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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

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pass over them in silence, and shall only observe, that the honourable Author seems, by his Quotations, to have been well versed in the ancient Poets, which perhaps raised his fancy above the ordinary pitch of Historians, and very much contributed to the embellishment of his writings.

N^o 255. Saturday, November 25. 1710.

-----*Nec te tua plurima, Pantheu,
Labentem pietas nec Apollinis insula texit.* Virg.

From my own Apartment, November 24.

To the Censor of Great Britain.

SIR,

I AM at present under very great difficulties, which it is not in the power of any one, besides your self, to redress. Whether or no you shall think it a proper case to come before your Court of Honour, I cannot tell; but thus it is: I am Chaplain to an honourable family, very regular at the hours of devotion, and I hope of an unblameable life; but for not offering to rise at second course, I found my Patron and his Lady very sullen and out of humour, though at first I did not know the reason of it. At length, when I happened to help my self to a Jelly, the Lady of the house, otherwise a devout Woman, told me, That it did not become a man of my Cloth to delight in such frivolous food: But as I still continued to sit out the last Course, I was yesterday informed by the Butler, that his Lordship had no further occasion for my Service. All which is humbly submitted to your consideration, by,

SIR, Your most Humble Servant, &c.

The case of this Gentleman deserves pity, especially if he loves Sweetmeats, to which, if I may guess by his Letter, he is no enemy. In the mean time, I have often wondered at the Indecency of discarding the holiest

holiest man from the table as soon as the most delicious parts of the entertainment are served up, and could never conceive a reason for so absurd a custom. Is it because a liquorish palate, or a sweet tooth (as they call it) is not consistent with the Sanctity of his character? This is but a trifling pretence. No man of the most rigid Virtue gives offence by any excesses in Plumb-pudding or Plumb-porridge, and that because they are the first parts of the dinner. Is there any thing that tends to Incitation in Sweetmeats more than in ordinary dishes? Certainly not. Sugar-plumbs are a very innocent diet, and Conserves of a much colder nature than our common Pickles. I have sometimes thought, that the Ceremony of the Chaplain's flying away from the Dessert was typical and figurative, to mark out to the company how they ought to retire from all the luscious baits of temptation, and deny their appetites the gratifications that are most pleasing to them; or at least to signify, that we ought to stint our selves in our most lawful satisfactions, and not make our pleasure, but our support, the end of eating: But most certainly, if such a Lesson of temperance had been necessary at a table, our Clergy would have recommended it to all the Lay-masters of Families, and not have disturbed other men's tables with such unseasonable examples of Abstinence. The original therefore of this barbarous custom, I take to have been merely accidental. The Chaplain retired out of pure complaisance to make room for the removal of the Dishes, or possibly for the ranging of the Dessert. This by degrees grew into a Duty, till at length, as the fashion improved, the good man found himself cut off from the third part of the Entertainment; and if the arrogance of the Patron goes on, it is not impossible but, in the next Generation, he may see himself reduced to the Tythe, or tenth Dish of the table; a sufficient caution not to part with any privilege we are once possessed of. It was usual for the Priest in old times to feast upon the Sacrifice, nay the Honey-cake, while the hungry Laity looked upon him with great devotion, or as the late Lord *Rochester* describes it in a lively manner:

And while the Priest did eat, the people stared.

At present the custom is inverted; the Laity feast, while the Priest stands by as an humble Spectator. This necessarily puts the good man upon making great ravages on all the Dishes that stand near him, and distinguishing himself by voraciousness of appetite, as knowing that his time is short. I would fain ask these stiff-necked Patrons, whether they would not take it ill of a Chaplain that, in his Grace after Meat, should return
thanks

thanks for the whole Entertainment, with an exception to the Dessert? And yet I cannot but think, that in such a proceeding he would but deal with them as they deserved. What would a *Roman* Catholick Priest think, who is always helped first, and placed next the Ladies, should he see a Clergyman giving his Company the slip at the first appearance of the Tarts or Sweet-meats? Would not he believe that he had the same antipathy to a candied Orange, or a piece of Puff-past, as some have to a *Cheshire* Cheese, or a Breast of Mutton? Yet to so ridiculous a height is this foolish custom grown, that even the *Christmas* Pye, which in its very nature is a kind of consecrated Cate, and a Badge of distinction, is often forbidden to the Druid of the family. Strange! that a Sirloin of Beef, whether boiled or roasted, when entire, is exposed to his utmost Depredations and Incisions; but if minced into small pieces, and tossed up with Plumbs and Sugar, changes its property, and, forsooth, is meat for his Master.

In this case I know not which to censure, the Patron or the Chaplain, the insolence of power, or the abjectness of dependence. For my own part, I have often blushed to see a Gentleman, whom I knew to have much more wit and learning than my self, and who was bred up with me at the University upon the same foot of a liberal Education, treated in such an ignominious manner, and sunk beneath those of his own rank, by reason of that Character which ought to bring him honour. This deters men of generous minds from placing themselves in such a station of life, and by that means frequently excludes persons of quality from the improving and agreeable conversation of a learned and obsequious friend.

Mr. *Oldham* lets us know, that he was affrighted from the thought of such an employment, by the scandalous sort of treatment which often accompanies it.

*Some think themselves exalted to the Sky,
If they light in some Noble family:
Diet, an Horse, and Thirty pounds a year,
Besides th'advantage of his Lordship's ear,
The credit of the business, and the state,
Are things that in a Youngster's sense sound great.
Little the unexperienc'd wretch does know,
What slavery he oft must undergo:
Who tho' in silken Scarf, and Cassock drest,
Wears but a gayer Livery at best.*

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*When dinner calls, the implement must wait
 With holy words to consecrate the meat.
 But hold it for a favour seldom known,
 If he be deign'd the honour to sit down.
 Soon as the Tarts appear, Sir Crape withdraw,
 Those dainties are not for a spiritual maw.
 Observe your distance, and be sure to stand
 Hard by the Cistern with your Cap in hand:
 There for diversion you may pick your teeth,
 Till the kind Voider comes for your relief.
 Let others who such meannesses can brook,
 Strike countenance to ev'ry great man's look;
 I rate my freedom higher.*

This Author's Raillery is the Raillery of a friend, and does not turn the Sacred Order into Ridicule, but is a just Censure on such persons as take advantage from the necessities of a man of merit, to impose on him hardships that are by no means suitable to the dignity of his profession.

N^o 256. *Tuesday, November 28. 1710.*

— *Nostrum est tantas componere Lites.* Virg.

The Proceedings of the Court of Honour, held in Sheer-lane on Monday the 20th of November 1710, before Isaac Bickerstaffe Esq; Censor of Great Britain.

Peter Plumb, of London, Merchant, was indicted by the Honourable Mr. Thomas Gules, of Gule-hall in the County of Salop, for that the said Peter Plumb did in Lombard-street, London, between the hours of two and three in the afternoon, meet the said Mr. Thomas Gules, and after a short Salutation, put on his Hat, value five-pence, while the Honourable Mr. Gules stood bare-headed for the space of two seconds. It was further urged against the Criminal, That during his discourse with the