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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

London, 1721

N° 110. Friday, July 6.

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-53621](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-53621)

and could not but consider with a great deal of concern, how so good an heart and such busie hands were wholly employed in trifles; that so much humanity should be so little beneficial to others, and so much industry so little advantageous to himself. The same temper of mind and application to affairs might have recommended him to the publick esteem, and have raised his fortune in another station of life. What good to his country or himself might not a trader or merchant have done with such useful though ordinary qualifications?

Will Wimble's is the case of many a younger brother of a great family, who had rather see their children starve like Gentlemen, than thrive in a trade or profession that is beneath their quality. This humour fills several parts of *Europe* with pride and beggary. It is the happiness of a trading nation, like ours, that the younger sons, though incapable of any liberal art or profession, may be placed in such a way of life, as may perhaps enable them to vie with the best of their family: accordingly we find several citizens that were launched into the world with narrow fortunes, rising by an honest industry to greater estates than those of their elder brothers. It is not improbable but *Will* was formerly tried at divinity, law, or physick; and that finding his genius did not lie that way, his parents gave him up at length to his own inventions. But certainly, however improper he might have been for studies of a higher nature, he was perfectly well turned for the occupations of trade and commerce. As I think this is a point which cannot be too much inculcated, I shall desire my Reader to compare what I have here written with what I have said in my twenty first Speculation.

N^o 110. Friday, July 6.

Horror ubique animos, simul ipsa silentia terrent. Virg.

AT a little distance from Sir ROGER's house, among the ruins of an old Abby, there is a long walk of aged elms; which are shot up so very high, that when one passes under them, the rooks and crows that rest upon the tops of them seem to be cawing in another region.

gion. I am very much delighted with this sort of noise, which I consider as a kind of natural prayer to that Being who supplies the wants of his whole creation, and who, in the beautiful language of the *Psalms*, feedeth the young ravens that call upon him. I like this retirement the better, because of an ill report it lyes under of being *haunted*; for which reason (as I have been told in the family) no living creature ever walks in it besides the Chaplain. My good friend the Butler desired me with a very grave face not to venture my self in it after sun-set, for that one of the footmen had been almost frighted out of his wits by a spirit that appeared to him in the shape of a black horse without an head; to which he added, that about a month ago one of the maids coming home late that way with a pail of milk upon her head, heard such a rustling among the bushes that she let it fall.

I was taking a walk in this place last night between the hours of nine and ten, and could not but fancy it one of the most proper scenes in the world for a ghost to appear in. The ruins of the abby are scattered up and down on every side, and half covered with ivy and elder bushes, the harbours of several solitary birds which seldom make their appearance till the dusk of the evening. The place was formerly a church-yard, and has still several marks in it of graves and burying-places. There is such an Echo among the old ruins and vaults, that if you stamp but a little louder than ordinary, you hear the sound repeated. At the same time the walk of elms, with the croaking of the ravens which from time to time are heard from the tops of them, looks exceeding solemn and venerable. These objects naturally raise seriousness and attention: and when night heightens the awfulness of the place, and pours out her supernumerary horrors upon every thing in it, I do not at all wonder that weak minds fill it with spectres and apparitions.

Mr. *Locke*, in his chapter of the association of ideas, has very curious remarks to shew how by the prejudice of education one idea often introduces into the mind a whole set that bear no resemblance to one another in the nature of things. Among several examples of this kind, he produces the following instance. *The ideas of goblins and sprights have really no more to do with darkness than light: yet let but a foolish maid inculcate these often on the mind of a child, and raise them there together, possibly he shall never be able to separate them again so long as he lives; but darkness shall ever afterward bring with it those frightful ideas, and they shall be so joined, that he can no more bear the one than the other.*

As

As I was walking in this solitude, where the dusk of the evening conspired with so many other occasions of terrour, I observed a cow grazing not far from me, which an imagination that is apt to *startle* might easily have construed into a black horse without an head: and I dare say the poor footman lost his wits upon some such trivial occasion.

My friend Sir ROGER has often told me with a great deal of mirth, that at his first coming to his estate, he found three parts of his house altogether useles; that the best room in it had the reputation of being haunted, and by that means was locked up; that noises had been heard in his long gallery, so that he could not get a servant to enter it after eight-a-clock at night; that the door of one of his chambers was nailed up, because there went a story in the family, that a Butler had formerly hanged himself in it; and that his mother, who lived to a great age, had shut up half the rooms in the house, in which either a husband, a son, or daughter had died. The Knight seeing his habitation reduced to so small a compass, and himself in a manner shut out of his own house, upon the death of his mother ordered all the apartments to be flung open, and *exorcised* by his Chaplain, who lay in every room one after another, and by that means dissipated the fears which had so long reigned in the family.

I should not have been thus particular upon these ridiculous horrors, did not I find them so very much prevail in all parts of the country. At the same time I think a person who is thus terrified with the imagination of Ghosts and Spectres much more reasonable, than one who contrary to the reports of all Historians sacred and prophane, ancient and modern, and to the traditions of all nations, thinks the appearance of Spirits fabulous and groundless. Could not I give my self up to this general testimony of mankind, I should to the relations of particular persons who are now living, and whom I cannot distrust in other matters of fact. I might here add, that not only the Historians, to whom we may join the Poets, but likewise the Philosophers of antiquity have favoured this opinion. *Lucretius* himself, though by the course of his Philosophy he was obliged to maintain that the soul did not exist separate from the body, makes no doubt of the reality of apparitions, and that men have often appeared after their death. This I think very remarkable; he was so pressed with the matter of fact which he could not have the confidence to deny, that he was forced to account for it by one of the most absurd unphilosophical notions that was ever started. He tells us, That the surfaces of all bodies are perpetually flying off from their respective
bodies,

bodies, one after another; and that these surfaces or thin cases that included each other whilst they were joined in the body like the coats of an Onion, are sometimes seen entire when they are separated from it; by which means we often behold the shapes and shadows of persons who are either dead or absent.

I shall dismiss this paper with a story out of *Josephus*, not so much for the sake of the story it self, as for the moral reflections with which the Author concludes it, and which I shall here set down in his own words. “ *Glaphyra* the daughter of King *Archilaus*, after the death of
“ her two first husbands (being married to a third, who was brother to
“ her first husband, and so passionately in love with her that he turned
“ off his former wife to make room for this marriage) had a very odd
“ kind of dream. She fancied that she saw her first husband coming towards
“ her, and that she embraced him with great tenderness; when in the
“ midst of the pleasure which she expressed at the sight of him, he re-
“ proached her after the following manner: *Glaphyra*, says he, thou hast
“ made good the old saying, that women are not to be trusted. Was not
“ I the husband of thy virginity? Have I not children by thee? How
“ couldst thou forget our loves so far as to enter into a second marriage,
“ and after that into a third, nay to take for thy husband a man who has
“ so shamelessly crept into the bed of his brother? However, for the sake
“ of our passed loves, I shall free thee from thy present reproach, and
“ make thee mine for ever. *Glaphyra* told this Dream to several women
“ of her acquaintance, and died soon after. I thought this story might
“ not be impertinent in this place, wherein I speak of those Kings: be-
“ sides that, the example deserves to be taken notice of, as it contains
“ a most certain proof of the Immortality of the Soul, and of divine Pro-
“ vidence. If any man thinks these facts incredible, let him enjoy his
“ opinion to himself; but let him not endeavour to disturb the belief of
“ others, who by instances of this nature are excited to the study of
“ Virtue.



Saturday.