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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

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O verè Phrygiæ, neque enim Phryges! ----- Virg.

AS I was the other day standing in my bookseller's shop, a pretty young thing, about eighteen years of age, stepped out of her coach, and brushing by me, beckened the man of the shop to the further end of his counter, where she whispered something to him with an attentive look, and at the same time presented him with a letter: after which, pressing the end of her fan upon his hand, she delivered the remaining part of her message, and withdrew. I observed, in the midst of her discourse, that she flushed, and cast an eye upon me over her shoulder, having been informed by my bookseller, that I was the man of the short face whom she had so often read of. Upon her passing by me, the pretty blooming creature smiled in my face, and dropped me a curtesy. She scarce gave me time to return her salute, before she quitted the shop with an easy skuttle, and stepped again into her coach, giving the footman directions to drive where they were bid. Upon her departure, my bookseller gave me a letter, subscribed, *To the ingenious Spectator*, which the young Lady had desired him to deliver into my own hands, and to tell me, that the speedy publication of it would not only oblige her self, but a whole tea-table of my friends. I opened it therefore, with a resolution to publish it, whatever it should contain, and am sure, if any of my male Readers will be so severely critical as not to like it, they would have been as well pleased with it as my self, had they seen the face of the pretty scribe.

Mr. SPECTATOR,

London, Nov. 1712.

“**Y**OU are always ready to receive any useful hint or proposal, and
 “ such, I believe, you will think one that may put you in a way
 “ to employ the most idle part of the kingdom; I mean that part of man-
 “ kind who are known by the name of the womens-men or beaus, &c.
 “ *Mr. SPECTATOR*, you are sensible these pretty Gentlemen are not
 “ made

“ made for any manly employments, and for want of business are often
 “ as much in the vapours as the Ladies. Now what I propose is this,
 “ since knotting is again in fashion, which has been found a very pretty
 “ amusement, that you would recommend it to these Gentlemen as some-
 “ thing that may make them useful to the Ladies they admire. And
 “ since it is not inconsistent with any game, or other diversion, for it
 “ may be done in the Play-house, in their coaches, at the tea-table, and,
 “ in short, in all places where they come for the sake of the Ladies (ex-
 “ cept at Church, be pleased to forbid it there, to prevent mistakes) it
 “ will be easily complied with. It is beside an employment that allows,
 “ as we see by the fair sex, of many graces, which will make the Beaus
 “ more readily come into it; it shews a white hand and a diamond ring
 “ to great advantage; it leaves the eyes at full liberty to be employed as
 “ before, as also the thoughts, and the tongue. In short, it seems in
 “ every respect so proper, that it is needless to urge it further, by speak-
 “ ing of the satisfaction these male-knotters will find, when they see their
 “ work mixed up in a fringe, and worn by the fair Lady for whom and
 “ with whom it was done. Truly, *Mr. SPECTATOR*, I cannot but be
 “ pleased I have hit upon something that these Gentlemen are capable
 “ of; for it is sad so considerable a part of the kingdom (I mean for
 “ numbers) should be of no manner of use. I shall not trouble you far-
 “ ther at this time, but only to say, that I am always your reader, and
 “ generally your admirer, *C. B.*

P. S. “ The sooner these fine Gentlemen are set to work, the better;
 “ there being at this time several fine fringes that stay only for more hands.

I shall, in the next place, present my Reader with the description of
 a set of men who are common enough in the world, though I do not re-
 member that I have yet taken notice of them, as they are drawn in the
 following Letter.

Mr. SPECTATOR,

“ Since you have lately, to so good purpose, enlarged upon conjugal
 “ love, it is to be hoped you will discourage every practice that
 “ rather proceeds from a regard to interest, than to happiness. Now
 “ you cannot but observe, that most of our fine young Ladies readily
 “ fall in with the direction of the graver sort, to retain in their service,
 “ by some small encouragement, as great a number as they can of su-
 “ pernumerary and insignificant fellows, which they use like whiffers,
 “ and

“ and commonly call *Shoeing-horns*. These are never designed to know
“ the length of the foot, but only, when a good offer comes, to whet
“ and spur him up to the point. Nay, it is the opinion of that grave
“ Lady, Madam *Matchwell*, that it is absolutely convenient for every
“ prudent family to have several of these implements about the house,
“ to clap on as occasion serves, and that every spark ought to produce
“ a certificate of his being a Shoeing-horn, before he be admitted as a
“ Shoe. A certain Lady, whom I could name, if it was necessary, has
“ at present more Shoeing-horns of all sizes, countries, and colours, in
“ her service, than ever she had new shoes in her life. I have known a
“ woman make use of a Shoeing-horn for several years, and finding him
“ unsuccessful in that function, convert him at length into a Shoe. I am
“ mistaken if your friend, *Mr. WILLIAM HONEYCOMB*, was not a
“ cast Shoeing-horn before his late marriage. As for my self, I must
“ frankly declare to you, that I have been an arrant Shoeing-horn for above
“ these twenty years. I served my first mistress in that capacity above
“ five of the number, before she was shod. I confess, though she had
“ many who made their applications to her, I always thought my self
“ the best shoe in her shop, and it was not till a month before her mar-
“ riage that I discovered what I was. This had like to have broke my
“ heart, and raised such suspicions in me, that I told the next I made
“ love to, upon receiving some unkind usage from her, that I began to
“ look upon my self as no more than her Shoeing-horn. Upon which,
“ my dear, who was a Coquette in her nature, told me I was hypocon-
“ driacal, and that I might as well look upon my self to be an egg or a
“ pipkin. But in a very short time after she gave me to know that I was
“ not mistaken in my self. It would be tedious to recount to you the
“ life of an unfortunate Shoeing-horn, or I might entertain you with a
“ very long and melancholy relation of my sufferings. Upon the whole,
“ I think, Sir, it would very well become a man in your post, to deter-
“ mine in what cases a woman may be allowed, with honour, to make
“ use of a Shoeing-horn, as also to declare whether a maid on this side
“ five and twenty, or a widow who has not been three years in that state,
“ may be granted such a privilege, with other difficulties which will na-
“ turally occur to you upon that subject.

I am, SIR, with the most profound veneration, Yours, &c.

Monday,