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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

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gether, it may furnish several hints that may be of use to a good Architect. I shall take the same liberty in a following paper, of giving my opinion upon the subject of Musick; which I shall lay down only in a problematical manner, to be considered by those who are Masters in the Art.

N^o 21. Saturday, March 24.

----- *Locus est et pluribus umbris.*

Hor.

I Am sometimes very much troubled, when I reflect upon the three great professions of Divinity, Law, and Physick; how they are each of them over-burdened with practitioners, and filled with multitudes of ingenious Gentlemen that starve one another.

We may divide the Clergy into Generals, Field-officers, and Subalterns. Among the first we may reckon Bishops, Deans and Archdeacons. Among the second are Doctors of Divinity, Prebendaries, and all that wear Scarfs. The rest are comprehended under the Subalterns. As for the first Class, our Constitution preserves it from any redundancy of incumbents, notwithstanding Competitors are numberless. Upon a strict calculation, it is found that there has been a great exceeding of late years in the second division, several Brevets having been granted for the converting of Subalterns into Scarf-officers; infomuch that within my memory the price of Lustring is raised above two pence in a yard. As for the Subalterns, they are not to be numbred. Should our Clergy once enter into the corrupt practice of the Laity, by the splitting of their Freeholds, they would be able to carry most of the Elections in *England*.

The body of the Law is no less encumbered with superfluous members, that are like *Virgil's* Army, which he tells us was so crouded, many of them had not room to use their weapons. This prodigious society of men may be divided into the Litigious and Peaceable. Under the first are comprehended all those who are carried down in coach-fulls to *Westminster-hall*, every morning in Term-time. *Martial's* description of this species of Lawyers is full of humour:

II *Tras*

Iras et verba locant.

Men that hire out their words and anger; that are more or less passionate according as they are paid for it, and allow their Client a quantity of wrath proportionable to the fee which they receive from him. I must however observe to the reader, that above three parts of those whom I reckon among the Litigious, are such as are only quarrelsome in their hearts, and have no opportunity of shewing their passion at the Bar. Nevertheless, as they do not know what strifes may arise, they appear at the Hall every day, that they may shew themselves in a readiness to enter the Lists, whenever there shall be occasion for them.

The Peaceable Lawyers are, in the first place, many of the Benchers of the several Inns of Court, who seem to be the Dignitaries of the Law, and are endowed with those qualifications of mind that accomplish a man rather for a Ruler, than a Pleader. These men live peaceably in their habitations, Eating once a day, and Dancing once a year, for the honour of the respective societies.

Another numberless branch of Peaceable Lawyers, are those young men who being placed at the Inns of Court in order to study the Laws of their country, frequent the Play-house more than *Westminster-Hall*, and are seen in all publick assemblies, except in a Court of Justice. I shall say nothing of those silent and busie multitudes that are employed within doors, in the drawing up of Writings and Conveyances; nor of those greater numbers that palliate their want of business with a pretence to such Chamber-practice.

If, in the third place, we look into the profession of Physick, we shall find a most formidable body of men: The sight of them is enough to make a man serious, for we may lay it down as a maxim, that when a nation abounds in Physicians it grows thin of people. Sir *William Temple* is very much puzzled to find out a reason why the Northern Hive, as he calls it, does not send out such prodigious swarms, and over-run the world with *Goths* and *Vandals*, as it did formerly; but had that excellent Author observed that there were no students in Physick among the subjects of *Thor* and *Woden*, and that this science very much flourishes in the North at present, he might have found a better solution for this difficulty than any of those he has made use of. This body of men, in our own country, may be described like the *British* army in *Cæsar's* time: Some of them flay in Chariots, and some on foot. If the Infantry do less execution than the Charioteers, it is because they cannot be carried

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so soon into all quarters of the town, and dispatch so much business in so short a time. Besides this body of Regular troops, there are Stragglers, who without being duly listed and enrolled, do infinite mischief to those who are so unlucky as to fall into their hands.

There are, besides the above-mentioned, innumerable Retainers to Physick, who, for want of other Patients, amuse themselves with the stifling of Cats in an air-pump, cutting up Dogs alive, or impaling of Insects upon the point of a needle for microscopical observations; besides those that are employed in the gathering of weeds, and the chace of Butterflies: Not to mention the Cocklehell-merchants and Spider-catchers.

When I consider how each of these professions are crowded with multitudes that seek their livelihood in them, and how many men of merit there are in each of them, who may be rather said to be of the Science, than the Profession; I very much wonder at the humour of Parents, who will not rather chuse to place their Sons in a way of life where an honest industry cannot but thrive, than in stations where the greatest Probity, Learning, and good Sense may miscarry. How many men are Country-curates, that might have made themselves Aldermen of *London*, by a right improvement of a smaller sum of money than what is usually laid out upon a learned education? A sober frugal person, of slender parts and a slow apprehension, might have thrived in Trade, though he starves upon Physick; as a man would be well enough pleased to buy Silks of one, whom he would not venture to feel his pulse. *Vagellius* is careful, studious and obliging, but withal a little thick-skulled; he has not a single Client, but might have had abundance of Customers. The misfortune is, that Parents take a liking to a particular profession, and therefore desire their Sons may be of it. Whereas, in so great an affair of life, they should consider the Genius and Abilities of their children, more than their own inclinations.

It is the great advantage of a Trading nation, that there are very few in it so dull and heavy, who may not be placed in stations of life, which may give them an opportunity of making their fortunes. A well-regulated commerce is not, like Law, Physick, or Divinity, to be over-stocked with hands; but, on the contrary, flourishes by multitudes, and gives employment to all its Professors. Fleets of Merchant-men are so many squadrons of floating shops, that vend our wares and manufactures in all the markets of the world, and find out chapmen under both the tropicks.

Tuesday,