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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

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“ approve the authors and dispersers of them, are as guilty as if they had
 “ composed them ; for if they do not write such libels themselves, it is
 “ because they have not the talent of writing, or because they will run
 “ no hazard.

The Author produces other authorities to confirm his judgment in this particular.

N^o 452.

Friday, August 8.

Est natura hominum novitatis avida.

Plin. apud Lillium.

THERE is no humour in my countrymen, which I am more inclined to wonder at, than their general thirst after news. There are about half a dozen ingenious men, who live very plentifully upon this curiosity of their fellow-subjects. They all of them receive the same advices from abroad, and very often in the same words ; but their way of cooking it is so different, that there is no citizen, who has an eye to the publick good, that can leave the Coffee-house with peace of mind, before he has given every one of them a reading. These several dishes of news are so very agreeable to the palate of my countrymen, that they are not only pleased with them when they are served up hot, but when they are again set cold before them, by those penetrating Politicians, who oblige the publick with their reflections and observations upon every piece of intelligence that is sent us from abroad. The text is given us by one sett of writers, and the comment by another.

But notwithstanding we have the same tale told us in so many different papers, and if occasion requires in so many articles of the same paper ; notwithstanding in a scarcity of foreign posts we hear the same story repeated, by different advices from *Paris*, *Brussels*, the *Hague*, and from every great town in *Europe* ; notwithstanding the multitude of annotations, explanations, reflections, and various readings which it passes through, our time lies heavy on our hands till the arrival of a fresh Mail: we long to receive further particulars, to hear what will be the next step, or what will be the consequence of that which has been already taken.

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A westerly wind keeps the whole town in suspense, and puts a stop to conversation.

This general curiosity has been raised and inflamed by our late wars, and, if rightly directed, might be of good use to a person who has such a thirst awakened in him. Why should not a man, who takes delight in reading every thing that is new, apply himself to history, travels, and other writings of the same kind, where he will find perpetual fuel for his curiosity, and meet with much more pleasure and improvement, than in these papers of the week? An honest tradesman, who languishes a whole summer in expectation of a battle, and perhaps is balked at last, may here meet with half a dozen in a day. He may read the news of a whole campaign, in less time than he now bestows upon the products of any single post. Fights, conquests and revolutions lye thick together. The Reader's curiosity is raised and satisfied every moment, and his passions disappointed or gratified, without being detained in a state of uncertainty from day to day, or lying at the mercy of sea and wind. In short, the mind is not here kept in a perpetual gape after knowledge, nor punished with that eternal thirst, which is the portion of all our modern news-mongers and coffee-house politicians.

All matters of fact, which a man did not know before, are news to him; and I do not see how any haberdasher in *Cheapside* is more concerned in the present quarrel of the Cantons, than he was in that of the League. At least, I believe every one will allow me, it is of more importance to an *Englishman* to know the history of his ancestors, than that of his contemporaries, who live upon the banks of the *Danube* or the *Borysthenes*. As for those who are of another mind, I shall recommend to them the following Letter, from a Projector, who is willing to turn a penny by this remarkable curiosity of his countrymen.

Mr. SPECTATOR,

“ YOU must have observed, that men who frequent Coffee-houses,
 “ and delight in news, are pleased with every thing that is mat-
 “ ter of fact, so it be what they have not heard before. A victory, or a
 “ defeat, are equally agreeable to them. The shutting of a Cardinal's
 “ mouth pleases them one post, and the opening of it another. They
 “ are glad to hear the *French* court is removed to *Marli*, and are after-
 “ wards as much delighted with its return to *Versailles*. They read the
 “ advertisements with the same curiosity as the articles of publick news;
 “ and are as pleased to hear of a pye-bald horse that is strayed out of a
 “ field

“ field near *Islington*, as of a whole troop that has been engaged in any
 “ foreign adventure. In short, they have a relish for every thing that is
 “ news, let the matter of it be what it will ; or to speak more properly,
 “ they are men of a voracious appetite, but no taste. Now, Sir, since
 “ the great fountain of news, I mean the war, is very near being dried
 “ up ; and since these Gentlemen have contracted such an inextinguish-
 “ ble thirst after it ; I have taken their case and my own into considera-
 “ tion, and have thought of a project which may turn to the advantage
 “ of us both. I have thoughts of publishing a daily paper, which shall
 “ comprehend in it all the most remarkable occurrences in every little
 “ town, village and hamlet, that lye within ten miles of *London*, or in
 “ other words, within the verge of the penny-post. I have pitched upon
 “ this scene of intelligence for two reasons ; first, because the carriage of
 “ Letters will be very cheap ; and secondly, because I may receive them
 “ every day. By this means my Readers will have their news fresh and
 “ fresh, and many worthy citizens, who cannot sleep with any satisfaction
 “ at present, for want of being informed how the world goes, may go
 “ to bed contentedly, it being my design to put out my paper every night
 “ at nine-a-clock precisely. I have already established correspondences
 “ in these several places, and received very good intelligence.

“ By my last advices from *Knights-bridge* I hear that a horse was clap-
 “ ped into the pound on the third instant, and that he was not released
 “ when the Letters came away.

“ We are informed from *Pankridge*, that a dozen weddings were
 “ lately celebrated in the Mother Church of that place, but are referred
 “ to their next Letters for the names of the parties concerned.

“ Letters from *Brompton* advise, that the Widow *Blight* had received
 “ several visits from *John Milldew*, which affords great matter of specu-
 “ lation in those parts.

“ By a Fisherman which lately touched at *Hammer-smith*, there is ad-
 “ vice from *Putney*, that a certain person well known in that place, is
 “ like to lose his election for Church-warden ; but this being boat-news,
 “ we cannot give entire credit to it.

“ Letters from *Paddington* bring little more than that *William Squeak*,
 “ the sow-gelder, passed through that place the fifth instant.

“ They advise from *Fulham*, that things remained there in the same
 “ state they were. They had intelligence, just as the Letters came away,
 “ of a tub of excellent ale just set abroach at *Parsons Green* ; but this
 “ wanted confirmation.

“ I have here, Sir, given you a specimen of the news with which I
 “ intend to entertain the town, and which, when drawn up regularly in
 “ the form of a News-paper, will, I doubt not, be very acceptable to
 “ many of those publick-spirited Readers, who take more delight in ac-
 “ quainting themselves with other peoples business than their own. I
 “ hope a paper of this kind, which lets us know what is done near home,
 “ may be more useful to us, than those which are filled with advices
 “ from *Zug* and *Bender*, and make some amends for that dearth of intel-
 “ ligence, which we may justly apprehend from times of peace. If I find
 “ that you receive this project favourably, I will shortly trouble you with
 “ one or two more ; and in the mean time am, most worthy Sir, with
 “ all due respect,

Your most obedient, and most humble Servant.

N^o 453. *Saturday, August 9.*

Non usitatâ nec tenui serar

Pennâ-----

Hor.

THERE is not a more pleasing exercise of the mind than Grati-
 tude. It is accompanied with such an inward satisfaction, that
 the duty is sufficiently rewarded by the performance. It is not
 like the practice of many other virtues, difficult and painful, but attended
 with so much pleasure, that were there no positive command which en-
 joined it, nor any recompence laid up for it hereafter, a generous mind
 would indulge in it, for the natural gratification that accompanies it.

If Gratitude is due from man to man, how much more from man to
 his Maker? The Supream Being does not only confer upon us those
 bounties which proceed more immediately from his hand, but even those
 benefits which are conveyed to us by others. Every blessing we enjoy,
 by what means soever it may be derived upon us, is the gift of him who
 is the great Author of Good, and Father of Mercies.

If Gratitude, when exerted towards one another, naturally produces a
 very pleasing sensation in the mind of a grateful man ; it exalts the soul

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