

I must confess to you, this to Men of Delicacy might have an Effect to cure them; but as they are stupid, noisy and drunken Fellows, it tends only to make Vice in themselves, as they think, pleasant and humorous, and at the same time nauseous in us. I shall, Sir, hereafter from time to time give you the Names of these Wretches who pretend to enter our Houses merely as Spectators. These Men think it Wit to use us ill: Pray tell them, however worthy we are of such Treatment, it is unworthy them to be guilty of it towards us. Pray, Sir, take notice of this, and pity the Oppressed: I wish we could add to it, the Innocent.

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N^o 191. Tuesday, October 9.

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Hom.

SOME ludicrous Schoolmen have put the Case, that if an Ass were placed between two Bundles of Hay, which affected his Senses equally on each Side, and tempted him in the very same Degree, whether it would be possible for him to eat of either. They generally determine this Question to the Disadvantage of the Ass, who they say would starve in the Midst of Plenty, as not having a single Grain of Free-will to determine him more to the one than to the other. The Bundle of Hay on either Side striking his Sight and Smell in the same Proportion, would keep him in a perpetual Suspence, like the two Magnets which Travellers have told us, are placed one of them in the Roof, and the other in the Floor of *Mahomet's* Burying-place at *Mecca*, and by that Means, say they, pull the Impostor's Iron Coffin with such an equal Attraction, that it hangs in the Air between both of them. As for the Ass's Behaviour in such nice Circumstances, whether he would starve sooner than violate his Neutrality to the two Bundles of Hay, I shall not presume to determine; but only take notice of the Conduct of our own Species

Species in the same Perplexity. When a Man has a mind to venture his Money in a Lottery, every Figure of it appears equally alluring, and as likely to succeed as any of its Fellows. They all of them have the same Pretensions to good Luck, stand upon the same Foot of Competition, and no manner of Reason can be given why a Man should prefer one to the other before the Lottery is drawn. In this Case therefore Caprice very often acts in the Place of Reason, and forms to it self some groundless imaginary Motive, where real and substantial ones are wanting. I know a well-meaning Man that is very well pleased to risque his good Fortune upon the Number 1711, because it is the Year of our Lord. I am acquainted with a Tacker that would give a good deal for the Number 134. On the contrary I have been told of a certain zealous Dissenter who being a great Enemy to Popery, and believing that bad men are the most fortunate in this World, will lay two to one on the Number 666 against any other Number, because, says he, it is the Number of the Beast. Several would prefer the Number 12000 before any other, as it is the Number of the Pounds in the great Prize. In short, some are pleased to find their own Age in their Number; some that they have got a Number which makes a pretty Appearance in the Cyphers; and others, because it is the same Number that succeeded in the last Lottery. Each of these, upon no other Grounds, thinks he stands fairest for the great Lot, and that he is possessed of what may not be improperly called the *Golden Number*.

THESE Principles of Election are the Pastimes and Extravagances of Human Reason, which is of so busy a Nature, that it will be exerting it self in the meanest Trifles, and working even when it wants Materials. The wisest of Men are sometimes acted by such unaccountable Motives, as the Life of the Fool and the Superstitious is guided by nothing else.

I am surpris'd that none of the Fortune-tellers, or, as the *French* call them, the *Diseurs de bonne Avanture*, who publish their Bills in every Quarter of the Town, have not turned our Lotteries to their Advantage: Did any of them set up for a Caster of fortunate Figures, what might he not get by his pretended Discoveries and Predictions?

I remember among the Advertisements in the *Post-Boy* of September the 27th, I was surpris'd to see the following one:

This is to give notice, That Ten Shillings over and above the Market-Price, will be given for the Ticket in 1500000 l. Lottery, N^o 132. by Nath. Cliff at the Bible and Three Crowns in Cheap-side.

THIS Advertisement has given great Matter of Speculation to Coffee-house Theorists. Mr. *Cliff's* Principles and Conversation have been canvass'd upon this Occasion, and various Conjectures made why he should thus set his Heart upon N^o 132. I have examined all the Powers in those Numbers, broken them into Fractions, extracted the Square and Cube Root, divided and multiplied them all Ways, but could not arrive at the Secret till about three Days ago, when I received the following Letter from an unknown Hand, by which I find that Mr. *Nathaniel Cliff* is only the Agent, and not the Principal in this Advertisement.

Mr. SPECTATOR,

I Am the Person that lately advertised I would give ten Shillings more than the current Price for the Ticket N^o 132 in the Lottery now drawing; which is a Secret I have communicated to some Friends, who rally me incessantly upon that Account. You must know I have but one Ticket, for which Reason, and a certain Dream I have lately had more than once, I was resolv'd it should be the Number I most approved. I am so positive I have pitched upon the great Lot, that I could almost lay all I am worth of it. My Visions are so frequent and strong upon this Occasion, that I have not only possessed the Lot, but disposed of the Money which in all Probability it will sell for. This Morning, in particular, I set up an Equipage which I look upon to be the gayest in the Town; the Liveries are very rich, but not gaudy. I should be very glad to see a Speculation or two upon Lottery Subjects, in which you would oblige all People concerned, and in particular

Your most humble Servant,

George Gosling.
P. S.

P. S. ' Dear S P E C, if I get the 12000 Pound, I'll make thee a handsom Present.

AFTER having wished my Correspondent good Luck, and thanked him for his intended Kindness, I shall for this Time dismiss the Subject of the Lottery, and only observe that the greatest Part of Mankind are in some Degree guilty of my Friend *Gosling's* Extravagance. We are apt to rely upon future Prospects, and become really expensive while we are only rich in Possibility. We live up to our Expectations, not to our Possessions, and make a Figure proportionable to what we may be, not what we are. We out-run our present Income, as not doubting to disburse our selves out of the Profits of some future Place, Project, or Reversion that we have in view. It is through this Temper of Mind, which is so common among us, that we see Tradesmen break, who have met with no Misfortunes in their Business; and Men of Estates reduced to Poverty, who have never suffered from Losses or Repairs, Tenants, Taxes, or Law-suits. In short, it is this foolish sanguine Temper, this depending upon contingent Futurities, that occasions Romantick Generosity, Chimerical Grandeur, senseless Ostentation, and generally ends in Beggary and Ruin. The Man who will live above his present Circumstances, is in great Danger of living in a little time much beneath them, or, as the *Italian* Proverb runs, The Man who lives by Hope will die by Hunger.

IT should be an indispensable Rule in Life, to contract our Desires to our present Condition, and whatever may be our Expectations, to live within the Compass of what we actually possess. It will be Time enough to enjoy an Estate when it comes into our Hands; but if we anticipate our good Fortune, we shall lose the Pleasure of it when it arrives, and may possibly never possess what we have so foolishly counted upon.

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Wednesday,