



UNIVERSITÄTS-  
BIBLIOTHEK  
PADERBORN

## Universitätsbibliothek Paderborn

### **The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.**

In Four Volumes

**Addison, Joseph**

**London, 1721**

The Preface.

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-53615](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-53615)

T H E  
P R E F A C E.

**J**OSEPH ADDISON, the son of *Lancelot Addison*, D. D. and of *Jane* the daughter of *Nathaniel Gulston*, D. D. and sister of *Dr. William Gulston* Bishop of *Bristol*, was born at *Milston* near *Ambrosebury*, in the county of *Wilts*, in the year 1671. His father, who was of the county of *Westmorland*, and educated at *Queen's College* in *Oxford*, passed many years in his travels through *Europe* and *Africa*, where he joined, to the uncommon and excellent talents of nature, a great knowledge of letters and things; of which several books published by him are ample testimonies. He was Rector of *Milston* above-mentioned, when *Mr. Addison* his eldest son was born: and afterwards became Arch-deacon of *Coventry*, and Dean of *Litchfield*.

*Mr. Addison* received his first education at the *Chartreux*, from whence he was removed very early to *Queen's College* in *Oxford*. He had been there about two years, when the accidental sight of a paper of his verses, in the hands of *Dr. Lancaster* then Dean of that house, occasioned his being elected into *Magdalen college*. He employed his first years in the study



of the old *Greek* and *Roman* writers; whose language and manner he caught at that time of life, as strongly as other young people gain a *French* accent, or a genteel air. An early acquaintance with the Classics is what may be called the good-breeding of Poetry, as it gives a certain gracefulness which never forsakes a mind, that contracted it in youth, but is seldom or never hit by those, who would learn it too late. He first distinguished himself by his *Latin* compositions, published in the *Muse Anglicane*, and was admired as one of the best authors since the *Augustan* age, in the two Universities, and the greatest part of *Europe*, before he was talked of as a Poet in Town. There is not perhaps any harder task than to tame the natural wildness of wit, and to civilize the fancy. The generality of our old *English* Poets abound in forced conceits, and affected phrases; and even those, who are said to come the nearest to exactness, are but too often fond of unnatural beauties, and aim at something better than perfection. If Mr. *Addison's* example and precepts be the occasion, that there now begins to be a great demand for correctness, we may justly attribute it to his being first fashioned by the ancient models, and familiarised to propriety of thought, and chastity of stile. Our country owes it to him, that the famous Monsieur *Boileau* first conceived an opinion of the *English* genius for Poetry, by perusing the present he made him of the *Muse Anglicane*. It has been currently reported, that this famous *French* Poet, among the civilities he shewed Mr. *Addison* on that occasion, affirmed, that he would not have written against *Perrault*, had he before seen such excellent pieces by a modern hand. Such a saying would have been impertinent and unworthy *Boileau*, whose dispute with *Perrault* turned

turned chiefly upon some passages in the ancients, which he rescued from the mis-interpretations of his adversary. The true and natural compliment made by him, was, that those books had given him a very new Idea of the *English* politeness, and that he did not question but there were excellent compositions in the native language of a country, that possessed the *Roman* genius in so eminent a degree.

The first *English* performance made public by him, is a short copy of verses to Mr. *Dryden*, with a view particularly to his translations. This was soon followed by a version of the fourth *Georgic* of *Virgil*, of which Mr. *Dryden* makes very honourable mention, in the postscript to his own translation of all *Virgil's* works: wherein I have often wondered that he did not, at the same time, acknowledge his obligation to Mr. *Addison*, for giving him *The Essay upon the Georgics*, prefixed to Mr. *Dryden's* translation. Lest the honour of so exquisite a piece of criticism should hereafter be transferred to a wrong author, I have taken care to insert it in this collection of his works.

Of some other copies of verses, printed in the *Miscellanies*, while he was young, the largest is *An Account of the greatest English Poets*; in the close of which he insinuates a design he then had of going into holy orders, to which he was strongly importuned by his father. His remarkable seriousness and modesty, which might have been urged as powerful reasons for his choosing that life, proved the chief obstacles to it. These qualities, by which the priesthood is so much adorned, represented the duties of it as too weighty for him; and rendered him still the more worthy of that honour, which they made him decline. It is happy that this very circumstance

poetics

has since turned so much to the advantage of virtue and religion, in the cause of which he has bestowed his labours the more successfully, as they were his voluntary, not his necessary employment. The world became insensibly reconciled to wisdom and goodness, when they saw them recommended by him with at least as much spirit and elegance, as they had been ridiculed for half a century.

He was in his twenty eighth year, when his inclination to see *France* and *Italy* was encouraged by the great Lord-Chancellor *Somers*, one of that kind of patriots, who think it no waste of the public treasure to purchase politeness to their country. The Poem upon one of King *William's* campaigns, address'd to His Lordship, was received with great humanity, and occasioned a message from him to the author to desire his acquaintance. He soon after obtained, by his interest, a yearly pension of three hundred pounds from the Crown, to support him in his travels. If the uncommonness of a favour, and the distinction of the person who confers it, enhance its value: nothing could be more honourable to a young man of learning, than such a bounty from so eminent a patron.

How well Mr. *Addison* answered the expectations of my Lord *Somers*, cannot appear better, than from the book of *Travels* he dedicated to his Lordship at his return. It is not hard to conceive, why that performance was at first but indifferently relished by the bulk of readers; who expected an account, in a common way, of the customs and policies of the several governments in *Italy*, reflexions upon the genius of the people, a map of their provinces, or a measure of their buildings. How were they disappointed, when, instead of such particulars, they were presented only with a journal of  
poetical

poetical travels, with remarks on the present picture of the country, compared with the landskips drawn by classic authors, and others the like unconcerning parts of knowledge! One may easily imagine a reader of plain sense, but without a fine taste, turning over these parts of the volume, which make more than half of it, and wondering, how an author, who seems to have so solid an understanding, when he treats of more weighty subjects in the other pages, should dwell upon such trifles, and give up so much room to matters of mere amusement. There are indeed but few men so fond of the ancients, as to be transported with every little accident, which introduces to their intimate acquaintance. Persons of that cast may here have the satisfaction of seeing annotations upon an old *Roman* Poem, gathered from the hills and vallies where it was written. The *Tyber* and the *Po* serve to explain the verses, that were made upon their banks; and the *Alpes* and *Appennines* are made commentators on those authors, to whom they were subjects so many centuries ago. Next to personal conversation with the writers themselves, this is the surest way of coming at their sense: a compendious and engaging kind of criticism, which convinces at first sight, and shews the vanity of conjectures, made by antiquaries at a distance. If the knowledge of polite literature has its use, there is certainly a merit in illustrating the perfect models of it, and the learned world will think some years of a man's life not mis-spent in so elegant an employment. I shall conclude what I had to say on this performance, by observing, that the fame of it increased from year to year, and the demand for copies was so urgent, that their price rose to four or five times the original value, before it came out in a second edition.

The

The *Letter from Italy* to my Lord *Halifax* may be considered as the text upon which the book of *Travels* is a large comment, and has been esteemed by those, who have a relish for antiquity, as the most exquisite of his poetical performances. A translation of it by Signor *Sabini*, professor of the *Greek* tongue at *Florence*, is inserted in this edition, not only on the account of its merit, but because it is the language of the country which is the subject of this Poem.

The materials for the *Dialogues upon Medals*, now first printed from a manuscript of the Author, were collected in the native country of those Coins. The book it self was begun to be cast into form at *Vienna*, as appears from a letter to Mr. *Stepney*, then minister at that court, dated in *November 1702*.

Some time before the date of this letter, Mr. *Addison* had designed to return to *England*, when he received advice from his friends, that he was pitched upon to attend the army under Prince *Eugene*, who had just begun the war in *Italy*, as Secretary from His Majesty. But an account of the death of King *William*, which he met with at *Geneva*, put an end to that thought; and as his hopes of advancement in his own country were fallen with the credit of his friends, who were out of power at the beginning of Her late Majesty's reign, he had leisure to make the tour of *Germany* in his way home.

He remained for some time, after his return to *England*, without any public employment, which he did not obtain till the year 1704, when the Duke of *Marlborough* arrived at the highest pitch of glory, by delivering all *Europe* from slavery, and furnished Mr. *Addison* with a subject worthy of that genius which appears in his Poem called *The Campaign*. The Lord-Treasurer

surer *Codolphin*, who was a fine judge of Poetry, had a sight of this work, when it was only carried on as far as the applauded simile of the *Angel*; and approved the Poem, by bestowing on the Author, in a few days after, the place of Commissioner of Appeals, vacant by the removal of the famous Mr. *Locke* to the council of Trade.

His next advancement was to the place of Under-secretary, which he held under Sir *Charles Hedges*, and the present Earl of *Sunderland*. The Opera of *Rosamond* was written, while he possessed that employment. What doubts soever have been raised about the merit of the musick, which, as the *Italian* taste at that time begun wholly to prevail, was thought sufficiently inexcusable, because it was the composition of an *English*-man; the Poetry of this piece has given as much pleasure in the closet, as others have afforded from the stage, with all the assistance of voices and instruments.

The Comedy called *the Tender Husband* appeared much about the same time, to which Mr. *Addison* wrote the Prologue. Sir *Richard Steele* surprized him with a very handsome dedication of this play, and has since acquainted the public, that he owed some of the most taking scenes of it to Mr. *Addison*.

His next step in his fortune, was to the post of Secretary under the late Marquess of *Wharton*, who was appointed Lord-Lieutenant of *Ireland* in the year 1709. As I have proposed to touch but very lightly on those parts of his life, which do not regard him as an Author, I shall not enlarge upon the great reputation he acquired by his turn to business, and his unblemished integrity, in this and other employments. It must not be omitted here, that the salary of Keeper of the Records

in

in *Ireland* was considerably raised, and that post bestowed upon him, at this time, as a mark of the Queen's favour. He was in that kingdom, when he first discovered Sir *Richard Steele* to be Author of *the Tatler*, by an observation upon *Virgil*, which had been by him communicated to his friend. The assistance, he occasionally gave him afterwards in the course of the paper, did not a little contribute to advance its reputation; and, upon the change of the ministry, he found leisure to engage more constantly in that work, which however was dropt at last, as it had been taken up, without his participation.

In the last paper, which closed those celebrated performances, and in the preface to the last volume, Sir *Richard Steele* has given to Mr. *Addison* the honour of the most applauded pieces in that collection. But as that acknowledgement was delivered only in general terms, without directing the public to the several papers: Mr. *Addison*, who was content with the praise arising from his own works, and too delicate to take any part of that which belonged to others, afterwards thought fit to distinguish his writings in the *Spectators* and *Guardians*, by such marks, as might remove the least possibility of mistake in the most undiscerning readers. It was necessary that his share in the *Tatlers* should be adjusted in a complete collection of his works; for which reason Sir *Richard Steele*, in compliance with the request of his deceased friend, delivered to him by the editor, was pleased to mark with his own hand those *Tatlers*, which are inserted in this edition, and even to point out several, in the writing of which they both were concerned.

The

The plan of the *Spectator*, as far as it regards the feigned person of the Author, and of the several characters that compose his club, was projected in concert with Sir *Richard Steele*. And, because many passages in the course of the work would otherwise be obscure, I have taken leave to insert one single paper, written by Sir *Richard Steele*, wherein those characters are drawn, which may serve as a *Dramatis Personæ*, or as so many pictures for an ornament and explication of the whole. As for the distinct papers, they were never or seldom shown to each other by their respective authors; who fully answered the promise they had made, and far out-went the expectation they had raised, of pursuing their labour in the same spirit and strength, with which it was begun. It would have been impossible for Mr. *Addison*, who made little or no use of letters sent in by the numerous correspondents of the *Spectator*, to have executed his large share of this task, in so exquisite a manner; if he had not ingrafted into it many pieces, that had lain by him in little hints and minutes, which he from time to time collected, and ranged in order, and moulded into the form in which they now appear. Such are the essays upon *Wit*, the *Pleasures of the Imagination*, the *Critique upon Milton*, and some others, which I thought to have connected in a continued Series in this edition; though they were at first published with the interruption of writings on different subjects. But as such a scheme would have obliged me to cut off several graceful introductions and circumstances, peculiarly adapted to the time and occasion of printing them, I durst not pursue that attempt.

The Tragedy of *Cato* appeared in public in the Year 1713, when the greatest part of the last Act was added by the Author to the foregoing, which he had kept by him for many years. He took up a design of writing a play upon this sub-

ject, when he was very young at the University, and even attempted something in it there, though not a line as it now stands. The work was performed by him in his travels, and retouched in *England*, without any formed resolution of bringing it upon the stage, 'till his friends of the first quality and distinction prevailed with him to put the last finishing to it, at a time when they thought the doctrine of Liberty very seasonable. It is in every body's memory, with what applause it was received by the public; that the first run of it lasted for a month; and then stopped, only because one of the performers became incapable of acting a principal part. The Author received a message, that the Queen would be pleased to have it dedicated to her: but as he had designed that compliment elsewhere, he found himself obliged by his duty on the one side, and his honour on the other, to send it into the world without any dedication. The fame of this Tragedy soon spread through *Europe*, and it has not only been translated, but acted in most of the languages of Christendom. The translation of it into *Italian*, by Signor *Salvini*, is very well known; but I have not been able to learn, whether that of Signor *Valetta*, a young *Neapolitan* nobleman, has ever been made public.

If he had found time for the writing of another tragedy, the Death of *Socrates* would have been the story. And, however unpromising that subject may appear, it would be presumptuous to censure his choice, who was so famous for raising the noblest plants from the most barren soil. It serves to shew, that he thought the whole labour of such a performance unworthy to be thrown away upon those intrigues and adventures, to which the *Romantic* taste has confined modern Tragedy; and, after the example of his predecessors in *Greece*,  
would

would have employed the Drama to wear out of our minds every thing that is mean, or little; to cherish and cultivate that humanity which is the ornament of our nature; to soften insolence, to sooth affliction, and to subdue our minds to the dispensations of Providence. \*

Upon the death of the late Queen, the Lords Justices, in whom the administration was lodged, appointed him their Secretary. Soon after His Majesty's arrival in *Great Britain*, the Earl of *Sunderland* being constituted Lord-Lieutenant of *Ireland*, Mr. *Addison* became a second time Secretary for the affairs of that kingdom; and was made one of the Lords-Commissioners of Trade, a little after his Lordship resigned the post of Lord-Lieutenant.

The paper, called the *Freeholder*, was undertaken at the time, when the rebellion broke out in *Scotland*.

The only works he left behind him for the public, are the *Dialogues upon Medals*, and the Treatise upon the *Christian Religion*. Some account has been already given of the former, to which nothing is now to be added, except that a great part of the *Latin* quotations were rendered into *English*, in a very hasty manner, by the Editor, and one of his friends, who had the good-nature to assist him, during his avocations of business. It was thought better to add these translations, such as they are, than to let the work come out unintelligible to those who do not possess the learned languages.

The scheme for the Treatise upon the *Christian Religion* was formed by the Author, about the end of the late Queen's reign; at which time he carefully perused the ancient writings, which furnish the materials for it. His continual employment in business prevented him from executing it, till he resigned his office of Secretary of State; and his death

\* *Spectator*. N<sup>o</sup> 39.

put a period to it, when he had imperfectly performed only one half of the design; he having proposed, as appears from the introduction, to add the *Jewish* to the Heathen testimonies, for the truth of the Christian history. He was more assiduous, than his health would well allow, in the pursuit of this work; and had long determined to dedicate his Poetry also, for the future, wholly to religious subjects.

Soon after he was, from being one of the Lords-Commissioners of Trade, advanced to the post of Secretary of State, he found his health impaired by the return of that asthmatic indisposition, which continued often to afflict him during his exercise of that employment, and at last obliged him to beg His Majesty's leave to resign. His freedom from the anxiety of business so far re-established his health, that his friends began to hope he might last for many years; but (whether it were from a life too sedentary, or from his natural constitution, in which was one circumstance very remarkable, that, from his cradle, he never had a regular pulse) a long and painful relapse into an asthma and dropsie deprived the world of this great man, on the 17th of *June* 1719. He left behind him only one Daughter, by the Countess of *Warwick*, to whom he was married in the year 1716.

Not many days before his death, he gave me directions to collect his writings, and at the same time committed to my care the Letter address'd to Mr. *Craggs* (his successor as Secretary of State) wherein he bequeaths them to him, as a token of friendship. Such a testimony, from the first man of our age, in such a point of time, will be perhaps as great and lasting an honour to that gentleman, as any even he could acquire to himself; and yet is no more than was due from an affection, that justly increased towards him, through the intimacy of several

veral years. I cannot, without the utmost tenderness, reflect on the kind concern, with which Mr. *Addison* left Me as a sort of incumbrance upon this valuable legacy. Nor must I deny my-self the honour to acknowledge, that the goodness of that great man to me, like many other of his amiable qualities, seem'd not so much to be renewed as continued in his successor; who made me an example, that nothing could be indifferent to him, which came recommended by Mr. *Addison*.

Could any circumstance be more severe to me, while I was executing these last commands of the Author, than to see the person, to whom his works were presented, cut off in the flower of his age, and carried from the high office wherein he had succeeded Mr. *Addison*, to be laid next him in the same grave! I might dwell upon such thoughts, as naturally rise from these minute resemblances in the fortune of two persons, whose names probably will be seldom mentioned asunder, while either our language or story subsist, were I not afraid of making this preface too tedious; especially since I shall want all the patience of the reader, for having enlarged it with the following verses.

To the RIGHT HONOURABLE the

EARL of *WARWICK*, &c.

**I**F, dumb too long, the drooping Muse hath stay'd,  
 And left her debt to *Addison* unpaid;  
 Blame not her silence, *Warwick*, but bemoan,  
 And judge, oh judge, my bosom by your own.

*What*

*What mourner ever felt poetic fires!  
 Slow comes the verse, that real woe inspires:  
 Grief unaffected suits but ill with art,  
 Or flowing numbers with a bleeding heart.*

*Can I forget the dismal night, that gave  
 My soul's best part for-ever to the grave!  
 How silent did his old companions tread,  
 By mid-night lamps, the mansions of the dead,  
 Through breathing statues, then unheeded things,  
 Through rows of warriors, and through walks of kings!  
 What awe did the slow solemn knell inspire;  
 The pealing organ, and the pausing choir;  
 The duties by the lawn-robe'd prelate pay'd;  
 And the last words, that dust to dust convey'd!  
 While speechless o'er thy closing grave we bend,  
 Accept these tears, thou dear departed friend,  
 Oh gone for-ever, take this long adieu;  
 And sleep in peace, next thy lov'd Montagu!*

*To strew fresh laurels let the task be mine,  
 A frequent pilgrim, at thy sacred shrine,  
 Mine with true sighs thy absence to bemoan,  
 And grave with faithful epitaphs thy stone.  
 If e'er from me thy lov'd memorial part,  
 May shame afflict this alienated heart;  
 Of thee forgetful if I form a song,  
 My lyre be broken, and untun'd my tongue,  
 My griefs be doubled, from thy image free,  
 And mirth a torment, unchastised by thee.*

Oft let me range the gloomy Iles alone  
 (Sad luxury! to vulgar minds unknown)  
 Along the walls where speaking marbles show  
 What worthies form the hallow'd mold below:  
 Proud names, who once the reins of empire held;  
 In arms who triumph'd; or in arts excell'd;  
 Chiefs, grac'd with scars, and prodigal of blood;  
 Stern patriots, who for sacred freedom stood;  
 Just men, by whom impartial laws were given;  
 And saints, who taught, and led, the way to heaven.  
 Ne'er to these chambers, where the mighty rest,  
 Since their foundation, came a nobler guest,  
 Nor e'er was to the bowers of bliss convey'd  
 A fairer spirit, or more welcome shade.

In what new region, to the just assign'd,  
 What new employments please th' unbody'd mind?  
 A winged Virtue, through th' ethereal sky,  
 From world to world unweari'd does he fly?  
 Or curious trace the long laborious maze  
 Of heaven's decrees, where wondering angels gaze?  
 Does he delight to hear bold Seraphs tell  
 How Michael battel'd, and the Dragon fell?  
 Or, mixt with milder Cherubim, to glow  
 In hymns of love, not ill essay'd below?  
 Or dost thou warn poor mortals left behind,  
 A task well suited to thy gentle mind?  
 Oh, if sometimes thy spotless form descend,  
 To me thy aid, thou guardian Genius, lend!

When

When rage misguides me, or when fear alarms,  
 When pain distresses, or when pleasure charms,  
 In silent whisperings purer thoughts impart,  
 And turn from Ill a frail and feeble heart;  
 Lead through the paths thy virtue trode before,  
 'Till bliss shall join, nor death can part us more.

That awful form (which, so ye heavens decree,  
 Must still be lov'd and still deplor'd by me)  
 In nightly visions seldom fails to rise,  
 Or, rous'd by fancy, meets my waking eyes.  
 If business calls, or crowded courts invite,  
 Th' unblemish'd statesman seems to strike my sight;  
 If in the stage I seek to soothe my care,  
 I meet his soul, which breathes in Cato there;  
 If pensive to the rural shades I rove,  
 His shape o'ertakes me in the lonely grove:  
 'Twas there of Just and Good he reason'd strong,  
 Clear'd some great truth, or rais'd some serious song;  
 There patient show'd us the wise course to steer,  
 A candid censor, and a friend severe;  
 There taught us how to live; and (oh! too high  
 The price for knowledge) taught us how to die.

Thou Hill, whose brow the antique structures grace,  
 Rear'd by bold chiefs of Warwick's noble race,  
 Why, once so lov'd, when-e'er thy bower appears,  
 O'er my dim eye-balls glance the sudden tears!  
 How sweet were once thy prospects fresh and fair,  
 Thy sloping walks, and unpolluted air!

How

How sweet the gloomes beneath thy aged trees,  
 Thy noon-tide shadow, and thy evening breeze!  
 His image thy forsaken bowers restore;  
 Thy walks and airy prospects charm no more,  
 No more the summer in thy gloomes allay'd,  
 Thy evening breezes, and thy noon-day shade.

From other ills, however fortune frown'd,  
 Some refuge in the muse's art I found:  
 Reluctant now I touch the trembling string,  
 Bereft of him, who taught me how to sing,  
 And these sad accents, murmur'd o'er his urn,  
 Betray that absence, they attempt to mourn.  
 Oh! must I then (now fresh my bosom bleeds,  
 And Craggs in death to Addison succeeds)  
 The verse, begun to one lost friend, prolong,  
 And weep a second in th' unfinish'd song!

These works divine, which on his death-bed laid  
 To thee, O Craggs, th' expiring Sage convey'd,  
 Great, but ill-omen'd monument of fame,  
 Nor he surviv'd to give, nor thou to claim.  
 Swift after him thy social spirit flies,  
 And close to his, how soon! thy coffin lies.  
 Blest pair! whose union future bards shall tell  
 In future tongues: each other's boast! farewell.  
 Farewel! whom join'd in fame, in friendship try'd,  
 No chance could sever, nor the grave divide.

THO. TICKELI.