



UNIVERSITÄTS-
BIBLIOTHEK
PADERBORN

Universitätsbibliothek Paderborn

The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

London, 1721

N° 489. Saturday, September 20.

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

N^o 489. Saturday, September 20.

Βαθυψέτασ μὴα θῆρα Ὀκεανός.

Hom.

S I R,

UPON reading your *Essay*, concerning the pleasures of the imagination, I find among the three sources of those pleasures which you have discovered, that *Greatness* is one. This has suggested to me the reason why, of all objects that I have ever seen, there is none which affects my imagination so much as the sea or ocean. I cannot see the heavings of this prodigious bulk of waters, even in a calm, without a very pleasing astonishment; but when it is worked up in a tempest, so that the Horizon on every side is nothing but foaming billows and floating mountains, it is impossible to describe the agreeable horreur that rises from such a prospect. A troubled ocean, to a man who sails upon it, is, I think, the biggest object that he can see in motion, and consequently gives his imagination one of the highest kinds of pleasure that can arise from greatness. I must confess, it is impossible for me to survey this world of fluid matter, without thinking on the hand that first poured it out, and made a proper channel for its reception. Such an object naturally raises in my thoughts the idea of an almighty Being, and convinces me of his existence as much as a metaphysical demonstration. The imagination prompts the understanding, and by the greatness of the sensible object, produces in it the idea of a Being who is neither circumscribed by time nor space.

As I have made several voyages upon the sea, I have often been tossed in storms, and on that occasion have frequently reflected on the descriptions of them in antient Poets. I remember *Longinus* highly recommends one in *Homer*, because the Poet has not amused himself with little fancies upon the occasion, as Authors of an inferior genius, whom he mentions, had done, but because he has gathered together those circumstances which are the most apt to terrify the imagination, and which really happen in the raging of a tempest. It is for the same reason, that I prefer

fer the following description of a ship in a storm, which the Psalmist has made, before any other I have ever met with. *They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters: these men see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waters thereof. They mount up to Heaven, they go down again to the depths, their Soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits-end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then they are glad because they be quiet, so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.*

By the way, how much more comfortable, as well as rational, is this system of the Psalmist, than the pagan scheme in *Virgil*, and other Poets, where one Deity is represented as raising a storm, and another as laying it? Were we only to consider the Sublime in this piece of poetry, what can be nobler than the idea it gives us of the supreme Being thus raising a tumult among the elements, and recovering them out of their confusion, thus troubling and becalming nature?

Great Painters do not only give us Landscips of gardens, groves, and meadows, but very often employ their pencils upon sea-pieces: I could wish you would follow their example. If this small sketch may deserve a place among your works, I shall accompany it with a divine Ode, made by a Gentleman upon the conclusion of his travels.

I.

HOW are thy servants blest, O Lord!
How sure is their defence!
Eternal wisdom is their guide,
Their help Omnipotence.

II.

In foreign realms, and lands remote,
Supported by thy care,
Thro' burning climes I pass'd unhurt,
And breath'd in tainted air.

III.

Thy mercy sweetned ev'ry soil,
Made ev'ry region please;
The hoary Alpine hills it warm'd,
And smooth'd the Tyrrhene seas.

IV. *Think,*

IV.

*Think, O my Soul, devoutly think,
How with affrighted eyes
Thou saw'st the wide extended deep
In all its horrors rise!*

V.

*Confusion dwelt in ev'ry face,
And fear in ev'ry heart;
When waves on waves, and gulphs in gulphs,
O'ercame the pilot's art.*

VI.

*Yet then from all my griefs, O Lord,
Thy mercy set me free,
Whilst in the confidence of pray'r
My soul took hold on thee.*

VII.

*For tho' in dreadful whirls we hung
High on the broken wave,
I knew thou wert not slow to hear,
Nor impotent to save.*

VIII.

*The storm was laid, the winds retir'd,
Obedient to thy will;
The sea that roar'd at thy command,
At thy command was still.*

IX.

*In midst of dangers, fears and death,
Thy goodness I'll adore,
And praise thee for thy mercies past;
And humbly hope for more.*

X.

*My life, if thou preserv'st my life,
Thy sacrifice shall be;
And death, if death must be my doom,
Shall join my soul to thee.*

Friday,