

instruction. My object in the foregoing remarks is to show that the objections against the establishment of denominational day schools, do not form any objection to granting aid to denominational colleges as institutions of science and literature, and open to all classes of youth who may be desirous of attending them.

The more carefully the question of religious instruction in connection with our system of common schools is examined, the more clearly, I think, it will appear that it has been left where it properly belongs—with the local school municipalities, parents and managers of schools—the government protecting the right of each parent and child, but beyond this and beyond the principles and duties of morality common to all classes, neither compelling, nor prohibiting—recognizing the duties of pastors and parents, as well as of school trustees and teachers, and considering the united labours of all as constituting the system of education for the youth of the country.

SHORT MEMOIRS OF EMINENT MEN.

No. 3.

JOSEPH ADDISON.

Joseph Addison, the son of Launcelot Addison, D. D., was born on the 11th of May, 1672, at Milston, a village in Wiltshire. His father, then rector of that place, and afterwards prebendary of Sarum, dean of Litchfield, and archdeacon of Coventry, was a man of great natural abilities, and author of several works, which evince that his literary attainments were of no ordinary character. The subject of his memoir received the first rudiments of education at the place of his nativity, under the tuition of Mr. Naish, a clergyman, but was soon removed to Salisbury, and from thence to the Charter-house. At fifteen he was entered at Queen's College, Oxford, where he applied very closely to the study of classical learning, in which he made a surprising proficiency.

In the year 1687, Dr. Lancaster, dean of Magdalen College, having, by chance, seen a Latin poem, of Addison's, was so pleased with it that he immediately got him elected into that college, where he took the degrees of Bachelor and Master of Arts. His Latin pieces, in the course of a few years, were exceedingly admired in both the universities, nor were they less esteemed abroad, particularly by Boileau, the celebrated French author, who was first led to think highly of the English genius for poetry by their perusal. He published nothing in English before the twenty-second year of his age, when there appeared a copy of verses written by him to Dryden, which met with great approbation from the best judges.

At the Charter-house school he first formed that intimacy with Sir Richard Steele, which their joint literary labours afterwards so effectually recorded. Addison was strongly pressed, when at the university, to enter into holy orders, and had once resolved upon doing so; but his great modesty, his natural diffidence, and an uncommonly delicate sense of the importance of the sacred office, joined to the advice of his friend, Mr. Montague, the Chancellor of Exchequer, made him afterwards alter his resolution. Having expressed to one of his patrons, Sir John Somers, a great inclination to travel, that gentleman, by his interest, procured him a pension from government of three hundred pounds a-year to defray his expenses. He accordingly made a tour to Italy in the year 1699, and two years after wrote a poetical epistle from that country to the Earl of Halifax. In 1702 he was about to return to England, when he received an appointment to attend Prince Eugene, then in command of the Imperial troops in Italy; but the death of William the Third happening soon after, put an end to this affair, as well as to his pension, and he remained a considerable time unemployed. During this period, however, Addison was not idle, but sedulously applied himself to the cultivation of his mind, until at length an unexpected incident gave him an opportunity of displaying his talents to advantage. Lord Godolphin, happening to complain to Lord Halifax that the Duke of Marlborough's victory at Blenheim had never been celebrated in verse in the manner it deserved, asked that nobleman if he could name a person capable of doing justice to the subject. Lord Halifax replied that he did know of such a person, but refused to mention him, "Because," he added, "I have long seen, with indignation, men of no merit maintained in luxury at the public expense, while those of real worth and modesty are suffered to languish in want and obscurity."

To this the Lord Treasurer answered that he was sorry there should be occasion for such a remark; but that he would do his best to wipe off such reproaches for the future; and, on his pledging his honour that whoever his lordship named as adequate to the task should be suitably recompensed, Lord Halifax mentioned Addison.

The proposal was, by direction of the Treasurer, made to our author by Mr. Boyle, in so polite and flattering a manner, that he readily accepted it. Lord Godolphin having seen the first part of the work before the whole was finished, was so pleased with it, that he appointed him Commissioner of Appeals.

The ensuing year he accompanied Lord Halifax into Holland, and in 1706 was made private secretary to the Secretary of State, in which office he acquitted himself ably.

About this time, there being a great taste for Italian operas, he wrote the opera of "Rosamond," wishing to try the effect that a composition of this with English words would have upon the stage; but, probably owing to the badness of the music to which it was adapted, this undertaking did not succeed.

On the 1st of March, 1711, the first number of the "Spectator" made its appearance. Of the extraordinary popularity of this celebrated periodical, the fact that more than twenty-thousand copies were often sold in one day, would alone bear sufficient testimony.

But, although his literary fame was raised very high by the publication of the "Tatler" and "Spectator," the former of which works is supposed to have been commenced by his friend Steele whilst he was in Ireland, without his knowledge; yet it was not until the appearance of "Cato" that his reputation reached its greatest height. The celebrated tragedy was planned by the author when he was very young, and principally written abroad. For a long time he had no intention of bringing it forward on the stage, but at length, yielding to the earnest and frequently repeated solicitations of his friends, it was exhibited at the theatre, with a prologue written by Pope. It met with uncommon success, being played thirty-five nights without interruption, and then discontinued only on account of the illness of one of the principal actors.—"Cato" was no less admired on the Continent, having been translated into French, Italian, and German. It was acted at Leghorn, and several other places, with immense applause; and the Jesuits of St. Omer made a Latin version of it, which was got up with great magnificence, and acted by the students of the college.

Before the arrival of George the First, Addison was made Secretary of the Regency, and was required by his office to send notice to that monarch of the death of Queen Anne, and the vacancy of the throne of England. He was so long in performing this, thinking that such a subject required so much consideration as to the best manner of expressing it, and was so perplexed with the choice of terms, that the lords, who could not be thus kept waiting, called a man of the name of Southwell, a clerk in the house, and desired him to depatch the message. Southwell readily wrote what was necessary, in the common-place style of business, and boasted that he had performed what was too difficult for Addison. A striking instance of absurd and overweening self-conceit is here afforded us; and it may also be remarked how much more frequently this defect is found in ignorant and inferior minds than those who are justly distinguished above the common herd for wisdom and learning.

In 1716 Addison married the widow of the Earl of Warwick, whom he had long courted. It seldom happens that unequal marriages are productive of happiness to either party; and this was exemplified in the case of Addison and his wife. He first became acquainted with her from being tutor to her son; and the lady always remembered her own rank, and treated her husband with very little consideration.

The year after this ill-sorted union Addison rose to his highest elevation, being made Secretary of State, but appears to have proved himself unequal to the duties of his situation. Having no powers of oratory, he could not speak in the House of Commons; and in the office he could not issue an order without losing his time, and causing inconvenient delay, by waiting to express it in fine and elaborate language. Finding, by experience, his utter inability for public business, he solicited his dismissal, which was granted, with a pension of £1500 a year.

In this retirement, although suffering from declining health, he