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In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

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The Whig-Examiner.

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The WHIG-EXAMINER.

N° 1. Thursday, September 12. 1710.

*Nescia mem hominum sui fortisque latine,
Et feruere nodum, et huc pulvis fœdatis!
Terno tempus etc.* THE

WHIG-EXAMINER.

To give all persons a short view, who have suffered under the
just sentence of the Whigs. As that a paper has lately been
published, the paper would have been made perfectly useful, had the
author at least his examination to make, that which is made by the rack and
wheel. I have always admired a Critic that has discovered the
name of an author, and never knew one who made it his business to be the
best of other writers, that was any party of greater honour, as the
paper is generally a worse satisfaction, than the criticism that follows by his
hand. To prove what I say, there needs no more than to read the
relations which this Author has made upon Dr. Swift's Poem, with the
poem in the front, and a riddle at the end of them. To begin with the
first: Did ever an advocate for a party open with such an unfortunate
allusion? The collected body of the Whigs have already engraved
this: That is, in plain English, the Whigs are possessed of all the riches
in the nation. Is not this giving up all he has been contending for?

VOL. IV.

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THE
W H I G - E X A M I N E R .

Vol. VI

The WHIG-EXAMINER.

 N^o 1. *Thursday, September 14. 1710.*

*Nescia mens hominum fati fortisque futura,
 Et servare modum, rebus sublata secundis!
 Turno tempus erit, magno cum optaverit emptum
 Intactum Pallanta, & cum folia ista diemque
 Oderit -----*

THE design of this work is to censure the writings of others, and to give all persons a rehearing, who have suffered under any unjust sentence of the *Examiner*. As that Author has hitherto proceeded, his paper would have been more properly entitled the *Executioner*: at least his examination is like that which is made by the rack and wheel. I have always admired a Critic that has discovered the beauties of an author, and never knew one who made it his business to lash the faults of other writers, that was not guilty of greater himself; as the hangman is generally a worse malefactor, than the criminal that suffers by his hand. To prove what I say, there needs no more than to read the annotations which this Author has made upon Dr. *Garth's* Poem, with the preface in the front, and a riddle at the end of them. To begin with the first: Did ever an advocate for a party open with such an unfortunate assertion? *The collective body of the Whigs have already engrossed our riches*: That is, in plain English, the Whigs are possessed of all the riches in the nation. Is not this giving up all he has been contending for these six weeks? Is there any thing more reasonable, than that those who have all the riches of the nation in their possession, or if he likes his own phrase better, as indeed I think it is stronger, that those who have already *engrossed* our riches, should have the management of our publick Treasury,

T t 2

sure, and the direction of our fleets and armies? But let us proceed: *Their representative the Kit-Cat have pretended to make a Monopoly of our sense.* Well, but what does all this end in? If the author means any thing, it is this, That to prevent such a Monopoly of sense, he is resolved to deal in it himself by retail, and sell a pennyworth of it every week. In what follows, there is such a shocking familiarity both in his railleries and civilities, that one cannot long be in doubt who is the Author. The remaining part of the preface has so much of the pedant, and so little of the conversation of men in it, that I shall pass it over, and hasten to the riddles, which are as follows.

The R I D D L E.

SPHINX *was a monster, that would eat
Whatever stranger she could get;
Unless his ready Wit disclos'd
The subtle riddle she propos'd.*
Oedipus was resolved to go,
And try what strength of parts could do:
Says Sphinx, *On this depends your fate;
Tell me what animal is that,
Which has four feet at morning bright?
Has two at noon, and three at night?
'Tis man, said he, who weak by nature,
At first creeps, like his fellow-creature,
Upon all four: As years accrue,
With sturdy steps he walks on two:
In age, at length, grown weak and sick,
For his third leg adopts the stick.
Now in your turn, 'tis just, methinks,
You should resolve me, Madam Sphinx,
What stranger creature yet is he,
Who has four legs, then two, then three;
Then loses one, then gets two more,
And runs away at last on four.*

The first part of this little mystical Poem is an old riddle, which we could have told the meaning of, had not the Author given himself the trouble of explaining it; but as for the exposition of the second, he leaves us altogether in the dark. The riddle runs thus: What creature is it that walks

walks upon four legs in the morning, two legs at noon, and three legs at night? This he solves, as our forefathers have done for these two thousand years; and not according to *Rabelais*, who gives another reason why a man is said to be a creature with three legs at night. Then follows the second riddle: What creature, says he, is it that first uses four legs, then two legs, then three legs; then loses one leg, then gets two legs, and at last runs away upon four legs? Were I disposed to be splenatick, I should ask if there was any thing in the new garland of riddles *so wild, so childish, or so flat*: But though I dare not go so far as that, I shall take upon me to say, that the Author has stolen his hint out of the garland, from a riddle which I was better acquainted with than the *Nile* when I was but twelve years old. It runs thus, Riddle my riddle my ree, what is this? Two legs sat upon three legs, and held one leg in her hand; in came four legs, and snatched away one leg; up started two legs, and flung three legs at four legs, and brought one leg back again. This Enigma, joined with the foregoing two, rings all the changes that can be made upon four legs. That I may deal more ingenuously with my Reader than the abovementioned Enigmatist has done, I shall present him with a key to my riddle; which upon application he will find exactly fitted to all the words of it: one leg is a leg of mutton, two legs is a servant maid, three legs is a joint stool, which in the Sphinx's country was called a tripod; as four legs is a dog, who in all nations and ages has been reckoned a quadruped. We have now the exposition of our first and third riddles upon legs; let us here if you please, endeavour to find out the meaning of our second, which is thus in the Author's words:

*What stranger creature yet is he,
That has four legs, then two, then three;
Then loses one, then gets two more,
And runs away at last on four?*

This riddle, as the Poet tells us, was proposed by *Oedipus* to the Sphinx, after he had given his solution to that which the Sphinx had proposed to him. This *Oedipus*, you must understand, though the people did not believe it, was son to a King of *Thebes*, and bore a particular grudge to the Tre——r of that Kingdom; which made him so bitter upon *H. L.* in this Enigma.

*What stranger creature yet is he,
That has four legs, then two, then three?*

By

By which he intimates, that this great man at *Thebes* being *weak by nature*, as he admirably expresses it, could not walk as soon as he was born, but, like other children, fell upon all four when he attempted it; that he afterwards went upon two legs, like other men; and that in his more advanced age, he got a white staff in Queen *Jocasta's* court, which the Author calls his third leg. Now it so happened that the Treasurer fell, and by that means broke his third leg, which is intimated by the next words, *Then loses one*—Thus far I think we have travelled through the riddle with good success.

*What stranger creature yet is he
That has four legs, then two, then three?
Then loses one—*

But now comes the difficulty that has puzzled the whole town, and which I must confess has kept me awake for these three nights;

*—————Then gets two more,
And runs away at last on four.*

I at last thought the treasurer of *Thebes* might have walked upon crutches, and so ran away on four legs, *viz.* two natural and two artificial. But this I have no authority for; and therefore upon mature consideration do find that the words (*Then gets two more*) are only Greek expletives, introduced to make up the verse, and to signify nothing; and that *runs*, in the next line, should be *rides*. I shall therefore restore the true ancient reading of this riddle, after which it will be able to explain it self.

Oedipus speaks:

*Now in your turn, 'tis just methinks,
You should resolve me, Madam Sphinx,
What stranger creature yet is he,
Who has four legs, then two, then three;
Then loses one, then gains two more,
And rides away at last on four?*

I must now inform the Reader, that *Thebes* was on the continent, so that it was easy for a man to ride out of his dominions on horseback, an advantage that a *British* Statesman would be deprived of. If he would run away, he must do it *in an open boat*; for to say of an *Englishman* in this sense, that he runs away on all four, would be as absurd as to say, he clapped spurs

spurs to his horse at St. James's gate, and galloped away to the Hague.

Before I take my farewell of this subject, I shall advise the Author for the future to speak his meaning more plainly. I allow he has a happy talent at doggrel, when he writes upon a known subject: where he tells us in plain intelligible language, how *Syrisca's* ladle was lost in one hole, and *Hans Carvel's* finger in another, he is very jocular and diverting; but when he wraps a lampoon in a riddle, he must consider that his jest is lost to every one, but the few merry wags that are in the secret. This is making darker satyrs than ever *Persus* did. After this cursory view of the *Examiner's* performance, let us consider his remarks upon the Doctor's. That general piece of raillery which he passes upon the Doctor's considering the Treasurer in several different views, is that which might, fall upon any Poem in *Waller*, or any other writer who has diversity of thoughts and allusions: and tho' it may appear a pleasant ridicule to an ignorant Reader, is wholly groundless and unjust. I do likewise dissent with the *Examiner*, upon the phrases of *passions being poised*, and of the *retrieving merit from dependence*, which are very beautiful and poetical. It is the same cavilling spirit that finds fault with that expression of the *pomp of peace among the woes of war*, as well as of *offering unasked*. As for the *Nile*, how *Icarus* and *Phaeton* came to be joined with it, I cannot conceive. I must confess they have been formerly used to represent the fate of rash ambitious men; and I cannot imagine why the Author should deprive us of those particular Similes for the future. The next Criticism upon the stars, seems introduced for no other reason but to mention Mr. *Bickerstaff*, whom the Author every where endeavours to imitate and abuse. But I shall refer the *Examiner* to the frog's advice to her little one, that was blowing it self up to the size of an Ox:

—Non si te ruperis, inquit,
Par eris—

The allusion to the victim may be a Gallimatia in French politicks, but is an apt and noble allusion to a true English spirit. And as for the *Examiner's* remarks on the word *bleed* (though a man wou'd laugh to see impotent malice so little able to contain it self) one cannot but observe in them the temper of the Banditti whom he mentions in the same paper, who always murder where they rob. The last observation is upon the line, *Ingratitude's a weed of every clime*. Here he is very much out of humour with the Doctor, for having called that the *weed*, which *Dryden* only terms the *growth*, of every Clime. But, for God-sake, why so much tenderness for ingratitude?

But

But I shall say no more. We are now in an age wherein impudent assertions must pass for arguments: and I do not question but the same, who has endeavoured here to prove that he who wrote the *Dispensary* was no Poet, will very suddenly undertake to shew, that he who gained the battle of *Blenheim* is no General.

N^o 2. *Thursday, September 21.*

----- *Arcades ambo*
Et cantare pares-----

I Never yet knew an Author that had not his admirers. *Bunyan* and *Quarles* have passed through several editions, and please as many Readers, as *Dryden* and *Tillotson*: The *Examiner* had not written two half sheets of paper, before he met with one that was astonished at the force he was master of, and approaches him with awe, when he mentions State-subjects, as *encroaching on the province that belonged to him*, and treating of things that deserved to pass under his pen. The same humble Author tells us, that the *Examiner* can furnish mankind with an *Antidote to the poyson that is scattered through the nation*. This crying up of the *Examiner's* Antidote, puts me in mind of the first appearance that a celebrated *French* quack made in the streets of *Paris*. A little boy walked before him, publishing, with a shrill voice, *Mon pere guerit toutes sortes de maladies, My father cures all sorts of distempers*: To which the Doctor, who walked behind him, added in a grave and composed manner, *L'enfant dit vrai, The child says true*.

That the Reader may see what party the Author of this Letter is of, I shall shew how he speaks of the *French King* and the *Duke of Anjou*, and how of our greatest Allies, the *Emperor of Germany* and the *States-General*. *In the mean while the French King has withdrawn his troops from Spain, and has put it out of his power to restore that monarchy to us, was he reduced low enough really to desire to do it. The Duke of Anjou has had leisure to take off those whom he suspected, to confirm his friends, to regulate his revenues, to increase and form his troops, and*
above

above all, to rouse that spirit in the Spanish nation, which a succession of lazy and indolent Princes had lulled asleep. From hence it appears probable enough, that if the war continue much longer on the present foot, instead of regaining Spain, we shall find the Duke of Anjou in a condition to pay the debt of gratitude, and support the grandfather in his declining years; by whose arms, in the days of his infancy, he was upheld. What expressions of tenderness, duty, and submission! The Panegyrick on the Duke of Anjou, is by much the best written part of this whole Letter; the Apology for the French King is indeed the same which the Post-boy has often made, but worded with greater deference and respect to that great Prince. There are many strokes of the Author's good-will to our confederates, the Dutch and the Emperor, in several parts of this notable Epistle; I shall only quote one of them, alluding to the concern which the Bank, the States-General, and the Emperor, expressed for the Ministry, by their humble applications to Her Majesty, in these words.

Not daunted yet, they resolve to try a new expedient, and the interest of Europe is to be represented as inseparable from that of the Ministers.

Haud dubitant equidem implorare quod usquam est;
Flectere si nequeunt Superos, Acheronta movebunt.

The members of the Bank, the Dutch, and the Court of Vienna, are called in as confederates to the Ministry. This, in the mildest English it will bear, runs thus. They are resolved to look for help where-ever they can find it; if they cannot have it from heaven, they will go to hell for it; That is, to the members of the Bank, the Dutch, and the Court of Vienna. The French King, the Pope, and the Devil, have been often joined together by a well-meaning Englishman; but I am very much surprized to see the Bank, the Dutch, and the Court of Vienna, in such company. We may still see this Gentleman's principles in the accounts which he gives of his own country: speaking of the G——l, the quondam T——r, and the J——to, which every one knows comprehends the Whigs, in their utmost extent; he adds, in opposition to them, *For the Queen and the whole body of the British nation,*——

Nos Numerus sumus.

In English,

We are Cyphers.

How properly the Tories may be called the whole body of the *British* nation, I leave to any one's judging: and wonder how an Author can be so disrespectful to Her Majesty, as to separate Her in so saucy a manner from that part of her people, who according to the *Examiner* himself, *have engrossed the riches of the nation*; and all this to join her, with so much impudence, under the common denomination of *We*; that is, *WE Queen and Tories* are cyphers. *Nos numerus sumus* is a scrap of *Latin* more impudent than Cardinal *Woolsey's Ego et Rex meus*. We find the same particle *WE*, used with great emphasis and significancy in the eighth page of this Letter; *But nothing decisive, nothing which had the appearance of earnest, has been so much as attempted, except that wise expedition to Thoulon, which WE suffered to be defeated before it began*. Whoever did, God forgive them: there were indeed several stories of discoveries made, by letters and messengers that were sent to *France*.

Having done with the Author's party and principles, we now shall consider his performance, under the three heads of Wit, Language, and Argument. The first lash of his Satyr falls upon the *Censor of Great-Britain*, who, says he, resembles the famous *Censor of Rome*, in nothing but espousing the *cause of the vanquished*. Our Letter-writer here alludes to that known verse in *Lucan*,

Victrix causa Diis placuit, sed victa Catoni.

The Gods espoused the cause of the conquerors, but Cato espoused the cause of the vanquished. The misfortune is, that this verse was not written of *Cato the Censor*, but of *Cato of Utica*. How Mr. *Bickerstaff*, who has written in favour of a party that is not vanquished, resembles the younger *Cato*, who was not a *Roman Censor*, I do not well conceive, unless it be in struggling for the liberty of his country. To say therefore, that the *Censor of Great-Britain* resembles that famous *Censor of Rome in nothing but espousing the cause of the vanquished*; is just the same as if one should say, in regard to the many obscure truths and secret histories that are brought to light in this Letter, that the Author of these new revelations, resembles the ancient Author of the Revelations *in nothing but venturing his head*. Besides that there would be no ground for such a resemblance, would not a man be laughed at by every common Reader, should he thus mistake one *St. John* for another, and apply that to *St. John* the Evangelist which relates to *St. John* the Baptist, who died many years before him?

Another

Another smart touch of the Author we meet with in the fifth page, where, without any preparation, he breaks out all on a sudden into a vein of poetry; and instead of writing a Letter to the *Examiner*, gives advice to a painter in these strong lines: *Paint, Sir, with that force which you are master of, the present state of the war abroad; and expose to the publick view those principles upon which, of late, it has been carried on, so different from those upon which it was originally entered into. Collect some few of the indignities which have been this year offered to Her Majesty, and of those unnatural struggles which have betrayed the weakness of a shattered constitution.* By the way, a man may be said to paint a battle, or if you please, a war; but I do not see how it is possible to paint the present state of a war. So a man may be said to describe or to collect accounts of indignities and unnatural struggles; but to collect the things themselves, is a figure which this Gentleman has introduced into our *English* prose. Well, but what will be the use of this picture of a state of the war? and this collection of indignities and struggles? It seems the chief design of them is to make a dead man blush, as we may see in those inimitable lines which immediately follow: *And when this is done, D—n shall blush in his grave among the dead, W—le among the living, and even Vol—e shall feel some remorse.* Was there ever any thing, I will not say so stiff and so unnatural, but so brutal and so silly! this is downright hacking and hewing in Satyr. But we see a masterpiece of this kind of writing in the twelfth page; where, without any respect to a Dutches of *Great-Britain*, a Princess of the Empire, and one who was a bosom friend of her Royal Mistress, he calls a great Lady *an insolent woman, the worst of her sex, a fury, an executioner of divine vengeance, a plague*; and applies to her a line which *Virgil* writ originally upon *Alecto*. One would think this foul-mouthed writer must have received some particular injuries, either from this great Lady or from her husband; and these the world shall be soon acquainted with, by a book which is now in the press, entitled, *An Essay towards proving that gratitude is no virtue.* This Author is so full of Satyr, and is so angry with every one that is pleased with the Duke of *Marlborough's* victories, that he goes out of his way to abuse one of the Queen's singing men, who it seems did his best to celebrate a thanksgiving day in an Anthem; as you may see in that passage: *Towns have been taken, and battles have been won; the mob has huzza'd round bonfires, the Stentor of the chappel has strained his throat in the gallery, and the Stentor of S—m has deafned his audience from the pulpit.* Thus you see how

like a true son of the High-Church, he falls upon a learned and reverend Prelate, and for no other crime, but for preaching with an audible voice. If a man lifts up his voice like a trumpet to preach sedition, he is received by some men as a Confessor; but if he cries aloud, and spares not, to animate people with devotion and gratitude, for the greatest publick blessings that ever were bestowed on a sinful nation, he is reviled as a *Stentor*.

I promised in the next place to consider the Language of this excellent Author, who I find takes himself for an Orator. In the first page he censures several for the poison which they *profusely scatter* through the nation; that is, in plain *English*, for *squandering away their poison*. In the second he talks of *carrying probability through the thread of a fable*; and in the third, of *laying an odium at a man's door*. In the fourth he rises in his expressions; where he speaks of those who would persuade the people, that *the G——l, the quondam T——r, and the J——to, are the only objects of the confidence of the Allies, and of the fears of the enemies*. I would advise this Author to try the beauty of this expression. Suppose a foreign Minister should address Her Majesty in the following manner, (for certainly it is Her Majesty only to whom the sense of the compliment ought to be paid) Madam, you are *the object of the confidence of the Allies*; or, Madam, your Majesty is *the only object of the fears of the enemies*. Would a man think that he had learned *English*? I would have the Author try, by the same rule, some of his other phrases, as Page 7. where he tells us, *That the ballance of power in Europe would be still precarious*. What would a tradesman think, if one should tell him in a passion, that his *scales were precarious*; and mean by it, that they were *not fixed*? In the thirteenth page he speaks of certain *profligate wretches, who having usurped the Royal Seat, resolved to venture overturning the chariot of government, rather than to lose their place in it*. A plain-spoken man would have left the *Chariot* out of this sentence, and so have made it good *English*. As it is there, it is not only an impropriety of speech, but of metaphor; it being impossible for a man to have a place in the Chariot which he drives. I would therefore advise this Gentleman, in the next edition of his Letter, to change the *Cbariot* of government into the *Chaise* of government, which will sound as well, and serve his turn much better. I could be longer on the *errata* of this very small work, but will conclude this head with taking notice of a certain figure which was unknown to the ancients, and in which this Letter-writer very much excels. This is called by some an *Anti-climax*,

an instance of which we have in the tenth page; where he tells us, that *Britain* may expect to have this only glory left her, *That she has proved a farm to the Bank, a province to Holland, and a jest to the whole world.* I never met with so sudden a downfall in so promising a sentence; a *jest to the whole world* gives such an unexpected turn to this happy period, that I was heartily troubled and surprized to meet with it. I do not remember in all my reading, to have observed more than two couplets of verses that have been written in this figure; the first are thus quoted by Mr. *Dryden*:

*Not only London ecchoes with thy fame,
But also Irlington has heard the same.*

The other are in *French*.

*Allez vous, luy dit il, sans bruit chez vos parens,
Ou vous avez laissé votre honneur & vos gans.*

But we need not go further than the Letter before us for examples of this nature, as we may find in page the eleventh. *Mankind remains convinced, that a Queen possessed of all the virtues requisite to bless a nation, or make a private family happy, sits on the throne.* Is this Panegyrick or Burlesque? To see so glorious a Queen celebrated in such a manner, gives every good subject a secret indignation; and looks liker *Scarron's* character of the great Queen *Semiramis*, who, says that Author, "was the Founder of *Babylon*, Conqueror of the *East*, and an "excellent Housewife.

The third subject being the argumentative part of this Letter, I shall leave till another occasion.



Thursday,

N^o 3. Thursday, September 28.

Non defensoribus istis

Tempus eget. —

Virg.

I Was once talking with an old humdrum fellow, and before I had heard his story out, was called away by business. About three years after I met him again; when he immediately reassumed the thread of his story, and began his salutation with, *but Sir, as I was telling you.* The same method has been made use of by very polite writers; as, in particular, the Author of *Don Quixote*, who inserts several novels in his works, and after a parenthesis of about a dozen leaves, returns again to his story. *Hudibras* has broke off the *Adventure of the Bear and Fiddle.* The *Tatler* has frequently interrupted the course of a Lucubration, and taken it up again after a fortnight's respite; as the *Examiner*, who is capable of imitating him in this particular, has likewise done.

This may serve as an apology for my postponing the examination of the argumentative part of the *Letter to the Examiner* to a further day, though I must confess, this was occasioned by a Letter which I received last post. Upon opening it, I found it to contain a very curious piece of antiquity; which without preface or application, was introduced as follows.

“ *Alcibiades* was a man of wit and pleasure, bred up in the school of
 “ *Socrates*; and one of the best Orators of his age, notwithstanding he
 “ lived at a time when learning was at its highest pitch: he was likewise
 “ very famous for his military exploits, having gained great conquests
 “ over the *Lacedæmonians*, who had formerly been the confederates of
 “ his country-men against the great King of *Persia*, but were at that
 “ time in alliance with the *Persians*. He had been once so far misre-
 “ presented and traduced by the malice of his enemies, that the Priests
 “ cursed him. But after the great services which he had done for his
 “ country, they publickly repealed their curses, and changed them into
 “ applauses and benedictions. “ *Plu-*

“ *Plutarch* tells us, in *the life of Alcibiades*, that one *Taureas*, an obscure man, contended with him for a certain prize, which was to be conferred by vote; at which time each of the competitors recommended himself to the *Athenians* by an oration. The speech which *Alcibiades* made on that occasion, has been lately discovered among the Manuscripts of *King's-college in Cambridge*; and communicated to me by my learned friend *Dr. B——ley*; who tells me, that by a marginal note it appears, that this *Taureas*, or, as the Doctor rather chuses to call him, *Toryas*, was an *Athenian Brewer*. This speech I have translated literally, changing very little in it, except where it was absolutely necessary to make it understood by an *English Reader*. It is as follows.

“ IS it then possible, O ye *Athenians*, that I who hitherto have had none but Generals to oppose me, must now have an artisan for my antagonist? That I who have overthrown the Princes of *Lacedaemon*, must now see my self in danger of being defeated by a Brewer? What will the world say of the Goddess that presides over you, should they suppose you follow her dictates? would they think she acted like herself, like the great *Minerva*? would they now say, she inspires her sons with wisdom? or would they not rather say, she has a second time chosen owls for her favourites? But O ye men of *Athens*, what has this man done to deserve your voices? You say he is honest; I believe it, and therefore he shall brew for me. You say he is assiduous in his calling: and is he not grown rich by it? let him have your custom, but not your votes: you are now to cast your eyes on those who can detect the artifices of the common enemy, that can disappoint your secret foes in Council, and your open ones in the field. Let it not avail my competitor, that he has been tapping his liquors, while I have been spilling my blood; that he has been gathering hops for you, while I have been reaping lawrels. Have I not born the dust and heat of the day, while he has been sweating at the furnace? behold these scars, behold this wound which still bleeds in your service; what can *Taureas* shew you of this nature? What are his marks of honour? Has he any other wound about him, except the accidental scaldings of his wort, or bruises from the tub or barrel? Let it not, O *Athenians*, let it not be said, that your Generals have conquered themselves into your displeasure, and lost your favour by gaining you victories. Shall those achievements that have redeemed the present age from slavery, be undervalued by those who feel the benefits of them? Shall those names that have

“ made

“ made your city the glory of the whole earth, be mentioned in it with
 “ obloquy and detraction? Will not your posterity blush at their fore-
 “ fathers, when they shall read in the annals of their country, that *Alci-*
 “ *biades* in the 90th Olympiad, after having conquered the *Lacedæmonians*,
 “ and recovered *Byzantium*, contended for a prize against *Taureas* the
 “ Brewer? The competition is dishonourable, the defeat would be shame-
 “ ful. I shall not however slacken my endeavours for the security of my
 “ country. If she is ungrateful, she is still *Athens*. On the contrary, as
 “ she will stand more in need of defence, when she has so degenerate a
 “ people; I will pursue my victories, till such time as it shall be out of
 “ your power to hurt your selves, and that you may be in safety even un-
 “ der your present leaders. But oh! thou genius of *Athens*, whither art
 “ thou fled? Where is now the race of those glorious spirits that perish-
 “ ed at the battel of *Thermopylae*, and fought upon the plains of *Mara-*
 “ *thon*? Are you weary of conquering, or have you forgotten the oath
 “ which you took at *Agraulos*, That you would look upon the bounds of
 “ Attica to be those soils only which are incapable of bearing wheat and
 “ barley, vines and olives? Consider your enemies the *Lacedæmonians*;
 “ did you ever hear that they preferred a Coffee-man to *Agésilas*? No,
 “ though their Generals have been unfortunate, though they have lost se-
 “ veral battels, though they have not been able to cope with the troops
 “ of *Athens*, which I have conducted; they are comforted and condo-
 “ led, nay celebrated and extolled, by their fellow citizens. Their Gene-
 “ rals have been received with honour after their defeat, yours with ig-
 “ nominy after conquest. Are there not men of *Taureas*'s temper and
 “ character, who tremble in their hearts at the name of the great King
 “ of *Persia*? who have been against entering into a war with him, or for
 “ making a peace upon base conditions? that have grudged those contri-
 “ butions which have set our country at the head of all the governments
 “ of *Greece*? that would dishonour those who have raised her to such a
 “ pitch of glory? that would betray those liberties which your fathers in
 “ all ages have purchased or recovered with their blood? and would pro-
 “ secute your fellow-citizens with as much rigour and fury, as of late
 “ years we have attacked the common enemy? I shall trouble you no
 “ more, O ye men of *Athens*; you know my actions, let my antagonist
 “ relate what he has done for you. Let him produce his vatts and tubs,
 “ in opposition to the heaps of arms and standards which were employed
 “ against you, and which I have wrested out of the hands of your enemies.
 “ And when this is done, let him be brought into the field of election
 “ upon

“ upon his dray-cart; and if I can finish my conquest sooner, I will not
 “ fail to meet him there in a triumphant chariot. But, O ye Gods! let
 “ not the King of *Persia* laugh at the fall of *Alcibiades*! Let him not
 “ say, *the Athenians have avenged me upon their own Generals*; or let
 “ me be rather struck dead by the hand of a *Lacedæmonian*, than disgra-
 “ ced by the voices of my fellow-citizens.

N^o 4. *Thursday, October 5.*

Satis eloquentiæ, sapientiæ parum.

Sal.

H *Udibras* has defined nonsense (as *Cowley* does wit) by negatives. Nonsense (says he) is that which is neither true nor false. These two great properties of nonsense, which are always essential to it, give it such a peculiar advantage over all other writings, that it is incapable of being either answered or contradicted. It stands upon its own basis like a rock of adamant, secured by its natural situation against all conquests or attacks. There is no one place about it weaker than another, to favour an enemy in his approaches. The major and the minor are of equal strength. Its questions admit of no reply, and its assertions are not to be invalidated. A man may as well hope to distinguish colours in the midst of darkness, as to find out what to approve and disapprove in nonsense: you may as well assault an army that is buried in intrenchments. If it affirms any thing, you cannot lay hold of it; or if it denies, you cannot confute it. In a word, there are greater depths and obscurities, greater intricacies and perplexities, in an elaborate and well-written piece of nonsense, than in the most abstruse and profound tract of school-divinity.

After this short panegyrick upon nonsense, which may appear as extravagant to an ordinary Reader, as *Erasmus's Encomium of folly*; I must here solemnly protest, that I have not done it to curry favour with my antagonist, or to reflect any praise in an oblique manner upon the *Letter to the Examiner*: I have no private considerations to warp me in this controversy, since my first entring upon it. But before I proceed any fur-

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ther, because it may be of great use to me in this dispute, to state the whole nature of nonsense; and because 'tis a subject entirely new, I must take notice that there are two kinds of it, *viz*, high nonsense and low nonsense.

Low nonsense is the talent of a cold phlegmatick temper, that in a poor dispirited style creeps along servilely through darkness and confusion. A writer of this complexion gropes his way softly amongst self-contradictions, and grovels in absurdities.

Videri vult pauper, & est pauper.

He has neither wit nor sense, and pretends to none.

On the contrary, your high nonsense blusters and makes a noise, it stalks upon hard words, and rattles through polysyllables. It is loud and sonorous, smooth and periodical. It has something in it like manliness and force, and makes one think of the name of Sir *Hercules Nonsense* in the play called *the nest of fools*. In a word, your high nonsense has a majestic appearance, and wears a most tremendous garb, like *Æsop's* ass clothed in a lion's skin.

When *Aristotle* lay upon his death-bed, and was asked whom he would appoint for his successor in his school, two of his scholars being Candidates for it; he called for two different sorts of wine, and by the character which he gave of them, denoted the different qualities and perfections that shewed themselves in the style and writings of each of the competitors. As rational writings have been represented by *wine*; I shall represent those kinds of writings we are now speaking of, by *small-beer*.

Low nonsense is like that in the barrel, which is altogether flat, tasteless, and insipid. High nonsense is like that in the bottle, which has in reality no more strength and spirit than the other, but frets and flies, and bounces, and by the help of a little wind that is got into it, imitates the passions of a much nobler liquor.

We meet with a low groveling nonsense in every *Grub-street* production; but I think there are none of our present writers who have hit the sublime in nonsense, besides Dr. *S——l* in divinity, and the Author of this letter in politicks; between whose characters in their respective professions, there seems to be a very nice resemblance.

There is still another qualification in nonsense which I must not pass over, being that which gives it the last finishing and perfection, and eminently discovers it self in the letter to the Examiner.—This is when an Author without any meaning, seems to have it; and so imposes upon us
by

by the found and ranging of his words, that one is apt to fancy they signify something. Any one who reads this letter, as he goes through it, will lie under the same delusion; but after having read it, let him consider what he has learnt from it, and he will immediately discover the deceit. I did not indeed at first imagine there was in it such a jargon of ideas, such an inconsistency of notions, such a confusion of particles, that rather puzzle than connect the sense, which in some places he seems to have aimed at, as I found upon my nearer perusal of it: Nevertheless, as no body writes a book without meaning something, though he may not have the faculty of writing consequentially, and expressing his meaning; I think I have with a great deal of attention and difficulty found out what this Gentleman would say, had he the gift of utterance. The System of his politicks, when disembroiled and cleared of all those incoherences and independent matters that are woven into this motley piece, will be as follows. The conduct of the late Ministry is considered first of all in respect to foreign affairs, and secondly to domestick: As to the first, he tells us, that *the motives which engaged Britain in the present war, were both wise and generous*; so that the Ministry is cleared as to that particular. These motives he tells us, *were to restore the Spanish monarchy to the house of Austria, and to regain a barrier for Holland. The last of these two motives, he says, was effectually answered by the reduction of the Netherlands in the year 1706, or might have been so by the concessions which it is notorious that the enemy offered.* So that the Ministry are here blamed for not contenting themselves with the barrier they had gained in the year 1706, nor with the concessions which the enemy then offered. The other motive of our entering into the war, *viz. The restoring the Spanish monarchy to the house of Austria, he tells us, remained still in its full force; and we were told, says he, that though the barrier of Holland was secured, the trade of Britain and the ballance of power in Europe would be still precarious: Spain therefore must be conquered.* He then loses himself in matter foreign to his purpose: But what he endeavours in the sequel of his discourse, is to shew, that we have not taken the proper method to recover the Spanish monarchy; *that the whole stress of the war has been wantonly laid where France is best able to keep us at bay; that the French King has made it impossible for himself to give up Spain, and that the Duke of Anjou has made it as impossible for us to conquer it: Nay, that instead of regaining Spain, we shall find the Duke of Anjou in a condition to pay the debt of gratitude, and support the Grandfather in his declining years, by whose arms in the days of his infan-*

cy he was upheld. He then intimates to us, that the *Dutch* and the Emperor will be so very well satisfied with what they have already conquered, that they may probably leave the house of *Bourbon* in the quiet possession of the *Spanish* Monarchy.

This strange huddle of politicks has been so fully answered by General *Stanhope*, that if the Author had delayed the publishing of his letter but a fortnight, the world would have been deprived of that elaborate production. Notwithstanding all that the *French* King or the Duke of *Anjou* have been able to do, notwithstanding the feeble efforts we have made in *Spain*, notwithstanding *the little care the Emperor takes to support King Charles*, notwithstanding the *Dutch* might have been contented *with a larger and better country than their own already conquered for them*, that victorious General at the head of *English* and *Dutch* forces, in conjunction with those of the Emperor, has wrested *Spain* out of the hands of the house of *Bourbon*; and added the conquest of *Navarre*, *Aragon*, and *Castile*, to those of *Catalonia*, *Bavaria*, *Flanders*, *Mantua*, *Milan*, *Naples*, *Sicily*, *Majorca*, *Minorca*, and *Sardinia*. Such a wonderful series of victories, and those astonishing returns of ingratitude which they have met with, appear both of them rather like dreams than realities: They puzzle and confound the present age, and it is to be hoped they will not be believed by posterity. Will the trifling Author of this letter say, that the Ministry did not apply themselves to the reduction of *Spain*, when the whole Kingdom was twice conquered in their administration? The Letter-writer says, *that the Dutch had gained a good barrier after the battel of Ramillies in the year 1706.* But I would fain ask him, whether he thinks *Antwerp* and *Brussels*, *Ghent* and *Bruges*, could be thought a strong barrier, or that those important conquests did not want several towns and forts to cover them? But it seems our great General on that side has done more for us than we expected of him, and made the barrier too impregnable. *But*, says the Letter-writer, *the stress of the war was laid in the wrong place:* But if the laying the stress of the war in the *Low-Countries* drew thither the whole strength of *France*; if it weakened *Spain*, and left it exposed to an equal force; if *France*, without being pressed on this side, could have assisted the Duke of *Anjou* with a numerous army; and if by the advantage of the situation, it could have sent and maintained in *Spain* ten regiments with as little trouble and expence as *England* could two regiments; every impartial Judge would think that the stress of the war has been laid in the right place.

The

The Author in this confused dissertation on foreign affairs, would fain make us believe, that *England* has gained nothing by these conquests, and put us out of humour with our chief Allies, the Emperor and the *Dutch*. He tells us, *they hoped England would have been taken care of, after having secured a barrier for Holland*: As if *England* were not taken care of by this very securing a barrier for *Holland*; which has always been looked upon as our Bulwark, or as Mr. *Waller* expresses it, our *outguard on the continent*; and which if it had fallen into the hands of the *French*, would have made *France* more strong by sea than all *Europe* besides. Has not *England* been taken care of by gaining a new mart in *Flanders*, by opening our trade into the *Levant*, by securing ports for us in *Gibraltar*, *Minorca* and *Naples*, and by that happy prospect we have of renewing that great branch of our commerce into *Spain*, which will be of more advantage to *England* than any conquest we can make of towns and provinces? Not to mention the demolishing of *Dunkirk*, which we were in a fair way of obtaining during the last Parliament, and which we never so much as proposed to our selves at our first engaging in this war.

As for this Author's aspersions of the *Dutch* and *Germans*, I have sometimes wondered that he has not been complained of for it to the Secretary of state. Had not he been looked upon as an insignificant scribler, he must have occasioned remonstrances and memorials: Such national injuries are not to be put up, but when the offender is below resentment. This puts me in mind of an honest *Scotchman*, who as he was walking along the streets of *London*, heard one calling out after him *Scot, Scot*, and casting forth in a clamorous manner a great deal of opprobrious language against that antient nation: *Sawny* turned about in a great passion, and found, to his surprize, that the person who abused him was a saucy parrot that hung up not far from him in a cage; upon which he clapped his hand to his sword, and told him, were he a man as he was a green-goose, he would have run him through the wemb.

The next head our Politician goes upon, relates to our domestick affairs; where I am extremely at a loss to know what he wou'd be at: All that I can gather from him is, that *the Queen had grieved her subjects* in making choice of such men for her Ministers, as raised the nation to a greater pitch of glory than ever it was in the days of our forefathers, or than any other nation in these our days.

Thursday,

N^o 5. Thursday, October 12.

Parere jam non scelus est.

Martial.

WE live in a nation where at present there is scarce a single head that does not teem with politicks. The whole Island is peopled with Statesmen, and not unlike *Trinculo's* Kingdom of Vice-roys. Every man has contrived a scheme of government for the benefit of his fellow-subjects, which they may follow and be safe.

After this short preface, by which, as an Englishman, I lay in my claim to be a Politician; I shall enter on my discourse.

The chief point that has puzzled the freeholders of *Great-Britain*, as well as all those that pay scot and lot, for about these six months last past, is this, Whether they would rather be governed by a Prince that is obliged by laws to be good and gracious, just and upright, a friend, father, and a defender of his people; or by one who, if he pleases, may drive away or plunder, imprison or kill, without opposition or resistance. This is the true state of the controversy relating to *passive-obedience* and *non-resistance*. For I must observe, that the Advocates for this doctrine have stated the case in the softest and most palatable terms that it will bear: And we very well know, that there is great art in moulding a question; and that many a motion will pass with a *nemine contradicente* in some words, that would have been as unanimously rejected in others. *Passive obedience* and *non-resistance* are of a mild, gentle, and meek-spirited sound: They have respect but to one side of the relation between the sovereign and the subject, and are apt to fill the mind with no other ideas but those of peace, tranquillity, and resignation. To shew this doctrine in those black and odious colours that are natural to it, we should consider it with regard to the Prince as well as to the people: The question will then take another turn, and it will not be debated whether resistance may be lawful, or whether we may take up arms against our Prince; but whether the English form of government be a tyranny or a limited monarchy? Whether our Prince be obliged by our constitution to act according to law, or whether he be arbitrary and despotical.

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It is impossible to state the measures of *Obedience*, without settling the extent of *Power*; or to describe the *Subject*, without defining the *King*. An arbitrary Prince is in justice and equity the master of a non-resisting people; for where the power is uncircumscribed, the obedience ought to be unlimited. *Passive-obedience* and *non-resistance* are the duties of *Turks* and *Indians*, who have no laws above the Will of a *Grand Signior* or a *Mogul*. The same power which those Princes enjoy in their respective governments, belongs to the legislative body in our constitution; and that for the same reason; because no body of men is subject to laws, or can be controuled by them, who have the authority of making, altering, or repealing whatever laws they shall think fit. Were our legislature vested in the person of our Prince, he might doubtless wind and turn our constitution at his pleasure; he might shape our government to his fancy. In a word, he might oppress, persecute, or destroy, and no man say to him, what dost thou?

If therefore we would rightly consider our form of government, we should discover the proper measures of our duty and obedience; which can never rise too high to our Sovereign, whilst he maintains us in those rights and liberties we were born to. But to say that we have rights which we ought not to vindicate and assert; that Liberty and Property are the birth-right of the *English* nation, but that if a Prince invades them by violent and illegal methods, we must upon no pretence resist, but remain altogether passive; nay, that in such a case we must all lose our lives unjustly rather than defend them: this, I say, is to confound governments, and to join things together that are wholly repugnant in their natures; since it is plain, that such a passive subjection, such an unconditional obedience, can be only due to an arbitrary Prince or to a legislative body.

Were these smooth ensnaring terms rightly explained to the people, and the controversy of Non-resistance set in this just light, we should have wanted many thousands of hands to some late Addresses. I would fain know what Free-holder in *England* would have subscribed the following Address, had it been offered to him; or whether Her Majesty, who values the rights of her subjects as much as her own prerogative, would not have been very much offended at it? and yet I will appeal to the Reader, if this has not been the sense of many Addresses, when taken out of several artificial qualifying expressions, and exposed in their true and genuine light.

Madam,

Madam,

“ IT is with unspeakable grief of heart, that we hear a set of men
 “ daily preaching up among us, that pernicious and damnable do-
 “ ctrine of self-preservation ; and boldly affirming, as well in their pub-
 “ lick writings, as in their private discourses, that it is lawful to resist a
 “ tyrant, and take up arms in defence of their lives and liberties. We
 “ have the utmost horror and detestation of these diabolical principles,
 “ that may induce your people to rise up in vindication of their rights
 “ and freedoms, whenever a wicked Prince shall make use of his Royal
 “ authority to subvert them. We are astonished at the bold and impious
 “ attempts of those men, who under the reign of the best of Sovereigns,
 “ would avow such dangerous tenets as may secure them under the worst.
 “ We are resolved to beat down and discountenance these seditious no-
 “ tions, as being altogether republican, jesuitical, and conformable to the
 “ practice of our rebellious fore-fathers ; who in all ages, at an infinite
 “ expence of blood and treasure, asserted their rights and properties,
 “ and consulted the good of their posterity by resistance, arms, and
 “ pitched battles, to the great trouble and disquiet of their lawful Prince.
 “ We do therefore in the most humble and dutiful manner solemnly pro-
 “ test and declare, that we will never resist a Sovereign that shall think
 “ fit to destroy our *Magna Charta*, or invade those rights and liberties
 “ which those traitors procured for us ; but will venture our lives and
 “ fortunes against such of our fellow-subjects who think they may stand
 “ up in defence of them.

It happens very unluckily that there is something so supple and insinuat-
 ing in this absurd unnatural doctrine, as makes it extremely agreeable to
 a Prince's ear : for which reason the publishers of it have always been the
 favourites of weak Kings. Even those who have *no inclination* to do hurt
 to others, says the famous Satyrist, would have *the power* of doing it if
 they pleased. Honest men who tell their Sovereigns what they expect
 from them, and what obedience they shall be always ready to pay them,
 are not upon an equal foot with such base and abject flatterers ; and are
 therefore always in danger of being the last in the Royal favour. Nor
 indeed would that be unreasonable, if the professors of Non-resistance
 and Passive-obedience would stand to their principle : but instead of that,
 we see they never fail to exert themselves against an arbitrary power, and
 to cast off the oppression when they feel the weight of it. Did they
 not in the late Revolution rise up unanimously with those who always de-
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clared their subjection to be conditional, and their obedience limited? And very lately, when their Queen had offended them in nothing but by the promotion of a few great men to posts of trust and honour, who had distinguished themselves by their moderation and humanity to all their fellow-subjects, what was the behaviour of these men of meek and resigned principles? Did not the *Church-Memorial*, which they all applauded and cried up as the language and sentiments of their party, tell H. M. that it would not be safe for Her to rely upon their doctrines of Passive-obedience and Non-resistance, for that *nature might rebel against principles*? Is not this, in plain terms, that they will only practise Non-resistance to a Prince that pleases them, and Passive-obedience when they suffer nothing? I remember one of the rabble in *Oedipus*, when he is upbraided with his rebellion, and asked by the Prophet if he had not taken an oath to be loyal, falls a scratching his head, and tells him, Why yes, truly, he had taken such an oath, *but it was a hard thing that an oath should be a man's master*. This is in effect the language of the Church in the above-mentioned Memorial. Men of these soft peaceable dispositions in times of prosperity, put me in mind of *Kirke's Lambs*; for that was the name he used to give his dragoons that had signalized themselves above the rest of the army by many military achievements among their own country-men.

There are two or three fatal consequences of this doctrine, which I cannot forbear pointing out. The first of which is, That it has a natural tendency to make a good King a very bad one. When a man is told he may do what he pleases with impunity, he will be less careful and cautious of doing what he should do, than a man who is influenced by fear as well as by other motives to virtue. It was a saying of *Thales the wife Milesian*, *That of all wild beasts a tyrant is the worst, and of all tame beasts a flatterer*. They do indeed naturally beget one another, and always exist together. Persuade a Prince that he is irresistible, and he will take care not to let so glorious an attribute lie dead and useless by him. An arbitrary power has something so great in it, that he must be more than man who is endowed with it, but never exerts it.

This consequence of the doctrine I have been speaking of, is very often a fatal one to the people; there is another which is no less destructive to the Prince. A late unfortunate King very visibly owed his ruin to it. He relied upon the assurances of his people, that they would never resist him upon any pretence whatsoever, and accordingly began to act like a King who was not under the restraint of laws, by dispensing

with them, and taking on him that power which was vested in the whole legislative body. And what was the dreadful end of such a proceeding? It is too fresh in every body's memory. Thus is a Prince corrupted by the professors of this doctrine, and afterwards betrayed by them. The same persons are the Actors, both in the temptation and the punishment. They assure him they will never resist, but retain their obedience under the utmost sufferings: he tries them in a few instances, and is deposed by them for his credulity.

I remember at the beginning of King *James's* reign the Quakers presented an Address, which gave great offence to the High Church-men of those times. But notwithstanding the uncourtliness of their phrases, the sense was very honest. The Address was as follows, to the best of my memory, for I then took great notice of it; and may serve as a counterpart to the foregoing one.

“ THESE are to testify to thee our sorrow for our friend *Charles*,
 “ whom we hope thou wilt follow in every thing that is good.
 “ We hear that thou art not of the religion of the land any more than
 “ we, and therefore may reasonably expect that thou wilt give us the same
 “ liberty that thou takest thy self.
 “ We hope that in this and all things else thou wilt promote the good
 “ of thy people, which will oblige us to pray that thy reign over us may
 “ be long and prosperous.

Had all King *James's* subjects addressed him with the same integrity; he had, in all probability, sat upon his throne till death had removed him from it.



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