

played such narrow meanness of soul, such wilful perversion of the truth, such utter unscrupulousness in dealing with the words, actions and characters of their fellow-countrymen? For the politician, with whom everything subserves party, be he as perfect as his elected, restricted position allows him to be, is of the earth earthy; whilst his love of country and solicitude for the welfare of the people are strongly tinged with self-interest, ambition and human passion. As Addison puts it, violent party spirit "is very fatal both to men's morals and their understandings; it sinks the virtue of a nation, and not only so, but destroys even its common sense."

If such are the results of the spirit of faction upon a nation at large, its influence upon the delicate, sensitive bonds of friendship cannot but be pernicious, if not disastrous.

In reviewing the course of the relations that existed amongst these three illustrious men, it may be stated that Addison, by temperament, mode of life, as well as by the peculiarities of time and place, was especially fitted to form strong and enduring attachments with men; and no eminent man of public life lost fewer friends or retained more. All who knew him agree that he possessed in the highest degree those qualifications which are requisite for winning and preserving the good-will and affection of his fellowmen.

Addison's friendship with Steele dated back to early days when they were boys together at the Chartreux. After years of separation, it was renewed and strengthened by community of interest and aim, as well as by the closest companionship. And so it stood for years; but at length came the little rift within the lute.

Old Polonius knew the value of his advice to his son when he said:

"Neither a borrower nor a lender be,
For loan oft loses both itself and friend."

Steele, whose improvidence was often his undoing, borrowed money from Addison, who, on one occasion, probably in a heated moment, caused by fruitless bickerings, repaid himself with the assistance of a bailiff. This action not unnaturally rankled in the heart of Steele, but their relations though strained were not broken. Probably the repeated kindnesses of Addison, the necessity of his favour and the sense of justice outweighed the chagrin and the sense of shame and unfriendliness. After a time, their old habits of familiar intercourse were resumed. But the friendship, that could withstand even such an assault as this, at length went down before the rancour engendered by mere political difference.

Both men were Whigs. A controversy, however, over Sunderland's "Peerage Bill" arose, concerning which, by the irony of fate, the two friends took opposite views. Steele wrote a pamphlet which provoked an answer from Addison. The contest did not proceed far before the controvertists were engaged in personalities and mutual recriminations; and the friendship of a life-time was shattered by a paltry squabble over the merits of a Parliamentary Bill. As Dr. Johnson says: "Every reader surely must regret that these two illustrious friends, after so many years passed in confidence and endearment, in unity of interest, conformity of opinion, and friendship and study, should finally part in acrimonious opposition. Why could not faction find other advocates. But among the uncertainties of the human state we are doomed to number the instability of friendship."

Addison and Swift, the two keenest and shrewdest observers of their age, were, at the commencement of their public career attached to the same political party and patrons. For the history of their friendship little need be added to what Swift has left us in his *Journal to Stella*. They had become acquainted during their residence in Ireland and Swift's visits to England; but their attachment ripened, reached fruition and decay during those three memorable years (1710-1713) passed by Swift in London, which are described at great length in his *Journal*, one of the most minute life records ever left by a great man to posterity.

How close and sacred was the tie that bound these two eminent men together may be gathered from the frequent daily recurrence of, "I dined, or sat, or walked, or drove with Addison," showing the constant companionship, perfect confidence, and genuine admiration and affection that existed between them.

"Mr. Addison's election," Swift writes, "has passed easy and disputed; and I believe if he had a mind to be chosen king he would hardly be refused."

Then Swift was introduced to the new Tory leaders, Harley and St. John, which was followed by his defection from the Whigs. Still, for a time, the old relations were maintained. But the leaven was at work and the arch-demon of discord was only awaiting his chance, which soon came.

Steele, in violation of his promise to abstain from politics, wrote an article in *The Tatler* against Harley, for which he was deprived of his position of *Gazetteer*, and three hundred pounds a year. Swift, out of consideration for Addison as much as anything, being desirous of keeping Steele in his other position, the stamped paper office, visited the former to discuss the situation with him; but, as he says, "I found party had so possessed him that he talked as if he suspected me, and would not fall in with anything I said. So I stopped short in my overture and we parted dryly." The next day he says, "I went to the coffee-house, where I behaved myself coldly enough to Mr. Addison."

Still, for some time yet, the friends dined together; but three weeks later he writes, "Mr. Addison and I meet a little seldomer than formerly, although we are still at bottom as good friends as ever; but differ a little about party." Then the warm meetings grew cool and seldom, and the brave dinings ceased, and Swift graced the tables of Harley and St. John more frequently.

"Mr. Addison and I," he states, "hardly meet once a fortnight; his parliament and my different friendships keep us asunder." And two days later, "Mr. Addison and I am different as black and white, and I believe our friendship will go off by this damned business of party; he cannot bear seeing me fall in so with this ministry; but I love him still, though we seldom meet."

Swift was now an out-and-out Tory, Addison remained a staunch Whig, and the estrangement was complete. And the gaunt spectre of faction, that had erected a barrier of ice between them, stood by, laughing grimly at his handiwork. Yet, it is remarkable that neither then nor after did these two, who had drifted so far asunder, calumniate each other or indulge in personal attack or abuse. Nay, the very next entry in the *Journal* proves the mutual respect and forbearance that subsisted between them. Swift still wished to effect a reconciliation between Harley and Steele, and fixed an appointment for them to meet, which Steele, for some reason, failed to observe.

"I believe," says Swift, "Addison hindered him out of mere spite, being grated to the soul to think he should ever want my help to save his friend; yet now he is soliciting me to make another of his friends Queen's Secretary at Geneva; and I will do it if I can."

From this out, with a single exception, Addison and Swift met as mere acquaintances, exchanging the common civilities of the coffee-house and club. Yet under these chilled conditions there existed a strong undercurrent of affection restrained and regret for the cruel restrictions which party-spirit had put upon their intercourse. "I called at the coffee-house," Swift writes, "and talked coldly awhile with Mr. Addison; all our friendship and dearness are off; we are civil acquaintance, talked words, of course, of when we shall meet, and that is all. I have not been at any house with him these six weeks; the other day we were to have dined together at the Comptroller's, but I sent my excuses, being engaged to the Secretary of State. Is it not odd?" Odd, indeed.

One more passage which ends in bitterness, sadness and regret.

"We are grown common acquaintances; yet, what have not I done for his friend, Steele. I have introduced Harrison, whom Mr. Addison recommended to me, to the Secretary of State, who has promised me to take care of him, and I have represented Addison himself so to the Ministry that they think and talk in his favour, though they hated him before. Well, he is now in my debt and there is an end; and I never had the least obligation to him, and there is another end." In these altered relations they lived during Swift's stay in London.

A few years later the Whigs were in power and Addison went as Chief Secretary to Ireland. But he had been advised to show no civility to the Dean of St. Patrick's, who was then living in the mirk and gloom of political ignominy