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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

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stand, I shall put up no more affronts; and I shall be so far from taking ill Words, that I will not take ill Looks. I therefore warn all young hot fellows, not to look hereafter more terrible than their neighbours; for if they stare at me with their Hats cocked higher than other people, I won't bear it. Nay, I give warning to all people in general to look kindly at me; for I'll bear no frowns, even from Ladies; and if any Woman pretends to look scornfully at me, I shall demand satisfaction of the next of kin of the Masculine Gender.

Sir Richard Steele assisted in this paper.

N^o 97. *Tuesday, November 22. 1709.*

Illud maxime rarum genus est eorum, qui aut eccellente ingenii magnitudine, aut præclara eruditione atque doctrina, aut utraque re ornati, Spatium de liberandi habuerunt, quem potissimum vitæ cursum sequi vellent. Tull. Offic.

From my own Apartment, November 21.

HAVING swept away prodigious multitudes in one of my late papers, and brought a great destruction upon my own Species, I must endeavour in this to raise fresh recruits, and, if possible, to supply the places of the unborn and the deceased. It is said of *Xerxes*, That when he stood upon a hill, and saw the whole country round him covered with his army, he burst out in tears, to think that not one of that multitude would be alive a hundred years after. For my part, when I take a survey of this populous City, I can scarce forbear weeping, to see how few of its Inhabitants are now living. It was with this thought that I drew up my last Bill of Mortality, and endeavoured to set out in it the great number of persons who have perished by a distemper (commonly known by the name of Idleness) which has long raged in the world, and destroys

destroys more in every great town than the Plague has done at *Dantzick*. To repair the mischief it has done, and stock the world with a better race of mortals, I have more hopes of bringing to life those that are young, than of reviving those that are old. For which reason, I shall here set down that noble Allegory which was written by an old Author called *Prodicus*, but recommended and embellished by *Socrates*. It is the description of *Virtue* and *Pleasure*, making their court to *Hercules* under the appearances of two beautiful Women.

When *Hercules*, says the divine Moralist, was in that part of his youth in which it was natural for him to consider what course of life he ought to pursue, he one day retired into a Desert, where the silence and solitude of the place very much favoured his meditations. As he was musing on his present condition, and very much perplexed in himself on the state of life he should chuse, he saw two women of a larger stature than ordinary approaching towards him. One of them had a very noble Air, and graceful Deportment; her Beauty was natural and easie, her Person clean and unspotted, her Eyes cast towards the ground with an agreeable reserve, her Motion and Behaviour full of Modesty, and her Raiment as white as snow. The other had a great deal of Health and Floridness in her countenance, which she had helped with an Artificial white and red, and endeavoured to appear more graceful than ordinary in her Mien, by a mixture of Affectation in all her gestures. She had a wonderful Confidence and Assurance in her looks, and all the Variety of colours in her dress that she thought were the most proper to show her complexion to an advantage. She cast her eyes upon her self, then turned them on those that were present, to see how they liked her, and often looked on the figure she made in her own shadow. Upon her nearer approach to *Hercules*, she stepped before the other Lady, (who came forward with a regular composed carriage) and running up to him, accosted him after the following manner.

My dear *Hercules*, (says she) I find you are very much divided in your own thoughts upon the way of life that you ought to chuse: Be my friend, and follow me; I'll lead you into the possession of Pleasure, and out of the reach of Pain, and remove you from all the noise and disquietude of Business. The affairs of either War or Peace shall have no power to disturb you. Your whole employment shall be to make your life easie, and to entertain every Sense with its proper gratification. Sumptuous Tables, Beds of Roses, Clouds of Perfumes, Consorts of Musick, Crowds of Beauties, are all in a readiness to receive you. Come along

with me into this Region of delights, this World of pleasure, and bid farewell for ever to Care, to Pain, to Business——

Hercules hearing the Lady talk after this manner, desired to know her Name; to which she answered, My Friends, and those who are well acquainted with me, call me *Happiness*; but my Enemies, and those who would injure my reputation, have given me the name of *Pleasure*.

By this time the other Lady was come up, who addressed her self to the young Heroe in a very different manner.

Hercules (says she) I offer my self to you, because I know you are descended from the Gods, and give proofs of that descent by your love to virtue, and application to the studies proper for your age. This makes me hope you will gain both for your self and me an immortal reputation. But before I invite you into my Society and Friendship, I will be open and sincere with you, and must lay down this as an established truth, That there is nothing truly valuable which can be purchased without pains and labour. The Gods have set a price upon every real and noble pleasure. If you would gain the favour of the Deity, you must be at the pains of worshipping him; if the friendship of good men, you must study to oblige them; if you would be honoured by your country, you must take care to serve it. In short, if you would be eminent in War or Peace, you must become master of all the qualifications that can make you so. These are the only terms and conditions upon which I can propose Happiness.

The Goddess of *Pleasure* here broke in upon her discourse: You see (said she) *Hercules*, by her own confession, the way to her pleasure is long and difficult, whereas that which I propose is short and easie.

Alas! (said the other Lady, whose visage glowed with a passion, made up of scorn and pity) What are the pleasures you propose? To eat before you are hungry, drink before you are athirst, sleep before you are tired, to gratifie appetites before they are raised, and raise such appetites as nature never planted. You never heard the most delicious musick, which is the praise of one's self; nor saw the most beautiful object, which is the work of one's own hands. Your Votaries pass away their youth in a dream of mistaken pleasures, while they are hoarding up anguish, torment, and remorse for old age. As for me, I am the Friend of Gods and of good Men, an agreeable companion to the Artizan, an household guardian to the Fathers of Families, a patron and protector of Servants, and associate in all true and generous Friendships. The Banquets of my Votaries are never costly, but always delicious; for none eat or drink at them who are not invited by hunger
and

and thirst. Their slumbers are sound, and their wakings chearful. My young men have the pleasure of hearing themselves praised by those who are in years; and those who are in years, of being honoured by those who are young. In a word, my followers are favoured by the gods, beloved by their acquaintance, esteemed by their country, and (after the close of their labours) honoured by posterity.

We know, by the life of this memorable Heroe, to which of these two Ladies he gave up his heart; and I believe, every one who reads this will do him the justice to approve his choice.

I very much admire the Speeches of these Ladies, as containing in them the chief arguments for a life of Virtue, or a life of Pleasure, that could enter into the thoughts of an Heathen; but am particularly pleased with the different figures he gives the two Goddeses. Our modern Authors have represented *Pleasure* or *Vice* with an alluring face, but ending in snakes and monsters: Here she appears in all the charms of beauty, though they are all false and borrowed; and by that means, composes a Vision entirely natural and pleasing.

I have translated this Allegory for the benefit of the youth of *Great Britain*; and particularly of those who are still in the deplorable state of Non-existence, and whom I most earnestly intreat to come into the world. Let my Embrio's show the least inclination to any single virtue, and I shall allow it to be a struggling towards birth. I do not expect of them, that, like the Heroe in the foregoing story, they should go about as soon as they are born, with a Club in their hands, and a Lion's skin on their shoulders, to root out Monsters, and destroy Tyrants; but, as the finest Author of all antiquity has said upon this very occasion, Though a man has not the abilities to distinguish himself in the most shining parts of a great character, he has certainly the capacity of being just, faithful, modest, and temperate.



Tuesday,