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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

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but not before he had laid down to me the impossibility of such an event, as the affairs of *Europe* now stand.

This Paper I design for the particular Benefit of those worthy Citizens who live more in a Coffee-house than in their Shops, and whose thoughts are so taken up with the Affairs of the Allies, that they forget their Customers.

N^o 156. Saturday, April 8. 1710.

-----*Sequiturque Patrem non passibus equis.*

Virg.

From my own Apartment, April 7.

WE have already described out of *Homer* the voyage of *Ulysses* to the Infernal Shades, with the several adventures that attended it.

If we look into the beautiful Romance published not many years since by the Archbishop of *Cambray*, we may see the Son of *Ulysses* bound on the same expedition, and after the same manner making his discoveries among the Regions of the Dead. The story of *Telemachus* is formed altogether in the Spirit of *Homer*, and will give an unlearned Reader a notion of that great Poet's manner of writing, more than any Translation of him can possibly do. As it was written for the instruction of a young Prince, who may one day sit upon the Throne of *France*, the Author took care to suit the several parts of his story, and particularly the description we are now entering upon, to the character and quality of his Pupil. For which reason, he insists very much on the Misery of Bad, and the Happiness of Good Kings, in the account he hath given of punishments and rewards in the other world.

We may however observe, notwithstanding the endeavours of this great and learned Author, to copy after the Style and Sentiments of *Homer*, that there is a certain tincture of Christianity running through the whole relation. The Prelate in several places mixes himself with the Poet; so that his Future State puts me in mind of *Michael Angelo's* last

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Judgment, where *Charon* and his Boat are represented as bearing a part in the dreadful Solemnities of that great day.

Telemachus, after having passed through the dark avenues of Death in the retinue of *Mercury*, who every day delivers up a certain tale of Ghosts to the Ferryman of *Styx*, is admitted into the infernal Bark. Among the companions of his voyage, is the Shade of *Nabopharzon*, a King of *Babylon*, and Tyrant of all the *East*. Among the ceremonies and pomps of his funeral, there were four Slaves sacrificed, according to the custom of the country, in order to attend him among the Shades. The Author having described this Tyrant in the most odious colours of Pride, Insolence, and Cruelty, tells us, that his four Slaves, instead of serving him after death, were perpetually insulting him with Reproaches and Affronts for his past usage; that they spurned him as he lay upon the ground, and forced him to show his face, which he would fain have covered, as lying under all the confusions of guilt and infamy; and in short, that they kept him bound in a Chain, in order to drag him before the Tribunal of the dead.

Telemachus, upon looking out of the Bark, sees all the strand covered with an innumerable multitude of Shades, who, upon his jumping ashore, immediately vanished. He then pursues his course to the Palace of *Pluto*, who is described as seated on his Throne in terrible Majesty, with *Proserpine* by his side. At the foot of his Throne was the pale hideous Spectre, who, by the Ghastliness of his visage, and the Nature of the apparitions that surrounded him, discovers himself to be *Death*. His attendants are *Melancholy*, *Distrust*, *Revenge*, *Hatred*, *Avarice*, *Despair*, *Ambition*, *Envy*, *Impiety*, with frightful *Dreams*, and waking *Cares*, which are all drawn very naturally in proper actions and postures. The Author, with great beauty, places near his frightful *Dreams* an assembly of *Phantoms*, which are often employed to terrify the living, by appearing in the shape and likeness of the dead.

The young Heroe, in the next place, takes a survey of the different kinds of Criminals that lay in torture among Clouds of Sulphur, and Torrents of Fire. The first of these were such as had been guilty of impieties, which every one hath an horror for: To which is added, a catalogue of such offenders that scarce appear to be faulty in the eyes of the vulgar. Among these, says the Author, are malicious Criticks, that have endeavoured to cast a blemish upon the perfections of others; with whom he likewise places such as have often hurt the reputation of the innocent, by passing a rash Judgment on their actions, without knowing
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the occasion of them. These Crimes, says he, are more severely punished after death, because they generally meet with impunity upon earth.

Telemachus, after having taken a survey of several other wretches in the same circumstances, arrives at that Region of Torments in which wicked Kings are punished. There are very fine strokes of Imagination in the description which he gives of this unhappy multitude. He tells us, that on one side of them there stood a revengeful Fury, thundering in their ears incessant repetitions of all the crimes they had committed upon earth, with the aggravations of Ambition, Vanity, Hardness of Heart, and all those secret Affections of Mind that enter into the composition of a Tyrant. At the same time, she holds up to them a large Mirror, in which every one sees himself represented in the natural horror and deformity of his character. On the other side of them stands another Fury, that, with an insulting derision, repeats to them all the praises that their flatterers had bestowed upon them while they sat upon their respective Thrones. She too, says the Author, presents a Mirror before their eyes, in which every one sees himself adorned with all those beauties and perfections in which they had been drawn by the vanity of their own hearts, and the flattery of others. To punish them for the wantonness of the cruelty which they formerly exercised, they are now delivered up to be treated according to the fancy and caprice of several Slaves, who have here an opportunity of tyrannizing in their turns.

The Author having given us a description of these ghastly Spectres, who, says he, are always calling upon Death, and are placed under the distillation of that burning Vengeance which falls upon them drop by drop, and is never to be exhausted, leads us into a pleasing Scene of Groves, filled with the Melody of Birds, and the Odours of a thousand different Plants. These Groves are represented as rising among a great many flowry meadows, and watered with streams that diffuse a perpetual freshness in the midst of an eternal day, and a never-fading spring. This, says the Author, was the habitation of those good Princes who were friends of the Gods, and parents of the people. Among these, *Telemachus* converses with the Shade of one of his ancestors, who makes a most agreeable relation of the Joys of *Elysium*, and the nature of its inhabitants. The Residence of *Sesostris* among these happy Shades, with his character and present employment, is drawn in a very lively manner, and with a great elevation of thought.

The description of that pure and gentle Light which overflows these happy Regions, and cloaths the spirits of these virtuous persons, hath some-

something in it of that Enthusiasm which this Author was accused of by his enemies in the Church of *Rome*; but however it may look in Religion, it makes a very beautiful figure in Poetry.

The rays of the Sun, says he, are darkness in comparison with this light, which rather deserves the name of Glory, than that of Light. It pierces the thickest bodies, in the same manner as the Sun-beams pass through chrystal; it strengthens the sight instead of dazzling it; and nourishes in the most inward recesses of the mind, a perpetual serenity that is not to be expressed. It enters and incorporates it self with the very substance of the Soul: The spirits of the blessed feel it in all their senses, and in all their perceptions. It produces a certain source of peace and joy that arises in them for ever, running through all the faculties, and refreshing all the desires of the Soul. External pleasures and delights, with all their charms and allurements, are regarded with the utmost indifference and neglect by these happy Spirits who have this great principle of pleasure within them, drawing the whole mind to its self, calling off their attention from the most delightful objects, and giving them all the transports of Inebriation, without the confusion and the folly of it.

I have here only mentioned some master-touches of this admirable piece, because the original it self is understood by the greater part of my Readers. I must confess, I take a particular delight in these Prospects of Futurity, whether grounded upon the probable Suggestions of a fine Imagination, or the more severe Conclusions of Philosophy; as a man loves to hear all the Discoveries or Conjectures relating to a foreign country which he is, at some time, to inhabit. Prospects of this nature lighten the burden of any present evil, and refresh us under the worst and lowest circumstances of Mortality. They extinguish in us both the fear and envy of humane Grandeur. Insolence shrinks its head, Power disappears; Pain, Poverty, and Death, fly before them. In short, the mind that is habituated to the lively sense of an Hereafter, can hope for what is the most terrifying to the generality of mankind, and rejoice in what is the most afflicting.

Thursday,