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

In Four Volumes

**Addison, Joseph**

**London, 1721**

The Birth of Bacchus.

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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



The hearers into different parts divide,  
And reasons are produc'd on either side.

*Juno* alone, of all that heard the news,  
Nor would condemn the Goddess, nor excuse:  
She heeded not the justice of the deed,  
But joy'd to see the race of *Cadmus* bleed;  
For still she kept *Europa* in her mind,  
And, for her sake, detested all her kind.  
Besides, to aggravate her hate, she heard  
How *Semele*, to *Jove's* embrace prefer'd,  
Was now grown big with an immortal load,  
And carry'd in her womb a future God.  
Thus terribly incens'd, the Goddess broke  
To sudden fury, and abruptly spoke.

“ Are my reproaches of so small a force?  
“ 'Tis time I then pursue another course:  
“ It is decreed the guilty wretch shall die,  
“ If I'm indeed the Mistress of the sky;  
“ If rightly stil'd among the powers above  
“ The Wife and Sister of the thundering *Jove*;  
“ (And none can sure a Sister's right deny)  
“ It is decreed the guilty wretch shall die.  
“ She boasts an honour I can hardly claim;  
“ Pregnant she rises to a Mother's name;  
“ While proud and vain she triumphs in her *Jove*,  
“ And shows the glorious tokens of his love:  
“ But if I'm still the mistress of the skies,  
“ By her own lover the fond beauty dies.



This said, descending in a yellow cloud,  
Before the gates of *Semele* she stood.

Old *Beroe's* decrepit shape she wears,  
Her wrinkled visage, and her hoary hairs;  
Whilst in her trembling gait she totters on,  
And learns to tattle in the Nurse's tone.  
The Goddess, thus disguis'd in age, beguil'd  
With pleasing stories her false Foster-child.  
Much did she talk of love, and when she came  
To mention to the Nymph her lover's name,  
Fetching a sigh, and holding down her head,  
" 'Tis well, says she, if all be true that's said.  
" But trust me, child, I'm much inclin'd to fear  
" Some counterfeit in this your *Jupiter*.  
" Many an honest well-designing maid,  
" Has been by these pretended Gods betray'd.  
" But if he be indeed the thundering *Jove*,  
" Bid him, when next he courts the rites of love,  
" Descend triumphant from th' ethereal sky,  
" In all the pomp of his divinity;  
" Encompass'd round by those celestial charms,  
" With which he fills th' immortal *Juno's* arms.

Th' unwary Nymph, ensnar'd with what she said,  
Desir'd of *Jove*, when next he sought her bed,  
To grant a certain gift which she would chuse;  
" Fear not, reply'd the God, that I'll refuse  
" Whate'er you ask: May *Styx* confirm my voice,  
" Chuse what you will, and you shall have your choice.  
" Then,



" Then, says the Nymph, when next you seek my arms,  
 " May you descend in those celestial charms,  
 " With which your *Juno's* bosom you enflame,  
 " And fill with transport Heaven's immortal dame.  
 The God surpriz'd would fain have stopp'd her voice:  
 But he had sworn, and she had made her choice.

To keep his promise he ascends, and shrowds  
 His awful brow in whirlwinds and in clouds;  
 Whilst all around, in terrible array,  
 His thunders rattle, and his light'nings play.  
 And yet, the dazzling lustre to abate,  
 He set not out in all his pomp and state,  
 Clad in the mildest light'ning of the skies,  
 And arm'd with thunder of the smallest size:  
 Not those huge bolts, by which the Giants slain  
 Lay overthrown on the *Phlegrean* plain.  
 'Twas of a lesser mould, and lighter weight;  
 They call it Thunder of a Second-rate.  
 For the rough *Cyclops*, who by *Jove's* command  
 Temper'd the bolt, and turn'd it to his hand,  
 Work'd up less flame and fury in its make,  
 And quench'd it sooner in the standing lake.  
 Thus dreadfully adorn'd, with horror bright,  
 Th' illustrious God, descending from his height,  
 Came rushing on her in a storm of light.

The mortal dame, too feeble to engage  
 The light'ning's flashes, and the thunder's rage,

Consum'd



Consum'd amidst the glories she desir'd,  
And in the terrible embrace expir'd.

But, to preserve his off-spring from the tomb,  
*Jove* took him smoaking from the blasted womb;  
And, if on ancient tales we may rely,  
Inclos'd th' abortive infant in his thigh.  
Here, when the babe had all his time fulfill'd,  
*Ino* first took him for her Foster-child;  
Then the *Niseans*, in their dark abode,  
Nurs'd secretly with milk the thriving God.

*The Transformation of TIRESIAS.*

'Twas now, while these transactions past on earth,  
And *Bacchus* thus procur'd a second birth,  
When *Jove*, dispos'd to lay aside the weight  
Of publick empire, and the cares of state;  
As to his Queen in nectar bowls he quaff'd,  
" In troth, says he, and as he spoke he laugh'd,  
" The sense of pleasure in the male is far  
" More dull and dead, than what you females share.  
*Juno* the truth of what was said deny'd;  
*Tiresias* therefore must the cause decide;  
For he the pleasure of each sex had try'd.

It happen'd once, within a shady wood,  
Two twisted Snakes he in conjunction view'd;  
When with his staff their slimy folds he broke,  
And lost his manhood at the fatal stroke.

But,