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In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

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Ut in vitâ, sic in studiis, pulcherrimum et humanissimum existimo, severitatem comitatemque miscere, ne illa in tristitiam, hæc in petulantiam procedat. Plin. Epist.

Sheer-Lane, December 30.

I Was walking about my Chamber this morning in a very gay humour, when I saw a Coach stop at my door, and a Youth about fifteen alighting out of it, who I perceived to be the eldest Son of my Bosom-friend that I gave some account of in my paper of the 17th of the last month. I felt a sensible pleasure rising in me at the sight of him, my Acquaintance having begun with his Father when he was just such a Stripling, and about that very age. When he came up to me, he took me by the hand, and burst into tears. I was extremely moved, and immediately said, Child, How does your Father do? He began to reply, My Mother—but could not go on for weeping. I went down with him into the Coach, and gathered out of him, that his Mother was then dying, and that while the holy man was doing the last offices to her, he had taken that time to come and call me to his Father, who (he said) would certainly break his heart if I did not go and comfort him. The Child's discretion in coming to me of his own head, and the tenderness he showed for his Parents, would have quite overpowered me, had I not resolved to fortifie my self for the seasonable performances of those duties which I owed to my Friend. As we were going, I could not but reflect upon the character of that excellent Woman, and the greatness of his grief for the loss of one who has ever been the support to him under all other afflictions. How (thought I) will he be able to bear the hour of her death, that could not, when I was lately with him, speak of a sickness, which was then past, without sorrow. We were now got pretty far into *Westminster*, and arrived at my Friend's house. At

the door of it I met *Favonius*, not without a secret Satisfaction to find he had been there. I had formerly conversed with him at his house; and as he abounds with that sort of Virtue and Knowledge which makes Religion beautiful, and never leads the Conversation into the violence and rage of Party-disputes, I listened to him with great Pleasure. Our discourse chanced to be upon the subject of Death, which he treated with such a Strength of reason, and Greatness of soul, that instead of being terrible, it appeared to a mind rightly cultivated altogether to be contemned; or rather to be desired. As I met him at the door, I saw in his face a certain glowing of grief and humanity, heightened with an air of fortitude and resolution, which, as I afterwards found, had such an irresistible force, as to suspend the pains of the dying, and the lamentation of the nearest friends who attended her. I went up directly to the room where she lay, and was met at the entrance by my Friend, who, notwithstanding his thoughts had been composed a little before, at the sight of me, turned away his face and wept. The little family of Children renewed the expressions of their sorrow according to their several ages and degrees of understanding. The eldest Daughter was in tears, busied in attendance upon her Mother; others were kneeling about the Bed-side: And what troubled me most was, to see a little Boy, who was too young to know the reason, weeping only because his Sisters did. The only one in the room who seemed resigned and comforted, was the dying person. At my approach to the Bed-side, she told me, with a low broken voice, This is kindly done— Take care of your Friend—Do not go from him. She had before taken leave of her Husband and Children, in a manner proper for so solemn a parting, and with a gratefulness peculiar to a Woman of her Character. My Heart was torn to pieces to see the Husband on one side suppressing and keeping down the swellings of his Grief, for fear of disturbing her in her last Moments; and the Wife even at that time concealing the Pains she endured, for fear of encreasing his Affliction. She kept her Eyes upon him for some moments after she grew speechless, and soon after closed them for ever. In the moment of her Departure, my Friend (who had thus far commanded himself) gave a deep Groan, and fell into a Swoon by her Bed-side. The distraction of the Children, who thought they saw both their Parents expiring together, and now lying dead before them, would have melted the hardest heart; but they soon perceived their Father recover, whom I helped to remove into another room, with a resolution to accompany him till the first Pangs

of

of his Affliction were abated. I knew Consolation would now be impertinent; and therefore contented my self to sit by him, and condole with him in silence. For I shall here use the method of an ancient Author, who in one of his Epistles relating the Virtues and Death of *Macrinus's* Wife, expresses himself thus; "I shall suspend my advice to this best of Friends, till he is made capable of receiving it by those three great Remedies, (*necessitas ipsa, dies longa, et satietas doloris*). "the Necessity of submission, Length of time, and Satiety of grief.

In the mean time, I cannot but consider, with much commiseration, the melancholy state of one who has had such a part of himself torn from him, and which he misses in every circumstance of Life. His Condition is like that of one who has lately lost his right Arm, and is every moment offering to help himself with it. He does not appear to himself the same person in his house, at his table, in company, or in retirement; and loses the relish of all the Pleasures and Diversions that were before entertaining to him by her Participation of them. The most agreeable objects recall the Sorrow for her with whom he used to enjoy them. This additional satisfaction, from the taste of pleasures in the Society of one we love, is admirably described in *Milton*, who represents *Eve*, though in Paradise it self, no further pleased with the beautiful objects around her, than as she sees them in Company with *Adam*, in that passage so inexpressibly charming,

*With thee conversing, I forget all time,
All seasons, and their change; all please alike.
Sweet is the breath of Morn, her rising sweet
With charm of earliest Birds; pleasant the Sun,
When first on his delightful land he spreads
His orient beams, on herb, tree, fruit and flower,
Glist'ring with dew; fragrant the fertile Earth
After soft showers; and sweet the coming on
Of grateful Evening mild; the silent Night,
With this her solemn Bird, and this fair Moon,
And these the Gems of Heaven her starry train.
But neither breath of Morn when she ascends
With charm of earliest Birds, nor rising Sun
In this delightful land, nor Herb, Fruit, Flower,
Glist'ring with dew, nor Fragrance after showers,
Nor grateful Evening mild, nor silent Night,
With this her solemn Bird, nor walk by Moon,
Or glittering Star-light, without Thee is sweet.*

The

The variety of Images in this passage is infinitely pleasing, and the recapitulation of each particular Image, with a little varying of the Expression, makes one of the finest Turns of Words that I have ever seen: Which I rather mention, because Mr. *Dryden* has said in his Preface to *Juvenal*, That he could meet with no Turn of Words in *Milton*.

It may further be observed, That though the sweetness of these Verses has something in it of a Pastoral, yet it excels the ordinary kind, as much as the Scene of it is above an ordinary Field or Meadow. I might here, since I am accidentally led into this subject, show several passages in *Milton* that have as excellent turns of this nature, as any of our *English* Poets whatsoever; but shall only mention that which follows, in which he describes the fallen Angels engaged in the intricate disputes of Predestination, Free-will, and Fore-knowledge; and to humour the Perplexity, makes a kind of Labyrinth in the very words that describe it.

*Others apart sat on a hill retir'd,
In thoughts more elevate, and reason'd high
Of Providence, Fore-knowledge, Will and Fate,
Fix'd Fate, Free-will, Fore-knowledge absolute,
And found no end in wand'ring Mazes lost.*

Sir Richard Steele assisted in this paper.

N^o 116. *Thursday, January 5. 1709.*

-----*Pars minima est ipsa puella sui.*

Ovid.

Sheer-Lane, January 4.

THE Court being prepared for proceeding on the cause of the *Petticoat*, I gave orders to bring in a Criminal who was taken up as she went out of the Puppet-show about three nights ago, and was now standing in the street with a great concourse of people about her. Word was brought me, that she had endeavoured twice or thrice to come in, but could not do it by reason of her *Petticoat*, which

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