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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

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N° 414. Wednesday, June 25.

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heath, or in a solitary desert. It is not improbable that something like this may be the state of the Soul after its first separation, in respect of the images it will receive from matter, though indeed the ideas of colours are so pleasing and beautiful in the imagination, that it is possible the Soul will not be deprived of them, but perhaps find them excited by some other occasional cause, as they are at present by the different impressions of the subtle matter on the organ of sight.

I have here supposed that my Reader is acquainted with that great modern discovery, which is at present universally acknowledged by all the enquirers into natural Philosophy: namely, that light and colours, as apprehended by the imagination, are only ideas in the mind, and not qualities that have any existence in matter. As this is a truth which has been proved incontestably by many modern Philosophers, and is indeed one of the finest speculations in that science, if the *English* reader would see the notion explained at large, he may find it in the eighth chapter of the second book of Mr. *Lock's* Essay on human Understanding.

N^o 414. *Wednesday, June 25.*

----- *Alterius sic*
Altera poscit opem res et conjurat amicè.

Hor.

IF we consider the works of *Nature* and *Art*, as they are qualified to entertain the Imagination, we shall find the last very defective, in comparison of the former; for though they may sometimes appear as beautiful or strange, they can have nothing in them of that vastness and immensity, which afford so great an entertainment to the mind of the beholder. The one may be as polite and delicate as the other, but can never shew her self so august and magnificent in the design. There is something more bold and masterly in the rough careless strokes of Nature, than in the nice touches and embellishments of Art. The beauties of the most stately garden or palace lie in a narrow compass, the imagination immediately runs them over, and requires something else to gratifie her; but, in the wide fields of Nature, the sight wanders up and down with-

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out confinement, and is fed with an infinite variety of images, without any certain stint or number. For this reason we always find the Poet in love with a country-life, where nature appears in the greatest perfection, and furnishes out all those scenes that are most apt to delight the Imagination.

Scriptorum chorus omnis amat nemus, et fugit urbes. Hor.

*Hic secura quies, et nescia fallere vita,
Dives opum variarum; hic latis otia fundis,
Spelunca, vivique lacus, hic frigida Tempe,
Mugitusque boum, mollesque sub arbore somni.* Virg.

But though there are several of these wild scenes, that are more delightful than any artificial shows; yet we find the works of nature still more pleasant, the more they resemble those of art: for in this case our pleasure rises from a double principle; from the agreeableness of the objects to the eye, and from their similitude to other objects: we are pleased as well with comparing their beauties, as with surveying them, and can represent them to our minds, either as copies or originals. Hence it is that we take delight in a prospect which is well laid out, and diversified with fields and meadows; woods and rivers; in those accidental land-skips of trees, clouds and cities, that are sometimes found in the veins of marble; in the curious fret-work of rocks, and grottos; and, in a word, in any thing that hath such a variety or regularity as may seem the effect of design, in what we call the works of Chance.

If the products of nature rise in value, according as they more or less resemble those of art, we may be sure that artificial works receive a greater advantage from their resemblance of such as are natural; because here the similitude is not only pleasant, but the pattern more perfect. The prettiest landskip I ever saw, was one drawn on the walls of a dark room, which stood opposite on one side to a navigable river, and on the other to a park. The experiment is very common in optics. Here you might discover the waves and fluctuations of the water in strong and proper colours, with the picture of a ship entering at one end, and sailing by degrees through the whole piece. On another there appeared the green shadows of trees, waving to and fro with the wind, and herds of Deer among them in miniature, leaping about upon the wall. I must confess, the Novelty of such a Sight may be one occasion of its pleasantness to the imagination, but certainly the chief reason is its near resemblance to nature,

ture, as it does not only, like other pictures, give the colour and figure, but the motion of the things it represents.

We have before observed, that there is generally in nature something more grand and august, than what we meet with in the curiosities of art. When, therefore, we see this imitated in any measure, it gives us a nobler and more exalted kind of pleasure than what we receive from the nicer and more accurate productions of art. On this account our *English* gardens are not so entertaining to the fancy as those in *France* and *Italy*, where we see a large extent of ground covered over with an agreeable mixture of garden and forest, which represent every where an artificial rudeness, much more charming than that neatness and elegance which we meet with in those of our own country. It might, indeed, be of ill consequence to the public, as well as unprofitable to private persons, to alienate so much ground from pasturage, and the plow, in many parts of a country that is so well peopled, and cultivated to a far greater advantage. But why may not a whole estate be thrown into a kind of garden by frequent plantations, that may turn as much to the profit, as the pleasure of the Owner? A marsh overgrown with willows, or a mountain shaded with oaks, are not only more beautiful, but more beneficial, than when they lie bare and unadorned. Fields of corn make a pleasant prospect, and if the walks were a little taken care of that lie between them, if the natural embroidery of the meadows were helpt and improved by some small additions of art, and the several rows of hedges set off by trees and flowers, that the soil was capable of receiving, a man might make a pretty landskip of his own possessions.

Writers, who have given us an account of *China*, tell us, the inhabitants of that country laugh at the plantations of our *Europeans*, which are lain out by the rule and line; because, they say, any one may place trees in equal rows and uniform figures. They chuse rather to shew a genius in works of this nature, and therefore always conceal the art by which they direct themselves. They have a word, it seems, in their language, by which they express the particular beauty of a plantation that thus strikes the Imagination at first sight, without discovering what it is that has so agreeable an effect. Our *British* Gardeners, on the contrary, instead of humouring nature, love to deviate from it as much as possible. Our trees rise in cones, globes, and pyramids. We see the marks of the scissars upon every plant and bush. I do not know whether I am singular in my opinion, but, for my own part, I would rather look upon a tree in all its luxuriance and diffusion of boughs and branches, than when

it is thus cut and trimmed into a mathematical figure; and cannot but fancy that an orchard in flower looks infinitely more delightful, than all the little labyrinths of the most finished Parterre. But as our great Modellers of gardens have their magazines of plants to dispose of, it is very natural for them to tear up all the beautiful plantations of fruit trees, and contrive a plan that may most turn to their own profit, in taking off their Evergreens, and the like moveable plants, with which their shops are plentifully stocked.

N° 415. Thursday, June 26.

Adde tot egregias urbes, operumque laborem: Virg.

HAVING already shewn how the Fancy is affected by the works of nature, and afterwards considered in general both the works of nature and of art, how they mutually assist and compleat each other, in forming such scenes and prospects as are most apt to delight the mind of the beholder, I shall in this paper throw together some reflections on that particular art, which has a more immediate tendency, than any other, to produce those primary pleasures of the Imagination, which have hitherto been the subject of this discourse. The art I mean is that of Architecture, which I shall consider only with regard to the light in which the foregoing Speculations have placed it, without entering into those rules and maxims which the great masters of Architecture have laid down, and explained at large in numberless treatises upon that subject.

Greatness, in the works of Architecture, may be considered as relating to the bulk and body of the structure, or to the *Manner* in which it is built. As for the first, we find the antients, especially among the eastern nations of the world, infinitely superior to the moderns.

Not to mention the Tower of *Babel*, of which an old Author says, there were the foundations to be seen in his time, which looked like a spacious mountain; what could be more noble than the walls of *Babylon*, its hanging gardens, and its temple to *Jupiter Belus*, that rose a mile high by eight several stories, each story a furlong in height, and on the