

BEN FRANKLIN, "ON THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS"

While free from Force the Press remains,
Virtue and Freedom chear our Plains,
And Learning Largesses bestows,
And keeps unlicens'd open House.
We to the Nation's publick Mart
Our Works of Wit, and Schemes of Art,
And philosophic Goods, this Way,
Like Water carriage, cheap convey.
This Tree which Knowledge so affords,
Inquisitors with flaming swords
From Lay-Approach with Zeal defend,
Lest their own Paradise should end.

The Press from her fecundous Womb
Brought forth the Arts of Greece and Rome;
Her offspring, skill'd in Logic War,
Truth's Banner wav'd in open Air;
The Monster Superstition fled,
And hid in Shades in Gorgon Head;
And awless Pow'r, the long kept Field,
By Reason quell'd, was forc'd to yield.

This Nurse of Arts, and Freedom's Fence,
To chain, is Treason against Sense:
And Liberty, thy thousand Tongues
None silence who design no Wrongs;
For those who use the Gag's Restraint,
First Rob, before they stop Complaint.

