

lo ! when he had anointed the Corps all over, and began to apply the Liquor, the Body stirred, and *Renatus*, in a Fright, broke the Phial. T



N^o 427. *Thursday, July 10.*

Quantum à rerum turpitudine abes, tantum Te à verborum libertate sejungas. Tull.

IT is a certain Sign of an ill Heart to be inclined to Defamation. They who are harmless and innocent, can have no Gratification that way ; but it ever arises from a Neglect of what is laudable in a Man's self, and an Impatience of seeing it in another. Else why should Virtue provoke ? Why should Beauty displease in such a Degree, that a Man given to Scandal never lets the Mention of either pass by him without offering something to the Diminution of it ? A Lady the other Day at a Visit being attacked somewhat rudely by one, whose own Character has been very roughly treated, answered a great deal of Heat and Intemperance very calmly, *Good Madam spare me, who am none of your Match ; I speak ill of no Body, and it is a new Thing to me to be spoken ill of.* Little Minds think Fame consists in the Number of Votes they have on their Side among the Multitude, whereas it is really the inseparable Follower of good and worthy Actions. Fame is as natural a Follower of Merit, as a Shadow is of a Body. It is true, when Crowds press upon you, this Shadow cannot be seen, but when they separate from around you, it will again appear. The Lazy, the Idle, and the Froward, are the Persons who are most pleas'd with the little Tales which pass about the Town to the Disadvantage of the rest of the World. Were it not for the Pleasure of speaking Ill, there are Numbers of People who are too lazy to go out of their own Houses, and too ill-natur'd to open their Lips in Conversation. It was not a little diverting the other Day to

observe a Lady reading a Post-Letter, and at these Words, *After all her Aims, he has heard some Story or other, and the Match is broke off*, give Orders in the midst of her Reading, *Put to the Horses*. That a young Woman of Merit has missed an advantageous Settlement, was News not to be delayed, lest some Body else should have given her malicious Acquaintance that Satisfaction before her. The Unwillingness to receive good Tidings is a Quality as inseparable from a Scandal-Bearer, as the Readiness to divulge bad. But, alas, how wretchedly low and contemptible is that State of Mind, that cannot be pleased but by what is the Subject of Lamentation. This Temper has ever been in the highest Degree odious to gallant Spirits. The *Persian Soldier*, who was heard reviling *Alexander the Great*, was well admonish'd by his Officer; *Sir, you are paid to fight against Alexander, and not to rail at him*.

CICERO in one of his Pleadings, defending his Client from general Scandal, says very handsomely, and with much Reason, *There are many who have particular Engagements to the Prosecutor: There are many who are known to have Ill-will to him for whom I appear; there are many who are naturally addicted to Defamation, and envious of any Good to any Man, who may have contributed to spread Reports of this kind: For nothing is so swift as Scandal, nothing is more easily sent abroad, nothing received with more Welcome, nothing diffuses itself so universally. I shall not desire, that if any Report to our Disadvantage has any Ground for it, you would overlook or extenuate it: But if there be any thing advanced, without a Person who can say whence he had it, or which is attested by one who forgot who told him it, or who had it from one of so little Consideration that he did not then think it worth his Notice, all such Testimonies as these, I know, you will think too slight to have any Credit against the Innocence and Honour of your Fellow-Citizen*. When an ill Report is traced, it very often vanishes among such as the Orator has here recited. And how despicable a Creature must that be, who is in Pain for what passes among so frivolous a People? There is a Town in *Warwickshire* of good Note, and formerly pretty famous for much Animosity and Disension, the chief Families of which have now turned all their Whispers,
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Backbitings, Envy, and private Malices, into Mirth and Entertainment, by means of a peevish old Gentlewoman, known by the Title of the Lady *Bluemantle*. This Heroine had for many Years together out-done the whole Sisterhood of Gossips, in Invention, quick Utterance, and unprovoked Malice. This good Body is of a lasting Constitution, though extremely decayed in her Eyes, and decrepid in her Feet. The two Circumstances of being always at Home from her Lameness, and very attentive from her Blindness, make her Lodgings the Receptacle of all that passes in Town, Good or Bad; but for the latter she seems to have the better Memory. There is another Thing to be noted of her, which is, That as it is usual with old People, she has a livelier Memory of Things which passed when she was very young, than of late Years. Add to all this, that she does not only not love any Body, but she hates every Body. The Statue in *Rome* does not serve to vent Malice half so well, as this old Lady does to disappoint it. She does not know the Author of any thing that is told her, but can readily repeat the Matter it self; therefore, though she exposes all the whole Town, she offends no one Body in it. She is so exquisitely restless and peevish, that she quarrels with all about her, and sometimes in a Freak will instantly change her Habitation. To indulge this Humour, she is led about the Grounds belonging to the same House she is in, and the Person to whom she is to remove, being in the Plot, are ready to receive her at her own Chamber again. At stated Times, the Gentlewoman at whose House she supposes she is at the Time, is sent for to quarrel with, according to her common Custom: When they have a mind to drive the Jest, she is immediately urged to that Degree, that she will board in a Family with which she has never yet been; and away she will go this Instant, and tell them all that the rest have been saying of them. By this Means she has been an Inhabitant of every House in the Place without stirring from the same Habitation; and the many Stories which every body furnishes her with to favour that Deceit, make her the general Intelligencer of the Town of all that can be said by one Woman against another. Thus groundless Stories die away, and sometimes Truths are smothered under the