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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

London, 1721

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“ and Mother both in one. These are all the circumstances that I could
 “ learn of Doctor *Young's* Life, which might have given occasion to ma-
 “ ny obscene fictions: But as I know those would never have gained a
 “ place in your paper, I have not troubled you with any impertinence of
 “ that nature; having stuck to the truth very scrupulously, as I always do
 “ when I subscribe my self,

S I R, Your, &c.

I shall add, as a Postscript to this Letter, that I am informed, the fa-
 mous *Saltero*, who sells Coffee in his Musæum at *Chelsea*, has by him a
 curiosity which helped the Doctor to carry on his Imposture, and will
 give great satisfaction to the curious Inquirer.

N^o 229. *Tuesday, September 26. 1710.*

Questam meritis sume superbiam.

Hor.

From my own Apartment, September 25.

THE whole Creation preys upon it self: Every living Creature is
 inhabited. A Flea has a thousand invisible Insects that tease him
 as he jumps from place to place, and revenge our quarrels upon
 him. A very ordinary Microscope shows us, that a Louse is it self a
 very lousie creature. A Whale, besides those Seas and Oceans in the
 several vessels of his body, which are filled with innumerable shoals of
 little Animals, carries about it a whole world of inhabitants; insomuch
 that, if we believe the calculations some have made, there are more living
 Creatures which are too small for the naked eye to behold about the Le-
 viathan, than there are of visible Creatures upon the face of the whole
 Earth. Thus every nobler Creature is at it were the basis and support
 of multitudes that are his inferiors.

This consideration very much comforts me, when I think on those
 numberless Vermin that feed upon this paper, and find their sustenance
 out of it; I mean, the small Wits and Scribblers that every day turn a
 Penny

Penny by nibbling at my Lucubrations. This has been so advantageous to this little species of writers, that, if they do me justice, I may expect to have my Statue erected in *Grub-street*, as being a common Benefactor to that quarter.

They say, when a Fox is very much troubled with Fleas, he goes into the next pool with a little lock of wool in his mouth, and keeps his body under water till the Vermin get into it, after which he quits the wool, and diving, leaves his tormentors to shift for themselves, and get their livelihood where they can. I would have these Gentlemen take care that I do not serve them after the same manner; for though I have hitherto kept my temper pretty well, it is not impossible but I may some time or other disappear; and what will then become of them? Should I lay down my paper, what a famine would there be among the Hawkers, Printers, Bookfellers and Authors? it would be like Dr. B---s's dropping his Cloak, with the whole congregation hanging upon the Skirts of it. To enumerate some of these my doughty Antagonists, I was threatened to be answered weekly *Tit for Tat*: I was undermined by the *Whisperer*, haunted by *Tom Brown's Ghost*, scolded at by a *Female Tatler*, and slandered by another of the same character, under the title of *Atalantis*. I have been annotated, retattled, examined, and condoled: But it being my standing maxim, Never to speak ill of the dead; I shall let these Authors rest in peace, and take great pleasure in thinking that I have sometimes been the means of their getting a belly-full. When I see my self thus surrounded by such formidable enemies, I often think of the Knight of the *Red Cross* in *Spencer's Den of Error*, who after he has cut off the Dragon's head, and left it wallowing in a flood of Ink, sees a thousand monstrous Reptiles making their attempts upon him, one with many heads, another with none, and all of them without eyes.

*The same so sore annoyed has the Knight,
That well nigh choaked with the deadly stink,
His forces fail, he can no longer fight;
Whose courage when the Fiend perceived to shrink,
She poured forth out of her hellish Sink
Her fruitful cursed spawn of Serpents small,
Deformed Monsters, foul, and black as Ink;
Which swarming all about his legs did crawl,
And him encombred sore, but could not hurt at all.*

*As gentle Shepherd in sweet even-tide,
 When ruddy Phœbus gins to welk in West,
 High on an hill, his Flock to viewen wide,
 Marks which do bite their hasty supper best;
 A cloud of combrous Gnats do him molest,
 All striving to infix their feeble stings,
 That from their noyance he no where can rest;
 But with his clownish hands their tender wings
 He brusheth oft, and oft doth mar their murmurings.*

If ever I should want such a fry of little Authors to attend me, I shall think my paper in a very decaying condition. They are like Ivy about an Oak, which adorns the tree at the same time that it eats into it; or like a great man's Equipage, that do honour to the person on whom they feed. For my part, when I see my self thus attacked, I do not consider my Antagonists as malicious, but hungry, and therefore am resolved never to take any notice of them.

As for those who detract from my labours without being prompted to it by an empty stomach, in return to their censures I shall take pains to excel, and never fail to perswade my self, that their enmity is nothing but their envy or ignorance.

Give me leave to conclude, like an Old man and a Moralist, with a Fable:

The Owls, Bats, and several other birds of night, were one day got together in a thick shade, where they abused their Neighbours in a very sociable manner. This Satyr at last fell upon the Sun, whom they all agreed to be very troublesome, impertinent, and inquisitive. Upon which the Sun, who overheard them, spoke to them after this manner: Gentlemen, I wonder how you dare abuse one that you know could in an instant scorch you up, and burn every Mother's Son of you: But the only answer I shall give you, or the revenge I shall take of you, is, to *shine on*.



Thursday,