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

In Four Volumes

**Addison, Joseph**

**London, 1721**

The story of Coronis, and birth of Æsculapius.

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

" This, this was all my weak revenge could do:  
 " But let the God his chaste amours pursue,  
 " And, as he acted after *Io's* rape,  
 " Restore th' adul'tress to her former shape;  
 " Then may he cast his *Juno* off, and lead  
 " The great *Lycaon's* off-spring to his bed.  
 " But you, ye venerable powers, be kind,  
 " And, if my wrongs a due resentment find,  
 " Receive not in your waves their setting beams,  
 " Nor let the glaring strumpet taint your streams.

The goddess ended, and her wish was given.  
 Back she return'd in triumph up to heaven;  
 Her gawdy Peacocks drew her through the skies,  
 Their tails were spotted with a thousand Eyes;  
 The Eyes of *Argus* on their tails were rang'd,  
 At the same time the Raven's colour chang'd.

*The Story of* CORONIS, *and Birth of*  
 ÆSCULAPIUS.

The Raven once in snowy plumes was drest,  
 White as the whitest Dove's unfully'd breast,  
 Fair as the guardian of the Capitol,  
 Soft as the Swan; a large and lovely fowl;  
 His tongue, his prating tongue had chang'd him quite  
 To sooty blackness from the purest white.

The story of his change shall here be told;  
 In *Thessaly* there liv'd a Nymph of old,

*Coronis*

*Coronis* nam'd; a peerless maid she shin'd,  
 Confest the fairest of the fairer kind.  
*Apollo* lov'd her, 'till her guilt he knew,  
 While true she was, or whilst he thought her true.  
 But his own bird the Raven chance'd to find  
 The false one with a secret rival join'd.  
*Coronis* begg'd him to suppress the tale,  
 But could not with repeated prayers prevail.  
 His milk-white pinions to the God he ply'd;  
 The busy Daw flew with him, side by side,  
 And by a thousand teizing questions drew  
 Th' important secret from him as they flew.  
 The Daw gave honest counsel, tho' despis'd,  
 And, tedious in her rattle, thus advis'd.

" Stay, silly bird, th' ill-natur'd task refuse,  
 " Nor be the bearer of unwelcome news.  
 " Be warn'd by my example: you discern  
 " What now I am, and what I was shall learn.  
 " My foolish honesty was all my crime;  
 " Then hear my story. Once upon a time,  
 " The two-shap'd *Erichonius* had his birth  
 " (Without a mother) from the teeming earth;  
 " *Minerva* nurs'd him, and the infant laid  
 " Within a chest, of twining osiers made.  
 " The daughters of King *Cecrops* undertook  
 " To guard the chest, commanded not to look  
 " On what was hid within. I stood to see  
 " The charge obey'd, perch'd on a neighb'ring tree.  
 " The sisters *Pandrosos* and *Hersè* keep  
 " The strict command; *Aglauros* needs would peep,

" And saw the monstrous infant in a fright,  
 " And call'd her sisters to the hideous sight;  
 " A Boy's soft shape did to the waist prevail,  
 " But the boy ended in a Dragon's tail;  
 " I told the stern *Minerva* all that pass'd,  
 " But for my pains, discarded and disgrace'd,  
 " The frowning goddess drove me from her sight,  
 " And for her favorite chose the bird of night.  
 " Be then no tell-tale; for I think my wrong  
 " Enough to teach a bird to hold her tongue.  
 " But you, perhaps, may think I was remov'd,  
 " As never by the heavenly maid belov'd;  
 " But I was lov'd; ask *Pallas* if I lye;  
 " Tho' *Pallas* hate me now, she won't deny:  
 " For I, whom in a feather'd shape you view,  
 " Was once a Maid (by heaven the story's true)  
 " A blooming maid, and a King's daughter too.  
 " A crowd of lovers own'd my beauty's charms;  
 " My beauty was the cause of all my harms;  
 " *Neptune*, as on his shores I went to rove,  
 " Observ'd me in my walks, and fell in love;  
 " He made his courtship, he confess'd his pain,  
 " And offer'd force when all his arts were vain;  
 " Swift he pursu'd: I ran along the strand,  
 " 'Till, spent and weary'd on the sinking sand,  
 " I shriek'd aloud, with cries I fill'd the air,  
 " To gods and men; nor god nor man was there:  
 " A virgin goddess heard a virgin's prayer.  
 " For, as my Arms I lifted to the skies,  
 " I saw black feathers from my fingers rise;

" I strove to fling my garment on the ground;  
 " My garment turn'd to Plumes, and girt me round:  
 " My hands to beat my naked bosom try;  
 " Nor naked bosom now nor hands had I.  
 " Lightly I tript, nor weary as before  
 " Sunk in the sand, but skim'd along the shore;  
 " 'Till, rising on my Wings, I was prefer'd  
 " To be the chaste *Minerva's* virgin bird:  
 " Prefer'd in vain! I now am in disgrace:  
 " *Nyctimene* the Owl enjoys my place.

" On her incestuous life I need not dwell,  
 " (In *Lesbos* still the horrid tale they tell)  
 " And of her dire amours you must have heard,  
 " For which she now does penance in a Bird,  
 " That, conscious of her shame, avoids the light,  
 " And loves the gloomy covering of the night;  
 " The Birds, where-e'er she flutters, scare away  
 " The hooting wretch, and drive her from the day.

The Raven, urge'd by such impertinence,  
 Grew passionate, it seems, and took offence,  
 And curst the harmless Daw; the Daw withdrew:  
 The Raven to her injur'd patron flew,  
 And found him out, and told the fatal truth  
 Of false *Coronis* and the favour'd youth.

The God was wroth; the colour left his look,  
 The wreath his head, the harp his hand forsook:  
 His silver bow and feather'd shafts he took;

And lodg'd an arrow in the tender breast,  
 That had so often to his own been prest.  
 Down fell the wounded Nymph, and sadly groan'd,  
 And pull'd his arrow reeking from the wound;  
 And weltring in her blood, thus faintly cry'd,  
 " Ah cruel God! tho' I have justly dy'd,  
 " What has, alas! my unborn Infant done,  
 " That He should fall, and two expire in one?  
 This said, in agonies she fetch'd her breath.

The God dissolves in pity at her death;  
 He hates the bird that made her falshood known,  
 And hates himself for what himself had done;  
 The feather'd shaft, that sent her to the fates,  
 And his own hand, that sent the shaft, he hates.  
 Fain would he heal the wound, and ease her pain,  
 And tries the compass of his art in vain.  
 Soon as he saw the lovely Nymph expire,  
 The pile made ready, and the kindling fire,  
 With sighs and groans her obsequies he kept,  
 And, if a God could Weep, the God had Wept.  
 Her corps he kiss'd, and heavenly incense brought,  
 And solemniz'd the death himself had wrought.

But, lest his off-spring should her fate partake,  
 Spight of th' immortal mixture in his make,  
 He ript her womb, and set the child at large,  
 And gave him to the Centaur *Chiron's* charge:  
 Then in his fury Black'd the Raven o'er,  
 And bid him prate in his White plumes no more.

OCYRRHOE