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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

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“ great *Mogul* and his *Emprefs* has been generally censured. Take the
 “ sentiments out of the shining dress of words, and they would be too
 “ coarse for a scene in *Billinggate*.

* * * * *

I am, &c.

N° III. *Saturday, July 18.*

*Hic aliquis de gente hircosâ centurionum
 Dicat : quod satis est sapio mihi ; non ego curo
 Esse quod Arcefilas, ærumnosique Solones.* Perf.

I Am very much concerned when I see young Gentlemen of fortune and quality so wholly set upon pleasures and diversions, that they neglect all those improvements in wisdom and knowledge which may make them easie to themselves and useful to the world. The greatest part of our *British* youth lose their figure and grow out of fashion by that time they are five and twenty. As soon as the natural gaiety and amiableness of the young man wears off, they have nothing left to recommend them, but *lie by* the rest of their lives among the lumber and refuse of the species. It sometimes happens indeed, that for want of applying themselves in due time to the pursuits of knowledge, they take up a book in their declining years, and grow very hopeful scholars by that time they are threescore. I must therefore earnestly press my Readers, who are in the flower of their youth, to labour at those accomplishments which may set off their persons when their bloom is gone, and to *lay in* timely provisions for manhood and old age. In short, I would advise the youth of fifteen to be dressing up every day the man of fifty, or to consider how to make himself venerable at threescore.

Young men, who are naturally ambitious, would do well to observe how the greatest men of antiquity made it their ambition to excell all their contemporaries in knowledge. *Julius Cæsar* and *Alexander*, the

most celebrated instances of human greatness, took a particular care to distinguish themselves by their skill in the arts and sciences. We have still extant several remains of the former, which justify the character given of him by the learned men of his own age. As for the latter, it is a known saying of his, that he was more obliged to *Aristotle* who had instructed him, than to *Philip* who had given him life and empire. There is a letter of his recorded by *Plutarch* and *Aulus Gellius*, which he wrote to *Aristotle* upon hearing that he had published those lectures he had given him in private. This letter was written in the following words at a time when he was in the height of his *Persian* conquests.

Alexander to Aristotle, Greeting.

“ YOU have not done well to publish your books of Select Knowledge; for what is there now in which I can surpass others, if those things which I have been instructed in are communicated to every body? For my own part I declare to you, I would rather excell others in knowledge than in power. *Farewell.*

We see by this letter, that the love of conquest was but the second ambition in *Alexander's* Soul. Knowledge is indeed that which, next to virtue, truly and essentially raises one man above another. It finishes one half of the human Soul. It makes Being pleasant to us, fills the mind with entertaining views, and administers to it a perpetual series of gratifications. It gives ease to solitude, and gracefulness to retirement. It fills a publick station with suitable abilities, and adds a lustre to those who are in the possession of them.

Learning, by which I mean all useful knowledge, whether speculative or practical, is in popular and mixt governments the natural source of wealth and honour. If we look into most of the reigns from the conquest, we shall find that the favourites of each reign have been those who have raised themselves. The greatest men are generally the growth of that particular age in which they flourish. A superior capacity for business, and a more extensive knowledge, are the steps by which a new man often mounts to favour, and outshines the rest of his contemporaries. But when men are actually born to titles, it is almost impossible that they should fail of receiving an additional greatness, if they take care to accomplish themselves for it.

The story of *Solomon's* choice does not only instruct us in that point of history, but furnishes out a very fine moral to us, namely, That he who applies his heart to wisdom, does at the same time take the most proper method

method for gaining long life, riches and reputation, which are very often not only the rewards, but the effects of wisdom.

As it is very suitable to my present subject, I shall first of all quote this passage in the words of sacred Writ; and afterwards mention an Allegory, in which this whole passage is represented by a famous *French Poet*: not questioning but it will be very pleasing to such of my Readers as have a taste of fine writing.

In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. And Solomon said, Thou hast showed unto thy servant David, my father, great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee, and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant King instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thy self long life, neither hast asked riches for thy self, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies, but hast asked for thy self understanding to discern judgment; behold I have done according to thy words: lo I have given thee a wise and understanding heart, so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honour, so that there shall not be any among the Kings like unto thee all thy days. And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days. And Solomon awoke, and behold it was a dream—

The *French Poet* has shadowed this story in an Allegory, of which he seems to have taken the hint from the fable of the three Goddesses appearing to *Paris*, or rather from the vision of *Hercules*, recorded by *Xenophon*, where *Pleasure* and *Virtue* are represented as real persons making their court to the Hero with all their several charms and allurements. Health, wealth, victory and honour are introduced successively in their proper emblems and characters, each of them spreading her temptations, and recommending her self to the young Monarch's choice. Wisdom enters the last, and so captivates him with her appearance, that he gives himself up to her. Upon which she informs him, that those who appeared

before her were nothing else but her equipage, and that since he had placed his heart upon wisdom; health, wealth, victory and honour should always wait on her as her handmaids.

N^o 112. Monday, July 20.

----- *udam*
Spernit humum fugiente pennâ.

Hor.

THE Philosophers of King *Charles's* reign were busie in finding out the art of flying. The famous Bishop *Wilkins* was so confident of success in it, that he says he does not question but in the next age it will be as usual to hear a man call for his wings when he is going a journey, as it is now to call for his boots. The humour so prevailed among the Vertuoso's of this reign, that they were actually making parties to go up to the moon together, and were more put to it in their thoughts how to meet with accommodations by the way, than how to get thither. Every one knows the story of the great Lady, who at the same time was building castles in the air for their reception. I always leave such trite quotations to my Reader's private recollection. For which reason also I shall forbear extracting out of Authors several instances of particular persons who have arrived at some perfection in this art, and exhibited specimens of it before multitudes of beholders. Instead of this I shall present my Reader with the following letter from an artist, who is now taken up with this invention, and conceals his true name under that of *Dædalus*.

Mr. IRONSIDE,

“ **K** Nowing that you are a great encourager of ingenuity, I think fit to
 “ acquaint you, that I have made a considerable progress in the
 “ art of flying. I flutter about my room two or three hours in a morn-
 “ ing, and when my wings are on, can go above an hundred yards at a
 “ hop, step and jump. I can fly already as well as a Turkey cock, and
 “ improve every day. If I proceed as I have begun, I intend to give the
 “ world