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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

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hazard of her life; and though she was offered a great sum for them, rather chose to live in poverty, than not obey the commands of her beloved father. *Myia* was the third of the daughters, whose works and history were very famous, even in *Lucian's* time. She was so signally virtuous, that for her unblemished behaviour in her virginity, she was chosen to lead up the chorus of maids in a national solemnity; and for her exemplary conduct in marriage, was placed at the head of all the matrons, in the like publick ceremony. The memory of this learned woman was so precious among her countrymen, that her house was after her death converted into a temple, and the street she lived in called by the name of the *Museum*. Nor must I omit, whilst I am mentioning this great Philosopher under his character as the master of a family, that two of his servants so improved themselves under him, that they were instituted into his sect, and make an eminent figure in the list of *Pythagoreans*. The names of these two servants were *Astræus* and *Zamolxes*. This single example sufficiently shows us both the influence and the merit of one who discharges as he ought the office of a good master of a family; which, if it were well observed in every house, would quickly put an end to that universal depravation of manners, by which the present age is so much distinguished; and which is more easie to lament than to reform.

N^o 166. *Monday, September 21.*

----- *aliquisque malo fuit usus in illo.* Ov. Met.

CHARITY is a virtue of the heart, and not of the hands, says an old writer. Gifts and alms are the expressions, not the essence of this virtue. A man may bestow great sums on the poor and indigent, without being charitable, and may be charitable when he is not able to bestow any thing. Charity is therefore a habit of good will, or benevolence, in the soul, which disposes us to the love, assistance and relief of mankind, especially of those who stand in need of it. The poor man who has this excellent frame of mind, is no less intitled to the reward of this virtue than the man who founds a college. For my own part, I

am charitable to an extravagance this way. I never saw an indigent person in my life, without reaching out to him some of this imaginary relief. I cannot but sympathize with every one I meet that is in affliction; and if my abilities were equal to my wishes, there should be neither pain nor poverty in the world.

To give my Reader a right notion of my self in this particular, I shall present him with the secret history of one of the most remarkable parts of my life.

I was once engaged in search of the Philosopher's stone. It is frequently observed of men who have been busied in this pursuit, that though they have failed in their principal design, they have however made such discoveries in their way to it, as have sufficiently recompensed their inquiries. In the same manner, though I cannot boast of my success in that affair, I do not repent of my engaging in it, because it produced in my mind, such an habitual exercise of charity, as made it much better than perhaps it would have been, had I never been lost in so pleasing a delusion.

As I did not question but I should soon have a new *Indies* in my possession, I was perpetually taken up in considering how to turn it to the benefit of mankind. In order to it I employed a whole day in walking about this great city, to find out proper places for the erection of hospitals. I had likewise entertained that project, which has since succeeded in another place, of building churches at the court end of the town, with this only difference, that instead of fifty, I intended to have built a hundred, and to have seen them all finished in less than one year.

I had with great pains and application got together a list of all the *French* Protestants; and by the best accounts I could come at, had calculated the value of all those estates and effects which every one of them had left in his own country for the sake of his religion, being fully determined to make it up to him, and return some of them the double of what they had lost.

As I was one day in my laboratory, my operator, who was to fill my coffers for me, and used to foot it from the other end of the town every morning, complained of a sprain in his leg, that he had met with over-against St. *Clement's* Church. This so affected me, that as a standing mark of my gratitude to him, and out of compassion to the rest of my fellow-citizens, I resolved to new pave every street within the liberties, and entered a *Memorandum* in my pocket-book accordingly. About the same time I entertained some thoughts of mending all the high-ways on this side the *Tweed*, and of making all the rivers in *England* navigable.

But

But the project I had most at heart was the settling upon every man in *Great Britain* three pounds a year (in which sum may be comprised, according to Sir *William Pettit's* observations, all the necessities of life) leaving to them whatever else they could get by their own industry to lay out on superfluities.

I was above a week debating in my self what I should do in the matter of *Impropriations*; but at length came to a resolution to buy them all up, and restore them to the Church.

As I was one day walking near *St. Paul's*, I took some time to survey that structure, and not being entirely satisfied with it, though I could not tell why, I had some thoughts of pulling it down, and building it up anew at my own expence.

For my own part, as I have no pride in me, I intended to take up with a coach and six, half a dozen footmen, and live like a private Gentleman.

It happened about this time that publick matters looked very gloomy, taxes came hard, the war went on heavily, people complained of the great burthens that were laid upon them: This made me resolve to set aside one morning, to consider seriously the state of the nation. I was the more ready to enter on it, because I was obliged, whether I would or no, to sit at home in my morning gown, having, after a most incredible expence, pawned a new suit of cloaths, and a full-bottomed wig, for a sum of money which my operator assured me was the last he should want to bring all matters to bear. After having considered many projects, I at length resolved to beat the common enemy at his own weapons, and laid a scheme which would have blown him up in a quarter of a year, had things succeeded to my wishes. As I was in this golden dream, some-body knocked at my door. I opened it and found it was a messenger that brought me a letter from the laboratory. The fellow looked so miserably poor, that I was resolved to make his fortune before he delivered his message: but seeing he brought a letter from my operator, I concluded I was bound to it in honour, as much as a Prince is to give a reward to one that brings him the first news of a victory. I knew this was the long-expected hour of projection, and which I had waited for, with great impatience, above half a year before. In short, I broke open my letter in a transport of joy, and found it as follows.

N n 2

S I R

S I R,

“ A F T E R having got out of you every thing you can conveniently spare, I scorn to trespass upon your generous nature, and therefore must ingenuously confess to you, that I know no more of the Philosopher’s stone than you do. I shall only tell you for your comfort, that I never yet could bubble a blockhead out of his mony. They must be men of wit and parts who are for my purpose. This made me apply my self to a person of your wealth and ingenuity. How I have succeeded, you your self can best tell.

Your humble servant to command,

Thomas White.

“ I have locked up the laboratory, and laid the key under the door. I was very much shocked at the unworthy treatment of this man, and not a little mortified at my disappointment, though not so much for what I my self, as what the publick, suffered by it. I think however I ought to let the world know what I designed for them, and hope that such of my readers who find they had a share in my good intentions, will accept of the will for the deed.

N^o 167. *Tuesday, September 22.*

Fata viam inuenient-----

Virg.

T H E following story is lately translated out of an *Arabian* manuscript, which I think has very much the turn of an oriental tale, and as it has never before been printed, I question not but it will be acceptable to my reader.

The name of *Helim* is still famous through all the eastern parts of the world. He is called among the *Persians*, even to this day, *Helim* the great physician. He was acquainted with all the powers of simples, understood all the influences of the stars, and knew the secrets that were engraved on the seal of *Solomon* the son of *David*. *Helim* was also gover-

nor