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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

London, 1721

No 97. Thursday, July 2.

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----- *Miserum est post omnia perdere nautum.*

Juv.

S I R,

“ I Was left a thousand pounds by an uncle, and being a man to my
 “ thinking very likely to get a rich widow, I laid aside all thoughts
 “ of making my fortune any other way, and without loss of time
 “ made my applications to one who had buried her husband about a week
 “ before. By the help of some of her she friends, who were my rela-
 “ tions, I got into her company when she would see no man besides my
 “ self and her Lawyer, who is a little, ravelled, spindle-shanked Gen-
 “ tleman, and married to boot, so that I had no reason to fear him. Up-
 “ on my first seeing her, she said in conversation within my hearing, that
 “ she thought a pale complexion the most agreeable either in man or wo-
 “ man: now you must know, Sir, my face is as white as chalk. This
 “ gave me some encouragement, so that to mend the matter I bought a
 “ fine flaxen long wig that cost me thirty guineas, and found an oppor-
 “ tunity of seeing her in it the next day. She then let drop some ex-
 “ pressions about an agate snuff-box. I immediately took the hint and
 “ bought one, being unwilling to omit any thing that might make me de-
 “ sireable in her eyes. I was betrayed after the same manner into a Bro-
 “ cade waistcoat, a sword knot, a pair of silver fringed gloves, and a
 “ diamond ring. But whether out of fickleness, or a design upon me, I
 “ cannot tell; but I found by her discourse, that what she liked one day
 “ she disliked another: so that in six months space I was forced to equip
 “ my self above a dozen times. As I told you before, I took her hints
 “ at a distance, for I could never find an opportunity of talking with
 “ her directly to the point. All this time, however, I was allowed the
 “ utmost familiarities with her lap-dog, and have played with it above an
 “ hour together, without receiving the least reprimand, and had many
 “ other marks of favour shown me, which I thought amounted to a pro-
 “ mise.”

“ wife. If she chanced to drop her fan, she received it from my hands
 “ with great civility. If she wanted any thing, I reached it for her. I
 “ have filled her tea-pot above an hundred times, and have afterwards
 “ received a dish of it from her own hands. Now, Sir, do you judge if after
 “ such encouragements she was not obliged to marry me. I forgot to
 “ tell you that I kept a chair by the week, on purpose to carry me thi-
 “ ther and back again. Not to trouble you with a long letter, in the space
 “ of about a twelvemonth I have run out of my whole thousand pound
 “ upon her, having laid out the last fifty in a new suit of cloaths, in which
 “ I was resolved to receive her final answer, which amounted to this,
 “ That she was engaged to another; That she never dreamt I had any
 “ such thing in my head as marriage; and that she thought I had frequent-
 “ ed her house only because I loved to be in company with my relati-
 “ ons. This, you know, Sir, is using a man like a fool, and so I told
 “ her; but the worst of it is, that I have spent my fortune to no purpose.
 “ All therefore that I desire of you is, to tell me whether upon exhibi-
 “ ting the several particulars which I have here related to you, I may not
 “ sue her for damages in a court of Justice. Your advice in this parti-
 “ cular will very much oblige

Your most humble admirer, Simon Softly.

Before I answer Mr. *Softly's* request, I find my self under a necessity of discussing two nice points: first of all, what it is, in cases of this nature, that amounts to an encouragement; and secondly, what it is that amounts to a promise. Each of which subjects requires more time to examine than I am at present master of. Besides, I would have my friend *Simon* consider, whether he has any Council that would undertake his cause in *Forma Pauperis*, he having unluckily disabled himself, by his own account of the matter, from prosecuting his suit any other way.

In answer however to Mr. *Softly's* request, I shall acquaint him with a method made use of by a young fellow in King *Charles* the Second's reign, whom I shall here call *Silvio*, who had long made love, with much artifice and intrigue, to a rich widow, whose true name I shall conceal under that of *Zelinda*. *Silvio*, who was much more smitten with her fortune than her person, finding a twelve-month's application unsuccessful, was resolved to make a saving bargain of it, and since he could not get the widow's estate into his possession, to recover at least what he had laid out of his own in the pursuit of it.

In order to this he presented her with a bill of costs; having particularized in it the several expences he had been at in his long perplexed amour. *Zelinda* was so pleased with the humour of the fellow, and his frank way of dealing, that, upon the perusal of the bill, she sent him a purse of fifteen hundred guineas, by the right application of which, the lover, in less than a year, got a woman of greater fortune than her he had missed. The several articles in the bill of costs I pretty well remember, though I have forgotten the particular sum charged to each article.

Laid out in supernumerary full-bottom wiggs.

Fiddles for a Serenade, with a speaking-trumpet.

Gilt paper in letters, and billetdoux with perfumed wax.

A ream of Sonnets and love verses, purchased at different times of Mr. *Triplett* at a crown a sheet.

To *Zelinda* two flicks of *May* Cherries.

Last summer, at several times, a bushel of Peaches.

Three porters whom I planted about her to watch her motions.

The first, who stood centry near her door.

The second, who had his stand at the stables where her coach was put up.

The third, who kept watch at the corner of the street where *Ned Courtall* lives, who has since married her.

Two additional porters planted over her during the whole month of *May*.

Five conjurers kept in pay all last winter.

Spy-mony to *John Trott* her footman, and Mrs. *Sarah Wheedle* her companion.

A new *Conningsmark* blade to fight *Ned Courtall*.

To *Zelinda's* woman (Mrs. *Abigal*) an *Indian* Fan, a dozen pair of white kid gloves, a piece of *Flanders* lace, and fifteen guineas in dry money.

Secret service-money to *Betty* at the ring.

Ditto, to Mrs. *Tape* the Mantua-maker.

Loss of time.



Friday,