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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

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N^o 192. Saturday, July 1. 1710.

Tecum vivere amem, tecum obeam libens.

Hor.

From my own Apartment, June 30.

SOME years since I was engaged with a Coach full of Friends to take a journey as far as the *Land's-end*. We were very well pleased with one another the first day, every one endeavouring to recommend himself by his good humour and complaisance to the rest of the company. This good correspondence did not last long; one of our party was fowred the very first evening by a plate of Butter which had not been melted to his mind, and which spoiled his temper to such a degree, that he continued upon the fret to the end of our journey. A second fell off from his good humour the next morning, for no other reason that I could imagine, but because I chanced to step into the Coach before him, and place my self on the shady side. This however was but my own private gues, for he did not mention a word of it, nor indeed of any thing else, for three days following. The rest of our company held out very near half the way, when of a sudden Mr. *Sprightly* fell asleep; and instead of endeavouring to divert and oblige us, as he had hitherto done, carried himself with an unconcerned, careless, drowzy behaviour, till we came to our last stage. There were three of us who still held up our heads, and did all we could to make our journey agreeable; but, to my shame be it spoken, about three miles on this side *Exeter* I was taken with an unaccountable fit of Sullenness, that hung upon me for above threescore miles; whether it were for want of respect, or from an accidental tread upon my foot, or from a foolish Maid's calling me *The old Gentleman*, I cannot tell. In short, there was but one who kept his good humour to the *Land's-end*.

There was another Coach that went along with us, in which I likewise observed, that there were many secret Jealousies, Heart-burnings, and Animofities:

sities: For when we joined companies at night, I could but take notice, that the passengers neglected their own company, and studied how to make themselves esteemed by us, who were altogether strangers to them; till at length they grew so well acquainted with us, that they liked us as little as they did one another. When I reflect upon this Journey, I often fancy it to be a Picture of Humane Life, in respect to the several Friendships, Contracts, and Alliances, that are made and dissolved in the several periods of it. The most delightful and most lasting engagements are generally those which pass between Man and Woman; and yet upon what trifles are they weakened, or entirely broken? Sometimes the parties fly asunder even in the midst of courtship, and sometimes grow cool in the very honey-month. Some separate before the first Child, and some after the fifth; others continue good till thirty, others till forty; while some few, whose Souls are of an happier make, and better fitted to one another, travel on together to the end of their journey, in a continual intercourse of kind offices and mutual endearments.

When we therefore chuse our companions for life, if we hope to keep both them and our selves in good humour to the last stage of it, we must be extremely careful in the choice we make, as well as in the conduct on our own part. When the persons to whom we join our selves can stand an examination, and bear the scrutiny, when they mend upon our acquaintance with them, and discover new Beauties the more we search into their characters, our love will naturally rise in proportion to their perfections.

But because there are very few possessed of such accomplishments of body and mind, we ought to look after those qualifications both in our selves and others, which are indispensibly necessary towards this happy Union, and which are in the power of every one to acquire, or at least to cultivate and improve. These, in my opinion, are Chearfulness and Constancy. A Chearful temper joined with Innocence, will make Beauty attractive, Knowledge delightful, and Wit good-natured. It will lighten Sickness, Poverty, and Affliction; convert Ignorance into an amiable Simplicity, and render Deformity it self agreeable.

Constancy is natural to persons of even tempers and uniform dispositions, and may be acquired by those of the greatest Fickleness, Violence and Passion, who consider seriously the terms of union upon which they come together, the mutual interest in which they are engaged, with all the motives that ought to incite their tenderness and compassion towards those who have their dependance upon them, and are embarked

with them for life in the same state of Happiness or Misery. Constancy, when it grows in the mind upon considerations of this nature, becomes a moral Virtue, and a kind of Good-nature, that is not subject to any change of Health, Age, Fortune, or any of those accidents which are apt to unsettle the best Dispositions that are founded rather in constitution than in reason. Where such a Constancy as this is wanting, the most inflamed Passion may fall away into coldness and indifference, and the most melting Tenderness degenerate into hatred and aversion. I shall conclude this paper with a story that is very well known in the North of *England*.

About thirty years ago, a Packet-boat that had several passengers on board was cast away upon a Rock, and in so great danger of sinking, that all who were in it endeavoured to save themselves as well as they could, though only those who could swim well had a bare possibility of doing it. Among the passengers there were two women of fashion, who seeing themselves in such a disconsolate condition, begged of their Husbands not to leave them. One of them chose rather to die with his Wife, than to forsake her; the other, though he was moved with the utmost compassion for his Wife, told her, that for the good of their Children, it was better one of them should live, than both perish. By a great piece of good luck, next to a miracle, when one of our good Men had taken the last and long farewell in order to save himself, and the other held in his arms the person that was dearer to him than life, the Ship was preserved. It is with a secret sorrow and vexation of mind that I must tell the sequel of the story, and let my Reader know, that this faithful Pair who were ready to have died in each others arms, about three years after their escape, upon some trifling disgust, grew to a coldness at first, and at length fell out to such a degree, that they left one another, and parted for ever. The other Couple lived together in an uninterrupted friendship and felicity; and what was remarkable, the Husband whom the shipwreck had like to have separated from his Wife, died a few months after her, not being able to survive the loss of her.

I must confess, there is something in the changeableness and inconstancy of humane Nature, that very often both dejects and terrifies me. Whatever I am at present, I tremble to think what I may be. While I find this principle in me, how can I assure my self, that I shall be always true to my God, my friend, or my self? in short, without Constancy there is neither love, friendship, or virtue in the world.

Saturday,