

he was in high Good-humour, he would lay the Scene with *Eucrate*, and on a publick Night exercise the Passions of his whole Court. He was pleased to see an haughty Beauty watch the Looks of the Man she had long despised, from Observation of his being taken notice of by *Pharamond*; and the Lover conceive higher Hopes, than to follow the Woman he was dying for the Day before. In a Court, where Men speak Affection in the strongest Terms, and Dislike in the faintest, it was a comical Mixture of Incidents to see Disguises thrown aside in one Case and increased on the other, according as Favour or Disgrace attended the respective Objects of Mens Approbation or Disesteem. *Pharamond* in his Mirth upon the Meanness of Mankind used to say, 'As he could take away a Man's Five Senses, he could give him an Hundred. The Man in Disgrace shall immediately lose all his natural Endowments, and he that finds Favour have the Attributes of an Angel. He would carry it so far as to say, 'It should not be only so in the Opinion of the lower Part of his Court, but the Men themselves shall think thus meanly or greatly of themselves, as they are out in the good Graces of a Court.

A Monarch who had Wit and Humour like *Pharamond*, must have Pleasures which no Man else can ever have Opportunity of enjoying. He gave Fortune to none but those whom he knew could receive it without Transport: He made a noble and generous Use of his Observations; and did not regard his Ministers as they were agreeable to himself, but as they were useful to his Kingdom: By this Means the King appeared in every Officer of State; and no Man had a Participation of the Power, who had not a Similitude of the Virtue of *Pharamond*. R

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N<sup>o</sup> 77. Tuesday, May 29.

*Non convivere licet, nec urbe totâ*

*Quisquam est tam propè tam proculque nobis. Mart.*

**M**Y Friend WILL. HONEYCOMB is one of those Sort of Men who are very often absent in Conversation, and what the French call a *raveur* and a *distract*. A little before our Club-time last Night we were walking

walking together in *Somerſet* Garden, where WILL. had picked up a ſmall Pebble of ſo odd a Make, that he ſaid he would preſent it to a Friend of his, and eminent *Virtuoſo*. After we had walked ſome time, I made a full ſtop with my Face towards the Weſt, which WILL. knowing to be my uſual Method of asking what's o' Clock, in an Afternoon, immediately pulled out his Watch, and told me we had ſeven Minutes good. We took a turn or two more, when, to my great Surprise, I ſaw him ſquirt away his Watch a conſiderable way into the *Thames*, and with great Sedateness in his Looks put up the Pebble, he had before found, in his Fob. As I have naturally an Averſion to much Speaking, and do not love to be the Meſſenger of ill News, eſpecially when it comes too late to be uſeful, I left him to be convinced of his Miſtake in due time, and continued my Walk, reflecting on theſe little Abſences and Diſtractions in Mankind, and reſolving to make them the Subject of a future Speculation.

I was the more confirmed in my Deſign, when I conſidered that they were very often Blemiſhes in the Characters of Men of excellent Senſe; and helped to keep up the Reputation of that *Latin* Proverb, which Mr. *Dryden* has Tranſlated in the following Lines:

*Great Wit to Madneſs ſure is near ally'd,  
And thin Partitions do their Bounds divide.*

MY Reader does, I hope, perceive, that I diſtinguiſh a Man who is *Absent*, becauſe he thinks of ſomething elſe, from one who is *Absent*, becauſe he thinks of nothing at all: The latter is too innocent a Creature to be taken notice of; but the Diſtractions of the former may, I believe, be generally accounted for from one of theſe Reaſons.

EITHER their Minds are wholly fixed on ſome particular Science, which iſo often the Caſe of Mathematicians and other learned Men; or are wholly taken up with ſome Violent Paſſion, ſuch as Anger, Fear, or Love, which ties the Mind to ſome diſtant Object; or, laſtly, theſe Diſtractions proceed from a certain Vivacity and Fickleneſs in a Man's Temper, which while it raiſes up infinite Numbers of *Ideas* in the Mind, is continually puſhing it on, without allowing it to reſt on any particular Image. Nothing therefore is more unnatural than the Thoughts and Conceptions of ſuch a Man, which are ſeldom occaſioned either by the Company he is in, or any of thoſe  
Objects



Objects which are placed before him. While you fancy he is admiring a beautiful Woman, 'tis an even Wager that he is solving a Proposition in *Euclid*; and while you may imagine he is reading the *Paris-Gazette*, it is far from being impossible, that he is pulling down and rebuilding the Front of his Country-house.

AT the same time that I am endeavouring to expose this Weakness in others, I shall readily confess that I once laboured under the same Infirmary myself. The Method I took to conquer it was a firm Resolution to learn something from whatever I was obliged to see or hear. There is a way of thinking if a Man can attain to it, by which he may strike somewhat out of any thing. I can at present observe those Starts of good Sense and Struggles of unimproved Reason in the Conversation of a Clown, with as much Satisfaction as the most shining Periods of the most finished Orator; and can make a shift to command my Attention at a *Puppet-Show* or an *Opera*, as well as at *Hamlet* or *Othello*. I always make one of the Company I am in; for though I say little myself, my Attention to others, and those Nods of Approbation which I never bestow unmerited, sufficiently shew that I am among them. Whereas WILL. HONEYCOMB, tho' a Fellow of good Sense, is every day doing and saying an hundred Things which he afterwards confesses, with a well-bred Frankness, were somewhat *mal à propos*, and undesigned.

I chanced the other Day to go into a Coffee-house, where WILL. was standing in the midst of several Auditors whom he had gathered round him, and was giving them an Account of the Person and Character of *Moll Hinton*. My Appearance before him just put him in mind of me, without making him reflect that I was actually present. So that keeping his Eyes full upon me, to the great Surprise of his Audience, he broke off his first Harangue, and proceeded thus,--- 'Why now there's my Friend (mentioning me by my Name) he is a Fellow that thinks a great deal, but never opens his Mouth; I warrant you he is now thrusting his short Face into some Coffee-house about *'Change*. I was his Bail in the time of the *Papish-Plot*, when he was taken up for a Jesuit.' If he had looked on me a little longer, he had certainly described me so particularly, without ever considering what led him into it, that the whole Company must necessarily have

have found me out ; for which Reason, remembering the old Proverb, *Out of Sight out of Mind*, I left the Room ; and upon meeting him an Hour afterwards, was asked by him, with a great deal of good Humour, in what Part of the World I had lived, that he had not seen me these three Days.

MONSIEUR *Bruyere* has given us the Character of an *absent Man*, with a great deal of Humour, which he has pushed to an agreeable Extravagance ; with the Heads of it I shall conclude my present Paper.

*MENALCAS* (says that excellent Author) comes down in a Morning, opens his Door to go out, but shuts it again, because he perceives that he has his Night-cap on ; and examining himself further finds that he is but half shaved, that he has stuck his Sword on his right Side, that his Stockings are about his Heels, and that his Shirt is over his Breeches. When he is dressed he goes to Court, comes into the Drawing-room, and walking bolt upright under a Branch of Candlesticks his Wig is caught up by one of them, and hangs dangling in the Air. All the Courtiers fall a laughing, but *Menalcas* laughs louder than any of them, and looks about for the Person that is the Jest of the Company. Coming down to the Court-gate he finds a Coach, which taking for his own he whips into it ; and the Coachman drives off, not doubting but he carries his Master. As soon as he stops, *Menalcas* throws himself out of the Coach, crosses the Court, ascends the Stair-case, and runs thro' all the Chambers with the greatest Familiarity, reposes himself on a Couch, and fancies himself at home. The Master of the House at last comes in, *Menalcas* rises to receive him, and desires him to sit down ; he talks, muses, and then talks again. The Gentleman of the House is tired and amazed ; *Menalcas* is no less so, but is every Moment in Hopes that his impertinent Guest will at last end his tedious Visit. Night comes on, when *Menalcas* is hardly undeceived.

WHEN he is playing at Backgammon, he calls for a full Glas of Wine and Water ; 'tis his turn to throw, he has the Box in one Hand and his Glas in the other, and being extremely dry, and unwilling to lose Time, he swallows down both the Dice, and at the same time throws his Wine into the Tables. He writes a Letter, and flings the Sand into the Ink-bottle ;

he



' he writes a second, and mistakes the Superfcription : A  
 ' Nobleman receives one of them, and upon opening it  
 ' reads as follows : *I would have you, honest Jack, immedi-*  
 ' *ately upon the Receipt of this, take in Hay enough to serve*  
 ' *me the Winter.* His Farmer receives the other, and is  
 ' amazed to see in it, *My Lord, I received your Grace's*  
 ' *Commands with an intire Submission to---* If he is at an  
 ' Entertainment, you may see the Pieces of Bread con-  
 ' tinually multiplying round his Plate : 'Tis true the rest  
 ' of the Company want it, as well as their Knives and  
 ' Forks, which *Menalcas* does not let them keep long.  
 ' Sometimes in a Morning he puts his whole Family in an  
 ' hurry, and at last goes out without being able to stay  
 ' for his Coach or Dinner, and for that Day you may  
 ' see him in every Part of the Town, except the very  
 ' Place where he had appointed to be upon a Business of  
 ' Importance. You would often take him for every thing  
 ' that he is not ; for a Fellow quite Stupid, for he hears  
 ' nothing ; for a Fool, for he talks to himself, and has an  
 ' hundred Grimaces and Motions with his Head, which  
 ' are altogether involuntary ; for a proud Man, for he  
 ' looks full upon you, and takes no notice of your sa-  
 ' luting him : The Truth on't is, his Eyes are open, but  
 ' he makes no use of them, and neither sees you, nor any  
 ' Man, nor any thing else : He came once from his  
 ' Country-House, and his own Footmen undertook to rob  
 ' him, and succeeded : They held a Flambeau to his  
 ' Throat, and bid him deliver his Purse ; he did so,  
 ' and coming home told his Friends he had been robbed ;  
 ' they desire to know the Particulars, *Ask my Servants,*  
 ' *says Menalcas, for they were with me.* X



N<sup>o</sup> 78. Wednesday, May 30.

*Cum Talis sis, Utinam noster esses!*

T H E following Letters are so pleasant, that I doubt  
 not but the Reader will be as much diverted with  
 them as I was. I have nothing to do in this Day's  
 Entertainment, but taking the Sentence from the End of  
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