



N^o 172. Monday, September 17.

Non solum Scientia, quæ est remota à Justitia, Calliditas potius quàm Sapientia est appellanda; verum etiam Animus paratus ad periculum, si suâ cupiditate, non utilitate communi, impellitur, Audaciæ potius nomen habeat, quàm Fortitudinis ——— Plato apud Tull.

THERE can be no greater Injury to human Society, than that good Talents among Men should be held honourable to those who are endowed with them, without any Regard how they are applied: The Gifts of Nature and Accomplishments of Art are valuable, but as they are exerted in the Interests of Virtue, or governed by the Rules of Honour. We ought to abstract our Minds from the Observation of an Excellence in those we converse with, till we have taken some Notice, or received some good Information of the Disposition of their Minds; otherwise the Beauty of their Persons, or the Charms of their Wit, may make us fond of those whom our Reason and Judgment will tell us we ought to abhor.

WHEN we suffer our selves to be thus carried away by meer Beauty, or meer Wit, *Omniamente* with all her Vice will bear away as much of our Good-will as the most innocent Virgin or discreet Matron; and there cannot be a more abject Slavery in this World, than to dote upon what we think we ought to condemn: Yet this must be our Condition in all the Parts of Life, if we suffer our selves to approve any Thing but what tends to the Promotion of what is good and honourable. If we would take true Pains with our selves to consider all Things by the Light of Reason and Justice, tho' a Man were in the Height of Youth and amorous Inclinations, he would look upon a Coquette with the same Contempt or Indifference as he would upon a Coxcomb: The wanton Carriage in a Woman would disappoint her of the Admiration which she aims at; and the vain Dress or Discourse of a Man, would

would destroy the Comeliness of his Shape, or Goodness of his Understanding. I say the Goodness of his Understanding, for it is no less common to see Men of Sense commence Coxcombs, than beautiful Women become immodest. When this happens in either, the Favour we are naturally inclined to give to the good Qualities they have from Nature should abate in Proportion. But however just it is to measure the Value of Men by the Application of their Talents, and not by the Eminence of those Qualities abstracted from their Use; I say however just such a Way of judging is, in all Ages as well as this, the Contrary has prevailed upon the Generality of Mankind. How many lewd Devices have been preserved from one Age to another, which had perished as soon as they were made, if Painters and Sculptors had been esteemed as much for the Purpose as the Execution of their Designs? Modest and well-governed Imaginations have by this Means lost the Representations of Ten Thousand charming Portraits, filled with Images of innate Truth, generous Zeal, courageous Faith, and tender Humanity; instead of which, Satyrs, Furies, and Monsters are recommended by those Arts to a shameful Eternity.

THE unjust Application of laudable Talents, is tolerated in the general Opinion of Men, not only in such Cases as are here mentioned, but also in Matters which concern ordinary Life. If a Lawyer were to be esteemed only as he uses his Parts in contending for Justice, and were immediately despicable when he appeared in a Cause which he could not but know was an unjust one, how honourable would his Character be? And how honourable is it in such among us, who follow the Profession no otherwise, than as labouring to protect the Injured, to subdue the Oppressor, to imprison the careless Debtor, and do right to the painful Artificer? But many of this excellent Character are overlooked by the greater Number; who affect covering a weak Place in a Client's Title, diverting the Course of an Inquiry, or finding a skilful Refuge to palliate a Falshood: Yet it is still called Eloquence in the latter, though thus unjustly employed: But Resolution in an Assassin is according to Reason quite as laudable, as Knowledge and Wisdom exercised in the Defence of an ill Cause.

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WERE the Intention stedfastly considered, as the Measure of Approbation, all Falshood would soon be out of Countenance: and an Address in imposing upon Mankind, would be as contemptible in one State of Life as another. A Couple of Courtiers making Professions of Esteem, would make the same Figure after Breach of Promise, as two Knights of the Post convicted of Perjury. But Conversation is fallen so low in point of Morality, that as they say in a Bargain, *Let the Buyer look to it*; so in Friendship, he is the Man in Danger who is most apt to believe: He is the more likely to suffer in the Commerce, who begins with the Obligation of being the more ready to enter into it.

BUT those Men only are truly great, who place their Ambition rather in acquiring to themselves the Conscience of worthy Enterprizes, than in the Prospect of Glory which attends them. These exalted Spirits would rather be secretly the Authors of Events which are serviceable to Mankind, than without being such, to have the publick Fame of it. Where therefore an eminent Merit is robbed by Artifice or Detraction, it does but increase by such Endeavours of its Enemies: The impotent Pains which are taken to fully it, or diffuse it among a Crowd to the Injury of a single Person, will naturally produce the contrary Effect; the Fire will blaze out, and burn up all that attempt to smother what they cannot extinguish.

THERE is but one Thing necessary to keep the Possession of true Glory, which is, to hear the Opposers of it with Patience, and preserve the Virtue by which it was acquired. When a Man is thoroughly persuaded that he ought neither to admire, wish for, or pursue any thing but what is exactly his Duty, it is not in the Power of Seasons, Persons or Accidents to diminish his Value. He only is a great Man who can neglect the Applause of the Multitude, and enjoy himself independent of its Favour. This is indeed an arduous Task; but it should comfort a glorious Spirit that it is the highest Step to which human Nature can arrive. Triumph, Applause, Acclamation, are dear to the Mind of Man; but it is still a more exquisite Delight to say to your self, you have done well, than to hear the whole human Race pronounce you