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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

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Ovid's Metamorphoses. Book III. The story of Cadmus.

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O V I D' S
M E T A M O R P H O S E S.

B O O K III.

The Story of C A D M U S.

W H E N now *Agenor* had his daughter lost,
He sent his son to search on every coast;
And sternly bid him to his arms restore
The darling maid, or see his face no more,
But live an exile in a foreign clime;
Thus was the father pious to a crime.

The restless youth search'd all the world around;
But how can *Jove* in his amours be found?
When tir'd at length with unsuccessful toil,
To shun his angry Sire and native soil,
He goes a suppliant to the *Delphick* dome;
There asks the God what new-appointed home

Should

Should end his wand'rings, and his toils relieve.
The *Delphick* oracles this answer give.

“ Behold among the fields a lonely Cow,
“ Unworn with yokes, unbroken to the plow;
“ Mark well the place where first she lays her down,
“ There measure out thy walls, and build thy town,
“ And from thy guide *Bœotia* call the land,
“ In which the destin'd walls and town shall stand.

No sooner had he left the dark abode,
Big with the promise of the *Delphick* God,
When in the fields the fatal Cow he view'd,
Nor gall'd with yokes, nor worn with servitude:
Her gently at a distance he pursu'd;
And, as he walk'd aloof, in silence pray'd
To the great Power whose counsels he obey'd.
Her way through flowery *Panopæ* she took,
And now, *Cephisus*, cross'd thy silver brook;
When to the Heavens her spacious front she rais'd,
And bellow'd thrice, then backward turning gaz'd
On those behind, 'till on the destin'd place
She stoop'd, and couch'd amid the rising grafs.

Cadmus salutes the soil, and gladly hails
The new-found mountains, and the nameless vales,
And thanks the Gods, and turns about his eye
To see his new dominions round him lye;
Then sends his servants to a neighbouring grove
For living streams, a sacrifice to *Jove*.

O'er

O'er the wide plain there rose a shady wood
 Of aged trees; in its dark bosom stood
 A bushy thicket, pathless and unworn,
 O'er-run with brambles, and perplex'd with thorn:
 Amidst the brake a hollow Den was found,
 With rocks and shelving arches vaulted round.

Deep in the dreary Den, conceal'd from day,
 Sacred to *Mars*, a mighty Dragon lay,
 Bloated with poison to a monstrous size;
 Fire broke in flashes when he glance'd his eyes:
 His towering crest was glorious to behold,
 His shoulders and his sides were scal'd with gold;
 Three tongues he brandish'd when he charg'd his foes;
 His teeth stood jaggy in three dreadful rows.
 The *Tyrians* in the Den for water fought,
 And with their urns explor'd the hollow vault:
 From side to side their empty urns rebound,
 And rouse the sleepy Serpent with the sound.
 Strait he bestirs him, and is seen to rise;
 And now with dreadful hissings fills the skies,
 And darts his forky tongues, and roul's his glareing eyes.
 The *Tyrians* drop their vessels in the fright,
 All pale and trembling at the hideous sight.
 Spire above spire uprear'd in air he stood,
 And gazing round him, over-look'd the wood:
 Then floating on the ground, in circles rowl'd;
 Then leap'd upon them in a mighty fold.
 Of such a bulk, and such a monstrous size,
 The Serpent in the polar circle lyes,
 That stretches over half the Northern skies.

In vain the *Tyrians* on their arms rely,
 In vain attempt to fight, in vain to fly:
 All their endeavours and their hopes are vain;
 Some die entangled in the winding train;
 Some are devour'd; or feel a loathsome death,
 Sworn up with blasts of pestilential breath.

And now the scorching Sun was mounted high,
 In all its lustre, to the noon-day sky;
 When, anxious for his friends, and fill'd with cares,
 To search the woods th' impatient Chief prepares.
 A Lion's hide around his loins he wore,
 The well-pois'd Jav'lin to the field he bore
 Inur'd to blood; the far-destroying Dart
 And, the best weapon, an undaunted Heart.

Soon as the youth approach'd the fatal place,
 He saw his servants breathless on the grass;
 The scaly foe amid their corps he view'd,
 Basking at ease, and feasting in their blood.
 " Such friends, he cries, deserv'd a longer date;
 " But *Cadmus* will revenge, or share their fate.
 Then heav'd a Stone, and rising to the throw,
 He sent it in a whirlwind at the foe:
 A tower, assaulted by so rude a stroke,
 With all its lofty battlements had shook;
 But nothing here th' unwieldy rock avails,
 Rebounding harmless from the plaited scales,
 That, firmly join'd, preserv'd him from a wound,
 With native armour crusted all around.

The

The pointed Jav'lin more successful flew,
 Which at his back the raging warrior threw;
 Amid the plaited scales it took its course,
 And in the spinal marrow spent its force.
 The monster hiss'd aloud, and rage'd in vain,
 And writh'd his body to and fro with pain;
 And bit the spear, and wrench'd the wood away;
 The point still buried in the marrow lay.
 And now his rage, increasing with his pain,
 Reddens his eyes, and beats in every vein;
 Churn'd in his teeth the foamy venom rose,
 Whilst from his mouth a blast of vapours flows,
 Such as th' infernal *Stygian* waters cast;
 The plants around him wither in the blast.
 Now in a maze of rings he lies enrowl'd,
 Now all unravel'd, and without a fold;
 Now, like a torrent, with a mighty force
 Bears down the forest in his boisterous course.
Cadmus gave back, and on the Lion's spoil
 Sustain'd the shock, then forc'd him to recoil;
 The pointed Jav'lin warded off his rage:
 Mad with his pains, and furious to engage,
 The Serpent champs the steel, and bites the spear,
 'Till blood and venom all the point besmear.
 But still the hurt he yet receiv'd was slight;
 For, whilst the Champion with redoubled might
 Strikes home the Jav'lin, his retiring foe
 Shrinks from the wound, and disappoints the blow.

The dauntless Heroe still pursues his stroke,
 And presses forward, 'till a knotty Oak
 Retards his foe, and stops him in the rear;
 Full in his throat he plunge'd the fatal spear,
 That in th' extended neck a passage found,
 And pierce'd the solid timber through the wound.
 Fix'd to the reeling trunk, with many a stroke
 Of his huge tail, he lash'd the sturdy Oak;
 'Till spent with toil, and labouring hard for breath,
 He now lay twisting in the pangs of death.

Cadmus beheld him wallow in a flood
 Of swimming poison, intermix'd with blood;
 When suddenly a speech was heard from high,
 (The speech was heard, nor was the speaker nigh)
 "Why dost thou thus with secret pleasure see,
 "Insulting man! what thou thy self shalt be?
 Astonish'd at the voice, he stood amaz'd,
 And all around with inward horror gaz'd:
 When *Pallas* swift descending from the skies,
Pallas, the guardian of the bold and wise,
 Bids him plow up the field, and scatter round
 The Dragon's Teeth o'er all the furrow'd ground;
 Then tells the youth how to his wondering eyes
 Embattled armies from the field should rise.

He sows the Teeth at *Pallas's* command,
 And flings the Future People from his hand.

The

The clods grow warm, and crumble where he sows;
 And now the pointed spears advance in rows;
 Now nodding plumes appear, and shining crests,
 Now the broad shoulders and the rising breasts;
 O'er all the field the breathing harvest swarms,
 A growing host, a crop of men and arms.

So through the parting stage a figure rears
 Its body up, and limb by limb appears
 By just degrees; 'till all the Man arise,
 And in his full proportion strikes the eyes.

Cadmus surpriz'd, and startled at the sight
 Of his new foes, prepar'd himself for fight:
 When one cry'd out, " Forbear, fond man, forbear
 " To mingle in a blind promiscuous war.
 This said, he struck his Brother to the ground,
 Himself expiring by Another's wound;
 Nor did the Third his conquest long survive,
 Dying e'er scarce he had begun to live.

The dire example ran through all the field,
 'Till heaps of brothers were by brothers kill'd;
 The furrows swam in blood: and onely five
 Of all the vast increase were left alive.

Ecbion one, at *Pallas's* command,
 Let fall the guiltless weapon from his hand;
 And with the rest a peaceful treaty makes,
 Whom *Cadmus* as his friends and partners takes:

So:

So founds a city on the promis'd earth,
And gives his new *Beotian* empire birth.

Here *Cadmus* reign'd; and now one would have guess't
The royal founder in his exile blest:
Long did he live within his new abodes,
Ally'd by marriage to the deathless Gods;
And, in a fruitful wife's embraces old,
A long increase of children's children told:
But no frail man, however great or high,
Can be concluded blest before he die.

Actæon was the first of all his race,
Who griev'd his Grandfire in his borrow'd face;
Condemn'd by stern *Diana* to bemoan
The branching horns, and visage not his own;
To shun his once-lov'd dogs, to bound away,
And from their Huntsman to become their Prey.
And yet consider why the change was wrought,
You'll find it his misfortune, not his fault;
Or if a fault, it was the fault of chance:
For how can guilt proceed from ignorance?

The Transformation of ACTÆON into a Stag.

In a fair Chace a shady mountain stood,
Well store'd with game, and mark'd with trails of blood.
Here did the huntsmen 'till the heat of day
Pursue the Stag, and load themselves with prey;

When