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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

London, 1721

N° 457. Thursday, August 14.

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N^o 457. *Thursday, August 14.*----- *Multa et praeclara minantis.*

Hor.

I Shall this day lay before my Reader a letter, written by the same hand with that of last *Friday*, which contained propofals for a printed news-paper, that fhould take in the whole circle of the penny-post.

S I R,

THE kind reception you gave my last *Friday's* letter, in which I broached my project of a News-paper, encourages me to lay before you two or three more; for, you must know, Sir, that we look upon you to be the *Lowndes* of the learned world, and cannot think any scheme practicable or rational before you have approved of it, though all the money we raife by it is on our own funds, and for our private use.

I have often thought that a *News-letter of Whispers*, written every post, and sent about the kingdom, after the same manner as that of Mr. *Dyer*, Mr. *Dawkes*, or any other epistolary Historian, might be highly gratifying to the publick, as well as beneficial to the Author. By whispers I mean those pieces of news which are communicated as secrets, and which bring a double pleasure to the hearer; first, as they are private history, and in the next place, as they have always in them a dash of scandal. These are the two chief qualifications in an article of News, which recommend it, in a more than ordinary manner, to the ears of the curious. Sicknefs of persons in high posts, twilight visits paid and received by Ministers of State, clandestine courtships and marriages, secret amours, losses at play, applications for places, with their respective successes or repulses, are the materials in which I chiefly intend to deal. I have two persons, that are each of them the representative of a species, who are to furnish me with those whispers which I intend to convey to my correspondents. The first of these is *Peter Hush*, descended from the ancient family of the *Hushes*. The other is the old Lady *Blast*, who has a very numerous tribe of daughters in the two great cities of *London* and *West-*

Westminster. *Peter Hush* has a whispering hole in most of the great Coffee-houses about town. If you are alone with him in a wide room, he carries you up into a corner of it, and speaks in your ear. I have seen *Peter* seat himself in a company of seven or eight persons, whom he never saw before in his life; and after having looked about to see there was no one that over-heard him, has communicated to them in a low voice, and under the seal of secrecy, the death of a great man in the country, who was perhaps a fox-hunting the very moment this account was giving of him. If upon your entering into a Coffee-house you see a circle of heads bending over the table, and lying close by one another, it is ten to one but my friend *Peter* is among them. I have known *Peter* publishing the whisper of the day by eight a clock in the morning at *Garraway's*, by twelve at *Will's*, and before two at the *Smyrna*. When *Peter* has thus effectually launched a secret, I have been very well pleased to hear people whispering it to one another at second hand, and spreading it about as their own; for you must know, Sir, the great incentive to whispering is the ambition which every one has of being thought in the secret, and being looked upon as a man who has access to greater people than one would imagine. After having given you this account of *Peter Hush*, I proceed to that virtuous Lady, the old Lady *Blast*, who is to communicate to me the private transactions of the Crimp table, with all the *Arcana* of the fair sex. The Lady *Blast*, you must understand, has such a particular malignity in her whisper, that it blights like an easterly wind, and withers every reputation that it breaths upon. She has a particular knack at making private weddings, and last winter married above five women of Quality to their footmen. Her whisper can make an innocent young woman big with child, or fill an healthful young fellow with distempers that are not to be named. She can turn a visit into an intrigue, and a distant salute into an assignation. She can beggar the wealthy, and degrade the noble. In short, she can whisper men base and foolish, jealous or ill-natured, or, if occasion requires, can tell you the slips of their great grandmothers, and traduce the memory of honest coach-men that have been in their graves above these hundred years. By these, and the like helps, I question not but I shall furnish out a very handsom News-letter. If you approve my project, I shall begin to whisper by the very next post, and question not but every one of my customers will be very well pleased with me, when he considers that every piece of news I send him is a word in his ear, and lets him into a secret.

Having

Having given you a sketch of this project, I shall, in the next place, suggest to you another for a monthly pamphlet, which I shall likewise submit to your spectatorial wisdom. I need not tell you, Sir, that there are several Authors in *France, Germany and Holland*, as well as in our own country, who publish every month, what they call *An Account of the Works of the Learned*, in which they give us an abstract of all such books as are printed in any part of *Europe*. Now, Sir, it is my design to publish every month, *An Account of the Works of the Unlearned*. Several late productions of my own country-men, who many of them make a very eminent figure in the illiterate world, encourage me in this undertaking. I may, in this work, possibly make a review of several pieces which have appeared in the foreign *Accounts* above-mentioned, though they ought not to have been taken notice of in works which bear such a title. I may, likewise, take into consideration such pieces as appear from time to time, under the names of those Gentlemen who compliment one another, in publick Assemblies, by the title of the *Learned Gentlemen*. Our Party-authors will also afford me a great variety of subjects, not to mention Editors, Commentators, and others, who are often men of no learning, or what is as bad, of no knowledge. I shall not enlarge upon this hint; but if you think any thing can be made of it, I shall set about it with all the pains and application that so useful a work deserves.

I am ever, most worthy Sir, &c.

N^o 458. Friday, August 15.

*Αιδως εν αγαθη

—Pudor malus—

Hes.

Hor.

I Could not but smile at the account that was yesterday given me of a modest young Gentleman, who being invited to an entertainment, though he was not used to drink, had not the confidence to refuse his glass in his turn, when on a sudden he grew so flustered that he took all the talk of the table into his own hands, abused every one of the company,