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

In Four Volumes

**Addison, Joseph**

**London, 1721**

No 3. Thursday, September 28.

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N<sup>o</sup> 3. Thursday, September 28.

Non defensoribus istis

Tempus eget. —

Virg.

I Was once talking with an old humdrum fellow, and before I had heard his story out, was called away by business. About three years after I met him again; when he immediately reassumed the thread of his story, and began his salutation with, *but Sir, as I was telling you.* The same method has been made use of by very polite writers; as, in particular, the Author of *Don Quixote*, who inserts several novels in his works, and after a parenthesis of about a dozen leaves, returns again to his story. *Hudibras* has broke off the *Adventure of the Bear and Fiddle.* The *Tatler* has frequently interrupted the course of a Lucubration, and taken it up again after a fortnight's respite; as the *Examiner*, who is capable of imitating him in this particular, has likewise done.

This may serve as an apology for my postponing the examination of the argumentative part of the *Letter to the Examiner* to a further day, though I must confess, this was occasioned by a Letter which I received last post. Upon opening it, I found it to contain a very curious piece of antiquity; which without preface or application, was introduced as follows.

“ *Alcibiades* was a man of wit and pleasure, bred up in the school of  
 “ *Socrates*; and one of the best Orators of his age, notwithstanding he  
 “ lived at a time when learning was at its highest pitch: he was likewise  
 “ very famous for his military exploits, having gained great conquests  
 “ over the *Lacedæmonians*, who had formerly been the confederates of  
 “ his country-men against the great King of *Persia*, but were at that  
 “ time in alliance with the *Persians*. He had been once so far misre-  
 “ presented and traduced by the malice of his enemies, that the Priests  
 “ cursed him. But after the great services which he had done for his  
 “ country, they publickly repealed their curses, and changed them into  
 “ applauses and benedictions. “ *Plu-*



“ *Plutarch* tells us, in *the life of Alcibiades*, that one *Taureas*, an obscure man, contended with him for a certain prize, which was to be conferred by vote; at which time each of the competitors recommended himself to the *Athenians* by an oration. The speech which *Alcibiades* made on that occasion, has been lately discovered among the Manuscripts of *King's-college in Cambridge*; and communicated to me by my learned friend *Dr. B——ley*; who tells me, that by a marginal note it appears, that this *Taureas*, or, as the Doctor rather chuses to call him, *Toryas*, was an *Athenian Brewer*. This speech I have translated literally, changing very little in it, except where it was absolutely necessary to make it understood by an *English Reader*. It is as follows.

“ IS it then possible, O ye *Athenians*, that I who hitherto have had none but Generals to oppose me, must now have an artisan for my antagonist? That I who have overthrown the Princes of *Lacedaemon*, must now see my self in danger of being defeated by a Brewer? What will the world say of the Goddess that presides over you, should they suppose you follow her dictates? would they think she acted like herself, like the great *Minerva*? would they now say, she inspires her sons with wisdom? or would they not rather say, she has a second time chosen owls for her favourites? But O ye men of *Athens*, what has this man done to deserve your voices? You say he is honest; I believe it, and therefore he shall brew for me. You say he is assiduous in his calling: and is he not grown rich by it? let him have your custom, but not your votes: you are now to cast your eyes on those who can detect the artifices of the common enemy, that can disappoint your secret foes in Council, and your open ones in the field. Let it not avail my competitor, that he has been tapping his liquors, while I have been spilling my blood; that he has been gathering hops for you, while I have been reaping lawrels. Have I not born the dust and heat of the day, while he has been sweating at the furnace? behold these scars, behold this wound which still bleeds in your service; what can *Taureas* shew you of this nature? What are his marks of honour? Has he any other wound about him, except the accidental scaldings of his wort, or bruises from the tub or barrel? Let it not, O *Athenians*, let it not be said, that your Generals have conquered themselves into your displeasure, and lost your favour by gaining you victories. Shall those achievements that have redeemed the present age from slavery, be undervalued by those who feel the benefits of them? Shall those names that have

“ made



“ made your city the glory of the whole earth, be mentioned in it with  
“ obloquy and detraction? Will not your posterity blush at their fore-  
“ fathers, when they shall read in the annals of their country, that *Alci-*  
“ *biades* in the 90th Olympiad, after having conquered the *Lacedæmonians*,  
“ and recovered *Byzantium*, contended for a prize against *Taureas* the  
“ Brewer? The competition is dishonourable, the defeat would be shame-  
“ ful. I shall not however slacken my endeavours for the security of my  
“ country. If she is ungrateful, she is still *Athens*. On the contrary, as  
“ she will stand more in need of defence, when she has so degenerate a  
“ people; I will pursue my victories, till such time as it shall be out of  
“ your power to hurt your selves, and that you may be in safety even un-  
“ der your present leaders. But oh! thou genius of *Athens*, whither art  
“ thou fled? Where is now the race of those glorious spirits that perish-  
“ ed at the battel of *Thermopylae*, and fought upon the plains of *Mara-*  
“ *thon*? Are you weary of conquering, or have you forgotten the oath  
“ which you took at *Agraulos*, That you would look upon the bounds of  
“ *Attica* to be those soils only which are incapable of bearing wheat and  
“ barley, vines and olives? Consider your enemies the *Lacedæmonians*;  
“ did you ever hear that they preferred a Coffee-man to *Agésilas*? No,  
“ though their Generals have been unfortunate, though they have lost se-  
“ veral battels, though they have not been able to cope with the troops  
“ of *Athens*, which I have conducted; they are comforted and condo-  
“ led, nay celebrated and extolled, by their fellow citizens. Their Gene-  
“ rals have been received with honour after their defeat, yours with ig-  
“ nominy after conquest. Are there not men of *Taureas*'s temper and  
“ character, who tremble in their hearts at the name of the great King  
“ of *Persia*? who have been against entering into a war with him, or for  
“ making a peace upon base conditions? that have grudged those contri-  
“ butions which have set our country at the head of all the governments  
“ of *Greece*? that would dishonour those who have raised her to such a  
“ pitch of glory? that would betray those liberties which your fathers in  
“ all ages have purchased or recovered with their blood? and would pro-  
“ secute your fellow-citizens with as much rigour and fury, as of late  
“ years we have attacked the common enemy? I shall trouble you no  
“ more, O ye men of *Athens*; you know my actions, let my antagonist  
“ relate what he has done for you. Let him produce his vatts and tubs,  
“ in opposition to the heaps of arms and standards which were employed  
“ against you, and which I have wrested out of the hands of your enemies.  
“ And when this is done, let him be brought into the field of election  
“ upon



“ upon his dray-cart; and if I can finish my conquest sooner, I will not  
 “ fail to meet him there in a triumphant chariot. But, O ye Gods! let  
 “ not the King of *Persia* laugh at the fall of *Alcibiades*! Let him not  
 “ say, *the Athenians have avenged me upon their own Generals*; or let  
 “ me be rather struck dead by the hand of a *Lacedæmonian*, than disgra-  
 “ ced by the voices of my fellow-citizens.

N<sup>o</sup> 4. *Thursday, October 5.*

*Satis eloquentiæ, sapientiæ parum.*

Sal.

**H** *Udibras* has defined nonsense (as *Cowley* does wit) by negatives. Nonsense (says he) is that which is neither true nor false. These two great properties of nonsense, which are always essential to it, give it such a peculiar advantage over all other writings, that it is incapable of being either answered or contradicted. It stands upon its own basis like a rock of adamant, secured by its natural situation against all conquests or attacks. There is no one place about it weaker than another, to favour an enemy in his approaches. The major and the minor are of equal strength. Its questions admit of no reply, and its assertions are not to be invalidated. A man may as well hope to distinguish colours in the midst of darkness, as to find out what to approve and disapprove in nonsense: you may as well assault an army that is buried in intrenchments. If it affirms any thing, you cannot lay hold of it; or if it denies, you cannot confute it. In a word, there are greater depths and obscurities, greater intricacies and perplexities, in an elaborate and well-written piece of nonsense, than in the most abstruse and profound tract of school-divinity.

After this short panegyrick upon nonsense, which may appear as extravagant to an ordinary Reader, as *Erasmus's Encomium of folly*; I must here solemnly protest, that I have not done it to curry favour with my antagonist, or to reflect any praise in an oblique manner upon the *Letter to the Examiner*: I have no private considerations to warp me in this controversy, since my first entring upon it. But before I proceed any fur-

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