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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

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An tu populum Romanum esse illum putas qui constat ex iis, qui mercede conducuntur? qui impelluntur, ut vim afferant magistratibus? ut obsideant senatum? optent quotidie cædem, incendia, rapinas? quem tu tamen populum nisi tabernis clausis, frequentare non poteris: cui populo duces Ventidios, Lollios, Sergios, præfeceras. O speciem, dignitatemque populi Romani, quam Reges, quam nationes exteræ, quam gentes ultimæ pertimescunt; multitudinem hominum ex servis conductis, ex facinorosis, ex egentibus congregatam!

Cicer.

THERE is in all governments a certain temper of mind, natural to the Patriots and lovers of their constitution, which may be called State-jealousy. It is this which makes them apprehensive of every tendency in the people, or in any particular member of the community, to endanger or disturb that form of rule, which is established by the laws and customs of their country. This political jealousy is absolutely requisite in some degree for the preservation of a government, and very reasonable in persons who are persuaded of the excellency of their constitution, and believe that they derive from it the most valuable blessings of society.

This publick-spirited passion is more strong and active under some governments, than others. The Commonwealth of *Venice*, which hath subsisted by it for near fourteen hundred years, is so jealous of all its members, that it keeps continual spies upon their actions; and if any one of them presume to censure the established plan of that Republick, or touch upon any of its fundamentals, he is brought before a secret Council of State, tried in a most rigorous manner, and put to death without mercy. The usual way of proceeding with persons who discover themselves unsatisfied with the title of their Sovereign in Despotick governments, is to confine

fine the malecontent, if his crimes are not capital, to some castle or dungeon for life. There is indeed no constitution, so tame and careless of their own defence, where any person dares to give the least sign or intimation of being a traitor in his heart. Our *English* history furnishes us with many examples of great severities during the disputes between the Houses of *York* and *Lancaster*, inflicted on such persons as shewed their disaffection to the Prince who was on the throne. Every one knows, that a factious Inn-keeper, in the reign of *Henry* the Seventh, was hanged, drawn, and quartered for a saucy pun, which reflected, in a very dark and distant manner, upon the title of that Prince to the Crown. I do not mention the practice of other governments, as what should be imitated in ours, which, God be thanked, affords us all the reasonable liberty of speech and action, suited to a free people; nor do I take notice of this last instance of severity in our own country, to justify such a proceeding, but only to display the mildness and forbearance made use of under the reign of his present Majesty. It may, however, turn to the advantage of those, who have been instrumental in stirring up the late tumults and seditions among the people, to consider the treatment which such a lawless ungoverned rabble would have met with in any other country, and under any other Sovereign.

These incendiaries have had the art to work up into the most unnatural ferments, the most heavy and stupid part of the community; and, if I may use a fine saying of *Terence* upon another occasion, to convert fools into madmen. This frenzy hath been raised among them to such a degree, that it has lately discovered it self in a sedition which is without a parallel. They have had the fool-hardiness to set a mark upon themselves on the *Pretender's* birth-day, as the declared friends to his cause, and profest enemies to their King and country. How fatal would such a distinction, of which every one knew the meaning, have proved in former reigns, when many a circumstance of less significancy has been construed into an Overt Act of High Treason! This unexampled piece of insolence will appear under its just aggravations, if we consider in the first place, that it was aimed personally at the King.

I do not remember among any of our popular commotions, when marks of this nature have been in fashion, that either side were so void of common sense, as to intimate by them an aversion to their Sovereign. His person was still held as sacred by both parties. The contention was not who should be the Monarch over them, but whose scheme of policy should take place in his administration. This was the conduct of Whigs
and

and Tories under King *Charles* the Second's reign, when men hung out their principles in different coloured ribbons. Nay, in the times of the great rebellion, the avowed disaffection of the people always terminated in evil Counsellors. Such an open outrage upon Majesty, such an ostentation of disloyalty, was reserved for that infamous rabble of *Englishmen*, who may be justly looked upon as the scandal of the present age, and the most shameless and abandoned race of men that our nation has yet produced.

In the next place. It is very peculiar to this mob of malecontents, that they did not only distinguish themselves against their King, but against a King possessed of all the power of the nation, and one who had so very lately crushed all those of the same principles, that had bravery enough to avow them in the field of battle. When ever was there an instance of a King who was not contemptible for his weakness, and want of power to resent, insulted by a few of his unarmed dastard subjects?

It is plain, from this single consideration, that such a base ungenerous race of men could rely upon nothing for their safety in this affront to his Majesty, but the known gentleness and lenity of his government. Instead of being deterred by knowing that he had in his hands the power to punish them, they were encouraged by knowing that he had not the inclination. In a word, they presumed upon that mercy which in all their conversations they endeavour to depreciate and misrepresent.

It is a very sensible concern to every one, who has a true and unfeigned respect of our national religion, to hear these vile miscreants calling themselves sons of the Church of *England*, amidst such impious tumults and disorders; and joining in the cry of High-church, at the same time that they bear a badge, which implies their inclination to destroy the reformed religion. Their concern for the church always rises highest, when they are acting in direct opposition to its doctrines. Our streets are filled at the same time with zeal and drunkenness, riots and religion. We must confess, if noise and clamour, slander and calumny, treason and perjury, were articles of their Communion, there would be none living more punctual in the performance of their duties; but if a peaceable behaviour, a love of truth, and a submission to superiors, are the genuine marks of our profession, we ought to be very heartily ashamed of such a profligate brotherhood. Or if we will still think and own these men to be true sons of the Church of *England*, I dare say there is no church in *Europe* which will envy her the glory of such disciples. But it is to be hoped we are not so fond of party, as to look upon a man, because he is a bad christian, to be a good Church of *England* man.