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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

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Mr. GUARDIAN,

“ YOUR predecessor, the *Spectator*, endeavoured, but in vain, to improve the charms of the fair sex, by exposing their dress whenever it launched into extremities. Among the rest the great petticoat came under his consideration, but in contradiction to whatever he has said they still resolutely persist in this fashion. The form of their bottom is not, I confess, altogether the same; for whereas before it was of an orbicular make, they now look as if they were press’d, so that they seem to deny access to any part but the middle. Many are the inconveniences that accrue to her Majesty’s loving subjects from the said petticoats, as hurting men’s shins, sweeping down the ware of industrious females in the street, &c. I saw a young Lady fall down, the other day, and believe me Sir, she very much resembled an overturned bell without a clapper. Many other disasters I could tell you of that befall themselves as well as others, by means of this unweildy garment. I wish, Mr. GUARDIAN, you would join with me in showing your dislike of such a monstrous fashion, and I hope when the Ladies see it is the opinion of two of the wisest men in *England*, they will be convinced of their folly.

I am, SIR, your daily Reader and Admirer,

Tom. Plain.

N^o 115. *Thursday, July 23.*

Ingenium par materie-----

Juv.

WHEN I read rules of criticism I immediately enquire after the works of the Author who has written them, and by that means discover what it is he likes in a composition; for there is no question but every man aims at least at what he thinks beautiful in others. If I find by his own manner of writing that he is heavy and tasteless, I throw aside his criticisms with a secret indignation, to see a man without genius or politeness dictating to the world on subjects which I find are above his reach.

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If the Critic has published nothing but rules and observations in criticism, I then consider whether there be a propriety and elegance in his thoughts and words, clearness and delicacy in his remarks, wit and good-breeding in his raillery; but if in the place of all these I find nothing but dogmatical stupidity, I must beg such a writer's pardon if I have no manner of deference for his judgment, and refuse to conform my self to his taste.

*So Macer and Mundungus school the times,
And write in rugged prose the softer rules of rhimes.
Well do they play the careful Critic's part,
Instructing doubly by their matchless art:
Rules for good verse they first with pains indite,
Then shew us what are bad, by what they write.*

Mr. Congreve to Sir R. Temple.

The greatest Critics among the ancients are those who have the most excelled in all other kinds of composition, and have shown the height of good writing even in the precepts which they have given for it.

Among the moderns likewise no Critic has ever pleased, or been looked upon as authentic, who did not show by his practice, that he was a master of the Theory. I have now one before me, who after having given many proofs of his performances both in poetry and prose, obliged the world with several critical works. The Author I mean is *Strada*. His prolusion on the stile of the most famous among the ancient *Latin* Poets who are extant, and have written in Epic verse, is one of the most entertaining, as well as the most just pieces of criticism that I have ever read. I shall make the plan of it the subject of this day's paper.

It is commonly known, that Pope *Leo* the Tenth was a great patron of learning, and used to be present at the performances, conversations and disputes of all the most polite writers of his time. Upon this bottom *Strada* founds the following narrative. When this Pope was at his *Villa*, that stood upon an eminence on the banks of the *Tiber*, the Poets contrived the following pageant or machine for his entertainment. They made a huge floating mountain, that was split at the top in imitation of *Parnassus*. There were several marks on it that distinguished it for the habitation of Heroic Poets. Of all the Muses *Calliope* only made her appearance. It was covered up and down with groves of laurel. *Pegasus* appeared hanging off the side of a rock, with a fountain running from his heel. This floating *Parnassus* fell down the river to the found of trumpets.

trumpets, and in a kind of Epic measure, for it was rowed forward by *six* huge wheels, three on each side, that by their constant motion carried on the machine until it arrived before the Pope's *Villa*.

The representatives of the ancient Poets were disposed in stations suitable to their respective characters. *Statius* was posted on the highest of the two summits, which was fashioned in the form of a precipice, and hung over the rest of the mountain in a dreadful manner, so that people regarded him with the same terror and curiosity as they look upon a daring rope-dancer whom they expect to fall every moment.

Claudian was seated on the other summit, which was lower, and at the same time more smooth and even than the former. It was observed likewise to be more barren, and to produce, on some spots of it, plants that are unknown to *Italy*, and such as the gardeners call exotics.

Lucretius was very busy about the roots of the mountain, being wholly intent upon the motion and management of the machine which was under his conduct, and was indeed of his invention. He was sometimes so engaged among the wheels, and covered with machinery, that not above half the Poet appeared to the spectators, though at other times, by the working of the engines, he was raised up and became as conspicuous as any of the brotherhood.

Ovid did not settle in any particular place, but ranged over all *Parnassus* with great nimbleness and activity. But as he did not much care for the toil and pains that were requisite to climb the upper part of the hill, he was generally roving about the bottom of it.

But there was none who was placed in a more eminent station, and had a greater prospect under him than *Lucan*. He vaulted upon *Pegasus* with all the heat and intrepidity of youth, and seemed desirous of mounting into the clouds upon the back of him. But as the hinder feet of the horse stuck to the mountain while the body reared up in the air, the Poet, with great difficulty, kept himself from sliding off his back, inasmuch that the people often gave him for gone, and cried out, every now and then, that he was tumbling.

Virgil, with great modesty in his looks, was seated by *Calliope*, in the midst of a plantation of laurels which grew thick about him, and almost covered him with their shade. He would not perhaps have been seen in this retirement, but that it was impossible to look upon *Calliope* without seeing *Virgil* at the same time.

This poetical masquerade was no sooner arrived before the Pope's *Villa*, but they received an invitation to land, which they did accordingly.

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The hall prepared for their reception was filled with an audience of the greatest eminence for quality and politeness. The Poets took their places, and repeated each of them a poem written in the stile and spirit of those immortal Authors whom they represented. The subjects of these several poems, with the judgment passed upon each of them, may be an agreeable entertainment for another day's paper.

N^o 116. *Friday, July 24.*

----- *Ridiculum acri*

Fortius et melius-----

Hor.

THERE are many little enormities in the world, which our preachers would be very glad to see removed; but at the same time dare not meddle with them, for fear of betraying the dignity of the Pulpit. Should they recommend the *Tucker* in a pathetick discourse, their audiences would be apt to laugh out. I knew a parish, where the top-woman of it used always to appear with a patch upon some part of her forehead: the good man of the place preached at it with great zeal for almost a twelvemonth; but instead of fetching out the spot which he perpetually aimed at, he only got the name of Parson *Patch* for his pains. Another is to this day called by the name of Doctor *Top-knot* for reasons of the same nature. I remember the Clergy, during the time of *Cromwell's* usurpation, were very much taken up in reforming the female world, and showing the vanity of those outward ornaments in which the sex so much delights. I have heard a whole sermon against a white-wash, and have known a coloured ribbon made the mark of the unconverted. The Clergy of the present age are not transported with these indiscreet fervours, as knowing that it is hard for a reformer to avoid ridicule, when he is severe upon subjects which are rather apt to produce mirth than seriousness. For this reason I look upon my self to be of great use to these good men; while they are employed in extirpating mortal sins, and crimes of a higher nature, I should be glad to rally the world out of indecencies and venial transgressions. While the
 Doctor