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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

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N^o 299. *Tuesday, February 12.*

*Malo Venusinam, quam te, Cornelia, mater
 Gracchorum, si cum magnis virtutibus affers
 Grande supercilium, et numeras in dote triumphos.
 Tolle tuum precor Annibalem victumque Syphacem
 In castris, et cum totâ Carthagine migra.*

Juv.

IT is observed, that a man improves more by reading the story of a person eminent for prudence and virtue, than by the finest rules and precepts of morality. In the same manner a representation of those calamities and misfortunes which a weak man suffers from wrong measures, and ill-concerted schemes of life, is apt to make a deeper impression upon our minds, than the wisest maxims and instructions that can be given us, for avoiding the like follies and indiscretions in our own private conduct. It is for this reason that I lay before my reader the following letter, and leave it with him to make his own use of it, without adding any reflections of my own upon the subject-matter.

Mr. SPECTATOR,

HAVING carefully perused a letter sent you by *Josiah Fribble*, Esq; with your subsequent discourse upon *Pin-money*, I do presume to trouble you with an account of my own case, which I look upon to be no less deplorable than that of Squire *Fribble*. I am a person of no extraction, having begun the world with a small parcel of rusty iron, and was for some years commonly known by the name of *Jack Anvil*. I have naturally a very happy Genius for getting money, infomuch that by the age of five and twenty I had scraped together four thousand two hundred pounds, five shillings, and a few odd pence. I then launched out into considerable business, and became a bold trader both by sea and land, which in a few years raised me a very considerable fortune. For these my good services I was knighted in the

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" thirty

“ thirty fifth year of my age, and lived with great dignity among my
“ City-neighbours by the name of Sir *John Anvil*. Being in my tem-
“ per very ambitious, I was now bent upon making a family, and ac-
“ cordingly resolv’d that my descendants should have a dash of good
“ blood in their veins. In order to this I made love to the Lady *Mary*
“ *Oddly*, an indigent young woman of Quality. To cut short the mar-
“ riage treaty, I threw her a *Charte Blanche*, as our news-papers call it,
“ desiring her to write upon it her own terms. She was very concise in
“ her demands, insisting only that the disposal of my fortune, and the
“ regulation of my family, should be entirely in her hands. Her father
“ and brothers appeared exceedingly averse to this match, and would not
“ see me for some time; but at present are so well reconciled, that they
“ dine with me almost every day, and have borrowed considerable sums
“ of me; which my Lady *Mary* very often twits me with, when she
“ would shew me how kind her relations are to me. She had no Por-
“ tion, as I told you before, but what she wanted in fortune, she makes
“ up in spirit. She at first changed my name to Sir *John Envil*, and at
“ present writes her self *Mary Enville*. I have had some children by
“ her, whom she has christned with the Surnames of her family, in order,
“ as she tells me, to wear out the homeliness of their parentage by the
“ father’s side. Our eldest son is the honourable *Oddly Enville*, Esq;
“ and our eldest daughter *Harriot Enville*. Upon her first coming into
“ my family, she turned off a parcel of very careful servants, who had
“ been long with me, and introduced in their stead a couple of Black-
“ a-moors, and three or four very genteel fellows in laced liveries, be-
“ sides her *French*-woman, who is perpetually making a noise in the
“ house in a language which no body understands, except my Lady
“ *Mary*. She next set her self to reform every room of my house, ha-
“ ving glazed all my chimney-pieces with looking-glass, and planted
“ every corner with such heaps of *China*, that I am obliged to move
“ about my own house with the greatest caution and circumspection,
“ for fear of hurting some of our brittle furniture. She makes an illumi-
“ nation once a week with wax-candles in one of the largest rooms, in
“ order, as she phrases it, to see company. At which time she always
“ desires me to be abroad, or to confine my self to the cock-loft, that I
“ may not disgrace her among her visitants of quality. Her footmen, as
“ I told you before, are such beaus, that I do not much care for asking
“ them questions; when I do, they answer me with a saucy frown, and
“ say that every thing, which I find fault with, was done by my Lady
“ *Mary’s*

“ *Mary’s* order. She tells me that she intends they shall wear swords
 “ with their next liveries, having lately observed the footmen of two or
 “ three persons of Quality hanging behind the coach with swords by their
 “ sides. As soon as the first honey-moon was over, I represented to
 “ her the unreasonableness of those daily innovations which she made in
 “ my family; but she told me I was no longer to consider my self as Sir
 “ *John Anvil*, but as her husband; and added, with a frown, that I did
 “ not seem to know who she was. I was surpris’d to be treated thus, after
 “ such familiarities as had pass’d between us. But she has since given
 “ me to know, that whatever freedoms she may sometimes indulge me
 “ in, she expects in general to be treated with the respect that is due to
 “ her birth and quality. Our children have been trained up from their
 “ infancy with so many accounts of their mother’s family, that they know
 “ the stories of all the great men and women it has produced. Their
 “ mother tells them, that such an one commanded in such a sea engage-
 “ ment, that their great Grandfather had a horse shot under him at
 “ *Edgehill*, that their Uncle was at the siege of *Buda*, and that her mo-
 “ ther danced in a ball at court with the Duke of *Monmouth*; with abun-
 “ dance of fiddle-faddle of the same nature. I was, the other day, a
 “ little out of countenance at a question of my little daughter *Harriot*,
 “ who asked me, with a great deal of innocence, why I never told them
 “ of the generals and admirals that had been in *my* family. As for my
 “ eldest son *Oddly*, he has been so spirited up by his mother, that if he
 “ does not mend his manners I shall go near to disinherit him. He drew
 “ his sword upon me before he was nine years old, and told me, that he
 “ expected to be us’d like a gentleman; upon my offering to correct
 “ him for his insolence, my Lady *Mary* stept in between us, and told
 “ me, that I ought to consider there was some difference between his
 “ mother and mine. She is perpetually finding out the features of her
 “ own relations in every one of my children, though, by the way, I
 “ have a little chub-faced boy as like me as he can stare, if I durst say so;
 “ but what most angers me, when she sees me playing with any of them
 “ upon my knee, she has begged me more than once to converse with
 “ the children as little as possible, that they may not learn any of my
 “ awkward tricks.

“ You must farther know, since I am opening my heart to you, that
 “ she thinks her self my superior in sense, as much as she is in quality,
 “ and therefore treats me like a plain well-meaning man, who does not
 “ know the world. She dictates to me in my own business, sets me right

“ in point of trade, and if I disagree with her about any of my ships at
 “ sea, wonders that I will dispute with her, when I know very well that
 “ her great grandfather was a Flag officer.

“ To compleat my sufferings, she has teased me for this quarter of a
 “ year last past, to remove into one of the Squares at the other end of
 “ the town, promising, for my encouragement, that I shall have as good
 “ a Cock-loft as any Gentleman in the Square; to which the honourable
 “ *Oddly Enville*, Esq; always adds, like a Jack-a-napes as he is, that he
 “ hopes it will be as near the Court as possible.

“ In short, Mr. SPECTATOR, I am so much out of my natural ele-
 “ ment, that to recover my old way of life I would be content to begin
 “ the world again, and be plain *Jack Anvill*; but alas! I am in for life,
 “ and am bound to subscribe my self, with great sorrow of heart,

Your humble Servant, John Enville, Knt.

N^o 305. *Tuesday, February 19.*

*Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis
 Tempus eget-----*

Virg.

OUR late News-papers being full of the project now on foot in the
 Court of *France*, for establishing a Political Academy, and I my
 self having received Letters from several Virtuoso's among my
 foreign correspondents, which give some light into that affair, I intend
 to make it the subject of this day's Speculation. A general account of
 this project may be met with in the *Daily Courant* of last *Friday* in the
 following words, translated from the *Gazette of Amsterdam*.

Paris, February 12. “ It is confirmed, that the King has resolved to
 “ establish a new Academy for Politics, of which the *Marquess de Tor-*
 “ *cy*, Minister and Secretary of State, is to be protector. Six *Academi-*
 “ *cians* are to be chosen, endowed with proper talents, for beginning to
 “ form this Academy, into which no person is to be admitted under
 “ twenty