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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

London, 1721

No 253. Tuesday, November 21. 1710.

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N^o 253. Tuesday, November 21. 1710.

*Pietate gravem ac meritis si forte virum quem
Conspexere, silent, arrectisque auribus astant.* Virg.

From my own Apartment, November 20.

Extract of the Journal of the Court of Honour, 1710.

Die Lunæ vicesimo Novembris, hora nona Antemeridiana.

THE Court being sat, an Oath prepared by the Cenfor was administered to the assistants on his Right hand, who were all sworn upon their Honour. The women on his Left hand took the same Oath upon their Reputation. Twelve Gentlemen of the Horse-guards were impannelled, having unanimously chosen Mr. *Alexander Truncheon*, who is their Right-hand man in the Troop, for their Foreman in the Jury. Mr. *Truncheon* immediately drew his sword, and holding it with the point towards his own body, presented it to the Cenfor. Mr. *Bickerstaffe* received it, and after having surveyed the breadth of the blade, and sharpness of the point, with more than ordinary attention, returned it to the Foreman in a very graceful manner. The rest of the Jury, upon the delivery of the sword to their Foreman, drew all of them together as one man, and saluted the bench with such an Air, as signified the most resigned submission to those who commanded them, and the greatest magnanimity to execute what they should command.

Mr. *Bickerstaffe*, after having received the compliments on his Right-hand, cast his eye upon the Left, where the whole Female-Jury paid their respects by a low Curtsie, and by laying their hands upon their mouths. Their Forewoman was a professed *Platonist*, that had spent much of her time in exhorting the Sex to set a just value upon their persons, and to make the men know themselves.

There

There followed a profound silence, when at length, after some recollection, the Censor, who continued hitherto uncovered, put on his Hat with great dignity; and after having composed the Brims of it in a manner suitable to the gravity of his Character, he gave the following Charge, which was received with silence and attention, that being the only applause which he admits of, or is ever given in his presence.

“ The Nature of my office, and the Solemnity of this occasion, requiring that I should open my first Session with a Speech, I shall cast what I have to say under two principal heads:

“ Under the first, I shall endeavour to show the Necessity and Usefulness of this new erected Court; and under the second, I shall give a word of Advice and Instruction to every constituent part of it.

“ As for the first, it is well observed by *Phædrus* an Heathen Poet,

Nisi utile est quod facimus, frustra est gloria.

“ Which is the same, Ladies, as if I should say, *It would be of no reputation for me to be President of a Court which is of no benefit to the Publick.* Now the Advantages that may arise to the Weal Publick from this Institution will more plainly appear, if we consider what it suffers for the want of it. Are not our streets daily filled with wild pieces of Justice and random Penalties? Are not Crimes undetermined, and Reparations disproportioned? How often have we seen the Lye punished by death, and the Lye himself deciding his own cause; nay, not only acting the Judge, but the Executioner? Have we not known a Box on the ear more severely accounted for than Manslaughter? In these extrajudicial proceedings of mankind, an unmannerly Jest is frequently as capital as a premeditated Murder.

“ But the most pernicious circumstance in this case is, that the man who suffers the injury must put himself upon the same foot of danger with him that gave it, before he can have his just revenge; so that the punishment is altogether accidental, and may fall as well upon the innocent as the guilty. I shall only mention a case which happens frequently among the more polite nations of the world, and which I the rather mention, because both Sexes are concerned in it, and which therefore you Gentlemen and you Ladies of the Jury will the rather take notice of; I mean that great and known case of Cuckoldom. Supposing the person who has suffered Insults in his dearer and better half; supposing, I say, this person should resent the injuries done to his tender

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“ Wife;

“ Wife; What is the reparation he may expect? Why, to be used worse
 “ than his poor Lady, run through the body, and left breathless upon the
 “ bed of Honour. What then, will you on my Right hand say, must
 “ the man do that is affronted? Must our sides be elbowed, our shins
 “ broken? Must the Wall, or perhaps our Mistress, be taken from us?
 “ May a man knit his forehead into a frown, toss up his arm, or pish at
 “ what we say; and must the Villain live after it? Is there no redress for
 “ injured Honour? Yes, Gentlemen, that is the design of the Judicature
 “ we have here established.

“ A Court of Conscience, we very well know, was first instituted for
 “ the determining of several points of Property that were too little and
 “ trivial for the Cognizance of higher Courts of Justice. In the same
 “ manner, our Court of Honour is appointed for the examination of se-
 “ veral Niceties and Punctilio's that do not pass for wrongs in the eye
 “ of our common laws. But notwithstanding no Legislators of any na-
 “ tion have taken into consideration these little circumstances, they are
 “ such as often lead to crimes big enough for their inspection, though
 “ they come before them too late for their redress.

“ Besides, I appeal to you, Ladies, [*Here Mr. Bickerstaffe turned to
 “ his left hand*] if these are not the little stings and thorns in life that
 “ make it more uneasy than its most substantial evils? Confess ingenuously,
 “ Did you never lose a Morning's Devotions, because you could not
 “ offer them up from the highest place of the Pew? Have you not been
 “ in pain, even at a Ball, because another has been taken out to dance
 “ before you? Do you love any of your friends so much as those that
 “ are below you? Or have you any Favourites that walk on your Right
 “ hand? You have answered me in your looks, I ask no more.

“ I come now to the second part of my discourse, which obliges me
 “ to address my self in particular to the respective Members of the Court,
 “ in which I shall be very brief.

“ As for you, Gentlemen and Ladies, my Assistants and Grand Juries,
 “ I have made choice of you on my Right hand, because I know you very
 “ jealous of your Honour; and you on my Left, because I know you
 “ very much concerned for the Reputation of others; for which reason I
 “ expect great exactness and impartiality in your Verdicts and Judg-
 “ ments.

“ I must in the next place address my self to you, Gentlemen of
 “ the Council: You all know, that I have not chosen you for your
 “ Knowledge in the litigious parts of the Law, but because you have all

“ of

“ of you formerly fought Duels, of which I have reason to think you
 “ have repented, as being now settled in the peaceable state of Bench-
 “ ers. My advice to you is, only that in your Pleadings you are short
 “ and expressive: To which end you are to banish out of your Discourses
 “ all synonymous Terms, and unnecessary Multiplications of Verbs and
 “ Nouns. I do moreover forbid you the use of the words *also* and *like-
 “ wise*; and must further declare, That if I catch any one among you,
 “ upon any pretence whatsoever, using the particle *or*, I shall incessantly
 “ order him to be stripped of his Gown, and thrown over the Bar.

This is a true Copy,

Charles Lillie.

N. B. The sequel of the Proceedings of this day will be published
 on *Tuesday* next.

Sir Richard Steele assisted in this paper.

N^o 254. *Thursday, November 23. 1710.*

Splendide mendax.-----

Hor.

From my own Apartment, November 22.

THERE are no Books which I more delight in than in Travels,
 especially those that describe remote Countries, and give the
 writer an opportunity of showing his parts without incurring any
 danger of being examined or contradicted. Among all the Authors of
 this kind, our renowned Country-man *Sir John Mandeville* has distin-
 guished himself by the Copiousness of his Invention, and Greatness of his
 Genius. The second to *Sir John* I take to have been *Ferdinand Men-
 dez Pinto*, a person of infinite adventure, and unbounded imagination.
 One reads the Voyages of these two Great Wits with as much astonish-
 ment as the Travels of *Ulysses* in *Homer*, or of the *Red-Cross Knight* in
Spenser. All is Enchanted Ground, and Fairy Land.

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