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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

London, 1721

No 568. Friday, July 16.

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

“ our *English* fleet, which used to be the terror of the ocean, should
 “ lie wind-bound for the sake of a——. I love to speak out and declare
 “ my mind clearly, when I am talking for the good of my country. I
 “ will not make my court to an ill man, though he were a *B——y* or a
 “ *T——t*. Nay, I would not stick to call so wretched a politician, a
 “ traitor, an enemy to his country, and a *Bl-nd-rb-fs, &c. &c.*

The remaining part of this political treatise, which is written after the manner of the most celebrated Authors in *Great Britain*, I may communicate to the publick at a more convenient season. In the mean while I shall leave this with my curious Reader, as some ingenious writers do their Enigmas, and if any sagacious person can fairly unriddle it, I will print his explanation, and, if he pleases, acquaint the world with his name.

I hope this short essay will convince my Readers, it is not for want of abilities that I avoid State-tracts, and that if I would apply my mind to it, I might in a little time be as great a master of the political scratch as any the most eminent writer of the age. I shall only add, that in order to outshine all the modern race of *Syncofists*, and thoroughly content my *English* Readers, I intend shortly to publish a *SPECTATOR*, that shall not have a single vowel in it.

N^o 568. *Friday, July 16.*

----- *Dum recitas, incipit esse tuus.* Mart.

I Was yesterday in a Coffee-house not far from the *Royal-Exchange*, where I observed three persons in close conference over a pipe of tobacco; upon which, having filled one for my own use, I lighted it at the little wax candle that stood before them; and after having thrown in two or three whiffs amongst them, sat down and made one of the company. I need not tell my Reader, that lighting a man's pipe at the same candle, is looked upon among brother-smoakers as an overture to conversation and friendship. As we here laid our heads together in a very amicable manner, being intrenched under a cloud of our own raising, I
 took

took up the last SPECTATOR, and casting my eye over it, *The SPECTATOR*, says I, *is very witty to-day*; upon which a lusty lethargick old Gentleman, who sat at the upper-end of the table, having gradually blown out of his mouth a great deal of smoak, which he had been collecting for some time before, *Ay*, says he, *more witty than wise I am afraid*. His neighbour, who sat at his right hand, immediately coloured, and being an angry politician, laid down his pipe with so much wrath that he broke it in the middle, and by that means furnished me with a tobacco-stopper. I took it up very sedately, and looking him full in the face, made use of it from time to time all the while he was speaking: *This fellow*, says he, *cannot for his life keep out of politics*. *Do you see how he abuses four great men here?* I fixed my eye very attentively on the paper, and asked him if he meant those who were represented by Asterisks. *Asterisks*, says he, *do you call them? they are all of them stars*. *He might as well have put garters to them*. *Then pray do but mind the two or three next lines! Ch-rch and p-dd-ng in the same sentence! our Clergy are very much beholden to him*. Upon this the third Gentleman, who was of a mild disposition, and, as I found, a Whig in his heart, desired him not to be too severe upon the SPECTATOR neither; *For*, says he, *you find he is very cautious of giving offence, and has therefore put two dashes into his pudding*. *A fig for his dash*, says the angry politician. *In his next sentence he gives a plain innuendo, that our posterity will be in a sweet p-ckle*. *What does the fool mean by his pickle? why does he not write at length if he means honestly?* I have read over the whole sentence, says I; *but I look upon the parenthesis in the belly of it to be the most dangerous part, and as full of insinuations as it can hold*. *But who*, says I, *is my Lady Q-p-t-s?* *Ay*, answer that if you can, Sir, says the furious Statesman to the poor Whig that sat over-against him. But without giving him time to reply, *I do assure you*, says he, *were I my Lady Q-p-t-s, I would sue him for Scandalum Magnatum*. *What is the world come to? must every body be allowed to—?* He had by this time filled a new pipe, and applying it to his lips, when we expected the last word of his sentence, put us off with a whiff of tobacco; which he redoubled with so much rage and trepidation, that he almost stifled the whole company. After a short pause, I owned that I thought the SPECTATOR had gone too far in writing so many letters in my Lady Q-p-t-s's name; *but however*, says I, *he has made a little amends for it in his next sentence, where he leaves a blank space without so much as a consonant to direct us! I mean*, says I, *after those words, The fleet, that used to*

be the terror of the ocean, should lie wind-bound for the sake of a—; after which ensues a chasm, that, in my opinion, looks modest enough. Sir, says my antagonist, you may easily know his meaning by his gaping; I suppose he designs his chasm, as you call it, for an hole to creep out at, but I believe it will hardly serve his turn. Who can endure to see the great Officers of State, the B—y's and T—t's treated after so scurrilous a manner? I cannot for my life, says I, imagine who the SPECTATOR means: No! says he,—Your humble servant, Sir! Upon which he flung himself back in his chair after a contemptuous manner, and smiled upon the old lethargick Gentleman on his left hand, who I found was his great admirer. The Whig however had begun to conceive a good-will towards me, and seeing my pipe out, very generously offered me the use of his box; but I declined it with great civility, being obliged to meet a friend about that time in another quarter of the city.

At my leaving the Coffee-house, I could not forbear reflecting with my self upon that gross tribe of fools who may be termed the *Over-wise*, and upon the difficulty of writing any thing in this censorious age, which a weak head may not construe into private satyr and personal reflection.

A man who has a good nose at an innuendo, smells treason and sedition in the most innocent words that can be put together, and never sees a vice or folly stigmatized, but finds out one or other of his acquaintance pointed at by the writer. I remember an empty pragmatial fellow in the country, who upon reading over *the whole Duty of Man*, had written the names of several persons in the village at the side of every sin which is mentioned by that excellent Author; so that he had converted one of the best books in the world into a libel against the 'Squire, Church-wardens, Overseers of the poor, and all other the most considerable persons in the parish. This book with these extraordinary marginal notes fell accidentally into the hands of one who had never seen it before; upon which there arose a current report that some body had written a book against the 'Squire and the whole parish. The Minister of the place having at that time a controversy with some of his congregation upon the account of his tythes, was under some suspicion of being the Author, until the good man set his people right, by shewing them that the satyrical passages might be applied to several others of two or three neighbouring villages, and that the book was writ against all the sinners in *England*.

Monday,