



UNIVERSITÄTS-  
BIBLIOTHEK  
PADERBORN

## Universitätsbibliothek Paderborn

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

In Four Volumes

**Addison, Joseph**

**London, 1721**

No 30. Monday, April 2.

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-53597](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-53597)

more extensive view of the publick good; the same freedom of thought disposes several of them to the embracing of particular schemes and maxims, and to a certain singularity of opinion which proves highly prejudicial to their cause; especially when they are encouraged in them by a vain breath of popularity, or by the artificial praises which are bestowed on them by the opposite party. This temper of mind, though the effect of a noble principle, very often betrays their friends, and brings into power the most pernicious and implacable of their enemies. In cases of this nature, it is the duty of an honest and prudent man, to sacrifice a doubtful opinion to the concurring judgment of those whom he believes to be well intentioned to their country, and who have better opportunities of looking into all its most complicated interests. An honest party of men acting with unanimity, are of infinitely greater consequence than the same party aiming at the same end by different views: As a large diamond is of a thousand times greater value whilst it remains entire, than when it is cut into a multitude of smaller stones, notwithstanding they may each of them be very curiously set, and are all of the same water.

---

N<sup>o</sup> 30. Monday, April 2.

---

----- I, *verbis virtutem illude superbis.*

Virg.

---

**A**S I was some years ago engaged in conversation with a fashionable French *Abbé* upon a subject which the people of that Kingdom love to start in discourse, the comparative greatness of the two nations; he asked me, *How many souls I thought there might be in London?* I replied, being willing to do my country all the honour I fairly could, That there were several who computed them at near a million: But not finding that surprize I expected in his countenance, I returned the question upon him, how many he thought there might be in *Paris?* To which he answered, with a certain grimace of coldness and indifference, *About ten or twelve millions.*

It

It would, indeed, be incredible to a man who has never been in *France*, should one relate the extravagant notion they entertain of themselves, and the mean opinion they have of their neighbours. There are certainly (notwithstanding the visible decay of learning and taste which has appeared among them of late years) many particular persons in that country, who are eminent in the highest degree for their good sense, as well as for their knowledge in all the arts and sciences. But I believe every one, who is acquainted with them, will allow, that the people in general fall short of those, who border upon them, in strength and solidity of understanding. One would therefore no more wonder to see the most shallow nation of *Europe* the most vain, than to find the most empty fellows in every distinct nation more conceited and censorious than the rest of their countrymen. Prejudice and self-sufficiency naturally proceed from inexperience of the world, and ignorance of mankind. As it requires but very small abilities to discover the imperfections of another, we find that none are more apt to turn their neighbours into ridicule, than those who are the most ridiculous in their own private conduct.

Those among the *French*, who have seen nothing but their own country, can scarce bring themselves to believe, that a nation, which lies never so little North of them, is not full of *Goths* and *Vandals*. Nay those among them who travel into foreign parts are so prejudiced in favour of their own imaginary politeness, that they are apt to look upon every thing as barbarous in proportion as it deviates from what they find at home. No less a man than an Ambassador of *France* being in conversation with our King of glorious memory, and willing to encourage his Majesty, told him, that he talked like a *Frenchman*. The King smiled at the encomium which was given him, and only replied, *Sir, I am sure you do*. An eminent writer of the last age was so offended at this kind of insolence, which shewed it self very plentifully in one of their travellers who gave an account of *England*, that he vindicated the honour of his country in a book full of just satyr and ingenuity. I need not acquaint my reader, that I mean Bishop *Sprat's* answer to *Sorbiere*.

Since I am upon this head, I cannot forbear mentioning some profound remarks that I have been lately shewn in a *French* book, the Author of which lived it seems, some time in *England*. The English, says this curious traveller, *very much delight in Pudding. This is the favourite dish not only of the Clergy, but of the people in general. Provided there be a Pudding upon the table, no matter what are the other dishes; they are sure to make a feast. They think themselves so happy when they have a Pudding*

ding before them, that if any one would tell a friend he is arriv'd in a lucky juncture, the ordinary salutation is, Sir, I am glad to see you; you are come in Pudding-time.

One cannot have the heart to be angry at this judicious observer, notwithstanding he has treated us like a race of *Hottentots*, because he only taxes us with our inordinate love of pudding, which it must be confessed, is not so elegant a dish as frog and fallat. Every one who has been at *Paris*, knows that *Un gros milord Anglois* is a frequent jest upon the *French* stage; as if corpulence was a proper subject for satyr, or a man of honour could help his being fat, who eats suitable to his quality.

It would be endless to recount the invectives which are to be met with among the *French* Historians, and even in *Mezeray* himself, against the manners of our countrymen. Their Authors in other kinds of writing are likewise very liberal in characters of the same nature. I cannot forbear mentioning the learned Monsieur *Patin* in particular; who tells us in so many words, *That the English are a people, whom he naturally abhors*: And in another place, *That he looks upon the English among the several nations of men, as he does upon wolves among the several species of beasts*. A *British* writer would be very justly charged with want of politeness, who in return to this civility, should look upon the *French* as that part of mankind which answers to a species in the brute creation, whom we call in *English* by the name of monkies.

If the *French* load us with these indignities, we may observe, for our comfort, that they give the rest of their borderers no better quarter. If we are a dull, heavy, phlegmatick people, we are it seems no worse than our neighbours. As an instance, I shall set down at large a remarkable passage in a famous book entituled *Chevræana*, written many years ago by the celebrated Monsieur *Chevreau*; after having advertised my reader that the Dutchess of *Hanover*, and the Princess *Elizabeth* of *Bohemia*, who are mentioned in it, were the late excellent Princess *Sophia* and her Sister.

Tilenus pour un Allemand, parle & écrit bien François, dit Scaliger: Gretzer a bien de l'esprit pour un Allemand, dit le Cardinal du Perron: Et le P. Boubours met en question, Si un Allemand peut être bel esprit? On ne doit juger ni bien ni mal d'une Nation par un particulier ni d'un particulier par sa nation. Il y a des Allemands, comme des François, qui n'ont point d'esprit; des Allemands, qui ont scû plus d'Hebreu, plus de Grec, que Scaliger & le Cardinal du Perron: J'honore fort le P. Boubours, qui a du merite; mais J'ose dire, que la France n'a point de plus bel Esprit que Madame la Duchesse de Hanovre d'aujourd'hui, ni de  
personne

personne plus solidement savante en Philosophie que l'étoit Madame la Princesse Elizabeth de Boheme, sa Soeur: Et je ne croi pas que 'on refuse le même titre à beaucoup d'Academiciens d'Allemagne dont les Ouvrages meritoient bien d'être traduits. Il y a d'autres Princesses en Allemagne, qui ont infiniment de l'esprit. Les François disent c'est un Allemand, pour exprimer un homme pesant, brutal: & les Allemands comme les Italiens, c'est un François, pour dire un fou & un étourdi. C'est aller trop loin: comme le Prince de Salé dit de Ruyter, Il est honnête homme, c'est bien dommage qu'il soit Chrétien. *Chevræana, Tom. I.*

" *Tilenus*, says *Scaliger*, speaks and writes well for a German. *Gretzer* has a great deal of wit for a German, says Cardinal *Perron*. And " Father *Boubours* makes it a question, whether a German can be a Wit? " One ought not to judge well or ill of a nation from a particular person, " nor of a particular person from his nation. There are Germans, as there " are French, who have no wit; and Germans who are better skilled in " Greek and Hebrew than either *Scaliger* or the Cardinal *du Perron*. " I have a great honour for father *Boubours*, who is a man of merit; but " will be bold to say, that there is not in all France, a person of more " wit than the present Dutchess of *Hanover*; nor more thoroughly know- " ing in Philosophy, than was the late Princess *Elizabeth* of *Bohemia* " her sister; and I believe none can refuse the same title to many Aca- " demicians in Germany, whose works very well deserve to be translated " into our tongue. There are other Princesses in Germany, who have " also an infinite deal of wit. The French say of a man, that he is a " German, when they would signify that he is dull and heavy; and the " Germans as well as the Italians, when they would call a man, a hair- " brain'd coxcomb, says he is a French man. This is going too far, and " is like the Governour of *Sally's* saying of *De Ruyter*, the Dutch Ad- " miral, *he is an honest man, 'tis a great pity he is a Christian.*

Having already run my paper out to its usual length, I have not room for many reflections on that which is the subject of it. The last cited Author has been before-hand with me in its proper moral. I shall only add to it, that there has been an unaccountable disposition among the English of late years, to fetch the fashion from the French, not only in their dress and behaviour, but even in their judgments and opinions of mankind. It will however be reasonable for us, if we concur with them in their contempt of other neighbouring nations, that we should likewise regard ourselves under the same view in which they are wont to place us. The Representations they make of us, are as of a nation the least favoured by them;

them; and, as these are agreeable to the natural aversion they have for us, are more disadvantageous than the pictures they have drawn of any other people in *Europe*.

---

N<sup>o</sup> 31. *Friday, April 6.*

---

*Omnes homines, P. C. qui de rebus dubiis consultant, ab odio, amicitia, ira, atque misericordia vacuos esse decet.*

Caesar apud Sallust.

---

I Have purposely avoided, during the whole course of this paper, to speak any thing concerning the treatment which is due to such persons as have been concerned in the late rebellion, because I would not seem to irritate justice against those who are under the prosecution of the law, nor incense any of my Readers against unhappy though guilty men. But when we find the proceedings of our government in this particular traduced and misrepresented, it is the duty of every good subject to set them in their proper light.

I am the more prompted to this undertaking by a pamphlet, entitled, *An argument to prove the affections of the people of England to be the best security of the government; humbly offered to the consideration of the patrons of severity, and applyed to the present juncture of affairs.* Had the whole scope of the Author been answerable to his title, he would have only undertaken to prove what every man in his wits is already convinced of. But the drift of the pamphlet is to stir up our compassion towards the rebels, and our indignation against the government. The Author, who knew that such a design as this could not be carried on without a great deal of artifice and sophistry, has puzzled and perplexed his cause, by throwing his thoughts together in such a studied confusion, that upon this account, if upon any, his pamphlet is, as the party have represented it, unanswerable.

The famous Monsieur *Bayle* compares the answering of an immethodical Author to the hunting of a Duck: when you have him full in your sight, and fancy your self within reach of him, he gives you the slip, and becomes