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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

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N^o 121. *Thursday, July 19.*

-----*Jovis omnia plena.*

Virg.

AS I was walking this morning in the great yard that belongs to my friend's country house, I was wonderfully pleased to see the different workings of Instinct in a Hen followed by a brood of Ducks. The young, upon the sight of a pond, immediately ran into it; while the step-mother, with all imaginable anxiety, hovered about the borders of it, to call them out of an element that appeared to her so dangerous and destructive. As the different principle which acted in these different animals cannot be termed Reason, so when we call it *Instinct*, we mean something we have no knowledge of. To me, as I hinted in my last paper, it seems the immediate direction of Providence, and such an operation of the supreme Being, as that which determines all the portions of matter to their proper centres. A modern Philosopher, quoted by Monsieur *Bayle* in his learned dissertation on the Souls of brutes, delivers the same opinion, though in a bolder form of words, where he says, *Deus est anima brutorum*, God himself is the Soul of brutes. Who can tell what to call that seeming sagacity in Animals, which directs them to such food as is proper for them, and makes them naturally avoid whatever is noxious or unwholesome? *Tully* has observed that a Lamb no sooner falls from its mother, but immediately and of its own accord applies it self to the teat. *Dampier*, in his travels, tells us, that when seamen are thrown upon any of the unknown coasts of *America*, they never venture upon the fruit of any tree, how tempting soever it may appear, unless they observe that it is marked with the pecking of birds; but fall on without any fear or apprehension where the birds have been before them.

But notwithstanding Animals have nothing like the use of Reason, we find in them all the lower parts of our nature, the passions and senses in their greatest strength and perfection. And here it is worth our observation, that all beasts and birds of prey are wonderfully subject to anger, malice, revenge, and all other violent passions that may animate them

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in search of their proper food; as those that are incapable of defending themselves, or annoying others, or whose safety lies chiefly in their flight, are suspicious, fearful, and apprehensive of every thing they see or hear; whilst others that are of assistance and use to man, have their natures softned with something mild and tractable, and by that means are qualified for a domestick life. In this case the passions generally correspond with the make of the body. We do not find the fury of a Lion in so weak and defenceless an animal as a Lamb, nor the meekness of a Lamb in a creature so armed for battle and assault as the Lion. In the same manner, we find that particular animals have a more or less exquisite sharpness and sagacity in those particular senses which most turn to their advantage, and in which their safety and welfare is the most concerned.

Nor must we here omit that great variety of arms with which nature has differently fortified the bodies of several kinds of animals, such as claws, hoofs and horns, teeth and tusks, a tail, a sting, a trunk, or a *Proboscis*. It is likewise observed by Naturalists, that it must be some hidden principle, distinct from what we call Reason, which instructs animals in the use of these their arms, and teaches them to manage them to the best advantage; because they naturally defend themselves with that part in which their strength lies, before the weapon be formed in it; as is remarkable in Lambs, which though they are bred within doors, and never saw the actions of their own species, push at those who approach them with their foreheads, before the first budding of a horn appears.

I shall add to these general observations, an instance which Mr. *Locke* has given us of Providence, even in the imperfections of a creature which seems the meanest and most despicable in the whole animal world. *We may*, says he, *from the make of an Oyster, or Cockle, conclude, that it has not so many nor so quick senses as a man, or several other animals: nor if it had, would it in that state and incapacity of transferring it self from one place to another, be bettered by them. What good would sight and hearing do to a creature, that cannot move it self to, or from the object, wherein at a distance it perceives good or evil? And would not quickness of sensation be an inconvenience to an animal, that must be still where chance has once placed it; and there receive the afflux of colder or warmer, clean or foul water, as it happens to come to it?*

I shall add to this instance out of Mr. *Locke*, another out of the learned Dr. *Moor*, who cites it from *Cardan*, in relation to another animal which Providence has left defective, but at the same time has shewn its wisdom in the formation of that organ in which it seems chiefly to have failed.

failed. *What is more obvious and ordinary than a Mole? and yet what more palpable argument of Providence than she? the members of her body are so exactly fitted to her nature and manner of life: for her dwelling being under ground where nothing is to be seen, nature has so obscurely fitted her with eyes, that Naturalists can scarce agree whether she have any sight at all or no. But for amends, what she is capable of for her defence and warning of danger, she has very eminently conferred upon her; for she is exceeding quick of hearing. And then her short tail and short legs, but broad fore-feet armed with sharp claws, we see by the event to what purpose they are, she so swiftly working her self under ground, and making her way so fast in the earth, as they that behold it cannot but admire it. Her legs therefore are short, that she need dig no more than will serve the meer thickness of her body; and her fore-feet are broad that she may scoup away much earth at a time; and little or no tail she has, because she courses it not on the ground, like the rat or mouse, of whose kindred she is, but lives under the earth, and is fain to dig her self a dwelling there. And she making her way through so thick an element, which will not yield easily, as the air or the water, it had been dangerous to have drawn so long a train behind her; for her enemy might fall upon her rear, and fetch her out before she had compleated or got full possession of her works.*

I cannot forbear mentioning Mr. Boyle's remark upon this last creature, who, I remember, somewhere in his works observes, that though the Mole be not totally blind (as it is commonly thought) she has not sight enough to distinguish particular objects. Her eye is said to have but one humour in it, which is supposed to give her the idea of light, but of nothing else, and is so formed that this idea is probably painful to the animal. Whenever she comes up into broad day she might be in danger of being taken, unless she were thus affected by a light striking upon her eye, and immediately warning her to bury her self in her proper element. More sight would be usefess to her, as none at all might be fatal.

I have only instanced such animals as seem the most imperfect works of nature; and if Providence shews it self even in the blemishes of these creatures, how much more does it discover it self in the several endowments which it has variously bestowed upon such creatures as are more or less finished and compleated in their several faculties, according to the condition of life in which they are posted?

I could wish our Royal Society would compile a body of natural history, the best that could be gathered together from books and observations.

If the several writers among them took each his particular species, and gave us a distinct account of its original, birth, and education; its policies, hostilities and alliances, with the frame and texture of its inward and outward parts, and particularly those that distinguish it from all other animals, with their peculiar aptitudes for the state of being in which Providence has placed them, it would be one of the best services their studies could do mankind, and not a little redound to the glory of the all-wise contriver.

It is true, such a natural history, after all the disquisitions of the learned, would be infinitely short and defective. Seas and deserts hide millions of animals from our observation. Innumerable artifices and stratagems are acted in the *howling wilderness* and in the *great deep*, that can never come to our knowledge. Besides that there are infinitely more species of creatures which are not to be seen without, nor indeed with the help of the finest glasses, than of such as are bulky enough for the naked eye to take hold of. However, from the consideration of such animals as lie within the compass of our knowledge, we might easily form a conclusion of the rest, that the same variety of wisdom and goodness runs through the whole creation, and puts every creature in a condition to provide for its safety and subsistence in its proper station.

Tully has given us an admirable sketch of natural history, in his second book, concerning the nature of the Gods; and that in a style so raised by metaphors and descriptions, that it lifts the subject above raillery and ridicule, which frequently fall on such nice observations, when they pass through the hands of an ordinary writer.

N^o 122. Friday, July 20.

Comes jucundus in via pro vehiculo est. Publ. Syr. Frag.

A Man's first care should be to avoid the reproaches of his own heart; his next, to escape the censures of the world: if the last interferes with the former, it ought to be intirely neglected; but otherwise there cannot be a greater satisfaction to an honest mind, than
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