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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

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N^o 413. Tuesday, June 24.----- *Causa latet, vis est notissima* ----- Ovid.

THOUGH in yesterday's paper we considered how every thing that is *Great, New, or Beautiful*, is apt to affect the imagination with pleasure, we must own that it is impossible for us to assign the necessary cause of this pleasure, because we know neither the nature of an Idea, nor the substance of an human Soul, which might help us to discover the conformity or disagreeableness of the one to the other; and therefore, for want of such a light, all that we can do in speculations of this kind, is to reflect on those operations of the Soul that are most agreeable, and to range, under their proper heads, what is pleasing or displeasing to the mind, without being able to trace out the several necessary and efficient causes from whence the pleasure or displeasure arises.

Final Causes lye more bare and open to our observation, as there are often a greater variety that belong to the same effect; and these, though they are not altogether so satisfactory, are generally more useful than the other, as they give us greater occasion of admiring the goodness and wisdom of the first contriver.

One of the final causes of our delight, in any thing that is *great*, may be this. The supreme Author of our Being has so formed the Soul of man, that nothing but himself can be its last, adequate, and proper happiness. Because, therefore, a great part of our happiness must arise from the contemplation of his being, that he might give our Souls a just relish of such a contemplation, he has made them naturally delight in the apprehension of what is great or unlimited. Our admiration, which is a very pleasing motion of the mind, immediately rises at the consideration of any object that takes up a great deal of room in the fancy, and, by consequence, will improve into the highest pitch of astonishment and devotion when we contemplate his nature, that is neither circumscribed
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by time nor place, nor to be comprehended by the largest capacity of a created Being.

He has annexed a secret pleasure to the idea of any thing that is *new* or *uncommon*, that he might encourage us in the pursuit after knowledge, and engage us to search into the wonders of his creation; for every new idea brings such a pleasure along with it, as rewards any pains we have taken in its acquisition, and consequently serves as a motive to put us upon fresh discoveries.

He has made every thing that is *beautiful in our own species* pleasant, that all creatures might be tempted to multiply their kind, and fill the world with inhabitants; for it is very remarkable that where-ever nature is cross in the production of a monster (the result of any unnatural mixture) the breed is incapable of propagating its likeness, and of founding a new order of creatures; so that unless all animals were allured by the beauty of their own species, generation would be at an end, and the earth unpeopled.

In the last place, he has made every thing that is beautiful in all other objects pleasant, or rather has made so many objects appear beautiful, that he might render the whole Creation more gay and delightful. He has given almost every thing about us the power of raising an agreeable idea in the imagination: so that it is impossible for us to behold his works with coldness or indifference, and to survey so many beauties without a secret satisfaction and complacency. Things would make but a poor appearance to the eye, if we saw them only in their proper figures and motions: and what reason can we assign for their exciting in us many of those ideas which are different from any thing that exists in the objects themselves, (for such are light and colours) were not it to add super-numerary ornaments to the universe, and make it more agreeable to the imagination? We are every where entertained with pleasing shows and apparitions, we discover imaginary glories in the heavens, and in the earth, and see some of this visionary beauty poured out upon the whole Creation; but what a rough unsightly sketch of nature should we be entertained with, did all her colouring disappear, and the several distinctions of light and shade vanish? In short, our Souls are at present delightfully lost and bewildered in a pleasing delusion, and we walk about like the enchanted Hero of a Romance, who sees beautiful castles, woods and meadows; and at the same time hears the warbling of birds, and the purring of streams; but upon the finishing of some secret spell, the fantastick scene breaks up, and the disconsolate Knight finds himself on a barren heath,

heath, or in a solitary desert. It is not improbable that something like this may be the state of the Soul after its first separation, in respect of the images it will receive from matter, though indeed the ideas of colours are so pleasing and beautiful in the imagination, that it is possible the Soul will not be deprived of them, but perhaps find them excited by some other occasional cause, as they are at present by the different impressions of the subtle matter on the organ of sight.

I have here supposed that my Reader is acquainted with that great modern discovery, which is at present universally acknowledged by all the enquirers into natural Philosophy: namely, that light and colours, as apprehended by the imagination, are only ideas in the mind, and not qualities that have any existence in matter. As this is a truth which has been proved incontestably by many modern Philosophers, and is indeed one of the finest speculations in that science, if the *English* reader would see the notion explained at large, he may find it in the eighth chapter of the second book of Mr. *Lock's* Essay on human Understanding.

N^o 414. *Wednesday, June 25.*

----- *Alterius sic*
Altera poscit opem res et conjurat amicè. Hor.

IF we consider the works of *Nature* and *Art*, as they are qualified to entertain the Imagination, we shall find the last very defective, in comparison of the former; for though they may sometimes appear as beautiful or strange, they can have nothing in them of that vastness and immensity, which afford so great an entertainment to the mind of the beholder. The one may be as polite and delicate as the other, but can never shew her self so august and magnificent in the design. There is something more bold and masterly in the rough careless strokes of *Nature*, than in the nice touches and embellishments of *Art*. The beauties of the most stately garden or palace lie in a narrow compass, the imagination immediately runs them over, and requires something else to gratifie her; but, in the wide fields of *Nature*, the sight wanders up and down with-
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