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**The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.**

In Four Volumes

**Addison, Joseph**

**London, 1721**

No 15. Saturday, March 17.

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N<sup>o</sup> 15. *Saturday, March 17.*

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*Parva leves capiunt animos-----*

Ovid.

**W**HEN I was in *France*, I used to gaze with great astonishment at the splendid equipages, and party-coloured habits, of that fantastick nation. I was one day in particular contemplating a Lady, that sat in a Coach adorned with gilded *Cupids*, and finely painted with the loves of *Venus* and *Adonis*. The Coach was drawn by six milk-white horses, and loaden behind with the same number of powdered Footmen. Just before the Lady were a couple of beautiful Pages, that were stuck among the harness, and, by their gay dresses and smiling features, looked like the elder brothers of the little Boys that were carved and painted in every corner of the Coach.

The Lady was the unfortunate *Cleante*, who afterwards gave an occasion to a pretty melancholy Novel. She had, for several years, received the addresses of a Gentleman, whom after a long and intimate acquaintance she forsook, upon the account of this shining Equipage, which had been offered to her by one of great riches, but a crazy constitution. The circumstances in which I saw her, were, it seems, the disguises only of a broken heart, and a kind of pageantry to cover distress; for in two months after she was carried to her grave with the same pomp and magnificence; being sent thither partly by the loss of one Lover, and partly by the possession of another.

I have often reflected with my self on this unaccountable humour in Woman-kind, of being smitten with every thing that is showy and superficial; and on the numberless evils that befall the Sex, from this light, fantastical disposition. I my self remember a young Lady, that was very warmly solicited by a couple of importunate Rivals, who, for several months together; did all they could to recommend themselves, by complacency of behaviour, and agreeableness of conversation. At length, when the competition was doubtful, and the Lady undetermined in her

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choice, one of the young Lovers very luckily bethought himself of adding a supernumerary Lace to his Liveries, which had so good an effect, that he married her the very week after.

The usual conversation of ordinary women very much cherishes this natural weakness of being taken with outside and appearance. Talk of a new-married couple, and you immediately hear whether they keep their Coach and six, or eat in Plate: Mention the name of an absent Lady, and it is ten to one but you learn something of her Gown and Petticoat. A Ball is a great help to discourse, and a Birth-day furnishes conversation for a twelvemonth after. A Furbeloe of precious stones, an Hat buttoned with a Diamond, a Brocade waistcoat or petticoat, are standing topicks. In short, they consider only the drapery of the Species, and never cast away a thought on those ornaments of the Mind, that make persons illustrious in themselves, and useful to others. When women are thus perpetually dazzling one anothers imaginations, and filling their heads with nothing but colours, it is no wonder that they are more attentive to the superficial parts of life, than the solid and substantial blessings of it. A Girl, who has been trained up in this kind of conversation, is in danger of every embroidered coat that comes in her way. A pair of fringed Gloves may be her ruine. In a word, Lace and Ribbons, silver and gold Galloons, with the like glittering gew-gaws, are so many lures to women of weak minds or low educations, and, when artificially displayed, are able to fetch down the most airy Coquette from the wild-est of her flights and rambles.

True Happiness is of a retired nature, and an enemy to pomp and noise; it arises, in the first place, from the enjoyment of one's self; and, in the next, from the friendship and conversation of a few select companions. It loves shade and solitude, and naturally haunts groves and fountains, fields and meadows: In short, it feels every thing it wants within it self, and receives no addition from multitudes of witnesses and spectators. On the contrary, False Happiness loves to be in a crowd, and to draw the eyes of the world upon her. She does not receive any satisfaction from the applauses which she gives her self, but from the admiration which she raises in others. She flourishes in Courts and Palaces, Theatres and Assemblies, and has no existence but when she is looked upon.

*Aurelia*, though a woman of great Quality, delights in the privacy of a country life, and passes away a great part of her time in her own walks and gardens. Her Husband, who is her bosom friend, and companion in  
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her solitudes, has been in love with her ever since he knew her. They both abound with good sense, consummate virtue, and a mutual esteem; and are a perpetual entertainment to one another. Their family is under so regular an oeconomy, in its hours of devotion, and repast, employment and diversion, that it looks like a little Common-wealth within it self. They often go into company, that they may return with the greater delight to one another; and sometimes live in town, not to enjoy it so properly as to grow weary of it, that they may renew in themselves the relish of a country life. By this means they are happy in each other, beloved by their children, adored by their servants, and are become the envy, or rather the delight, of all that know them.

How different to this is the life of *Fulvia*! she considers her Husband as her Steward, and looks upon discretion and good housewifery as little domestick virtues, unbecoming a woman of Quality. She thinks life lost in her own family, and fancies her self out of the world when she is not in the Ring, the Play-house, or the Drawing-room: She lives in a perpetual motion of body, and restlessness of thought, and is never easie in any one place, when she thinks there is more company in another. The missing of an Opera the first night, would be more afflicting to her than the death of a child. She pities all the valuable part of her own sex; and calls every woman of a prudent modest retired life, a poor-spirited unpolished creature. What a mortification would it be to *Fulvia*, if she knew that her setting her self to view is but exposing her self, and that she grows contemptible by being conspicuous.

I cannot conclude my Paper, without observing that *Virgil* has very finely touched upon this female passion for dress and show, in the character of *Camilla*; who, though she seems to have shaken off all the other weakneses of her sex, is still described as a Woman in this particular. The Poet tells us, that after having made a great slaughter of the enemy, she unfortunately cast her eye on a *Trojan*, who wore an embroidered Tunick, a beautiful Coat of Mail, with a Mantle of the finest purple. *A golden bow*, says he, *hung upon his shoulder; his Garment was buckled with a golden Clasp, and his head covered with an Helmet of the same shining Metal.* The *Amazon* immediately singled out this well-dressed warrior, being seized with a woman's longing for the pretty trappings that he was adorned with.

—*Totumque incauta per agmen  
Famineo prædæ et spoliis ardebat amore.*

L 112

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This heedless pursuit after these glittering trifles, the Poet (by a nice concealed Moral) represents to have been the destruction of his female Heroe.

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N<sup>o</sup> 16. *Monday, March 19.*

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*Quod verum atque decens curo et rogo, et omnis in hoc sum.* Hor.

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I Have received a Letter, desiring me to be very satyrical upon the little Muff that is now in fashion; another informs me of a pair of silver Garters buckled below the knee, that have been lately seen at the *Rainbow* Coffee-house in *Fleet-street*; a third sends me an heavy complaint against Fringed Gloves. To be brief, there is scarce an ornament of either Sex which one or other of my correspondents has not inveighed against with some bitterness, and recommended to my observation. I must therefore, once for all, inform my readers, that it is not my intention to sink the dignity of this my Paper with reflections upon red-heels or top-knots, but rather to enter into the passions of mankind, and to correct those depraved sentiments that give birth to all those little extravagances which appear in their outward dress and behaviour. Foppish and fantastick ornaments are only indications of vice, not criminal in themselves. Extinguish vanity in the mind, and you naturally retrench the little superfluities of garniture and equipage. The blossoms will fall of themselves, when the root that nourishes them is destroyed.

I shall therefore, as I have said, apply my remedies to the first seeds and principles of an affected Dress, without descending to the Dress it self; though at the same time I must own, that I have thoughts of creating an Officer under me, to be entitled, *The Censor of small Wares*, and of allotting him one day in a week for the execution of such his Office. An Operator of this nature might act under me, with the same regard as a Surgeon to a Physician; the one might be employed in healing those blotches and tumours which break out in the body, while the other is sweetning the blood and rectifying the constitution. To speak truly, the young people of both Sexes are so wonderfully apt to  
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