller’s manner of addressing those who voted in favour of Mr. Fuller only as “loyal freeholders”, it should seem that the term *independent* was not a very favourite one with them – and, indeed, that is highly probable, for it cannot be supposed that Mr. Fuller, who boasted of the great assistance he had received from these Thatched-house Junto, would be at all pleased to see the spirit of independence spread in this County.

But perhaps it may be that they are very angry to find that Col. Sergison’s friends are not yet placed on the STOOL OF REPENTANCE. And, as our party are in such good spirits, notwithstanding what Philo-Fuller says of our defeat, and as the congratulatory address of the Committee is little calculated to depress the hopes entertained by Col. Sergison’s friends of his final and complete triumph over Mr. Fuller, it seems rather probable that *Stool* will be wanted by any of our party, and we would recommend it (not threaten them with it, as one of Mr. F’s worthy friends did some of the Freeholders who voted for Col. Sergison) to many, very many, of their party. It be not an easy seat, it may be salutary; and, so far as I am capable of judging, seems altogether proper for their case.

What else could give offence in the Address I am really at a loss to conjecture.

Philo-Fuller must be certainly joking with his friends when he talks of Fuller’s *real Independence*, and of his being no *Tool either to a Party or a Peer*. For no one will believe that those who could co-operate with the THATCHED HOUSE JUNTO, whose only object is to destroy the Independence of the County, would at the same time support him on account of his *real* independence – and when they recollect, that in this celebrated JUNTO there are many Peers, and that Mr. Fuller at the close of the poll acknowledged the vast obligations he was under to them, and addressed them as his NOBLE AND ILLUSTRIOUS SUPPORTERS, they can hardly expect to obtain credit when they declare he is not the *tool of a Peer*. And as to his not being the *Tool of a Party*, that can hardly be believed, for it is well known that ever since the late Administration carried the measure for the abolition of the Slave-trade against the wishes of him, and a few other of his very humane and worthy friends, he has been as completely devoted to the present Administration as any *Tool* need be, independently of the additional obligations he has to be so, in gratitude for the great exertions they have made to support him in the present contest.

However confident Philo-Fuller may be of what would have been the result of the Scrutiny before the Sheriff, if he had thought proper to allow it, I will venture to assert, without fear of contradiction, there was not one of the Fuller's friends that did not dread it, nor one of Col. Sergison's that did not wish for it. And as to the plea that there was not time for the scrutiny, it is truly ridiculous. There were three clear weeks, and in that time there is little doubt that it would have been clearly ascertained that Co. Sergison ought to be the sitting member, by so considerable a majority of legal votes, that *hopeless* indeed would have been their case if they had petitioned the House against his return.

Then INDEPENDENT Freeholders, and LOYAL too, whatever Philo-Fuller may insinuate to the contrary, stand forward and maintain your just rights. Support the man who has already made great sacrifices, and is still ready to make more. In defence of the Independence of your County, and defeat the purpose of the THATCHED HOUSE JUNTO, and of every other JUNTO that would conspire to rob you of your birth-right, and deprive you of the privilege of choosing your own Representatives in Parliament.

I am, GENTLEMEN, your most obedient Servant,
A Lover of Truth.

Chichester, June 5, 1807. Seagrave, Printer.