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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

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No 105. Saturday, July 11.

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“ works of nature than in the new stile. I have past one *March* in my
 “ life without being ruffled by the winds, and one *April* without being
 “ washed with rains.

I am, SIR, Yours, &c.

N^o 105. *Saturday, July 11.*

*Quod neque in Armeniis tigres fecere latebris:
 Perdere nec fetus ausa leæna suos.
 At teneræ faciunt, sed non impunè, puellæ;
 Sæpe suos utero quæ necat, ipsa perit.*

Ov.

THERE was no part of the show on the Thanksgiving-day that so much pleased and affected me as the little boys and girls who were ranged with so much order and decency in that part of the *Strand* which reaches from the *Maypole* to *Exeter-Change*. Such a numerous and innocent multitude, cloathed in the charity of their benefactors, was a spectacle pleasing both to God and man, and a more beautiful expression of joy and thanksgiving than could have been exhibited by all the pomps of a *Roman* triumph. Never did a more full and unspotted chorus of human creatures join together in a hymn of devotion. The care and tenderness which appeared in the looks of their several instructors, who were disposed among this little helpless people, could not forbear touching every heart that had any sentiments of humanity.

I am very sorry that Her Majesty did not see this assembly of objects so proper to excite that charity and compassion which she bears to all who stand in need of it, though at the same time I question not but her Royal bounty will extend it self to them. A charity bestowed on the education of so many of her young subjects, has more merit in it than a thousand pensions to those of a higher fortune who are in greater stations in life.

I have always looked on this institution of charity-schools, which, of late years, has so universally prevailed through the whole nation, as the glory of the age we live in, and the most proper means that can be made use

use of to recover it out of its present degeneracy and depravation of manners. It seems to promise us an honest and virtuous posterity: there will be few in the next generation who will not at least be able to write and read, and have not had the early tincture of religion. It is therefore to be hoped that the several persons of wealth and quality, who made their procession through the members of these new erected seminaries, will not regard them only as an empty spectacle, or the materials of a fine show, but contribute to their maintenance and increase. For my part, I can scarce forbear looking on the astonishing victories our arms have been crowned with, to be in some measure the blessings returned upon that national charity which has been so conspicuous of late, and that the great successes of the last war, for which we lately offered up our thanks, were in some measure occasioned by the several objects which then stood before us.

Since I am upon this subject, I shall mention a piece of charity which has not been yet exerted among us, and which deserves our attention the more, because it is practised by most of the nations about us. I mean a provision for foundlings, or for those children who through want of such a provision are exposed to the barbarity of cruel and unnatural parents. One does not know how to speak on such a subject without horror: but what multitudes of infants have been made away by those who brought them into the world, and were afterwards either ashamed or unable to provide for them!

There is scarce an Assizes where some unhappy wretch is not executed for the murder of a child. And how many more of these monsters of inhumanity may we suppose to be wholly undiscovered, or cleared for want of legal evidence? not to mention those, who by unnatural practices do in some measure defeat the intentions of providence, and destroy their conceptions even before they see the light. In all these the guilt is equal, though the punishment is not so. But to pass by the greatness of the crime, (which is not to be expressed by words) if we only consider it as it robs the common-wealth of its full number of citizens, it certainly deserves the utmost application and wisdom of a people to prevent it.

It is certain, that which generally betrays these profligate women into it, and overcomes the tenderness which is natural to them on other occasions, is the fear of shame, or their inability to support those whom they gave life to. I shall therefore show how this evil is prevented in other countries, as I have learnt from those who have been conversant in the several great cities of *Europe*.

There are at *Paris, Madrid, Lisbon, Rome*, and many other large towns, great hospitals built like our colleges. In the walls of these hospitals are placed machines, in the shape of large lanthorns, with a little door in the side of them turned towards the street, and a bell hanging by them. The child is deposited in this lanthorn, which is immediately turned about into the inside of the hospital. The person who conveys the child rings the bell and leaves it there, upon which the proper Officer comes and receives it without making further enquiries. The parent or her friend, who lays the child there, generally leaves a note with it, declaring whether it be yet christened, the name it should be called by, the particular marks upon it, and the like.

It often happens that the parent leaves a note for the maintenance and education of the child, or takes it out after it has been some years in the hospital. Nay, it has been known that the father has afterwards owned the young foundling for his son, or left his estate to him. This is certain, that many are by this means preserved, and do signal services to their country, who without such a provision might have perished as abortives, or have come to an untimely end, and perhaps have brought upon their guilty parents the like destruction.

This I think is a subject that deserves our most serious consideration, for which reason I hope I shall not be thought impertinent in laying it before my Readers.

N^o 106. *Monday, July 13.*

Quod latet arcanâ non enarrabile fibrâ. Perf.

AS I was making up my *Monday's* provision for the public, I received the following Letter, which being a better entertainment than any I can furnish out my self, I shall set before the Reader, and desire him to fall on without further ceremony.

S I R,