

Nº 15. Saturday, May 14, 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 its theme.” P.

From my own Apartment, May 12.

I HAVE taken a resolution hereafter, on any want of intelligence, to carry my Familiar abroad with me*, who has promised to give me very proper and just notices of persons and things, to make up the history of the passing day. He is wonderfully skilful in the knowledge of men and manners, which has made me more than ordinary curious to know how he came to that perfection, and I communicated to him that doubt. “Mr. PACOLET,” said I, “I am mightily surprized to see you so good a judge of our nature and circumstances, since you are a mere spirit, and have no knowledge of the bodily part of us.” He answered, smiling, “You are mistaken; I have been one

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“of

“ of you, and lived a month amongst you,
“ which gives me an exact sense of your con-
“ dition. You are to know, that all, who
“ enter into human life, have a certain date or
“ *stamen* given to their being, which they only
“ who die of age may be said to have arrived
“ at; but it is ordered sometimes by fate, that
“ such as die infants are, after death, to at-
“ tend mankind to the end of that *stamen* of
“ being in themselves, which was broke off by
“ sickness or any other disaster. These are
“ proper guardians to men, as being sensible
“ of the infirmity of their state. You are phi-
“ losopher enough to know, that the differ-
“ ence of mens understandings proceeds only
“ from the various dispositions of their organs;
“ so that he, who dies at a month old, is in
“ the next life as knowing, though more in-
“ nocent, as they who live to fifty; and after
“ death, they have as perfect a memory and
“ judgment of all that passed in their life-
“ time, as I have of all the revolutions in
“ that uneasy, turbulent condition of yours;
“ and you would say I had enough of it in a
“ month, were I to tell you all my misfor-
“ tunes.” “ A life of a month cannot have,
“ one would think, much variety. But pray,”
said I, “ let us have your story.”

Then he proceeds in the following manner:
“ It was one of the most wealthy families in
“ Great Britain into which I was born, and
“ it was a very great happiness to me that it so
happened,

“ happened, otherwise I had still, in all proba-
“ bility, been living : but I shall recount to you
“ all the occurrences of my short and miserable
“ existence, just as, by examining into the traces
“ made in my brain, they appeared to me at
“ that time. The first thing that ever struck
“ my senses was a noise over my head of one
“ shrieking; after which, methought, I took a
“ full jump, and found myself in the hands of
“ a forcefess, who seemed as if she had been
“ long waking, and employed in some incanta-
“ tion : I was thoroughly frightened, and cried
“ out; but she immediately seemed to go on in
“ some magical operation, and anointed me
“ from head to foot. What they meant, I
“ could not imagine : for there gathered a great
“ croud about me, crying, ‘ An Heir ! an
“ Heir !’ upon which I grew a little still, and
“ believed this was a ceremony to be used only
“ to great persons, and such as made them,
“ what they called *Heirs*. I lay very quiet;
“ but the witch, for no manner of reason or
“ provocation in the world, takes me, and
“ binds my head as hard as possibly she could;
“ then ties up both my legs, and makes me
“ swallow down an horrid mixture. I thought
“ it an harsh entrance into life, to begin with
“ taking physic; but I was forced to it, or else
“ must have taken down a great instrument in
“ which she gave it me. When I was thus dres-
“ sed, I was carried to a bedside, where a fine
“ young lady (my mother I wot) had like to
“ have

“ have hugged me to death. From her, they fa-
“ ced me about, and there was a thing with quite
“ another look from the rest of the company,
“ to whom they talked about my nose. He
“ seemed wonderfully pleased to see me; but I
“ knew since, my nose belonged to another fa-
“ mily. That into which I was born is one of
“ the most numerous amongst you; therefore
“ crowds of relations came every day to congra-
“ tulate my arrival; amongst others, my cou-
“ sin Betty, the greatest romp in nature: she
“ whisks me such a height over her head, that
“ I cried out for fear of falling. She pinched
“ me, and called me *squealing chit*, and threw
“ me into a girl’s arms that was taken in to tend
“ me. The girl was very proud of the wo-
“ manly employment of a nurse, and took
“ upon her to strip and dress me a-new, because
“ I made a noise, to see what ailed me: she did
“ so, and stuck a pin in every joint about me.
“ I still cried: upon which, she lays me on my
“ face in her lap; and, to quiet me, fell a-
“ nailing in all the pins, by clapping me on the
“ back, and screaming a lullaby. But my pain
“ made me exalt my voice above hers, which
“ brought up the nurse, the witch I first saw,
“ and my grand-mother. The girl is turned
“ down stairs, and I stripped again, as well to
“ find what ailed me, as to satisfy my granam’s
“ farther curiosity. This good old woman’s
“ visit was the cause of all my troubles. You
“ are to understand, that I was hitherto bred by
“ hand,

“ hand, and any body that stood next me gave me
“ pap, if I did but open my lips ; infomuch,
“ that I was grown so cunning, as to pretend
“ myself asleep when I was not, to prevent my
“ being crammed. But my grand-mother be-
“ gan a loud lecture upon the idleness of the
“ wives of this age, who, for fear of their
“ shapes, forbear suckling their own offspring:
“ and ten nurses were immediately sent for;
“ one was whispered to have a wanton eye, and
“ would soon spoil her milk; another was in a
“ consumption; the third had an ill voice, and
“ would frighten me instead of lulling me to
“ sleep. Such exceptions were made against all
“ but one country milch-wench, to whom I
“ was committed, and put to the breast. This
“ careless jade was eternally romping with the
“ footman, and downright starved me; in-
“ much that I daily pined away, and should ne-
“ ver have been relieved had it not been that,
“ on the thirtieth day of my life, a Fellow of
“ the Royal Society, who had writ upon Cold
“ Baths, came to visit me, and solemnly pro-
“ tested, I was utterly lost for want of that me-
“ thod*: upon which he foused me head and

* The Fellow of the Royal Society here alluded to, was probably a physician at Litchfield, Sir JOHN FLOYER, Knt. M. D. who published, “ An Enquiry into the right use and abuses of the hot, cold and temperate Baths in England, &c.” in the year 1697, which might probably be about the time when PACOLET was happily dismissed from this troublesome world.

“ ears

“ ears into a pail of water, where I had the
“ good fortune to be drowned; and so escaped
“ being lashed into a linguist until sixteen,
“ running after wenches until twenty-five, and
“ being married to an ill-natured wife until
“ sixty: which had certainly been my fate, had
“ not the enchantment between body and soul
“ been broke by this philosopher. Thus,
“ until the age I should have otherwise lived,
“ I am obliged to watch the steps of men;
“ and, if you please, shall accompany you in
“ your present walk, and get you intelligence
“ from the ærial lacquey, who is in waiting,
“ what are the thoughts and purposes of any
“ whom you enquire for.”

I accepted his kind offer, and immediately took him with me in a hack to White's.

WHITE'S Chocolate-house, May 13.

We got in hither, and my companion threw a powder round us, that made me as invisible as himself; so that we could see and hear all others, ourselves unseen and unheard.

The first thing we took notice of was a nobleman of a goodly and frank aspect, with his generous birth and temper visible in it, playing at cards with a creature of a black and horrid countenance, wherein were plainly delineated the arts of his mind, cozenage and falshood. They were marking their game with counters, on which we could see inscriptions, imperceptible

tible to any but us. My Lord had scored with pieces of ivory, on which were writ "Good
" Fame, Glory, Riches, Honour, and Poste-
" rity." The spectre over against him had on his counters the inscriptions of " Dishonour,
" Impudence, Poverty, Ignorance, and want of
" Shame*." " Bless me!" said I; " sure, my
" Lord does not see what he plays for?" " As
" well as I do," says PACOLET. " He despises
" that fellow he plays with, and scorns himself
" for making him his companion." At the very instant he was speaking, I saw the fellow, who played with my Lord, hide two cards in the roll of his stocking: PACOLET immediately stole them from thence; upon which the nobleman soon after won the game. The little triumph he appeared in, when he got such a trifling stock of ready money, though he had ventured so great sums with indifference, increased my admiration. But PACOLET began to talk to me. " Mr. ISAAC, this to you
" looks wonderful, but not at all to us higher
" beings: that nobleman has as many good
" qualities as any man of his order, and seems
" to have no faults but what, as I may say,
" are excrescences from virtues. He is ge-
" nerous to a prodigality, more affable than
" is consistent with his quality, and courage-
" ous to a rashness. Yet, after all this, the
" source of his whole conduct is (though he
" would hate himself if he knew it) mere
" avarice. The ready cash laid before the
" gamester's

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“gamester’s counters makes him venture, as
 “you see, and lay distinction against infamy,
 “abundance against want; in a word, all that
 “is desirable against all that is to be avoided.
 “However, said I, be sure you disappoint the
 “sharpers to-night, and steal from them all
 “the cards they hide. PACOLET obeyed me,
 “and my lord went home with their whole
 “bank in his pocket.”

WILL’s Coffee-house, May 13.

To-night was acted a second time a comedy, called *THE BUSY BODY*: this play is written by a lady *. In old times, we used to sit upon a play here after it was acted; but now the entertainment is turned another way; not but there are considerable men in all ages, who, for some eminent quality or invention, deserve the esteem and thanks of the public. Such a benefactor is a gentleman of this house; who is observed by the surgeons with much envy; and is ranked among, and received by the modern wits, as a great promoter of gallantry and pleasure. But, I fear, pleasure is less under-

* By Mrs. SUSANNAH CENTLIVRE, 1709, 4to. See TAT. N^o 19.

ISAAC BICKERSTAFF, Esq. had promised a prologue to “*The Busy Body*” before it was to be first played, as appears by a rhyming epistle of Mrs. CENTLIVRE to STEELE, claiming the performance of such a promise, printed by Charles Lilly. “Orig. Letter to TAT. and SPEC.” vol. II. N^o 13. p. 34. ed. 8vo. 1725.

stood in this age, which so much pretends to it, than in any since the creation. It was admirably said of him, who first took notice, that (*Res est severa voluptas*) “there is a certain severity in pleasure.” Without that, all decency is banished; and if reason is not to be present at our greatest satisfactions, of all the race of creatures, the human is the most miserable. It was not so of old; when VIRGIL describes a wit, he always means a virtuous man; and all his sentiments of men of genius, are such as shew persons distinguished from the common level of mankind; such as placed happiness in the contempt of low fears, and mean gratifications: fears which we are subject to with the vulgar; and pleasures which we have in common with beasts. With these illustrious personages, the wisest man was the greatest wit; and none was thought worthy of that character, unless he answered this excellent description of the poet:

*Qui——metus omnes & inexorabile fatum
Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari.*

VIRG. * Georg. II. 492.

Happy the man,——
His mind possessing in a quiet state,
Fearless of fortune, and resign'd to fate. DRYDEN.

* VIRGIL seems to speak here as an Epicurean, and might probably allude to some lines in LUCRETIVS, lib. III. 37—995. It is only by Christianity that men can be trained to that elevation of soul, which the doctrine of EPICURUS, &c. aimed at in vain.

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