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**The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.**

In Four Volumes

**Addison, Joseph**

**London, 1721**

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N<sup>o</sup> 136. *Monday, August 17.**Noctes atque dies patet atri janua ditis.* Virg.

SOME of our quaint moralists have pleased themselves with an observation, that there is but one way of coming into the world, but a thousand to go out of it. I have seen a fanciful dream written by a *Spaniard*, in which he introduces the person of death metamorphosing himself like another *Proteus* into innumerable shapes and figures. To represent the fatality of feavers and agues, with many other distempers and accidents that destroy the life of man; Death enters first of all in a body of fire, a little after he appears like a man of snow, then rolls about the room like a cannon ball, then lies on the table like a gilded pill: after this he transforms himself, of a sudden, into a sword, then dwindles successively to a dagger, to a bodkin, to a crooked pin, to a needle, to a hair. The *Spaniard's* design, by this allegory, was to shew the many assaults to which the life of man is exposed, and to let his Reader see that there was scarce any thing in nature so very mean and inconsiderable, but that it was able to overcome him and lay his head in the dust. I remember Monsieur *Paschal*, in his Reflections on Providence, has this observation upon *Cromwell's* death. That Usurper, says he, who had destroyed the Royal Family in his own nation, who had made all the Princes of *Europe* tremble, and struck a terror into *Rome* it self, was at last taken out of the world by a fit of the gravel. An atome, a grain of sand, says he, that would have been of no significancy in any other part of the universe, being lodged in such a particular place, was an instrument of providence to bring about the most happy revolution, and to remove from the face of the earth this troubler of mankind. In short, swarms of distempers are every where hovering over us; casualties, whether at home or abroad, whether we wake or sleep, sit or walk, are planted about us in ambuscade; every element, every climate, every season, all nature is full of death.

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There are more casualties incident to men than women, as battles, sea-voyages, with several dangerous trades and professions that often prove fatal to the practitioners. I have seen a treatise written by a learned Physician on the distempers peculiar to those who work in stone or marble. It has been therefore observed by curious men, that upon a strict examination there are more males brought into the world than females. Providence, to supply this waste in the species, has made allowances for it by a suitable redundancy in the male sex. Those who have made the nicest calculations have found, I think, that taking one year with another, there are about twenty boys produced to nineteen girls. This observation is so well grounded, that I will at any time lay five to four, that there appear more male than female infants in every weekly bill of mortality. And what can be a more demonstrative argument for the superintendency of Providence?

There are casualties incident to every particular station and way of life. A friend of mine was once saying, that he fancied there would be something new and diverting in a country bill of mortality. Upon communicating this hint to a Gentleman who was then going down to his seat, which lies at a considerable distance from *London*, he told me he would make a collection, as well as he could, of the several deaths that had happened in his country for the space of a whole year, and send them up to me in the form of such a bill as I mentioned. The Reader will here see that he has been as good as his promise. To make it the more entertaining he has set down, among the real distempers, some imaginary ones, to which the country people ascribed the deaths of some of their neighbours. I shall extract out of them such only as seem almost peculiar to the country, laying aside fevers, apoplexies, small-pox, and the like, which they have in common with towns and cities.

Of a six-bar gate, fox-hunters	4
Of a quick-set hedge	2
Two duels, <i>viz.</i>	
First, between a frying-pan and a pitch-fork	1
Second, between a joint-stool and a brown jug	1
Bewitched	13
Of an evil tongue	9
Croft in love	7
Broke his neck in robbing a henroost	1
Cut finger turned to a gangrene by an old Gentlewoman of the parish	1
Surfeit	

Surfeit of curds and cream	2
Took cold sleeping at Church	11
Of a sprain in his shoulder by saving his dog at a Bull-baiting	1
Lady B—s cordial water	2
Knocked down by a quart bottle	1
Frighted out of his wits by a headless dog with sawcer eyes	1
Of <i>October</i>	25
Broke a vein in bawling for a Knight of the shire	1
Old women drowned upon tryal of witchcraft	3
Climbing a crow's nest	2
Chalk and green apples	4
Led into a horse-pond by a <i>Will of the Whisp</i>	1
Died of a fright in an exercise of the trained bands	1
Over-eat himself at a house-warming	1
By the Parson's bull	2
Vagrant beggars worried by the Squire's house-dog	2
Shot by mistake	1
Of a mountebank doctor	6
Of the <i>Merry-Andrew</i>	1
Caught her death in a wet ditch	1
Old age	100
Foul distemper	o

N<sup>o</sup> 137. *Tuesday, August 18.*

----- *sanctus haberi*  
*Iustitiaeque tenax, factis dictisque mereris?*  
*Agnosco procerem*-----

Juv.

**H**ORACE, Juvenal, Boileau, and indeed the greatest writers in almost every age, have exposed, with all the strength of wit and good sense, the vanity of a man's valuing himself upon his ancestors, and endeavoured to show that true nobility consists in virtue, not in birth. With submission however to so many great authorities, I think they

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