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**The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.**

In Four Volumes

**Addison, Joseph**

**London, 1721**

No 16. Monday, March 19.

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-53633](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-53633)

This heedless pursuit after these glittering trifles, the Poet (by a nice concealed Moral) represents to have been the destruction of his female Heroe.

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N<sup>o</sup> 16. *Monday, March 19.*

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*Quod verum atque decens curo et rogo, et omnis in hoc sum.* Hor.

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I Have received a Letter, desiring me to be very satyrical upon the little Muff that is now in fashion; another informs me of a pair of silver Garters buckled below the knee, that have been lately seen at the *Rainbow* Coffee-house in *Fleet-street*; a third sends me an heavy complaint against Fringed Gloves. To be brief, there is scarce an ornament of either Sex which one or other of my correspondents has not inveighed against with some bitterness, and recommended to my observation. I must therefore, once for all, inform my readers, that it is not my intention to sink the dignity of this my Paper with reflections upon red-heels or top-knots, but rather to enter into the passions of mankind, and to correct those depraved sentiments that give birth to all those little extravagances which appear in their outward dress and behaviour. Foppish and fantastick ornaments are only indications of vice, not criminal in themselves. Extinguish vanity in the mind, and you naturally retrench the little superfluities of garniture and equipage. The blossoms will fall of themselves, when the root that nourishes them is destroyed.

I shall therefore, as I have said, apply my remedies to the first seeds and principles of an affected Dress, without descending to the Dress it self; though at the same time I must own, that I have thoughts of creating an Officer under me, to be entitled, *The Censor of small Wares*, and of allotting him one day in a week for the execution of such his Office. An Operator of this nature might act under me, with the same regard as a Surgeon to a Physician; the one might be employed in healing those blotches and tumours which break out in the body, while the other is sweetning the blood and rectifying the constitution. To speak truly, the young people of both Sexes are so wonderfully apt to  
shoot



shoot out into long Swords or sweeping Trains, bushy Head-dresses or full-bottomed Perriwigs, with several other incumbrances of Dress, that they stand in need of being pruned very frequently, lest they should be oppressed with ornaments, and over-run with the luxuriancy of their habits. I am much in doubt, whether I should give the preference to a Quaker that is trimmed close and almost cut to the quick, or to a Beau that is loaden with such a redundance of excrescences. I must therefore desire my Correspondents to let me know how they approve my project, and whether they think the erecting of such a petty Censorship may not turn to the emolument of the publick; for I would not do any thing of this nature rashly and without advice.

There is another Set of correspondents to whom I must address my self in the second place; I mean, such as fill their Letters with private scandal, and black accounts of particular persons and families. The world is so full of ill-nature, that I have Lampoons sent me by people who cannot spell, and Satyrs composed by those who scarce know how to write. By the last post in particular I received a packet of scandal which is not legible; and have a whole bundle of Letters in womens hands that are full of blots and calumnies, insomuch, that when I see the name *Celia*, *Phyllis*, *Pastora*, or the like, at the bottom of a scrawl, I conclude on course that it brings me some account of a fallen Virgin, a faithless Wife, or an amorous Widow. I must therefore inform these my correspondents, that it is not my design to be a publisher of intrigues and cuckoldoms, or to bring little infamous stories out of their present lurking holes into broad day-light. If I attack the vicious, I shall only set upon them in a body; and will not be provoked by the worst usage I can receive from others, to make an example of any particular Criminal. In short, I have so much of a *Drawcansir* in me, that I shall pass over a single Foe to charge whole Armies. It is not *Lais* or *Silenus*, but the harlot and the drunkard, whom I shall endeavour to expose; and shall consider the crime as it appears in a species, not as it is circumstanced in an individual. I think it was *Caligula*, who wished the whole city of *Rome* had but one neck, that he might behead them at a blow. I shall do out of humanity, what that Emperor would have done in the cruelty of his temper, and aim every stroke at a collective body of Offenders. At the same time I am very sensible, that nothing spreads a Paper like private calumny and defamation; but as my Speculations are not under this necessity, they are not exposed to this temptation.

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In the next place I must apply my self to my Party-correspondents, who are continually teasing me to take notice of one another's proceedings. How often am I asked by both sides, if it is possible for me to be an unconcerned Spectator of the rogueries that are committed by the party which is oppositè to him that writes the Letter. About two days since I was reproached with an old *Grecian* law, that forbids any man to stand as a Neuter or a Looker-on in the divisions of his country. However, as I am very sensible my Paper would lose its whole effect, should it run into the outrages of a Party, I shall take care to keep clear of every thing which looks that way. If I can any way asswage private Inflammations, or allay publick Ferments, I shall apply my self to it with my utmost endeavours; but will never let my heart reproach me, with having done any thing towards encreasing those feuds and animosities that extinguish Religion, deface Government, and make a Nation miserable.

What I have said under the three foregoing heads, will, I am afraid, very much retrench the number of my Correspondents: I shall therefore acquaint my reader, that if he has started any hint which he is not able to pursue, if he has met with any surprizing story which he does not know how to tell, if he has discovered any epidemical vice which has escaped my observation, or has heard of any uncommon virtue which he would desire to publish; in short, if he has any materials that can furnish out an innocent diversion, I shall promise him my best assistance in the working of them up for a publick entertainment.

This Paper my reader will find was intended for an answer to a multitude of Correspondents; but I hope he will pardon me if I single out one of them in particular, who has made me so very humble a request, that I cannot forbear complying with it.

To the SPECTATOR.

S I R,

March 15, 1711.

I Am at present so unfortunate, as to have nothing to do but to  
 “ mind my own business; and therefore beg of you that you will  
 “ be pleased to put me into some small Post under you. I observe that  
 “ you have appointed your Printer and Publisher to receive Letters and  
 “ Advertisements for the City of *London*; and shall think my self very  
 “ much honoured by you, if you will appoint me to take in Letters  
 “ and Advertisements for the City of *Westminster* and the Duchy of  
 “ *Lancaster*. Though I cannot promise to fill such an employment with  
 “ suffici-



“ sufficient abilities, I will endeavour to make up with industry and fi-  
 “ delity what I want in parts and genius. I am,

*SIR, Your most obedient Servant, Charles Lillie.*

N<sup>o</sup> 18. *Wednesday, March 21.*

----- *Equitis quoque jam migravit ab aure voluptas*  
*Omnis ad incertos oculos et gaudia vana.* Hor.

**I**T is my design in this paper to deliver down to posterity a faithful account of the *Italian Opera*, and of the gradual progress which it has made upon the *English Stage*; for there is no question but our great grand-children will be very curious to know the reason why their fore-fathers used to sit together like an audience of foreigners in their own country, and to hear whole Plays acted before them in a tongue which they did not understand.

*Arfinoe* was the first Opera that gave us a taste of *Italian Musick*. The great success this Opera met with, produced some attempts of forming pieces upon *Italian Plans*, which should give a more natural and reasonable entertainment than what can be met with in the elaborate trifles of that nation. This alarmed the Poetasters and Fiddlers of the town, who were used to deal in a more ordinary kind of ware; and therefore laid down an established rule, which is received as such to this day, *That nothing is capable of being well set to Musick, that is not Nonsense.*

This maxim was no sooner received, but we immediately fell to translating the *Italian Opera's*; and as there was no danger of hurting the sense of those extraordinary pieces, our Authors would often make words of their own which were entirely foreign to the meaning of the passages they pretended to translate; their chief care being to make the numbers of the *English* verse answer to those of the *Italian*, that both of them might go to the same tune. Thus the famous song in *Camilla*,

*Barbara*