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

In Four Volumes

**Addison, Joseph**

**London, 1721**

No 23. Friday, March 9.

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N<sup>o</sup> 23. *Friday, March 9.*

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*Illis ira modum supra est, et saepe venenum  
Morsibus inspirant.-----*

Virg.

**I**N the wars of *Europe* which were waged among our forefathers, it was usual for the enemy, when there was a King in the field, to demand by a trumpet in what part of the camp he resided, that they might avoid firing upon the royal pavillion. Our party-contests in *England* were heretofore managed with the same kind of decency and good-breeding. The person of the Prince was always looked upon as sacred; and whatever severe usage his friends or ministers met with, none presumed to direct their hostilities at their Sovereign. The enemies of our present settlement are of such a coarse kind of make, and so equally void of loyalty and good manners, that they are grown scurrilous upon the Royal family, and treat the most exalted characters with the most opprobrious language.

This petulance in conversation is particularly observed to prevail among some of that sex where it appears the most unbecoming and the most unnatural. Many of these act with the greater licentiousness, because they know they can act with the greater impunity. This consideration, indeed, engages the most generous and well-bred even of our the male-contents, to make no ill use of the indulgence of our law-givers; and to discover in their debates at least the delicacy of the woman, if not the duty of the subject. But it is generally remarked, that every one of them who is a shrew in domestick life, is now become a scold in politicks. And as for those of the party, who are of a superior rank and unblemished virtue, it must be a melancholy reflection for them to consider that all the common women of the town are of their side; for which reason they ought to preserve a more than ordinary modesty in their satyrical excursions, that their characters may not be liable to suspicion.

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If there is not some method found out for allaying these heats and animosities among the fair sex, one does not know to what outrages they may proceed. I remember a hero in *Scarron*, who finding himself opposed by a mixed multitude of both sexes with a great deal of virulent language, after having brought them to a submission, gave order (to keep them from doing farther mischief) that the men should be disarmed of their clubs, and that the women should have their nails pared. We are not yet reduced to the necessity of applying such violent remedies; but as we daily receive accounts of Ladies battling it on both sides, and that those who appear against the constitution make war upon their antagonists by many unfair practices and unwarrantable methods, I think it is very convenient there should be a cartel settled between them. If they have not yet agreed upon any thing of this nature among themselves, I would propose to them the following plan, in which I have sketched out several rules suited to the politest sex in one of the most civilized nations.

**T**HAT in every political rencounter between woman and woman, no weapon shall be made use of but the tongue.

That in the course of the engagement, if either of the combatants, finding her self hard prest by her adversary, shall proceed to personal reflections or discovery of secrets, they shall be parted by the standers by.

That when both sides are drawn up in a full assembly, it shall not be lawful for above five of them to talk at the same time.

That if any shall detract from a Ladies character, (unless she be absent) the said detractress shall be forthwith ordered to the lowest place of the room.

That none presume to speak disrespectfully of his Majesty, or any of the Royal family, on pain of three hours silence.

That none be permitted to talk spightfully of the Court, unless they can produce vouchers that they have been there.

That the making use of news which goes about in whisper, unless the Author be produced, or the fact well attested, shall be deemed fighting with white powder, and contrary to the laws of war.

That any one who produces libels or lampoons, shall be regarded in the same manner as one who shoots with poisoned bullets.

That when a Lady is throughly convinced of the falshood of any story she has related, she shall give her parole not to tell it for a certain truth that winter.

That

That when any matter of doubt arises, which cannot otherwise be decided, Appeal shall be made to a Toast, if there be any such in the company.

That no Coquette, notwithstanding she can do it with a good air, shall be allowed to sigh for the danger of the Church, or to shiver at the apprehensions of Fanaticism.

That when a woman has talked an hour and a half, it shall be lawful to call her down to order.

As this civil discord among the Sisterhood of *Great Britain* is likely to engage them in a long and lingering war, consisting altogether of drawn battels, it is the more necessary that there should be a Cartel settled among them. Besides, as our *English Ladies* are at present the greatest State-women in *Europe*, they will be in danger of making themselves the most unamiable part of their sex, if they continue to give a loose to intemperate language, and to a low kind of ribaldry, which is not used among the women of fashion in any other country.

Discretion and good-nature have been always looked upon as the distinguishing ornaments of Female conversation. The woman, *whose price is above rubies*, has no particular in the character given of her by the wise man, more endearing, than that *she openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness*. Besides, every fierce She-zalot should consider, that however any of the other sex may seem to applaud her as a partisan, there is none of them who would not be afraid of associating himself with her in any of the more private relations of life.

I shall only add, that there is no talent so pernicious as eloquence, to those who have it not under command: For which reason, women who are so liberally gifted by nature in this particular, ought to study, with the greatest application, the rules of female oratory, delivered in that excellent Treatise, entituled *The government of the tongue*. Had that Author foreseen the political ferment which is now raised among the sex, he would probably have made his book larger by some chapters than it is at present: But what is wanting in that work, may I hope, in some measure, be supplied by the above-written Cartel.

