

*So much delights me, as those graceful Acts,
Those thousand Decencies that daily flow
From all her Words and Actions, mixt with Love
And sweet Compliance, which declare unfeign'd
Union of Mind, or in us both one Soul;
Harmony to behold in wedded Pair!*

ADAM's Speech, at parting with the Angel, has in it a Deference and Gratitude agreeable to an inferior Nature, and at the same time a certain Dignity and Greatness suitable to the Father of Mankind in his State of Innocence. L



N^o 346. *Monday, April 7.*

Consuetudinem benignitatis largitioni munerum longè antepono. Hæc est gravium hominum atque magnorum; Illæ quasi assentatorum populi, multitudinis levitatem voluptate quasi titillantium.
Tull.

WHEN we consider the Offices of human Life, there is, methinks, something in what we ordinarily call Generosity, which when carefully examined, seems to flow rather from a loose and unguarded Temper, than an honest and liberal Mind. For this reason it is absolutely necessary that all Liberality should have for its Basis and Support Frugality. By this means the beneficent Spirit works in a Man from the Convictions of Reason, not from the Impulses of Passion. The generous Man, in the ordinary Acceptation, without respect to the Demands of his own Family will soon find upon the Foot of his Account, that he has sacrificed to Fools, Knaves, Flatterers, or the deservedly Unhappy, all the Opportunities of affording any future Assistance where it ought to be. Let him therefore reflect, that if to bestow, be in it self laudable, should not a Man take care to secure an Ability to do things praise-worthy as long as he lives? Or could there be a more cruel Piece of Rallery upon a Man who should have reduc'd his Fortune below the Capacity of acting according

cording to his natural Temper, than to say of him, *That Gentleman was generous?* My beloved Author therefore has, in the Sentence on the Top of my Paper, turned his Eye with a certain Satiety from beholding the Addressees to the People by Largeesses and publick Entertainments, which he asserts to be in general vicious, and are always to be regulated according to the Circumstances of Time and a Man's own Fortune. A constant Benignity in Commerce with the rest of the World, which ought to run through all a Man's Actions, has Effects more useful to those whom you oblige, and less ostentatious in yourself. He turns his Recommendation of this Virtue in commercial Life: and according to him a Citizen who is frank in his Kindnesses, and abhors Severity in his Demands; he who in buying, selling, lending, doing acts of good Neighbourhood, is just and easy; he who appears naturally averse to Disputes, and above the Sense of little Sufferings; bears a nobler Character, and does much more good to Mankind, than any other Man's Fortune without Commerce can possibly support. For the Citizen above all other Men has Opportunities of arriving at *that highest Fruit of Wealth, to be liberal without the least Expence of a Man's own Fortune.* It is not to be denied but such a Practice is liable to hazard; but this therefore adds to the Obligation, that, among Traders, he who obliges is as much concerned to keep the Favour a Secret, as he who receives it. The unhappy Distinctions among us in *England* are so great, that to celebrate the Intercourse of commercial Friendship, (with which I am daily made acquainted) would be to raise the virtuous Man so many Enemies of the contrary Party. I am obliged to conceal all I know of *Tom the Bounteous*, who lends at the ordinary Interest, to give Men of less Fortune Opportunities of making greater Advantages. He conceals, under a rough Air and distant Behaviour, a bleeding Compassion and womanish Tenderness. This is governed by the most exact Circumspection, that there is no Industry wanting in the Person whom he is to serve, and that he is guilty of no improper Expences. This I know of *Tom*, but who dare say it of so known a Tory? The same Care I was forced to use some time ago in the Report of another's Virtue, and said fifty instead of an hundred, because the Man I pointed at was a Whig.

Actions

Actions of this kind are popular without being invidious : for every Man of ordinary Circumstances looks upon a Man who has this known Benignity in his Nature, as a Person ready to be his Friend upon such Terms as he ought to expect it ; and the wealthy, who may envy such a Character, can do no Injury to its Interests but by the Imitation of it, in which the good Citizen will rejoice to be rivalled. I know not how to form to myself a greater Idea of human Life, than in what is the Practice of some wealthy Men whom I could name, that make no Step to the Improvement of their own Fortunes, wherein they do not also advance those of other Men who would languish in Poverty without that Munificence. In a Nation where there are so many publick Funds to be supported, I know not whether he can be called a good Subject, who does not embark some part of his Fortune with the State, to whose Vigilance he owes the Security of the whole. This certainly is an immediate way of laying an Obligation upon many, and extending his Benignity the furthest a Man can possibly, who is not engaged in Commerce. But he who trades, besides giving the State some part of this sort of Credit he gives his Banker, may in all the Occurrences of his Life have his Eye upon the removing Want from the Door of the Industrious, and defending the unhappy upright Man from Bankruptcy. Without this Benignity, Pride or Vengeance will precipitate a Man to choose the Receipt of half his Demands from one whom he has undone, rather than the whole from one to whom he has shewn Mercy. This Benignity is essential to the Character of a fair Trader, and any Man who designs to enjoy his Wealth with Honour and Self-Satisfaction : Nay, it would not be hard to maintain, that the Practice of supporting good and industrious Men, would carry a Man further even to his Profit, than indulging the Propensity of serving and obliging the Fortunate. My Author argues on this Subject, in order to incline Mens Minds to those who want them most, after this manner ; *We must always consider the Nature of things, and govern our selves accordingly. The wealthy Man, when he has repaid you, is upon a Balance with you ; but the Person whom you favour'd with a Loan, if he be a good Man, will think himself in your Debt after he has paid you. The Wealthy and*
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the Conspicuous are not obliged by the Benefit you do them, they think they conferred a Benefit when they receive one. Your good Offices are always suspected, and it is with them the same thing to expect their Favour as to receive it. But the Man below you, who knows in the Good you have done him, you respected himself more than his Circumstances, does not act like an obliged Man only to him from whom he has received a Benefit, but also to all who are capable of doing him one. And whatever little Offices he can do for you, he is so far from magnifying it, that he will labour to extenuate it in all his Actions and Expressions. Moreover, the Regard to what you do to a great Man, at best is taken notice of no further than by himself or his Family; but what you do to a Man of an humble Fortune, (provided always that he is a good and a modest Man) raises the Affections towards you of all Men of that Character (of which there are many) in the whole City.

THERE is nothing gains a Reputation to a Preacher so much as his own Practice; I am therefore casting about what Act of Benignity is in the Power of a SPECTATOR. Alas, that lies but in a very narrow Compass, and I think the most immediately under my Patronage, are either Players, or such whose Circumstances bear an Affinity with theirs: All therefore I am able to do at this time of this Kind, is to tell the Town that on *Friday* the 11th of this Instant *April*, there will be perform'd in *York-Buildings* a Consort of Vocal and Instrumental Musick, for the Benefit of *Mr. Edward Keen*, the Father of twenty Children; and that this Day the haughty *George Powell* hopes all the good-natur'd part of the Town will favour him, whom they applauded in *Alexander*, *Timon*, *Lear*, and *Orestes*, with their Company this Night, when he hazards all his heroick Glory for their Approbation in the humbler Condition of honest *Jack Falstaffe*. T



Tuesday,