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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

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The hours of a wise man are lengthened by his Ideas, as those of a Fool are by his passions: the time of the one is long, because he does not know what to do with it; so is that of the other, because he distinguishes every moment of it with useful or amusing thoughts; or in other words, because the one is always wishing it away, and the other always enjoying it.

How different is the view of past life, in the man who is grown old in knowledge and wisdom, from that of him who is grown old in ignorance and folly? The latter is like the owner of a barren country, that fills his eye with the prospect of naked hills and plains, which produce nothing either profitable or ornamental; the other beholds a beautiful and spacious Landskip, divided into delightful gardens, green meadows, fruitful fields, and can scarce cast his eye on a single spot of his possessions, that is not covered with some beautiful plant or flower.

N^o 98. Friday, June 22.

-----*Tanta est querendi cura decoris.*

Juv.

THERE is not so variable a thing in nature as a Lady's Head-dress: within my own memory I have known it rise and fall above thirty degrees. About ten years ago it shot up to a very great height, insomuch that the female part of our species were much taller than the men. The women were of such an enormous stature, that *we appeared as Grasshoppers before them*: at present the whole sex is in a manner dwarfed and shrunk into a race of beauties that seems almost another species. I remember several Ladies, who were once very near seven foot high, that at present want some inches of five: how they came to be thus curtailed I cannot learn; whether the whole sex be at present under any penance which we know nothing of, or whether they have cast their Head-dresses in order to surprize us with something in that kind which shall be entirely new; or whether some of the tallest of the sex, being too cunning for the rest, have contrived this method to
make

make themselves appear sizeable, is still a secret; though I find most are of opinion, they are at present like trees new lopped and pruned, that will certainly sprout up and flourish with greater heads than before. For my own part, as I do not love to be insulted by women who are taller than my self, I admire the sex much more in their present humiliation, which has reduced them to their natural dimensions, than when they had extended their persons, and lengthened themselves out into formidable and gigantick figures. I am not for adding to the beautiful edifice of nature, nor for raising any whimsical superstructure upon her plans: I must therefore repeat it, that I am highly pleased with the Coiffure now in fashion, and think it shews the good sense which at present very much reigns among the valuable part of the sex. One may observe, that women in all ages have taken more pains than men to adorn the outside of their heads; and indeed I very much admire, that those female Architects, who raise such wonderful structures out of Ribbands, Lace, and Wire, have not been recorded for their respective inventions. It is certain there have been as many orders in these kinds of building, as in those which have been made of marble: Sometimes they rise in the shape of a pyramid, sometimes like a tower, and sometimes like a steeple. In *Juvenal's* time the building grew by several orders and stories, as he has very humorously described it.

*Tot premit ordinibus, tot adhuc compagibus altum
Ædificat caput: Andromachen a fronte videbis;
Post minor est: aliam credas.*

Juv.

But I do not remember, in any part of my reading, that the Head-dress aspired to so great an extravagance as in the fourteenth century; when it was built up in a couple of cones or spires, which stood so excessively high on each side of the head, that a woman who was but a *Pigmy* without her Head-dress, appeared like a *Colossus* upon putting it on. *Monsieur Paradin* says, "That these old fashioned fontanges rose an ell above the head; that they were pointed like steeples, and had long loose pieces of Crape fastened to the tops of them, which were curiously fringed, and hung down their backs like streamers."

The women might possibly have carried this Gothick building much higher, had not a famous Monk, *Thomas Conecte* by name, attacked it with great zeal and resolution. This holy man travelled from place to place to preach down this monstrous commode; and succeeded so well in it, that as the Magicians sacrificed their books to the flames upon the

preaching of an Apostle, many of the women threw down their Head-dresses in the middle of his Sermon, and made a bonfire of them within sight of the Pulpit. He was so renowned, as well for the sanctity of his life as his manner of preaching, that he had often a congregation of twenty thousand people; the men placing themselves on the one side of his Pulpit, and the women on the other, that appeared (to use the similitude of an ingenious writer) like a forest of Cedars with their heads reaching to the clouds. He so warmed and animated the people against this monstrous ornament, that it lay under a kind of persecution; and whenever it appeared in publick, was pelted down by the rabble, who flung stones at the persons that wore it. But notwithstanding this Prodigy vanished while the preacher was among them, it began to appear again some months after his departure, or to tell it in Monsieur *Paradin's* own words, "The women that, like snails in a fright, had drawn in their horns, shot them out again as soon as the danger was over. This extravagance of the womens Head-dresses in that age is taken notice of by Monsieur *d'Argentre* in his history of *Bretagne*, and by other Historians as well as the person I have here quoted.

It is usually observed, that a good reign is the only time for the making of laws against the exorbitance of power; in the same manner an excessive Head-dress may be attacked the most effectually when the fashion is against it. I do therefore recommend this paper to my female Readers by way of prevention.

I would desire the fair sex to consider how impossible it is for them to add any thing that can be ornamental to what is already the masterpiece of nature. The head has the most beautiful appearance, as well as the highest station, in a human figure. Nature has laid out all her art in beautifying the face: she has touched it with Vermillion, planted in it a double row of Ivory, made it the seat of smiles and blushes, lighted it up and enlivened it with the brightness of the eyes, hung it on each side with curious organs of sense, given it aires and graces that cannot be described, and surrounded it with such a flowing shade of hair as sets all its beauties in the most agreeable light: in short, she seems to have designed the head as the Cupola to the most glorious of her works; and when we load it with such a pile of supernumerary ornaments, we destroy the symmetry of the humane figure, and foolishly contrive to call off the eye from great and real beauties, to childish gew-gaws, ribbands, and bone-lace.

Saturday,