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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

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Such Criticisms make a man of Sense sick, and a Fool merry.

The next Paragraph of the paper we are talking of, falls upon some body whom I am at a loss to guess at: But I find the whole invective turns upon a man who (it seems) has been imprisoned for debt. Whoever he was, I most heartily pity him; but at the same time must put the *Examiner* in mind, that notwithstanding he is a Critick, he still ought to remember he is a Christian. Poverty was never thought a proper subject for ridicule; and I do not remember that I ever met with a Satyr upon a Beggar.

As for those little Retortings of my own expressions, of *being dull by design, witty in October, shining, excelling*, and so forth; they are the common Cavils of every Witlin, who has no other method of showing his Parts, but by little variations and repetitions of the man's words whom he attacks.

But the truth of it is, the paper before me, not only in this particular, but in its very essence, is like *Ovid's Echo*:

— *Quæ nec reticere loquenti,*
Nec prior ipsa loqui didicit. —

I should not have deserved the character of a *Censor*, had I not animadverted upon the above-mentioned Author by a gentle chastisement: But I know my Reader will not pardon me, unless I declare, that nothing of this nature for the future (unless it be written with some Wit) shall divert me from my care of the publick.

N^o 240. Saturday, October 21. 1710.

Ad populum phaleras. —

Perf.

From my own Apartment, October 20.

I DO not remember that in any of my Lucubrations I have touched upon that useful Science of Physick, notwithstanding I have declared my self more than once a Professor of it. I have indeed joined the study of Astrology with it, because I never knew a Physician recommend

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himself to the publick who had not a Sister art to embellish his knowledge in Medicine. It has been commonly observed in compliment to the Ingenious of our profession, that *Apollo* was God of Verse as well as Physick; and in all ages the most celebrated Practitioners of our country were the particular favourites of the Muses. Poetry to Physick is indeed like the gilding to a Pill; it makes the art shine, and covers the severity of the Doctor with the agreeableness of the Companion.

The very foundation of Poetry is good sense, if we may allow *Horace* to be a judge of the art.

Scribendi recte sapere est, et principium, et fons.

And if so, we have reason to believe, that the same man who writes well can prescribe well, if he has applied himself to the study of both. Besides, when we see a Man making profession of two different Sciences, it is natural for us to believe he is no Pretender in that which we are not judges of, when we find him skilful in that which we understand.

Ordinary Quacks and Charlatans are throughly sensible how necessary it is to support themselves by these collateral assistances, and therefore always lay their claim to some supernumerary Accomplishments which are wholly foreign to their profession.

About twenty years ago, it was impossible to walk the streets without having an Advertisement thrust into your hand of a Doctor *who was arrived at the knowledge of the green and red Dragon, and had discovered the Female Fern Seed.* No body ever knew what this meant; but the green and red Dragon so amused the people, that the Doctor lived very comfortably upon them. About the same time there was pasted a very hard word upon every corner of the streets. This, to the best of my remembrance, was

T E T R A C H Y M A G O G O N,

Which drew great shoals of Spectators about it, who read the bill that it introduced with unspeakable curiosity; and when they were sick, would have no body but this Learned man for their Physician.

I once received an Advertisement of one *who had studied thirty years by Candle-light for the good of his countrymen.* He might have studied twice as long by Day-light, and never have been taken notice of: But Elucubrations cannot be over-valued. There are some who have gained themselves great reputation for Physick by their birth, as the *Seventh Son of a Seventh Son*; and others by not being born at all, as the *Unborn*

born Doctor, who, I hear, is lately gone the way of his Patients, having died worth five hundred Pounds *per Annum*, though he was not *born* to a halfpenny.

My ingenious friend *Doctor Saffold*, succeeded my old contemporary *Doctor Lilly* in the studies both of Physick and Astrology, to which he added that of Poetry, as was to be seen both upon the sign where he lived, and in the Bills which he distributed. He was succeeded by *Doctor Case*, who erased the Verses of his Predecessor out of the Sign-post, and substituted in their stead two of his own, which were as follow:

*Within this Place
Lives Doctor Case.*

He is said to have got more by this Distich, than *Mr. Dryden* did by all his Works. There would be no end of enumerating the several imaginary Perfections and unaccountable Artifices by which this tribe of men ensnare the minds of the vulgar, and gain crowds of admirers. I have seen the whole front of a Mountebank's Stage from one end to the other faced with Patents, Certificates, Medals, and Great Seals, by which the several Princes of *Europe* have testified their particular respect and esteem for the Doctor. Every Great man with a founding title has been his Patient. I believe I have seen twenty Mountebanks that have given Physick to the Czar of *Muscovy*. The Great Duke of *Tuscany* escapes no better. The Elector of *Brandenburg* was likewise a very good Patient.

This great condescension of the Doctor draws upon him much goodwill from his Audience; and it is ten to one, but if any of them be troubled with an aching Tooth, his ambition will prompt him to get it drawn by a person who has had so many Princes, Kings, and Emperors, under his hands.

I must not leave this subject without observing, that as Physicians are apt to deal in Poetry, Apothecaries endeavour to recommend themselves by Oratory, and are therefore without controversy the most Eloquent persons in the whole *British* Nation. I would not willingly discourage any of the Arts, especially that of which I am an humble Professor; but I must confess, for the good of my native Country, I could wish there might be a suspension of Physick for some years, that our Kingdom, which has been so much exhausted by the wars, might have leave to recruit it self.

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As for my self, the only Physick which has brought me safe to almost the age of man, and which I prescribe to all my friends, is Abstinence. This is certainly the best Physick for prevention, and very often the most effectual against the present distemper. In short, my *Recipe* is, *Take nothing.*

Were the Body Politick to be physicked like particular persons, I should venture to prescribe to it after the same manner. I remember when our whole Island was shaken with an Earthquake some years ago, there was an impudent Mountebank who sold Pills which (as he told the country people) were very good against an Earthquake. It may perhaps be thought as absurd to prescribe a Diet for the allaying popular commotions, and national ferments. But I am verily persuaded, that if in such a case a whole people were to enter into a course of Abstinence, and eat nothing but Water-gruel for a fortnight, it would abate the rage and animosity of Parties, and not a little contribute to the cure of a distracted Nation. Such a Fast would have a natural tendency to the procuring of those ends for which a Fast is usually proclaimed. If any man has a mind to enter on such a voluntary abstinence, it might not be improper to give him the caution of *Pythagoras* in particular.

Abstine a Fabis.

“ Abstain from Beans.

That is, say the Interpreters, meddle not with Elections, Beans having been made use of by the Voters among the *Athenians* in the choice of Magistrates.



Saturday,