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N° 8. Tuesday, April 28, 1709.

S T E E L E.

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*Quicquid agunt homines —*

*nostri est farrago libelli.*

Juv. Sat. i. 85, 86.

“Whate’er men do, or say, or think, or dream,  
“Our medley Paper seizes for its theme.” P.

WHITE’S Chocolate-house, April 26.

THE play of the LONDON CUCKOLDS \* was acted this evening before a suitable audience, who were extremely well diverted with that heap of vice and absurdity. The indignation which EUGENIO, who is a gentleman of a just taste, has upon occasion of seeing human nature fall so low in its delights, made him, I thought, expatiate upon the mention of this play very agreeably. Of all men living, said he, I pity players (who must be men of good understanding, to be capable of being

\* A very immoral, as well as a very ill-written comedy, by EDW. RAVENSCROFT, 1682. 4to. It used to be acted frequently, especially upon Lord Mayor’s days, in contempt, and to the disgrace of the city, but is at length totally banished from the stage, to the honour of the present managers. P.



fuch), that they are obliged to repeat and assume proper gestures for representing things of which their reason must be ashamed, and which they must disdain their audience for approving. The amendment of these low gratifications is only to be made by people of condition, by encouraging the representation of the noble characters drawn by SHAKSPEARE and others, from whence it is impossible to return without strong impressions of honour and humanity. On these occasions, distress is laid before us with all its causes and consequences, and our resentment placed according to the merit of the persons afflicted. Were dramas of this nature more acceptable to the taste of the town, men who have genius would bend their studies to excel in them. How forcible an effect this would have on our minds, one needs no more than to observe how strongly we are touched by mere pictures. Who can see LE BRUN'S \* picture of the battle of PORUS, without entering into the character of that fierce gallant man †, and being accordingly spurred

\* CHARLES LE BRUN, one of those rare men who seem intended to do honour to their profession, their country, and their kind, was the son of a sculptor, of Scotch extraction, and born at Paris in 1619, where he died without issue, piously, and universally lamented in 1690, aged 71.

† An Indian king, defeated and put to death in an inhuman manner by ALEXANDER the Great. See the story of PORUS in *Q. Curtius*, l. viii. c. 12. and 14. The fine painting in the French king's cabinet here spoken of, is 16

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feet



spurred to an emulation of his constancy and courage? When he is falling with his wound, the features are at the same time very terrible and languishing; and there is such a stern faintness diffused through all his look, as is apt to move a kind of horror, as well as pity, in the beholder. This, I say, is an effect wrought by mere lights and shades: consider also a representation made by words only, as in an account given by a good writer: CATILINE in SALLUST \* makes just such a figure as PORUS by LE BRUN. It is said of him, *Catilina verò longè a suis inter hostium cadavera repertus est: paululum etiam spirans, ferocitatemque animi, quam vivus habuerat, in vultu retinens.* “CATILINE was found killed, far  
 “ from his own men, among the dead bodies  
 “ of the enemy: he seemed still to breathe,  
 “ and still retained in his face the same fierceness he had when he was living.” You have in that one sentence a lively impression of his whole life and actions. What I would insinuate from all this is, that if the painter and the historian can do thus much in colours and

feet high, and 39 feet 5 inches long. FLORENT. LE COMTE, Tom. I. p. 197. See TAT. N° 153, Note. *Mr. Holwell nia l'existence de PORUS, mais à présent l'on a trouve dans l'Inde meme une histoire detailée de ce prince; comme plusieurs personnes qui ont longtems veçu dans ce pais me l'ont assure.* DANKERVILLE Recherches sur l'origin, &c. des Arts de la Grèce. A Londres, 1785, liv. I. c. 2. p. 128. 4to.

\* SALL. Hist. Bell. Catilin. cap. 61.



language, what may not be performed by an excellent poet, when the character he draws is presented by the person, the manner, the look, and the motion, of an accomplished player? If a thing painted or related can irresistibly enter our hearts, what may not be brought to pass by seeing generous things performed before our eyes? EUGENIO ended his discourse, by recommending the apt use of a theatre, as the most agreeable and easy method of making a polite and moral gentry; which would end in rendering the rest of the people regular in their behaviour, and ambitious of laudable undertakings.

St. JAMES's Coffee-house, April 27.

Letters from Naples of the ninth instant, N. S. advise, that Cardinal Grimani had ordered the regiment commanded by General Pate to march towards Final, in order to embark for Catalonia; whither also a thousand horse are to be transported from Sardinia, besides the troops which come from the Milanese. An English man of war has taken two prizes, one a vessel of Malta, the other of Genoa, both laden with goods of the enemy. They write from Florence of the thirteenth, that his Majesty of Denmark had received a courier from the Hague, with an account of some matters relating to the treaty of a peace; upon which

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he declared, that he thought it necessary to hasten to his own dominions.

Letters from Switzerland inform us, that the effects of the great scarcity of corn in France were felt at Geneva; the magistrates of which city had appointed deputies to treat with the Cantons of Bern and Zurich, for leave to buy up such quantities of grain within their territories as should be thought necessary. The Protestants of Tockenbourg are still in arms about the convent of St. John, and have declared, that they will not lay them down, until they shall have sufficient security, from the Roman Catholicks, of living unmolested in the exercise of their religion. In the mean time, the deputies of Bern and Tockenbourg have frequent conferences at Zurich with the regency of that Canton, to find out methods for quieting these disorders.

Letters from the Hague, of the third of May, advise, that the President Rouille, after his last conference with the deputies of the States, had retired to Bodegrave, five miles distant from Worden, and expected the return of a courier from France on the fourth, with new instructions. It is said, if his answer from the French Court shall not prove satisfactory, he will be desired to withdraw out of these parts. In the mean time it is also reported, that his equipage, as an ambassador on this great occasion, is actually on the march towards him. They write from Flanders, that  
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the great convoy of provisions, which set out from Ghent, is safely arrived at Lisle. Those advices add, that the enemy had assembled near Tournay a considerable body of troops, drawn out of the neighbouring garrisons. Their High Mightinesses having sent orders to their Ministers at Hamburgh and Dantzic, to engage the magistrates of those cities to forbid the sale of corn to the French, and to signify to them, that the Dutch merchants will buy up as much of that commodity as they can spare; the Hamburgers have accordingly contracted with the Dutch, and refused any commerce with the French on that occasion.

From my own Apartment.

After the lassitude of a day, spent in the strolling manner which is usual with men of pleasure in this town, and with a head full of a million of impertinencies, which had danced round it for ten hours together, I came to my lodging, and hastened to bed. My *valet de chambre* knows my university trick of reading there; and he, being a good scholar for a gentleman, ran over the names of HORACE, TIBULLUS, OVID, and others, to know which I would have. "Bring VIRGIL," said I; "and if I fall asleep, take care of the candle." I read the sixth book over with the most exquisite delight, and had gone half through it a second time, when the pleasing ideas of

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Elysian



Elyſian fields, deceaſed worthies walking in them, ſincere lovers enjoying their languiſhment without pain, compaſſion for the unhappy ſpirits who had miſ-ſpent their ſhort day-light, and were exiled from the ſeats of bliſs for ever; I ſay, I was deep again in my reading, when this mixture of images had taken place of all others in my imagination before, and lulled me into a dream, from which I am juſt awake, to my great diſadvantage. The happy manſions of *Elyſium*, by degrees, ſeemed to be waſted from me, and the very traces of my late waking thoughts began to fade away, when I was caſt by a ſudden whirlwind upon an iſland, encompassed with a roaring and troubled ſea, which ſhaked its very centre, and rocked its inhabitants as in a cradle. The iſlanders lay on their faces, without offering to look up, or hope for preſervation; all her harbours were crowded with mariners, and tall veſſels of war lay in danger of being driven to pieces on her ſhores. “Bleſs me!” ſaid I, “why have I lived in ſuch a manner, that the convulſion of nature ſhould be ſo terrible to me, when I feel in myſelf that the better part of me is to ſurvive it? Oh! may that be in happineſs!” A ſudden ſhriek, in which the whole people on their faces joined, interrupted my ſoliloquy, and turned my eyes and attention to the object that had given us that ſudden ſtart, in the miſt of an inconſolable and ſpeechleſs affliction. Im-  
mediately



mediately the winds grew calm, the waves subsided, and the people stood up, turning their faces upon a magnificent pile in the midst of the island. There we beheld an hero of a comely and erect aspect, but pale and languid, sitting under a canopy of state. By the faces and dumb sorrow of those who attended, we thought him in the article of death. At a distance sat a lady, whose life seemed to hang upon the same thread with his: she kept her eyes fixed upon him, and seemed to smother ten thousand thousand nameless things, which urged her tenderness to clasp him in her arms: but her greatness of spirit overcame those sentiments, and gave her power to forbear disturbing his last moment; which immediately approached\*. The hero looked up with an air of negligence, and satiety of being, rather than of pain to leave it; and, leaning back his head, expired.

When the heroine, who sat at a distance, saw his last instant come, she threw herself at his feet, and, kneeling, pressed his hand to her lips, in which posture she continued under the

\* GEORGE Prince of DENMARK, second son of FREDERIC III. and brother of CHRISTIAN V. was married to the Princess ANNE, daughter of JAMES Duke of YORK, July 28, 1683, with whom he lived in exemplary harmony until Oct. 21, 1708, when he died at Kensington, after an indisposition of a few days. He was Lord High Admiral of England. This dream is a poetical description of the state of England from the death of Prince GEORGE in 1708, to the conclusion of the negotiations at the Hague in 1709.



agony of an unutterable sorrow, until conducted from our sight by her attendants. That commanding awe, which accompanies the grief of great minds, restrained the multitude while in her presence; but as soon as she retired, they gave way to their distraction, and all the islanders called upon their deceased hero. To him, methought, they cried out, as to a guardian being; and I gathered from their broken accents, that it was he who had the empire over the ocean and its powers, by which he had long protected the island from shipwreck and invasion. They now give a loose to their moan, and think themselves exposed without hopes of human or divine assistance. While the people ran wild, and expressed all the different forms of lamentation, methought a sable cloud overshadowed the whole land, and covered its inhabitants with darkness: no glimpse of light appeared, except one ray from heaven upon the place in which the heroine now secluded herself from the world, with her eyes fixed on those abodes to which her consort was ascended\*. Methought a long period of time had passed away in mourning and in darkness, when a twilight began by degrees to enlighten the hemisphere; and, looking round

\* Q. ANNE mourned so long on this occasion, that the manufacturers remonstrated respectfully, and in the end obtained a law to prevent the serious inconveniencies they complained of, in future, by limiting the duration of public mournings.

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me, I saw a boat rowed towards the shore, in which sat a personage adorned with warlike trophies, bearing on his left arm a shield, on which was engraven the image of VICTORY, and in his right hand a branch of olive. His visage was at once so winning and so awful, that the shield and the olive seemed equally suitable to his genius.

When this illustrious\* person touched on the shore, he was received by the acclamations of the people, and followed to the palace of the heroine. No pleasure in the glory of her arms, (or the acclamations of her applauding subjects,) were ever capable to suspend her sorrow for one moment, till she saw the olive-branch in the hand of that auspicious messenger. At that sight, as heaven bestows its blessings on the wants and importunities of mortals, out of its native bounty, and not to increase its own power or honour, in compassion to the world, the celestial mourner was then first seen to turn her regard to things below; and, taking the branch out of the warrior's hand, looked at it with much satisfaction, and spoke of the blessings of peace, with a voice and accent, such as that in which guardian spirits whisper to dying penitents assurances of happiness. The air was hushed, the multitude attentive, and all nature in a pause while she was speaking.

\* About this time the Duke of MARLBOROUGH returned from Holland, with the preliminaries of a peace.

But



But as soon as the messenger of peace had made some low reply, in which, methought, I heard the word *Iberia*, the heroine, assuming a more severe air, but such as spoke resolution without rage, returned him the olive, and again veiled her face. Loud cries and clashing of arms immediately followed, which forced me from my charming vision, and drove me back to these mansions of care and sorrow.

\* \* \* Mr. BICKERSTAFF thanks Mr. QUARTERSTAFF for his kind and instructive letter dated the 26th instant.

N° 9. Saturday, April 30, 1709.

S T E E L E.

*Quicquid agunt homines——*

*nostri est farrago libelli.*

Juv. Sat. i. 85, 86.

“Whate’er men do, or say, or think, or dream,  
“Our medley Paper seizes for it’s theme.” P.

WILL’s Coffee-house, April 14.

**T**HIS evening we were entertained with  
THE OLD BACHELOR\*, a comedy of  
deserved

\* By CONGREVE. His first play, and first acted in 1693. See TATLER, N° 193. Notwithstanding all that is