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

In Four Volumes

**Addison, Joseph**

**London, 1721**

N° 181. Thursday, September 27.

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## POSTSCRIPT.

“ After you have dispatched these two important points of Grinning and Whistling, I hope you will oblige the world with some reflections upon Yawning, as I have seen it practised on a twelfth-night among other Christmas gambols, at the house of a very worthy gentleman, who always entertains his tenants at that time of the year. They yawn for a *Cheshire* cheese, and begin about mid-night, when the whole company is disposed to be drowsy. He that yawns widest, and at the same time so naturally as to produce the most yawns among the spectators, carries home the cheese. If you handle this subject as you ought, I question not but your paper will fet half the kingdom yawning, though I dare promise you it will never make any body fall asleep.

N<sup>o</sup> 181.*Thursday, September 27.*

*His lacrymis vitam damus, et miserescimur ultrò.* Virg.

I Am more pleased with a letter that is filled with touches of nature than of wit. The following one is of this kind.

S I R,

“ AMONG all the distresses which happen in families, I do not remember that you have touched upon the marriage of children without the consent of their parents. I am one of these unfortunate persons. I was about fifteen when I took the liberty to chuse for my self; and have ever since languished under the displeasure of an inexorable father, who, though he sees me happy in the best of husbands, and blessed with very fine children, can never be prevailed upon to forgive me. He was so kind to me before this unhappy accident, that indeed it makes my breach of duty, in some measure, inexcusable; and at the same time creates in me such a tendernefs towards him, that I love him above all things, and would die to be reconciled to him. I have thrown my self at his feet, and besought him with tears to par-

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“ don me; but he always pushes me away, and spurns me from him:  
 “ I have written several letters to him, but he will neither open nor re-  
 “ ceive them. About two years ago I sent my little boy to him, dressed  
 “ in a new apparel; but the child returned to me crying, because he  
 “ said his grand-father would not see him, and had ordered him to be  
 “ put out of his house. My mother is won over to my side, but dares  
 “ not mention me to my father for fear of provoking him. About a  
 “ month ago he lay sick upon his bed, and in great danger of his life:  
 “ I was pierced to the heart at the news, and could not forbear going  
 “ to enquire after his health. My mother took this opportunity of speak-  
 “ ing in my behalf: She told him with abundance of tears, that I was  
 “ come to see him, that I could not speak to her for weeping, and that  
 “ I should certainly break my heart if he refused at that time to give  
 “ me his blessing, and be reconciled to me. He was so far from re-  
 “ lenting towards me, that he bid her speak no more of me, unless she  
 “ had a mind to disturb him in his last moments; for, Sir, you must  
 “ know that he has the reputation of an honest and religious man, which  
 “ makes my misfortune so much the greater. God be thanked he is  
 “ since recovered: but his severe usage has given me such a blow, that  
 “ I shall soon sink under it, unless I may be relieved by any impressions  
 “ which the reading of this in your paper may make upon him.

*I am, &c.*

Of all hardnesses of heart, there is none so inexcusable as that of pa-  
 rents towards their children. An obstinate, inflexible, unforgiving tem-  
 per is odious upon all occasions, but here it is unnatural. The love, ten-  
 derness, and compassion which are apt to arise in us, towards those who  
 depend upon us, is that by which the whole world of life is upheld. The  
 supreme Being, by the transcendent excellency and goodness of his na-  
 ture, extends his Mercy towards all his works; and because his creatures  
 have not such a spontaneous benevolence and compassion towards those  
 who are under their care and protection, he has implanted in them an  
 instinct, that supplies the place of this inherent goodness. I have illu-  
 strated this kind of instinct in former papers, and have shewn how it runs  
 through all the species of brute creatures, as indeed the whole animal  
 creation subsists by it.

This instinct in man is more general and uncircumscribed than in  
 brutes, as being enlarged by the dictates of reason and duty. For if we  
 consider our selves attentively, we shall find that we are not only inclined

to

to love those who descend from us, but that we bear a kind of (σὸς) or, natural affection, to every thing which relies upon us for its good and preservation. Dependence is a perpetual call upon humanity, and a greater incitement to tenderness and pity than any other motive whatsoever.

The man therefore who, notwithstanding any passion or resentment, can overcome this powerful instinct, and extinguish natural affection, debases his mind even below brutality, frustrates, as much as in him lies, the great design of Providence, and strikes out of his nature one of the most divine principles that is planted in it.

Among innumerable arguments which might be brought against such an unreasonable Proceeding, I shall only insist on one. We make it the condition of our forgiveness that we forgive others. In our very prayers we desire no more than to be treated by this kind of retaliation. The case therefore before us seems to be what they call a *Case in Point*; the Relation between the child and father being what comes nearest to that between a creature and its Creator. If the father is inexorable to the child who has offended, let the offence be of never so high a nature, how will he address himself to the supreme Being, under the tender appellation of a father, and desire of him such a forgiveness as he himself refuses to grant?

To this I might add many other religious, as well as many prudential considerations; but if the last mentioned motive does not prevail, I despair of succeeding by any other, and shall therefore conclude my paper with a very remarkable story, which is recorded in an old chronicle published by *Freber* among the writers of the *German* history.

*Eginhart*, who was Secretary to *Charles* the Great, became exceeding popular by his behaviour in that post. His great abilities gained him the favour of his Master, and the esteem of the whole Court. *Imma*, the daughter of the Emperor, was so pleased with his person and conversation, that she fell in love with him. As she was one of the greatest beauties of the Age, *Eginhart* answered her with a more than equal return of passion. They stifled their flames for some time, under apprehension of the fatal consequences that might ensue. *Eginhart* at length resolving to hazard all, rather than live deprived of one whom his heart was so much set upon, conveyed himself one night into the Princess's apartment, and knocking gently at the door, was admitted as a person who had something to communicate to her from the Emperor. He was with her in private most part of the night; but upon his preparing to go away about  
break

break of day, he observed that there had fallen a great snow during his stay with the Princess. This very much perplexed him, lest the prints of his feet in the snow might make discoveries to the King, who often used to visit his daughter in the morning. He acquainted the Princess *Imma* with his fears; who, after some consultations upon the matter, prevailed upon him to let her carry him through the snow upon her own shoulders. It happened, that the Emperor not being able to sleep, was at that time up and walking in his chamber, when upon looking through the window he perceived his daughter tottering under her burden, and carrying his first Minister across the snow: which she had no sooner done, but she returned again with the utmost speed to her own apartment. The Emperor was extremely troubled and astonished at this accident; but resolved to speak nothing of it till a proper opportunity. In the mean time *Eginhart* knowing that what he had done could not be long a secret, determined to retire from Court; and in order to it begged the Emperor that he would be pleased to dismiss him, pretending a kind of discontent at his not having been rewarded for his long services. The Emperor would not give a direct answer to his petition, but told him he would think of it, and appointed a certain day when he would let him know his pleasure. He then called together the most faithful of his Counsellors, and acquainting them with his Secretary's crime, asked them their advice in so delicate an affair. They most of them gave their opinion, that the person could not be too severely punished who had thus dishonoured his Master. Upon the whole debate, the Emperor declared it was his opinion, that *Eginhart's* punishment would rather encrease than diminish the shame of his family, and that therefore he thought it the most adviseable to wear out the memory of the fact, by marrying him to his daughter. Accordingly *Eginhart* was called in, and acquainted by the Emperor, that he should no longer have any pretence of complaining his services were not rewarded, for that the Princess *Imma* should be given him in marriage, with a Dower suitable to her quality; which was soon after performed accordingly.



Saturday,