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

In Four Volumes

**Addison, Joseph**

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*Languish, Absence, Cupid, Heart, Eyes, Hang, Drown,* and the like. This would very much abridge the Lover's pains in this way of writing a letter, as it would enable him to express the most useful and significant words with a single touch of the needle.

*Formam quidem ipsam, Marce fili, et tanquam faciem honesti vides: quæ si oculis cerneretur, mirabiles amores (ut ait Plato) excitaret sapientie.* Tull. Offic.

**I** Do not remember to have read any discourse written expressly upon the beauty and loveliness of virtue, without considering it as a duty, and as the means of making us happy both now and hereafter. I design therefore this Speculation as an essay upon that subject, in which I shall consider virtue no further than as it is in it self of an amiable nature, after having premised, that I understand by the word Virtue such a general notion as is affixed to it by the writers of morality, and which by devout men generally goes under the name of Religion, and by men of the world under the name of Honour.

Hypocrisy it self does great honour, or rather justice, to religion, and tacitly acknowledges it to be an ornament to humane nature. The Hypocrite would not be at so much pains to put on the appearance of virtue, if he did not know it was the most proper and effectual means to gain the love and esteem of mankind.

We learn from *Hierocles* it was a common saying among the heathens, that the wise man hates no body, but only loves the virtuous.

*Tully* has a very beautiful gradation of thoughts, to shew how amiable virtue is. We love a virtuous man, says he, who lives in the remotest parts of the earth, though we are altogether out of the reach of his virtue, and can receive from it no manner of benefit; nay, one who died several ages ago, raises a secret fondness and benevolence for him in our minds, when we read his story: nay, what is still more, one who has been the



enemy of our country, provided his wars were regulated by justice and humanity, as in the instance of *Pyrrhus*, whom *Tully* mentions on this occasion in opposition to *Hannibal*. Such is the natural beauty and loveliness of virtue.

Stoicism, which was the pedantry of Virtue, ascribes all good qualifications of what kind soever to the virtuous man. Accordingly *Cato*, in the character *Tully* has left of him, carried matters so far, that he would not allow any one but a virtuous man to be handsome. This indeed looks more like a philosophical rant, than the real opinion of a wise man; yet this was what *Cato* very seriously maintained. In short, the Stoics thought they could not sufficiently represent the excellence of virtue, if they did not comprehend in the notion of it all possible perfection; and therefore did not only suppose, that it was transcendently beautiful in it self, but that it made the very body amiable, and banished every kind of deformity from the person in whom it resided.

It is a common observation, that the most abandoned to all sense and goodness, are apt to wish those who are related to them of a different character; and it is very observable, that none are more struck with the charms of virtue in the fair sex, than those who by their very admiration of it are carried to a desire of ruining it.

A virtuous mind in a fair body is indeed a fine picture in a good light, and therefore it is no wonder that it makes the beautiful sex all over Charms.

As virtue in general is of an amiable and lovely nature, there are some particular kinds of it which are more so than others, and these are such as dispose us to do good to mankind. Temperance and abstinence, faith and devotion, are in themselves perhaps as laudable as any other virtues; but those which make a man popular and beloved, are justice, charity, munificence, and in short all the qualifications that render us beneficial to each other. For which reason even an extravagant man, who has nothing else to recommend him but a false generosity, is often more beloved and esteemed than a person of a much more finished character, who is defective in this particular.

The two great ornaments of virtue, which shew her in the most advantageous views, and make her altogether lovely, are cheerfulness and good nature. These generally go together, as a man cannot be agreeable to others who is not easy within himself. They are both very requisite in a virtuous mind, to keep out melancholy from the many serious thoughts it is engaged in, and to hinder its natural hatred of vice from souring into severity and censoriousness.



If virtue is of this amiable nature, what can we think of those who can look upon it with an eye of hatred and ill-will, or can suffer their aversion for a party to blot out all the Merit of the person who is engaged in it. A man must be excessively stupid, as well as uncharitable, who believes that there is no virtue but on his own side, and that there are not men as honest as himself who may differ from him in political principles. Men may oppose one another in some particulars, but ought not to carry their hatred to those qualities which are of so amiable a nature in themselves, and have nothing to do with the points in dispute. Men of virtue, though of different interests, ought to consider themselves as more nearly united with one another, than with the vicious part of mankind, who embark with them in the same civil concerns. We should bear the same love towards a man of honour, who is a living antagonist, which *Tully* tells us in the forementioned passage every one naturally does to an enemy that is dead. In short, we should esteem virtue though in a foe, and abhor vice though in a friend.

I speak this with an eye to those cruel treatments which men of all sides are apt to give the characters of those who do not agree with them. How many persons of undoubted probity and exemplary virtue, on either side, are blackned and defamed? How many men of honour exposed to public obloquy and reproach? Those therefore who are either the instruments or abettors in such infernal dealings, ought to be looked upon as persons who make use of religion to promote their cause, not of their cause to promote religion.

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N<sup>o</sup> 245. *Tuesday, December II.*

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*Ficta voluptatis causâ sint proxima veris.* Hor.

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**T**HERE is nothing which one regards so much with an eye of mirth and pity, as Innocence when it has in it a dash of folly. At the same time that one esteems the virtue, one is tempted to laugh at the simplicity which accompanies it. When a man is made up wholly of the Dove, without the least grain of the Serpent in his composition