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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

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how much rapture they have spoken on this subject; and that *Virgil* in particular has written a whole book on the art of planting.

This art seems to have been more especially adapted to the nature of man in his Primæval state, when he had life enough to see his productions flourish in their utmost beauty, and gradually decay with him. One who lived before the flood might have seen a wood of the tallest oaks in the acorn. But I only mention this particular, in order to introduce in my next paper, a history which I have found among the accounts of *China*, and which may be looked upon as an Antediluvian novel.

N^o 584. Monday, August 23.

*Hic gelidi fontes, hic mollia prata, Lycori,
Hic nemus, hic toto tecum consumerer ævo.*

Virg.

HILPA was one of the 150 daughters of *Zilpah*, of the race of *Cobu*, by whom some of the learned think is meant *Cain*. She was exceedingly beautiful, and when she was but a girl of three-score and ten years of age, received the addresses of several who made love to her. Among these were two brothers, *Harpath* and *Shalum*; *Harpath* being the first-born, was master of that fruitful region which lies at the foot of mount *Tirzah*, in the southern parts of *China*. *Shalum* (which is to say the Planter in the *Chinese* language) possessed all the neighbouring hills, and that great range of mountains which goes under the name of *Tirzah*. *Harpath* was of a haughty contemptuous spirit; *Shalum* was of a gentle disposition, beloved both by God and man.

It is said that, among the Antediluvian women, the daughters of *Cobu* had their minds wholly set upon riches; for which reason the beautiful *Hilpa* preferred *Harpath* to *Shalum*, because of his numerous flocks and herds, that covered all the low country which runs along the foot of mount *Tirzah*, and is watered by several fountains and streams breaking out of the sides of that mountain.

Harpath made so quick a dispatch of his courtship, that he married *Hilpa* in the hundredth year of her age; and being of an insolent temper,

per, laughed to scorn his brother *Sbalum* for having pretended to the beautiful *Hilpa*, when he was master of nothing but a long chain of rocks and mountains. This so much provoked *Sbalum*, that he is said to have cursed his brother in the bitterness of his heart, and to have prayed that one of his mountains might fall upon his head, if ever he came within the shadow of it.

From this time forward *Harpeth* would never venture out of the valleys, but came to an untimely end in the 250th year of his age, being drowned in a river as he attempted to cross it. This river is called to this day, from his name who perished in it, the river *Harpeth*, and what is very remarkable, issues out of one of those mountains which *Sbalum* wished might fall upon his brother, when he cursed him in the bitterness of his heart.

Hilpa was in the 160th year of her age at the death of her husband, having brought him but fifty children, before he was snatched away, as has been already related. Many of the Antediluvians made love to the young widow, though no one was thought so likely to succeed in her affections as her first lover *Sbalum*, who renewed his court to her about ten years after the death of *Harpeth*; for it was not thought decent in those days that a widow should be seen by a man within ten years after the decease of her husband.

Sbalum falling into a deep melancholy, and resolving to take away that objection which had been raised against him when he made his first addresses to *Hilpa*, began immediately after her marriage with *Harpeth*, to plant all that mountainous region which fell to his lot in the division of this country. He knew how to adapt every plant to its proper soil, and is thought to have inherited many traditional secrets of that art from the first man. This employment turned at length to his profit as well as to his amusement: his mountains were in a few years shaded with young trees, that gradually shot up into groves, woods, and forests, intermixed with walks, and lawns, and gardens; insomuch that the whole region, from a naked and desolate prospect, began now to look like a second paradise. The pleasantness of the place, and the agreeable disposition of *Sbalum*, who was reckoned one of the mildest and wisest of all who lived before the flood, drew into it multitudes of people, who were perpetually employed in the sinking of wells, the digging of trenches, and the hollowing of trees, for the better distribution of water through every part of this spacious plantation.

The

The habitations of *Shalum* looked every year more beautiful in the eyes of *Hilpa*, who, after the space of 70 autumns, was wonderfully pleased with the distant prospect of *Shalum's* hills, which were then covered with innumerable tufts of trees and gloomy scenes that gave a magnificence to the place, and converted it into one of the finest Landskips the eye of man could behold.

The *Chinese* record a letter which *Shalum* is said to have written to *Hilpa*, in the eleventh year of her widowhood. I shall here translate it, without departing from that noble simplicity of sentiments, and plainness of manners, which appears in the original.

Shalum was at this time 180 years old, and *Hilpa* 170.

Shalum Master of mount Tirzah, to Hilpa Mistress of the vallies.

In the 788th year of the Creation.

“WHAT have I not suffered, O thou daughter of *Zilpah*, since thou
 “ gavest thy self away in marriage to my rival? I grew weary
 “ of the light of the sun, and have been ever since covering my self with
 “ woods and forests. These threescore and ten years have I bewailed the
 “ loss of thee on the tops of mount *Tirzah*, and soothed my melancholy
 “ among a thousand gloomy shades of my own raising. My dwellings
 “ are at present as the garden of God; every part of them is filled with
 “ fruits, and flowers, and fountains. The whole mountain is perfumed
 “ for thy reception. Come up into it, O my beloved, and let us people
 “ this spot of the new world with a beautiful race of mortals; let us
 “ multiply exceedingly among these delightful shades, and fill every
 “ quarter of them with sons and daughters. Remember, O thou
 “ daughter of *Zilpah*, that the age of man is but a thousand years; that
 “ beauty is the admiration but of a few centuries. It flourishes as a mountain
 “ Oak, or as a Cedar on the top of *Tirzah*, which in three or four
 “ hundred years will fade away, and never be thought of by posterity,
 “ unless a young wood springs from its roots. Think well on this, and
 “ remember thy neighbour in the mountains.

Having here inserted this letter, which I look upon as the only Antediluvian *Billet-doux* now extant, I shall in my next paper give the answer to it, and the sequel of this story.

Wednes-