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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

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The story of Pentheus.

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Then on th' unwholsome earth he gasping lyes,
 'Till death shuts up those self-admiring eyes.
 To the cold shades his flitting ghost retires,
 And in the *Stygian* waves it self admires.

For him the *Naiads* and the *Dryads* mourn,
 Whom the sad *Echo* answers in her turn;
 And now the Sister-Nymphs prepare his urn:
 When, looking for his corps, they only found
 A rising Stalk, with Yellow Blossoms crown'd.

The Story of PENTHEUS.

This sad event gave blind *Tiresias* fame,
 Through *Greece* establish'd in a Prophet's name.

Th' un-hallow'd *Pentheus* only durst deride
 The cheated people, and their eyeless guide.
 To whom the Prophet in his fury said,
 Shaking the hoary honours of his head;
 " 'Twere well, presumptuous man, 'twere well for thee
 " If thou wert eyeless too, and blind, like me:
 " For the time comes, nay, 'tis already here,
 " When the young God's solemnities appear;
 " Which if thou dost not with just rites adorn,
 " Thy impious carcass, into pieces torn,
 " Shall strew the woods, and hang on every thorn.
 " Then, then, remember what I now foretel,
 " And own the blind *Tiresias* saw too well.

Still

Still *Pentheus* scorns him, and derides his skill,
 But Time did all the Prophet's threats fulfil.
 For now thro' prostrate *Greece* young *Bacchus* rode,
 Whilst howling matrons celebrate the God.
 All ranks and sexes to his *Orgies* ran,
 To mingle in the pomps, and fill the train.
 When *Pentheus* thus his wicked rage express'd;
 " What madness, *Thebans*, has your souls possess'd?
 " Can hollow timbrels, can a drunken shout,
 " And the lewd clamours of a beastly rout,
 " Thus quell your courage? can the weak alarm
 " Of women's yells those stubborn souls disarm,
 " Whom nor the sword nor trumpet e'er could fright,
 " Nor the loud din and horror of a fight?
 " And you, our Sires, who left your old abodes,
 " And fix'd in foreign earth your country Gods;
 " Will you without a stroak your city yield,
 " And poorly quit an undisputed field?
 " But you, whose youth and vigour should inspire
 " Heroick warmth, and kindle martial fire,
 " Whom burnish'd arms and crested helmets grace,
 " Not flowery garlands and a painted face;
 " Remember him to whom you stand ally'd:
 " The Serpent for his well of waters dy'd.
 " He fought the strong; do you his courage show;
 " And gain a conquest o'er a feeble foe.
 " If *Thebes* must fall, oh might the fates afford
 " A nobler doom from famine, fire, or sword!
 " Then might the *Thebans* perish with renown:
 " But now a beardless victor sacks the town;

" Whom

" Whom nor the prancing steed, nor pond'rous shield,
 " Nor the hack'd helmet, nor the dusty field,
 " But the soft joys of luxury and ease,
 " The purple vests, and flowery garlands please.
 " Stand then aside, I'll make the counterfeit
 " Renounce his God-head, and confess the cheat.
 " *Acrifus* from the *Grecian* walls repell'd
 " This boasted power; why then should *Pentheus* yield?
 " Go quickly, drag th' audacious boy to me;
 " I'll try the force of his divinity.

Thus did th' audacious wretch those rites profane;
 His friends dissuade th' audacious wretch in vain;
 In vain his Grandfire urg'd him to give o'er
 His impious threats; the wretch but raves the more.

So have I seen a river gently glide,
 In a smooth course, and inoffensive tide;
 But if with dams its current we restrain,
 It bears down all, and foams along the plain.

But now his servants came besmear'd with blood,
 Sent by their haughty Prince to seize the God;
 The God they found not in the frantick throng,
 But dragg'd a zealous votary along.

The Mariners transform'd to Dolphins.

Him *Pentheus* view'd with fury in his look,
 And scarce with-held his hands, while thus he spoke:

" Vile