



N<sup>o</sup> 103. Thursday, June 28.

————— *Sibi quivis*

*Speret idem, frustra sudet, frustra que laboret*

*Ausus idem* —————

Hor.

MY Friend the Divine having been used with Words of Complaisance (which he thinks could be properly applied to no one living, and I think could be only spoken of him, and that in his Absence) was so extremely offended with the excessive way of speaking Civilities among us, that he made a Discourse against it at the Club; which he concluded with this Remark, that he had not heard one Compliment made in our Society since its Commencement. Every one was pleased with his Conclusion; and as each knew his Good-will to the rest, he was convinced that the many Professions of Kindness and Service, which we ordinarily meet with, are not natural where the Heart is well inclined; but are a Prostitution of Speech, seldom intended to mean any Part of what they express, never to mean All they express. Our Reverend Friend, upon this Topick, pointed to us two or three Paragraphs on this Subject in the first Sermon of the first Volume of the late Archbishop's Posthumous Works. I do not know that I ever read any thing that pleased me more, and as it is the Praise of *Longinus*, that he speaks of the Sublime in a Style suitable to it, so one may say of this Author upon Sincerity, that he abhors any Pomp of Rhetorick on this Occasion, and treats it with a more than ordinary Simplicity, at once to be a Preacher and an Example. With what Command of himself does he lay before us, in the Language and Temper of his Profession, a Fault, which by the least Liberty and Warmth of Expression would be the most lively Wit and Satire? But his Heart was better disposed, and the good Man chastised the great Wit in such a manner, that he was able to speak as follows.

• ——— AMONGST

‘ — AMONGST too many other Instances of the great Corruption and Degeneracy of the Age wherein we live, the great and general Want of Sincerity in Conversation is none of the least. The World is grown so full of Dissimulation and Compliment, that Mens Words are hardly any Signification of their Thoughts; and if any Man measure his Words by his Heart, and speak as he thinks, and do not express more Kindness to every Man, than Men usually have for any Man, he can hardly escape the Censure of want of Breeding. The old *English* Plainness and Sincerity, that generous Integrity of Nature, and Honesty of Disposition, which always argues true Greatness of Mind, and is usually accompanied with undaunted Courage and Resolution, is in a great measure lost amongst us: There hath been a long Endeavour to transform us into Foreign Manners and Fashions, and to bring us to a servile Imitation of none of the best of our Neighbours in some of the worst of their Qualities. The Dialect of Conversation is now-a-days so swelled with Vanity and Compliment, and so surfeited (as I may say) of Expressions of Kindness and Respect, that if a Man that lived an Age or two ago should return into the World again he would really want a Dictionary to help him to understand his own Language, and to know the true intrinsic Value of the Phrase in Fashion, and would hardly at first believe at what a low Rate the highest Strains and Expressions of Kindness imaginable do commonly pass in current Payment: and when he should come to understand it, it would be a great while before he could bring himself with a good Countenance and a good Conscience to converse with Men upon equal Terms, and in their own way.

‘ AND in Truth it is hard to say, whether it should more provoke our Contempt or our Pity, to hear what solemn Expressions of Respect and Kindness will pass between Men, almost upon no Occasion; how great Honour and Esteem they will declare for one whom perhaps they never saw before, and how intirely they are all on the sudden devoted to his Service and Interest, for no Reason; how infinitely and eternally obliged to him, for no Benefit; and how extremely they will



will be concerned for him, yea and afflicted too, for no Cause. I know it is said, in Justification of this hollow kind of Conversation, that there is no Harm, no real Deceit in Compliment, but the Matter is well enough, so long as we understand one another; *et Verba valent ut Nummi, Words are like Money*; and when the current Value of them is generally understood, no Man is cheated by them. This is something, if such Words were any thing; but being brought into the Account, they are mere Ciphers. However, it is still a just Matter of Complaint, that Sincerity and Plainness are out of Fashion, and that our Language is running into a Lye; that Men have almost quite perverted the use of Speech, and made Words to signify nothing, that the greatest part of the Conversation of Mankind is little else but driving a Trade of Dissimulation; insomuch that it would make a Man heartily sick and weary of the World, to see the little Sincerity that is in Use and Practice among Men.

WHEN the Vice is placed in this contemptible Light, he argues unanswerably against it, in Words and Thoughts so natural, that any Man who reads them would imagine he himself could have been the Author of them.

If the Show of any thing be good for any thing, I am sure Sincerity is better: for why does any Man dissemble, or seem to be that which he is not, but because he thinks it good to have such a Quality as he pretends to? For to counterfeit and dissemble, is to put on the Appearance of some real Excellency. Now the best way in the World to seem to be any thing, is really to be what he would seem to be. Besides, that it is many times as troublesome to make good the Pretence of a good Quality, as to have it; and if a Man have it not, it is ten to one but he is discovered to want it; and then all his Pains and Labour to seem to have it, is lost.

IN another Part of the same Discourse he goes on to shew, that all Artifice must naturally tend to the Disappointment of him that practises it.

WHATSOEVER Convenience may be thought to be in Falshood and Dissimulation, it is soon over; but the Inconvenience of it is perpetual, because it brings