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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

London, 1721

No 4. Monday, January, 2. 1716.

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-53597](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-53597)

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Ne se mulier extra virtutum cogitationes, extraque bellorum casus putet, ipsis incipientis matrimonii auspiciis admonetur, venire se laborum periculorumque sociam, idem in pace, idem in praelio passuram ausuramque. Sic vivendum, sic pereundum.
 Tacit.

IT is with great satisfaction I observe, that the women of our Island, who are the most eminent for virtue and good sense, are in the interest of the present government. As the fair sex very much recommend the cause they are engaged in, it would be no small misfortune to a Sovereign, though he had all the male part of the nation on his side, if he did not find himself King of the most beautiful half of his subjects. Ladies are always of great use to the party they espouse, and never fail to win over numbers to it. Lovers, according to Sir *William Petty's* computation, make at least the third part of the sensible men of the *British* nation; and it has been an uncontroverted maxim in all ages, that, though a husband is sometimes a stubborn sort of a creature, a lover is always at the devotion of his Mistress. By this means it lies in the power of every fine woman, to secure at least half a dozen able-bodied men to his Majesty's service. The female world are likewise indispensably necessary in the best causes to manage the controversial part of them, in which no man of tolerable breeding is ever able to refute them. Arguments out of a pretty mouth are unanswerable.

It is indeed remarkable that the inferior tribe of common women, who are a dishonour to their sex, have, in most reigns, been the professed sticklers for such as have acted in opposition to the true interest of the nation. The most numerous converts in King *James's* reign, were particularly noted to be of this kind. I can give no other reason for such a behaviour, unless it be, that it is not for the advantage of these female adventurers the laws of the land should take place, and that they know *Bridewell* is a part of our constitution. There

There are many reasons why the women of *Great Britain* should be on the side of the Free-holder, and enemies to the person who would bring in arbitrary government and Popery. As there are several of our Ladies who amuse themselves in the reading of Travels, they cannot but take notice what uncomfortable lives those of their own sex lead, where Passive-obedience is professed and practised in its utmost perfection. In those countries the men have no property but in their wives, who are the slaves to slaves: every married woman being subject to a domestick tyrant, that requires from her the same vassalage which he pays to his Sultan. If the Ladies would seriously consider the evil consequences of arbitrary power, they would find, that it spoils the shape of the foot in *China*, where the barbarous politicks of the men so diminish the basis of the female figure, as to unqualify a woman for an evening walk or country dance. In the *East-Indies*, a widow, who has any regard to her character, throws her self into the flames of her husband's funeral pile, to shew, forsooth, that she is faithful and loyal to the memory of her deceased Lord. In *Persia*, the daughters of *Eve*, as they call them, are reckoned in the inventory of their goods and chattels: and it is a usual thing when a man sells a bale of silk, or a drove of camels, to toss half a dozen women into the bargain. Through all the dominions of the *Great Turk*, a woman thinks her self happy if she can get but the twelfth share of a husband, and is thought of no manner of use in the creation, but to keep up a proper number of slaves for the commander of the faithful. I need not set forth the ill usage, which the fair ones meet with in those despotick governments that lie nearer us. Every one hath heard of the several ways of locking up women in *Spain* and *Italy*; where, if there is any power lodged in any of the sex, it is not among the young and the beautiful, whom nature seems to have formed for it, but among the old and withered matrons, known by the frightful name of *Gouvernantes* and *Duegnas*. If any should alledge the freedoms indulged to the *French Ladies*, he must own that these are owing to the natural gallantry of the people, not to their form of government, which excludes by its very constitution every female from power, as naturally unfit to hold the sceptre of that kingdom.

Women ought in reason to be no less averse to popery than to arbitrary power. Some merry Authors have pretended to demonstrate, that the *Roman Catholick* religion could never spread in a nation, where women would have more modesty than to expose their innocent liberties to a Confessor. Others of the same turn, have assured us, that the fine

British complexion, which is so peculiar to our Ladies, would suffer very much from a fish-diet: and that a whole *Lent* would give such a fallowness to the celebrated beauties of this Island, as would scarce make them distinguishable from those of *France*. I shall only leave to the serious consideration of my country-women the danger any of them might have been in, (had Popery been our national religion) of being forced by their Relations to a state of perpetual virginity. The most blooming Toast in the Island might have been a Nun; and many a Lady, who is now a mother of fine children, condemned to a condition of life, disagreeable to herself, and unprofitable to the world. To this I might add the melancholy objects, they would be daily entertained with, of several fightly men delivered over to an inviolable celibacy. Let a young Lady imagine to herself the brisk embroidered Officer, who now makes love to her with so agreeable an air, converted into a Monk; or the Beau, who now addresses himself to her in a full-bottomed wig, distinguished by a little bald pate covered with a black leather skull-cap. I forbear to mention many other objections, which the Ladies, who are no strangers to the doctrines of Popery, will easily recollect: though I do not in the least doubt, but those I have already suggested, will be sufficient to persuade my fair Readers to be zealous in the Protestant cause.

7 The freedom and happiness of our *British* Ladies is so singular, that it is a common saying in foreign countries, *If a bridge were built cross the seas, all the women in Europe would flock into England*. It has been observed, that the laws relating to them are so favourable, that one would think they themselves had given votes in enacting them. All the honours and indulgences of society are due to them by our customs; and, by our constitution, they have all the privileges of *English*-born subjects, without the burdens. I need not acquaint my fair Fellow-freeholders, that every man, who is anxious for our sacred and civil rights, is a champion in their cause; since we enjoy in common a religion agreeable to that reasonable nature, of which we equally partake; and since, in point of property, our law makes no distinction of sexes.

We may therefore justly expect from them, that they will act in concert with us for the preservation of our laws and religion, which cannot subsist, but under the government of his present Majesty; and would necessarily be subverted, under that of a person bred up in the most violent principles of popery and arbitrary power. Thus may the fair sex contribute to fix the peace of a brave and generous people, who for many ages have disdained to bear any tyranny but theirs; and be as famous in history,

ry, as those illustrious matrons, who in the infancy of *Rome*, reconciled the *Romans* and the *Sabines*, and united the two contending parties under their new King.

N^o 5. *Friday, January 6.*

Omnium Societatum nulla est gravior, nulla carior, quam ea que cum republica est unicuique nostrum: Cari sunt parentes, cari liberi, propinqui, familiares: Sed omnes omnium caritates patria una complexa est: Pro qua quis bonus dubitet mortem oppetere, si ei sit profuturus? Cic.

THERE is no greater sign of a general decay of virtue in a nation, than a want of zeal in its inhabitants for the good of their country. This generous and publick-spirited passion has been observed of late years to languish and grow cold in this our Island; where a party of men have made it their business to represent it as chimerical and romantic, to destroy in the minds of the people the sense of national glory, and to turn into ridicule our natural and ancient Allies, who are united to us by the common interests both of religion and policy. It may not therefore be unseasonable to recommend to this present generation the practice of that virtue, for which their ancestors were particularly famous, and which is called *The love of one's country*. This love to our country, as a moral virtue, is a fixed disposition of mind to promote the safety, welfare, and reputation of the community in which we are born, and of the constitution under which we are protected. Our obligation to this great duty, may appear to us from several considerations.

In the first place we may observe, that we are directed to it by one of those secret suggestions of nature, which go under the name of *Instinct*, and which are never given in vain. As self-love is an instinct planted in us for the good and safety of each particular person, the love of our country is impressed on our minds for the happiness and preservation of