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

In Four Volumes

**Addison, Joseph**

**London, 1721**

No 20. Monday, February 27.

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The conduct of this work has hitherto been regulated by different views, and shall continue to be so; unless the party it has to deal with, draw upon themselves another kind of treatment. For if they shall persist in pointing their batteries against particular persons, there are no laws of war, that forbid the making of reprisals. In the mean time, this undertaking shall be managed with that generous spirit which was so remarkable among the *Romans*, who did not subdue a country in order to put the inhabitants to fire and sword, but to incorporate them into their own community, and make them happy in the same government with themselves.

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N<sup>o</sup> 20.      *Monday, February 27.*

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*Privatus illis census erat brevis,  
Commune magnum-----*

Hor.

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**I**T is very unlucky for those who make it their business to raise popular murmurs and discontents against his Majesty's government, that they find so very few and so very improper occasions for them. To shew how hard they are set in this particular, there are several, who for want of other materials, are forced to represent the bill which has passed this Session, for laying an additional tax of two shillings in the pound upon Land, as a kind of grievance upon the subject. If this be a matter of complaint, it ought in justice to fall upon those who have made it necessary. Had there been no rebellion, there would have been no increase of the Land-tax; so that in proportion as a man declares his aversion to the one, he ought to testify his abhorrence of the other. But it is very remarkable that those, who would persuade the people that they are aggrieved by this additional burthen, are the very persons who endeavour, in their ordinary conversation, to extenuate the heinousness of the rebellion, and who express the greatest tenderness for the persons of the rebels. They shew a particular indulgence for that unnatural insurrection which has drawn this load upon us, and are angry at the means which were necessary for suppressing it. There needs no clearer proof of the  
spirit

spirit and intention with which they act: I shall therefore advise my fellow-free-holders to consider the character of any person who would possess them with the notion of a hardship that is put upon the country by this tax. If he be one of known affection to the present establishment, they may imagine there is some reason for complaint. But if on the contrary he be one, who has shewn himself indifferent as to the success of the present rebellion, or is suspected as a private abettor of it, they may take it for granted, his complaint against the Land-tax is either the rage of a disappointed man, or the artifice of one who would alienate their affections from the present government.

The expence which will arise to the nation from this rebellion, is already computed at near a million. And it is a melancholy consideration for the Free-holders of *Great Britain*, that the treason of their fellow-subjects should bring upon them as great a charge as the war with *France*. At the same time every reasonable man among them will pay a tax with at least as great cheerfulness for stifling a Civil war in its birth, as for carrying on a war in a foreign country. Had not our first supplies been effectual for the crushing of our domestick enemies, we should immediately have beheld the whole kingdom a scene of slaughter and desolation: Whereas, if we had failed in our first attempts upon a distant nation, we might have repaired the losses of one Campaign by the advantages of another, and after several victories gained over us, might still have kept the enemy from our gates.

As it was thus absolutely necessary to raise a sum that might enable the government to put a speedy stop to the rebellion, so could there be no method thought of for raising such a sum more proper, than this of laying an additional tax of two shillings in the pound upon land.

In the first place: This tax has already been so often tried, that we know the exact produce of it, which in any new project is always very doubtful and uncertain. As we are thus acquainted with the produce of this tax, we find it is adequate to the services for which it is designed, and that the additional tax is proportioned to the supernumerary expence, which falls upon the kingdom this year by the unnatural rebellion, as it has been above stated.

In the next place: no other tax could have been thought of, upon which so much money would have been immediately advanced as was necessary in so critical a juncture for pushing our successes against the rebels, and preventing the attempts of their friends and confederates both at home and abroad. No body cares to make loans upon a new and untried project;

ject; whereas men never fail to bring in their money upon a Land-tax, when the præmium or interest allowed them, is suited to the hazard they run by such loans to the government. And here one cannot but bewail the misfortune of our country, when we consider, that the House of Commons had last year reduced this interest to four *per Cent.* by which means there was a considerable saving to the nation; but that this year they have been forced to give six *per Cent.* as well knowing the fatal consequences that might have ensued, had there not been an interest allowed, which would certainly encourage the lender to venture, in such a time of danger, what was indispensably necessary for the exigences of the publick.

Besides; this is a method for raising a sum of money, that, with the ordinary taxes, will in all probability defray the whole expence of the year: so that there is no burden laid upon our posterity, who have been sufficiently loaded by other means of raising money; nor any deficiency to be hereafter made up by our selves; which has been our case in so many other Subsidies.

To this we may add; that we have no example of any other tax, which in its nature would so particularly affect the enemies to his Majesty's government. Multitudes of *Papists* and *Nonjurors* will be obliged to furnish a double proportion out of their revenues towards the clearing of that expence, which by their open and secret practices they have been instrumental in bringing upon their fellow-subjects.

I shall only mention one consideration more; that no other tax is so likely to cease as this is, when there is no farther occasion for it. This tax is established by a House of Commons, which, by vertue of an Act of Parliament passed a few years ago, must consist for the most part of landed men; so that a great share of the weight of it must necessarily fall upon the Members of their own body. As this is an instance of their publick spirit, so we may be sure they would not have exerted it, had there not been an absolute necessity: nor can we doubt, that for the same reasons, when this necessity ceases, they will take the first opportunity of easing themselves in this particular, as well as those whom they represent. It is a celebrated notion of a patriot, who signally distinguished himself for the liberties of his country, That a House of Commons should never grant such Subsidies as are easy to be raised, and give no pain to the people, lest the nation should acquiesce under a burden they did not feel, and see it perpetuated without repining. Whether this notion might not be too refined, I shall not determine; but by what has been already said, I think we may promise our selves, that this additional tax of two shillings in the pound

pound will not be continued another year, because we may hope the rebellion will be entirely ended in this.

And here, I believe, it must be obvious to every one's reflection, that the rebellion might not have concluded so soon, had not this method been made use of for that end. A foreign Potentate trembles at the thought of entering into a war with so wealthy an enemy as the *British* nation, when he finds the whole landed interest of the kingdom engaged to oppose him with their united force; and at all times ready to employ against him such a part of their revenues, as shall be sufficient to baffle his designs upon their country: especially when none can imagine, that he expects an encouragement from those, whose fortunes are either lodged in the funds, or employed in trade.

The wisdom therefore of the present House of Commons has by this tax, not only enabled the King to subdue those of his own subjects who have been actually in arms against him, but to divert any of his neighbours from the hopes of lending them a competent assistance.

N<sup>o</sup> 21. *Friday, March 2.*

*Qualis in Eurotæ ripis, aut per juga Cynthi,  
Exercet Diana choros; quam mille secutæ  
Hinc atque hinc glomerantur Oreades: illa pharetram  
Fert humero, gradiensque Deas supereminet omnes.* Virg.

IT is not easy for any one, who saw the magnificence of yesterday in the Court of *Great Britain*, to turn his thoughts for some time after on any other subject. It was a solemnity every way suited to the Birthday of a Princess, who is the delight of our nation, and the glory of her sex. *Homer* tells us, that when the daughter of *Jupiter* presented herself among a crowd of Goddesses, she was distinguished from the rest by her graceful stature, and known by her superior beauty, notwithstanding they were all beautiful. Such was the appearance of the Princess of *Wales* among our *British* Ladies; or (to use a more solemn phrase) of *the King's* daugh-