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

In Four Volumes

**Addison, Joseph**

**London, 1721**

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N<sup>o</sup> 295. *Thursday, February 7.*

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*Prodiga non sentit pereuntem femina censum:*

*At velut exhaustâ redivivus pullulet arcâ*

*Nummus, et è pleno semper tollatur acervo,*

*Non unquam reputat quanti sibi gaudia constant.*

Juv.

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Mr. SPECTATOR,

“ I Am turned of my great climacteric, and am naturally a man of a  
 “ meek temper. About a dozen years ago I was married, for my  
 “ sins, to a young woman of a good family, and of an high spirit;  
 “ but could not bring her to close with me, before I had entered into a  
 “ treaty with her longer than that of the grand Alliance. Among other  
 “ articles, it was therein stipulated, that she should have 400*l.* a year for  
 “ *Pin-money*, which I obliged my self to pay quarterly into the hands of  
 “ one who acted as her Plenipotentiary in that affair. I have ever since  
 “ religiously observed my part in this solemn agreement. Now, Sir, so  
 “ it is, that the Lady has had several children since I married her; to  
 “ which, if I should credit our malicious neighbours, her *Pin-money* has  
 “ not a little contributed. The education of these my children, who,  
 “ contrary to my expectation, are born to me every year, freights me  
 “ so much that I have begged their mother to free me from the obliga-  
 “ tion of the above-mentioned *Pin-money*, that it may go towards making  
 “ a provision for her family. This proposal makes her noble blood swell  
 “ in her veins, insomuch that finding me a little tardy in her last quar-  
 “ ter’s payment, she threatens me every day to arrest me; and proceeds  
 “ so far as to tell me, that if I do not do her justice, I shall dye in a jail.  
 “ To this she adds, when her passion will let her argue calmly, that she  
 “ has several play-debts on her hand, which must be discharged very sud-  
 “ denly, and that she cannot lose her money as becomes a woman of her  
 “ fashion,



“ fashion, if she makes me any abatements in this article. I hope, Sir,  
 “ you will take an occasion from hence to give your opinion upon a sub-  
 “ ject which you have not yet touched, and inform us if there are any  
 “ precedents for this usage among our ancestors; or whether you find  
 “ any mention of *Pin-money* in *Grotius*, *Puffendorf*, or any other of the  
 “ Civilians.

*I am ever the humblest of your Admirers, Josiah Fribble, Esq;*

As there is no man living who is a more professed advocate for the fair sex than my self, so there is none that would be more unwilling to invade any of their ancient rights and privileges; but as the doctrine of *Pin-money* is of a very late date, unknown to our great grandmothers, and not yet received by many of our modern Ladies, I think it is for the interest of both sexes to keep it from spreading.

Mr. *Fribble* may not, perhaps, be much mistaken where he intimates, that the supplying a man's wife with *Pin-money*, is furnishing her with arms against himself, and in a manner becoming accessary to his own dishonour. We may, indeed, generally observe, that in proportion as a woman is more or less beautiful, and her husband advanced in years, she stands in need of a greater or less number of *Pins*, and upon a treaty of marriage, rises or falls in her demands accordingly. It must likewise be owned, that high quality in a Mistress does very much inflame this article in the marriage reckoning.

But where the age and circumstances of both parties are pretty much upon a level, I cannot but think the insisting upon *Pin-money* is very extraordinary; and yet we find several matches broken off upon this very head. What would a foreigner, or one who is a stranger to this practice, think of a Lover that forsakes his Mistress, because he is not willing to keep her in *Pins*; but what would he think of the Mistress, should he be informed that she asks five or six hundred pounds a year for this use? Should a man unacquainted with our customs be told the sums which are allowed in *Great Britain*, under the title of *Pin-money*, what a prodigious consumption of *Pins* would he think there was in this island? *A Pin a day*, says our frugal proverb, *is a groat a year*; so that according to this calculation, my friend *Fribble's* wife must every year make use of eight millions six hundred and forty thousand *new Pins*.

I am not ignorant that our *British* Ladies alledge they comprehend under this general term several other conveniencies of life; I could there-  
 fore



fore wish, for the honour of my country-women, that they had rather called it *Needle-money*, which might have implied something of good-houfewifry, and not have given the malicious world occasion to think, that dress and trifle have always the uppermost place in a woman's thoughts.

I know several of my fair Readers urge, in defence of this practice, that it is but a necessary provision to make for themselves, in case their husband proves a churl or a miser; so that they consider this allowance as a kind of Alimony, which they may lay their claim to without actually separating from their husbands. But with submission, I think a woman who will give up her self to a man in marriage, where there is the least room for such an apprehension, and trust her person to one whom she will not rely on for the common necessaries of life, may very properly be accused (in the phrase of an homely proverb) of being *penny wise and pound foolish*.

It is observed of over-cautious Generals, that they never engage in a battel without securing a retreat, in case the event should not answer their expectations; on the other hand, the greatest Conquerors have burnt their ships, and broke down the bridges behind them, as being determined either to succeed or die in the engagement. In the same manner I should very much suspect a woman who takes such precautions for her retreat, and contrives methods how she may live happily, without the affection of one to whom she joins her self for life. Separate purses, between man and wife, are, in my opinion, as unnatural as separate beds. A marriage cannot be happy, where the pleasures, inclinations, and interests of both parties are not the same. There is no greater incitement to love in the mind of man, than the sense of a person's depending upon him for her ease and happiness; as a woman uses all her endeavours to please the person whom she looks upon as her honour, her comfort, and her support.

For this reason I am not very much surprized at the behaviour of a rough country Squire, who, being not a little shocked at the proceeding of a young widow that would not recede from her demands of *Pin-money*, was so enraged at her mercenary temper, that he told her in great wrath, "As much as she thought him her slave, he would shew "all the world he did not care a pin for her. Upon which he flew out of the room, and never saw her more.

Socrates,



*Socrates*, in *Plato's Alcibiades*, says, he was informed by one, who had travelled through *Persia*, that as he passed over a tract of lands, and enquired what the name of the place was, they told him it was the *Queen's girdle*; to which he adds, that another wide field which lay by it, was called the *Queen's veil*, and that in the same manner there was a large portion of ground set aside for every part of her Majesty's dress. These lands might not be improperly called the *Queen of Persia's Pin-money*.

I remember my friend, Sir *ROGER*, who I dare say never read this passage in *Plato*, told me some time since, that upon his courting the perverse widow (of whom I have given an account in former papers) he had disposed of an hundred acres in a *Diamond-ring*, which he would have presented her with, had she thought fit to accept it; and that upon her wedding-day she should have carried on her head fifty of the tallest Oaks upon his estate. He further informed me that he would have given her a *Colepit* to keep her in clean linnen, that he would have allowed her the profits of a *Windmill* for her fans, and have presented her, once in three years, with the sheering of his sheep for her under-petticoats. To which the Knight always adds, that though he did not care for fine cloaths himself, there should not have been a woman in the country better dressed than my *Lady Coverly*. Sir *ROGER* perhaps, may in this, as well as in many other of his devices, appear something odd and singular, but if the humour of *Pin-money* prevails, I think it would be very proper for every Gentleman of an estate to mark out so many acres of it under the title of *The Pins*.



Tuesday,