



CLASSIC LIVING BOOK

DAYS WITH
**SIR ROGER
DE COVERLEY**

Joseph Addison

COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED

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Days with Sir Roger de Coverley

by

JOSEPH ADDISON





A Day with Mr. ROGER COKERLEY.

The title is rendered in a decorative, calligraphic font. The words "A Day" are in a large, elegant script. "with" is in a smaller, simpler font. "Mr. ROGER COKERLEY." is in a large, bold, serif font with decorative flourishes. The text is integrated with a detailed illustration of a grapevine with clusters of grapes and a stone tower with a decorative top.



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HENRY ALTEMVS

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WITH SIR ROGER
DE COVERLEY

ADDISON

PHILADELPHIA



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Sir Roger de Coverley



SIR ROGER'S FAMILY.



HAVING often received an invitation from my friend Sir Roger de Coverley to pass away a month with him in the country, I last week accompanied him thither, and am settled with him for some time at his country-house, where I intend to form several of my ensuing Speculations. Sir Roger, who is very well acquainted with my humour, lets me rise and go to bed when I please, dine at his own table or in my chamber as I think fit, sit still and say nothing without bidding me be merry. When the gentlemen of the country come to see him, he only shews me at a distance. As I have been walking in his fields I have observed them stealing a sight of me over an hedge, and have heard

the Knight desiring them not to let me see them, for that I hated to be stared at.

I am the more at ease in Sir Roger's family, because it consists of sober and staid persons; for as the Knight is the best master in the world, he seldom changes his servants; and as he is beloved by all about him, his servants never care for leaving him; by this means his domesticks are all in years, and grown old with their master. You would take his valet de chambre for his brother, his butler is gray-headed, his groom is one of the gravest men that I have ever seen, and his coachman has the



“I HAVE OBSERVED THEM STEALING A SIGHT OF ME OVER AN HEDGE.”

looks of a privy-counsellor. You see the goodness of the master even in the old house-dog, and in a gray pad that is kept in the stable with great care and tenderness out of regard to his past services, tho' he has been useless for several years.

I could not but observe with a great deal of pleasure the joy that appeared in the countenance of these ancient domesticks upon my friend's arrival at his country-seat. Some of them could not refrain from tears at the sight of their old master; every one of them press'd forward to do something for him, and seemed discouraged if they were not employed. At the same time the good old Knight, with the mixture of the father and the master of the family, tempered the enquiries after his own affairs with several kind questions relating to themselves. This humanity and good-nature engages every body to him, so that when he is pleasant upon any of them, all his family are in good humour, and none so much as the person whom he diverts himself with. On the contrary, if he coughs, or betrays any infirmity of



THE GRAY PAD.

old age, it is easy for a stander-by to observe a secret concern in the looks of all his servants.

My worthy friend has put me under the particular care of his butler, who is a very prudent man, and, as well as the rest of his fellow-servants, wonderfully desirous of pleasing me, because they have often heard their master talk of me as of his particular friend.

My chief companion, when Sir Roger is diverting



SIR ROGER ARRIVES AT THE HOUSE.

himself in the woods or the fields, is a very venerable man who is ever with Sir Roger, and has lived at his house in the nature of a chaplain above thirty years. This gentleman is a person of good sense and some learning, of a very regular life and obliging conversation. He heartily loves Sir Roger, and knows that he is very much in the old Knight's esteem, so that he lives in the family rather as a relation than a dependent.

I have observed in several of my papers, that my friend Sir Roger, amidst all his good qualities, is something of an humorist; and that his virtues, as well as imperfections, are as it were tinged by a cer-

tain extravagance, which makes them particularly HIS, and distinguishes them from those of other men. This cast of mind, as it is generally very innocent in itself, so it renders his conversation highly agreeable, and more delightful than the same degree of sense and virtue would appear in their common and ordinary colours. As I was walking with him last night, he asked me how I liked the good man whom I have just now mentioned? and without staying for my answer told me, That he was afraid of being insulted with Latin and Greek at his own table; for which reason he desired a particular friend of his at the University to find him out a clergyman rather of plain sense than much learning, of a good aspect, a clear voice, a sociable temper, and, if possible, a man that understood a little of backgammon. My friend, says Sir Roger, found me out this gentleman, who, besides the endowments required of him, is, they tell me, a good scholar, tho' he does not shew it. I have given him the parsonage of the parish; and because I know his value, have settled upon him a good annuity for life. If he outlives me, he shall find



THE VILLAGE COURT OF ASSIZE.

that he was higher in my esteem than perhaps he thinks he is. He has now been with me thirty years; and tho' he does not know I have taken notice of it, has never in all that time asked anything of me for himself, tho' he is every day soliciting me for some thing in behalf of one or other of my tenants his parishioners. There has not been a law-suit in the parish since he has liv'd among them. If any dispute arises they apply themselves to him for the decision; if they do not acquiesce in his judgment, which I think never happened above once or twice at most, they appeal to me. At his first settling with me, I made him a present of all the good sermons which have been printed in English, and only begg'd of



SIR ROGER'S CHAPLAIN.

him that every Sunday he would pronounce one of them in the pulpit. Accordingly, he has digested them into such a series, that they follow one another naturally, and make a continued system of practical divinity.

As Sir Roger was going on in his story, the gentleman we were talking of came up to us; and upon the Knight's asking him who preached to tomorrow (for it was Saturday night) told us, the Bishop of St. Asaph in the morning, and Dr. South in the afternoon. He then shewed us his list of preachers for the whole year, where I saw with a great deal of pleasure Archbishop Tillotson, Bishop Saunderson, Dr. Barrow, Dr. Calamy, with several living authors who have published discourses of practical divinity. I no sooner saw this venerable man in the pulpit, but I very much approved of my friend's insisting upon the qualifications of a good aspect and a clear voice; for I was so charmed with the gracefulness of his figure and delivery, as well as with the discourses he pronounced, that I think I never passed any time more to my satisfaction. A sermon repeated after this manner, is like the composition of a poet in the mouth of a graceful actor.

I could heartily wish that more of our country-clergy would follow this example; and instead of wasting their spirits in laborious compositions of

their own, would endeavour after a handsome elocution, and all those other talents that are proper to enforce what has been penned by greater masters. This would not only be more easy to themselves, but more edifying to the people.

MR. WILL WIMBLE



I was yesterday morning walking with Sir Roger before his house, a country-fellow brought him a huge fish, which, he told him, Mr. William Wimble had caught that very morning; and that he presented it, with his service to him, and intended to come and dine with him. At the same time he delivered a letter which my friend read to me as soon as the messenger left him.

“Sir Roger,

“I desire you to accept of a jack, which is the best I have caught this season. I intend to come and stay with you a week, and see how the perch bite in the Black River. I observed with

some concern, the last time I saw you upon the bowling-green, that your whip wanted a lash to it; I will bring half a dozen with me that I twisted last week, which I hope will serve you all the time you are in the country. I have not been out of the saddle for six days last past, having been at Eaton with Sir John's eldest son. He takes to his learning hugely.

“I am,

“Sir, your humble servant,

“Will Wimble.”

This extraordinary letter, and message that accompanied it, made me very curious to know the character and quality of the gentleman who sent them; which I found to be as follows. Will Wimble is younger brother to a baronet, and descended of the ancient family of the Wimbles. He is now between forty and fifty; but being bred to no business and born to no estate, he generally lives with his elder brother as superintendent of his game. He hunts a pack of dogs better than any man in the country, and is very famous for finding out a hare. He is



SIR ROGER ON THE BOWLING-GREEN.

extremely well versed in all the little handicrafts of an idle man: he makes a Mayfly to a miracle; and furnishes the whole country with angle-rods. As he is a good-natur'd officious fellow, and very much esteem'd upon account of his family, he is a welcome guest at every house, and keeps up a good correspondence among all the gentlemen about him. He carries a tulip-root in his pocket from one to another, or exchanges a puppy between a couple of friends that live perhaps in the opposite sides of the county. Will is a particular favourite of all the young heirs, whom he frequently obliges with a