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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

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to come into one change more, by falling in with that plan of government which at present they think fit to oppose. At least we may expect they will be so wise as to shew a legal obedience to the best of Kings, who profess the duty of Passive-obedience to the worst.

N^o 26. Monday, March 19.

Bella viri pacemque gerant, quis bella gerenda. Virg.

WHEN the *Athenians* had long contended against the power of *Philip*, he demanded of them to give up their orators, as well knowing their opposition would be soon at an end if it were not irritated from time to time by these tongue-warriors. I have endeavoured for the same reason to gain our female adversaries, and by that means to disarm the party of its principal strength. Let them give us up their women, and we know by experience how inconsiderable a resistance we are to expect from their men.

This sharp political humour has but lately prevailed in so great a measure as it now does among the beautiful part of our species. They used to employ themselves wholly in the scenes of a domestick life, and provided a woman could keep her house in order, she never troubled herself about regulating the Commonwealth. The eye of the Mistress was wont to make her pewter shine, and to inspect every part of her household furniture as much as her looking-glass. But at present our discontented matrons are so conversant in matters of State, that they wholly neglect their private affairs: for we may always observe that a Gossip in politics is a flattern in her family.

It is indeed a melancholy thing to see the disorders of a household that is under the conduct of an angry Stateswoman, who lays out all her thoughts upon the publick, and is only attentive to find out miscarriages in the Ministry. Several women of this turn are so earnest in contending for Hereditary right, that they wholly neglect the education of their sons and heirs; and are so taken up with their zeal for the church, that they cannot find time to teach their children their catechism. A Lady who thus intrudes

intrudes into the province of the men, was so astonishing a character among the old *Romans*, that when *Amesia* presented her self to speak before the Senate, they looked upon it as a prodigy, and sent messengers to inquire of the oracle, what it might portend to the Commonwealth?

It would be manifestly to the disadvantage of the *British* cause, should our pretty Loyalists profess an indifference in state-affairs, while their disaffected sisters are thus industrious to the prejudice of their country; and accordingly we have the satisfaction to find our she-associates are not idle upon this occasion. It is owing to the good principles of these his Majesty's fair and faithful subjects, that our country-women appear no less amiable in the eyes of the male-world, than they have done in former ages. For where a great number of flowers grow, the ground at a distance seems entirely covered with them, and we must walk into it, before we can distinguish the several weeds that spring up in such a beautiful mass of colours. Our great concern is, to find deformity can arise among so many charms, and that the most lovely parts of the creation can make themselves the most disagreeable. But it is an observation of the Philosophers, that the best things may be corrupted into the worst; and the ancients did not scruple to affirm, that the Furies and the Graces were of the same sex.

As I should do the nation and themselves good service, if I could draw the Ladies, who still hold out against his Majesty, into the interest of our present establishment, I shall propose to their serious consideration, the several inconveniencies which those among them undergo, who have not yet surrendered to the government.

They should first reflect on the great sufferings and persecutions to which they expose themselves by the obstinacy of their behaviour. They lose their elections in every club where they are set up for toasts. They are obliged by their principles to stick a patch on the most unbecoming side of their fore-heads. They forego the advantage of birth-day suits. They are insulted by the loyalty of claps and hisses every time they appear at a play. They receive no benefit from the army, and are never the better for all the young fellows that wear hats and feathers. They are forced to live in the country and feed their chicken; at the same time that they might shew themselves at Court, and appear in brocade, if they behaved themselves well. In short, what must go to the heart of every fine woman, they throw themselves quite out of the fashion.

The above-mentioned motive must have an influence upon the gay part of the sex; and as for those who are acted by more sublime and moral principles, they should consider, that they cannot signalize themselves as malecontents, without breaking through all the amiable instincts and softer virtues, which are peculiarly ornamental to womankind. Their timorous, gentle, modest behaviour; their affability, meekness, good-breeding, and many other beautiful dispositions of mind must be sacrificed to a blind and furious zeal for they do not know what. A man is startled when he sees a pretty bosom heaving with such party-rage, as is disagreeable even in that sex which is of a more coarse and rugged make. And yet such is our misfortune, that we sometimes see a pair of stays ready to burst with sedition; and hear the most masculine passions express in the sweetest voices. I have lately been told of a Country-gentlewoman, pretty much famed for this virility of behaviour in party-disputes, who, upon venting her notions very freely in a strange place, was carried before an honest Justice of the Peace. This prudent Magistrate observing her to be a large black woman, and finding by her discourse that she was no better than a rebel in a riding-hood, began to suspect her for my Lord *Nithisdale*; till a stranger came to her rescue, who assured him, with tears in his eyes, that he was her husband.

In the next place our *British* Ladies may consider, that by interesting themselves so zealously in the affairs of the publick, they are engaged, without any necessity, in the crimes which are often committed even by the best of parties, and which they are naturally exempted from by the privilege of their sex. The worst character a female could formerly arrive at, was of being an ill woman; but by their present conduct, she may likewise deserve the character of an ill subject. They come in for their share of political guilt, and have found a way to make themselves much greater criminals, than their mothers before them.

I have great hopes that these motives, when they are assisted by their own reflections, will incline the fair ones of the adverse party to come over to the national interest, in which their own is so highly concerned; especially if they consider, that by these superfluous employments which they take upon them as partisans, they do not only dip themselves in an unnecessary guilt, but are obnoxious to a grief and anguish of mind, which doth not properly fall within their lot. And here I would advise every one of these exasperated Ladies, who indulges that opprobrious eloquence which is so much in fashion, to reflect on *Æsop's* fable of the viper. *This little animal, says the old moralist, chancing to meet with a file, began to lick*

lick it with her tongue till the blood came; which gave her a very silly satisfaction, as imagining the blood came from the file, notwithstanding all the smart was in her own tongue.

N^o 27. *Friday, March 23.*

----- *dii visa secundant.*

Luc.

IT is an old observation, that a time of peace is always a time of Prodigies; for as our news-writers must adorn their papers with that which the criticks call, *The Marvellous*, they are forced in a dead calm of affairs, to ransack every element for proper amusements, and either to astonish their Readers from time to time with a strange and wonderful sight, or be content to lose their custom. The sea is generally filled with monsters when there are no fleets upon it. Mount *Ætna* immediately began to rage upon the extinction of the rebellion: and woe to the people of *Catanea*, if the peace continues; for they are sure to be shaken every week with earthquakes, till they are relieved by the siege of some other great town in *Europe*. The air has likewise contributed its quota of Prodigies. We had a blazing star by the last mail from *Genoa*; and in the present dearth of battels have been very opportunely entertained, by persons of undoubted credit, with a Civil war in the clouds, where our sharp-sighted malecontents discovered many objects invisible to an eye that is dimmed by *Whig*-principles.

I question not but this paper will fall in with the present humour, since it contains a very remarkable vision of a *Higbland Seer*, who is famous among the mountains, and known by the name of *Second-sighted-Sawney*. Had he been able to write, we might probably have seen this vision sooner in print; for it happened to him very early in the late hard winter; and is transmitted to me by a student at *Glasgow*, who took the whole relation from him, and stuck close to the facts, though he has delivered them in his own style.