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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

London, 1721

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----- *Huc natus adjice septem,*
Et totidem juvenes, et mox generosque nurusque.
Querite nunc, habeat quam nostra superbia causam. Ov. Met.

S I R,

“ Y O U, who are so well acquainted with the story of *Socrates*,
 “ must have read how, upon his making a discourse concern-
 “ ing love, he pressed his point with so much success, that all
 “ the batchelors in his audience took a resolution to marry by the first
 “ opportunity, and that all the married men immediately took horse and
 “ galloped home to their wives. I am apt to think your discourses, in
 “ which you have drawn so many agreeable pictures of marriage, have
 “ had a very good effect this way in *England*. We are obliged to you,
 “ at least, for having taken off that senseless ridicule, which for many
 “ years the wittings of the town have turned upon their fathers and mo-
 “ thers. For my own part, I was born in wedlock, and I do not care
 “ who knows it: for which reason, among many others, I should look
 “ upon my self as a most insufferable coxcomb, did I endeavour to main-
 “ tain that cuckoldom was inseparable from marriage, or to make use of
 “ *husband* and *wife* as terms of reproach. Nay, Sir, I will go one step
 “ further, and declare to you before the whole world, that I am a mar-
 “ ried man, and at the same time I have so much assurance as not to be
 “ ashamed of what I have done.
 “ Among the several pleasures that accompany this state of life,
 “ and which you have described in your former papers, there are two
 “ you have not taken notice of, and which are seldom cast into the ac-
 “ count, by those who write on this subject. You must have observed,
 “ in your *Speculations* on human nature, that nothing is more gratifying
 “ to the mind of man than power or dominion; and this I think my self
 “ amply possessed of, as I am the father of a family. I am perpetually
 “ taken

taken up in giving out orders, in prescribing duties, in hearing parties,
 in administering justice, and in distributing rewards and punishments.
 To speak in the language of the Centurion, *I say unto one, Go, and
 he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant,
 Do this, and he doeth it.* In short, Sir, I look upon my family as a
 patriarchal sovereignty, in which I am my self both King and Priest.
 All great governments are nothing else but clusters of these little pri-
 vate royalties, and therefore I consider the masters of families as small
 deputy-governors presiding over the several little parcels and divisions
 of their fellow-subjects. As I take great pleasure in the administration
 of my government in particular, so I look upon my self not only as a
 more useful, but as a much greater and happier man than any batche-
 lor in *England* of my own rank and condition.

There is another accidental advantage in marriage, which has like-
 wise fallen to my share, I mean the having a multitude of children.
 These I cannot but regard as very great blessings. When I see my
 little troop before me, I rejoice in the additions which I have made to
 my species, to my country, and to my religion, in having produced
 such a number of reasonable creatures, citizens, and christians. I am
 pleased to see my self thus perpetuated; and as there is no production
 comparable to that of a human creature, I am more proud of having
 been the occasion of ten such glorious productions, than if I had built
 a hundred pyramids at my own expence, or published as many volumes
 of the finest wit and learning. In what a beautiful light has the Holy
 Scripture represented *Abdon*, one of the judges of *Israel*, who had
 forty sons and thirty grandsons, that rode on threescore and ten Afs-
 colts, according to the magnificence of the eastern countries? how
 must the heart of the old man rejoice, when he saw such a beautiful
 procession of his own descendants, such a numerous cavalcade of his
 own raising? For my own part, I can sit in my parlour with great con-
 tent, when I take a review of half a dozen of my little boys mounted
 upon their hobby-horses, and of as many little girls tutoring their ba-
 bies, each of them endeavouring to excel the rest, and to do some-
 thing that may gain my favour and approbation. I cannot question
 but he who has blessed me with so many children, will assist my en-
 deavours in providing for them. There is one thing I am able to give
 each of them, which is a virtuous education. I think it is Sir *Francis
 Bacon's* observation, that in a numerous family of children the eldest is
 often spoiled by the prospect of an estate, and the youngest by being

“ the darling of the parent ; but that some one or other in the middle
 “ who has not perhaps been regarded, has made his way in the world,
 “ and over-topped the rest. It is my business to implant in every one of
 “ my children the same seeds of industry, and the same honest principles.
 “ By this means I think I have a fair chance, that one or other of them
 “ may grow considerable in some or other way of life, whether it be in
 “ the army, or in the fleet, in trade, or any of the three learned profes-
 “ sions; for you must know, Sir, that from long experience and obser-
 “ vation, I am persuaded of what seems a paradox to most of those with
 “ whom I converse, namely, that a man who has many children, and
 “ gives them a good education, is more likely to raise a family, than he
 “ who has but one, notwithstanding he leaves him his whole estate. For
 “ this reason I cannot forbear amusing my self with finding out a General,
 “ an Admiral, or an Alderman of *London*, a Divine, a Physician, or a
 “ Lawyer, among my little people who are now perhaps in petticoats ;
 “ and when I see the motherly airs of my little daughters when they are
 “ playing with their puppets, I cannot but flatter my self that their hus-
 “ bands and children will be happy in the possession of such wives and
 “ mothers.

“ If you are a father, you will not perhaps think this Letter imperti-
 “ nent ; but if you are a single man, you will not know the meaning of
 “ it, and probably throw it into the fire : Whatever you determine of
 “ it, you may assure your self that it comes from one who is

Your most humble servant, and well-wisher,

Philogamus.



Thursday,