



UNIVERSITÄTS-
BIBLIOTHEK
PADERBORN

Universitätsbibliothek Paderborn

The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

London, 1721

N° 387. Saturday, May 24.

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-53621](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-53621)

so much as your Nightingale. Ah, Mr. SPECTATOR! the many moon-light nights that I have walked by my self, and thought on the widow by the musick of the Nightingale! He here fetched a deep sigh, and was falling into a fit of musing, when a mask, who came behind him, gave him a gentle tap upon the shoulder, and asked him if he would drink a bottle of Mead with her? But the Knight being startled at so unexpected a familiarity, and displeas'd to be interrupted in his thoughts of the widow, told her, *She was a wanton baggage*, and bid her go about her business.

We concluded our walk with a glass of *Burton-ale*, and a slice of *Hung-beef*. When we had done eating our selves, the Knight called a Waiter to him, and bid him carry the remainder to a Waterman that had but one leg. I perceived the fellow stared upon him at the oddness of the message, and was going to be faucy; upon which I ratified the Knight's commands with a peremptory look.

As we were going out of the garden, my old friend thinking himself oblig'd, as a member of the *Quorum*, to animadvert upon the morals of the place, told the Mistress of the house, who sat at the bar, That he should be a better customer to her garden, if there were more Nightingales and fewer Strumpets.

N^o 387.

Saturday, May 24.

Quid purè tranquillet-----

Hor.

IN my last *Saturday's* paper I spoke of *Chearfulness* as it is a *Moral* habit of the mind, and accordingly mentioned such moral motives as are apt to cherish and keep alive this happy temper in the Soul of man: I shall now consider *Chearfulness* in its natural state, and reflect on those motives to it, which are indifferent either as to virtue or vice.

Chearfulness is, in the first place, the best promoter of health. Repinings, and secret murmurs of heart, give imperceptible strokes to those delicate fibres of which the vital parts are compos'd, and wear out the machine insensibly; not to mention those violent ferments which they stir up in the blood, and those irregular disturbed motions which they raise in

M m m 2

the

the animal spirits. I scarce remember, in my own observation, to have met with any old men, or with such, who (to use our *English* phrase) *wear well*, that had not at least a certain indolence in their humour, if not a more than ordinary gaiety and chearfulness of heart. The truth of it is, health and chearfulness mutually beget each other; with this difference, that we seldom meet with a great degree of health which is not attended with a certain chearfulness, but very often see chearfulness where there is no great degree of health.

Chearfulness bears the same friendly regard to the mind as to the body: it banishes all anxious care and discontent, soothes and composes the passions, and keeps the soul in a perpetual calm. But having already touched on this last consideration, I shall here take notice, that the world, in which we are placed, is filled with innumerable objects that are proper to raise and keep alive this happy temper of mind.

If we consider the world in its subserviency to man, one would think it was made for our use; but if we consider it in its natural beauty and harmony, one would be apt to conclude it was made for our pleasure. The Sun, which is as the great soul of the universe, and produces all the necessaries of life, has a particular influence in chearing the mind of man, and making the heart glad.

Those several living creatures which are made for our service or sustenance, at the same time either fill the woods with their music, furnish us with game, or raise pleasing ideas in us by the delightfulness of their appearance. Fountains, lakes, and rivers are as refreshing to the imagination, as to the soil through which they pass.

There are writers of great distinction, who have made it an argument for Providence, that the whole earth is covered with green, rather than with any other colour, as being such a right mixture of light and shade, that it comforts and strengthens the eye instead of weakening or grieving it. For this reason several painters have a green cloth hanging near them, to ease the eye upon, after too great an application to their colouring. A famous modern Philosopher accounts for it in the following manner: All colours that are more luminous, over-power and dissipate the animal spirits which are employed in sight; on the contrary, those that are more obscure do not give the animal spirits a sufficient exercise; whereas the rays that produce in us the idea of green, fall upon the eye in such a due proportion, that they give the animal spirits their proper play, and by keeping up the struggle in a just ballance, excite a very pleasing and agreeable sensation. Let the cause be what it will, the effect is certain, for
which

which reason the Poets ascribe to this particular colour the epithet of *Chearful*.

To consider further this double end in the works of nature, and how they are at the same time both useful and entertaining, we find that the most important parts in the vegetable world are those which are the most beautiful. These are the seeds by which the several races of plants are propagated and continued, and which are always lodged in flowers or blossoms. Nature seems to hide her principal design, and to be industrious in making the earth gay and delightful, while she is carrying on her great work, and intent upon her own preservation. The husbandman after the same manner is employed in laying out the whole country into a kind of garden or landskip, and making every thing smile about him, whilst in reality he thinks of nothing but of the harvest, and increase which is to arise from it.

We may further observe how Providence has taken care to keep up this chearfulness in the mind of man, by having formed it after such a manner, as to make it capable of conceiving delight from several objects which seem to have very little use in them; as from the wildness of rocks and desarts, and the like grotesque parts of nature. Those who are versed in Philosophy may still carry this consideration higher, by observing that if Matter had appeared to us endowed only with those real qualities which is actually possesses, it would have made but a very joyless and uncomfortable figure; and why has Providence given it a power of producing in us such imaginary qualities, and tastes, and colours, sounds and smells, heat and cold, but that man, while he is conversant in the lower stations of nature, might have his mind cheared and delighted with agreeable sensations? In short, the whole universe is a kind of Theatre filled with objects that either raise in us pleasure, amusement, or admiration.

The Reader's own thoughts will suggest to him the vicissitude of day and night, the change of seasons, with all that variety of scenes which diversify the face of nature, and fill the mind with a perpetual succession of beautiful and pleasing images.

I shall not here mention the several entertainments of art, with the pleasures of friendship, books, conversation, and other accidental diversions of life, because I would only take notice of such incitements to a chearful temper, as offer themselves to persons of all ranks and conditions, and which may sufficiently shew us that Providence did not design this world should be filled with murmurs and repinings, or that the heart of man should be involved in gloom and melancholy.

I the more inculcate this Chearfulness of temper, as it is a virtue in which our countrymen are observed to be more deficient than any other nation. Melancholy is a kind of Demon that haunts our island, and often conveys her self to us in an easterly wind. A celebrated *French* Novelist, in opposition to those who begin their romances with the flowry season of the year, enters on his story thus; *In the gloomy month of November, when the people of England hang and drown themselves, a disconsolate lover walked out into the fields, &c.*

Every one ought to fence against the temper of his climate or constitution, and frequently to indulge in himself those considerations which may give him a serenity of mind, and enable him to bear up chearfully against those little evils and misfortunes which are common to human nature, and which by a right improvement of them will produce a satiety of joy, and an uninterrupted happiness.

At the same time that I would engage my Reader to consider the world in its most agreeable lights, I must own there are many evils which naturally spring up amidst the entertainments that are provided for us; but these, if rightly considered, should be far from overcasting the mind with sorrow, or destroying that chearfulness of temper which I have been recommending. This interspersion of evil with good, and pain with pleasure, in the works of nature, is very truly ascribed by Mr. *Locke*, in his Essay on human understanding, to a moral reason, in the following words:

Beyond all this, we may find another reason why God hath scattered up and down several degrees of pleasure and pain, in all the things that environ and affect us, and blended them together, in almost all that our thoughts and senses have to do with; that we finding imperfection, dissatisfaction, and want of compleat happiness in all the enjoyments which the creatures can afford us, might be led to seek it in the enjoyment of him, with whom there is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore.



Thursday,