

*in Poetry and Fiction have to please the Imagination. What Liberties are allowed them.*

## PAPER IX.

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## PAPER XI.

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N<sup>o</sup> 422. Friday, July 4.

*Hæc scripsi non otii abundantia sed amoris erga te.*  
Tull. Epist.

I Do not know any thing which gives greater Disturbance to Conversation, than the false Notion some People have of Rallery. It ought certainly to be the first Point to be aimed at in Society, to gain the Goodwill of those with whom you converse. The Way to that, is to shew you are well inclined towards them :

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What then can be more absurd, than to set up for being extremely sharp and biting, as the Term is in your Expressions to your Familiars? A Man who has no good Quality but Courage is in a very ill way towards making an agreeable Figure in the World, because that which he has superior to other People cannot be exerted, without raising himself an *Enemy*. Your Gentleman of a Satirical Vein is in the like Condition. To say a Thing which perplexes the Heart of him you speak to, or brings Blushes into his Face, is a degree of Murder; and it is, I think, an unpardonable Offence to shew a Man you do not care, whether he is pleased or displeased. But won't you then take a Jest? Yes: but pray let it be a Jest. It is no Jest to put me, who am so unhappy as to have an utter Aversion to speaking to more than one Man at a time, under a Necessity to explain my self in much Company, and reducing me to Shame and Derision, except I perform what my Infirmary of Silence disables me to do.

*CALLISTHENES* has great Wit accompanied with that Quality (without which a Man can have no Wit at all) a sound Judgment. This Gentleman rallies the best of any Man I know, for he forms his Ridicule upon a Circumstance which you are in your Heart not unwilling to grant him, to wit that you are Guilty of an Excess in something which is in it self laudable. He very well understands what you would be, and needs not fear your Anger for declaring you are a little too much that Thing. The Generous will bear being reproached as Lavish, and the Valiant, Rash, without being provoked to Resentment against their Monitor. What has been said to be a Mark of a good Writer, will fall in with the Character of a good Companion. The good Writer makes his Reader better pleased with himself, and the agreeable Man makes his Friends enjoy themselves, rather than him, while he is in their Company. *Callisthenes* does this with inimitable Pleasantry. He whispered a Friend the other Day, so as to be overheard by a young Officer, who gave Symptoms of Cocking upon the Company, That Gentleman has very much of the Air of a General Officer. The Youth immediately put on a Composed Behaviour, and behaved himself suitably to the Conceptions he believed the Company had of him. It is to be allowed that *Callisthenes* will



will make a Man run into impertinent Relations, to his own Advantage, and exprefs the Satisfaction he has in his own dear self till he is very ridiculous, but in this case the Man is made a Fool by his own Consent, and not exposed as such whether he will or no. I take it therefore that to make Rallery agreeable, a Man must either not know he is rallied, or think never the worse of himself if he sees he is.

*ACETUS* is of a quite contrary Genius, and is more generally admired than *Callisthenes*, but not with Justice; *Acetus* has no regard to the Modesty or Weakness of the Person he rallies; but if the Quality or Humility gives him any Superiority to the Man he would fall upon, he has no Mercy on making the Onset. He can be pleased to see his best Friend out of Countenance, while the Laugh is loud in his own Applause. His Rallery always puts the Company into little Divisions and separate Interests, while that of *Callisthenes* cements it, and makes every Man not only better pleased with himself, but also with all the rest in the Conversation.

TO rally well, it is absolutely necessary that Kindness must run thro' all you say, and you must ever preserve the Character of a Friend to support your Pretensions to be free with a Man. *Acetus* ought to be banished human Society, because he raises his Mirth upon giving Pain to the Person upon whom he is pleasant. Nothing but the Malevolence, which is too general towards those who excel, could make his Company tolerated; but they with whom he converses, are sure to see some Man sacrificed where-ever he is admitted, and all the Credit he has for Wit is owing to the Gratification it gives to other Mens Ill-nature.

*MINUTIUS* has a Wit that conciliates a Man's Love at the same time that it is exerted against his Faults. He has an Art of keeping the Person he rallies in Countenance, by insinuating that he himself is guilty of the same Imperfection. This he does with so much Address, that he seems rather to bewail himself, than fall upon his Friend.

IT is really monstrous to see how unaccountably it prevails among Men, to take the Liberty of displeasing each other. One would think sometimes that the Con-

tention is, who shall be most disagreeable. Allusions to past Follies, Hints which revive what a Man has a mind to forget for ever, and deserves that all the rest of the World should, are commonly brought forth even in Company of Men of Distinction. They do not thrust with the Skill of Fencers, but cut up with the Barbarity of Butchers. It is, methinks, below the Character of Men of Humanity and Good-manners, to be capable of Mirth while there is any one of the Company in Pain and Disorder. They who have the true Taste of Conversation, enjoy themselves in a Communication of each other's Excellencies, and not in a Triumph over their Imperfections. *Fortius* would have been reckoned a Wit, if there had never been a Fool in the World; He wants not Foils to be a Beauty, but has that natural Pleasure in observing Perfection in others, that his own Faults are over-looked out of Gratitude by all his Acquaintance.

AFTER these several Characters of Men who succeed or fail in Rallery, it may not be amiss to reflect a little further what one takes to be the most agreeable Kind of it; and that to me appears when the Satyr is directed against Vice, with an Air of Contempt of the Fault, but no Ill-will to the Criminal, Mr. *Congreve's Doris* is a Master-piece in this Kind. It is the Character of a Woman utterly abandoned, but her Impudence by the finest Piece of Rallery is made only Generosity.

*Peculiar therefore is her Way,  
Whether by Nature taught,  
I shall not undertake to say,  
Or by Experience bought;*

*For who o'er Night obtain'd her Grace,  
She can next Day disown,  
And stare upon the strange Man's Face,  
As one she ne'er had known.*

*So well she can the Truth disguise,  
Such artful Wonder frame,  
The Lover or distrusts his Eyes,  
Or thinks 'twas all a Dream.*

*Some*