

with Infamy in Books, often give a Man a Figure in the World; while several Qualities which are celebrated in Authors, as Generosity, Ingenuity and Good-nature, impoverish and ruin him. This cannot but have a proportionable Effect on Men, whose Tempers and Principles are equally Good and Vicious.

THERE would be at least this Advantage in employing Men of Learning and Parts in Business, that their Prosperity would sit more gracefully on them, and that we should not see many worthless Persons shot up into the greatest Figures of Life. C

N^o 470. Friday, August 29.

*Turpe est difficiles habere nugas,
Et stultus est labor ineptiarum.*

Mart.

I Have been very often disappointed of late Years, when upon examining the new Edition of a Classic Author, I have found above half the Volume taken up with various Readings. When I have expected to meet with a learned Note upon a doubtful Passage in a *Latin* Poet, I have only been informed, that such or such Ancient Manuscripts for an *et* write an *ac*, or of some other notable Discovery of the like Importance. Indeed, when a different Reading gives us a different Sense, or a new Elegance in an Author, the Editor does very well in taking notice of it; but when he only entertains us with the several ways of spelling the same Word, and gathers together the various Blunders and Mistakes of twenty or thirty different Transcribers, they only take up the Time of the learned Reader, and puzzle the Minds of the Ignorant. I have often fancied with my self how enraged an old *Latin* Author would be, should he see the several Absurdities in Sense and Grammar, which are imputed to him by some or other of these various Readings. In one he speaks Nonsense; in another makes use of a Word that was never heard of: And indeed there is scarce a Solecism in Writing which the best Author is not guilty of, if we may be at Liberty to read him

him in the Words of some Manuscript, which the laborious Editor has thought fit to examine in the Prosecution of his Work.

I question not but the Ladies and pretty Fellows will be very curious to understand what it is that I have been hitherto talking of; I shall therefore give them a Notion of this Practice, by endeavouring to write after the manner of several Persons who make an eminent Figure in the Republick of Letters. To this end we will suppose that the following Song is an old Ode which I present to the Publick in a new Edition, with the several various Readings which I find of it in former Editions, and in Ancient Manuscripts. Those who cannot relish the various Readings, will perhaps find their Account in the Song, which never before appeared in Print.

*My Love was fickle once and changing,
Nor e'er would settle in my Heart;
From Beauty still to Beauty ranging,
In ev'ry Face I found a Dart.*

*'Twas first a charming Shape enslav'd me,
An Eye then gave the fatal Stroke;
'Till by her Wit Corinna sav'd me,
And all my former Fetters broke.*

*But now a long and lasting Anguish
For Belvidera I endure;
Hourly I Sigh and hourly Languish,
Nor hope to find the wonted Cure.*

*For here the false unconstant Lover,
After a thousand Beauties shown,
Does new surprising Charms discover,
And finds Variety in One.*

Various Readings.

Stanza the First, Verse the First. *And changing.*] The *and* in some Manuscripts is written thus, &, but that in the Cotton Library writes it in three distinct Letters.

Verse the Second, *Nor e'er would.*] *Aldus* reads it *ever would*; but as this would hurt the Metre, we have restored

store it to its genuine Reading, by observing that *Synæ-*
restis which had been neglected by ignorant Transcribers.

Ibid. *In my Heart.*] *Scaliger* and others, *on my Heart.*

Verse the Fourth. *I found a Dart.*] The *Vatican* Manuscript for *I* reads *it*, but this must have been the Hallucination of the Transcriber, who probably mistook the Dash of the *I* for a *T*.

Stanza the Second, Verse the Second. *The fatal Stroke.*] *Scioppius*, *Salmasius* and many others, for *the* read *a*, but I have stuck to the usual Reading.

Verse the Third. *Till by her Wit.*] Some Manuscripts have it *his Wit*, others *your*, others *their Wit*. But as I find *Corinna* to be the Name of a Woman in other Authors, I cannot doubt but it should be *her*.

Stanza the Third, Verse the First. *A long and lasting Anguish.*] The *German* Manuscript reads *a lasting Passion*, but the Rhime will not admit it.

Verse the Second. *For Belvidera I endure.*] Did not all the Manuscripts reclaim, I should change *Belvidera* into *Pelvidera*; *Pelvis* being used by several of the ancient Comick Writers for a Looking-glass, by which means the Etymology of the Word is very visible, and *Pelvidera* will signify a Lady who often looks in her Glass; as indeed she had very good reason, if she had all those Beauties which our Poet here ascribes to her.

Verse the Third. *Hourly I sigh and hourly languish.*] Some for the Word *hourly* read *daily*, and others *nightly*; the last has great Authorities of its side.

Verse the Fourth. *The wonted Cure.*] The *Elder Stevens* reads *wanted Cure*.

Stanza the Fourth, Verse the Second. *After a thousand Beauties.*] In several Copies we meet with a *Hundred Beauties* by the usual Error of the Transcribers, who probably omitted a Cipher, and had not Taste enough to know that the Word *Thousand* was ten Times a greater Compliment to the Poet's Mistress than an *Hundred*.

Verse the Fourth. *And finds Variety in one.*] Most of the Ancient Manuscripts have it in *two*. Indeed so many of them concur in this last Reading, that I am very much in doubt whether it ought not to take place. There are but two Reasons which incline me to the Reading as