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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

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N^o 126. Wednesday, July 25.

Tros Rutulufve fuat, nullo discrimine habebo. Virg.

IN my yesterday's paper I propos'd, that the honest men of all parties should enter into a kind of association for the defence of one another and the confusion of their common enemies. As it is design'd this neutral body should act with a regard to nothing but truth and equity, and divest themselves of the little heats and prepossessions that cleave to parties of all kinds, I have prepared for them the following form of an association, which may express their intentions in the most plain and simple manner.

We whose names are hereunto subscribed, do solemnly declare, that we do in our Consciencs believe two and two make four; and that we shall adjudge any man whatsoever to be our enemy who endeavours to perswade us to the contrary. We are likewise ready to maintain, with the hazard of all that is near and dear to us, that six is less than seven in all times and all places; and that ten will not be more three years hence than it is at present. We do also firmly declare, that it is our resolution as long as we live to call black black, and white white. And we shall upon all occasions oppose such persons that upon any day of the year shall call black white, or white black, with the utmost peril of our lives and fortunes.

Were there such a combination of honest men, who without any regard to places, would endeavour to extirpate all such furious zealots as would sacrifice one half of their country to the passion and interest of the other; as also such infamous hypocrites, that are for promoting their own advantage, under colour of the publick good; with all the profligate immoral retainers to each side, that have nothing to recommend them but an implicit submission to their leaders; we should soon see that furious Party-spirit extinguish'd, which may in time expose us to the derision and contempt of all the nations about us.

A member of this society, that would thus carefully employ himself in making room for merit, by throwing down the worthless and depraved part of mankind from those conspicuous stations of life to which they have been sometimes advanced, and all this without any regard to his private interest, would be no small benefactor to his country.

I remember to have read in *Diodorus Siculus* an account of a very active little animal, which I think he calls the *Ichneumon*, that makes it the whole business of his life to break the eggs of the crocodile, which he is always in search after. This instinct is the more remarkable, because the *Ichneumon* never feeds upon the eggs he has broken, nor any other way finds his account in them. Were it not for the incessant labours of this industrious animal, *Ægypt*, says the Historian, would be over-run with crocodiles; for the *Ægyptians* are so far from destroying those pernicious creatures, that they worship them as Gods.

If we look into the behaviour of ordinary partizans, we shall find them far from resembling this disinterested animal; and rather acting after the example of the wild *Tartars*, who are ambitious of destroying a man of the most extraordinary parts and accomplishments, as thinking that upon his decease the same talents, what-ever post they qualified him for, enter of course into his destroyer.

As in the whole train of my Speculations, I have endeavoured as much as I am able to extinguish that pernicious spirit of passion and prejudice, which rages with the same violence in all parties, I am still the more desirous of doing some good in this particular, because I observe that the spirit of party reigns more in the country than in the town. It here contracts a kind of brutality and rustick fierceness, to which men of a politer conversation are wholly strangers. It extends it self even to the return of the bow and the hat; and at the same time that the heads of parties preserve towards one another an outward shew of good breeding, and keep up a perpetual intercourse of civilities, their tools that are dispersed in these outlying parts will not so much as mingle together at a cock-match. This humour fills the country with several periodical meetings of whig jockeys and tory fox-hunters; not to mention the innumerable curses, frowns, and whispers it produces at a Quarter-sessions.

I do not know whether I have observed in any of my former papers, that my friends Sir ROGER DE COVERLY and Sir ANDREW FREEPORT are of different principles, the first of them inclined to the *landed* and the other to the *moneyed* interest. This humour is so moderate in each of them, that it proceeds no farther than to an agreeable raillery,

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which very often diverts the rest of the club. I find however that the Knight is a much stronger Tory in the country than in town, which, as he has told me in my ear, is absolutely necessary for the keeping up his interest. In all our journey from *London* to his house we did not so much as bait at a Whig-inn; or if by chance the coachman stopped at a wrong place, one of Sir ROGER's servants would ride up to his master full speed, and whisper to him that the master of the house was against such an one in the last election. This often betrayed us into hard beds and bad cheer; for we were not so inquisitive about the Inn as the Inn-keeper; and provided our landlord's principles were found, did not take any notice of the staleness of his provisions. This I found still the more inconvenient, because the better the Host was, the worse generally were his accommodations; the fellow knowing very well, that those who were his friends would take up with coarse diet and an hard lodging. For these reasons, all the while I was upon the road, I dreaded entering into an house of any one that Sir ROGER had applauded for an honest man.

Since my stay at Sir ROGER's in the country, I daily find more instances of this narrow party-humour. Being upon the bowling-green at a neighbouring market-town the other day, (for that is the place where the Gentlemen of one side meet once a week) I observed a stranger among them of a better presence and genteeler behaviour than ordinary; but was much surprized, that notwithstanding he was a very fair *better*, no body would take him up. But upon enquiry I found, that he was one who had given a disagreeable vote in a former Parliament, for which reason there was not a man upon that bowling-green who would have so much correspondence with him as to win his money of him.

Among other instances of this nature, I must not omit one which concerns my self. *Will Wimble* was the other day relating several strange stories that he had picked up no body knows where of a certain great man; and upon my staring at him, as one that was surprized to hear such things in the country, which had never been so much as whispered in the town, *Will* stopped short in the thread of his discourse, and after dinner asked my friend Sir ROGER in his ear if he was sure that I was not a fanatick.

It gives me a serious concern to see such a spirit of dissension in the country; not only as it destroys virtue and common sense, and renders us in a manner Barbarians towards one another, but as it perpetuates our animosities, widens our breaches, and transmits our present passions and prejudices to our posterity. For my own part, I am sometimes afraid
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that I discover the seeds of a Civil War in these our divisions: and therefore cannot but bewail, as in their first principles, the miseries and calamities of our children.

N^o 127. *Thursday, July 26.*

-----*Quantum est in rebus inane?* Perf.

IT is our custom at Sir ROGER's, upon the coming in of the Post, to sit about a pot of coffee, and hear the old Knight read *Dyer's* letter; which he does with his spectacles upon his nose, and in an audible voice, smiling very often at those little strokes of Satyr, which are so frequent in the writings of that Author. I afterwards communicate to the Knight such packets as I receive under the quality of *SPECTATOR*. The following letter chancing to please him more than ordinary, I shall publish it at his request.

Mr. SPECTATOR,

“**Y**OU have diverted the town almost a whole month at the expence
 “ of the country; it is now high time that you should give
 “ the country their revenge. Since your withdrawing from this place,
 “ the fair sex are run into great extravagancies. Their petticoats, which
 “ began to heave and swell before you left us, are now blown up into a
 “ most enormous concave, and rise every day more and more: in short,
 “ Sir, since our women know themselves to be out of the eye of the
 “ *SPECTATOR*, they will be kept within no compass. You praised
 “ them a little too soon, for the modesty of their head-dresses: for as
 “ the humour of a sick person is often driven out of one limb into ano-
 “ ther, their superfluity of ornaments, instead of being entirely banish-
 “ ed, seems only fallen from their heads upon their lower parts. What
 “ they have lost in height they make up in breadth, and contrary to all
 “ rules of architecture widen the foundations at the same time that they
 “ shorten the superstructure. Were they, like *Spanish* jennets, to im-
 “ pregnate by the wind, they could not have thought on a more proper
 “ invention.