
N° 10. Tuesday, May 3, 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.

By Mrs. JENNY DISTAFF*, Half-Sister to
Mr. BICKERSTAFF.

From my own Apartment, May 1.

MY brother ISAAC, having a sudden occasion to go out of town, ordered me to take upon me the dispatch of the next advices from home, with liberty to speak in my own way;
not

* We find *Miss*, a contraction of *Mistress*, in MIEGE’S French Dictionary, 1688; but in 1709 the appellation of *Miss* seems to have been given only to girls not yet in their teens, or to indiscreet and inconsiderate young women. In N° 9. the giddy *Pastorella* is styled *Miss*, but here it is *Mrs. Jenny Distaff*, and she was only turned of twenty. N° 33. A young lady ridiculed for her unbecoming and injudicious head-dress is styled *Miss Gruel*. N° 212. but in N° 139, it is *MISTRESS* and not *Miss Alice*, and the same observation occurs in N° 175, in N° 189, and in SPEC. N° 496. *Depingle* is named *MADAM* in TAT. N° 7, and it is *MADAM Distaff* in N° 140. A young lady of

H 3

nineteen

not doubting the allowances which would be given to a writer of my sex. You may be sure I undertook it with much satisfaction: and I confess, I am not a little pleased with the opportunity of running over all the papers in his closet, which he has left open for my use on this occasion. The first that I lay my hands on, is a treatise concerning "the empire of beauty," and the effects it has had in all nations of the world, upon the public and private actions of men; with an appendix, which he calls, "The Bachelor's scheme for governing his wife." The first thing he makes this gentleman propose, is, that she shall be no woman; for she is to have an aversion to balls, to operas, to visits: she is to think his company sufficient to fill up all the hours of life with great satisfaction: she is never to believe any other man, wise, learned, or valiant; or at least, but in a second degree. In the next place, he intends she shall be a cuckold; but expects, that he himself must live in perfect security from that terror. He dwells a great while on

nineteen is called MISTRESS in SPEC. N° 534. We meet with a Miss *Liddy* in SPEC. N° 306. and the title of honour given to her elder sister is MADAM *Martha*, but her precise age is not mentioned. See also SPEC. N° 531. N° 538. and N° 579. In CONGREVE'S "*Way of the World*," An. 1700, Act II. sc. 7. it is MISTRESS, and once MADAM *Millamant*, and MISTRESS *Marwood*. SHAKESPEARE distinguishes maidens from their mothers, by adding the christian names; "MISTRESS ANN Page," Anno 1601. See TAT. N° 13. note A.

instructions

instructions for her discreet behaviour, in case of his falshood. I have not patience with these unreasonable expectations, therefore turn back to the treatise itself. Here indeed my brother deduces all the revolutions among men from the passion of love; and in his preface answers that usual observation against us, "that there is no quarrel without a woman in it;" with a gallant assertion, that "there is nothing else worth quarrelling for." My brother is of a complexion truly amorous; all his thoughts and actions carry in them a tincture of that obliging inclination; and this turn has opened his eyes to see, that we are not the inconsiderable creatures which unlucky pretenders to our favour would insinuate. He observes, that no man begins to make any tolerable figure, until he sets out with the hopes of pleasing some one of us. No sooner he takes that in hand, but he pleases every one else by the bye. It has an immediate effect upon his behaviour. There is Col. RANTER*, who never spoke without an oath, until he saw the Lady BETTY MODISH; now, never gives his man an order, but it is, "Pray, Tom, do it." The drawers where he drinks live in perfect happiness. He asked Will at the George the

* There is probably an allusion here to the celebrated Mrs. ANNE OLDFIELD and Brigadier General CHURCHILL. Mrs. O. played at this time inimitably well the character of *Lady Betty Modish* in the "Careless Husband," which the author, CIBBER, acknowledges was not only written for her, but copied from her, so that she was both the player, and the original of the character.

other day, how he did? Where he used to say, “Damn it, it is so;” he now “believes there is some mistake; he must confess, he is of another opinion; but however he will not insist.”

Every temper, except downright insipid, is to be animated and softened by the influence of beauty: but of this untractable sort is a lifeless handsome fellow that visits us, whom I have dressed at this twelve-month; but he is as insensible of all the arts I use, as if he conversed all that time with his nurse. He out-does our whole sex in all the faults our enemies impute to us; he has brought laziness into an opinion, and makes his indolence his philosophy: inasmuch that no longer ago than yesterday in the evening he gave me this account of himself: “I am, Madam, perfectly unmoved at all that passes among men, and seldom give myself the fatigue of going among them; but when I do, I always appear the same thing to those whom I converse with. My hours of existence, or being awake, are from eleven in the morning to eleven at night; half of which I live to myself, in picking my teeth, washing my hands, paring my nails, and looking in the glass. The insignificance of my manners to the rest of the world, makes the laughers call me a *Quidnunc*, a phrase which I neither understand, nor shall ever enquire what they mean by it. The last of me each night is at St. James’s coffee-house, where

“ where I converse, yet never fall into a dispute on any occasion; but leave the understanding I have, passive of all that goes through it, without entering into the business of life. And thus, Madam, have I arrived by laziness, to what others pretend to by philosophy, a perfect neglect of the world.”
Sure, if our sex had the liberty of frequenting public houses and conversations, we should put these rivals of our faults and follies out of countenance. However, we shall soon have the pleasure of being acquainted with them one way or other; for my brother ISAAC designs, for the use of our sex, to give the exact characters of all the chief politicians, who frequent any of the coffee-houses from St. James’s to the Exchange; but designs to begin with that cluster of wise-heads, as they are found sitting every evening from the left-side of the fire at the Smyrna, to the door. This will be of great service for us, and I have authority to promise an exact journal of their deliberations; the publication of which I am to be allowed for pin-money. In the mean time, I cast my eye upon a new book, which gave me more pleasing entertainment, being a sixth part of Miscellany Poems published by JACOB TONSON*, which, I find by my brother’s notes upon it, no way inferior to the other volumes. There is, it seems, in this, a collection of the

* Usually called “Dryden’s Collection.” See N^o 12, *note*.
best

best pastorals that have hitherto appeared in England; but among them none superior to that dialogue between Sylvia and Dorinda, written by one of my own sex*; where all our little weaknesses are laid open in a manner more just, and with truer raillery, than ever man yet hit upon.

Only this I now discern,
From the things thou'dst have me learn,
That womankind's peculiar joys
From past or present beauties rise.

But, to re-assume my first design, there cannot be a greater instance of the command of females, than in the prevailing charms of the heroine in the play, which was acted this night, called, ALL FOR LOVE; or, *The World well lost* †. The enamoured Antony resigns glory and power to the force of the attractive Cleopatra, whose charms were the defence of her diadem against a people otherwise invincible. It is so natural for women to talk of themselves, that it is to be hoped, all my own sex at least will pardon me, that I could fall into no other discourse. If we have their favour, we give ourselves very little anxiety for the rest of our readers. I believe I see a sentence of *Latin* in my brother's day-book of

* By Mrs. ELIZABETH SINGER, celebrated by PRIOR in many parts of his poems, and afterwards Mrs. ROWE.

† By DRYDEN, first acted in the year 1678.

wit,

wit, which seems applicable on this occasion,
and in contempt of the critics,

—— *Tristitiam & metus*
Tradam protervis in mare Creticum
Portare ventis. HOR. I Od. xxvi. 2.

No boding fears shall break my rest,
Nor anxious cares invade my breast;
Puff them, ye wanton gales; away,
And plunge them in the Cretan sea.

R. WYNNE.

But I am interrupted by a packet from Mr. Kidney, from St. James's coffee-house, which I am obliged to insert in the very style and words which Mr. Kidney uses in his letter.

St. JAMES's Coffee-house, May 2.

We are advised by letters from Bern, dated the first instant, N. S. that the Duke of Berwick arrived at Lyons the twenty-fifth of the last month, and continued his journey the next day to visit the passes of the mountains, and other posts in Dauphiné and Provence. These letters also informed us, that the miseries of the people in France are heightened to that degree, that unless a peace be speedily concluded, half of that kingdom would perish for want of bread. On the twenty-fourth, the Marshal de Thesse passed through Lyons, in his way to Versailles; and two battalions, which

which were marching from Alsace to reinforce the army of the Duke of Berwick, passed also through that place. Those troops were to be followed by six battalions more.

Letters from Naples of the sixteenth of April say, that the Marquis de Prie's son was arrived there, with instructions from his father, to signify to the Vice-roy the necessity his Imperial Majesty was under, of desiring an aid from that kingdom, for carrying on the extraordinary expences of the war. On the fourteenth of the same month, they made a review of the Spanish troops in that garrison, and afterwards of the marines; one part of whom will embark with those designed for Barcelona, and the rest are to be sent on board the galleys appointed to convoy provisions to that place.

We hear from Rome, by letters dated the twentieth of April, that the Count de Mellos, envoy from the King of Portugal, had made his public entry into that city with much state and magnificence. The Pope has lately held two other consistories, wherein he made a promotion of two cardinals; but the acknowledgement of king Charles is still deferred.

Letters from other parts of Italy advise us, that the Doge of Venice continues dangerously ill: that the Prince de Carignan, having relapsed into a violent fever, died the twenty-third of April, in his eightieth year.

Advices from Vienna of the twenty-seventh of April import, that the archbishop of Salzburg

burg is dead, who is succeeded by Count Harrach, formerly bishop of Vienna, and for these last three years coadjutor to the said archbishop; and that Prince Maximilian of Litchtenstein is likewise departed this life at his country seat called Cromaw in Moravia. These advices add, that the Emperor has named Count Zinzendorf, Count Goes, and Monsieur Conbruck, for his plenipotentiaries in an ensuing treaty of peace; and they hear from Hungary, that the Imperialists have had several successful skirmishes with the malcontents.

Letters from Paris, dated May the sixth, say, that the Marshal de Theffe arrived there on the twenty-ninth of the last month, and that the Chevalier de Beuil was sent thither by Don Pedro Ronquillo with advice, that the confederate squadron appeared before Alicant on the seventeenth, and, having for some time cannonaded the city, endeavoured to land some troops for the relief of the castle; but general Stanhope, finding the passes well guarded, and the enterprize dangerous, demanded to capitulate for the castle; which being granted him, the garrison, consisting of 600 regular troops, marched out with their arms and baggage the day following; and being received on board, they immediately set sail for Barcelona. These letters add, that the march of the French and Swiss regiments is further deferred for a few days; and that the Duke of Noailles was
just

just ready to set out for Rouffillon, as well as the Count de Bezons for Catalonia.

The same advices say, bread was sold at Paris for sixpence a pound; and that there was not half enough, even at that rate, to supply the necessities of the people, which reduced them to the utmost despair; that 300 men had taken up arms, and, having plundered the market of the suburb of St. Germain, pressed down by the multitude the king's guards who opposed them. Two of those mutineers were afterwards seized and condemned to death; but four others went to the magistrate who pronounced that sentence, and told him, he must expect to answer with his own life for those of their comrades. All order and sense of government being thus lost among the enraged people; to keep up a show of authority, the captain of the guards, who saw all their insolence, pretended, that he had represented to the king their deplorable condition, and had obtained their pardon. It is further reported, that the Dauphin and Duchefs of Burgundy, as they went to the opera, were surrounded by crowds of people, who upbraided them with their neglect of the general calamity, in going to diversions, when the whole people were ready to perish for want of bread. Edicts are daily published to suppress these riots; and papers, with menaces against the government, as publicly thrown about. Among others, these words were dropped in a court of justice,

tice, "France wants a RAVILLIAC or a JESUIT
" to deliver her."

We are advised by letters from the Hague, dated the tenth instant, N. S. that on the sixth the Marquis de Torcy arrived there from Paris; and offered to communicate to Monsieur Heinsius the proposals which he had to make; but the pensionary refused to see them, and said, he would signify it to the States, who deputed some of their own body to acquaint him, that they would enter into no negociation until the arrival of his grace the Duke of Marlborough, and the other ministers of the alliance. Prince Eugene was expected there the twelfth instant from Brussels. It is said, that besides Monsieur de Torcy, and Monsieur Pajot, director-general of the posts, there are two or three persons at the Hague whose names are not known; but it is supposed, that the Duke d'Alba, ambassador from the Duke of Anjou, was one of them. The States have sent letters to all the cities of the provinces desiring them to send their deputies to receive the propositions of peace made by the court of France.

* * In the absence of Mr. BICKERSTAFF,
* Mrs. DISTAFF has received Mr. NATHANIEL
BROOMSTICK's letter.

Under the signature of NATHANIEL BROOMSTICK, the subsequent Paper, or hints for it, might have been communicated to STEELE by SWIFT, by ANTHONY HENLEY, Esq. or by Mr. JABEZ HUGHES. See TAT. N^o 11, and Notes.