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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

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*Romulus, et Liber pater, et cum Castore Pollux,
Post ingentia facta, deorum in templa recepti;
Dum terras hominumque colunt genus, aspera bella
Componunt, agros assignant, oppida condunt;
Ploravere suis non respondere favorem
Speratum meritis:-----*

Hor.

CENSURE, says a late ingenious Author, is the tax a man pays to the publick for being eminent. It is a folly for an eminent man to think of escaping it, and a weakness to be affected with it. All the illustrious persons of antiquity, and indeed of every age in the world, have passed through this fiery persecution. There is no defence against reproach but obscurity; it is a kind of concomitant to greatness, as Satyrs and Invectives were an essential part of a Roman triumph.

If men of eminence are exposed to censure on one hand, they are as much liable to flattery on the other. If they receive reproaches which are not due to them, they likewise receive praises which they do not deserve. In a word, the man in a high post is never regarded with an indifferent eye, but always considered as a friend or an enemy. For this reason persons in great stations have seldom their true characters drawn till several years after their deaths. Their personal friendships and enmities must cease, and the parties they were engaged in be at an end, before their faults or their virtues can have justice done them. When writers have the least opportunities of knowing the truth, they are in the best disposition to tell it.

It is therefore the privilege of posterity to adjust the characters of illustrious persons, and to set matters right between those antagonists, who by their rivalry for greatness divided a whole age into factions. We can now allow *Cæsar* to be a great man, without derogating from *Pompey*; and cele-

celebrate the virtues of *Cato*, without detracting from those of *Cesar*. Every one that has been long dead has a due proportion of praise allotted him, in which whilst he lived his friends were too profuse, and his enemies too sparing.

According to Sir *Isaac Newton's* calculations, the last Comet that made its appearance in 1680, imbibed so much heat by its approaches to the Sun, that it would have been two thousand times hotter than red hot Iron, had it been a globe of that metal; and that supposing it as big as the Earth, and at the same distance from the Sun, it would be fifty thousand years in cooling, before it recovered its natural temper. In the like manner, if an *Englishman* considers the great ferment into which our political world is thrown at present, and how intensely it is heated in all its parts, he cannot suppose that it will cool again in less than three hundred years. In such a tract of time it is possible that the heats of the present age may be extinguished, and our several classes of great men represented under their proper characters. Some eminent Historian may then probably arise, that will not write *recentibus odiis* (as *Tacitus* expresses it) with the passions and prejudices of a contemporary Author, but make an impartial distribution of fame among the great men of the present age.

I cannot forbear entertaining my self very often with the idea of such an imaginary Historian describing the reign of *ANNE* the First, and introducing it with a Preface to his Reader; that he is now entering upon the most shining part of the *English* story. The great rivals in fame will be then distinguished according to their respective merits, and shine in their proper points of light. Such an one (says the Historian) though variously represented by the writers of his own age, appears to have been a man of more than ordinary abilities, great application, and uncommon integrity: nor was such an one (though of an opposite party and interest) inferior to him in any of these respects. The several antagonists who now endeavour to depreciate one another, and are celebrated or traduced by different parties, will then have the same body of admirers, and appear illustrious in the opinion of the whole *British* nation. The deserving man, who can now recommend himself to the esteem of but half his countrymen, will then receive the approbations and applauses of a whole age.

Among the several persons that flourish in this glorious reign, there is no question but such a future Historian as the person of whom I am speaking,

ing, will make mention of the men of genius and learning, who have now any figure in the *British* nation. For my own part, I often flatter my self with the honourable mention which will then be made of me; and have drawn up a paragraph in my own imagination, that I fancy will not be altogether unlike what will be found in some page or other of this imaginary Historian.

It was under this reign, says he, that the SPECTATOR published those little diurnal Essays which are still extant. We know very little of the name or person of this Author, except only that he was a man of a very short face, extremely addicted to silence, and so great a lover of knowledge, that he made a voyage to *Grand Cairo* for no other reason, but to take the measure of a Pyramid. His chief friend was one Sir ROGER DE COVERLEY, a whimsical country Knight, and a *Templer* whose name he has not transmitted to us. He lived as a lodger at the house of a widow-woman, and was a great humourist in all parts of his life. This is all we can affirm with any certainty of his person and character. As for his Speculations, notwithstanding the several obsolete words and obscure phrases of the age in which he lived, we still understand enough of them to see the diversions and characters of the *English* nation in his time: not but that we are to make allowance for the mirth and humour of the Author, who has doubtless strained many representations of things beyond the truth. For if we interpret his words in their literal meaning, we must suppose that women of the first quality used to pass away whole mornings at a Puppet-show: that they attested their principles by their *Patches*: that an Audience would sit out an evening to hear a dramatical performance written in a language which they did not understand: That chairs and flower-pots were introduced as Actors upon the *British* stage: that a promiscuous assembly of men and women were allowed to meet at midnight in masques within the verge of the Court; with many improbabilities of the like nature. We must therefore, in these and the like cases, suppose that these remote hints and allusions aimed at some certain follies which were then in vogue, and which at present we have not any notion of. We may guess by several passages in the *Speculations*, that there were writers who endeavoured to detract from the works of this Author; but as nothing of this nature is come down to us, we cannot guess at any objections that could be made to his paper. If we consider his style with that indulgence which we must shew to old *English* writers, or if we look into the variety of his subjects, with those several

veral

veral critical dissertations, moral reflections, * * * * *

The following part of the paragraph is so much to my advantage, and beyond any thing I can pretend to, that I hope my Reader will excuse me for not inserting it.

N^o 102. *Wednesday, June 27.*

----- *Lusus animo debent aliquando dari,
Ad cogitandum melior ut redeat sibi.* Phædr.

I Do not know whether to call the following Letter a fatyr upon Coquettes, or a representation of their several fantastical accomplishments, or what other title to give it; but as it is I shall communicate it to the publick. It will sufficiently explain its own intentions, so that I shall give it my Reader at length without either Preface or Postscript.

Mr. SPECTATOR,

“ **W**OMEN are armed with Fans as men with Swords, and some-
 “ times do more execution with them. To the end there-
 “ fore that Ladies may be entire Mistresses of the weapon which they
 “ bear, I have erected an Academy for the training up of young women
 “ in the *Exercise of the Fan*, according to the most fashionable airs and
 “ motions that are now practised at Court. The Ladies who *carry*
 “ Fans under me are drawn up twice a day in my great Hall, where they
 “ are instructed in the use of their Arms, and *exercised* by the following
 “ words of command,

*Handle your Fans,
 Unfurl your Fans,
 Discharge your Fans,
 Ground your Fans,
 Recover your Fans,
 Flutter your Fans.*

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“ By