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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

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*Quales Threïciæ cùm flumina Thermodontis
Pulsant, et pictis bellantur Amazones armis:
Seu circum Hippolyten, seu cùm se martia curru
Penthesilea refert, magnoque ululante tumultu
Feminea exultant lunatis agmina peltis.*

Virg.

HAVING carefully perused the Manuscript I mentioned in my yesterday's paper, so far as it relates to the republick of women, I find in it several particulars which may very well deserve the Reader's attention.

The girls of quality, from six to twelve years old, were put to public schools, where they learned to box and play at cudgels, with several other accomplishments of the same nature; so that nothing was more usual than to see a little Miss returning home at night with a broken pate, or two or three teeth knocked out of her head. They were afterwards taught to ride the great horse, to shoot, dart, or sling, and listed into several companies, in order to perfect themselves in military exercises. No woman was to be married until she had killed her man. The Ladies of fashion used to play with young lions instead of lap-dogs, and when they made any parties of diversion, instead of entertaining themselves at Ombre or Piquet, they would wrestle and pitch the bar for a whole afternoon together. There was never any such thing as a blush seen, or a sigh heard, in the Commonwealth. The women never dressed but to look terrible, to which end they would sometimes after a battel paint their cheeks with the blood of their enemies. For this reason likewise the face which had the most scars was looked upon as the most beautiful. If they found lace, jewels, ribbons, or any ornaments in silver or gold among the booty which they had taken, they used to dress their horses with it, but never entertained a thought of wearing it themselves. There were particular rights and privileges allowed to any member of the Com-

mon-

monwealth, who was a mother of three daughters. The Senate was made up of old women; for by the laws of the country none was to be a Councillor of State that was not past child-bearing. They used to boast their republick had continued four thousand years, which is altogether improbable, unless we may suppose, what I am very apt to think, that they measured their time by *lunar* years.

There was a great revolution brought about in this female republick, by means of a neighbouring King, who had made war upon them several years with various success, and at length overthrew them in a very great battel. This defeat they ascribe to several causes; some say that the Secretary of State having been troubled with the vapours, had committed some fatal mistakes in several dispatches about that time. Others pretend, that the first Minister being big with child, could not attend the publick affairs, as so great an exigency of state required; but this I can give no manner of credit to, since it seems to contradict a fundamental maxim in their government, which I have before mentioned. My Author gives the most probable reason of this great disaster; for he affirms, that the General was brought to bed, or (as others say) miscarried the very night before the battel: however it was, this signal overthrow obliged them to call in the male republick to their assistance; but notwithstanding their common efforts to repulse the victorious enemy, the war continued for many years before they could entirely bring it to a happy conclusion.

The campaigns which both sexes passed together, made them so well acquainted with one another, that at the end of the war they did not care for parting. In the beginning of it they lodged in separate camps, but afterwards as they grew more familiar, they pitched their tents promiscuously.

From this time the armies being chequered with both sexes, they polished apace. The men used to invite their fellow-soldiers into their quarters, and would dress their tents with flowers and boughs, for their reception. If they chanced to like one more than another, they would be cutting her name in the table, or chalking out her figure upon a wall, or talking of her in a kind of rapturous language, which by degrees improved into verse and sonnet. These were as the first rudiments of Architecture, Painting, and Poetry among this savage people. After any advantage over the enemy, both sexes used to jump together and make a clattering with their swords and shields, for joy, which in a few years produced several regular tunes and sett dances.

As the two armies romped on these occasions, the women complained of the thick bushy beards and long nails of their confederates, who thereupon took care to prune themselves into such figures as were most pleasing to their female friends and allies.

When they had taken any spoils from the enemy, the men would make a present of every thing that was rich and showy to the women whom they most admired, and would frequently dress the necks, or heads, or arms of their mistresses, with any thing which they thought appeared gay or pretty. The women observing that the men took delight in looking upon them, when they were adorned with such trappings and gugaws, set their heads at work to find out new inventions, and to out-shine one another in all councils of war or the like solemn meetings. On the other hand, the men observing how the womens hearts were set upon finery, begun to embellish themselves and look as agreeably as they could in the eyes of their associates. In short, after a few years conversing together, the women had learnt to smile, and the men to ogle, the women grew soft, and the men lively.

When they had thus insensibly formed one another, upon the finishing of the war, which concluded with an entire conquest over their common enemy, the Colonels in one army married the Colonels in the other; the Captains in the same manner took the Captains to their wives: the whole body of common soldiers were matched, after the example of their leaders. By this means the two republicks incorporated with one another, and became the most flourishing and polite government in the part of the world which they inhabited.



Saturday,