

Advices we had received from *France*, it was impossible that it could be otherwise. As he was laying these together, and dictating to his Hearers with great Authority, there came in a Gentleman from *Garaway's*, who told us that there were several Letters from *France* just come in, with Advice that the King was in good Health, and was gone out a Hunting the very Morning the Post came away: Upon which the Haberdasher stole off his Hat that hung upon a wooden Peg by him, and retired to his Shop with great Confusion. This Intelligence put a Stop to my Travels, which I had prosecuted with so much Satisfaction; not being a little pleased to hear so many different Opinions upon so great an Event, and to observe how naturally upon such a Piece of News every one is apt to consider it with a Regard to his particular Interest and Advantage. L

N<sup>o</sup> 404.

Friday, June 13.

— Non omnia possumus omnes. Virg.

NATURE does nothing in vain: the Creator of the Universe has appointed every thing to a certain Use and Purpose, and determin'd it to a settled Course and Sphere of Action, from which, if it in the least deviates, it becomes unfit to answer those Ends for which it was designed. In like manner it is in the Dispositions of Society, the civil Oeconomy is formed in a Chain as well as the natural; and in either Case the Breach but of one Link puts the Whole in some Disorder. It is, I think, pretty plain, that most of the Absurdity and Ridicule we meet with in the World, is generally owing to the impertinent Affectation of excelling in Characters Men are not fit for, and for which Nature never designed them.

EVERY Man has one or more Qualities which may make him useful both to himself and others: Nature never

ver fails of pointing them out, and while the Infant continues under her Guardianship, she brings him on in his Way; and then offers her self for a Guide in what remains of the Journey; if he proceeds in that Course, he can hardly miscarry: Nature makes good her Engagements; for as she never promises what she is not able to perform, so she never fails of performing what she promises. But the Misfortune is, Men despise what they may be Masters of, and affect what they are not fit for; they reckon themselves already possessed of what their Genius inclined them to, and so bend all their Ambition to excel in what is out of their Reach: Thus they destroy the Use of their natural Talents, in the same manner as covetous Men do their Quiet and Repose; they can enjoy no Satisfaction in what they have, because of the absurd Inclination they are possessed with for what they have not.

CLEANTHES had good Sense, a great Memory, and a Constitution capable of the closest Application: In a word, there was no Profession in which *Cleanthes* might not have made a very good Figure; but this won't satisfy him, he takes up an unaccountable Fondness for the Character of a fine Gentleman; all his Thoughts are bent upon this: instead of attending a Dissection, frequenting the Courts of Justice, or studying the Fathers, *Cleanthes* reads Plays, dances, dresses, and spends his Time in Drawing-rooms; instead of being a good Lawyer, Divine, or Physician, *Cleanthes* is a downright Coxcomb, and will remain to all that knew him a contemptible Example of Talents misapplied. It is to this Affectation the World owes its whole Race of Coxcombs: Nature in her whole Drama never drew such a Part: she has sometimes made a Fool, but a Coxcomb is always of a Man's own making, by applying his Talents otherwise than Nature designed, who ever bears a high Repentment for being put out of her Course, and never fails of taking her Revenge on those that do so. Opposing her Tendency in the Application of a Man's Parts, has the same Success as declining from her Course in the Production of Vegetables, by the Assistance of Art and an hot Bed: We may possibly extort an unwilling Plant, or an untimely Salad; but how weak, how tasteless and insipid? Just as insipid as the Poetry of *Valerio*: *Valerio* had an universal Character,



rafter, was genteel, had Learning, thought juſtly, ſpoke correctly; 'twas believed there was nothing in which *Valerio* did not excel; and 'twas ſo far true, that there was but one; *Valerio* had no Genius for Poetry, yet he's reſolved to be a Poet; he writes Verſes, and takes great Pains to convince the Town, that *Valerio* is not that extraordinary Perſon he was taken for.

IF Men would be content to graft upon Nature, and aſſiſt her Operations, what mighty Effects might we expect? *Tully* would not ſtand ſo much alone in Oratory, *Virgil* in Poetry, or *Cæſar* in War. To build upon Nature, is laying the Foundation upon a Rock; every thing diſpoſes it ſelf into Order as it were of Courſe, and the whole Work is half done as ſoon as undertaken. *Cicero's* Genius inclined him to Oratory, *Virgil's* to follow the Train of the Muſes; they piously obeyed the Admonition, and were rewarded. Had *Virgil* attended the Bar, his modeſt and ingenious Virtue would ſurely have made but a very indifferent Figure; and *Tully's* declamatory Inclination would have been as uſeleſs in Poetry. Nature, if left to her ſelf, leads us on in the beſt Courſe, but will do nothing by Compulſion and Conſtraint; and if we are not ſatiſfied to go her way, we are always the greateſt Sufferers by it.

WHEREVER Nature deſigns a Production, ſhe always diſpoſes Seeds proper for it, which are as abſolutely neceſſary to the Formation of any moral or intellectual Excellence, as they are to the Being and Growth of Plants; and I know not by what Fate and Folly it is, that Men are taught not to reckon him equally abſurd that will write Verſes in ſpite of Nature, with that Gardiner that ſhould undertake to raiſe a Junquil or Tulip without the Help of their reſpective Seeds.

AS there is no good or bad Quality that does not affect both Sexes, ſo it is not to be imagined but the fair Sex muſt have ſuffered by an Affectation of this Nature, at leaſt as much as the other: The ill Effect of it is in none ſo conſpicuous as in the two oppoſite Characters of *Cælia* and *Iras*; *Cælia* has all the Charms of Perſon, together with an abundant Sweetneſs of Nature, but wants Wit, and has a very ill Voice; *Iras* is ugly and ungenteel, but has Wit and good Senſe: If *Cælia* would be ſilent,

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her Beholders would adore her; if *Irás* would talk, her Hearers would admire her; but *Cælia's* Tongue runs incessantly, while *Irás* gives her self silent Airs and soft Languors; so that 'tis difficult to persuade one's self that *Cælia* has Beauty and *Irás* Wit: Each neglects her own Excellence, and is ambitious of the other's Character; *Irás* would be thought to have as much Beauty as *Cælia*, and *Cælia* as much Wit as *Irás*.

THE great Misfortune of this Affectation is, that Men not only lose a good Quality, but also contract a bad one: They not only are unfit for what they were designed, but they assign themselves to what they are not fit for; and instead of making a very good Figure one Way, make a very ridiculous one another. If *Semanthe* would have been satisfied with her natural Complexion, she might still have been celebrated by the Name of the Olive Beauty; but *Semanthe* has taken up an Affectation to White and Red, and is now distinguished by the Character of the Lady that paints so well. In a word, could the World be reformed to the Obedience of that famed Dictate, *Follow Nature*, which the Oracle of *Delphos* pronounced to *Cicero* when he consulted what Course of Studies he should pursue, we should see almost every Man as eminent in his proper Sphere as *Tully* was in his, and should in a very short time find Impertinence and Affectation banished from among the Women, and Coxcombs and false Characters from among the Men. For my part, I could never consider this preposterous Repugnancy to Nature any otherwise, than not only as the greatest Folly, but also one of the most heinous Crimes, since it is a direct Opposition to the Disposition of Providence, and (as *Tully* expresses it) like the Sin of the Giants, an actual Rebellion against Heaven.



Saturday,