



UNIVERSITÄTS-
BIBLIOTHEK
PADERBORN

Universitätsbibliothek Paderborn

The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

London, 1721

No 54. Monday, June 25.

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

N^o 54. *Monday, June 25.*

————— *Tu, nisi ventis*

Debes ludibrium, cave.

Nuper sollicitum quæ mihi tedium,

Nunc desiderium, curaque non levis.

Hor.

THE general division of the *British* nation is into Whigs and Tories, there being very few, if any, who stand neuters in the dispute, without ranging themselves under one of these denominations. One would therefore be apt to think, that every member of the community, who embraces with vehemence the principles of either of these parties, had thoroughly sifted and examined them, and was secretly convinced of their preference to those of that party which he rejects. And yet it is certain, that most of our fellow-subjects are guided in this particular, either by the prejudice of education, private interest, personal friendships, or a deference to the judgment of those, who perhaps, in their own hearts disapprove the opinions which they industriously spread among the multitude. Nay, there is nothing more undoubtedly true, than that great numbers of one side concur in reality with the notions of those whom they oppose, were they able to explain their implicit sentiments, and to tell their own meaning.

However, as it becomes every reasonable man to examine those principles by which he acts, I shall in this paper select some considerations, out of many, that might be insisted on, to shew the preference of what is generally called the Whig-scheme, to that which is espoused by the Tories.

This will appear in the first place, if we reflect upon the tendency of their respective principles, supposing them carried to their utmost extremity. For if, in this case, the worst consequences of the one are more eligible than the worst consequences of the other, it is a plain argument, that those principles are the most eligible of the two, whose effects are the least pernicious. Now the tendency of these two different sets of principles, as they are charged upon each party by its antagonists, is as follows. The Tories tell us, that the Whig scheme would end in Presbyteria-

byterianism and a Common-wealth. The Whigs tell us, on the other side, that the Tory-scheme would terminate in Popery and arbitrary government. Were these reproaches mutually true; which would be most preferable to any man of common sense, Presbyterianism and a republican form of government, or Popery and Tyranny? Both extremes are indeed dreadful, but not equally so; both to be regarded with the utmost aversion by the friends of our constitution, and lovers of our country: but if one of them were inevitable, who would not rather chuse to live under a state of excessive liberty, than of slavery, and not prefer a religion that differs from our own in the circumstantial, before one that differs from it in the essentials of Christianity!

Secondly, Let us look into the history of *England*, and see under which of these two schemes the nation has enjoyed most honour and prosperity. If we observe the reigns of Queen *Elizabeth* and King *James* the first (which an impudent *Frenchman* calls the reigns of King *Elizabeth* and Queen *James*) We find the Whig-scheme took place under the first, and the Tory-scheme under the latter. The first, in whom the Whigs have always gloried, opposed and humbled the most powerful among the *Roman* Catholick Princes; raised and supported the *Dutch*; assisted the *French* Protestants; and made the reformed religion an overbalance for Popery through all *Europe*. On the contrary, her successor aggrandized the Catholick King; alienated himself from the *Dutch*; suffered the *French* power to increase, till it was too late to remedy it; and abandoned the interests of the King of *Bohemia*, grand-father to his present Majesty, which might have spread the reformed religion through all *Germany*. I need not describe to the Reader the different state of the kingdom, as to its reputation, trade, and wealth, under these two reigns. We might, after this, compare the figure in which these kingdoms, and the whole Protestant interest of *Europe*, were placed by the conduct of King *Charles* the Second, and that of King *William*; and every one knows which of the schemes prevailed in each of those reigns. I shall not impute to any Tory-scheme the administration of King *James* the Second, on condition that they do not reproach the Whigs with the usurpation of *Oliver*; as being satisfied that the principles of those governments are respectively disclaimed and abhorred by all the men of sense and virtue in both parties, as they now stand. But we have a fresh instance which will be remembered with grief by the present age and all our posterity, of the influence both of Whig and Tory principles in the late reign. Was *England* ever so glorious in the eyes of *Europe*, as in that part of it when the first prevailed? or was it ever more contemptible than when the last took place? I

I shall add, under this head, the preference of the Whig-scheme, with regard to foreigners. All the Protestant States of *Europe*, who may be considered as neutral judges between both parties, and are well-wishers to us in general, as to a Protestant people, rejoice upon the success of a Whig-scheme; whilst all of the Church of *Rome*, who contemn hate and detest us as the great bulwark of heresy, are as much pleased when the opposite party triumphs in its turn. And here let any impartial man put this question to his own heart, whether that party doth not act reasonably, who look upon the *Dutch* as their genuine friends and allies, considering that they are of the reformed religion, that they have assisted us in the greatest times of necessity, and that they can never entertain a thought of reducing us under their power. Or, on the other hand, let him consider whether that party acts with more reason, who are the avowed friends of a nation, that are of the *Roman* Catholick religion, that have cruelly persecuted our brethren of the reformation, that have made attempts in all ages to conquer this island, and supported the interest of that Prince, who abdicated the throne, and had endeavoured to subvert our civil and religious liberties.

Thirdly, let us compare these two schemes from the effects they produce among our selves within our own island; and these we may consider, first with regard to the King, and secondly with regard to the people.

First, With regard to the King. The Whigs have always professed and practised an obedience which they conceive agreeable to the constitution; whereas the Tories have concurred with the Whigs in their practice, though they differ from them in their professions; and have avowed a principle of passive-obedience to the temptation, and afterwards to the destruction, of those who have relied upon it. Nor must I here omit to take notice of that firm and zealous adherence which the Whig-party have shewn to the protestant succession, and to the cause of his present Majesty. I have never heard of any in this principle, who was either guilty or suspected of measures to defeat this establishment, or to overturn it, since it has taken effect. A consideration, which, it is hoped, may put to silence those who upbraid the Whig-schemes of government, with an inclination to a commonwealth, or a disaffection to Kings.

Secondly, With regard to the people. Every one must own, that those laws which have most conduced to the ease and happiness of the subject, have always passed in those Parliaments, which their enemies branded with the name of Whig, and during the time of a Whig-ministry. And,

what is very remarkable, the Tories are now forced to have recourse to those laws for shelter and protection: by which they tacitly do honour to the Whig-scheme, and own it more accommodated to the happiness of the people, than that which they espouse.

I hope I need not qualify these remarks with a supposition which I have gone upon through the whole course of my papers, that I am far from considering a great part of those who call themselves Tories, as enemies to the present establishment; and that by the Whigs I always mean those who are friends to our constitution both in church and state. As we may look upon these to be, in the main, true lovers of their religion and country, they seem rather to be divided by accidental friendships and circumstances, than by any essential distinction.

N^o 55.*Friday, June 29.*----- *cestus artemque repono.*

Virg.

A Rising of parliament being a kind of cessation from politicks, the *Free-holder* cannot let his paper drop at a more proper juncture. I would not be accessary to the continuing of our political ferment, when occasions of dispute are not administered to us by matters depending before the legislature; and when debates without doors naturally fall with those in the two houses of Parliament. At the same time a *British* Freeholder would very ill discharge his part, if he did not acknowledge, with becoming duty and gratitude, the excellency and seasonableness of those laws, by which the representatives of men in his rank have recovered their country in a great measure out of its confusions, and provided for its future peace and happiness under the present establishment. Their unanimous and regular proceeding, under the conduct of that honourable person who fills their chair with the most consummate abilities, and hath justly gained the esteem of all sides by the impartiality of his behaviour; the absolute necessity of some acts which they have passed, and their dis-inclination to extend them any longer, than that necessity required; their manifest aversion to enter upon schemes, which
the