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**The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.**

In Four Volumes

**Addison, Joseph**

**London, 1721**

No 561. Wednesday, June 30.

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N<sup>o</sup> 561. Wednesday, June 30.

----- *Paulatim abolere Sichaum*

*Incipit, et vivo tentat praevertere amore*

*Jampridem resides animos desuetaque corda.* Virg.

S I R,

“ I Am a tall, broad-shouldered, impudent, black fellow, and, as I  
 “ thought, every way qualified for a rich widow: but, after ha-  
 “ ving tried my fortune for above three years together, I have  
 “ not been able to get one single relict in the mind. My first attacks  
 “ were generally successful, but always broke off as soon as they came  
 “ to the word *Settlement*. Though I have not improved my fortune  
 “ this way, I have my experience, and have learnt several secrets which  
 “ may be of use to those unhappy Gentlemen, who are commonly di-  
 “ stinguished by the name of Widow-hunters, and who do not know that  
 “ this tribe of women are, generally speaking, as much upon the catch  
 “ as themselves. I shall here communicate to you the mysteries of a cer-  
 “ tain female cabal of this order, who call themselves the *Widow-Club*.  
 “ This Club consists of nine experienced dames, who take their places  
 “ once a week round a large oval table.  
 “ I. Mrs. President is a person who has disposed of six husbands, and  
 “ is now determined to take a seventh; being of opinion that there is as  
 “ much vertue in the touch of a seventh husband as of a seventh son.  
 “ Her comrades are as follow.  
 “ II. Mrs. *Snapp*, who has four jointures, by four different bed-fellows,  
 “ of four different shires. She is at present upon the point of marriage  
 “ with a *Middlesex* man, and is said to have an ambition of extending  
 “ her possessions through all the counties in *England*, on this side the  
 “ *Trent*.  
 “ III. Mrs. *Medlar*, who after two husbands and a gallant, is now  
 “ wedded to an old Gentleman of sixty. Upon her making her re-  
 “ port to the Club after a week’s cohabitation, she is still allowed to fit as  
 “ a widow, and accordingly takes her place at the board. “ IV. The

“ IV. The Widow *Quick*, married within a fortnight after the death of her last husband. Her *Weeds* have served her thrice, and are still as good as new.

“ V. Lady *Catharine Swallow*. She was a widow at eighteen, and has since buried a second husband and two coachmen.

“ VI. The Lady *Waddle*. She was married in the 15th year of her age to Sir *Simon Waddle*, Knight, aged threescore and twelve, by whom she had twins nine months after his decease. In the 55th year of her age she was married to *James Spindle*, Esq; a youth of one and twenty, who did not outlive the honey-moon.

“ VII. *Deborah Conquest*. The case of this Lady is something particular. She is the relict of Sir *Sampson Conquest*, some time Justice of the *Quorum*. Sir *Sampson* was seven foot high, and two foot in breadth from the tip of one shoulder to the other. He had married three wives, who all of them died in childbed. This terrified the whole sex, who none of them durst venture on Sir *Sampson*. At length Mrs. *Deborah* undertook him, and gave so good an account of him, that in three years time she very fairly laid him out, and measured his length upon the ground. This exploit has gained her so great a reputation in the Club, that they have added Sir *Sampson's* three victories to hers, and give her the merit of a fourth widowhood; and she takes her place accordingly.

“ VIII. The Widow *Wildfire*, relict of Mr. *John Wildfire*, Fox-hunter, who broke his neck over a six bar gate. She took his death so much to heart, that it was thought it would have put an end to her life, had she not diverted her sorrows by receiving the addresses of a Gentleman in the neighbourhood, who made love to her in the second month of her widowhood. This Gentleman was discarded in a fortnight for the sake of a young *Templer*, who had the possession of her for six weeks after, till he was beaten out by a broken Officer, who likewise gave up his place to a Gentleman at court. The courtier was as short-liv'd a favourite as his predecessors, but had the pleasure to see himself succeeded by a long series of lovers, who followed the Widow *Wildfire* to the 37th year of her age, at which time there ensued a cessation of ten years, when *John Felt*, Haberdasher, took it in his head to be in love with her, and it is thought will very suddenly carry her off.

“ IX. The last is pretty Mrs. *Runnet*, who broke her first husband's heart before she was sixteen, at which time she was entred of the Club; “ but

“ but soon after left it, upon account of a second whom she made so quick a dispatch of, that she returned to her seat in less than a twelve-month. This young matron is looked upon as the most rising member of the society, and will probably be in the President's chair before she dies.

“ These Ladies, upon their first institution, resolved to give the pictures of their deceased husbands to the Club-room, but two of them bringing in their dead at full length, they covered all the walls: upon which they came to a second resolution, that every matron should give her own picture, and set it round with her husbands in miniature.

“ As they have most of them the misfortune to be troubled with the cholick, they have a noble cellar of cordials and strong waters. When they grow maudlin, they are very apt to commemorate their former partners with a tear. But ask them which of their husbands they condole, they are not able to tell you, and discover plainly that they do not weep so much for the loss of a husband, as for the want of one.

“ The principal rule, by which the whole society are to govern themselves, is this, To cry up the pleasures of a single life upon all occasions, in order to deter the rest of their sex from marriage, and engross the whole male world to themselves.

“ They are obliged, when any one makes love to a member of the society, to communicate his name, at which time the whole assembly sit upon his reputation, person, fortune, and good humour; and if they find him qualified for a filter of the Club, they lay their heads together how to make him sure. By this means they are acquainted with all the Widow-hunters about town, who often afford them great diversion. There is an honest *Irish* Gentleman, it seems, who knows nothing of this society, but at different times has made love to the whole Club.

“ Their conversation often turns upon their former husbands, and it is very diverting to hear them relate their arts and stratagems, with which they amused the jealous, pacified the cholerick, or wheedled the good-natured man, until at last, to use the Club phrase, *They sent him out of the house with his heels foremost.*

“ The politics, which are most cultivated by this society of *She-Machiavils*, relate chiefly to these two points, How to treat a lover, and How to manage a husband. As for the first set of artifices, they are too numerous to come within the compass of your paper, and shall therefore be reserved for a second Letter.

“ The

“ The management of a husband is built upon the following doctrines,  
 “ which are universally assented to by the whole Club. Not to give him  
 “ his head at first. Not to allow him too great freedoms and familiari-  
 “ ties. Not to be treated by him like a raw girl, but as a woman that  
 “ knows the world. Not to lessen any thing of her former figure. To  
 “ celebrate the generosity, or any other virtue, of a deceased husband,  
 “ which she would recommend to his successor. To turn away all his  
 “ old friends and servants, that she may have the dear man to her self.  
 “ To make him disinheret the undutiful children of any former wife.  
 “ Never to be thoroughly convinced of his affection, until he has made  
 “ over to her all his goods and chattels.

“ After so long a Letter, I am, without more ceremony,

Your humble servant, &c.

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N<sup>o</sup> 562. Friday, July 2.

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-----Præsens, absens ut sies.

Ter.

**I**T is a hard and nice subject for a man to speak of himself, says Cowley; it grates his own heart to say any thing of disparagement, and the Reader's ears to hear any thing of praise from him. Let the tenor of his discourse be what it will upon this subject, it generally proceeds from *Vanity*. An ostentatious man will rather relate a blunder or an absurdity he has committed, than be debarred from talking of his own dear person.

Some very great writers have been guilty of this fault. It is observed of *Tully* in particular, that his works run very much in the first person, and that he takes all occasions of doing himself justice. “ Does he think, “ says *Brutus*, that his Consulship deserves more applause than my putting *Cæsar* to death, because I am not perpetually talking of the Ides “ of *March*, as he is of the Nones of *December*?” I need not acquaint my learned Reader, that in the Ides of *March*, *Brutus* destroyed *Cæsar*, and that *Cicero* quashed the conspiracy of *Cataline* in the Calends of *December*.