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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

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and if the fashion should introduce the thick kind of Whigs which were in vogue some few years ago, he promises to add two or three supernumerary locks that shall contain all the *Apocrypha*. He designed this Wig originally for King *William*, having disposed of the two books of *Kings* in the two forks of the foretop; but that glorious Monarch dying before the Wig was finished, there is a space left in it for the face of any one that has a mind to purchase it.

But to return to our ancient Poems in picture, I would humbly propose, for the benefit of our modern smatterers in Poetry, that they would imitate their brethren among the antients in those ingenious devices. I have communicated this thought to a young poetical Lover of my acquaintance, who intends to present his Mistress with a copy of verses made in the shape of her fan; and, if he tells me true, has already finished the three first sticks of it. He has likewise promised me to get the measure of his Mistress's marriage-finger, with a design to make a poeie in the fashion of a ring which shall exactly fit it. It is so very easie to enlage upon a good hint, that I do not question but my ingenious Readers will apply what I have said to many other particulars; and that we shall see the Town filled in a very little time with poetical tippetts, handkerchiefs, snuff-boxes, and the like female ornaments. I shall therefore conclude with a word of advice to those admirable *English* Authors who call themselves Pindarick writers, that they would apply themselves to this kind of wit without loss of time, as being provided better than any other Poets with verses of all sizes and dimensions.

N^o 59. *Tuesday, May 8.*

Operosè nihil agunt.

Sen.

THERE is nothing more certain than that every man would be a Wit if he could, and notwithstanding Pedants of pretended depth and solidity are apt to decry the writings of a polite Author, as *Flash* and *Froth*, they all of them shew upon occasion that they would spare no pains to arrive at the character of those whom they seem to despise.

despise. For this reason we often find them endeavouring at works of fancy, which cost them infinite pangs in the production. The truth of it is, a man had better be a gally-slave than a wit, were one to gain that title by those elaborate trifles which have been the inventions of such Authors as were often masters of great learning, but no genius.

In my last paper I mentioned some of these false wits among the ancients, and in this shall give the Reader two or three other species of them, that flourished in the same early ages of the world. The first I shall produce are the *Lipogrammatists* or *Letter-droppers* of antiquity, that would take an exception, without any reason, against some particular letter in the alphabet, so as not to admit it once into a whole Poem. One *Tryphiodorus* was a great master in this kind of writing. He composed an *Odyssey* or epick Poem on the adventures of *Ulysses*, consisting of four and twenty books, having entirely banished the letter *A* from his first book, which was called *Alpha* (as *lucus a non lucendo*) because there was not an *Alpha* in it. His second book was inscribed *Beta*, for the same reason. In short, the Poet excluded the whole four and twenty letters in their turns, and shewed them, one after another, that he could do his business without them.

It must have been very pleasant to have seen this Poet avoiding the reprobate letter, as much as another would a false quantity, and making his escape from it through the several *Greek* dialects, when he was pressed with it in any particular syllable. For the most apt and elegant word in the whole language was rejected, like a diamond with a flaw in it, if it appeared blemished with a wrong letter. I shall only observe upon this head, that if the work I have here mentioned had been now extant, the *Odyssey* of *Tryphiodorus*, in all probability, would have been oftner quoted by our learned Pedants, than the *Odyssey* of *Homer*. What a perpetual fund would it have been of obsolete words and phrases, unusual barbarisms and rusticities, absurd spellings and complicated dialects? I make no question but it would have been looked upon as one of the most valuable treasuries of the *Greek* tongue.

I find likewise among the ancients that ingenious kind of conceit, which the moderns distinguish by the name of a *Rebus*, that does not sink a letter but a whole word, by substituting a picture in its place. When *Cæsar* was one of the masters of the *Roman* mint, he placed the figure of an Elephant upon the reverse of the publick mony; the word *Cæsar* signifying an Elephant in the *Punick* language. This was artificially contrived by *Cæsar*, because it was not lawful for a private man to
stamp

stamp his own figure upon the coin of the Common-wealth. *Cicero*, who was so called from the founder of his family, that was marked on the nose with a little wren like a vetch (which is *cicer* in *Latin*) instead of *Marcus Tullius Cicero*, ordered the words *Marcus Tullius* with the figure of a vetch at the end of them to be inscribed on a publick monument. This was done probably to shew that he was neither ashamed of his name or family, notwithstanding the envy of his competitors had often reproached him with both. In the same manner we read of a famous building that was marked in several parts of it with the figures of a Frog and a Lizard: those words in *Greek* having been the names of the architects, who by the laws of their country were never permitted to inscribe their own names upon their works. For the same reason it is thought, that the forelock of the horse in the antique-equestrian statue of *Marcus Aurelius*, represents at a distance the shape of an Owl, to intimate the country of the statuary, who, in all probability, was an *Athenian*. This kind of wit was very much in vogue among our own country-men about an age or two ago, who did not practise it for any oblique reason, as the ancients abovementioned, but purely for the sake of being witty. Among innumerable instances that may be given of this nature, I shall produce the device of one Mr. *Newberry*, as I find it mentioned by our learned *Camden* in his Remains. Mr. *Newberry*, to represent his name by a picture, hung up at his door the sign of a Yew-tree, that had several berries upon it, and in the midst of them a great golden *N* hung upon a bough of the tree, which by the help of a little false spelling made up the word *New-berry*.

I shall conclude this topick with a *Rebus*, which has been lately hewn out in free-stone, and erected over two of the portals of *Blenheim* house, being the figure of a monstrous Lion tearing to pieces a little Cock. For the better understanding of which device, I must acquaint my *English* reader that a Cock has the misfortune to be called in *Latin* by the same word that signifies a *French-man*, as a Lion is the emblem of the *English* nation. Such a device in so noble a pile of building looks like a Punn in an heroick Poem; and I am very sorry the truly ingenious architect would suffer the statuary to blemish his excellent plan with so poor a conceit: But I hope what I have said will gain quarter for the Cock, and deliver him out of the Lion's paw.

I find likewise in ancient times the conceit of making an Echo talk sensibly, and give rational answers. If this could be excusable in any writer, it would be in *Ovid*, where he introduces the Echo as a Nymph, before

before she was worn away into nothing but a voice. The learned *Erafmus*, though a man of wit and genius, has composed a Dialogue upon this silly kind of device, and made use of an *Eccho* who seems to have been a very extraordinary linguist, for she answers the person she talks with in *Latin, Greek* and *Hebrew*, according as she found the syllables which she was to repeat in any of those learned languages. *Hudibras*, in ridicule of this false kind of wit, has described *Bruin* bewailing the loss of his Bear to a solitary *Echo*, who is of great use to the Poet in several disticks, as she does not only repeat after him, but helps out his verse, and furnishes him with *Rhymes*.

*He raged, and kept as heavy a coil as
Stout Hercules for loss of Hylas;
Forcing the vallies to repeat
The accents of his sad regret;
He beat his breast, and tore his hair,
For loss of his dear crony Bear,
That Echo from the hollow ground
His doleful wailings did resound
More wistfully, by many times,
Than in small Poets splay-foot Rhymes,
That make her in their rueful stories,
To answer to Int'rogatories,
And most unconscionably depose
Things of which she nothing knows:
And when she has said all she can say,
'Tis wrested to the Lover's fancy.
Quoth he, O whither, wicked Bruin,
Art thou fled to my——Echo, Ruin?
I thought th'hadst scorn'd to budge a step
For fear. (Quoth Echo) Marry guep.
Am I not here to take thy part!
Then what has quell'd thy stubborn heart?
Have these bones rattled, and this head
So often in thy quarrel bled?
Nor did I ever winch or grudge it,
For thy dear sake. (Quoth she) Mum budget.
Think'st thou 'twill not be laid i' th' dish
Thou turnd'st thy back? quoth Echo, Pish.*

To

To run from those th' hadst overcome
 Thus cowardly? quoth Echo, Mum.
 But what a-vengeance makes thee fly
 From me too, as thine enemy?
 Or if thou hadst no thought of me,
 Nor what I have endur'd for thee,
 Yet shame and honour might prevail
 To keep thee thus from turning tail:
 For who wou'd grudge to spend his blood in
 His honour's cause? quoth she, A pudding.

N^o 60. Wednesday, May 9.

Hoc est quod palles? cur quis non prandeat, hoc est? Per. Sat. 3.

SEVERAL kinds of false wit that vanished in the refined ages of the world, discovered themselves again in the times of monkish ignorance.

As the Monks were the masters of all that little learning which was then extant, and had their whole lives entirely disengaged from business, it is no wonder that several of them, who wanted genius for higher performances, employed many hours in the composition of such tricks in writing as required much time and little capacity. I have seen half the *Aeneid* turned into *Latin* rhymes by one of the *Beaux Esprits* of that dark age; who says in his preface to it, that the *Aeneid* wanted nothing but the sweets of rhyme to make it the most perfect work in its kind. I have likewise seen an Hymn in Hexameters to the *Virgin Mary*, which filled a whole book, tho' it consisted but of the eight following words;

Tot, tibi, sunt, Virgo, dotes, quot, sidera, caelo.

Thou hast as many virtues, O Virgin, as there are stars in Heaven.

The Poet rung the changes upon these eight several words, and by that means made his verses almost as numerous as the virtues and the stars which they celebrated. It is no wonder that men who had so much time upon