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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

London, 1721

No 134. Friday, August 14.

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N^o 134. *Friday, August 14.**Matrone præter faciem nil cernere possis,
Cætera, ni Catia est, demissâ veste tegentis.*

Hor.

MY Lion having given over roaring for some time, I find that several stories have been spread abroad in the country to his disadvantage. One of my correspondents tells me, it is confidently reported of him, in their parts, that he is silenced by authority; another informs me, that he hears he was sent for by a messenger, who had orders to bring him away with all his papers, and that upon examination he was found to contain several dangerous things in his maw. I must not omit another report which has been raised by such as are enemies to me and my Lion, namely, that he is starved for want of food, and that he has not had a good meals meat for this fortnight. I do hereby declare these reports to be altogether groundless; and since I am contradicting common fame, I must likewise acquaint the world, that the story of a two hundred pound bank bill being conveyed to me through the mouth of my Lion, has no foundation of truth in it. The matter of fact is this; my Lion has not roared for these twelve days past, by reason that his prompters have put very ill words in his mouth, and such as he could not utter with common honour and decency. Notwithstanding the admonitions I have given my correspondents, many of them have crammed great quantities of scandal down his throat, others have choaked him with lewdness and ribaldry. Some of them have gorged him with so much nonsense that they have made a very ass of him. On *Monday* last, upon examining, I found him an arrant *French* Tory, and the day after a virulent Whig. Some have been so mischievous as to make him fall upon his Keeper, and give me very reproachful language; but as I have promised to restrain him from hurting any man's reputation, so my Reader may be assured that I my self shall be the last man whom I will suffer him to abuse. However, that I may give general satisfaction, I have a design of converting a room in Mr. *Button's* house to the *Lion's Library*, in

VOL. IV.

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which

which I intend to deposite the feveral packets of letters and private intelligence which I do not communicate to the publick. These manuscripts will in time be very valuable, and may afford good lights to future historians who shall give an account of the present age. In the mean while, as the Lion is an animal which has a particular regard for chastity, it has been observed that mine has taken delight in roaring very vehemently against the untucked neck, and, as far as I can find by him, is still determined to roar louder and louder, till that irregularity be thoroughly reformed.

Good Mr. IRONSIDE,

“ I Must acquaint you, for your comfort, that your Lion is grown a
 “ kind of Bull-beggar among the women where I live. When my
 “ wife comes home late from Cards, or commits any other enormity, I
 “ whisper in her ear, partly betwixt jest and earnest, that *I will tell the*
 “ *Lion of her.* Dear Sir, do not let them alone till you have made them
 “ put on their tuckers again. What can be a greater sign, that they
 “ themselves are sensible they have stripped too far, than their pretend-
 “ ing to call a bitt of linnen which will hardly cover a silver groat their
 “ *Modesty-piece*? It is observed, that this modesty-piece still sinks lower
 “ and lower, and who knows where it will fix at last?
 “ You must know, Sir, I am a *Turkey* Merchant, and lived several years
 “ in a country where the women show nothing but their eyes. Upon
 “ my return to *England* I was almost out of countenance to see my pret-
 “ ty country-women laying open their charms with so much liberality,
 “ though at that time many of them were concealed under the modest
 “ shade of the Tucker. I soon after married a very fine woman, who
 “ always goes in the extremity of the fashion. I was pleased to think, as
 “ every married man must, that I should make daily discoveries in the
 “ dear creature, which were unknown to the rest of the world. But
 “ since this new airy fashion is come up, every one’s eye is as familiar
 “ with her as mine, for I can positively affirm, that her neck is grown
 “ eight inches within these three years. And what makes me tremble
 “ when I think of it, that pretty foot and ankle are now exposed to the
 “ sight of the whole world, which made my very heart dance within me
 “ when I first found my self their proprietor. As in all appearance the
 “ curtain is still rising, I find a parcel of rascally young fellows in the
 “ neighbourhood are in hopes to be presented with some new scene
 “ every day.

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“ In short, Sir, the tables are now quite turned upon me. Instead of being acquainted with her person more than other men, I have now the least share of it. When she is at home she is continually muffled up, and concealed in mobbs, morning gowns, and handkerchiefs; but strips every afternoon to appear in publick. For ought I can find, when she has thrown aside half her cloaths, she begins to think herself half drest. Now, Sir, if I may presume to say so, you have been in the wrong, to think of reforming this fashion, by showing the immodesty of it. If you expect to make female profelytes, you must convince them, that, if they would get husbands, they must not show All before marriage. I am sure, had my wife been dressed before I married her as she is at present, she would have satisfied a good half of my curiosity. Many a man has been hindered from laying out his money on a show, by seeing the principal figures of it hung out before the door. I have often observed a curious passenger so attentive to these objects which he could see for nothing, that he took no notice of the master of the show, who was continually crying out, *Pray Gentlemen walk in.*

“ I have told you at the beginning of this letter, how *Mabomet's* she-disciples are obliged to cover themselves; you have lately informed us from the foreign news papers of the regulations which the Pope is now making among the *Roman Ladies* in this particular; and I hope our *British Dames*, notwithstanding they have the finest skins in the world, will be content to show no more of them than what belongs to the face and to the *neck* properly speaking. Their being fair is no excuse for their being naked.

“ You know, Sir, that in the beginning of the last Century there was a sect of men among us who called themselves *Adamites*, and appeared in publick without cloaths. This heresie may spring up in the other sex, if you do not put a timely stop to it, there being so many in all publick places, who show so great an inclination to be *Evites*.

I am, SIR, &c.



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Saturday,