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

In Four Volumes

**Addison, Joseph**

**London, 1721**

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N<sup>o</sup> 72. Wednesday, May 23.

-----*Genus immortale manet, multosque per annos  
Stat fortuna domus, et avi numerantur avorum.* Virg.

HAVING already given my Reader an account of several extraordinary Clubs both ancient and modern, I did not design to have troubled him with any more narratives of this nature; but I have lately received information of a Club which I can call neither ancient nor modern, that I dare say will be no less surprizing to my Reader than it was to my self; for which reason I shall communicate it to the publick as one of the greatest curiosities in its kind.

A friend of mine complaining of a tradesman who is related to him after having represented him as a very idle worthless fellow, who neglected his family, and spent most of his time over a bottle, told me, to conclude his character, that he was a member of the *everlasting Club*. So very odd a title raised my curiosity to enquire into the nature of a Club that had such a founding name; upon which my friend gave me the following account.

THE *everlasting Club* consists of a hundred members, who divide the whole twenty four hours among them in such a manner, that the Club sits day and night from one end of the year to another; no party presuming to rise till they are relieved by those who are in course to succeed them. By this means a member of the *everlasting Club* never wants company; for though he is not upon duty himself, he is sure to find some who are; so that if he be disposed to take a whet, a nooning, an evenings draught, or a bottle after midnight, he goes to the Club, and finds a knot of friends to his mind.

It is a maxim in this Club that the Steward never dies; for as they succeed one another by way of rotation, no man is to quit the great elbow-chair which stands at the upper end of the table, till his successor is in a readi-



readiness to fill it; infomuch that there has not been a *Sede vacante* in the memory of man.

This Club was instituted towards the end (or, as some of them say, about the middle) of the Civil Wars, and continued without interruption till the time of the *Great Fire*, which burnt them out, and dispersed them for several weeks. The Steward at that time maintained his post till he had like to have been blown up with a neighbouring house, (which was demolished in order to stop the fire;) and would not leave the chair at last, till he had emptied all the bottles upon the table, and received repeated directions from the Club to withdraw himself. This Steward is frequently talked of in the Club, and looked upon by every member of it as a greater man, than the famous Captain mentioned in my Lord *Clarendon*, who was burnt in his ship because he would not quit it without orders. It is said that towards the close of 1700, being the great year of Jubilee, the Club had it under consideration whether they should break up or continue their session; but after many speeches and debates, it was at length agreed to sit out the other century. This resolution passed in a general Club *Nemine contradicente*.

Having given this short account of the institution and continuation of the *everlasting Club*, I should here endeavour to say something of the manners and characters of its several members, which I shall do according to the best light I have received in this matter.

It appears by their books in general, that since their first institution they have smoked fifty tun of tobacco, drank thirty thousand butts of ale, one thousand hogheads of red port, two hundred barrels of brandy, and a kilderkin of small beer: there has been likewise a great consumption of cards. It is also said, that they observe the law in *Ben Johnson's Club*, which orders the fire to be always kept in (*focus perennis esto*) as well for the convenience of lighting their pipes, as to cure the dampness of the Club-room. They have an old woman in the nature of a Vestal, whose business it is to cherish and perpetuate the fire, which burns from generation to generation, and has seen the glass-house fires in and out above an hundred times.

The *everlasting Club* treats all other Clubs with an eye of contempt, and talks even of the *Kit-Cat* and *October* as of a couple of upstarts. Their ordinary discourse (as much as I have been able to learn of it) turns altogether upon such adventures as have passed in their own assembly; of members who have taken the glass in their turns for a week together, without stirring out of the Club; of others who have smoked an hundred



dred pipes at a sitting; of others who have not missed their morning's draught for twenty years together: sometimes they speak in raptures of a run of ale in King *Charles's* reign; and sometimes reflect with astonishment upon games at whisk, which have been miraculously recovered by members of the society, when in all human probability the case was desperate.

They delight in several old catches, which they sing at all hours to encourage one another to moisten their clay, and grow immortal by drinking; with many other edifying exhortations of the like nature.

There are four general Clubs held in a year, at which times they fill up vacancies, appoint waiters, confirm the old fire-maker, or elect a new one, settle contributions for coals, pipes, tobacco, and other necessaries.

The senior member has out-lived the whole Club twice over, and has been drunk with the grandfathers of some of the present sitting members.

N<sup>o</sup> 73.

Thursday, May 24.

-----*O Dea certe!*

Virg.

**I**T is very strange to consider, that a creature like man, who is sensible of so many weaknesses and imperfections, should be actuated by a love of fame: that vice and ignorance, imperfection and misery should contend for praise, and endeavour as much as possible to make themselves objects of admiration.

But notwithstanding man's essential perfection is but very little, his comparative perfection may be very considerable. If he looks upon himself in an abstracted light, he has not much to boast of; but if he considers himself with regard to others, he may find occasion of glorying, if not in his own virtues, at least in the absence of another's imperfections. This gives a different turn to the reflections of the wise man and the fool. The first endeavours to shine in himself, and the last to out-shine others. The first is humbled by the sense of his own infirmities, the last is lifted up by the discovery of those which he observes in other men. The  
wife