

‘ would take a Pinch. Pray, Sir, think of these things in
 ‘ time, and you will oblige,
 T Sir, your most humble Servant.



N^o 345. Saturday, April 5.

*Sandius his animal, mentisque capacius altæ
 Deerat adhuc, et quod dominari in cætera posset.
 Natus homo est* ————— Ov. Met.

THE Accounts which *Raphael* gives of the Battle of Angels, and the Creation of the World, have in them those Qualifications which the Criticks judge requisite to an Epifode. They are nearly related to the principal Action, and have a just Connexion with the Fable.

THE eighth Book opens with a beautiful Description of the Impression which this Discourse of the Archangel made on our first Parents. *Adam* afterwards, by a very natural Curiosity, inquires concerning the Motions of those Celestial Bodies which make the most glorious Appearance among the six days Works. The Poet here, with a great deal of Art, represents *Eve* as withdrawing from this part of their Conversation, to Amusements more suitable to her Sex. He well knew that the Epifode in this Book, which is filled with *Adam's* Account of his Passion and Esteem for *Eve*, would have been improper for her hearing, and has therefore devised very just and beautiful Reasons for her retiring.

*So spake our Sire, and by his Count'nance seem'd
 Ent'ring on studious Thoughts abstruse: which Eve
 Perceiving, where she sat retired in sight,
 With lowliness majestick, from her Seat,
 And Grace, that won who saw to wish her Stay,
 Rose; and went forth among her Fruits and Flowers
 To visit how they prosper'd, Bud and Bloom,
 Her Nursery: they at her coming sprung,
 And touch'd by her fair Tendance gladlier grew.
 Yet went she not, as not with such Discourse*

Delighted,

*Delighted, or not capable her Ear
Of what was high: Such Pleasure she reserved,
Adam relating, she sole Auditress;
Her Husband the Relater she preferr'd
Before the Angel, and of him to ask
Chose rather: he, she knew, would intermix
Grateful Digressions, and solve high Dispute
With conjugal Caresses: from his Lip
Not Words alone pleas'd her. O when meet now
Such Pairs, in Love and mutual Honour join'd!*

THE Angel's returning a doubtful Answer to *Adam's* Enquiries, was not only proper for the moral Reason which the Poet assigns, but because it would have been highly absurd to have given the Sanction of an Archangel to any particular System of Philosophy. The chief Points in the *Ptolemaick* and *Copernican* Hypothesis are described with great Conciseness and Perspicuity, and at the same time dressed in very pleasing and poetical Images.

ADAM, to detain the Angel, enters afterwards upon his own History, and relates to him the Circumstances in which he found himself upon his Creation; as also his Conversation with his Maker, and his first meeting with *Eve*. There is no part of the Poem more apt to raise the Attention of the Reader, than this Discourse of our great Ancestor; as nothing can be more surprising and delightful to us, than to hear the Sentiments that arose in the first Man while he was yet new and fresh from the Hands of his Creator. The Poet has interwoven every thing which is delivered upon this Subject in Holy Writ with so many beautiful Imaginations of his own, that nothing can be conceived more just and natural than this whole Episode. As our Author knew this Subject could not but be agreeable to his Reader, he would not throw it into the Relation of the six days Works, but reserved it for a distinct Episode, that he might have an opportunity of expatiating upon it more at large. Before I enter on this part of the Poem, I cannot but take notice of two shining Passages in the Dialogue between *Adam* and the Angel. The first is that wherein our Ancestor gives an account of the Pleasure he took in conversing with him, which contains a very noble Moral.

*For while I sit with thee, I seem in Heav'n,
And sweeter thy Discourse is to my Ear
Than Fruits of Palm-tree (pleasantest to Thirst
And Hunger both from Labour) at the hour
Of sweet Repast: they satiate, and soon fill,
Tho' pleasant; but thy Words with Grace divine
Imbu'd, bring to their Sweetness no Satiety.*

THE other I shall mention, is that in which the Angel gives a Reason why he should be glad to hear the Story *Adam* was about to relate.

*For I that day was absent, as besel,
Bound on a Voyage uncouth and obscure;
Far on Excursion towards the Gates of Hell,
Squar'd in full Legion (such Command we had)
To see that none thence issued forth a Spy,
Or Enemy, while God was in his Work,
Lest he, incens'd at such Eruption bold,
Destruction with Creation might have mix'd.*

THERE is no question but our Poet drew the Image in what follows from that in *Virgil's* sixth Book, where *Aeneas* and the Sibyl stand before the Adamantine Gates, which are there described as shut upon the Place of Torments, and listen to the Groans, the Clank of Chains, and the Noise of Iron Whips, that were heard in those Regions of Pain and Sorrow.

————— *Fast we found, fast stout
The dismal Gates, and barricado'd strong;
But long ere our Approaching heard within
Noise, other than the Sound of Dance or Song,
Torment, and loud Lament, and furious Rage.*

ADAM then proceeds to give an account of his Condition and Sentiments immediately after his Creation. How agreeably does he represent the Posture in which he found himself, the beautiful Landskip that surrounded him, and the Gladness of Heart which grew up in him on that occasion?

————— *As new waked from soundest Sleep,
Soft on the flow'ry Herb I found me laid*

In

*In balmy Sweat, which with his Beams the Sun
 Soon dried, and on the reaking Moisture fed.
 Straight towards Heav'n my wond'ring Eyes I turn'd,
 And gazed awhile the ample Sky, till rais'd
 By quick instinctive Motion, up I sprung,
 As thitherward endeavouring, and upright
 Stood on my Feet: About me round I saw
 Hill, Dale, and shady Woods, and sunny Plains,
 And liquid lapse of murmuring Streams; by these
 Creatures that liv'd, and mov'd, and walk'd, or flew,
 Birds on the Branches warbling; all things smil'd:
 With Fragrance, and with Joy my Heart o'erflow'd.*

ADAM is afterwards describ'd as surpris'd at his own Existence, and taking a Survey of himself, and of all the Works of Nature. He likewise is represented as discovering by the Light of Reason, that he and every thing about him must have been the Effect of some Being infinitely good and powerful, and that this Being had a right to his Worship and Adoration. His first Address to the Sun, and to those Parts of the Creation which made the most distinguished Figure, is very natural and amusing to the Imagination.

— *Thou Sun, said I, fair Light,
 And thou enlighten'd Earth, so fresh and gay,
 Ye Hills and Dales, ye Rivers, Woods and Plains,
 And ye that live and move, fair Creatures tell,
 Tell if you saw, how came I thus, how here?*

HIS next Sentiment, when upon his first going to sleep he fancies himself losing his Existence, and falling away into nothing, can never be sufficiently admired. His Dream, in which he still preserves the Consciousness of his Existence, together with his Removal into the Garden which was prepared for his Reception, are also Circumstances finely imagined, and grounded upon what is delivered in Sacred Story.

THESE and the like wonderful Incidents in this Part of the Work, have in them all the Beauties of Novelty, at the same time that they have all the Graces of Nature. They are such as none but a great Genius could have thought of, tho', upon the perusal of them, they seem to

rise of themselves from the Subject of which he treats. In a word, tho' they are natural, they are not obvious, which is the true Character of all fine Writing.

THE Impression which the Interdiction of the Tree of Life left in the Mind of our first Parent, is describ'd with great Strength and Judgment; as the Image of the several Beasts and Birds passing in review before him is very beautiful and lively.

————— *Each Bird and Beast behold
Approaching two and two, these cowering low
With Blandishment; each Bird stoop'd on his Wing:
I nam'd them as they pass'd* —————

ADAM, in the next place, describes a Conference which he held with his Maker upon the Subject of Solitude. The Poet here represents the supreme Being, as making an Essay of his own Work, and putting to the trial that reasoning Faculty, with which he had endued his Creature. Adam urges, in this divine Colloquy, the Impossibility of his being happy, tho' he was the Inhabitant of Paradise, and Lord of the whole Creation, without the Conversation and Society of some rational Creature, who should partake ^{those Pleasures} reported chiefly by the Beauty of the Thoughts, without other poetical Ornaments, is as fine a Part as any in the whole Poem: The more the Reader examines the Justness and Delicacy of his Sentiments, the more he will find himself pleas'd with it. The Poet has wonderfully preserved the Character of Majesty and Condescension in the Creator, and at the same time that of Humility and Adoration in the Creature, as particularly in the following Lines:

*Thus I presumptuous; and the Vision bright,
As with a Smile more brightned, thus reply'd, &c.
————— I with leave of Speech implor'd,
And humble Deprecation thus reply'd:
Let not my Words offend thee, Heav'nly Power,
My Maker, be propitious while I speak, &c.*

ADAM then proceeds to give an account of his second Sleep, and of the Dream in which he beheld the Formation of Eve. The new Passion that was awaken'd in him at the sight of her, is touch'd very finely.

Under

*Under his forming Hands a Creature grew,
 Manlike, but diff'rent Sex: so lovely fair,
 That what seem'd fair in all the World, seem'd now
 Mean, or in her summ'd up, in her contain'd,
 And in her Looks; which from that time infus'd
 Sweetness into my Heart, unfelt before:
 And into all things from her Air inspir'd
 The Spirit of Love and amorous Delight*

ADAM's Distress upon losing sight of this beautiful Phantom, with his Exclamations of Joy and Gratitude at the Discovery of a real Creature who resembled the Apparition which had been presented to him in his Dream; the Approaches he makes to her, and his Manner of Courtship; are all laid together in a most exquisite Propriety of Sentiments.

THO' this Part of the Poem is work'd up with great Warmth and Spirit, the Love which is described in it is every way suitable to a State of Innocence. If the Reader compares the Description which *Adam* here gives of his leading *Eve* to the Nuptial Bower, with that which *Mr. Dryden* has made on the same Occasion in a Scene of his *Fall of Man*, he will be sensible of the great Care which *Milton* took to avoid all Thoughts on so delicate a Subject, that might be offensive to Religion or Good-manners. The Sentiments are chaste, but not cold; and convey to the Mind Ideas of the most transporting Passion, and of the greatest Purity. What a noble Mixture of Rapture and Innocence has the Author join'd together, in the Reflexion which *Adam* makes on the Pleasures of Love, compared to those of Sense.

*Thus have I told thee all my State, and brought
 My Story to the sum of earthly Bliss,
 Which I enjoy; and must confess to find
 In all things else Delight indeed, but such
 As us'd or not, works in the Mind no Change
 Nor vehement Desires; these Delicacies
 I mean of Taste, Sight, Smell, Herbs, Fruits, and Flowers;
 Walks, and the Melody of Birds: but here
 Far other-wise, transported I behold,*

*Transported touch; here Passion first I felt,
 Commotion strange! in all Enjoyments else
 Superiour and unmow'd, here only weak
 Against the Charms of Beauty's powerful Glance,
 Or Nature fail'd in me, and left some Part
 Not proof enough such Object to sustain;
 Or from my Side subducting, took perhaps
 More than enough; at least on her bestow'd
 Too much of Ornament in outward shew
 Elaborate, of inward less exact.*

————— *When I approach
 Her Loveliness, so absolute she seems
 And in herself compleat, so well to know
 Her own, that what she wills to do or say
 Seems wisest, virtuouslest, discreetest, best:
 All higher Knowledge in her Presence falls
 Degraded: Wisdom in discourse with her
 Loses discountenanc'd, and like Folly shews;
 Authority and Reason on her wait,
 As one intended first, not after made
 Occasionally: and to consummate all,
 Greatness of Mind, and Nobleness their Seat
 Build in her lowliest, and create an Awe
 About her, as a Guard angelick plac'd.*

THESE Sentiments of Love, in our first Parent, gave the Angel such an Insight into human Nature, that he seems apprehensive of the Evils which might befall the Species in general, as well as *Adam* in particular, from the Excess of this Passion. He therefore fortifies him against it by timely Admonitions; which very artfully prepare the Mind of the Reader for the Occurrences of the next Book, where the Weakness of which *Adam* here gives such distant Discoveries, brings about the fatal Event which is the Subject of the Poem. His Discourse, which follows the gentle Rebuke he receiv'd from the Angel, shews that his Love, however violent it might appear, was still founded in Reason, and consequently not improper for *Paradise*.

*Neither her outside Form so fair, nor aught
 In Procreation common to all kinds,
 (Tho' higher of the genial Bed by far,
 And with mysterious Reverence I deem)*