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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

London, 1721

N° 108. Wednesday, July 4.

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N^o 108. *Wednesday, July 4.*

Gratis anbelans, multa agendo nihil agens.

Phæd.

AS I was yesterday morning walking with Sir ROGER before his house, a country-fellow brought him a huge fish, which he told him, Mr. *William Wimble* had caught that very morning; and that he presented it, with his service to him, and intended to come and dine with him. At the same time he delivered a Letter, which my friend read to me as soon as the messenger left him.

Sir ROGER,

“ I Desire you to accept of a Jack, which is the best I have caught
 “ this season. I intend to come and stay with you a week, and
 “ see how the Perch bite in the *Black river*. I observed with some concern,
 “ the last time I saw you upon the Bowling-green, that your whip
 “ wanted a lash to it: I will bring half a dozen with me that I twisted
 “ last week, which I hope will serve you all the time you are in the
 “ country. I have not been out of the fiddle for six days last past, having
 “ been at *Eaton* with Sir *John's* eldest son. He takes to his learning
 “ hugely. I am,

SIR, Your humble Servant, Will. Wimble.

This extraordinary letter, and message that accompanied it, made me very curious to know the character and quality of the Gentleman who sent them; which I found to be as follows. *Will. Wimble* is younger brother to a Baronet, and descended of the ancient family of the *Wimbles*. He is now between forty and fifty; but being bred to no business and born to no estate, he generally lives with his elder brother as superintendent of his game. He hunts a pack of Dogs better than any man in the country, and is very famous for finding out a Hare. He is extremely well versed in all the little handicrafts of an idle man: he makes a *May-fly* to a miracle; and furnishes the whole country with Angle-rods. As he is a good-natured officious fellow, and very much esteemed

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med upon account of his family, he is a welcome guest at every house, and keeps up a good correspondence among all the Gentlemen about him. He carries a Tulip-root in his pocket from one to another, or exchanges a puppy between a couple of friends that live perhaps in the opposite sides of the county. *Will* is a particular favourite of all the young Heirs, whom he frequently obliges with a Net that he has weaved, or a Setting-dog that he has *made* himself: he now and then presents a pair of garters of his own knitting to their mothers or sisters; and raises a great deal of mirth among them, by enquiring as often as he meets them *how they wear?* these Gentleman-like manufactures and obliging little humours, make *Will* the darling of the country.

Sir ROGER was proceeding in the character of him, when he saw him make up to us with two or three hazle-twigs in his hand that he had cut in Sir ROGER's woods, as he came through them, in his way to the house. I was very much pleased to observe on one side the hearty and sincere welcome with which Sir ROGER received him, and on the other the secret joy which his guest discovered at sight of the good old Knight. After the first salutes were over, *Will* desired Sir ROGER to lend him one of his servants to carry a set of shuttle-cocks he had with him in a little box to a Lady that lived about a mile off, to whom it seems he had promised such a present for above this half year. Sir ROGER's back was no sooner turned, but honest *Will* began to tell me of a large cock-pheasant that he had sprung in one of the neighbouring woods, with two or three other adventures of the same nature. Odd and uncommon characters are the game that I look for, and most delight in; for which reason I was as much pleased with the novelty of the person that talked to me, as he could be for his life with the springing of a pheasant, and therefore listned to him with more than ordinary attention.

In the midst of his discourse the bell rung to dinner, where the Gentleman I have been speaking of had the pleasure of seeing the huge jack, he had caught, served up for the first dish in a most sumptuous manner. Upon our sitting down to it he gave us a long account how he had hooked it, played with it, foiled it, and at length drew it out upon the bank, with several other particulars that lasted all the first course. A dish of wild-fowl that came afterwards furnished conversation for the rest of the dinner, which concluded with a late invention of *Will's* for improving the quail-pipe.

Upon withdrawing into my room after dinner, I was secretly touched with compassion towards the honest Gentleman that had dined with us;

and could not but consider with a great deal of concern, how so good an heart and such busie hands were wholly employed in trifles; that so much humanity should be so little beneficial to others, and so much industry so little advantageous to himself. The same temper of mind and application to affairs might have recommended him to the publick esteem, and have raised his fortune in another station of life. What good to his country or himself might not a trader or merchant have done with such useful though ordinary qualifications?

Will Wimble's is the case of many a younger brother of a great family, who had rather see their children starve like Gentlemen, than thrive in a trade or profession that is beneath their quality. This humour fills several parts of *Europe* with pride and beggary. It is the happiness of a trading nation, like ours, that the younger sons, though incapable of any liberal art or profession, may be placed in such a way of life, as may perhaps enable them to vie with the best of their family: accordingly we find several citizens that were launched into the world with narrow fortunes, rising by an honest industry to greater estates than those of their elder brothers. It is not improbable but *Will* was formerly tried at divinity, law, or physick; and that finding his genius did not lie that way, his parents gave him up at length to his own inventions. But certainly, however improper he might have been for studies of a higher nature, he was perfectly well turned for the occupations of trade and commerce. As I think this is a point which cannot be too much inculcated, I shall desire my Reader to compare what I have here written with what I have said in my twenty first Speculation.

N^o 110. Friday, July 6.

Horror ubique animos, simul ipsa silentia terrent. Virg.

AT a little distance from Sir ROGER's house, among the ruins of an old Abby, there is a long walk of aged elms; which are shot up so very high, that when one passes under them, the rooks and crows that rest upon the tops of them seem to be cawing in another region.