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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

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-----*Errat et illinc*

Huc venit, hinc illuc, et quoslibet occupat artus

Spiritus: éque feris humana in corpora transit,

Inque feras noster-----

Pythag. ap. Ov.

WILL HONEYCOMB, who loves to shew upon occasion all the little learning he has picked up, told us yesterday at the club, that he thought there might be a great deal said for the transmigration of Souls, and that the eastern parts of the world believed in that doctrine to this day. Sir *Paul Rycout*, says he, gives us an account of several well-disposed Mahometans that purchase the freedom of any little bird they see confined to a cage, and think they merit as much by it, as we should do here by ransoming any of our countrymen from their captivity at *Algiers*. You may know, says *WILL*, the reason is, because they consider every animal as a brother or a sister in disguise, and therefore think themselves obliged to extend their charity to them, tho' under such mean circumstances. They will tell you, says *WILL*, that the Soul of a man, when he dies, immediately passes into the body of another man, or of some brute, which he resembled in his humour, or his fortune, when he was one of us.

As I was wondring what this profusion of learning would end in, *WILL* told us that *Jack Freelove*, who was a fellow of whim, made love to one of those Ladies who throw away all their fondness on parrots, monkeys, and lap-dogs. Upon going to pay her a visit one morning, he writ a very pretty epistle upon this hint. *Jack*, says he, was conducted into the parlour, where he diverted himself for some time with her favourite monkey, which was chained in one of the windows; till at length observing a pen and ink lie by him, he writ the following letter to his Mistress, in the person of the monkey; and upon her not coming down so soon as he expected, left it in the window, and went about his business.

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The

The Lady soon after coming into the parlour, and seeing her monkey look upon a paper with great earnestness, took it up, and to this day is in some doubt, says WILL, whether it was written by *Jack* or the monkey.

Madam,

“ NOT having the gift of speech, I have a long time waited in vain
 “ for an opportunity of making my self known to you; and ha-
 “ ving at present the conveniences of pen, ink, and paper by me, I gladly
 “ take the occasion of giving you my history in writing, which I could
 “ not do by word of mouth. You must know, Madam, that about a thou-
 “ sand years ago I was an *Indian* Brachman, and versed in all those my-
 “ sterious secrets which your *European* Philosopher, called *Pythagoras*,
 “ is said to have learned from our fraternity. I had so ingratiated my self
 “ by my great skill in the occult sciences with a Dæmon whom I used
 “ to converse with, that he promised to grant me whatever I should ask
 “ of him. I desired that my soul might never pass into the body of a
 “ brute creature; but this he told me was not in his power to grant me.
 “ I then begged that into whatever creature I should chance to transmi-
 “ grate, I might still retain my memory, and be conscious that I was the
 “ same person who lived in different animals. This he told me was with-
 “ in his power, and accordingly promised on the word of a Dæmon that
 “ he would grant me what I desired. From that time forth I lived so
 “ very unblameably, that I was made President of a college of Brach-
 “ mans, an office which I discharged with great integrity till the day of
 “ my death.

“ I was then shuffled into another human body, and acted my part so
 “ very well in it, that I became first Minister to a Prince who reigned
 “ upon the banks of the *Ganges*. I here lived in great honour for sever-
 “ ral years, but by degrees lost all the innocence of the Brachman, be-
 “ ing obliged to rifle and oppress the people to enrich my Sovereign;
 “ till at length I became so odious, that my Master, to recover his credit
 “ with his subjects, shot me through the heart with an arrow, as I was one
 “ day addressing my self to him at the head of his army.

“ Upon my next remove I found my self in the woods under the shape
 “ of a Jack-call, and soon listed my self in the service of a Lion. I used
 “ to yelp near his den about midnight, which was his time of rousing
 “ and seeking after his prey. He always followed me in the rear, and when
 “ I had run down a fat buck, a wild goat, or an hare, after he had feasted
 “ very

“ very plentifully upon it himself, would now and then throw me a bone
“ that was but half picked for my encouragement; but upon my being
“ unsuccessful in two or three chaces, he gave me such a confounded
“ gripe in his anger, that I died of it.

“ In my next transmigration I was again set upon two legs, and became
“ an *Indian* tax-gatherer; but having been guilty of great extravagances,
“ and being married to an expensive jade of a wife, I ran so cursedly in
“ debt, that I durst not shew my head. I could no sooner step out of
“ my house, but I was arrested by some body or other that lay in wait
“ for me. As I ventured abroad one night in the dusk of the evening,
“ I was taken up and hurry'd into a dungeon, where I died a few months
“ after.

“ My soul then entered into a flying-fish, and in that state led a most
“ melancholy life for the space of six years. Several fishes of prey pur-
“ sued me when I was in the water, and if I betook my self to my wings,
“ it was ten to one but I had a flock of birds aiming at me. As I was
“ one day flying amidst a fleet of *English* ships, I observed a huge sea-
“ gull whetting his bill and hovering just over my head: Upon my dip-
“ ping into the water to avoid him, I fell into the mouth of a mon-
“ strous shark that swallowed me down in an instant.

“ I was some years afterwards, to my great surprize, an eminent ban-
“ ker in *Lombard-Street*; and remembering how I had formerly suffered
“ for want of mony, became so very fordid and avaritious, that the
“ whole town cried shame of me. I was a miserable little old fellow to
“ look upon, for I had in a manner starved my self, and was nothing
“ but skin and bone when I died.

“ I was afterwards very much troubled and amazed to find my self
“ dwindled into an emmet. I was heartily concerned to make so insigni-
“ ficant a figure, and did not know but some time or other I might be
“ reduced to a mite if I did not mend my manners. I therefore applied
“ my self with great diligence to the offices that were allotted me, and
“ was generally looked upon as the notablest ant in the whole molehill.
“ I was at last picked up, as I was groaning under a burden, by an un-
“ lucky cock-sparrow that lived in the neighbourhood, and had before
“ made great depredations upon our commonwealth.

“ I then bettered my condition a little, and lived a whole summer in
“ the shape of a Bee; but being tired with the painful and penurious
“ life I had undergone in my two last transmigrations, I fell into the other
“ extreme, and turned drone. As I one day headed a party to plunder

“ an hive, we were received so warmly by the swarm which defended
“ it, that we were most of us left dead upon the spot.

“ I might tell you of many other transmigrations which I went through:
“ how I was a town-rake, and afterwards did penance in a bay gelding
“ for ten years; as also how I was a taylor, a shrimp, and a tom-tit. In
“ the last of these my shapes I was shot in the *Christmas* holidays by a
“ young Jack-a-napes, who would needs try his new gun upon me.

“ But I shall pass over these and several other stages of life, to remind
“ you of the young beau who made love to you about six years since.
“ You may remember, Madam, how he masked, and danced, and sung,
“ and played a thousand tricks to gain you; and how he was at last car-
“ ried off by a cold that he had got under your window one night in a
“ serenade. I was that unfortunate young fellow, whom you were then
“ so cruel to. Not long after my shifting that unlucky body, I found my
“ self upon a hill in *Æthiopia*, where I lived in my present grotesque
“ shape, till I was caught by a servant of the *English* factory, and sent
“ over into *Great Britain*: I need not inform you how I came into
“ your hand. You see, Madam, this is not the first time that you have
“ had me in a chain: I am, however, very happy in this my captivity, as
“ you often bestow on me those kisses and caresses which I would have
“ given the world for, when I was a man. I hope this discovery of my
“ person will not tend to my disadvantage, but that you will still conti-
“ nue your accustomed favours to

Your most devoted humble Servant, Pugg.

P. S. “ I would advise your little shock-dog to keep out of my way;
“ for as I look upon him to be the most formidable of my rivals, I may
“ chance one time or other to give him such a snap as he won't like.



Thursday