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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

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But I shall say no more. We are now in an age wherein impudent assertions must pass for arguments: and I do not question but the same, who has endeavoured here to prove that he who wrote the *Dispensary* was no Poet, will very suddenly undertake to shew, that he who gained the battle of *Blenheim* is no General.

N^o 2. *Thursday, September 21.*

----- *Arcades ambo*
Et cantare pares-----

I Never yet knew an Author that had not his admirers. *Bunyan* and *Quarles* have passed through several editions, and please as many Readers, as *Dryden* and *Tillotson*: The *Examiner* had not written two half sheets of paper, before he met with one that was astonished at the force he was master of, and approaches him with awe, when he mentions State-subjects, as *encroaching on the province that belonged to him*, and treating of things that deserved to pass under his pen. The same humble Author tells us, that the *Examiner* can furnish mankind with an *Antidote to the poyson that is scattered through the nation*. This crying up of the *Examiner's* Antidote, puts me in mind of the first appearance that a celebrated *French* quack made in the streets of *Paris*. A little boy walked before him, publishing, with a shrill voice, *Mon pere guerit toutes sortes de maladies, My father cures all sorts of distempers*: To which the Doctor, who walked behind him, added in a grave and composed manner, *L'enfant dit vrai, The child says true*.

That the Reader may see what party the Author of this Letter is of, I shall shew how he speaks of the *French King* and the *Duke of Anjou*, and how of our greatest Allies, the *Emperor of Germany* and the *States-General*. *In the mean while the French King has withdrawn his troops from Spain, and has put it out of his power to restore that monarchy to us, was he reduced low enough really to desire to do it. The Duke of Anjou has had leisure to take off those whom he suspected, to confirm his friends, to regulate his revenues, to increase and form his troops, and*
above

above all, to rouse that spirit in the Spanish nation, which a succession of lazy and indolent Princes had lulled asleep. From hence it appears probable enough, that if the war continue much longer on the present foot, instead of regaining Spain, we shall find the Duke of Anjou in a condition to pay the debt of gratitude, and support the grandfather in his declining years; by whose arms, in the days of his infancy, he was upheld. What expressions of tenderness, duty, and submission! The Panegyrick on the Duke of Anjou, is by much the best written part of this whole Letter; the Apology for the French King is indeed the same which the Post-boy has often made, but worded with greater deference and respect to that great Prince. There are many strokes of the Author's good-will to our confederates, the Dutch and the Emperor, in several parts of this notable Epistle; I shall only quote one of them, alluding to the concern which the Bank, the States-General, and the Emperor, expressed for the Ministry, by their humble applications to Her Majesty, in these words.

Not daunted yet, they resolve to try a new expedient, and the interest of Europe is to be represented as inseparable from that of the Ministers.

Haud dubitant equidem implorare quod usquam est;
Flectere si nequeunt Superos, Acheronta movebunt.

The members of the Bank, the Dutch, and the Court of Vienna, are called in as confederates to the Ministry. This, in the mildest English it will bear, runs thus. They are resolved to look for help where-ever they can find it; if they cannot have it from heaven, they will go to hell for it; That is, to the members of the Bank, the Dutch, and the Court of Vienna. The French King, the Pope, and the Devil, have been often joined together by a well-meaning Englishman; but I am very much surprized to see the Bank, the Dutch, and the Court of Vienna, in such company. We may still see this Gentleman's principles in the accounts which he gives of his own country: speaking of the G——l, the quondam T——r, and the J——to, which every one knows comprehends the Whigs, in their utmost extent; he adds, in opposition to them, *For the Queen and the whole body of the British nation,*——

Nos Numerus sumus.

In English,

We are Cyphers.

How properly the Tories may be called the whole body of the *British* nation, I leave to any one's judging: and wonder how an Author can be so disrespectful to Her Majesty, as to separate Her in so saucy a manner from that part of her people, who according to the *Examiner* himself, *have engrossed the riches of the nation*; and all this to join her, with so much impudence, under the common denomination of *We*; that is, *WE Queen and Tories* are cyphers. *Nos numerus sumus* is a scrap of *Latin* more impudent than Cardinal *Woolsey's Ego et Rex meus*. We find the same particle *WE*, used with great emphasis and significancy in the eighth page of this Letter; *But nothing decisive, nothing which had the appearance of earnest, has been so much as attempted, except that wise expedition to Thoulon, which WE suffered to be defeated before it began*. Whoever did, God forgive them: there were indeed several stories of discoveries made, by letters and messengers that were sent to *France*.

Having done with the Author's party and principles, we now shall consider his performance, under the three heads of Wit, Language, and Argument. The first lash of his Satyr falls upon the *Censor of Great-Britain*, who, says he, resembles the famous *Censor of Rome*, in nothing but espousing the *cause of the vanquished*. Our Letter-writer here alludes to that known verse in *Lucan*,

Victrix causa Diis placuit, sed victa Catoni.

The Gods espoused the cause of the conquerors, but Cato espoused the cause of the vanquished. The misfortune is, that this verse was not written of *Cato the Censor*, but of *Cato of Utica*. How Mr. *Bickerstaff*, who has written in favour of a party that is not vanquished, resembles the younger *Cato*, who was not a *Roman Censor*, I do not well conceive, unless it be in struggling for the liberty of his country. To say therefore, that the *Censor of Great-Britain* resembles that famous *Censor of Rome in nothing but espousing the cause of the vanquished*; is just the same as if one should say, in regard to the many obscure truths and secret histories that are brought to light in this Letter, that the Author of these new revelations, resembles the ancient Author of the Revelations *in nothing but venturing his head*. Besides that there would be no ground for such a resemblance, would not a man be laughed at by every common Reader, should he thus mistake one *St. John* for another, and apply that to *St. John* the Evangelist which relates to *St. John* the Baptist, who died many years before him?

Another

Another smart touch of the Author we meet with in the fifth page, where, without any preparation, he breaks out all on a sudden into a vein of poetry; and instead of writing a Letter to the *Examiner*, gives advice to a painter in these strong lines: *Paint, Sir, with that force which you are master of, the present state of the war abroad; and expose to the publick view those principles upon which, of late, it has been carried on, so different from those upon which it was originally entered into. Collect some few of the indignities which have been this year offered to Her Majesty, and of those unnatural struggles which have betrayed the weakness of a shattered constitution.* By the way, a man may be said to paint a battle, or if you please, a war; but I do not see how it is possible to paint the present state of a war. So a man may be said to describe or to collect accounts of indignities and unnatural struggles; but to collect the things themselves, is a figure which this Gentleman has introduced into our *English* prose. Well, but what will be the use of this picture of a state of the war? and this collection of indignities and struggles? It seems the chief design of them is to make a dead man blush, as we may see in those inimitable lines which immediately follow: *And when this is done, D—n shall blush in his grave among the dead, W—le among the living, and even Vol—e shall feel some remorse.* Was there ever any thing, I will not say so stiff and so unnatural, but so brutal and so silly! this is downright hacking and hewing in Satyr. But we see a masterpiece of this kind of writing in the twelfth page; where, without any respect to a Dutches of *Great-Britain*, a Princess of the Empire, and one who was a bosom friend of her Royal Mistress, he calls a great Lady *an insolent woman, the worst of her sex, a fury, an executioner of divine vengeance, a plague*; and applies to her a line which *Virgil* writ originally upon *Alecto*. One would think this foul-mouthed writer must have received some particular injuries, either from this great Lady or from her husband; and these the world shall be soon acquainted with, by a book which is now in the press, entitled, *An Essay towards proving that gratitude is no virtue.* This Author is so full of Satyr, and is so angry with every one that is pleased with the Duke of *Marlborough's* victories, that he goes out of his way to abuse one of the Queen's singing men, who it seems did his best to celebrate a thanksgiving day in an Anthem; as you may see in that passage: *Towns have been taken, and battles have been won; the mob has huzza'd round bonfires, the Stentor of the chappel has strained his throat in the gallery, and the Stentor of S—m has deafned his audience from the pulpit.* Thus you see how

like a true son of the High-Church, he falls upon a learned and reverend Prelate, and for no other crime, but for preaching with an audible voice. If a man lifts up his voice like a trumpet to preach sedition, he is received by some men as a Confessor; but if he cries aloud, and spares not, to animate people with devotion and gratitude, for the greatest publick blessings that ever were bestowed on a sinful nation, he is reviled as a *Stentor*.

I promised in the next place to consider the Language of this excellent Author, who I find takes himself for an Orator. In the first page he censures several for the poison which they *profusely scatter* through the nation; that is, in plain *English*, for *squandering away their poison*. In the second he talks of *carrying probability through the thread of a fable*; and in the third, of *laying an odium at a man's door*. In the fourth he rises in his expressions; where he speaks of those who would persuade the people, that *the G——l, the quondam T——r, and the J——to, are the only objects of the confidence of the Allies, and of the fears of the enemies*. I would advise this Author to try the beauty of this expression. Suppose a foreign Minister should address Her Majesty in the following manner, (for certainly it is Her Majesty only to whom the sense of the compliment ought to be paid) Madam, you are *the object of the confidence of the Allies*; or, Madam, your Majesty is *the only object of the fears of the enemies*. Would a man think that he had learned *English*? I would have the Author try, by the same rule, some of his other phrases, as *Page 7*. where he tells us, *That the ballance of power in Europe would be still precarious*. What would a tradesman think, if one should tell him in a passion, that his *scales were precarious*; and mean by it, that they were *not fixed*? In the thirteenth page he speaks of certain *profligate wretches, who having usurped the Royal Seat, resolved to venture overturning the chariot of government, rather than to lose their place in it*. A plain-spoken man would have left the *Chariot* out of this sentence, and so have made it good *English*. As it is there, it is not only an impropriety of speech, but of metaphor; it being impossible for a man to have a place in the Chariot which he drives. I would therefore advise this Gentleman, in the next edition of his Letter, to change the *Cbariot* of government into the *Chaise* of government, which will sound as well, and serve his turn much better. I could be longer on the *errata* of this very small work, but will conclude this head with taking notice of a certain figure which was unknown to the ancients, and in which this Letter-writer very much excels. This is called by some an *Anti-climax*,

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an instance of which we have in the tenth page; where he tells us, that *Britain* may expect to have this only glory left her, *That she has proved a farm to the Bank, a province to Holland, and a jest to the whole world.* I never met with so sudden a downfall in so promising a sentence; a *jest to the whole world* gives such an unexpected turn to this happy period, that I was heartily troubled and surprized to meet with it. I do not remember in all my reading, to have observed more than two couplets of verses that have been written in this figure; the first are thus quoted by Mr. *Dryden*:

*Not only London ecchoes with thy fame,
But also Irlington has heard the same.*

The other are in *French*.

*Allez vous, luy dit il, sans bruit chez vos parens,
Ou vous avez laissé votre honneur & vos gans.*

But we need not go further than the Letter before us for examples of this nature, as we may find in page the eleventh. *Mankind remains convinced, that a Queen possessed of all the virtues requisite to bless a nation, or make a private family happy, sits on the throne.* Is this Panegyrick or Burlesque? To see so glorious a Queen celebrated in such a manner, gives every good subject a secret indignation; and looks liker *Scarron's* character of the great Queen *Semiramis*, who, says that Author, "was the Founder of *Babylon*, Conqueror of the *East*, and an "excellent Housewife.

The third subject being the argumentative part of this Letter, I shall leave till another occasion.



Thursday,