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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

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----- nothing lovelier can be found

In woman, than to study household good,

And good works in her husband to promote.

Milton.

A bit for the Lion.

S I R,

“ AS soon as you have set up your Unicorn, there is no question
 “ but the Ladies will make him push very furiously at the
 “ Men; for which reason I think it is good to be before-hand
 “ with them, and make the Lion roar aloud at *Female* irregularities.
 “ Among these, I wonder how their *Gaming* has so long escaped your
 “ notice. You who converse with the sober family of the *Lizards*, are
 “ perhaps a stranger to these *Virago*'s; but what would you say, should
 “ you see a *Sparkler* shaking her elbow for a whole night together, and
 “ thumping the table with a dice-box? Or how would you like to hear
 “ the good widow-lady her self returning to her house at mid-night, and
 “ alarming the whole street with a most enormous rap, after having sat up
 “ until that time at *Crimp* or *Ombre*? Sir, I am the husband of one of
 “ the female *Gamesters*, and a great loser by it both in my rest and my
 “ pocket. As my wife reads your papers, one upon this this subject
 “ might be of use both to her, and

Your humble Servant.

I should ill deserve the name of *Guardian*, did I not caution all my fair wards against a practice which when it runs to excess, is the most shameful, but one, that the female world can fall into. The ill consequences of it are more than can be contained in this paper. However, that I may proceed in method, I shall consider them, First, as they relate to the *Mind*; Secondly, as they relate to the *body*.

Could

Could we look into the *mind* of a female Gamester, we should see it full of nothing but *Trumps* and *Mattadores*. Her slumbers are haunted with Kings, Queens and Knaves. The day lies heavy upon her until the play-season returns, when for half a dozen hours together all her faculties are employed in shuffling, cutting, dealing and sorting out a pack of Cards, and no ideas to be discovered in a Soul which calls it self rational, excepting little square figures of painted and spotted paper. Was the understanding, that divine part in our composition, given for such an use? Is it thus we improve the greatest talent human nature is endowed with? What would a superior Being think, were he shown this intellectual faculty in a female Gamester, and at the same time told that it was by this she was distinguished from brutes, and allied to Angels?

When our women thus fill their imaginations with pips and counters, I cannot wonder at the story I have lately heard of a new-born child that was *marked* with the five of Clubs.

Their *Passions* suffer no less by this practice than their understandings and imaginations. What hope and fear, joy and anger, sorrow and discontent break out all at once in a fair assembly, upon so noble an occasion as that of turning up a Card? Who can consider without a secret indignation that all those affections of the mind which should be consecrated to their children, husbands and parents, are thus vilely prostituted and thrown away upon a hand at Loo? For my own part, I cannot but be grieved when I see a fine woman fretting and bleeding inwardly from such trivial motives; when I behold the face of an Angel agitated and discomposed by the heart of a Fury.

Our minds are of such a make, that they naturally give themselves up to every diversion which they are much accustomed to, and we always find that play, when followed with assiduity, engrosses the whole woman. She quickly grows uneasy in her own family, takes but little pleasure in all the domestick innocent endearments of life, and grows more fond of *Pam* than of her husband. My friend *Theophrastus*, the best of husbands and of fathers, has often complained to me, with tears in his eyes, of the late hours he is forced to keep if he would enjoy his wife's conversation. When she returns to me with joy in her face, it does not arise, says he, from the sight of her husband, but from the good luck she has had at Cards. On the contrary, says he, if she has been a loser, I am doubly a sufferer by it. She comes home out of humour, is angry with every body, displeas'd with all I can do or say, and in reality for no other reason but because she has been throwing away my estate. What charming

ing;

ing bedfellows and companions for life are men likely to meet with, that chuse their wives out of such women of vogue and fashion? What a race of worthies, what patriots, what heroes must we expect from mothers of this make?

I come in the next place to consider the ill consequences which gaming has on the *bodies* of our female adventurers. It is so ordered that almost every thing which corrupts the Soul, decays the body. The beauties of the face and mind are generally destroyed by the same means. This consideration should have a particular weight with the female world, who were designed to please the eye, and attract the regards of the other half of the species. Now there is nothing that wears out a fine face like the vigils of the Card-table, and those cutting passions which naturally attend them. Hollow eyes, haggard looks, and pale complexions, are the natural indications of a female Gamester. Her morning sleeps are not able to repair her midnight watchings. I have known a woman carried off half dead from Bassette, and have many a time grieved to see a person of Quality gliding by me in her chair at two a-clock in the morning, and looking like a spectre amidst a glare of Flambeaux. In short, I never knew a thorough-paced female Gamester hold her beauty two winters together.

But there is still another case in which the body is more endangered than in the former. All play-debts must be paid in specie, or by an equivalent. The man that plays beyond his income pawns his estate; the woman must find out something else to mortgage when her pin-money is gone: the husband has his lands to dispose of, the wife her person. Now when the female body is once *dipped*, if the Creditor be very importunate, I leave my Reader to consider the consequences.



Thursday,