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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

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But as it is usual enough for several persons to dress themselves in the habit of a great leader, *Ambition* and *Avarice* had taken on them the garb and habit of *Love*, by which means they often imposed on *Hymen*, by putting into his hands several couples whom he would never have joined together, had it not been brought about by the delusion of these two impostors.

N^o 153. Saturday, September 5.

Admiranda tibi levium spectacula rerum. Virg.

THERE is no passion which steals into the heart more imperceptibly, and covers it self under more disguises, than *Pride*. For my own part, I think if there is any passion or vice which I am wholly a stranger to, it is this; though, at the same time, perhaps this very judgment which I form of my self, proceeds in some measure from this corrupt principle.

I have been always wonderfully delighted with that sentence in holy writ, *Pride was not made for man*. There is not indeed any single view of human nature under its present condition, which is not sufficient to extinguish in us all the secret seeds of pride; and, on the contrary, to sink the soul into the lowest state of humility, and what the school-men call self-annihilation. *Pride was not made for man*, as he is,

1. A sinful,
2. An ignorant,
3. A miserable Being.

There is nothing in his understanding, in his will, or in his present condition, that can tempt any considerate creature to pride or vanity.

These three very reasons why he should not be proud, are notwithstanding the reasons why he is so. Were not he a sinful creature, he would not be subject to a passion which rises from the depravity of his nature; were he not an ignorant creature, he would see that he has nothing to be proud of; and were not the whole species miserable, he would not have those wretched objects of comparison before his eyes, which are the occasions

passions of this passion, and which make one man value himself more than another.

A wise man will be contented that his glory be deferred till such time as he shall be truly glorified; when his understanding shall be cleared, his will rectified, and his happiness assured; or in other words, when he shall be neither sinful, nor ignorant, nor miserable.

If there be any thing which makes human nature appear *ridiculous* to Beings of superior faculties, it must be pride. They know so well the vanity of those imaginary perfections that swell the heart of man, and of those little supernumerary advantages, whether in birth, fortune, or title, which one man enjoys above another, that it must certainly very much astonish, if it does not very much divert them, when they see a mortal puffed up, and valuing himself above his neighbours on any of these accounts, at the same time that he is obnoxious to all the common calamities of the species.

To set this thought in its true light, we will fancy, if you please, that yonder mole-hill is inhabited by reasonable creatures, and that every pismire (his shape and way of life only excepted) is endowed with human passions. How should we smile to hear one give us an account of the pedigrees, distinctions, and titles that reign among them! Observe how the whole swarm divide and make way for the pismire that passes thorough them. You must understand he is an emmet of quality, and has better blood in his veins than any pismire in the mole-hill. Do not you see how sensible he is of it, how slow he marches forward, how the whole rabble of ants keep their distance? Here you may observe one placed upon a little eminence, and looking down on a long row of labourers. He is the richest Insect on this side the hillock, he has a walk of half a yard in length, and a quarter of an inch in breadth, he keeps a hundred menial servants, and has at least fifteen barley-corns in his granary. He is now chiding and beslaving the emmet that stands before him, and who, for all that we can discover, is as good an emmet as himself.

But here comes an insect of figure! do not you take notice of a little white straw that he carries in his mouth? That straw, you must understand, he would not part with for the longest tract about the mole-hill: did you but know what he has undergone to purchase it! See how the ants of all qualities and conditions swarm about him. Should this straw drop out of his mouth, you would see all this numerous circle of attendants follow the next that took it up, and leave the discarded insect, or run over his back, to come at his successor.

If now you have a mind to see all the Ladies of the mole-hill, observe first the pismire that listens to the emmet on her left hand, at the same time that she seems to turn away her head from him. He tells this poor insect that she is a Goddess, that her eyes are brighter than the sun, that life and death are at her disposal. She believes him, and gives her self a thousand little airs upon it. Mark the vanity of the pismire on your left hand. She can scarce crawl with age, but you must know she values her self upon her birth; and if you mind, spurns at every one that comes within her reach. The little nimble coquette that is running along by the side of her, is a Wit. She has broke many a pismire's heart. Do but observe what a drove of lovers are running after her.

We will here finish this imaginary scene; but first of all, to draw the parallel closer, will suppose, if you please, that death comes down upon the mole-hill, in the shape of a cock-sparrow, who picks up, without distinction, the pismire of quality and his flatterers, the pismire of substance and his day-labourers, the white-straw officer and his sycophants, with all the goddesses, wits, and beauties of the mole-hill.

May we not imagine that Beings of superior natures and perfections regard all the instances of pride and vanity, among our own species, in the same kind of view, when they take a survey of those who inhabit the earth; or, in the language of an ingenious *French* Poet, of those pismires that people this heap of dirt, which human vanity has divided into climates and regions?

N^o 154. Monday, September 7.

Omnia transformant sese in miracula rerum.

Virg.

I Question not but the following letter will be entertaining to those who were present at the late masquerade, as it will recall into their minds several merry particulars that passed in it, and, at the same time, be very acceptable to those who were at a distance from it, as they may form from hence some Idea of this fashionable amusement.

To