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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

London, 1721

N° 433. Thursday, July 17.

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

There is not a sight in nature so mortifying as that of a distracted person, when his imagination is troubled, and his whole Soul disordered and confus'd. *Babylon* in ruins is not so melancholy a spectacle. But to quit so disagreeable a subject, I shall only consider, by way of conclusion, what an infinite advantage this faculty gives an almighty Being over the Soul of man, and how great a measure of happiness or misery we are capable of receiving from the imagination only.

We have already seen the influence that one man has over the fancy of another, and with what ease he conveys into it a variety of imagery; how great a power then may we suppose lodged in him, who knows all the ways of affecting the Imagination, who can infuse what ideas he pleases, and fill those ideas with terrour or delight to what degree he thinks fit? He can excite images in the mind, without the help of words, and make scenes rise up before us and seem present to the eye, without the assistance of bodies or exterior objects. He can transport the Imagination with such beautiful and glorious visions, as cannot possibly enter into our present conceptions, or haunt it with such ghastly spectres and apparitions, as would make us hope for annihilation, and think existence no better than a curse. In short, he can so exquisitely ravish or torture the Soul through this single faculty, as might suffice to make up the whole Heaven or Hell of any finite Being.

N^o 433. *Thursday, July 17.*

*Perlege Mæonio cantatas carmine ranas,
Et frontem nugis solvere disce meis.* Mart.

THE moral world, as consisting of males and females, is of a mixt nature, and filled with several customs, fashions and ceremonies, which would have no place in it, were there but *one sex*. Had our species no females in it, men would be quite different creatures from what they are at present; their endeavours to please the opposite sex, polishes and refines them out of those manners which are most natural to them, and often sets them upon modelling themselves, not according to

to the plans which they approve in their own opinions, but according to those plans which they think are most agreeable to the Female world. In a word, man would not only be an unhappy, but a rude unfinished creature, were he conversant with none but those of his own make.

Women, on the other side, are apt to form themselves in every thing with regard to that other half of reasonable creatures, with whom they are here blended and confus'd; their thoughts are ever turned upon appearing amiable to the other sex; they talk, and move, and smile, with a design upon us; every feature of their faces, every part of their dress is fill'd with snares and allurements. There would be no such animals as Prudes or Coquettes in the world, were there not such an animal as man. In short, it is the male that gives charms to womankind, that produces an air in their faces, a grace in their motions, a softness in their voices, and a delicacy in their complections.

As this mutual regard between the two sexes tends to the improvement of each of them, we may observe that men are apt to degenerate into rough and brutal natures, who live as if there were no such things as women in the world; as on the contrary, women, who have an indifference or aversion for their counter-parts in human nature, are generally sower and unamiable, fluttish and censorious.

I am led into this train of thoughts by a little manuscript which is lately fallen into my hands, and which I shall communicate to the Reader, as I have done some other curious pieces of the same nature, without troubling him with any enquiries about the Author of it. It contains a summary account of two different states which bordered upon one another. The one was a Commonwealth of *Amazons*, or women without men; the other was a Republick of males that had not a woman in their whole community. As these two states bordered upon one another, it was their way, it seems, to meet upon their frontiers at a certain season of the year, where those among the men who had not made their choice in any former meeting, associated themselves with particular women, whom they were afterwards obliged to look upon as their wives in every one of these yearly rencounters. The children that sprung from this alliance, if males, were sent to their respective fathers; if females, continued with their mothers. By means of this anniversary carnival, which lasted about a week, the Commonwealths were recruited from time to time, and supplied with their respective subjects.

These two States were engaged together in a perpetual league, offensive and defensive, so that if any foreign Potentate offered to attack either

ther of them, both the sexes fell upon him at once, and quickly brought him to reason. It was remarkable that for many Ages this agreement continued inviolable between the two States, notwithstanding, as was said before, they were husbands and wives: but this will not appear so wonderful, if we consider that they did not live together above a week in a year.

In the account which my Author gives of the male republick, there were several customs very remarkable. The men never shaved their beards, or pared their nails above once in a twelvemonth, which was probably about the time of the great annual meeting upon their frontiers. I find the name of a Minister of State in one part of their history, who was fined for appearing too frequently in clean linnen; and of a certain great General who was turned out of his post for effeminacy, it having been proved upon him by several credible witnesses that he washed his face every morning. If any member of the Commonwealth had a soft voice, a smooth face, or a supple behaviour, he was banished into the Commonwealth of females, where he was treated as a slave, dressed in petticoats, and set a spinning. They had no titles of honour among them, but such as denoted some bodily strength or perfection, as such an one *the Tall*, such an one *the Stocky*, such an one *the Gruff*. Their publick debates were generally managed with kicks and cuffs, insomuch that they often came from the council-table with broken shins, black eyes and bloody noses. When they would reproach a man in the most bitter terms, they would tell him his teeth were white, or that he had a fair skin, and a soft hand. The greatest man I meet with in their history, was one who could lift five hundred weight, and wore such a prodigious pair of whiskers as had never been seen in the Commonwealth before his time. These accomplishments it seems had rendred him so popular, that if he had not died very seasonably, it is thought he might have enslaved the republick. Having made this short extract out of the history of the male Commonwealth, I shall look into the history of the neighbouring State which consisted of females, and if I find any thing in it, will not fail to communicate it to the public.

