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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

London, 1721

[The Lover.]

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The L O V E R.

 N^o 10. *Thursday, March 18. 1714.*

 ----- *Magis illa placent quae pluris emuntur.*

I Have lately been very much teized with the thought of Mrs. *Anne Page*, and the memory of those many cruelties which I suffered from that obdurate fair one. Mrs. *Anne* was in a particular manner very fond of *China* ware, against which I had unfortunaely declared my averfion. I do not know but this was the first occasion of her coldness towards me, which makes me sick at the very fight of a *China* dish ever fince. This is the best introduction I can make for my present difcourse, which may ferve to fill up a gap till I am more at leifure to refume the thread of my amours.

There are no inclinations in women which more surprize me than their paffions for chalk and *China*. The first of these maladies wears out in a little time; but when a woman is vifited with the fecond, it generally takes poffeffion of her for life. *China* veffels are play-things for women of all ages. An old Lady of fourfcore fhall be as bufie in cleaning an *Indian* Mandaring, as her great-grand-daughter is in dressing her baby.

The common way of puchafing fuch trifles, if I may believe my female informers, is by exchanging old fuits of cloaths for this brittle ware. The potters of *China* have, it feems, their factors at this diftance, who retail out their feveral manufactures for caft cloaths and fuperannuated garments. I have known an old petticoat metamorphofed into a punch-bowl, and a pair of breeches into a tea pot. For this reason my friend *Tradewell* in the city calls his great room, that is nobly furnifhed out with *China*, his wife's wardrobe. In yonder corner, fays he, are above twenty fuits of cloaths, and on that fcrotore above a hundred yards of furbelowed filk. You cannot imagine how many night-gowns, flays and man-toes,

toes, went to the raising of that pyramid. The worst of it is, says he, a suit of cloaths is not suffered to last half its time, that it may be the more vendible; so that in reality this is but a more dextrous way of pick-in gthe husband's pocket, who is often purchasing a great vase of *China*, when he fancies that he is buying a fine head, or a silk gown for his wife. There is likewise another inconvenience in this female passion for *China*, namely, that it administers to them great matter of wrath and sorrow. How much anger and affliction are produced daily in the hearts of my dear country-women, by the breach of this frail furniture. Some of them pay half their servants wages in *China* fragments, which their carelesness has produced. *If thou hast a piece of earthen ware, consider, says Epictetus, that it is a piece of earthen ware, and very easy and obnoxious to be broken: be not therefore so void of reason as to be angry or grieved when this comes to pass.* In order, therefore, to exempt my fair Readers from such additional and supernumerary calamities of life, I would advise them to forbear dealing in these perishable commodities, till such time as they are philosophers enough to keep their temper at the fall of a tea-pot or a *China* cup. I shall further recommend to their serious consideration these three particulars: First, That all *China* ware is of a weak and transitory nature. Secondly, that the fashion of it is changeable: and Thirdly, that it is of no use. And first of the first: the fragility of *China* is such as a reasonable Being ought by no means to set its heart upon, though at the same time I am afraid I may complain with *Seneca* on the like occasion, that this very consideration recommends them to our choice; our luxury being grown so wanton, that this kind of treasure becomes the more valuable, the more easily we may be deprived of it, and that it receives a price from its brittleness. There is a kind of ostentation in wealth, which sets the possessors of it upon distinguishing themselves in those things where it is hard for the poor to follow them. For this reason I have often wondered that our Ladies have not taken pleasure in eggshells, especially in those which are curiously stained and streaked, and which are so very tender, that they require the nicest hand to hold without breaking them. But as if the brittleness of this ware were not sufficient to make it costly, the very fashion of it is changeable, which brings me to my second particular.

It may chance that a piece of *China* may survive all those accidents to which it is by nature liable, and last for some years, if rightly situated and taken care of. To remedy, therefore, this inconvenience, it is so ordered that the shape of it shall grow unfashionable, which makes new supplies

always necessary, and furnishes employment for life to women of great and generous Souls, who cannot live out of the mode. I my self remember when there were few *China* vessels to be seen that held more than a dish of Coffee; but their size is so gradually enlarged, that there are many at present, which are capable of holding half a hoghead. The fashion of the tea-cup is also greatly altered, and has run through a wonderful variety of colour, shape and size.

But, in the last place, *China* ware is of no use. Who would not laugh to see a smith's shop furnished with anvils and hammers of *China*? the furniture of a Ladies favourite room is altogether as absurd: you see Jars of a prodigious capacity that are to hold nothing. I have seen horses and herds of cattel in this fine sort of Porcelain, not to mention the several *Chinese* Ladies who, perhaps, are naturally enough represented in these frail materials.

Did our women take delight in heaping up piles of earthen platters, brown jugs, and the like useful products of our *British* potteries, there would be some sense in it. They might be ranged in as fine figures, and disposed of in as beautiful pieces of Architecture; but there is an objection to these which cannot be overcome, namely, that they would be of some use, and might be taken down on all occasions to be employed in services of the family, besides that they are intolerably cheap, and most shamefully durable and lasting.

N^o 39. Tuesday, May 25.

Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere fidus
Interpres

Hor.

SINCE I have given public notice of my abode, I have had many visits from unfortunate fellow-sufferers who have been crossed in love as well as my self.

Will. Wormwood, who is related to me by my mother's side, is one of those who often repair to me for my advice. *Will.* is a fellow of good sense, but puts it to little other use than to torment himself. He is a
man

man of so refined an understanding, that he can set a construction upon every thing to his own disadvantage, and turn even a civility into an affront. He groans under imaginary injuries, finds himself abused by his friends, and fancies the whole world in a kind of combination against him. In short, poor *Wormwood* is devoured with the spleen: you may be sure a man of this humour makes a very whimsical lover. Be that as it will, he is now over head and ears in that passion, and by a very curious interpretation of his Mistress's behaviour, has in less than three months reduced himself to a perfect skeleton. As her fortune is inferior to his, she gives him all the encouragement another man could wish, but has the mortification to find that her lover still sowers upon her hands. *Will.* is dissatisfied with her, whether she smiles or frowns upon him; and always thinks her too reserved, or too coming. A kind word, that would make another lover's heart dance for joy, pangs poor *Will.* and makes him lie awake all night — As I was going on with *Will. Wormwood's* amour, I received a present from my Bookseller, which I found to be *The Characters of Theophrastus*, translated from the *Greek* into *English* by Mr. *Budgell*.

It was with me, as I believe it will be with all who look into this translation; when I had begun to peruse it, I could not lay it by, until I had gone through the whole book; and was agreeably surpris'd to meet with a chapter in it, entitled, *A discontented temper*, which gives a livelier picture of my cousin *Wormwood*, than that which I was drawing for him myself. It is as follows,

C H A P. XVII. *A Discontented Temper.*

“ A discontented temper, is a frame of mind which sets a man upon
 “ complaining without reason. When one of his neighbours who makes
 “ an entertainment, sends a servant to him with a plate of any thing that
 “ is nice, *What*, says he, *your Master did not think me good enough to*
 “ *dine with him?* He complains of his Mistress at the very time she is
 “ caressing him; and when she redoubles her kisses and endearments, *I*
 “ *wish*, says he, *all this came from your heart.* In a dry season he grum-
 “ bles for want of rain, and when a shower falls, mutters to himself, *Why*
 “ *could not this have come sooner?* If he happens to find a purse of money,
 “ *Had it been a pot of gold*, says he, *it would have been worth stooping*
 “ *for.* He takes a great deal of pains to beat down the price of a
 “ a slave; and after he has paid his money for him, *I am sure*, says he, *Thou*
 “ *art good for nothing, or I should not have had thee so cheap.* When a
 messen-

“ messenger comes with great joy to acquaint him that his wife is brought
 “ to bed of a son, he answers, *That is as much as to say, Friend, I am*
 “ *poorer by half to day than I was yesterday.* Though he has gained a
 “ cause with full costs and damages, he complains that his Council did
 “ not insist upon the most material points. If after any misfortune has
 “ befallen him, his friends raise a voluntary contribution for him, and de-
 “ sire him to be merry, *How is that possible,* says he, *when I am to pay*
 “ *every one of you his money again, and be obliged to you into the bar-*
 “ *gain?*

The instances of a discontented temper which *Theophrastus* has here made use of, like those which he singles out to illustrate the rest of his characters, are chosen with the greatest nicety, and full of humour. His strokes are always fine and exquisite, and though they are not sometimes violent enough to affect the imagination of a coarse Reader, cannot but give the highest pleasure to every man of a refined taste, who has a thorough insight into human nature.

As for the translation, I have never seen any of a prose Author which has pleased me more. The Gentleman who has obliged the public with it, has followed the rule which *Horace* has laid down for translators, by preserving every where the life and spirit of his Author, without servilely copying after him word for word. This is what the *French*, who have most distinguished themselves by performances of this nature, so often inculcate when they advise a translator to find out such particular elegancies in his own tongue as bear some analogy to those he sees in the original, and to express himself by such phrases as his Author would probably have made use of, had he written in the language into which he is translated. By this means, as well as by throwing in a lucky word, or a short circumstance, the meaning of *Theophrastus* is all along explained, and the humour very often carried to a greater height. A translator, who does not thus consider the different genius of the two languages in which he is concerned, with such parallel turns of thoughts and expression as correspond with one another in both of them, may value himself upon being a *faithful interpreter*; but in works of wit and humour will never do justice to his Author, or credit to himself.

As this is every where a judicious and a reasonable liberty, I see no chapter in *Theophrastus* where it has been so much indulged, and in which it was so absolutely necessary, as in the character of the *Sloven*. I find the translator himself, though he has taken pains to qualifie it, is still apprehensive

hensive that there may be something too gross in the description. The Reader will see with how much *Delicacy* he has touched upon every particular, and cast into shades every thing that was shocking in so nauseous a figure.

CHAP. XIX. A S L O V E N.

“ Slovenliness is such a neglect of a man's person, as makes him offensive to other people. The sloven comes into company with a dirty pair of hands, and a set of long nails at the end of them, and tells you for an excuse, that his father and grandfather used to do so before him. However, that he may out-go his fore-fathers, his fingers are covered with warts of his own raising. He is as hairy as a goat, and takes care to let you see it. His teeth and breath are perfectly well suited to one another. He lays about him at table after a very extraordinary manner, and takes in a meal at a mouthful; which he seldom disposes of without offending the company. In drinking he generally makes more haste than good speed. When he goes into the bath, you may easily find him out by the scent of his oyl, and distinguish him when he is dressed by the spots in his coat. He does not stand upon decency in conversation, but will talk smut, though a priest and his mother be in the room. He commits a blunder in the most solemn offices of devotion, and afterwards falls a laughing at it. At a consort of musick he breaks in upon the performance, hums over the tune to himself, or if he thinks it long, asks the Musicians *Whether they will never have done?* He always spits at random, and if he is at an entertainment, it is ten to one but it is upon the servant who stands behind him.

The foregoing translation brings to my remembrance that excellent observation of my Lord *Roscommon's*,

*None yet have been with Admiration read,
But who (beside their Learning) were well-bred.*

Lord Roscommon's Essay on translated verse.

If after this the Reader can endure the filthy representation of the same figure expos'd in its worst light, he may see how it looks in the former *English* version, which was published some years since, and is done from the *French* of *Bruyere*.

Nastiness or Slovenliness:

“ Slovenliness is a lazy and beastly negligence of a man's own person, whereby he becomes so sordid, as to be offensive to those about him.
“ You

“ You will see him come into company when he is covered all over with
 “ a leprosy and scurf, and with very long nails, and says, those distempers
 “ were hereditary, that his father and grandfather had them before him.
 “ He has ulcers in his thighs, and boils upon his hands, which he takes
 “ no care to have cured, but lets them run on till they are gone beyond
 “ remedy. His arm-pits are all hairy, and most part of his body like a
 “ wild beast. His teeth are black and rotten, which makes his breath
 “ stink so that you cannot endure him to come nigh you; he will also
 “ snuff up his nose and spit it out as he eats, and uses to speak with his
 “ mouth crammed full, and lets his victuals come out at both corners. He
 “ belches in the cup as he is drinking, and uses nasty stinking oyl in the
 “ bath. He will intrude into the best company in fordid ragged cloaths.
 “ If he goes with his mother to the southsayers, he cannot then refrain
 “ from wicked and prophane expressions. When he is making his obla-
 “ tions at the temple, he will let the dish drop out of his hand, and fall
 “ a laughing, as if he had done some brave exploit. At the finest con-
 “ sort of musick he cannot forbear clapping his hands, and making a rude
 “ noise; will pretend to sing along with them, and fall a railing at them
 “ to leave off. Sitting at table, he spits full upon the servants who wait-
 “ ed there.

I cannot close this paper without observing, That if Gentlemen of lei-
 sure and genius would take the same pains upon some other *Greek* or *Ro-*
man Author, that has been bestowed upon this, we should no longer be
 abused by our Bookfellers, who set their hackney-writers at work for so
 much a sheet. The world would soon be convinced, that there is a great
 deal of difference between putting an Author into *English*, and *Transla-*
ting him.



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