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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

London, 1721

The transformation of Actæon into a Stag.

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

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

When thus *Acteon* calling to the rest:

“ My friends, says he, our sport is at the best.

“ The Sun is high advance’d, and downward sheds

“ His burning beams directly on our heads;

“ Then by consent abstain from further spoils,

“ Call off the dogs, and gather up the toiles;

“ And e’er to morrow’s Sun begins his race,

“ Take the cool morning to renew the chace.

They all consent, and in a chearful train

The jolly huntsmen, loaden with the slain,

Return in triumph from the sultry plain.

Down in a vale with Pine and Cypress clad,
Refresh’d with gentle winds, and brown with shade,

The chaste *Diana*’s private haunt, there stood

Full in the centre of the darksome wood

A spacious Grotto, all around o’er-grown

With hoary moss, and arch’d with Pumice-stone.

From out its rocky clefts the waters flow,

And trickling swell into a lake below.

Nature had every where so play’d her part,

That every where she seem’d to vie with Art.

Here the bright Goddess, toil’d and chafe’d with heat,

Was wont to bathe her in the cool retreat.

Here did she now with all her train resort,

Panting with heat, and breathless from the sport;

Her armour-bearer laid her bow aside,

Some loos’d her sandals, some her veil unty’d;

Each

Each busy Nymph her proper part undrest;
 While *Crocale*, more handy than the rest,
 Gather'd her flowing hair, and in a noose
 Bound it together, whilst her own hung loose.
 Five of the more ignoble sort by turns
 Fetch up the water, and unlade their urns.

Now all undrest the shining Goddess stood,
 When young *Actæon*, wilder'd in the wood,
 To the cool grott by his hard fate betray'd,
 The fountains fill'd with naked Nymphs survey'd.
 The frighted virgins shriek'd at the surprize,
 (The forest echo'd with their piercing cries.)
 Then in a huddle round their Goddess prest:
 She, proudly eminent above the rest,
 With blushes glow'd; such blushes as adorn
 The ruddy welkin, or the purple morn;
 And tho' the crowding Nymphs her body hide,
 Half backward shrunk, and view'd him from aside.
 Surpriz'd, at first she would have snatch'd her Bow,
 But sees the circling waters round her flow;
 These in the hollow of her hand she took,
 And dash'd 'em in his face, while thus she spoke:
 " Tell if thou can'st the wonderous sight disclos'd,
 " A Goddess Naked to thy view expos'd.

This said, the Man begun to disappear
 By slow degrees, and ended in a Deer.
 A rising horn on either brow he wears,
 And stretches out his neck, and pricks his ears;

Rough

Rough is his skin, with sudden hairs o'er-grown,
 His bosom pants with fears before unknown.
 Transform'd at length, he flies away in haste,
 And wonders why he flies away so fast.
 But as by chance, within a neighbouring brook,
 He saw his branching horns and alter'd look,
 Wretched *Actæon!* in a doleful tone
 He try'd to speak, but only gave a groan;
 And as he wept, within the wat'ry glass
 He saw the big round drops, with silent pace,
 Run trickling down a savage hairy face.
 What should he do? Or seek his old abodes,
 Or herd among the Deer, and skulk in woods?
 Here shame dissuades him, there his fear prevails,
 And each by turns his aking heart assails.

As he thus ponders, he behind him spies
 His opening Hounds, and now he hears their cries:
 A generous pack, or to maintain the chace,
 Or snuff the vapour from the scented gras.

He bounded off with fear, and swiftly ran
 O'er craggy mountains, and the flowery plain;
 Through brakes and thickets forc'd his way, and flew
 Through many a ring, where once he did pursue.
 In vain he oft endeavour'd to proclaim
 His new misfortune, and to tell his name;
 Nor voice nor words the brutal tongue supplies;
 From shouting men, and horns, and dogs he flies,
 Deafen'd and stunn'd with their promiscuous cries.

When now the fleetest of the pack, that prest
 Close at his heels, and sprung before the rest,
 Had fasten'd on him, straight another pair
 Hung on his wounded haunch, and held him there,
 'Till all the pack came up, and every hound
 Tore the sad Huntsman grov'ling on the ground,
 Who now appear'd but one continu'd wound,
 With dropping tears his bitter fate he moans,
 And fills the mountain with his dying groans.
 His servants with a piteous look he spies,
 And turns about his supplicating eyes.
 His servants, ignorant of what had chanc'd,
 With eager haste and joyful shouts advanc'd,
 And call'd their Lord *Acteon* to the game:
 He shook his head in answer to the name;
 He heard, but wish'd he had indeed been gone,
 Or only to have stood a looker on.
 But, to his grief, he finds himself too near,
 And feels his rav'nous dogs with fury tear
 Their wretched master panting in a Deer.

The Birth of BACCHUS.

Acteon's sufferings, and *Diana's* rage,
 Did all the thoughts of Men and Gods engage;
 Some call'd the evils, which *Diana* wrought,
 Too great, and disproportion'd to the fault:
 Others again esteem'd *Acteon's* woes
 Fit for a Virgin Goddess to impose.

The