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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

London, 1721

No 582. Wednesday, August 18.

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“ the Almighty, and enjoy greater manifestations of his presence; whether there are not solemn times and occasions, when all the multitude of heaven celebrate the presence of their Maker in more extraordinary forms of praise and adoration; as *Adam*, though he had continued in a state of innocence, would, in the opinion of our Divines, have kept holy the Sabbath day, in a more particular manner than any other of the seven. These, and the like speculations, we may very innocently indulge, so long as we make use of them to inspire us with a desire of becoming inhabitants of this delightful place.

“ I have in this, and in two foregoing Letters, treated on the most serious subject that can employ the mind of man, the Omnipresence of the Deity; a subject which, if possible, should never depart from our meditations. We have considered the divine Being, as he inhabits infinitude, as he dwells among his works, as he is present to the mind of man, and as he discovers himself in a more glorious manner among the regions of the blest. Such a consideration should be kept awake in us at all times, and in all places, and possess our minds with a perpetual awe and reverence. It should be interwoven with all our thoughts and perceptions, and become one with the consciousness of our own Being. It is not to be reflected on in the coldness of Philosophy, but ought to sink us into the lowest prostration before him, who is so astonishingly Great, Wonderful, and Holy.

N^o 582. *Wednesday, August 18.*

-----*Tenet insanabile multos*
Scribendi Cacoethes-----

Juv.

THERE is a certain distemper, which is mentioned neither by *Galen* nor *Hippocrates*, nor to be met with in the *London Dispensary*. *Juvenal*, in the motto of my paper, terms it a *Cacoethes*; which is a hard word for a disease called in plain *English*, *the itch of writing*. This *Cacoethes* is as epidemical as the small-pox, there being very few who are not seized with it some time or other in their lives.

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There is however this difference in these two distempers, that the first, after having indisposed you for a time, never returns again; whereas this I am speaking of, when it is once got into the blood, seldom comes out of it. The *British* nation is very much afflicted with this malady, and though very many remedies have been applied to persons infected with it, few of them have ever proved successful. Some have been cauterized with satyrs and lampoons, but have received little or no benefit from them; others have had their heads fastened for an hour together between a cleft board, which is made use of as a cure for the disease when it appears in its greatest malignity. There is indeed one kind of this malady which has been sometimes removed, like the biting of a *Tarantula*, with the sound of a musical instrument, which is commonly known by the name of a Cat-call. But if you have a patient of this kind under your care, you may assure your self there is no other way of recovering him effectually, but by forbidding him the use of pen, ink, and paper.

But to drop the allegory before I have tired it out, there is no species of scriblers more offensive, and more incurable, than your periodical writers, whose works return upon the public on certain days and at stated times. We have not the consolation in the perusal of these Authors, which we find at the reading of all others, (namely) that we are sure, if we have but patience, we may come to the end of their labours. I have often admired a humorous saying of *Diogenes*, who reading a dull Author to several of his friends, when every one began to be tired, finding he was almost come to a blank leaf at the end of it, cried, *Courage, lads, I see land*. On the contrary, our progress through that kind of writers I am now speaking of, is never at an end. One day makes work for another, we do not know when to promise our selves rest.

It is a melancholy thing to consider, that the Art of Printing, which might be the greatest blessing to mankind, should prove detrimental to us, and that it should be made use of to scatter prejudice and ignorance through a people, instead of conveying to them truth and knowledge.

I was lately reading a very whimsical treatise, entitled, *William Ramsey's Vindication of Astrology*. This profound Author, among many mystical passages, has the following one: "The absence of the Sun is not the cause of night, forasmuch as his light is so great that it may illuminate the earth all over at once as clear as broad day, but there are te-nebrificous and dark Stars, by whose influence night is brought on, and which do ray out darkness and obscurity upon the earth, as the Sun does light."

I consider writers in the same view this sage Astrologer does the heavenly bodies. Some of them are stars that scatter light, as others do darkness. I could mention several Authors who are tenebrificous stars of the first magnitude, and point out a knot of Gentlemen who have been dull in consort, and may be looked upon as a dark constellation. The nation has been a great while benighted with several of these antiluminaries. I suffered them to ray out their darkness as long as I was able to endure it, till at length I came to a resolution of rising upon them, and hope in a little time to drive them quite out of the *British* Hemisphere.

N^o 583. *Friday, August 20.*

*Ipse thymum pinosque ferens de montibus aliis,
Tecta serat latè circum, cui talia curæ:
Ipse labore manum duro terat, ipse feraces
Figat humo plantas, et amicos irriget imbres.* Virg.

EVERY station of life has duties which are proper to it. Those who are determined by choice to any particular kind of business, are indeed more happy than those who are determined by necessity, but both are under an equal obligation of fixing on employments, which may be either useful to themselves or beneficial to others. No one of the sons of *Adam* ought to think himself exempt from that labour and industry, which were denounced to our first parent, and in him to all his posterity. Those to whom birth or fortune may seem to make such an application unnecessary, ought to find out some calling or profession for themselves, that they may not lye as a burden on the species, and be the only useles parts of the creation.

Many of our country Gentlemen in their busie hours apply themselves wholly to the chase, or to some other diversion which they find in the fields and woods. This gave occasion to one of our most eminent *English* writers to represent every one of them as lying under a kind of curse pronounced to them in the words of *Goliath*, *I will give thee to the fowls of the air and to the beasts of the field.*

VOL. IV.

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