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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

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astonishment on the little competitions, factions and debates of mankind. When I read the several dates of the tombs, of some that died yesterday, and some six hundred years ago, I consider that great day when we shall all of us be contemporaries, and make our appearance together.

N^o 28. *Monday, April 2.*

-----*Neque semper arcum
Tendit Apollo.*

Hor.

I Shall here present my reader with a Letter from a Projector, concerning a new Office which he thinks may very much contribute to the embellishment of the City, and to the driving barbarity out of our streets. I consider it as a Satyr upon Projectors in general, and a lively picture of the whole art of modern Criticism.

S I R,

“ **O**bserving that you have thoughts of creating certain Officers
 “ under you, for the inspection of several petty enormities
 “ which you your self cannot attend to; and finding daily absurdities
 “ hung out upon the sign-posts of this city, to the great scandal of fo-
 “ reigners, as well as those of our own country, who are curious specta-
 “ tors of the same: I do humbly propose, that you would be pleased
 “ to make me your Superintendent of all such figures and devices as are
 “ or shall be made use of on this occasion; with full powers to rectifie or
 “ expunge whatever I shall find irregular or defective. For want of such
 “ an Officer, there is nothing like found literature and good sense to be met
 “ with in those objects, that are every where thrusting themselves out to
 “ the eye, and endeavouring to become visible. Our streets are filled
 “ with blue Boars, black Swans, and red Lions; not to mention flying
 “ Pigs, and Hogs in armour, with many other creatures more extraor-
 “ dinary than any in the desarts of *Africk*. Strange! that one who has
 “ all

“ all the birds and beasts in nature to chuse out of, should live at the Sign
“ of an *Ens Rationis*!

“ My first task therefore should be, like that of *Hercules*, to clear the
“ city from Monsters. In the second place I would forbid, that creatures
“ of jarring and incongruous natures should be joined together in the
“ same sign; such as the Bell and the Neats-tongue, the Dog and Gridi-
“ ron. The Fox and Goose may be supposed to have met; but what
“ has the Fox and the seven Stars to do together? And when did the Lamb
“ and Dolphin ever meet, except upon a sign-post? As for the Cat and
“ Fiddle, there is a conceit in it; and therefore I do not intend that any
“ thing I have here said should affect it. I must however observe to you
“ upon this subject, that it is usual for a young Tradesman, at his first
“ setting up, to add to his Sign that of the Master whom he served; as
“ the Husband after marriage, gives a place to his Mistress's Arms in his
“ own Coat. This I take to have given rise to many of those absurdities
“ which are committed over our heads; and, as I am informed, first oc-
“ casioned the three Nuns and a Hare, which we see so frequently joined
“ together. I would therefore establish certain rules, for the determi-
“ ning how far one Tradesman may *give* the Sign of another, and in what
“ cases he may be allowed to quarter it with his own.

“ In the third place, I would enjoin every Shop to make use of a Sign
“ which bears some affinity to the Wares in which it deals. What can
“ be more inconsistent, than to see a Bawd at the sign of the Angel, or a
“ Taylor at the Lion? A Cook should not live at the Boot, nor a Shoe-
“ maker at the roasted Pig; and yet, for want of this regulation, I have
“ seen a Goat set up before the door of a Perfumer, and the *French*
“ King's head at a Sword-cutler's.

“ An ingenious foreigner observes, that several of those Gentlemen
“ who value themselves upon their families, and overlook such as are bred
“ to trade, bear the tools of their forefathers in their Coats of Arms. I
“ will not examine how true this is in fact: But though it may not be
“ necessary for posterity thus to set up the sign of their forefathers; I
“ think it highly proper for those who actually profess the trade, to shew
“ some such marks of it before their doors.

“ When the Name gives an occasion for an ingenious Sign-post, I would
“ likewise advise the owner to take that opportunity of letting the world
“ know who he is. It would have been ridiculous for the ingenious
“ Mrs. *Salmon* to have lived at the sign of the Trout; for which reason
“ she has erected before her house the figure of the fish that is her name-

“ fake.

“ fake. Mr. *Bell* has likewise distinguished himself by a device of the
 “ same nature: And here, Sir, I must beg leave to observe to you, that
 “ this particular figure of a Bell has given occasion to several pieces of
 “ wit in this kind. A man of your reading must know that *Abel Drug-*
 “ *ger* gained great applause by it in the time of *Ben. Johnson*. Our a-
 “ pocryphal heathen God is also represented by this figure; which, in
 “ conjunction with the Dragon, makes a very handsome picture in feve-
 “ ral of our streets. As for the Bell-savage, which is the sign of a Sa-
 “ vage man standing by a Bell, I was formerly very much puzzled upon
 “ the conceit of it, till I accidentally fell into the reading of an old Ro-
 “ mance translated out of the *French*; which gives an account of a very
 “ beautiful woman who was found in a wilderness, and is called in the
 “ *French la belle Sauvage*; and is every where translated by our coun-
 “ try-man the Bell-savage. This piece of Philology will, I hope, con-
 “ vince you that I have made Sign-posts my study, and consequently qua-
 “ lified my self for the employment which I sollicite at your hands. But
 “ before I conclude my Letter, I must communicate to you another re-
 “ mark which I have made upon the subject with which I am now en-
 “ tertaining you, namely, that I can give a shrewd guess at the humour
 “ of the Inhabitant by the Sign that hangs before his door. A furly cho-
 “ leric fellow, generally makes choice of a Bear; as men of milder dif-
 “ positions frequently live at the Lamb. Seeing a Punch-bowl painted
 “ upon a Sign near *Charing-crofs*, and very curiously garnished, with a
 “ couple of Angels hovering over it, and squeezing a Lemon into it, I had
 “ the curiosity to ask after the Master of the house, and found upon en-
 “ quiry, as I had guessed by the little *Agréemens* upon his Sign, that he
 “ was a *Frenchman*. I know, Sir, it is not requisite for me to enlarge
 “ upon these hints to a Gentleman of your great abilities; so humbly
 “ recommending my self to your favour and patronage,

I remain, &c.

I shall add to the foregoing Letter another, which came to me by the
 same Penny-post.

From my own Apartment near Charing-crofs.

Honoured Sir,

“ **H**AVING heard that this nation is a great encourager of ingenuity,
 “ I have brought with me a Rope dancer that was caught in
 “ one of the woods belonging to the Great *Mogul*. He is by birth a
 “ Monkey;

“ Monkey; but swings upon a rope, takes a pipe of tobacco, and drinks
 “ a glass of ale, like any reasonable creature. He gives great satisfaction
 “ to the Quality; and if they will make a Subscription for him, I will
 “ send for a brother of his out of *Holland* that is a very good Tumbler;
 “ and also for another of the same family whom I design for my *Merry-Andrew*,
 “ as being an excellent Mimick, and the greatest Drole in
 “ the country where he now is. I hope to have this entertainment in a
 “ readines for the next winter; and doubt not but it will please more
 “ than the Opera or Puppet-show. I will not say that a Monkey is a bet-
 “ ter man than some of the Opera Heroes; but certainly he is a better
 “ representative of a man, than the most artificial composition of wood
 “ and wire. If you will be pleased to give me a good word in your paper,
 “ you shall be every night a Spectator at my Show for nothing.

I am, &c.

N^o 29. *Tuesday, April 3.*

----- *Sermo linguâ concinnus utraque*

Suavior: ut Chio nota si commista Falerni est.

Hor.

THERE is nothing that has more startled our *English* Audience, than the *Italian Recitativo* at its first entrance upon the Stage. People were wonderfully surprized to hear Generals singing the word of command, and Ladies delivering messages in Musick. Our country-men could not forbear laughing when they heard a Lover chanting out a Billet-doux, and even the Superscription of a Letter set to a tune. The famous blunder in an old Play of *Enter a King and two Fiddlers solus*, was now no longer an absurdity; when it was impossible for a Hero in a desert, or a Princess in her closet, to speak any thing unaccompanied with musical Instruments.

VOL. II.

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But