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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

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*Quoi quisque ferè studio devinctus adhæret:
Aut quibus in rebus multùm sumus antè morati:
Atque in quâ ratione fuit contenta magis mens;
In somnis eadem plerumque videmur obire.* Lucr. L. 4.

IN one of my late rambles, or rather speculations, I looked into the great hall where the Bank is kept, and was not a little pleased to see the Directors, Secretaries and Clerks, with all the other Members of that wealthy Corporation, ranged in their several stations, according to the parts they act in that just and regular Oeconomy. This revived in my memory the many discourses which I had both read and heard concerning the decay of Publick Credit, with the methods of restoring it, and which, in my opinion, have always been defective, because they have always been made with an eye to separate interests, and party principles.

The thoughts of the day gave my mind employment for the whole night, so that I fell insensibly into a kind of methodical Dream, which disposed all my contemplations into a Vision or Allegory, or what else the reader shall please to call it.

My thoughts I returned to the great hall, where I had been the morning before, but, to my surprize, instead of the company that I left there, I saw towards the upper end of the hall a beautiful Virgin, seated on a throne of gold. Her name (as they told me) was *Publick Credit*. The walls, instead of being adorned with pictures and maps, were hung with many Acts of Parliament written in golden letters. At the upper end of the hall was the *Magna Charta*, with the Act of Uniformity on the right hand, and the Act of Toleration on the left. At the lower end of the hall was the Act of Settlement, which was placed full in the eye of the Virgin

gin that fate upon the Throne. Both the sides of the hall were covered with such Acts of Parliament as had been made for the establishment of publick Funds. The Lady seemed to set an unspeakable value upon these several pieces of furniture, insomuch that she often refreshed her eye with them, and often smiled with a secret pleasure, as she looked upon them; but, at the same time, shewed a very particular uneasiness, as if she saw any thing approaching that might hurt them. She appeared indeed infinitely timorous in all her behaviour: and, whether it was from the delicacy of her constitution, or that she was troubled with Vapours, as I was afterwards told by one who I found was none of her well-wishers, she changed colour, and startled at every thing she heard. She was likewise (as I afterwards found) a greater Valetudinarian than any I had ever met with, even in her own Sex, and subject to such momentary Consumptions, that in the twinkling of an eye, she would fall away from the most florid complexion, and the most healthful state of body, and wither into a Skeleton. Her recoveries were often as sudden as her decays, insomuch that she would revive in a moment out of a wasting distemper, into a habit of the highest health and vigour.

I had very soon an opportunity of observing these quick turns and changes in her Constitution. There sat at her feet a couple of Secretaries, who received every hour Letters from all parts of the world, which the one or the other of them was perpetually reading to her; and, according to the news she heard, to which she was exceedingly attentive, she changed colour, and discovered many symptoms of health or sickness.

Behind the Throne was a prodigious heap of bags of money, which were piled upon one another so high that they touched the ceiling. The floor, on her right hand and on her left, was covered with vast sums of gold that rose up in pyramids on either side of her: But this I did not so much wonder at, when I heard, upon enquiry, that she had the same virtue in her touch, which the Poets tell us a *Lydian* King was formerly possessed of: and that she could convert whatever she pleased into that precious metal.

After a little dizziness, and confused hurry of thought, which a man often meets with in a dream, methoughts the Hall was alarmed, the doors flew open, and there entered half a dozen of the most hideous Phantoms that I had ever seen (even in a dream) before that time. They came in two by two, though matched in the most dissociable manner, and mingled together in a kind of dance. It would be tedious to describe their habits and persons, for which reason I shall only inform my

Reader that the first couple were Tyranny and Anarchy, the second were Bigotry and Atheism, the third the Genius of a Common-wealth and a young man of about twenty two years of age, whose name I could not learn. He had a sword in his right hand, which in the dance he often brandish'd at the Act of Settlement; and a Citizen, who stood by me, whisper'd in my ear, that he saw a sponge in his left hand. The dance of so many jarring natures put me in mind of the Sun, Moon and Earth, in the *Rebearfal*, that danced together for no other end but to eclipse one another.

The Reader will easily suppose, by what has been before said, that the Lady on the throne would have been almost frighted to distraction, had she seen but any one of these Spectres; what then must have been her condition when she saw them all in a body? She fainted and dyed away at the sight.

Et neque jam color est misto candore rubori;

Vec vigor, et vires, et quæ modò visa placebant;

Nec corpus remanet----- Ov. Met. Lib. 3.

There was a great change in the hill of money bags, and the heaps of money, the former shrinking, and falling into so many empty bags, that I now found not above a tenth part of them had been filled with money. The rest that took up the same space, and made the same figure as the bags that were really filled with money, had been blown up with air, and called into my memory the bags full of wind, which *Homer* tells us his Hero received as a present from *Æolus*. The great heaps of gold, on either side the throne, now appeared to be only heaps of paper, or little piles of notched sticks, bound up together in bundles, like *Bath-faggots*.

Whilst I was lamenting this sudden desolation that had been made before me, the whole Scene vanished: In the room of the frightful Spectres, there now entered a second dance of Apparitions very agreeably match'd together, and made up of very amiable Phantoms. The first pair was Liberty with Monarchy at her right hand: The second was Moderation leading in Religion; and the third a person whom I had never seen, with the Genius of *Great Britain*. At the first entrance the Lady revived, the bags swelled to their former bulk, the pile of faggots and heaps of paper changed into pyramids of Guineas: And for my own part I was so transported with joy, that I awaked, though I must confess, I would fain have fallen asleep again to have clos'd my Vision, if I could have done it.

Tuesday,