



N^o 150. Wednesday, August 22.

*Nil habet infelix paupertas durius in se,
Quam quod ridiculos homines facit* — Juv.

AS I was walking in my Chamber the Morning before I went last into the Country, I heard the Hawkers with great Vehemence crying about a Paper, entitled, *The ninety nine Plagues of an empty Purse*. I had indeed some Time before observed, that the Orators of *Grubstreet* had dealt very much in *Plagues*. They have already published in the same Month, *The Plagues of Matrimony*, *The Plagues of a single Life*, *The nineteen Plagues of a Chambermaid*, *The Plagues of a Coachman*, *The Plagues of a Footman*, and *the Plague of Plagues*. The Success these several *Plagues* met with, probably gave Occasion to the above-mentioned Poem on an *empty Purse*. However that be, the same Noise so frequently repeated under my Window, drew me insensibly to think on some of those Inconveniencies and Mortifications which usually attend on Poverty, and in short gave Birth to the present Speculation: For after my Fancy had run over the most obvious and common Calamities which Men of mean Fortunes are liable to, it descended to those little Insults and Contempts, which tho' they may seem to dwindle into nothing when a Man offers to describe them, are perhaps in themselves more cutting and insupportable than the former. *Juvenal*, with a great deal of Humour and Reason tells us, that nothing bore harder upon a poor Man in his Time, than the continual Ridicule which his Habit and Dress afforded to the Beaus of *Rome*.

*Quid quod materiam præbet causasque jocorum
Omnibus hic idem? si sæda & scissa lacerna,
Si toga sordidula est, & rupta calceus alter
Pelle patet, vel si consuto vulnere crassum
Atque recens linum ostendit non una Cicatrix.* Juv. Sat. 3.

Add,

*Add, that the Rich have still a Gibe in Store,
And will be monstrous witty on the Poor ;
For the torn Surtout and the tatter'd Vest,
The Wretch and all his Wardrobe are a Jest ;
The greasy Gown sully'd with often turning,
Gives a good Hint to say the Man's in Mourning ;
Or if the Shoe be ript, or Patch is put,
He's wounded ! see the Plaister on his Foot. Dryd.*

'Tis on this Occasion that he afterwards adds the Reflexion which I have chosen for my Motto.

*Want is the Scorn of ev'ry wealthy Fool,
And Wit in Rags is turn'd to Ridicule. Dryd.*

IT must be confess'd, that few things make a Man appear more despicable, or more prejudice his Hearers against what he is going to offer, than an awkward or pitiful Dress ; infomuch that I fancy, had Tully himself pronounced one of his Orations with a Blanket about his Shoulders, more People would have laugh'd at his Dress than have admir'd his Eloquence. This last Reflexion made me wonder at a Set of Men, who, without being subjected to it by the Unkindness of their Fortunes, are contented to draw upon themselves the Ridicule of the World in this Particular ; I mean such as take it into their Heads, that the first regular Step to be a Wit is to commence a Sloven. It is certain nothing has so much debas'd that, which must have been otherwise so great a Character ; and I know not how to account for it, unless it may possibly be in Complaisance to those narrow Minds who can have no Notion of the same Person's possessing different Accomplishments ; or that it is a sort of Sacrifice which some Men are contented to make to Calumny, by allowing it to fasten on one Part of their Character, while they are endeavouring to establish another. Yet however unaccountable this foolish Custom is, I am afraid it could plead a long Prescription ; and probably gave too much Occasion for the vulgar Definition still remaining among us of an *Heathen Philosopher*.

I have seen the Speech of a *Terra-filius*, spoken in King Charles II's Reign ; in which he describes two very eminent Men, who were perhaps the greatest Scholars of their

their Age; and after having mentioned the intire Friendship between them, concludes, That *they had but one Mind, one Purse, one Chamber, and one Hat*. The Men of Business were also infected with a sort of Singularity little better than this. I have heard my Father say, that a broad-brimm'd Hat, short Hair, and unfolded Handkerchief, were in his Time absolutely necessary to denote a *notable Man*; and that he had known two or three who aspired to the Characters of *very notable*, wear Shoe-strings with great Success.

TO the Honour of our present Age it must be allowed, that some of our greatest Genius's for *Wit* and *Business* have almost intirely broke the Neck of these Absurdities.

VICTOR, after having dispatched the most important Affairs of the Commonwealth, has appeared at an Assembly, where all the Ladies have declared him the genteelest Man in the Company; and in *Atticus*, tho' every way one of the greatest Genius's the Age has produced, one sees nothing particular in his Dress or Carriage to denote his Pretensions to Wit and Learning: So that at present a Man may venture to cock up his Hat, and wear a fashionable Wig, without being taken for a Rake or a Fool.

THE Medium between a Fop and a Sloven is what a Man of Sense would endeavour to keep; yet I remember Mr. *Osborn* advises his Son to appear in his Habit rather above than below his Fortune; and tells him, that he will find an handsom Suit of Clothes always procures some additional Respect. I have indeed my self observed that my Banker ever bows lowest to me when I wear my full-bottom'd Wig; and writes me *Mr.* or *Esq.*; accordingly as he sees me dressed.

I shall conclude this Paper with an Adventure which I was my self an Eye-witness of very lately.

I happened the other Day to call in at a celebrated Coffee-house near the *Temple*. I had not been there long when there came in an elderly Man very meanly dressed, and sat down by me; he had a thread-bare loose Coat on, which it was plain he wore to keep himself warm, and not to favour his under Suit, which seemed to have been at least his Contemporary: His short Wig and Hat were both answerable to the rest of his Apparel. He was no sooner

sooner seated than he called for a Dish of Tea; but as several Gentlemen in the Room wanted other things, the Boys of the House did not think themselves at leisure to mind him. I could observe the old Fellow was very uneasy at the Affront, and at his being obliged to repeat his Commands several Times to no purpose; 'till at last one of the Lads presented him with some stale Tea in a broken Dish, accompanied with a Plate of brown Sugar; which so raised his Indignation, that after several obliging Appellations of Dog and Rascal, he asked him aloud before the whole Company, *Why he must be used with less Respect than that Fop there?* pointing to a well-dressed young Gentleman who was drinking Tea at the opposite Table. The Boy of the House replied with a great deal of Pertness, That his Master had two sorts of Customers, and that the Gentleman at the other Table had given him many a Six-pence for wiping his Shoes. By this time the young *Templar*, who found his Honour concerned in the Dispute, and that the Eyes of the whole Coffee-house were upon him, had thrown aside a Paper he had in his Hand, and was coming towards us, while we at the Table made what haste we could to get away from the impending Quarrel, but were all of us surprised to see him as he approached nearer put on an Air of Deference and Respect. To whom the old Man said, *Hark you, Sirrah, I'll pay off your extravagant Bills once more; but will take effectual Care for the future, that your Prodigality shall not spirit up a Parcel of Rascals to insult your Father.*

THO' I by no means approve either the Impudence of the Servants or the Extravagance of the Son, I cannot but think the old Gentleman was in some measure justly served for walking in Masquerade, I mean appearing in a Dress so much beneath his Quality and Estate.

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Thursday,