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N<sup>o</sup> 16. Tuesday, May 17, 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, May 15.

SIR *Thomas*\*, of this house, has shewed me some letters from the Bath, which give accounts of what passes among the good company of that place; and allowed me to transcribe one of them, that seems to be *writ* by some of Sir Thomas’s particular acquaintance, and is as follows:

May 9, 1709.

“Dear Knight,

“I desire you would give my humble service to all our friends, which I speak of to you (out of method) in the very beginning of my

\* The nick-name of the waiter. See TAT. N<sup>o</sup> 26, N<sup>o</sup> 36. and SPEC. N<sup>o</sup> 49.

epistle,



epistle, lest the present disorders, by which this feat of gallantry and pleasure is torn to pieces, should make me forget it. You keep so good company, that you know BATH is stocked with such as come hither to be relieved from luxuriant health, or imaginary sickness; and consequently is always as well stowed with gallants, as invalids, who live together in a very good understanding. But the season is so early, that our fine company is not yet arrived; and the warm bath, which in heathen times was dedicated to VENUS, is now used only by such as really want it for health's sake. There are, however, a good many strangers, among whom are two ambitious ladies, who, being both in the autumn of their life, take the opportunity of placing themselves at the head of such as we are, before the Chloe's, Clarissa's, and Pastorella's come down. One of these two is excessively in pain, that the ugly being, called Time, will make wrinkles in spite of the lead forehead cloth; and therefore hides, with the gaiety of her air, the volubility of her tongue, and quickness of her motion, the injuries which it has done her. The other lady is but two years behind her in life, and dreads as much being laid aside as the former; and consequently has taken the necessary precautions to prevent her reign over us. But she is very discreet, and wonderfully turned for ambition, being never apparently transported either with affection, or malice. Thus, while FLORIMEL is

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talking in public, and spreading her graces in assemblies, to gain a popular dominion over our diversions, PRUDENTIA visits very cunningly all the lame, the splenetic, and the superannuated, who have their distinct classes of followers and friends. Among these she has found, that somebody has sent down printed certificates of FLORIMEL's age, which she has read and distributed to this unjoyful set of people, who are always enemies to those in possession of the good opinion of the company. This unprovoked injury done by PRUDENTIA was the first occasion of our fatal divisions here, and a declaration of war between these rivals. FLORIMEL has abundance of wit, which she has lavished in decrying PRUDENTIA, and giving defiance to her little arts. For an instance of her superior power, she bespoke the play of ALEXANDER THE GREAT\*, to be acted by the company of strollers, and desired us all to be there on Thursday last. When she spoke to me to come, "As you are," said she, "a lover, you will not fail the death of ALEXANDER: the passion of love is wonderfully hit—STATIRA! O that happy woman—to have a conqueror at her feet!—But you will be sure to be there." I, and several others, resolved to be of her party. But see the irresistible strength of that unsuspected creature, a "Silent Woman." PRUDENTIA

\* A burlesque on LEE's "Rival Queens;" See N<sup>o</sup> 191, and *Note*.

had



had counterplotted us, and had bespoke on the same evening the puppet-show of "The Creation of the World\*." She had engaged every body to be there; and, to turn our leader into ridicule, had secretly let them know, that the puppet Eve was made the most like FLORIMEL that ever was seen. On Thursday morning the puppet-drummer, Adam and Eve, and several others who lived before the flood, passed through the streets on horse-back, to invite us all to the pastime, and the representation of such things as we all knew to be true: and Mr. Mayor was so wise, as to prefer these innocent people the puppets, who, he said, were to represent Christians, before the wicked players, who were to shew ALEXANDER, an heathen philosopher. To be short, this PRUDENTIA had so laid it, that at ten of the clock footmen were sent to take places at the puppet-show, and all we of FLORIMEL's party were to be out of fashion, or desert her. We chose the latter. All the world crowded to PRUDENTIA's house, because it was given out nobody could get in. When we came to Noah's flood in the show, Punch and his wife were introduced dancing in the ark. An honest plain friend of FLORIMEL's, but a critic withal, rose up in the midst of the representa-

\* A deformed cripple of the name of POWEL was the master of a popular puppet show at this time, and made Punch utter many things, that would not have been endured in any other way of communication. See N° 11, *note*; GUARD. N° 53; and TAT. vol. vi. N° 270. *Adv.* p. 444.



tion, and made many very good exceptions to the drama itself, and told us, that it was against all morality, as well as rules of the stage, that Punch should be in jest in the deluge, or indeed that he should appear at all. This was certainly a just remark, and I thought to second him; but he was hissed by PRUDENTIA's party: upon which, really, Sir Thomas, we, who were his friends, hissed him too. Old Mrs. Petulant desired both her daughters to mind the moral; then whispered Mrs. Mayores, "This is very proper for young people to see!" Punch, at the end of the play, made PRUDENTIA a compliment, and was very civil to the whole company, making bows until his buttons touched the ground. All was carried triumphantly against our party. In the mean time FLORIMEL went to the tragedy, dressed as fine as hands could make her, in hopes to see PRUDENTIA pine away with envy. Instead of that, she sat a full hour alone, and at last was entertained with this whole relation from Statira, who wiped her eyes with her tragical cut handkerchief, and lamented the ignorance of the quality. FLORIMEL was stung with this affront, and the next day bespoke the puppet-show. PRUDENTIA, insolent with power, bespoke ALEXANDER. The whole company came then to Alexander. Madam Petulant desired her daughters to mind the moral, and believe no man's fair words: "For you will see, children," said she, "these soldiers are never to be de-  
" pended



“ pended upon; they are sometimes here, some-  
 “ times there.—Do not you see, daughter  
 “ Betty, Colonel CLOD, our next neighbour in  
 “ the country, pull off his hat to you? court’fy,  
 “ good child, his estate is just by us.” FLO-  
 RIMEL was now mortified down to PRUDEN-  
 TIA’s humour; and PRUDENTIA exalted into  
 hers. This was observed: FLORIMEL invites  
 us to the play a second time, PRUDENTIA to  
 the show. See the uncertainty of human af-  
 fairs! the beaux, the wits, the gamesters, the  
 prudes, the coquettes, the valetudinarians and  
 gallants, all now wait upon FLORIMEL. Such  
 is the state of things at this present date; and  
 if there happens any new commotions, you  
 shall have immediate advice from, SIR,

Your affectionate friend,  
 and servant.”

TO CASTABELLA\*.

MADAM,

May 16, 1709.

I Have the honour of a letter from a friend  
 of yours, relating to an incivility done to you  
 at the opera, by one of your own sex; but  
 I, who was an eye-witness of the accident, can  
 testify to you, that though she pressed before  
 you, she lost her ends in that design; for she  
 was taken notice of for no other reason, but  
 her endeavours to hide a finer woman than her-

\* See TAT. N<sup>o</sup> 14. *ad finem*.



self. But, indeed, I dare not go farther in this matter, than just this bare mention; for though it was taking your place of right, rather than place of precedence, yet it is so tender a point, and on which the very life of female ambition depends, that it is of the last consequence to meddle in it: all my hopes are from your beautiful sex; and those bright eyes, which are the bane of others, are my only sun-shine. My writings are sacred to you; and I hope, I shall always have the good fortune to live under your protection; therefore take this public opportunity to signify to all the world, that I design to forbear any thing that may in the least tend to the diminution of your interest, reputation, or power. You will therefore forgive me, that I strive to conceal every wrong step made by any who have the honour to wear petticoats, and shall at all times do what is in my power to make all mankind as much their slaves as myself. If they would consider things as they ought, there needs not much argument to convince them, that it is their fate to be obedient to you, and that your greatest rebels do only serve with a worse grace. I am, Madam,

Your most obedient and

most humble servant,

ISAAC BICKERSTAFF.

N. B. William Oliver, M. D. and F. R. S. wrote a Dissertation on Bath Waters, and Cold Baths, in 1709, to which he added the relation of a very extraordinary Sleeper near Bath. See TAT. N° 15. Note on Sir J. Floyer, M. D. and F. R. S.

N° 17.