

per Method to give a Man a becoming Assurance in his Words and Actions. *Guilt* always seeks to shelter it self in one of the Extremes, and is sometimes attended with both.

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N<sup>o</sup> 374. Friday, May 9.

*Nil actum reputans si quid superesset agendum.* Luc.

THE RE is a Fault, which, tho' common, wants a Name. It is the very contrary to Procrastination: As we lose the present Hour by delaying from day to day to execute what we ought to do immediately; so most of us take occasion to sit still and throw away the time in our possession, by Retrospect on what is past, imagining we have already acquitted our selves, and established our Characters in the sight of Mankind. But when we thus put a Value upon our selves for what we have already done, any further than to explain our selves in order to assist our future Conduct, that will give us an over-weening opinion of our Merit to the prejudice of our present Industry. The great Rule, methinks, should be to manage the Instant in which we stand, with Fortitude, Equanimity, and Moderation, according to Mens respective Circumstances. If our past Actions reproach us, they cannot be atoned for by our own severe Reflexions so effectually as by a contrary Behaviour. If they are praise-worthy, the Memory of them is of no use but to act suitably to them. Thus a good present Behaviour is an implicit Repentance for any Mis-carriage in what is past; but present Slackness will not make up for past Activity. Time has swallowed up all that we Contemporaries did yesterday, as irrevocably as it has the Actions of the Antediluvians: But we are again awake, and what shall we do to-day, to-day which passes while we are yet speaking? Shall we remember the Folly of last Night, or resolve upon the Exercise of Virtue to-morrow? Last Night is certainly gone, and To-morrow may never arrive: This Instant make use of.

Can

Can you oblige any Man of Honour and Virtue ? Do it immediately. Can you visit a sick Friend ? Will it revive him to see you enter, and suspend your own Ease and Pleasure to comfort his Weakness, and hear the Impertinencies of a Wretch in pain ? Don't stay to take Coach, but be gone. Your Mistress will bring Sorrow, and your Bottle Madness : Go to neither ——— Such Virtues and Diversions as these are mentioned because they occur to all Men. But every Man is sufficiently convinced, that to suspend the Use of the present Moment, and resolve better for the future only, is an unpardonable Folly : What I attempted to consider, was the Mischief of setting such a Value upon what is past, as to think we have done enough. Let a Man have filled all the Offices of Life with the highest Dignity till yesterday, and begin to live only to himself to-day, he must expect he will in the Effects upon his Reputation be considered as the Man who died yesterday. The Man who distinguishes himself from the rest, stands in a press of People ; those before him intercept his Progress, and those behind him, if he does not urge on, will tread him down. *Cæsar*, of whom it was said, *that he thought nothing done while there was any thing left for him to do*, went on in performing the greatest Exploits, without assuming to himself a Privilege of taking Rest upon the Foundation of the Merit of his former Actions. It was the manner of that glorious Captain to write down what Scenes he passed through, but it was rather to keep his Affairs in Method, and capable of a clear Review in case they should be examined by others, than that he built a Renown upon any thing that was past. I shall produce two Fragments of his to demonstrate, that it was his Rule of Life to support himself rather by what he should perform, than what he had done already. In the Tablet which he wore about him the same Year in which he obtained the Battle of *Pharsalia*, there were found these loose Notes for his own Conduct : It is supposed, by the Circumstances they alluded to, that they might be set down the Evening of the same Night.

‘ MY Part is now but begun , and my Glory must  
‘ be sustained by the Use I make of this Victory ; other-

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‘ wise



' wise my Loss will be greater than that of *Pompey*.  
 ' Our personal Reputation will rise or fall as we hear  
 ' our respective Fortunes. All my private Enemies among  
 ' the Prisoners shall be spared. I will forget this, in  
 ' order to obtain such another Day. *Trebutius* is ashamed  
 ' to see me: I will go to his Tent, and be reconciled  
 ' in private. Give all the Men of Honour, who take  
 ' part with me, the Terms I offered before the Battle.  
 ' Let them owe this to their Friends who have been  
 ' long in my Interests. Power is weakened by the full  
 ' Use of it, but extended by Moderation. *Galbinus* is  
 ' proud, and will be servile in his present Fortune; let  
 ' him wait. Send for *Sertinius*: He is modest, and his  
 ' Virtue is worth gaining. I have cooled my Heart  
 ' with Reflexion, and am fit to rejoice with the Army  
 ' to-morrow. He is a popular General who can expose  
 ' himself like a private Man during a Battle; but he is  
 ' more popular who can rejoice but like a private Man  
 ' after a Victory.

WHAT is particularly proper for the Example of all  
 who pretend to Industry in the pursuit of Honour and  
 Virtue, is, that this Hero was more than ordinarily so-  
 licitous about his Reputation, when a Common Mind  
 would have thought it self in Security, and given it self a  
 loose to Joy and Triumph. But though this is a very  
 great Instance of his Temper, I must confess I am more  
 taken with his Reflexions when he retired to his Closet  
 in some Disturbance upon the repeated ill Omens of  
*Calphurnia's* Dream the Night before his Death. The lite-  
 ral Translation of that Fragment shall conclude this Paper.

' BE it so then. If I am to die to-morrow, that is  
 ' what I am to do to-morrow: It will not be then,  
 ' because I am willing it should be then; nor shall I  
 ' escape it, because I am unwilling. It is in the Gods  
 ' when, but in my self how I shall die. If *Calphurnia's*  
 ' Dreams are Fumes of Indigestion, how shall I behold  
 ' the Day after to-morrow? If they are from the Gods,  
 ' their Admonition is not to prepare me to escape from  
 ' their Decree, but to meet it. I have lived to a Fulness  
 ' of Days and of Glory: what is there that *Cæsar* has not  
 ' done with as much Honour as ancient Heroes? *Cæsar*  
 ' has not yet died; *Cæsar* is prepared to die.

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Saturday,