

the Person who introduces him, says, he is a very honest Gentleman, and he is taken in, as their Cant is, to pay Costs. I am admitted upon the Recommendation of one of their Principals, as a *very honest good-natur'd Fellow*, that will never be in a Plot, and only desires to drink his Bottle and smoke his Pipe. You have formerly remarked upon several sorts of Clubs; and as the Tendency of this is only to increase Fraud and Deceit, I hope you will please to take notice of it.

*I am (with Respect)*

*Your humble Servant,*

T

H. R.



N<sup>o</sup> 373. *Thursday, May 8.*

*Fallit enim Vitium specie virtutis & umbrâ.* Juv.

**M**R. LOCKE, in his Treatise of Human Understanding, has spent two Chapters upon the Abuse of Words. The first and most palpable Abuse of Words, he says, is, when they are used without clear and distinct Ideas: The second, when we are so inconstant and unsteddy in the Application of them, that we sometimes use them to signify one Idea, sometimes another. He adds, that the Result of our Contemplations and Reasonings, while we have no precise Ideas fixed to our Words, must needs be very confused and absurd. To avoid this Inconvenience, more especially in moral Discourses, where the same Word should constantly be used in the same Sense, he earnestly recommends the use of Definitions. *A Definition*, says he, *is the only way whereby the precise Meaning of moral Words can be known.* He therefore accuses those of great Negligence, who discourse of moral things with the least Obscurity in the Terms they make use of, since upon the forementioned Ground he does not scruple to say, that he thinks *Morality is capable of Demonstration as well as the Mathematicks.*

I know

I know no two Words that have been more abused by the different and wrong Interpretations which are put upon them, than those two, *Modesty* and *Assurance*. To say such a one is a *modest man*, sometimes indeed passes for a good Character; but at present is very often used to signify a sheepish awkward Fellow, who has neither Good-breeding, Politeness, nor any Knowledge of the World.

AGAIN, *A Man of Assurance*, tho' at first it only denoted a Person of a free and open Carriage, is now very usually applied to a profligate Wretch, who can break through all the Rules of Decency and Morality without a Blush.

I shall endeavour therefore in this Essay to restore these Words to their true Meaning, to prevent the Idea of *Modesty* from being confounded with that of *Sheepishness*, and to hinder *Impudence* from passing for *Assurance*.

IF I was put to define *Modesty*, I would call it, *The Reflexion of an Ingenuous Mind, either when a Man has committed an Action for which he censures himself, or fancies that he is exposed to the Censure of others.*

FOR this reason a Man truly modest is as much so when he is alone as in Company, and as subject to a Blush in his Closet, as when the Eyes of Multitudes are upon him.

I do not remember to have met with any Instance of *Modesty* with which I am so well pleased, as that celebrated one of the young Prince, whose Father being a tributary King to the *Romans*, had several Complaints laid against him before the Senate, as a Tyrant and Oppressor of his Subjects. The Prince went to *Rome* to defend his Father, but coming into the Senate, and hearing a Multitude of Crimes prov'd upon him, was so oppress'd when it came to his Turn to speak, that he was unable to utter a Word. The Story tells us, that the Fathers were more moved at this Instance of *Modesty* and *Ingenuity*, than they could have been by the most pathetick Oration; and, in short, pardoned the guilty Father for this early Promise of *Virtue* in the Son.

I take *Assurance* to be *the Faculty of Possessing a Man's self, or of saying and doing indifferent things without any Uneasiness or Emotion in the Mind.* That which generally gives a Man Assurance is a moderate Knowledge of the World,



World, but above all a Mind fixed and determined in itself to do nothing against the Rules of Honour and Decency. An open and assured Behaviour is the natural Consequence of such a Resolution. A Man thus armed, if his Words or Actions are at any time misinterpreted, retires within himself, and from a Consciousness of his own Integrity, assumes Force enough to despise the little Censures of Ignorance or Malice.

EVERY one ought to cherish and encourage in himself the Modesty and Assurance I have here mentioned.

A Man without Assurance is liable to be made uneasy by the Folly or Ill-nature of every one he converses with. A Man without Modesty is lost to all Sense of Honour and Virtue.

IT is more than probable, that the Prince abovementioned possessed both these Qualifications in a very eminent degree. Without Assurance he would never have undertaken to speak before the most august Assembly in the World; without Modesty he would have pleaded the Cause he had taken upon him, tho' it had appeared ever so scandalous.

FROM what has been said, it is plain, that Modesty and Assurance are both amiable, and may very well meet in the same Person. When they are thus mixed and blended together, they compose what we endeavour to express when we say *a modest Assurance*; by which we understand the just Mean between Bashfulness and Impudence.

I shall conclude with observing, that as the same Man may be both modest and assured, so it is also possible for the same Person to be both impudent and bashful.

WE have frequent Instances of this odd kind of Mixture in People of depraved Minds and mean Education; who tho' they are not able to meet a Man's Eyes, or pronounce a Sentence without Confusion, can voluntarily commit the greatest Villanies, or most indecent Actions.

SUCH a Person seems to have made a Resolution to do Ill even in spite of himself, and in defiance of all those Checks and Restraints his Temper and Complexion seem to have laid in his way.

UPON the whole, I would endeavour to establish this Maxim, That the Practice of *Virtue* is the most proper