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**The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.**

In Four Volumes

**Addison, Joseph**

**London, 1721**

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N<sup>o</sup> 115.

Thursday, July 12.

*-----Ut sit mens sana in corpore sano.*

Juv.

**B**ODILY labour is of two kinds, either that which a man submits to for his livelihood, or that which he undergoes for his pleasure. The latter of them generally changes the name of Labour for that of Exercise, but differs only from ordinary labour as it rises from another motive.

A country life abounds in both these kinds of labour, and for that reason gives a man a greater stock of health, and consequently a more perfect enjoyment of himself, than any other way of life. I consider the body as a system of tubes and glands, or to use a more rustick phrase, a bundle of pipes and strainers, fitted to one another after so wonderful a manner as to make a proper engine for the soul to work with. This description does not only comprehend the bowels, bones, tendons, veins, nerves and arteries, but every muscle and every ligature, which is a composition of fibres, that are so many imperceptible tubes or pipes interwoven on all sides with invisible glands or strainers.

This general idea of a humane body, without considering it in the niceties of anatomy, lets us see how absolutely necessary Labour is for the right preservation of it. There must be frequent motions and agitations, to mix, digest, and separate the juices contained in it, as well as to clear and cleanse that infinitude of pipes and strainers of which it is composed, and to give their solid parts a more firm and lasting tone. Labour or Exercise ferments the humours, casts them into their proper channels, throws off redundancies, and helps Nature in those secret distributions without which the body cannot subsist in its vigour, nor the soul act with cheerfulness.

I might here mention the effects which this has upon all the faculties of the mind, by keeping the understanding clear, the imagination untroubled, and refining those spirits that are necessary for the proper exertion of our intellectual faculties, during the present laws of union between

tween soul and body. It is to a neglect in this particular that we must ascribe the spleen, which is so frequent in men of studious and sedentary tempers, as well as the vapours to which those of the other sex are so often subject.

Had not Exercise been absolutely necessary for our well-being, nature would not have made the body so proper for it, by giving such an activity to the limbs, and such a pliancy to every part as necessarily produces those compressions, extensions, contortions, dilatations, and all other kinds of motions that are necessary for the preservation of such a system of tubes and glands as has been before mentioned. And that we might not want inducements to engage us in such an exercise of the body as is proper for its welfare, it is so ordered that nothing valuable can be procured without it. Not to mention riches and honour, even food and raiment are not to be come at without the toil of the hands and sweat of the brows. Providence furnishes materials, but expects that we should work them up our selves. The Earth must be laboured before it gives its encrease, and when it is forced into its several products, how many hands must they pass through before they are fit for use? Manufactures, trade, and agriculture, naturally employ more than nineteen parts of the species in twenty; and as for those who are not obliged to labour, by the condition in which they are born, they are more miserable than the rest of mankind, unless they indulge themselves in that voluntary labour which goes by the name of Exercise.

My friend Sir ROGER has been an indefatigable man in business of this kind, and has hung several parts of his house with the trophies of his former labours. The walls of his great hall are covered with the horns of several kinds of Deer that he has killed in the chace, which he thinks the most valuable furniture of his house, as they afford him frequent topics of discourse, and shew that he has not been idle. At the lower end of the hall is a large Otter's skin stuffed with hay, which his mother ordered to be hung up in that manner, and the Knight looks upon with great satisfaction, because it seems he was but nine years old when his dog killed him. A little room adjoining to the hall is a kind of Arsenal filled with guns of several sizes and inventions, with which the Knight has made great havock in the woods, and destroyed many thousands of pheasants, partridges and wood-cocks. His stable doors are patched with noses that belonged to Foxes of the Knight's own hunting down. Sir ROGER shewed me one of them that for distinction sake has a brass nail struck through it, which cost him about fifteen hours riding,

riding, carried him through half a dozen counties, killed him a brace of geldings, and lost above half his dogs. This the Knight looks upon as one of the greatest exploits of his life. The perverse widow, whom I have given some account of, was the death of several foxes; for Sir ROGER has told me that in the course of his amours he patched the western door of his stable. Whenever the widow was cruel, the foxes were fure to pay for it. In proportion as his passion for the widow abated, and old age came on, he left his Fox-hunting; but a Hare is not yet safe that fits within ten miles of his house.

There is no kind of exercise which I would so recommend to my Readers of both sexes as this of riding, as there is none which so much conduces to health, and is every way accommodated to the body, according to the *idea* which I have given of it. Doctor *Sydenham* is very lavish in its praises; and if the *English* Reader would see the mechanical effects of it described at length, he may find them in a book published not many years since, under the title of the *Medicina Gymnastica*. For my own part, when I am in town, for want of these opportunities, I exercise my self an hour every morning upon a dumb bell that is placed in a corner of a room, and pleases me the more because it does every thing I require of it in the most profound silence. My landlady and her daughters are so well acquainted with my hours of exercise, that they never come into my room to disturb me whilst I am ringing.

When I was some years younger than I am at present, I used to employ my self in a more laborious diversion, which I learned from a *Latin* treatise of exercises, that is written with great erudition: It is there called the *σκιωμαχία*, or the fighting with a man's own shadow; and consists in the brandishing of two short sticks grasped in each hand, and laden with plugs of lead at either end. This opens the chest, exercises the limbs, and gives a man all the pleasure of boxing, without the blows. I could wish that several learned men would lay out that time which they employ in controversies and disputes about nothing, in *this Method* of fighting with their own shadows. It might conduce very much to evaporate the spleen, which makes them uneasy to the publick as well as to themselves.

To conclude, as I am a compound of soul and body, I consider my self as obliged to a double scheme of duties; and I think I have not fulfilled the business of the day, when I do not thus employ the one in labour and exercise, as well as the other in study and contemplation.

*Saturday.*