

'fore if you have nothing to say to the contrary, I shall  
'take *Will*. Alas, poor *Tom*!

Your Humble Servant,

T

BIDDY LOVELESS.



N<sup>o</sup> 197. Tuesday, October 16.

*Alter rixatur de lanâ sæpe caprinâ,  
Propugnat nugis armatus: scilicet, ut non  
Sit mihi prima fides; & verè quod placet, ut non  
Acrius elatrem, pretium ætas altera sordet.  
Ambigitur quid enim? Cassor sciat an Docilis plus,  
Brundisium Numici melius via ducat an Appi. Hor.*

EVERY Age a Man passes through, and Way of Life he engages in, has some particular Vice or Imperfection naturally cleaving to it, which it will require his nicest Care to avoid. The several Weaknesses, to which Youth, Old Age, and Manhood are exposed, have long since been set down by many both of the Poets and Philosophers; but I do not remember to have met with any Author who has treated of those ill Habits Men are subject to, not so much by reason of their different Ages and Tempers, as the particular Profession or Business in which they were educated and brought up.

I am the more surpris'd to find this Subject so little touch'd on, since what I am here speaking of is so apparent, as not to escape the most vulgar Observation. The Business Men are chiefly conversant in, does not only give a certain Cast or Turn to their Minds, but is very often apparent in their outward Behaviour, and some of the most indifferent Actions of their Lives. It is this Air diffusing it self over the whole Man, which helps us to find out a Person at his first Appearance; so that the most careless Observer fancies he can scarce be mistaken in the Carriage of a Seaman or the Gait of a Tailor.

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THE liberal Arts, though they may possibly have less Effect on our external Mien and Behaviour, make so deep an Impression on the Mind, as is very apt to bend it wholly one Way.

THE Mathematician will take little less than Demonstration in the most common Discourse, and the Schoolman is as great a Friend to Definitions and Syllogisms. The Physician and Divine are often heard to dictate in private Companies with the same Authority which they exercise over their Patients and Disciples; while the Lawyer is putting Cases, and raising Matter for Disputation out of every thing that occurs.

I may possibly some time or other animadvert more at large on the particular Fault each Profession is most infected with; but shall at present wholly apply my self to the Cure of what I last mentioned, namely that Spirit of Strife and Contention in the Conversations of Gentlemen of the long Robe.

THIS is the more ordinary, because these Gentlemen regarding Argument as their own proper Province, and very often making Ready-money of it, think it unsafe to yield before Company. They are shewing in common Talk how zealously they could defend a Cause in Court, and therefore frequently forget to keep that Temper which is absolutely requisite to render Conversation pleasant and instructive.

CAPTAIN SENTRY pushes this Matter so far, that I have heard him say, *He has known but few Pleaders that were tolerable Company.*

THE Captain, who is a Man of good Sense, but dry Conversation, was last Night giving me an Account of a Discourse, in which he had lately been engaged with a young Wrangler in the Law. I was giving my Opinion, says the Captain, without apprehending any Debate that might arise from it, of a General's Behaviour in a Battle that was fought some Years before either the Templar or my self were born. The young Lawyer immediately took me up, and by reasoning above a Quarter of an Hour upon a Subject which I saw he understood nothing of, endeavoured to shew me that my Opinions were ill-grounded. Upon which, says the Captain, to avoid any farther Contests, I told him, That truly I had not considered



der'd those several Arguments which he had brought against me, and that there might be a great deal in them. Ay, but says my Antagonist, who would not let me escape so, there are several Things to be urged in favour of your Opinion which you have omitted; and thereupon begun to shine on the other Side of the Question. Upon this, says the Captain, I came over to my first Sentiments, and intirely acquiesced in his Reasons for my so doing. Upon which the Templar again recovered his former Posture, and confuted both himself and me a third Time. In short, says my Friend, I found he was resolved to keep me at Sword's Length, and never let me close with him, so that I had nothing left but to hold my tongue, and give my Antagonist free Leave to smile at his Victories, who I found, like *Hudibras*, could still change Sides, and still confute.

FOR my own part, I have ever regarded our Inns of Court as Nurseries of Statesmen and Lawgivers, which makes me often frequent that Part of the Town with great Pleasure.

UPON my calling in lately at one of the most noted *Temple* Coffee-houses, I found the whole Room, which was full of young Students, divided into several Parties, each of which was deeply engaged in some Controversy. The Management of the late Ministry was attacked and defended with great Vigour; and several Preliminaries to the Peace were proposed by some, and rejected by others; the demolishing of *Dunkirk* was so eagerly insisted on, and so warmly controverted, as had like to have produced a Challenge. In short, I observed that the Desire of Victory, whetted with the little Prejudices of Party and Interest, generally carried the Argument to such a Height, as made the Disputants insensibly conceive an Aversion towards each other, and part with the highest Dissatisfaction on both Sides.

THE managing an Argument handsomly being so nice a Point, and what I have seen so very few excel in, I shall here set down a few Rules on that Head, which, among other things, I gave in Writing to a young Kinsman of mine, who had made so great a Proficiency in the Law, that he began to plead in Company, upon every Subject that was started.

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HAVING the intire Manuscript by me, I may, perhaps, from time to time, publish such Parts of it as I shall think requisite for the Instruction of the *British* Youth. What regards my present Purpose is as follows:

A VOID Disputes as much as possible. In order to appear easy and well-bred in Conversation, you may assure your self that it requires more Wit, as well as more Good-humour, to improve than to contradict the Notions of another: but if you are at any time obliged to enter on an Argument, give your Reasons with the utmost Coolness and Modesty, two Things which scarce ever fail of making an Impression on the Hearers. Besides, if you are neither dogmatical, nor shew either by your Actions or Words, that you are full of your self, all will the more heartily rejoice at your Victory. Nay, should you be pinched in your Argument, you may make your Retreat with a very good Grace: You were never positive, and are now glad to be better informed. This has made some approve the Socratical Way of Reasoning, where while you scarce affirm any thing, you can hardly be caught in an Absurdity, and tho' possibly you are endeavouring to bring over another to your Opinion, which is firmly fix'd, you seem only to desire Information from him.

IN order to keep that Temper which is so difficult, and yet so necessary to preserve, you may please to consider, that nothing can be more unjust or ridiculous, than to be angry with another because he is not of your Opinion. The Interests, Education, and Means by which Men attain their Knowledge, are so very different, that it is impossible they should all think alike; and he has at least as much Reason to be angry with you, as you with him. Sometimes to keep yourself cool, it may be of Service to ask your self fairly, What might have been your Opinion, had you all the Biases of Education and Interest your Adversary may possibly have? But if you contend for the Honour of Victory alone, you may lay down this as an infallible Maxim, That you cannot make a more false Step, or give your Antagonists a greater Advantage over you, than by falling into a Passion.

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WHEN an Argument is over, how many weighty Reasons does a Man recollect, which his Heat and Violence made him utterly forget?

IT is yet more absurd to be angry with a Man because he does not apprehend the Force of your Reasons, or gives weak ones of his own. If you argue for Reputation, this makes your Victory the easier; he is certainly in all respects an Object of your Pity, rather than Anger; and if he cannot comprehend what you do, you ought to thank Nature for her Favours, who has given you so much the clearer Understanding.

YOU may please to add this Consideration, That among your Equals no one values your Anger, which only preys upon its Master; and perhaps you may find is not very consistent either with Prudence or your Ease, to punish your self whenever you meet with a Fool or a Knave.

LASTLY, If you propose to your self the true End of Argument, which is Information, it may be a seasonable Check to your Passion; for if you search purely after Truth, 'twill be almost indifferent to you where you find it. I cannot in this Place omit an Observation which I have often made, namely, That nothing procures a Man more Esteem and less Envy from the whole Company, than if he chooses the Part of Moderator, without engaging directly on either Side in a Dispute. This gives him the Character of Impartial, furnishes him with an Opportunity of sifting Things to the Bottom, shewing his Judgment, and of sometimes making handsom Compliments to each of the contending Parties.

I shall close this Subject with giving you one Caution: When you have gained a Victory, do not push it too far; 'tis sufficient to let the Company and your Adversary see 'tis in your Power, but that you are too generous to make use of it.

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Wednesday,