

Tits: The Undertakers being resolved to spare neither Pains nor Money for the Gratification of the Audience. C



N<sup>o</sup> 6. *Wednesday, March 7.*

*Credebant hoc grande Nefas, & Morte piumum,  
Si Juvenis Vetulo non assurrexerat — Juv.*

I Know no Evil under the Sun so great as the Abuse of the Understanding, and yet there is no one Vice more common. It has diffused it self through both Sexes and all Qualities of Mankind, and there is hardly that Person to be found, who is not more concerned for the Reputation of Wit and Sense, than Honesty and Virtue. But this unhappy Affectation of being Wise rather than Honest, Witty than Good-natur'd, is the Source of most of the ill Habits of Life. Such false Impressions are owing to the abandoned Writings of Men of Wit, and the aukward Imitation of the rest of Mankind.

FOR this Reason Sir ROGER was saying last Night, That he was of opinion none but Men of fine Parts deserve to be hanged. The Reflexions of such Men are so delicate upon all Occurrences which they are concerned in, that they should be exposed to more than ordinary Infamy and Punishment for offending against such quick Admonitions as their own Souls give them, and blunting the fine Edge of their Minds in such a Manner, that they are no more shocked at Vice and Folly, than Men of slower Capacities. There is no greater Monster in Being, than a very ill Man of great Parts: He lives like a Man in a Palsy, with one Side of him dead. While perhaps he enjoys the Satisfaction of Luxury, of Wealth, of Ambition, he has lost the Taste of Good-will, of Friendship, of Innocence. *Scarecrow*, the Beggar in *Lincoln's-Inn-Fields*, who disabled himself in his Right Leg, and asks Alms all Day to get himself a warm Supper and a Trull at Night, is not half so despicable a Wretch as such a Man

Man of Sense. The Beggar has no Relish above Sensations; he finds Rest more agreeable than Motion; and while he has a warm Fire and his Doxy, never reflects that he deserves to be whipped. Every Man who terminates his Satisfactions and Enjoyments within the Supply of his own Neecessities and Passions, is, says Sir ROGER, in my Eye as poor a Rogue as *Scarecrow*. But, continued he, for the Loss of publick and private Virtue, we are beholden to your Men of Parts forsooth; it is with them no matter what is done, so it be done with an Air. But to me, who am so whimsical in a corrupt Age as to act according to Nature and Reason, a selfish Man, in the most shining Circumstance and Equipage, appears in the same Condition with the Fellow above-mentioned, but more contemptible, in Proportion to what more he robs the Publick of and enjoys above him. I lay it down therefore for a Rule, That the whole Man is to move together; that every Action of any Importance, is to have a Prospect of publick Good; and that the general Tendency of our indifferent Actions, ought to be agreeable to the Dictates of Reason, of Religion, of good Breeding; without this, a Man, as I before have hinted, is hopping instead of walking, he is not in his intire and proper Motion.

WHILE the honest Knight was thus bewildering himself in good Starts, I looked intently upon him, which made him, I thought, collect his Mind a little. What I aim at, says he, is to represent, That I am of Opinion, to polish our Understandings and neglect our Manners, is of all things the most inexcusable. Reason should govern Passion, but instead of that, you see, it is often subservient to it; and as unaccountable as one would think it, a wise Man is not always a good Man. This Degeneracy is not only the Guilt of particular Persons, but at some times of a whole People; and perhaps it may appear upon Examination, that the most polite Ages are the least virtuous. This may be attributed to the Folly of admitting Wit and Learning as Merit in themselves, without considering the Application of them. By this Means it becomes a Rule, not so much to regard what we do, as how we do it. But this false Beauty will not pass upon Men of honest Minds and true Taste. Sir



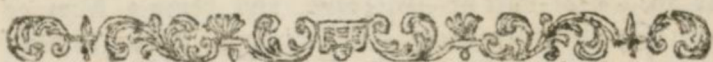
*Richard Blackmore* says, with as much good Sense as Virtue, *It is a mighty Dishonour and Shame to employ excellent Faculties and abundance of Wit to humour and please Men in their Vices and Follies. The great Enemy of Mankind, notwithstanding his Wit and Angelick Faculties, is the most odious Being in the whole Creation.* He goes on soon after to say very generously, That he undertook the writing of his Poem to rescue the *Muses* out of the Hands of *Ravishers*, to restore them to their sweet and chaste Mansions; and to engage them in an Employment suitable to their Dignity. This certainly ought to be the Purpose of every Man who appears in Publick, and whoever does not proceed upon that Foundation, injures his Country as fast as he succeeds in his Studies. When Modesty ceases to be the chief Ornament of one Sex, and Integrity of the other, Society is upon a wrong Basis, and we shall be ever after without Rules to guide our Judgment in what is really becoming and ornamental. Nature and Reason direct one thing, Passion and Humour another: To follow the Dictates of the two latter, is going into a Road that is both endless, and intricate; when we pursue the other, our Passage is delightful, and what we aim at easily attainable.

I do not doubt but *England* is at present as polite a Nation as any in the World; but any Man who thinks can easily see, that the Affectation of being Gay and in Fashion, has very near eaten up our good Sense and our Religion. Is there any thing so just, as that Mode and Gallantry should be built upon exerting our selves in what is proper and agreeable to the Institutions of Justice and Piety among us? And yet is there any thing more common than that we run in perfect Contradiction to them? All which is supported by no other Pretention, than that it is done with what we call a good Grace.

NOTHING ought to be held laudable or becoming, but what Nature it self should prompt us to think so. Respect to all kind of Superiors is founded, methinks, upon Instinct; and yet what is so ridiculous as Age? I make this abrupt Transition to the Mention of this Vice more than any other, in order to introduce a little Story, which I think a pretty Instance that the most polite Age is in danger of being the most vicious.

• IT

' I T happened at *Athens*, during a publick Representation of some Play exhibited in Honour of the Commonwealth, that an old Gentleman came too late for a Place suitable to his Age and Quality. Many of the young Gentlemen who observed the Difficulty and Confusion he was in, made Signs to him that they would accommodate him if he came where they sat: The good Man bustled through the Crowd accordingly; but when he came to the Seats to which he was invited, the Jest was to sit close, and expose him, as he stood out of Countenance, to the whole Audience. The Frolick went round all the *Athenian* Benches. But on those Occasions there were also particular Places assigned for Foreigners: When the good Man skulked towards the Boxes appointed for the *Lacedemonians*, that honest People more virtuous than polite, rose up all to a Man, and with the greatest Respect received him among them. The *Athenians* being suddenly touched with a Sense of the *Spartan* Virtue and their own Degeneracy, gave a Thunder of Applause; and the old Man cryed out, *The Athenians understand what is good, but the Lacedemonians practise it.* R



*Somnia, terrores magicos, miracula, Sagas,  
Nocturnos lemures, portentaque Theffala rides?* Hor.

GOING Yesterday to dine with an old Acquaintance, I had the Misfortune to find his whole Family very much dejected. Upon asking him the Occasion of it, he told me that his Wife had dreamt a strange Dream the Night before, which they were afraid portended some Misfortune to themselves or to their Children. At her coming into the Room I observed a settled Melancholy in her Countenance, which I should have been troubled for, had I not heard from whence it proceeded. We were no sooner sat down,

B 5

but,