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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

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Studius rudis, sermone barbarus, impetu strenuus, manu promptus, cogitatione celer. Vell. Paterc.

FOR the honour of his Majesty, and the safety of his government, we cannot but observe, that those who have appeared the greatest enemies to both, are of that rank of men, who are commonly distinguished by the title of *Fox-hunters*. As several of these have had no part of their education in cities, camps, or courts, it is doubtful whether they are of greater ornament or use to the nation in which they live. It would be an everlasting reproach to politicks, should such men be able to overturn an establishment which has been formed by the wisest laws, and is supported by the ablest heads. The wrong notions and prejudices which cleave to many of these country-gentlemen, who have always lived out of the way of being better informed, are not easy to be conceived by a person who has never conversed with them.

That I may give my Readers an image of these rural Statesmen, I shall, without farther preface, set down an account of a discourse I chanced to have with one of them some time ago. I was travelling towards one of the remote parts of *England*, when about three a-clock in the afternoon, seeing a country-gentleman trotting before me with a Spaniel by his horse's side, I made up to him. Our conversation opened, as usual, upon the weather; in which we were very unanimous; having both agreed that it was too dry for the season of the year. My fellow-traveller, upon this, observed to me, that there had been no good weather since the Revolution. I was a little startled at so extraordinary a remark, but would not interrupt him till he proceeded to tell me of the fine weather they used to have in King *Charles* the Second's reign. I only answered that I did not see how the badness of the weather could be the King's fault; and, without waiting for his reply, asked him whose house it was we saw upon a rising-ground at a little distance from us. He told me it belonged to an old fanatical cur, Mr. Such a one, *You must have heard of him;*

him, says he, *he's one of the Rump.* I knew the Gentleman's character upon hearing his name, but assured him that to my knowledge he was a good Churchman: *Ay!* says he with a kind of surprize, *We were told in the country, that he spoke twice in the Queen's time against taking off the duties upon French claret.* This naturally led us in the proceedings of late Parliaments, upon which occasion he affirmed roundly, that there had not been one good law passed since King *William's* accession to the throne, except the Act for preserving the game. I had a mind to see him out, and therefore did not care for contradicting him. *Is it not hard,* says he, *that honest Gentlemen should be taken into Custody of Messengers to prevent them from acting according to their consciences? But,* says he, *what can we expect when a parcel of factious sons of whores—* He was going on in great passion, but chanced to miss his dog, who was amusing himself about a bush, that grew at some distance behind us. We stood still till he had whittled him up; when he fell into a long panegyrick upon his Spaniel, who seemed indeed excellent in his kind: but I found the most remarkable adventure of his life was, that he had once like to have worried a dissenting-teacher. The master could hardly sit on his horse for laughing all the while he was giving me the particulars of this story, which I found had mightily endeared his dog to him, and as he himself told me, had made him a great favourite among all the honest Gentlemen of the country. We were at length diverted from this piece of mirth by a post-boy, who winding his horn at us, my companion gave him two or three curses, and left the way clear for him. *I fancy,* said I, *that post brings news from Scotland. I shall long to see the next Gazette.* *Sir,* says he, *I make it a rule never to believe any of your printed news. We never see, Sir, how things go, except now and then in Dyer's Letter, and I read that more for the style than the news. The man has a cleaver pen it must be owned. But is it not strange that we should be making war upon Church of England men, with Dutch and Swiss soldiers, men of antimonarchical principles? these foreigners will never be loved in England, Sir; they have not that wit and good-breeding that we have.* I must confess I did not expect to hear my new acquaintance value himself upon these qualifications, but finding him such a Critick upon foreigners, I asked him if he had ever travelled; he told me, he did not know what travelling was good for, but to teach a man to ride the great horse, to jabber *French*, and to talk against Passive-obedience: to which he added, that he scarce ever knew a traveller in his life who had not forsook his principles, and lost his hunting-seat.

For

For my part, says he, I and my father before me have always been for Passive-obedience, and shall be always for opposing a Prince who makes use of Ministers that are of another opinion. But where do you intend to inn to night? (for we were now come in sight of the next town) I can help you to a very good Landlord if you will go along with me. He is a lussy jolly fellow, that lives well, at least three yards in the girt, and the best Cburch of England man upon the road. I had a curiosity to see this High-church Inn-keeper, as well as to enjoy more of the conversation of my fellow-traveller, and therefore readily consented to fet our horses together for that night. As we rode side by side through the town, I was let into the characters of all the principal inhabitants whom we met in our way. One was a dog, another a whelp, another a cur, and another the son of a bitch, under which several denominations were comprehended all that voted on the *Whig* side in the last election of Burgeses. As for those of his own party, he distinguished them by a nod of his head, and asking them how they did by their christian names. Upon our arrival at the Inn, my companion fetched out the jolly Landlord, who knew him by his whistle. Many endearments, and private whispers passed between them; though it was easy to see, by the Landlord's scratching his head, that things did not go to their wishes. The Landlord had swelled his body to a prodigious size, and worked up his complection to a standing crimson by his zeal for the prosperity of the church, which he expressed every hour of the day, as his customers dropt in, by repeated bumpers. He had not time to go to church himself, but, as my friend told me in my ear, had headed a mob at the pulling down of two or three meeting-houses. While supper was preparing, he enlarged upon the happiness of the neighbouring Shire; *For*, says he, *there is scarce a Presbyterian in the whole county, except the Bishop.* In short, I found by his discourse that he had learned a great deal of politicks, but not one word of religion, from the Parson of his parish; and, indeed, that he had scarce any other notion of religion, but that it consisted in hating Presbyterians. I had a remarkable instance of his notions in this particular. Upon seeing a poor decrepid old woman pass under the window where we sate, he desired me to take notice of her; and afterwards informed me, that she was generally reputed a witch by the country people, but that, for his part, he was apt to believe she was a Presbyterian.

Supper was no sooner served in, than he took occasion, from a shoulder of mutton that lay before us, to cry up the plenty of *England*, which would be the happiest country in the world, provided we would live within

within our selves. Upon which, he expatiated on the inconveniencies of trade, that carried from us the commodities of our country, and made a parcel of upstarts as rich as men of the most ancient families of *England*. He then declared frankly, that he had always been against all treaties and alliances with foreigners; *Our wooden walls*, says he, *are our security, and we may bid defiance to the whole world, especially if they should attack us when the Militia is out.* I ventured to reply, that I had as great an opinion of the *English* fleet as he had; but I could not see how they could be payed, and manned, and fitted out, unless we encouraged trade and navigation. He replied, with some vehemence, that he would undertake to prove, trade would be the ruin of the *English* nation. I would fain have put him upon it; but he contented himself with affirming it more eagerly, to which he added two or three curses upon the *London* Merchants, not forgetting the Directors of the Bank. After supper he asked me if I was an admirer of punch; and immediately called for a sneaker. I took this occasion to insinuate the advantages of trade, by observing to him, that water was the only native of *England* that could be made use of on this occasion: but that the lemons, the brandy, the sugar, and the nutmeg, were all foreigners. This put him into some confusion; but the landlord, who overheard me, brought him off, by affirming, that for constant use, there was no liquor like a cup of *English* water, provided it had malt enough in it. My 'Squire laughed heartily at the conceit, and made the Landlord sit down with us. We sate pretty late over our punch; and, amidst a great deal of improving discourse, drank the healths of several persons in the country, whom I had never heard of, that, they both assured me, were the ablest Statesmen in the nation: and of some *Londoners*, whom they extolled to the skies for their wit, and who, I knew, passed in town for silly fellows. It being now midnight, and my friend perceiving by his Almanack that the Moon was up, he called for his horses, and took a sudden resolution to go to his house, which was at three miles distance from the town, after having bethought himself that he never slept well out of his own bed. He shook me very heartily by the hand at parting, and discovered a great air of satisfaction in his looks, that he had met with an opportunity of shewing his parts, and left me a much wiser man than he found me.

Friday,