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**The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.**

In Four Volumes

**Addison, Joseph**

**London, 1721**

No 31. Thursday, April 5.

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that comes on the stage is a Beau. The Queens and Heroines are so painted, that they appear as ruddy and cherry-checked as Milk-maids. The Shepherds are all embroidered, and acquit themselves in a Ball better than our *English* Dancing-masters. I have seen a couple of Rivers appear in red stockings; and *Alpheus*, instead of having his head covered with Sedge and Bull-rushes, making love in a fair full-bottomed Perriwig, and a plume of Feathers, but with a voice so full of shakes and quavers, that I should have thought the murmurs of a country brook the much more agreeable musick.

I remember the last Opera I saw in that merry Nation, was *The Rape of Proserpine*; where *Pluto*, to make the more tempting figure, puts himself in a *French* equipage, and brings *Ascalaphus* along with him as his *Valet de Chambre*. This is what we call folly and impertinence; but what the *French* look upon as gay and polite.

I shall add no more to what I have here offered, than that Musick, Architecture and Painting, as well as Poetry and Oratory, are to deduce their laws and rules from the general sense and taste of mankind, and not from the principles of those Arts themselves; or in other words, the Taste is not to conform to the Art, but the Art to the Taste. Musick is not designed to please only chromatick ears, but all that are capable of distinguishing harsh from disagreeable notes. A man of an ordinary ear is a judge whether a passion is expressed in proper sounds, and whether the melody of those sounds be more or less pleasing.

N<sup>o</sup> 31. Thursday, April 5.

*Sit mihi fas audita loqui!*-----

Virg.

**L**AST night, upon my going into a Coffee-house not far from the *Hay-Market* Theatre, I diverted my self for above half an hour with over-hearing the discourse of one, who, by the shabbiness of his dress, the extravagance of his conceptions, and the hurry of his speech, I discovered to be of that species who are generally distinguished by the title



title of Projectors. This Gentleman, for I found he was treated as such by his audience, was entertaining a whole table of listners with the project of an Opera, which he told us had not cost him above two or three mornings in the contrivance, and which he was ready to put in execution, provided he might find his account in it. He said, that he had observed the great trouble and inconvenience which Ladies were at, in travelling up and down to the several Shows that are exhibited in different quarters of the town. The dancing Monkies are in one place; the Puppet-show in another; the Opera in a third; not to mention the Lions, that are almost a whole day's journey from the politer part of the town. By this means people of figure are forced to lose half the winter after their coming to town, before they have seen all the strange Sights about it. In order to remedy this great inconvenience, our Projector drew out of his pocket the scheme of an Opera, entitled, *The Expedition of Alexander the Great*; in which he had disposed all the remarkable Shows about town, among the scenes and decorations of his piece. The thought, he confessed, was not originally his own, but that he had taken the hint of it from several performances which he had seen upon our stage: In one of which there was a Rary-show; in another, a Ladder-dance; and in others a Posture-man, a moving Picture, with many curiosities of the like nature.

This *Expedition of Alexander* opens with his consulting the Oracle at *Delphos*, in which the dumb Conjuror, who has been visited by so many Persons of Quality of late years, is to be introduced as telling him his fortune: At the same time *Clench of Barnet* is represented in another corner of the Temple, as ringing the Bells of *Delphos*, for joy of his arrival. The Tent of *Darius* is to be peopled by the ingenious Mrs. *Salmon*, where *Alexander* is to fall in love with a piece of Wax-work, that represents the beautiful *Statira*. When *Alexander* comes into that country, in which *Quintus Curtius* tells us the Dogs were so exceeding fierce that they would not loose their hold, though they were cut to pieces limb by limb, and that they would hang upon their prey by their teeth when they had nothing but a mouth left, there is to be a scene of *Hockley in the Hole*, in which is to be represented all the diversions of that place, the Bull-baiting only excepted, which cannot possibly be exhibited in the Theatre, by reason of the lowness of the roof. The several woods in *Asia*, which *Alexander* must be supposed to pass through, will give the audience a sight of Monkies dancing upon ropes, with the many other pleasantries of that ludicrous species. At the same time, if there  
chance



chance to be any strange Animals in town, whether birds or beasts, they may be either let loose among the woods, or driven across the stage by some of the country people of *Asia*. In the last great battel, *Pinkethman* is to personate King *Porus* upon an Elephant, and is to be encountered by *Powell*, representing *Alexander the Great*, upon a Dromedary, which nevertheless Mr. *Powell* is desired to call by the name of *Bucephalus*. Upon the close of this great decisive battel, when the two Kings are thoroughly reconciled, to shew the mutual friendship and good correspondence that reigns between them, they both of them go together to a Puppet-show, in which the ingenious Mr. *Powell*, Junior, may have an opportunity of displaying his whole Art of Machinery, for the diversion of the two Monarchs. Some at the table urged, that a Puppet-show was not a suitable entertainment for *Alexander the Great*; and that it might be introduced more properly, if we suppose the Conqueror touch'd upon that part of *India* which is said to be inhabited by the Pigmies. But this objection was looked upon as frivolous, and the proposal immediately over-ruled. Our Projector further added, that after the reconciliation of these two Kings, they might invite one another to dinner, and either of them entertain his guest with the *German* Artist, Mr. *Pinkethman's* Heathen Gods, or any of the like diversions, which shall then chance to be in vogue.

This project was received with very great applause by the whole table. Upon which the Undertaker told us, that he had not yet communicated to us above half his design; for that *Alexander* being a *Greek*, it was his intention that the whole Opera should be acted in that language, which was a tongue he was sure would wonderfully please the Ladies, especially when it was a little raised and rounded by the *Ionick* dialect; and could not but be acceptable to the whole audience, because there are fewer of them who understand *Greek* than *Italian*. The only difficulty that remained, was, how to get performers, unless we could persuade some Gentlemen of the Universities to learn to sing, in order to qualify themselves for the stage; but this objection soon vanished, when the Projector informed us that the *Greeks* were at present the only Musicians in the *Turkish* Empire, and that it would be very easie for our Factory at *Smyrna* to furnish us every year with a Colony of Musicians, by the opportunity of the *Turkey* Fleet; besides, says he, if we want any single voice for any lower part in the Opera, *Lawrence* can learn to speak *Greek*, as well as he does *Italian*, in a fortnight's time.

The



The Projector having thus settled matters, to the good liking of all that heard him, he left his seat at the table, and planted himself before the fire, where I had unluckily taken my stand for the convenience of overhearing what he said. Whether he had observed me to be more attentive than ordinary, I cannot tell, but he had not stood by me above a quarter of a minute, but he turned short upon me on a sudden, and catching me by a button of my coat, attacked me very abruptly after the following manner. Besides, Sir, I have heard of a very extraordinary genius for Musick that lives in *Switzerland*, who has so strong a spring in his fingers, that he can make the board of an organ sound like a drum, and if I could but procure a subscription of about ten thousand pound every winter, I would undertake to fetch him over, and oblige him by articles to set every thing that should be sung upon the *English* Stage. After this he looked full in my face, expecting I would make an answer; when, by good luck, a Gentleman that had entred the Coffee-house since the Projector applied himself to me, hearing him talk of his *Swiss* compositions, cryed out with a kind of laugh, Is our Musick then to receive further improvements from *Switzerland*? This alarmed the Projector, who immediately let go my button, and turned about to answer him. I took the opportunity of the diversion, which seemed to be made in favour of me, and laying down my peny upon the bar, retired with some precipitation.

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N<sup>o</sup> 34. *Monday, April 9.*

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*Cognatis maculis similis fera* ----- *parcit*

Juv.

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THE Club of which I am a Member, is very luckily composed of such persons as are engaged in different ways of life, and deputed as it were out of the most conspicuous classes of mankind: By this means I am furnished with the greatest variety of hints and materials, and know every thing that passes in the different quarters and divisions,