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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

London, 1721

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Not having room to insert all the advertisements which were sent me, I have only picked out some few from the third Volume, reserving the fourth for another opportunity.

N^o 549. Saturday, November 29.

*Quamvis digressu veteris confusus amici,
Laudo tamen-----*

Juv.

I Believe most people begin the world with a resolution to withdraw from it into a serious kind of solitude or retirement, when they have made themselves easy in it. Our unhappiness is, that we find out some excuse or other for deferring such our good resolutions till our intended retreat is cut off by Death. But among all kinds of people there are none who are so hard to part with the world, as those who are grown old in the heaping up of riches. Their minds are so warped with their constant attention to gain, that it is very difficult for them to give their souls another bent, and convert them towards those objects, which, though they are proper for every stage of life, are so more especially for the last. *Horace* describes an old usurer as so charmed with the pleasures of a country life, that in order to make a purchase he called in all his money; but what was the event of it? why in a very few days after he put it out again. I am engaged in this series of thought by a discourse which I had last week with my worthy friend Sir ANDREW FREEPORT, a man of so much natural eloquence, good sense, and probity of mind, that I always hear him with a particular pleasure. As we were sitting together, being the sole remaining members of our Club, Sir ANDREW gave me an account of the many busy scenes of life in which he had been engaged, and at the same time reckoned up to me abundance of those lucky hits, which at another time he would have called pieces of good fortune; but in the temper of mind he was then, he termed them mercies, favours of providence, and blessings upon an honest industry. Now, says he, you must know, my good friend, I am so used to consider my self as creditor and debtor,

debtor, that I often state my accounts after the same manner, with regard to heaven and my own soul. In this case, when I look upon the debtor-side, I find such innumerable articles, that I want arithmetick to cast them up; but when I look upon the creditor-side, I find little more than blank paper. Now though I am very well satisfied that it is not in my power to ballance accounts with my Maker, I am resolved however to turn all my future endeavours that way. You must not therefore be surprized, my friend, if you hear that I am betaking my self to a more thoughtful kind of life, and if I meet you no more in this place.

I could not but approve so good a resolution, notwithstanding the loss I shall suffer by it. Sir ANDREW has since explained himself to me more at large in the following Letter, which is just come to my hands.

Good Mr. SPECTATOR,

“ NOTwithstanding my friends at the Club have always rallied me,
 “ when I have talked of retiring from business, and repeated to
 “ me one of my own sayings, *That a Merchant has never enough till he*
 “ *has got a little more*; I can now inform you, that there is one in the
 “ world who thinks he has enough, and is determined to pass the re-
 “ mainder of his life in the enjoyment of what he has. You know me
 “ so well, that I need not tell you, I mean, by the enjoyment of my pos-
 “ sessions, the making of them useful to the public. As the greatest part
 “ of my estate has been hitherto of an unsteady and volatile nature, either
 “ tost upon seas or fluctuating in funds; it is now fixed and settled in
 “ substantial acres and tenements. I have removed it from the uncer-
 “ tainty of stocks, winds and waves, and disposed of it in a considerable
 “ purchase. This will give me great opportunity of being charitable in
 “ my way, that is, in setting my poor neighbours to work, and giving
 “ them a comfortable subsistence out of their own industry. My gar-
 “ dens, my fish-ponds, my arable and pasture grounds shall be my several
 “ hospitals, or rather work-houses, in which I propose to maintain a
 “ great many indigent persons, who are now starving in my neighbour-
 “ hood. I have got a fine spread of improveable lands, and in my own
 “ thoughts am already plowing up some of them, fencing others; plant-
 “ ing woods, and draining marshes. In fine, as I have my share in the sur-
 “ face of this island, I am resolved to make it as beautiful a spot as any
 “ in her Majesty's dominions; at least there is not an inch of it which
 “ shall not be cultivated to the best advantage, and do its utmost for its
 “ owner. As in my mercantile employment, I so disposed of my affairs,
 “ that

“ that from whatever corner of the compass the wind blew, it was bring-
 “ ing home one or other of my ships; I hope, as a husbandman, to con-
 “ trive it so, that not a shower of rain, or a glimpse of sunshine, shall
 “ fall upon my estate without bettering some part of it, and contributing
 “ to the products of the season. You know it has been hitherto my
 “ opinion of life, that it is thrown away when it is not some way useful
 “ to others. But when I am riding out by my self, in the fresh air on
 “ the open heath that lies by my house, I find several other thoughts
 “ growing up in me. I am now of opinion, that a man of my age may
 “ find business enough on himself, by setting his mind in order, prepar-
 “ ing it for another world, and reconciling it to the thoughts of death.
 “ I must therefore acquaint you, that besides those usual methods of
 “ charity, of which I have before spoken, I am at this very instant find-
 “ ing out a convenient place where I may build an alms-house, which I
 “ intend to endow very handsomly, for a dozen superannuated husband-
 “ men. It will be a great pleasure to me to say my prayers twice a day
 “ with men of my own years, who all of them, as well as my self, may
 “ have their thoughts taken up how they shall die, rather than how they
 “ shall live. I remember an excellent saying that I learned at school, *Fi-
 “ nis coronat opus*. You know best whether it be in *Virgil* or in *Horace*,
 “ it is my business to apply it. If your affairs will permit you to take
 “ the country air with me sometimes, you shall find an apartment fitted
 “ up for you, and shall be every day entertained with beef or mutton
 “ of my own feeding; fish out of my own ponds; and fruit out of my
 “ own gardens. You shall have free egress and regress about my house,
 “ without having any questions asked you, and in a word such a hearty
 “ welcome as you may expect from

Your most sincere friend and humble servant,

ANDREW FREEPORT.

The Club, of which I am a member, being entirely dispersed, I shall consult my Reader next week, upon a project relating to the institution of a new one.



Monday,