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Sensus Communis :
A N
E S S A Y
O N T H E
F R E E D O M
O F
Wit *and* Humour.

In a LETTER to a Friend.

— *Hâc urget Lupus, hâc Canis* —
Horat. Sat. 2. Lib. 2.

L O N D O N,

Printed for *Egbert Sanger* at the Post-Office
in *Fleetstreet*. M. DCC. IX.

Author's Comments :

BY

ESSAYS

OF THE

FRANCE

TO

WITNESS AND HISTORY.

In a LETTER to a Friend.

— The Author's Name, the Date —
London, 1763.

LONDON

Printed for E. Smith and S. Oakes
in Pall-mall, M.DCC.LXIII.

A N
E S S A Y, &c.

I HAVE been considering (my Friend!) what your Fancy was, to express such a Surprize as you did the other day, when I happen'd to speak to you in commendation of *Raillery*. Was it possible you shou'd suppose me so grave a Man as to dislike *all* Conversation of this kind? Or were you afraid I shou'd not stand the Trial, if you shou'd put me to it, by making the Experiment in *my own* Case?

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I must

I must confess, you had reason enough for your Caution; if you cou'd imagine me at the bottom so true a *Zealot*, as not to bear the least Raillery on my own Opinions. 'Tis the Case, I know, with Many. Whatever they think grave or solemn, they suppose must never be treated out of a grave and solemn way: Tho' what *Another* thinks so, they can be contented to treat otherwise; and are forward to try the Edge of Ridicule against any Opinions besides *their own*.

The Question is, Whether this be fair or no? and Whether it be not just, and wise, to make as free with our *own* Opinions, as with those of *other People*? For to be sparing in this case, may be look'd upon as a piece of Selfishness. We may be charg'd perhaps with wilful Ignorance and blind Idolatry, for having taken Opinions upon Trust, and
confe-

consecrated in our selves certain *Idol-Notions*, which we will never suffer to be unveil'd, or seen in open Light. They may perhaps be Monsters, and not Divinitys, or Sacred Truths, which are kept thus choicely, in some dark Corner of our Minds: The Specters may impose on us, whilst we refuse to turn 'em every way; and view their Shapes and Complexions in every Light. For that which can be shewn only in a certain Light, is questionable. Truth, 'tis suppos'd, may bear *all* Lights: and one of those in which Things are to be view'd, in order to a thorow Recognition, is that by which we discern whatever is liable to *Ridicule* in any Subject. At least, 'tis so allow'd by All, who at any time appeal to this *Criterion*. The gravest Gentlemen, even in the gravest Subjects, are suppos'd to acknowledg this: and can have no Right, 'tis thought,

to deny others the Freedom of this Appeal; whilst they are free to censure like other Men; and in their gravest Arguments make no scruple to ask, *Is it not ridiculous?*

Of this Affair, therefore, I design you shou'd know fully what my Thoughts are. And by this means you will be able to judg of me; whether I was sincere the other day in the Defence of *Railery*, and can continue still to plead for those ingenious Friends of ours, who are often censur'd for their Humour of this kind, and for the Freedom they take in such an airy way of Conversation and Writing.

IN good earnest, when one considers what use is sometimes made of this kind of Wit, and to what an excess it has risen of late, in some Characters of the Age; one may be startled a little, and in doubt, what
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to think of the Practice, or whither this raiilying Humour will at length carry us. It has pass'd from the Men of Pleasure to the Men of Business. Politicians have been infected with it: and the grave Affairs of State have been treated with an Air of Irony and Banter. The ablest Negotiators have been known the notablest Buffoons: the most celebrated Authors, the greatest Masters of Burlesque.

There is indeed a kind of *defensive Raillery* (if I may so call it) which I am willing enough to allow in Affairs of whatever kind; when the Spirit of Curiosity wou'd force a Discovery of more Truth than can conveniently be told. For we can never do more injury to Truth, than by discovering too much of it, on some occasions. 'Tis the same with Understandings as with Eyes: To such a certain Size and Make just so

much Light is necessary, and no more. Whatever is beyond, brings Darknes and Confusion.

'Tis real Humanity and Kindness, to hide strong Truths from weak Eyes. And to do this by a pleasant Amusement, is easier, and civiller, than by a harsh Denial or remarkable Reserve. But to go about industriously to confound Men, in a mysterious manner; and to make advantage or draw pleasure from that Perplexity they are thrown into, by such uncertain Talk; is as unhand-som in a way of Raillery, as when done with the greatest Seriousness, or in the most solemn way of Deceit. It may be necessary, as well now as of old, for wise Men to speak in *Parables*, and with a double Meaning, that the Enemy may be amus'd, and those only *who have Ears to hear may hear*. But 'tis a mean, impotent and dull sort of Wit, which amuses all alike,

alike, and leaves the most sensible Man, and even a Friend, equally in doubt, and at a loss, to know what one's real mind is, upon any Subject.

This is that gross sort of Raillery, which is so offensive in good Company. And indeed there is as much difference between one sort and another, as between fair Dealing and Hypocrisy; or between the genteelest Wit, and the most scurrilous Buffoonery. But by Freedom of Conversation, this illiberal kind of Wit will lose its Credit. For Wit is its own Remedy. Liberty and Commerce bring it to its true Standard. The only Danger is, the laying an Embargo. The same thing happens here, as in the Case of *Trade*. Impositions and Restrictions reduce it to a low Ebb. Nothing is so advantageous to it as a *Free Port*.

We have seen in our own time the Decline and Ruin of a false sort of

Wit, which so much delighted our Ancestors, that their Poems, and Plays, as well as Sermons, were full of it. All Humour had something of *the Quibble*. The very Language of the Court was *Punning*. But 'tis now banish'd the Town and all good Company: There are only some few Footsteps of it in the Country; and it seems at last confin'd to the Nurserys of Youth, as the chief Entertainment of Pedants and their Pupils. And thus in other respects *Wit* will mend upon our hands; and *Humour* will refine it self; if we take care not to tamper with it, and bring it under Constraint, by severe Usage and rigorous Prescriptions. All Politeness is owing to Liberty. We polish one another, and rub off our Corners and rough Sides by this *amicable Collision*. To restrain this, is inevitably to bring a Rust upon Mens Understandings. 'Tis a destroying
of

of Civility, Good Breeding, and even Charity it self, under pretence of maintaining it.

TO describe true *Raillery* wou'd be as hard a matter, and perhaps as little to the purpose, as to define *Good Breeding*. None can understand the Speculation, but they who have the Practice. Yet every one thinks himself *well-bred*: and the formallest Pedant imagines he can railly with a good Grace. I have known some of those grave Gentlemen undertake to correct an Author for defending the Use of *Raillery*, and at the same time have upon every turn made use of that Weapon, tho they were naturally so very aukard at it. And this I believe may be observ'd in the Case of many Zealots, who have taken upon 'em to answer our modern Free Writers. The Tragical Gentlemen, with the grim Aspect
and

and Mein of true *Inquisitors*, have but an ill Grace when they vouchsafe to quit their Austerity, and be jocose and pleasant with an Adversary, whom they wou'd chuse to treat in a very different manner. For to do 'em justice, had they their Wills, I doubt not but their Conduct and Mein wou'd be pretty much of a piece. They wou'd soon quit their Farce, and make a thorow Tragedy. But at present there is nothing so ridiculous as this JANUS-Face of Writers, who with one Countenance force a Smile, and with another show nothing but Rage and Fury. Having enter'd the Lists, and agreed to the fair Laws of Combat by Wit and Argument, they have no sooner prov'd their Weapon, than you hear 'em crying aloud for help, and delivering over to the *Secular Arm*.

There can't be a more preposterous Sight than an Executioner and

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a Merry *Andrew* acting their Part upon the same Stage. Yet I am persuaded any one will find this to be the real Picture of certain modern Zealots in their Controversial Writings. They are no more Masters of Gravity, than they are of good Humour. The first always runs into harsh Severity, and the latter into an aukard Buffoonery. And thus between Anger and Pleasure, Zeal and Drollery, their Writing has much such a Grace as the Play of humerfom Children, who almost, at the same instant, are both peevish and wanton, and can laugh and cry in one and the same Breath.

How agreeable such Writings are like to prove, and of what Effect towards the winning over or convincing those who are suppos'd to be in Error, I need not go about to explain. Nor can I wonder, on this account, to hear those publick Lamentations

mentations of Zealots, that whilst the Books of their Adversarys are so current, their Answers to 'em can hardly make their way into the World, or be taken the least notice of. *Pedantry* and *Bigotry* are Mill-Stones able to sink the best Book, that bears the least part of their dead weight. The Temper of the Pedagogue sutes not with the Age. And the World, tho it may be taught, will not be tutor'd. If a Philosopher speaks, Men hear him willingly while he keeps to his Philosophy. So is a Christian heard, while he keeps to his profess'd Charity and Meekness. In a Gentleman we allow of Pleasantry and Raillery, as being manag'd always with good Breeding, and never gross or clownish. But if a mere Scholastick, intrrenching upon all these Characters, and writing as it were by Starts and Rebounds from one of these to another,

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ther,

ther, appears upon the whole as little able to keep the Temper of Christianity, as to use the Reason of a Philosopher, or the Raillery of a Man of Breeding; what wonder is it if the monstrous Product of such a jumbled Brain be ridiculous to the World?

If you think (my Friend) that by this Description I have done wrong to any of these Zealot-Writers in religious Controversy; read but a few Pages in any one of them (even where the Contest is not *Abroad*, but within their own *Pale*) and then pronounce.

AND now I have said thus much as to Authors and Writings, you shall hear my Thoughts, as you have desir'd, upon the Subject of *Conversation*, and particularly a late *One* of a free Kind, which you remember I was present at, with some
Friends

Friends of yours, whom you fancy'd I shou'd in great Gravity have condemn'd.

'Twas, I must own, a very diverting one, and perhaps not the less so, for ending as abruptly as it did, and in a sort of Confusion; which almost brought all to nothing that had been advanc'd in the Discourse before. Some Particulars of this Conversation may not perhaps be so proper to commit to Paper. 'Tis enough that I put you in mind of what pass'd. A great many fine Schemes, it's true, were destroy'd; many grave Reasonings overturn'd: but this being done without Offence to the Partys concern'd, and with Improvement to the good Humour of the Company, it set the Appetite the keener to such Conversations. And I am persuaded, that had *Reason* her self been to judg of her own Interest, she wou'd have
+ thought

thought she receiv'd more Advantage in the main from that easy and familiar way, than from the usual stiff Adherence to a particular Opinion.

But perhaps you may still be in the same Humour of not believing me in earnest. You may continue to tell me, I affect to be paradoxical, in commending a Conversation as advantageous to Reason, which ended in such an Uncertainty of all that Reason had seemingly so well establish'd.

To this I answer, That according to the Notion I have of *Reason*, neither the written Treatises of the Learned, nor the set Discourses of the Eloquent, are able of themselves to teach the use of it. 'Tis the Habit alone of Reasoning that can make a *Reasoner*. And Men can never be better invited to the Habit, than when they find Pleasure in it.

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A Freedom of Raillery, a Liberty in decent Language to question every thing, and an Allowance of unravelling or refuting any Argument, without offence to the Arguer, are the only Terms which can render such speculative Conversations any way agreeable. For to say truth, they have been render'd burdensom to Mankind by the Strictness of the Laws prescrib'd to 'em, and by the prevailing Pedantry and Bigotry of those who reign in 'em; and assume to themselves to be Dictators in these Provinces.

Semper ego Auditor tantum ! is as natural a Case of Complaint in Divinity, in Morals, and in Philosophy, as it was of old, *the Satyrists*, in Poetry. *Vicissitude* is a mighty Law of Discourse, and mightily long'd for by Mankind. In matter of Reason, more is done in a minute or two, by way of Question and Reply,

Reply, than by a continu'd Discourse of whole Hours. *Orations* are fit only to move the Passions: And the Power of *Declamation* is to terrify, exalt, ravish, or delight, rather than satisfy or instruct. A free Conference is a close Fight. The other Way, in comparison to it, is but a Brandishing, or *Beating the Air*. To be obstructed therefore and manacled in Conferences, and to be confin'd to hear *Orations* on certain Subjects, must needs give us a Distast, and render the Subjects so manag'd, as disagreeable as the Managers. Men had rather reason upon Trifles, so they may reason freely and without the Imposition of Authority, than on the usefullest and best Subjects in the World, where they are held under a Restraint, and Fear.

Nor is it a wonder that Men are generally such faint Reasoners, and care so little to argue strictly on any

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trivial

trivial Subject in Company ; when they dare so little exert their Reason in greater Matters, and are forc'd to argue lamely where they have need of the greatest Activity and Strength. And therefore the same thing happens here as in strong and healthy Bodys, which are debar'd their natural Exercise, and confin'd in a narrow Space. They are forc'd to use odd Gestures and Contortions. They have a sort of Action, and move still, tho with the worst Grace imaginable. For the animal Spirits in such sound and active Limbs cannot lie dead, or without Employment. And thus the natural free Spirits of ingenious Men, if imprison'd and controul'd, will find out other ways of Motion to relieve themselves in their *Constraint* : and whether it be in Burlesque, Mimickry or Buffoonery, they will be glad at any rate to vent themselves, and be reveng'd on their *Constrainers*. If

If Men are forbid to speak their Minds seriously on certain Subjects, they will do it ironically. If they are forbid to speak at all upon such Subjects ; or if they find it really dangerous for 'em to do so ; they will then redouble their Disguise, involve themselves in Mysteriousness, and talk so as hardly to be understood, or at least not plainly interpreted, by those who are dispos'd to do 'em a Mischief. And thus Raillery is brought more in fashion; and runs into an Extreme. 'Tis the persecuting Spirit has rais'd the *bantering* one : And want of Liberty may account for want of a true Politeness, and for the Corruption or wrong Use of Pleasantry and Humour.

If in this respect we strain the just measure of what we call *Urbanity*, and are apt sometimes to take a Buffooning, Rustick Air, we may

thank the ridiculous Solemnity, and
sour Humour - of our Pedagogues ;
or rather they may thank themselves,
if they in particular meet with the
heaviest of this kind of Treatment.
For it will naturally fall heaviest,
where the Constraint has been the
severest. The greater the Weight is,
the bitterer will be the Satyr. The
higher the Slavery, the more exqui-
site the Buffoonery.

That this is really so, may appear
by looking on those Countrys where
the spiritual Tyranny is highest. For
the greatest of Buffoons are the *Ita-
lians* : and in their Writings, in their
freer sort of Conversations, on their
Theatres, and in their Streets, Buf-
foonery and Burlesque are in the
highest vogue. 'Tis the only man-
ner in which the poor cramp'd Wret-
ches can discharge a free Thought.
We must yield to 'em the Superio-
rity in this sort of Wit. For what
wonder

wonder is it if we, who have more of Liberty, have less Dexterity in that egregious way of Raillery and Ridicule ?

'TIS for this reason, I verily believe, that the Antients knew so little of this Spirit, and that there is hardly such a thing found as mere *Burlesque* in any Authors of the politer Ages. The manner indeed in which they treated the very gravest Subjects, was somewhat different from that of our Days. Their Treatises were generally in a free and familiar Stile. They chose to give us the Representation of real Discourse and Converse, by treating their Subjects in the way of *Dialogue* and free Debate. The Scene was usually laid at Table, or in the publick Walks or Meeting-Places ; and the usual Wit and Humour of their real Discourses appear'd in those of their own composing.

posing. And this was fair. For without Wit and Humour, *Reason* can hardly have its Proof, or be distinguish'd. The Magisterial Voice and high Strain of the Pedagogue, commands Reverence and Awe. 'Tis of admirable use to keep Understandings at a distance, and out of reach. The other Manner, on the contrary, gives the fairest hold, and suffers an Antagonist to use his full Strength hand to hand, upon even ground.

'Tis not to be imagin'd what advantage the Reader has, when he can thus cope with his Author, who is willing to come on a fair Stage with him, and exchange the Tragick Buskin for an easier and more natural Gate and Habit. *Grimace* and *Tone* are mighty Helps to Impolture. And many a formal Piece of Sophistry holds proof under a severe Brow, which wou'd not pass under an easy
one,

one. 'Twas the Saying of an ancient Sage, " That Humour was the
" only Test of Gravity: and Gra-
" vity of Humour. For a Subject
" that wou'd not bear Raillery, was
" suspicious; and a Jest that wou'd
" not bear a serious Examination,
" was certainly false Wit."

But some Gentlemen there are so full of the Spirit of Bigotry, and false Zeal, that when they hear Principles examin'd, Sciences and Arts inquir'd into, and Matters of Importance treated with this Frankness of Humour, they imagine presently that all Professions must fall to the ground, all Establishments come to ruin, and nothing orderly or decent be left standing in the World. They fear, or pretend to fear, that Religion it self will be endanger'd by this free Way; and are therefore as much alarm'd at this Liberty in private Conversation, and under prudent

dent Management, as if it were grossly us'd in publick Company, or before the solemnest Assembly. But the Case, as I apprehend it, is far different. For you are to remember (my Friend) that I am writing to you in defence only of the Liberty of *the Club*, and of that sort of Freedom which is taken amongst *Gentlemen* and *Friends*, who know one another perfectly well. And that 'tis natural for me to defend Liberty with this restriction, you may infer from the very Notion I have of Liberty it self.

'Tis surely a Violation of the Freedom of publick Assemblies, for any one to take the Chair who is not call'd to it. To start Questions, or manage Debates, which offend the Publick Ear, is to be wanting in that Respect which is due to common Society. Such Subjects shou'd either not be treated at all in publick, or in
such

such a manner as to occasion no Scandal or Disturbance. The Publick is not to be laugh'd at, to its Face ; or so told of its Follies, as to make it think it self contemn'd. And what is contrary to good Breeding, is in this respect as contrary to Liberty. It belongs to Men of slavish Principles, to affect a Superiority over the *Vulgar*, and to despise the *Multitude*. The Lovers of Mankind, respect and honour Conventions and Societys of Men. And in mix'd Company and Places, where Men are met promiscuously, on account of Diversion or Affairs, 'tis an Imposition and Hardship to force 'em to hear what they dislike, and to treat of Matters in a Dialect, which many who are present have perhaps been never us'd to. 'Tis a breach of the Harmony of publick Conversation, to take things in such a high Key, as is above the common Reach,

Reach, puts others to silence, and robs them of their *Privilege of Turn*. But as to private Society, and what passes in select Companys, where Friends meet knowingly, and with that very design of exercising their Wit, and looking freely into all Subjects ; I see no pretence for any one to be offended at the way of Railery and Humour, which is the very Life of such Conversations ; the only thing which makes good Company, and frees it from the Formality of Business, and the Tutorage and Dogmaticalness of the Schools.

TO return therefore to our Argument. If the best of our modern Conversations are apt to run chiefly upon Trifles ; if rational Discourses (especially those of a deeper Speculation) have lost their Credit, and are in disgrace because of their *Formality* ; there is reason for more Allowance

Allowance in the way of *Humour* and *Gaiety*. An easier Method of treating these Subjects, will make 'em more agreeable and familiar. To dispute about 'em, will be the same as about other Matters. They need not spoil good Company, or take from the Ease or Pleasure of a polite Conversation. And the oftner these Conversations are renew'd, the better will be their Effect. We shall grow better *Reasoners*, by reasoning pleasantly, and at our ease; taking up, or laying down these Subjects as we fancy. So that upon the whole, I must own to you, I cannot be scandaliz'd at the Raillery you took notice of, nor at the Effect it had upon our Company. The Humour was agreeable, and the pleasant Confusion which the Conversation ended in, is at this time as pleasant to me upon Reflection; when I consider, that instead of being discourag'd
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from resuming the Debate, we were so much the readier to meet again at any time, and dispute upon the same Subjects, even with more Ease and Satisfaction than before.

We had been a long while entertain'd, you know, upon the Subject of *Morality and Religion*. And amidst the different Opinions which were started and maintain'd by several of the Partys, with a great deal of Life and Ingenuity; one or other wou'd every now and then take the Liberty to appeal to COMMON SENSE. Every one allow'd the Appeal, and was willing to stand the Trial. No one but was assur'd *Common Sense* wou'd justify him. But when Issue was join'd, and the Cause examin'd at the Bar, there cou'd be no Judgment given. The Partys however were not less forward in renewing their Appeal, on the very next occasion that presented. No one wou'd offer

offer to call the Authority of the Court in question; till a Gentleman, whose good Understanding was never yet doubted of, desir'd the Company very gravely, that they wou'd tell him *what Common Sense was.*

If by the word *Sense* we were to understand Opinion and Judgment, and by the word *common* the Generality or any considerable part of Mankind, twou'd be hard, he said, to discover where the Subject of common Sense cou'd lie. For that which was according to the Sense of one Part of Mankind, was against the Sense of another. And if the Majority were to determine common Sense, it wou'd change as often as Men chang'd. That which was according to common Sense to day, wou'd be the contrary to morrow, or soon after.

But notwithstanding the different Judgments of Mankind in most Subjects,

jects, there were some however in which 'twas suppos'd they all agreed, and had the same Thoughts in common.— The Question was ask'd still *Where?* “ For whatever was of
“ any moment, 'twas suppos'd, might
“ be reduc'd under the head of *Re-*
“ *ligion, Policy, or Morals.*

“ Of the Differences in RELI-
“ GION there was no occasion to
“ speak: the Case was so well known
“ to all, and so feelingly understood
“ by Christians, in particular, among
“ themselves. They had made sound
“ Experiment upon one another;
“ each Party in their turn. No En-
“ deavours had been wanting on the
“ side of any particular Sect. Which-
“ ever chanc'd to have the Power,
“ fail'd not of putting all means in
“ execution, to make their private
“ Sense the publick one. But all in
“ vain. *Common Sense* was as hard
“ still to determine as *Catholick* or *Or-*
“ *thodox.*

“ *thodox*. What with one was in-
“ conceivable Mystery, to another
“ was of easy Comprehension. What
“ to one was Absurdity, to another
“ was Demonstration.

“ As for POLICY; What Sense
“ or whose cou'd be call'd common,
“ was equally a Question. If plain
“ *British* or *Dutch* Sense were right,
“ *Turkish* and *French* Sense must cer-
“ tainly be very wrong. And as
“ mere Nonsense as *Passive Obe-*
“ *dience* seem'd to some of us; we
“ found it to be the common Sense
“ of a great Party amongst our
“ selves, a greater Party in *Europe*,
“ and perhaps the greatest Part of
“ all the World besides.

“ As for MORALS; the diffe-
“ rence, if possible, was still wider.
“ For without considering the Opi-
“ nions and Customs of the many
“ barbarous and illiterate Nations;
“ we saw that even the few who had
“ attain'd

“ attain’d to riper Letters, and to
 “ Philosophy, cou’d never as yet
 “ agree on one and the same System,
 “ or acknowledg the same moral
 “ Principles. And some even of our
 “ most admir’d modern Philosophers
 “ had fairly told us, that *Virtue* and
 “ *Vice* had, after all, no other *Law*
 “ or *Measure*, than *mere Fashion* and
 “ *Vogue*.”

It might have appear’d perhaps
 unfair in our Friends, had they treated
 only the graver Subjects in this man-
 ner; and suffer’d the lighter to es-
 cape. For in the gayer Part of Life,
 our Follies are as solemn as in the
 more serious. The fault is, we car-
 ry the Laugh but *half-way*. The false
 Earnest is ridicul’d, but the *false Jest*
 passes secure, and becomes as errant
 Deceit as the other. Our Diversions,
 our Plays, our Amusements become
solemn. We dream of Happinesses,
 and Possessions, and Injoyments in
 † which

which we have no Understanding, no Certainty; and yet we pursue these as the best known and most certain things in the World. There is nothing so foolish and deluding as a *partial Scepticism*. For whilst the Doubt is cast only on one side, the Certainty grows so much stronger on the other. Whilst only one Face of Folly appears ridiculous, the other grows more solemn and deceiving.

But 'twas not thus with our Friends. They seem'd better *Criticks*, and more ingenious, and fair in their way of questioning receiv'd Opinions, and exposing the Ridicule of Things. And if you will allow me to carry on their Humour, I will venture to make the Experiment throughout; and try what certain Knowledge or Assurance of things may be recover'd, in that very way, by which all Certainty, you thought, was lost, and an endless *Scepticism* introduc'd.

C

IF

IF a Native of ETHIOPIA were on a sudden transported into EUROPE, and plac'd either at PARIS or VENICE at a time of Carnival, when the general Face of Mankind was disguis'd, and almost every Creature wore a Mask; 'tis probable he wou'd for some time be at a stand, e'er he discover'd the Cheat; not imagining that a whole People cou'd be so fantastical, as upon Agreement, at an appointed time, to transform themselves by a Variety of Habits, and make it a solemn Practice to impose on one another, by this universal Confusion of Characters and Persons. Tho he might at first have look'd on this with a serious Eye, it wou'd be hardly possible for him to hold his Countenance, when he had perceiv'd what was carrying on. The EUROPEANS, on their

II † O side,

side, might laugh perhaps at this Simplicity. But our ETHIOPIAN wou'd certainly laugh with better reason. 'Tis easy to see which of the two wou'd be ridiculous. For he who laughs, and is himself ridiculous, bears a double share of Ridicule. However, shou'd it so happen, that in the Transport of Ridicule our ETHIOPIAN, having his Head still running upon *Masks*, and knowing nothing of the *fair* Complexion and common Dress of the EUROPEANS, shou'd upon the sight of a natural Face and Habit, laugh just as heartily as before; wou'd not he in his turn become ridiculous, by carrying the Jest too far; when by a silly Presumption he took *Nature* for mere *Art*, and mistook perhaps a Man of Sobriety and Sense for one of those ridiculous *Mummers*?

There was a time when Men were accountable only for their Actions

and Behaviour. Their Opinions were left to themselves. They had Liberty to differ in these, as in their Faces. Every one took the Air and Look which was natural to him. But in process of time, it was thought decent to mend Mens Countenances; and render their intellectual Complexions uniform and of a sort. Thus the Magistrate became a *Dresser*, and in his turn was *dress'd* too; when he had given up his Power to a new Order of *Tire-men*. But tho it was agreed that there was only one *certain* and *true Dress*, one *single peculiar Air*, to which it was necessary all People shou'd conform; yet the Misery was, that neither the Magistrate, nor the *Tire-men* themselves, cou'd resolve, which of the various Modes was the *exact true one*. Imagine now, what the Effect of this must needs be; when Men became persecuted thus on every side about their *Air* and *Feature*,
and

and were put to their shifts how to adjust and compose their *Mein*, according to the Mode; when a thousand Models, a thousand Patterns of Dress were current, and alter'd every now and then, upon occasion, according to *Fashion* and the Humour of the Times. Judg whether Mens Countenances were not like to grow constrain'd, and the natural Visage of Mankind, by this Habit, distorted, convuls'd, and render'd hardly knowable.

But as unnatural or artificial as the general Face of Things may have been render'd by this unhappy Care of Dress, and Over-Tenderness for the *Safety of Complexions*; we must not therefore imagine that all Faces are alike besmear'd or plaister'd. All is not *Fucus*, or mere Gloss. Nor is the Face of Truth less fair and beautiful, for all the counterfeit Vizards which have been put upon her. We must remember the *Carnival*, and what

the Occasion has been of this wild Concourse and Medley: who were the Institutors of it: and to what end Men were thus set a work and amus'd. We may laugh sufficiently at the original Cheat; and, if pity will suffer us, we may make our selves diversion enough with the Folly and Madness of those who are thus caught, and practis'd on; by these Impostures. But we must remember withal our ETHIOPIAN, and beware, lest by taking plain Nature for a Vizard, we become more ridiculous than the People whom we ridicule.

Had it been your Fortune (my Friend!) to have liv'd in ASIA at the time when the MAGI by an egregious Imposture got possession of the Empire; no doubt but you wou'd have had a detestation of the Act: And perhaps the very Persons of the Men might have grown so odious to
you,

you, that after all the Cheats and Abuses they had committed, you might have seen 'em dispatch'd with as relentless an eye as our later *European* Ancestors saw the Destruction of a like politick Body of Conjurers, the *Knights Templars*; who were almost become an Over-Match for the Civil Sovereign. Your Indignation perhaps might have carry'd you to propose the razing all Monuments and Memorials of these Magicians. You might have resolv'd not to leave so much as their Houses standing. But if it had happen'd that these Magicians, in the time of their Dominion, had made any Collection of Books, or had compil'd any themselves, in which they had treated of *Philosophy*, or *Morals*, or any other Science, or Part of *Learning*; wou'd you have carry'd your Resentment so far as to have extirpated these also, and condemn'd every Opinion

or Doctrine, which they had espous'd; for no other reason than merely *because they had espous'd it?* Hardly a *SOXTHIAN*, a *TARTAR*, or a *GOTH*, wou'd act or reason so absurdly. Much less wou'd you (my Friend) have carry'd on this *MAGOPHONY*, or *Priest-Massacre*, with such a barbarous Zeal. For, in good earnest, to destroy a Philosophy in hatred to a Man, is as errant a *Tartar-Notion*, as to destroy or murder a Man in order to plunder him of his Wit, and get the Inheritance of his Understanding.

I must confess indeed, that had the Institutions, the Statutes, and Regulations of this antient *Hierarchy*, been all of 'em resembling the fundamental one, of the Order it self, they might with a great deal of Justice have been suppress'd: For one can't without some abhorrence read that Law of theirs;

Nam

Nam Magus ex Matre & Gnato nascatur oportet.

But the Conjurers (as we'l rather suppose) having consider'd that they ought in their *Principle* to appear as fair as possible to the World, the better to conceal their *Practice*, found it highly for their Interest to espouse some excellent moral Rules, and establish the very best Maxims of this kind. They thought it for their advantage perhaps, on their first setting out, to recommend the greatest Purity of Religion, the greatest Integrity of Life and Manners. They may perhaps too, in general, have preach'd up Charity and Good-will. They may, for the most part, have set to view the fairest Face of Human Nature; and together with their By-Laws, and Political Institutions, they may have interwove the honestest
Morals

Morals and best Doctrine in the World.

How therefore shou'd we have behav'd our selves in this Affair? How shou'd we have carry'd our selves towards this Order of Men, at the time of the Discovery of their Cheat, and Ruin of their Empire? Shou'd we have fall'n to work instantly with their Systems, struck at all their Opinions and Doctrines without distinction, and erected a contrary Philosophy in their Teeth? Shou'd we have flown at every religious and moral Principle, deny'd every natural and social Affection, and render'd Men as much *Wolves* as was possible to one another, whilst we describ'd em such; and endeavor'd to make them see themselves by far more monstrous and corrupt, than with the worst Intentions it was ever possible for the worst of em to become? — This, you'll say, doubtless

less wou'd have been a very preposterous Part, and cou'd never have been acted but by mean Spirits, such as had been held in awe, and overfrighted by the *M A G I C I A N S*. And yet an able and witty Philosopher of our Nation was, we know, of late Years, so possess'd with a Horror of this kind, that both with respect to Politicks and Morals, he directly acted in this Spirit of *Massacre*. The Fright he took upon the Sight of the then governing Powers, who unjustly assum'd the Authority of the People, gave him such an Abhorrence of all popular Government, and of the very Notion of Liberty it self; that to extinguish it for ever, he recommends the very extinguishing of Letters, and exhorts Princes not to spare so much as an ancient *ROMAN* or *GREEK* Historian. — Is not this in truth somewhat *Gothick*? And has not our Philoso-

Philosopher, in appearance, something of the *Savage*, that he shou'd use Philosophy and Learning as the *SCYTHIANS* are said to have us'd *ANARCHISIS* and others; for having visited the *Wife of GREECE*, and learnt the *Manners* of a polite People?

His Quarrel with *Religion* was the same as with *Liberty*. The same Times gave him the same Terror in this other kind. He had nothing before his Eyes but the Ravage of *Enthusiasm*, and the Artifice of those, who rais'd and conducted that Spirit. And the good sociable Man, as savage and unsociable as he wou'd make himself and all Mankind appear by his Philosophy, expos'd himself during his Life, and took the utmost Pains, that after his Death we might be deliver'd from the occasion of these Terrours. He did his utmost to shew us, that both in Religion and Morals we were impos'd

pos'd on by our Governours; that there was nothing which by Nature inclin'd us either way; nothing which naturally drew us to the Love of what was without, or beyond *our selves*. Tho the Love of such great Truths and Sovereign Maxims as he imagin'd these to be, made him the most laborious of all Men in composing Systems of this kind for our Use; and forc'd him, notwithstanding his natural Fear, to run continually the highest risk of being a Martyr for our Deliverance.

Give me leave therefore (my Friend!) on this occasion, to prevent your Seriousness, and assure you; that there is no such mighty Danger as we are apt to imagine from these fierce Prosecutors of Superstition, who are so jealous of every religious or moral Principle. Whatever *Savages* they may appear in Philosophy, they are in their common Capacity

as †

as *Civil* Persons, as one can wish. Their free communicating of their Principles may witness for them. 'Tis the height of Sociableness to be thus friendly and communicative.

If the Principles indeed were conceal'd from us, and made a *Mystery*; they might become considerable. Things are often made so, by being kept as *Secrets* of a Sect or Party; and nothing helps this more than the *Antipathy* and *Shyness* of a contrary Party. If we fall presently into Horrors, and Consternation, upon the hearing Maxims which are thought *poisonous*; we are in no Disposition to use that familiar and easy Part of Reason, which is the best *Antidote*. The only *Poison* to Reason, is *Passion*. For false Reasoning is soon redress'd, where Passion is remov'd. But if the very hearing certain Propositions of Philosophy is sufficient to move our *Passion*;

'tis

'tis plain, the *Poison* has already gain'd on us, and we are effectually prevented in the use of our reasoning Faculty.

Were it not for the Prejudices of this kind; what shou'd hinder us from diverting our selves with the Fancy of one of these *modern Reformers* we have been speaking of? What shou'd we say to one of these *Anti-Zealots*, who, in the Zeal of such a cool Philosophy, shou'd assure us faithfully, " That we were
" the most mistaken Men in the
" World, to imagine there was any
" such Thing as natural Faith or
" Justice? For that it was only
" Force and Power which constituted
" Right. That there was no such
" thing in reality as *Virtue*; no Prin-
" ciple of Order in things above, or
" below; no secret *Charm* or Force
" of Nature, by which every one
" was made to operate willingly or
" unwillingly

“ unwillingly towards publick Good,
“ and punish’d, and tormented if
“ he did otherwise.” — Is not this
the very *Charm* it self? Is not the Gen-
tleman at this instant under the power
of it? — “ Sir! The Philosophy
“ you have condescended to reveal to
“ us is most extraordinary. We are
“ beholden to you for your Instruc-
“ tion. But, pray, whence is this
“ Zeal in our behalf? What are *We*
“ to *You*? Are You our *Father*? Or
“ if You were, why this Concern
“ for Us? Is there then such a thing
“ as *natural Affection*? If not; why
“ all this Pains, why all this Dan-
“ ger on our account? Why not
“ keep this Secret to Your self? Of
“ what use is it to You, to take us
“ out of the Cheat? The more are
“ kept in it, the better. ’Tis direct-
“ ly against Your Interest to unde-
“ ceive Us, and let us know that
“ only private Interest governs You,
“ and

“ and that nothing nobler, or of a
“ larger kind, shou’d govern us,
“ whom you converse with. Leave
“ us to our selves, and to that *Art*
“ by which we are happily tam’d,
“ and render’d thus mild and *sheepish*.
“ ’Tis not fit we shou’d know that
“ by *Nature* we are all *Wolves*. Is it
“ possible that one who has really
“ discover’d himself such, shou’d
“ take pains to cummunicate such a
“ Discovery ?”

I N reality (my Friend !) a severe
Brow may well be spar’d on this oc-
casion ; when we are put thus upon
the Defence of *common Honesty*, by
such fair honest Gentlemen, who are
in Practice so different from what
they wou’d appear in Speculation.
Knaves I know there are in *Notion*
and *Principle*, as well as in *Practice* :
who think all Honesty as well as
Religion a mere Cheat ; and, by a
D very

very consistent reasoning, have resolv'd deliberately to do all that by *Power* or *Art* they are able, for their private Advantage. But such as these never open themselves in Friendship to others. They have no such Passion for Truth, or Love for Mankind. They have no Quarrel with *Religion*, or *Morals*; but know what use to make of both, upon occasion. If they discover their Principles, 'tis never but at unawares. They are sure to preach Honesty, and go to Church.

On the other side, the Gentlemen for whom I am apologizing, cannot however be call'd *Hypocrites*. They speak as ill of themselves as they possibly can. If they have hard Thoughts of Human Nature; 'tis a proof still of their Humanity, that they give such Warning to the World. If they represent Men by Nature *treacherous* and *wild*, 'tis out of Care
‡ for

for Mankind ; left by being too *tame* and *trusting*, they shou'd easily be caught.

Impostors naturally speak the best of Human Nature, that they may the easier abuse it. These Gentlemen on the contrary speak the worst, and had rather they themselves shou'd be ill thought of, with the rest, than that a *Few* shou'd by Imposture prevail over *the Many*. For 'tis Opinion of *Goodness* that creates Easiness of Trust : and by *Trust* we are betray'd to *Power* ; our very *Reason* being thus captivated by those in whom we come insensibly to have an *implicit Faith*. But supposing one another to be by Nature such very *Savages*, we shall take care to come less in one another's Power : and apprehending *Power* to be *insatiably coveted by all*, we shall the better fence against the Evil ; not by giving all into one hand (as the Champion of

this Cause wou'd have us) but by a right Division and Ballance of Power, and by the Restraint of good Laws and Limitations, which may secure the publick Liberty.

Shou'd you therefore ask me, whether I really thought these Gentlemen were fully perswaded of the Principles they so often advance in Company : I shou'd tell you, that tho I wou'd not absolutely arraign the Gentlemens Sincerity ; yet there was something of Mystery in the Case, more than was imagin'd. The Reason perhaps why Men of Wit delight so much to espouse these paradoxical Systems, is not in truth that they are so fully satisfy'd with 'em ; but that they may the better oppose some other Systems, which by their fair Appearance have help'd, they think, to bring Mankind under Subjection. They imagine that by this *general Scepticism*, which they
wou'd

wou'd introduce, they shall better deal with the dogmatical Spirit which prevails in some *particular Subjects*. And when they have accustom'd Men to bear Contradiction *in the main*, and hear the Nature of Things disputed of, *at large*; they conclude it may be safer to argue *separately*, upon certain Points in which they are not so well satisfy'd. So that from hence perhaps you may still better apprehend why, in Conversation, *the Spirit of Raillery* prevails so much, and Notions are taken up for no reason besides their being *odd*, and *out of the way*.

BUT let who will condemn *the Humour*: For my own part, I am in no such apprehension from this sceptical kind of Wit. Men indeed may, in a serious way, be so wrought on, and confounded, by different Modes of Opinion, different Systems and

D 3

Schemes

Schemes *impos'd* by *Authority*, that they may wholly lose all Notion or Comprehension of *Truth*. I can easily apprehend what Effect *Awe* has over Mens Understandings. I can very well suppose Men may be frighted out of their Wits: But I have no apprehension they shou'd be laugh'd out of 'em. I can have no suspicion that in a pleasant way they shou'd be talk'd out of their Love for Society, or reason'd out of *common Sense*. A mannerly Wit can hurt no Cause that I am concern'd for: And Philosophical Speculations, politely manag'd, can never surely render us more unfociable or unciviliz'd. This is not the Quarter from whence I can possibly expect an Inroad of Savageness and Barbarity. And by the best of my Observation, I have learnt, that Virtue is never such a Sufferer by being *contested*, as by being *betray'd*. My Fear is not so much

much from its witty *Antagonists* who give it Exercise, and put it on its Defence, as from its tender *Nurses*, who are apt to over-lay it, and kill it, with Excess of Care and Cherishing.

I have known a Building, which by the *Officioufness* of the Workmen has been so *shor'd*, and *screw'd up*, on the side where they pretended it had a Leaning, that it has at last been turn'd the contrary way, and overthrown. There has something perhaps of this kind happen'd in *Morals*. Men have not been contented to shew the natural Advantages of Honesty and Virtue. They have rather lessen'd these, the better, as they thought, to advance another Foundation. They have made *Virtue* so mercenary a Thing, and have talk'd so much of its *Rewards*, that one can hardly tell what there is in it, after all, that can be worth rewarding.

D 4

For

For to be brib'd only, or terrify'd into an honest Practice, bespeaks little of real Honesty or Worth. We may make, it's true, whatever *Bargain* we think fit; and may bestow *in favour* what Overplus we please. But there can be no Excellence or Wisdom in voluntarily rewarding what is neither estimable nor deserving. And if Virtue be not really estimable in it self, I can see nothing estimable in following it for the sake of a *Bargain*.

If the Love of doing Good, be not, of it self, a *good* and *right* Inclination; I know not how there can be such a thing as *Goodness* or *Virtue*. If the Inclination be *right*; 'tis a perverting of it, to apply it solely to *the Reward*, and make us conceive such Wonders of the Grace and Favour that is to attend Virtue; when there is so little shewn of the intrinsic Worth or Value of the Thing it self.

I

I cou'd be almost tempted to think, that the true Reason why some of the most Heroick Virtues have so little notice taken of 'em in our Holy Religion, is because there wou'd have been no room left for *Disinterestedness*, had they been intitled to a share of that infinite Reward, which Providence has by Revelation assign'd to other Dutys. *Private Friendship*, and *Zeal for the Publick, and our Country*, are Virtues purely voluntary in a Christian. They are no essential Parts of his *Charity*. He is not so ty'd to the Affairs of this Life; nor is he oblig'd to enter into such Engagements with this World, as are of no help to him in acquiring a better. His Conversation is in Heaven. Nor has he occasion for such supernumerary Cares or Embarrassments here on Earth, as may obstruct his way thither, or retard him in the careful Task of working
† out

out his own Salvation. If nevertheless any Portion of Reward be reserv'd hereafter for the generous Part of a Patriot, or that of a *thorow Friend*; this is still behind the Curtain, and happily conceal'd from us; that we may be the more deserving of it, when it comes.

It appears indeed under the *Jewish* Dispensation, that each of these Virtues had their illustrious Examples, and were in some manner recommended to us as honourable, and worthy our Imitation. Even SAUL himself, as ill a Prince as he is represented, appears both living and dying to have been respected and prais'd for the Love he bore his native Country. And the Love which was so remarkable between his Son and his Successor, gives us a noble View of a disinterested Friendship, at least on one side. But the heroick Virtue of these Persons had only the
common

common Reward of Praise attributed to it, and cou'd not claim a future Recompence under a Religion which taught no future State, nor exhibited any Rewards or Punishments, besides such as were Temporal, and had respect to the written Law.

And thus the *Jews* as well as *Heathens* were left to their Philosophy, to be instructed in the sublime part of Virtue, and induc'd by Reason to that which was not injoin'd 'em by Command. No Premium or Penalty being inforc'd in these Cases, the disinterested Part subsisted, the Virtue was a *free Choice*, and the Magnanimity of the Act was left intire. He that wou'd be generous, had the Means. He that wou'd love a Friend, or serve his Country at the expence of his Life, might do it on fair Terms. *DULCE ET DECORUM EST* was his sole Reason. 'Twas *Inviting* and *Becoming*. 'Twas
Good

Good and *Honest*. And that this is still a good Reason, and according to *Common Sense*, I will endeavour to satisfy you. For I shou'd think myself very ridiculous to be angry with any one for thinking me dishonest; if I cou'd give no account of my *Honesty*, nor shew upon what Principle I differ'd from a *Knave*.

THE *Roman* Satyrift may be thought more than ordinarily satyri- cal, when speaking of the *Nobility* and *Court*, he is so far from allowing them to be the Standard of Polite- ness and good Sense, that he makes em in a manner the Reverse.

*Rarus enim ferme Sensus communis
in illâ*

Fortunâ—————

Some

Some of the most ingenious Commentators, however, interpret this very differently from what is generally apprehended. They make this *Common Sense* of the Poet's, by a Greek Derivation, to signify *Sense of Publick Weal*, and of the *Common Interest*; Love of the *Community* or *Society*, Natural Affection, Humanity, Obligingness, or that sort of *Civility* which rises from a just *Sense* of the *common Rights* of Mankind, and the *natural Equality* there is amongst those of the same Species.

And indeed if we consider the thing nicely, it must seem somewhat hard in the Poet, to have deny'd *Ability* and *Wit* to a Court such as that of ROME, even under a TIBERIUS, or a NERO. But for *Humanity*, or *Sense of Publick Good*, and the *common Interest* of Mankind, 'twas no such deep Satyr to question whether this was properly *the Spirit of a Court*.

Court. 'Twas difficult to apprehend what *Community* subsisted among *Cour-tiers*: or what *Publick* between an *Absolute Prince* and his *Slave-Sub-jects*. And for real *Society*, there cou'd be none between such as had no other *Sense* than that of *private Good*.

Our Poet therefore seems not so immoderate in his *Censure*; if we consider it is the *Heart*, rather than the *Head*, he takes to task: when reflecting on a *Court-Education*, he thinks it unapt to raise any *Affection* towards a *Country*; and looks upon young *Princes*, and *Lords*, as the *young Masters* of the *World*; who being indulg'd in all their *Passions*, and train'd up in all manner of *Li-centiousness*, have that thorow *Con-tempt* and *Disregard* of *Mankind*, which *Mankind* in a manner deserves, where *Arbitrary Power* is permitted, and a *Tyranny* ador'd.

Hæc

*Hæc satis ad Juvenem, quem nobis
fama superbum
Tradit, & inflatum, plenumque Ne-
rone propinquo.*

A publick Spirit can come only from a social Feeling or *Sense of Partnership* with Human Kind. Now there are none so far from being *Partners* in this *Sense*, or *Sharers* in this *common Affection*, as they who scarcely know an *Equal*, nor consider themselves as subject to any *Law of Fellowship* or *Community*. And thus *Morality* and good *Government* go together. There is no real *Love of Virtue*, without the *Knowledg of Publick Good*. And where *Absolute Power* is, there is no *PUBLICK*.

They who live under a *Tyranny*, and have learnt to admire its *Power* as *Sacred* and *Divine*, are debauch'd as much in their *Religion*, as in their *Morals*.

Morals. *Publick Good*, according to their Apprehension, is as little the Measure or Rule of Government in *the Universe*, as in *the State*. They have scarce a Notion of what is Good or Just, but as *Will* and *Power* have made it. Omnipotence, they think, wou'd hardly be it self, were it not at liberty to dispense with the Laws of Equity, and change at pleasure the Standard of moral Rectitude.

But notwithstanding the Prejudices and Corruptions of this kind, 'tis plain there is something still of a *publick Principle*, even where it is most perverted and depress'd. The worst of Magistracys, *the mere Despotick kind*, can shew sufficient Instances of Zeal and Affection towards it. Where no other Government is known, it seldom fails of having that Allegiance and Duty paid it, which is owing to a better Form. The Eastern Countries, and many barbarous Nations, have

have been and still are Examples of this kind. The personal Love they bear their Prince, however severe towards them, may shew how natural an Affection there is towards Government and Order among Mankind. If Men have *really* no publick Parent, no Magistrate in common, to cherish and protect 'em, they will still *imagine* they have such a one; and, like new-born Creatures that have never seen their Dam, will fancy one for themselves, and apply (as by Nature prompted) to some like Form, for Favour and Protection. In the room of a *true Foster-Father, and Chief*, they will take after a *false one*; and in the room of a *legal Government and just Prince*, obey even a *Tyrant*, and endure a whole Lineage and Succession of such.

As for us BRITTONS, thank Heaven, we have a better *Sense* of Government deliver'd to us from our Ancestors. We have the Notion of

E

▲

A PUBLICK, and A CONSTITUTION; how a *Legislative*, and how an *Executive* is model'd. We understand Weight and Measure in this kind, and can reason justly on the *Ballance of Power and Property*. The Maxims we draw from hence, are as evident as those in *Mathematicks*. Our increasing Knowledge shews us every day, more and more, what COMMON SENSE is in Politicks: And this must of necessity lead us to understand a like *Sense* in Morals; which is the Foundation.

'Tis ridiculous to say, there is any Obligation on Man to act sociably, or honestly, in a form'd Government; and not in that which is call'd *the State of Nature*. For, to speak in the fashionable Language of our modern Philosophy: " Society being
 " founded on a Compact; the Sur-
 " render made of every Man's pri-
 " vate unlimited Right, into the
 " hands of the Majority, or such as
 " the

“ the Majority shou’d appoint, was
“ of free Choice, and by a Promise.”
Now *the Promise* it self was made in
the *State of Nature* : And that which
cou’d make a *Promise* obligatory in
the *State of Nature*, must make *all*
other Acts of Humanity as much
our real Duty, and natural Part.
Thus *Faith, Justice, Honesty* and *Vir-
tue*, must have been as early as the
State of Nature, or they cou’d ne-
ver have been *at all*. The *Civil U-
nion*, or *Confederacy*, cou’d never
make *Right* or *Wrong*; if they sub-
sisted not before. He who was free
to any Villany before his *Contract*,
will, and ought to make as free with
his *Contract*, when he thinks fit.
The *natural Knave* has the same *Rea-
son* to be a *Civil one*; and may dis-
pense with his *Politick Capacity* as
oft as he sees occasion : ’Tis only *his
Word* stands in his way.—A Man is
oblig’d to *keep his Word*. Why ?
Because *he has given his Word* to *keep*

it.—Is not this a notable Account of the Original of moral Justice, and the Rise of Civil Government and Allegiance!

BUT to pass by these Cavils of a Philosophy, which speaks so much of *Nature* with so little Meaning; we may with Justice surely place it as a Principle, “That if any thing
 “ be *natural*, in any Creature, or any
 “ Kind; ’tis that which is *Preserva-*
 “ *tive* of the Kind it self, and con-
 “ *ducing* to its Welfare and Support.”
 If in original and pure Nature, it be *Wrong* to break a Promise, or be treacherous; ’tis as truly *Wrong* to be in any respect inhuman, or any way wanting in our natural part towards Human Kind. If *Eating* and *Drinking* be natural, *Herding* is so too. If any *Appetite* or *Sense* be natural, the *Sense of Fellowship* is the same. If there be any thing of Nature in that Affection which is be-
 tween

tween the Sexes, the Affection is certainly as natural towards the consequent Offspring; and so again between the Offspring themselves, as Kindred and Companions, bred under the same Discipline and Oeconomy. And thus a *Clan* or *Tribe* is strait form'd; a *Publick* is recogniz'd: and besides the Pleasure found in social Entertainment, Language, and Discourse, there is so apparent a Necessity for continuing this good Correspondency and Union, that to have no *Sense* of this kind, no Love of *Country*, *Community*, or any thing *in common*, wou'd be the same as to be insensible even of the plainest Means of *Self-Preservation*, and most necessary Condition of *Self-Enjoyment*.

How the Wit of Man shou'd so puzzle this Cause, as to make Civil Government and Society appear a kind of Invention, and Creature of Art, I know not. For my own part,

E 3 methinks,

methinks, this *herding* Principle, and *associating* Inclination, is seen so *natural* and strong in most Men, that one might readily affirm, 'twas even from the Violence of this Passion that so much Disorder arose in the general Society of Mankind.

Universal Good, or the Interest of *the World in general*, is a kind of remote Philosophical Object. That *greater Community* falls not easily under the Eye. Nor is a National Interest, or that of a whole People, or Body Politick, so readily apprehended. In less Partys, Men may be intimately conversant and acquainted with one another. They can there better taste Society, and enjoy the *common* Good and Interest of a more contracted Publick. They view the whole Compass and Extent of their Community; and see, and know, what it is they serve, and to what end they *associate* and *conspire*. All Men have naturally their share of this *combining* Prin-

Principle : and they who are of the sprightliest and most active Facultys, have so large a share of it, that unless it be happily directed by right Reason, it can never find Exercise for it self in so remote a Sphere as that of the Body Politick at large : For here perhaps the thousandth part of those who are serv'd, are scarce so much as known by sight. No visible Band is form'd ; no strict Alliance : but the Conjunction is made with different Persons, Orders, and Ranks of Men ; not sensibly, but *in Idea* : according to that general View or Notion of a *State* or *Commonwealth*.

Thus the social Aim is disturb'd, for want of certain Scope. The *close Sympathy* and *conspiring Virtue* is apt to lose it self, for want of Direction, in so wide a Field. Nor is the Passion any where so strongly felt, or vigorously exerted, as in actual *Conspiracy* or *War* ; in which the highest Genius's are often known the forwardest

to employ themselves. For the most generous Spirits are the most combining, and delight most to move in Concert, and *feel* (if I may say so) in the strongest manner, the force of the *confederating Charm*.

'Tis strange to imagine that *War*, which of all things appears the most savage, shou'd be the Passion of the most Heroick Spirits. But 'tis in *War* that the Knot of *Fellowship* is closest drawn. 'Tis in *War* that mutual Succour is most given, mutual Danger run, and *common Affection* most exerted and employ'd. For *Heroism* and *Philanthropy* are almost one and the same. Yet by a small Misguidance of the Affection, a Lover of Mankind, becomes a Ravager: A Hero and Deliverer, becomes an Oppressor and Destroyer.

Hence other Divisions amongst Men. Hence, in the way of Peace and Civil Government, that *Love of Party*, and Subdivision, by *Cabal*.

For

For *Sedition* is a kind of *cantonizing* already begun within the State. To *cantonize* is natural; when the Society grows vast, and bulky; And powerful States have found other Advantages in sending Colonys Abroad, than merely that of having Elbow-room at Home, or extending their Dominion into distant Countrys. Vast Empires are in many respects unnatural: but particularly in this, that be they ever so well constituted, the Affairs of many, must, in such Governments, turn upon a very few; and the Relation be less sensible, and in a manner lost, between the Magistrate and People, in a Body so unweildy in its Limbs, and whose Members lie so remote from one another, and distant from the Head.

'Tis in such Bodys as these that strong Factions are aptest to engender. The associating Spirits, for want of Exercise, form new Movements, and seek a narrower Sphere of Activity,

Activity, when they want Action in a greater. Thus we have *Wheels within Wheels*. And in some National Constitutions (notwithstanding the Absurdity in Politicks) we have *one Empire within another*. Nothing is so delightful as to incorporate. *Distinctions* of many kinds are invented. *Religious Societys* are form'd. *Orders* are erected; and their Interests espous'd, and serv'd, with the utmost Zeal and Passion. Founders and Patrons of this sort are never wanting. Wonders are perform'd, in this wrong social Spirit, by those Members of separate Societys. And the *affociating Genius* of Mankind is never better prov'd, than in those very Societys, which are form'd in opposition to the general one of Mankind, and to the real Interest of the State.

In short, the very Spirit of *Faction*, for the greatest part, seems to be no other than the Abuse or Irregularity

gularity of that *social Love*, and *common Affection*, which is natural to Mankind. For the Opposite of *Sociableness* is *Selfishness*. And of all Characters, the thorow-selfish one is the least forward in *taking Party*. The Men of this sort are, in this respect, true *Men of Moderation*. They are secure of their Temper; and possess themselves too well, to be in danger of entering warmly into any Cause, or engaging deeply with any Side, or Faction.

YOU have heard it (my Friend!) as a common Saying, that *Interest governs the World*. But, I believe, whoever looks narrowly into the Affairs of it, will find, that *Passion, Humour, Caprice, Zeal, Faction*, and a thousand other Springs, which are counter to *Self-Interest*, have as considerable a part in the Movements of this Machine. There are more *Wheels and Counter-Poises* in this Engine

gine than are imagin'd. 'Tis of too complex a kind, to fall under one simple View, or be explain'd thus briefly in a word or two. The Students of this *Mechanism* must have a very partial Eye, to overlook all other Motions besides those of the lowest and narrowest Compass. 'Tis hard, that in the Plan or Description of this Clock-work, no Wheel or Ballance shou'd be allow'd on the side of the better and more enlarg'd Affections; that nothing shou'd be understood to be done in *Kindness* or *Generosity*; nothing in *pure good Nature* or *Friendship*, or thro any *social* or *natural Affection* of any kind; when, perhaps, the main Springs of this Machine will be found to be either these very *natural Affections* themselves, or a compound kind deriv'd from them, and retaining more than one half of their Nature.

But here (my Friend!) you must not expect it of me, that I shou'd draw
draw

draw you up a *Scheme* of the *Passions*, or pretend to shew you their *Genealogy* and *Relation*; how they are interwoven with one another, or interfere with our *Happiness* and *Interest*. 'Twould be out of the *Genius* and *Compass* of such a *Letter* as this, to frame a just *Model*; by which you might, with an accurate *View*, observe what *Proportion* the *friendly* and *natural Affections* seem to bear in this *Order* of *Architecture*.

Modern *Projectors*, I know, would willingly rid their *Hands* of these *natural* *Materials*; and would fain build after a more uniform way. They would new frame the *Human Heart*; and have a mighty *Fancy* to reduce all its *Motions*, *Ballances* and *Weights*, to that one *Principle* and *Foundation* of a cool and deliberate *Selfishness*. Men, it seems, are unwilling to think they can be so outwitted, and impos'd on by *Nature*, as to be made to serve her *Purposes*,

poses, rather than their own. They are ashamed to be drawn thus out of *themselves*, and forc'd from what they esteem their *true Interest*.

There has been in all times a sort of narrow-minded Philosophers, who have thought to set this Difference to rights, by conquering *Nature* in themselves. A Primitive Father and Founder among these, saw well this Power of *Nature*, and understood it so far, that he earnestly exhorted his Followers neither to beget Children, nor serve their Country. There was no dealing with *Nature*, it seems, while these alluring Objects stood in the way. *Relations, Friends, Country-Men, Laws, Politick Constitutions, the Beauty of Order and Government, and the Interest of Society and Mankind,* were Objects which, he well saw, would naturally raise a stronger Affection than any that was grounded upon the narrow bottom of mere Self. His Advice, therefore, not to
marry,

marry, nor engage at all in the Publick, was wise, and sutable to his Design. There was no way to be truly a Disciple of this Philosophy, but to leave Family, Friends, Country, and Society, *to cleave to it.*— And who wou'd not, if it were *Happiness* to do so?—The Philosopher, however, was *kind*, in telling us his Thought. 'Twas a Token of his *Fatherly Love* of Mankind.

*Tu Pater, & rerum Inventor ! Tu
Patria nobis
Suppeditas praecepta !*

But the Revivers of this Philosophy in latter Days, appear to be of a lower Genius. They seem to have understood less of this force of Nature, and have thought to alter *the Thing*, by shifting a Name. They wou'd so explain all the social Passions, and natural Affections, as to denominate 'em *of the selfish kind*. Thus Civility; Hospitality, Humanity

nity towards Strangers or People in Distress, is but a more deliberate Selfishness. An honest Heart is only a more cunning one; and Honesty and good Nature, a more deliberate, or better regulated Self-Love. The Love of Kindred, Children and Posterity, is purely Love of Self, and of one's own Blood: As if, by this Reckoning, all Mankind were not as well included; All being of one Blood, and join'd by Inter-Marriages and Alliances; as they have been transplanted in Colonys, and mix'd one with another. And thus Love of one's Country, and Love of Mankind, must also be Self-Love. Magnanimity and Courage, no doubt, are Modifications of this universal Self-Love. For Courage (says our modern Philosopher) is constant Anger. And all Men (says a witty Poet) wou'd be Cowards if they durst.

That the Poet, and the Philosopher both, were Cowards, may be yielded perhaps without Dispute.
They

They may have spoken the best of their Knowledge. But for true Courage, it has so little to do with Anger, that there is always the strongest Suspicion against it, where this Passion is highest. The true Courage is the cool and calm. The bravest of Men have the least of a brutal bullying Insolence; and in the very time of Danger are found the most serene, pleasant, and free. Rage, we know, can make a Coward forget himself and fight. But what is done in Fury, or Anger, can never be plac'd to the Account of Courage. Were it otherwise, Womankind might claim to be the stoutest Sex: For their Hatred and Anger have ever been allow'd to be the strongest and most lasting.

Other Authors there have been of a yet inferiour Kind: a sort of Distributers and petty Retailers of this Wit; who have run Changes, and Divisions, without end, upon this Article of Self-Love. You have the

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same Thought spun out a hundred Ways, and drawn into Motto's, and Devises, to set forth this Riddle; That "act as disinterestedly or generously as you please, *Self* still is at the bottom, and nothing else." Now if these Gentlemen, who delight so much in the Play of Words, but care not to grapple with Definitions, wou'd tell us only what *Self-Interest* was, and determine *Happiness*, and *Good*, there wou'd be an End of this Enigmatical Wit. For in this we shou'd all agree, that *Happiness* was to be pursu'd, and in fact was always sought after: but whether found in *following Nature*, and giving way to *common Affection*; or in suppressing it, and turning every *Passion* towards *private Advantage*, a narrow *Self-End*, or the *Preservation of mere Life*; this wou'd be the matter in Debate between us. The Question wou'd not be; Who lov'd himself; or Who not: But who lov'd

†

and

and serv'd himself the *rightest*, and after the truest manner.

'Tis the height of Wisdom, no doubt, to be rightly *selfish*. And to love Life, as far as Life is good, belongs as much to Courage as to Discretion. But a wretched Life is no wise Man's Wish. To be without *Honesty*, is, in effect, to be without *natural Affection* or *Sociableness* of any kind. And a Life without *natural Affection*, *Friendship*, or *Sociableness*, wou'd be found a wretched one, were it to be try'd. 'Tis as these Feelings and Affections are intrinsically valuable and worthy, that *Self-Interest* is to be rated and esteem'd. A Man is by nothing so much *himself*, as by his *Temper*, and the *Character of his Passions and Affections*. If he loses what is manly and worthy in these, he is as much lost to himself as when he loses his Memory and Understanding. The least step into Villany or Baseness, changes

the Character and Value of a Life. He who would preserve Life at any rate, must abuse himself more than any one can abuse him. And if Life be not a dear Thing indeed, he who has refus'd to live a Villain, and has prefer'd Death to a base Action, has been a Gainer by the Bargain.

'TIS well for you (my Friend!) that in your Education you have had little to do with the *Philosophy*, or *Philosophers* of our Days. A good Poet, and an honest Historian, may afford Learning enough for a *Gentleman*. And such a one, whilst he reads these Authors as his Diversion, will have a truer relish of their sense, and understand 'em better, than a *Pedant*, with all his Labours, and the Assistance of his Volumes of Commentators. I am sensible, that of old 'twas the Custom to send the Youth of highest Quality to *Philosophers* to be form'd.

'Twas in their Schools in

in their Companys and by their Precepts and Example, that the illustrious Pupils were inur'd to Hardship, and exercis'd in the severest Courses of Temperance and Self-denial. By such an early Discipline, they were fitted for the Command of others; to maintain their Country's Honour in War, rule wisely in the State, and fight against Luxury and Corruption in times of Prosperity and Peace. If any of these Arts are comprehended in *University-Learning*, 'tis well. But as some Universitys in the World are now model'd, they seem not so very effectual to these Purposes, nor so fortunate in preparing for a right Practice of the World, or a just Knowledg of Men and Things. Had you been thorowly pack'd in the *Ethicks* or *Politicks* of the Schools, I shou'd never have thought of writing a word to you upon *common Sense*, or *the Love of Mankind*. I shou'd not have cited the Poet's

Dulce & Decorum. Nor, if I had made a Character for you, as he for his Friend, shou'd I have crown'd it with his

*Non ille pro earis Amicis,
Aut Patria timidus perire.*

Our Philosophy now-a-days runs after the manner of that able Sophister, who said, *Skin for Skin: All that a Man has, will he give for his Life.* 'Tis Orthodox Divinity, as well as sound Philosophy, with some Men, to rate *Life* by the Number and Exquisite-ness of the *pleasing Sensations*. These they constantly set in opposition to *dry Virtue* and *Honesty*. And upon this foot, they think it proper to call all Men Fools, who wou'd risk a *Life*, or part with any of these *pleasing Sensations*; except on the Condition of being repaid in the same Coin, and with good Interest into the Bargain. Thus, it seems,
we

we are to learn Virtue by Usury; and enhance the Value of *Life*, and of the *Pleasures of Sense*, in order to be wise, and to *live well*.

But you, my Friend, are stubborn in this Point: and instead of being brought to think mournfully of Death, or to repine at the Loss of what you may sometimes hazard by your Honesty, you can laugh at such Maxims as these; and divert your self with the improv'd Selfishness, and Philosophical Cowardice of these fashionable Moralists. You will not be taught to value *Life*, at their rate, or degrade HONESTY as they do, who make it only a *Name*. You are persuaded there is something more in the Thing than *Fashion* or *Applause*; that WORTH and MERIT are substantial, and no way variable by *Fancy* or *Will*; and that HONOUR is as much it self, when acting by it self, and *unseen*, as when *seen*, and applauded by all the World.

Shou'd One, who had the Countenance of a Gentleman, ask me, "Why I would avoid being *nasty*, when no body was by?" In the first place I shou'd be fully satisfy'd that he himself was a very nasty Gentleman who cou'd ask this Question; and that it wou'd be a hard matter for me to make him ever conceive what true Cleanliness was. However, I might be contended perhaps to give him a slight Answer, and say, "Twas because I had a Nose." Shou'd he trouble me further; and ask, "What if I had a Cold? Or what if naturally I had no such nice Smell?" I might answer perhaps, "That I car'd as little to see myself *nasty*, as that others shou'd see me so." But what if it were *in the Dark*? or, Why tho' I had neither Nose, nor Eyes, my Sense of the Thing wou'd be still the same; my Nature wou'd rise at the Thought of what was forbidden.

did: or if it did not; I shou'd have a wretched Nature indeed, and hate my self for a Beast. Honour my self, I never cou'd; whilst I had no better a sense of what I ow'd my self, and what in reality became me, as a human Creature.

Much in the same manner have I heard it ask'd, *Why shou'd a Man be honest in the Dark?* What a Man must be to ask this Question, I won't say. But for Those who have no better a Reason for being honest than the Fear of a Gibbet or a Jail; I shou'd not, I confess, much covet their Company, or Acquaintance. And if any Guardian of mine who had kept his Trust, and given me back my Estate; when I came of Age, had been found to have acted thus, thro' Fear only of what might happen to him; I shou'd for my own part, no doubt, continue civil to him: but for my Opinion of his Worth, it wou'd be the same as the
Pythian

Pythian God had of his Votary, who devoutly fear'd him, and therefore restor'd to a Friend what had been deposited in his Hands.

*Reddidit ergo metu, non moribus;
 & tamen omnem
 Vocem adyti dignam templo, veramque
 probavit,
 Extinctus totâ pariter cum prole do-
 moque.*

I know very well that many Services to the Publick are done merely for the sake of a *Gratuity*; and that *Informers* in particular, are to be taken care of, and sometimes made *Pensioners of State*. But I must beg pardon for the particular Thoughts I may have of these Gentlemens *Merit*; and shall never bestow my *Esteem* on any other than the *voluntary Discoverers of Villany*, and *heartly Prosecutors of their Country's Interest*. And in this respect, I know nothing

nothing greater or nobler than the undertaking and managing some important Accusation ; by which some high Criminal of State, or some form'd Body of Conspirators against the Publick, may be arraign'd and brought to Punishment, thro the honest Zeal and publick Affection of a private Man.

I know too, that the mere Vulgar of Mankind often stand in need of such a rectifying Object as *the Gallows* before their Eyes. Yet I have no belief, that any Man of a liberal Education, or common Honesty, ever needed to have recourse to this Idea in his Mind, the better to restrain him from playing the Knave. And if a SAINT had no other Virtue than what was rais'd in him by the same Objects of Reward and Punishment, in a more distant State ; I know not whose Love or Esteem he might gain besides ; but for my own part, I shou'd never think him worthy of mine.

Nec

*Nec furtum feci; nec fugi; si mihi
quis dicit:*

Servus: Habes pretium; loris non ure-
simus; ris, &c.

Non hominem occidi: Non pasces in
cruce corvos.

Sum Bonus & Frugi: Renit, negat
atque Sabellus.

In this time (my Friend!) you may possibly, I hope, be satisfy'd; that as I am in earnest in defending *Raillery*, so I can be sober too in the Use of it. 'Tis in reality a serious Study, to learn to temper and regulate that *Humour* which Nature has given us, as a more lenitive Remedy against Vice, and a kind of Specifick against Superstition and Melancholy Delusion. There is a great difference between seeking how to raise a Laugh from every thing; and seeking, in every thing, what justly may

may be laugh'd at. For nothing is ridiculous, but what is deform'd: Nor is any thing proof against *Raillery*, but what is handfom and just. And therefore is the hardest thing in the World, to deny *Fair* HONESTY the use of this Weapon, which can never bear an Edge against herself, and bears against every thing that is contrary.

If the very *Italian* Buffoons were to give us the Rule in this Case, we shou'd learn by them, that in their lowest and most scurrilous way of Wit, there was nothing so successfully to be play'd upon, as the Passions of Cowardice and Avarice. One may defy the World to turn real *Bravery* or *Generosity* into Ridicule. A *Glutton*, and a mere *Sensualist*, is as ridiculous as the other two Characters. Nor can an unaffected *Temperance* be made the Subject of Contempt to any besides the grossest and most contemptible of Mankind. Now these

three

three Ingredients make up a virtuous Character: as the contrary three a vicious one. How therefore can we possibly make a Jest of Honesty? To laugh both ways, is nonsensical: And if the Ridicule lie against *Sottishness, Avarice, and Cowardice*; you see the Consequence. A Man must be soundly ridiculous, who, with all the Wit in the World, wou'd go about to ridicule Wisdom, or laugh at Honesty, or Good Manners.

A Man of thorow *Good-Breeding*, whatever else he be, is incapable of doing a rude or brutal Action. He never *deliberates* in this case, or considers of the Matter by prudential Rules of Self-Interest and Advantage. He acts from his Nature, in a manner necessarily, and without Reflection: and if he did not, it were impossible for him to answer his Character, or be found that truly well-bred Man, on every occasion. 'Tis the same with

the *Honest Man*. He can't deliberate in the Case of a plain Villany. A *Plum* is no Temptation to him. He likes and loves himself too well, to change Hearts with one of those corrupt Miscreants, who amongst 'em, gave that name to one of those round Sums which they had gain'd by Rapine and Plunder of the Commonwealth. He who wou'd enjoy a *Freedom of Mind*, and be truly *Possessor of himself*, must be above the Thought of stooping to what is villainous or base. He who has a Heart to stoop, must quit the Thought of *Manlineß, Resolution, Friendship, Merit,* and a *Character with himself and others*: But to affect these Enjoyments, or Advantages, together with the other; to pretend to enjoy *Society, and a free Mind*, in company with a *knavish Heart*, is as ridiculous as the way of Children, who first eat their Cake; and then cry for it. When Men begin to *deliberate* about Dishonesty, and
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finding

finding it go less against their Souls
 much, ask, "Why they should bid
 "at a good Piece of Knavery for a
 "good Sum?" They should be
 told, as Children, that They can't eat
 their Cake, and have it.

When Men, indeed, are become
 accomplish'd Knaves, they are past cry-
 ing for their Cake. They know Them-
 selves, and are known by Mankind.

'Tis not These who are so much en-
 vy'd or admir'd. The moderate Kind
 are the more taking with us. Yet
 had we Sense, we should consider 'tis
 in reality the *thorow profligate Knave*,
 the very compleat unnatural Villain al-
 lone, who can any way bid for Hap-
 piness with the *Honest Man*. True
 Interest is wholly on one side, or the
 other. All between is Inconsistency,
 Irresolution, Remorse, Vexation, and
 an Ague-Fit: from hot to cold;
 from one Passion to another quite
 contrary; a perpetual Discord of
 Life; and an alternate Disquiet and
 Self-

Self-Dislike. The only Rest of Re-
 pose must be thro' *one*, determin'd,
 considerate Resolution: which when
 once taken, must be courageously
 kept; and the Passions and Affec-
 tions brought under Obedience to it;
 the Temper steel'd and harden'd to
 the Mind; the Disposition to the
 Judgment. Both must agree; else
 all must be Disturbance and Confu-
 sion. So that to think with one's
 self, "Why may not one do this
 "little Villany, or commit this *one*
 "Treachery, and but for *once*;" is
 the most ridiculous Imagination in
 the world, and contrary to COM-
 MON SENSE. For a common ho-
 nest Man, whilst left to himself, and
 undisturb'd by Philosophy and subtle
 Reasonings about his Interest, gives
 no other Answer to the Thought of
 Villany, than that *he can't find in his*
heart to set about it, or conquer the
natural Aversion he has to it. And
this is natural, and just.

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The Truth is; as Notions stand now in the World, with respect to Morals; Honesty is like to gain little by Philosophy, or deep Speculations of any kind. In the main, 'tis best to stick to *Common Sense*, and go no further. Mens first Thoughts, in this matter, are generally better than their second: their natural Notions better than those refin'd by Study, or Consultation with *Casuits*. According to common Speech, as well as common Sense, *Honesty is the best Policy*: But according to refin'd Sense, the only *well-advis'd* Persons, as to this World, are *errant Knaves*; and they alone are thought to serve themselves, who serve their Passions, and indulge their loosest Appetites and Desires.—Such, it seems, are the *Wise*, and such the *Wisdom of this World*!

An ordinary Man talking of a vile Action, in a way of *Common Sense*, says naturally and heartily,

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“ He

“ He wou'd not do the thing for
“ all the World.” But *Speculative*
Men find great Modifications in the
Case ; many ways of Evasion ; ma-
ny Remedys ; many Alleviations. A
good Gift *rightly* apply'd ; a *right* Me-
thod of suing out a Pardon ; good
Alms-Houses, and Charitable Foun-
dations erected for *right* Worshippers ;
and a good Zeal shewn for the *right*
Belief, may sufficiently atone for *one*
wrong Practice ; especially when it is
such as raises a Man to a considerable
power of *doing Good*, and serving the
true Cause.

Many a good Estate, many a high
Station has been gain'd upon such a
foot as this. Some *Crowns* too may
have been purchas'd on these terms :
and some great *Emperors* (if I mis-
take not) there have been of old,
who were much assisted by these or
the like Principles ; and in return were
not ingrateful to the Cause and Party
which had assisted 'em. The For-
gers

gers of such Morals have been amply endow'd : and the World has paid roundly for its Philosophy ; since the original plain Principles of Humanity, and the simple honest Precepts of *Peace* and *mutual Love*, have, by a sort of spiritual Chymists, been so sublimated, as to become the highest Corrosives ; and passing thro' their Limbecks, have yielded the strongest Spirit of *mutual Hatred* and *malignant Persecution*.

BUT our Humours (my Friend) incline us not to melancholy Reflections. Let the solemn Reprovors of Vice proceed in the manner most suitable to their Genius, and Character. I am ready to congratulate with 'em on the Success of their Labours, in that authoritative way which is allow'd 'em. I know not in the mean while, why others may not be allow'd to *ridicule* Folly, and recommend Wisdom and Virtue (if possibly they can) in a way of Pleasantry

santry and Mirth. I know not why Poets, or such as write chiefly for the Entertainment of themselves and others, may not be allow'd this Privilege. And if it be the Complaint of our *standing Reformers*, that they are not heard so well by *the Gentlemen of Fashion*; if they exclaim against those airy Wits who fly to *Ridicule* as a Protection, and make successful Sallys from that Quarter; why shou'd it be deny'd one, who is but a *Volunteer* in this Cause, to engage the Adversary on his own Terms, and expose himself willingly to such Attacks, on the Condition only of being allow'd *fair Play* in the same kind?

By *Gentlemen of Fashion*, I understand those to whom a natural good Genius, or the Force of good Education, has given a *Sense* of what is *naturally graceful and becoming*. Some by mere Nature, others by Art and Practice, are Masters of an Ear in Musick, an Eye in Painting, a Fancy

in the ordinary things of Ornament and Grace, a Judgment in Proportions of all kinds, and a Taste in most of those Subjects which make the Amusement and Delight of the ingenious People of the World. Let such Gentlemen as these be as extravagant as they please, or as irregular in their Morals; they must at the same time discover their Inconsistency, live at variance with themselves, and in contradiction to that Principle, on which they ground their highest Pleasure and Entertainment.

Of all other Beautys which *Virtuosos* run after, *Poets* celebrate, *Musicians* sing, and *Architects* or *Artists*, of whatever kind, describe or form; the most delightful, the most engaging and pathetick, is that which is drawn from *Life* and from the *Passions*. Nothing affects the Heart like that which is *from it self*, and of *its own nature*; such as the *Beauty of Sentiments*; the *Grace of Actions*; the *Turn*
of

of Characters, and the Proportions and Features of a human Mind. This Lesson of Philosophy, even a Romance, a Poem, or a Play may teach us; whilst the fabulous Author leads us with such Pleasure thro the Labyrinth of the Affections, and interests us, whether we will or no, in the Passions of his Heroes and Heroines:

————— *Angit;*
Irritat, mulcet, falsis terroribus implet,
Ut Magus.

Let Poets, or the Men of Harmony, deny, if they can, this Force of Nature, or withstand this *moral Magick*. They, for their parts, carry a double Portion of this Charm about with 'em. For in the first place, the very Passion which inspires 'em, is it self the *Love of Numbers, Decency and Proportion*; and this too, not in a narrow sense, or after a *selfish* way (for Who is there that composes for *himself*?) but in a friendly social

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View;

View ; for the Pleasure and Good of others; even down to Posterity, and future Ages. And in the next place, 'tis evident in these Performers, that their chief Theme, and Subject, that which raises their Genius the most, and by which they so effectually move others, is purely *Manners*, and the *moral Part*. For this is the Effect, and this the Beauty of their Art ;
 “ in vocal Measures of Syllables, and
 “ Sounds, to express the Harmony
 “ and Numbers of an inward kind ;
 “ and represent the Beautys of a
 “ human Soul, by proper Foils, and
 “ Contrarietys, which serve as Gra-
 “ ces in this Limning, and render
 “ this Musick of the Passions more
 “ powerful and enchanting.”

The Admirers of Beauty in the Fair Sex, wou'd laugh, perhaps, to hear of a *moral Part* in their Amours. Yet, what a stir is made about a *Heart* ! What curious Search of *Sentiments*, and *tender Thoughts* ! What Praises

Praises of a *Humour*, a *Sense*, a *je ne
sçai quoy* of *Wit*, and all those *Graces* of a *Mind* which these *Virtuoso-
Lovers* delight to celebrate! Let
them settle this Matter among them-
selves; and regulate, as they think
fit, the Proportions which these dif-
ferent Beautys hold one to another:
They must allow still, there is a
Beauty of the *Mind*; and such as is
essential in the Case. Why else is
the very *Air* of *Foolishness* enough to
cloy a *Lover*, at first sight? Why
does an *Idiot-Look* and *Manner* destroy
the Effect of all those outward
Charms, and rob the *Fair One* of
her Power; tho regularly arm'd, in
all the Exactness of Feature and Com-
plexion? We may imagine what
we please of a substantial solid Part
of Beauty: but were the Subject to
be well criticiz'd, we shou'd find,
perhaps, that what we most admir'd,
even in the Turn of outward Features,
was but a mysterious Expression, and

a kind of shadow of something inward in the Temper: and that when we were struck with a *Majestick Air*, a *sprightly Look*, an *Amazon bold Grace*, or a contrary *soft and gentle one*; 'twas chiefly the Fancy of these Characters or Qualities that wrought on us: our Imagination being busied in forming beauteous Shapes and Images of this kind, which amus'd the Mind, and held it in Admiration; whilst other Passions were employ'd another way. The preliminary Addresses, the Declarations, the Explanations, Confidences, Clearings; the Dependence on something mutual, something felt by way of Return; the *Spes animi credula mutui*; all these become necessary Ingredients in the Affair of Love, and are authentically establish'd by the Men of Elegance and Art in this way of Passion.

Nor can the Men of cooler Passions, and more deliberate Pursuits, withstand

withstand the force of *Beauty*, in other kinds. Every one is a *Virtuoso*, of a higher or lower degree: Every one pursues a *GRACE*, and courts a *VENUS* of one kind or another. The *Venustum*, the *Honestum*, the *Decorum* of Things, will force its way. They who refuse to give it Scope in the nobler Subjects of a rational and moral kind, will find its Prevalency elsewhere, in an inferiour Order of Things. They who overlook the *main Springs* of Action, and despise the Thought of Numbers and Proportion in a *Life at large*, will in the mean *Particulars* of it, be no less taken up, and engag'd, as either in the Study of common Arts, or in the Care and Culture of mere mechanick Beautys. The Models of Houses, Buildings, and their accompanying Ornaments; the Plans of Gardens and their Compartments; the ordering of Walks, Plantations, Avenues; and a thousand other Symmetrys,

metrys, will succeed in the room of that happier and higher Symmetry and Order of a Mind. The *Species* of *Fair, Noble, Handsome*, will discover it self on a thousand Occasions, and in a thousand Subjects. The *Specter* still will haunt us, in some Shape or other: and when driven from our cool Thoughts, and frighted from *the Closet*, will meet us even *at Court*, and fill our Heads with Dreams of Grandure, Titles, Honours, and a false Magnificence and Beauty; to which we are ready to sacrifice our highest Pleasure and Ease; and for the sake of which, we become the merest Drudges, and most abject Slaves.

The Men of Pleasure, who seem the greatest Contemners of this Philosophical Beauty, are forc'd often to confess her Charms. They can as heartily as others commend *Honesty*; and are as much struck with the Beauty of a *generous Part*. They
admire

admire the Thing it self; tho not the Means. And, if possible, they wou'd so order it, as to make Probitie, and Luxury agree. But the Rules of Harmony will not permit it. The Dissonancys are too strong. However the Attempts of this kind, are not unpleasant to observe. For tho some of the Voluptuous are sordid Pleaders for Baseness and Corruption of every kind: yet others, more generous, endeavour to keep Measures with Honesty; and understanding Pleasure better, are for bringing it under some Rule. They condemn *this* manner: they praise *the other*. "So far was right: but further, *wrong*. Such a Case was allowable: but such a one, not to be admitted." They introduce a *Justice*, and an *Order* in their Pleasures. They wou'd bring *Reason* to be of their Party, account in some manner for their Lives, and form themselves to some kind of Consistency,

nancy, and Agreement: Or if they find this impracticable on certain Terms, they wou'd chuse to sacrifice their other Pleasures to those which arise from a generous Behaviour, or Regularity of Conduct, and a Consistency of Life and Manners:

Et vera Numerosque Modosque ediscere vite.

Other Occasions will put us upon this Thought: but chiefly a strong View of Merit, in a generous Character, oppos'd to some detestably vile one. Hence it is that among Poets, the Satyrists seldom fail in doing Justice to Virtue. Nor are any of the nobler Poets false to this Cause. Even modern Wits, whose Turn is all towards Gallantry and Pleasure, when bare-fac'd Villany stands in their way, and brings the contrary Species in view, can sing in passionate Strains
the

the Praises of plain *Honesty*.

When we are highly Friends with the World, and prosperous in the possession of other Beautys; we may perchance, as is usual, despise this sober Mistress. But when we see, in the issue, what Riot and *Excess* naturally produce; when by *Luxury's* means, and for the service of vile Interests, Knaves, we see, are advanc'd; and the vilest of Men are prefer'd before the honestest; we then behold VIRTUE in a new Light, and by the help of such a Foil, can discern the Beauty of *Honesty*, and the reality of those Charms, which before we understood not to be either natural, or powerful.

AND thus, after all, the most natural Beauty in the World is *Honesty*, and *Moral Truth*. For all Beauty is TRUTH. True Features make the Beauty of a Face; and true Proportions

portions the Beauty of Architecture; as true Measures that of Harmony and Musick. In Poetry, which is all Fable, Truth still is the Perfection. And whoever is Scholar enough to read the antient Philosopher, or his modern Copists, upon the nature of a Dramatick and Epick Poem, will easily understand this account of Truth.

A Painter, if he have any Genius, understands the Truth and Unity of Design; and knows he is even then unnatural, when he follows Nature too close, and strictly copys Life. For his Art allows him not to bring All Nature into his Piece, but a Part only. However, his Piece, if it be beautiful, and carries Truth, must be a Whole, by it self, compleat, independent, and withal as great and comprehensive as he can make it. So that Particulars, on this occasion, must yield to the general Design; and all Things be subser-

subservient to that which is principal : in order to form a certain *Easiness of Sight*; a simple, clear, and united *View*, which wou'd be broken and disturb'd by the Expression of any thing peculiar, or distinct.

Now the Variety of Nature is such as to distinguish every thing she forms, by a *peculiar* original Character; which, if strictly observ'd, will make the Subject appear unlike to any thing extant in the World besides. But this Effect the good Poet and Painter seek industriously to prevent. They hate *Mmuteness*, and are afraid of *Singularity*; which wou'd make their Images, or Characters, appear capricious and fantastical. The mere Face-Painter, indeed, has little in common with the Poet; but, like the mere Historian, copys what he sees, and minutely traces every Feature, and odd Mark. 'Tis otherwise with the Men of Invention and Design. 'Tis from the *many*

H Objects

Objects of Nature, and not from a particular one, that those Genius's form the Idea of their Work. Thus the best Artists are said to have been indefatigable in studying the best Statues: as knowing them a better Rule, than the perfectest Human Bodys cou'd afford. And thus some considerable Wits have recommended the best Poems; as preferable to the best of Historys; and better teaching the *Truth* of Characters, and Nature of Mankind.

Nor can this Criticism be thought high-strain'd. Tho' Few confinethemselves to these Rules; Few are insensible of 'em. Whatever Quarter we may give to our vitious Poets, or other Composers of irregular and short-liv'd Works; we know very well that the standing Pieces of good Artists must be form'd after a more uniform way. Every just Work of theirs comes under those natural Rules of Proportion, and *Truth*. The Creature

ture of their Brain must be like one of Nature's Formation. It must have a Body and Parts proportionable : or the very Vulgar will not fail to criticize the Work, when *it has neither Head nor Tail*. For so *common Sense* (according to just Philosophy) judges of those Works which want the Justness of a *Whole*, and shew their Author, however curious and exact in Particulars, to be in the main a very Bungler :

Infelix operis summâ, quia ponere Totum Nescit.

Such is *Poetical*, and such (if I may so call it) *Graphical*, or *Plastick Truth*. *Narrative*, or *Historical Truth*, must needs be highly estimable ; especially when we consider how Mankind, who are become so deeply interested in it, have suffer'd by the want of it. 'Tis it self a part of *Moral Truth*. To be a Judg in *one*, requires a Judgment in *the other*. The *Morals*, the Character,

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racter, and Genius of an Author, must be thorowly consider'd: And the Historian or Relater of Things important to Mankind, must, whoever he be, approve himself many ways to us; both in respect of his Judgment, Candour, and Disinterestedness; e'er we are bound to take any thing on his Authority. And as for *critical Truth*; or the Judgment and Determination of what Commentators, Translators, Paraphrasts, Gramarians, and others have, on this occasion, deliver'd to us; in the midst of such Variety of Stile, such different Readings, such Interpolations, and Corruptions in the Originals; such Mistakes of Copists, Transcribers, Editors, and a hundred such Accidents, to which antient Books are subject; it becomes, upon the whole, a *Matter of nice Speculation*: considering, withal, that the Reader, tho' an able Linguist, must be supported by so many other Helps from Chronology,

gy, Natural Philosophy, and Geography, and other Sciences.

And thus many previous *Truths* are to be examin'd, and understood, in order to judg rightly of *Historical Truth*, and of the past Actions and Circumstances of Mankind, as deliver'd down to us by antient Authors of different Nations, different Times, and different in their Characters and Interests. Some *Moral* and *Philosophical Truths* there are withal so evident in themselves, that 'twou'd be easier to imagine half Mankind to have run mad, and join'd in one and the same Species of Folly, than to admit any thing as *Truth*, which shou'd be advanc'd against such *natural Knowledge*, *fundamental Reason*, and *common Sense*.

And this I have mention'd the rather, because some modern Zealots appear to have no better knowledg of *TRUTH*, nor better manner of judging it, than by *counting Noses*.
By

By this Rule, if they can poll an indifferent Number out of a *Mob*; if they can but produce a Set of *Lancashire Noddles*, remote provincial Head-Pieces, or visionary Assemblers, to attest a Story of a *Witch upon a Broom-Stick*, and a *Flight in the Air*; they triumph in the solid Proof of their new Prodigy, and cry, *Magna est Veritas & prævalebit!*

Religion, no doubt, is much indebted to these Men of Prodigy; who, in such a discerning Age, wou'd set her on the foot of popular Tradition; and venture her on the same bottom with *Parish-Tales*, and *Gossiping Storys of Imps, Goblins, and Demoniatal Pranks*, invented to fright Children, or make Practice for common Exorcists, and *Cunning-Men*. For by that Name, you know, Country People are us'd to call those Dealers in Mystery, who are thought to conjure *in an honest way*, and foil the Devil at his own Weapon.

But

But now (my Friend!) 'tis time to put an End to these Reflections; lest by endeavouring to expound things any further, I shou'd be drawn from my way of *Humour*, to harangue profoundly on these Subjects. But shou'd you find I had moraliz'd in any tolerable manner, according to *common Sense*, and without *Canting*; I cou'd be satisfy'd with my Performance, such as it is, without fearing what Disturbance I might possibly give to some formal *Censors* of the Age; whose Discourses and Writings are of another strain. I have taken the Liberty, you see, to *laugh*, upon some Occasions: And if I have either laugh'd wrong, or been impertinently serious; I can be content to be *laugh'd at*, in my Turn. If I am rail'd at, I can *laugh* still, as before; and with fresh Advantage to my Cause. For tho, in truth, there cou'd be nothing less a laughing Matter, than the provok'd Rage, Ill-Will, and Fury of certain zealous Gentlemen,

men, were they arm'd as of late days they have been known; yet as the Magistrate has since taken care to pare their Talons, there is nothing very terrible in their Encounter. On the contrary, there is something comical in the Case. It brings to one's mind the Fancy of those Grottesque Figures, and Dragon-Faces, which are seen often in the Frontispiece, and on the Corner Stones of old Buildings. They seem plac'd there, as the *Defenders* and *Supporters* of the Edifice; but with all their Grimace, are as harmless to People without, as they are useless to the Building within. Great Efforts of Anger to little purpose, serve for Pleasantry and Farce. Exceeding *Fierceneß*, with perfect *Inability* and *Impotence*, makes the highest Ridicule.

I am,

Dear Friend,

Affectionately Yours.

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