

10 *To the Clergy and Inhabitants of the*

a Kind of general Idleness among the People, and given Rise to almost infinite Places of Diversion in and about this Town; it were well if they were Places of Diversion only; but they are often Places for carrying on worse Business, and give Opportunities to the Profligate to seduce the Innocent, who often meet their Ruin, where they only came for Pleasure—While I was writing this I cast my Eye upon a News-Paper of the Day, and counted no less than fifteen Advertisements for *Plays, Operas, Musick, and Dancing*, for Meetings at *Gardens*, for *Cock-fighting, Prize-fighting, &c?* Should this Paper, (as many of our News-Papers do) go abroad, what an Idea must it give to all the Churches abroad, of the Manner in which *Lent* is kept in this Protestant Country? What our Saviour said to the *Jews* upon another Occasion, *You have turned the House of Prayer into a Den of Thieves*, may with a little Variation, be applied to Ourselves, We have turned this Season appointed for serious Reflexions, and Humiliation of Body and Spirit, into a Time of Mirth and Jollity, of Musick, Dancing, and riotous Living.

How far this Spirit of Indolence and Idleness has gone, and to what Excess, may be seen in all Orders among us; friendly Visits for Conversation are become insipid Things, and are degenerated into Meetings for Gaming, where People hardly known to each other, are invited by one Tye only, the Love of Play: Which seems now to be, not an Amusement or Diversion, but a
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