
Nº 19. Tuesday, May 24, 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 23.

THERE is nothing can give a man of any consideration greater pain, than to see order and distinction laid aside amongst men, especially when the rank (of which he himself is member) is intruded upon, by such as have no pretence to that honour. The appellation of ESQUIRE is the most notoriously abused in this kind, of any class amongst men; insomuch, that it is become almost the subject of derision: but I will be bold to say, this behaviour towards it proceeds from the ignorance of the people in its true origin. I shall therefore, as briefly as possible, do myself and all true ESQUIRES the justice to look into antiquity upon this subject*.

* See SELDEN’s “Titles of Honour,” part II. chap. v. p. 830.

In the first ages of the world, before the invention of jointures and settlements, when the noble passion of love had possession of the hearts of men, and the fair sex were not yet cultivated into the merciful disposition which they have shewed in latter centuries, it was natural for great and heroic spirits to retire to rivulets, woods, and caves, to lament their destiny, and the cruelty of the fair persons who were deaf to their lamentations. The hero in this distress was generally in armour, and in a readiness to fight any man he met with, especially if distinguished by any extraordinary qualifications: it being the nature of heroic love to hate all merit, lest it should come within the observation of the cruel one by whom its own perfections are neglected. A lover of this kind had always about him a person of a second value, and subordinate to him, who could hear his afflictions, carry an incantment for his wounds, hold his helmet when he was eating (if ever he did eat), or in his absence, when he was retired to his apartment in any king's palace, tell the prince himself, or perhaps his daughter, the birth, parentage, and adventures of his valiant master. This trusty companion was styled his *ESQUIRE*, and was always fit for any offices about him; was as gentle and chaste as a gentleman-usher, quick and active as an equerry, smooth and eloquent as the master of the ceremonies. A man thus qualified was the first, as the antients affirm, who was called an *ESQUIRE*; and

and none without these accomplishments ought to assume our order: but, to the utter disgrace and confusion of the heralds, every pretender is admitted into this fraternity, even persons the most foreign to this courteous institution. I have taken an inventory of all within this city, and looked over every letter in the Post-office, for my better information. There are of the Middle Temple, including all in the buttry-books, and in the lists of the house, five thousand *. In the Inner, four thousand †. In the King's-Bench Walks, the whole buildings are inhabited by Esquires only. The adjacent street of Essex, from Morris's Coffee-house ‡, and the turning towards the Grecian, you cannot meet one who is not an ESQUIRE, until you take water. Every house in Norfolk and Arundel-streets is also governed by an ESQUIRE, or his LADY: Soho-square, Bloomsbury-square, and all other places where the floors rise above nine feet, are so many universities, where you enter yourselves, and become of our order. However, if this were the worst of the evil, it were to be supported, because they are generally men of some figure, and use; though I know no pretence they have to an honour which had its rise from chivalry. But if you travel into the counties of Great Britain, we are still more imposed upon by innovation. We

* In Tat. *in folio*, 4000. † In Tat. *in f.* 5000.

‡ Morris's Coffee-house was in the Strand. P.

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are indeed derived from the field: but shall that give title to all that ride mad after foxes, that halloo when they see a hare, or venture their necks full speed after an hawk, immediately to commence ESQUIRES? No; our order is temperate, cleanly, sober, and chaste; but these rural ESQUIRES commit immodesties upon hay-cocks, wear shirts half a week, and are drunk twice a day. These men are also, to the last degree, excessive in their food: an ESQUIRE of Norfolk eats two pounds of dumplin every meal, as if obliged to it by our order: an ESQUIRE of Hampshire is as ravenous in devouring hogs flesh: one of Essex has as little mercy on calves. But I must take the liberty to protest against them, and acquaint those persons, that it is not the quantity they eat, but the manner of eating, that shews an ESQUIRE. But, above all, I am most offended at small quillmen, and transcribing clerks, who are all come into our order, for no reason that I know of, but that they can easily flourish at the end of their name. I will undertake that, if you read the superscriptions to all the offices in the kingdom, you will not find three letters directed to any but ESQUIRES. I have myself a couple of clerks, and the rogues make nothing of leaving messages upon each other's desk: one directs, "To Gregory Goosequill, ESQUIRE;" to which the other replies by a note, "To Nehemiah Dashwell, ESQUIRE, with respect;" in a word, it is now *Populus Armigerorum*, a people of ESQUIRES.

ESQUIRES. And I do not know but, by the late act of naturalization *, foreigners will assume that title, as part of the immunity of being Englishmen. All these improprieties flow from the negligence of the Heralds-office. Those gentlemen in party-coloured habits do not so rightly, as they ought, understand themselves; though they are dressed *cap-a-pee* in hieroglyphicks, they are inwardly but ignorant men. I asked an acquaintance of mine, who is a man of wit, but of no fortune, and is forced to appear as a jack pudding on the stage to a mountebank: “Pr’ythee, Jack, why is your coat of so many colours?” He replied, “I act a fool; and this spotted dress is to signify, that every man living has a weak place about him; for I am Knight of the Shire, and represent you all.” I wish the heralds would know as well as this man does, in his way, that they are to act for us in the case of our arms and appellations: we should not then be jumbled together in so promiscuous and absurd a

* “Il faut un acte exprés de Parlement pour obtenir le droit naturel en Angleterre. On avoit fait alors une Loi générale, par laquelle on pouvoit aquerir ce droit dans toutes les cours de justice. Cette faveur étoit l’ouvrage des WHIGS pour les François Réfugiez, dont la plupart profiterent. Le parlement TORY de 1711 revoqua cette loi.” BABILLARD.

“If the Whigs were now restored to power,—the bill (for a general naturalization) now to be repealed, would then be re-enacted, and the birth-right of an Englishman reduced again to the value of *twelve pence*.” Examiner, vol. I. N° 26.

manner.

manner. I design to take this matter into further consideration; and no man shall be received as an ESQUIRE, who cannot bring a certificate, that he has conquered some lady's obdurate heart; that he can lead up a country-dance; or carry a message between her and her lover, with address, secrecy, and diligence. A SQUIRE is properly born for the service of the sex, and his credentials shall be signed by three toasts and one prude, before his title shall be received in my office.

WILL's Coffee-house, May 23.

On Saturday last was presented THE BUSY BODY, a comedy, written (as I have heretofore remarked) by a woman*. The plot and incidents of the play are laid with that subtilty of spirit which is peculiar to females of wit, and is very seldom well performed by those of the other sex, in whom craft in love is an act of invention, and not, as with women, the effect of nature and instinct.

To-morrow will be acted a play, called, THE TRIP TO THE JUBILEE†. This perfor-

* By Mrs. CENTLIVRE. See N^o 15. and *note*. The part of the Busy Body, by Mr. Dogget; Sir G. Airy, by Mr. Wilks; Charles, by Mr. Mills; Gripe, by Mr. Estcourt; Traffic, by Mr. Bullock; Miranda, by Mrs. Cross; and Isabinda, by Mrs. Porter.

† The author of "The Trip to the Jubilee," Mr. GEORGE FARQUHAR, makes a modest pun upon himself, and confesses, "That there are a great many *Trips* in the play." See TAT. N^o 3, and *note*.

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mance is the greatest instance that we can have of the irresistible force of proper action. The dialogue in itself has something too low to bear a criticism upon it: but Mr. WILKS enters into the part with so much skill, that the gallantry, the youth, and gaiety of a young man of a plentiful fortune, are looked upon with as much indulgence on the stage, as in real life, without any of those intermixtures of wit and humour, which usually prepossess us in favour of such characters in other plays.

An authentic letter from Madam MAINTENON to Monsieur TORCY has been stolen by a person about him, who has communicated a copy of it to some of the dependants of a minister of the allies. That epistle is writ in the most pathetic manner imaginable, and in a style which shews her genius, that has so long engrossed the heart of this great monarch*.

“SIR,

“I received yours, and am sensible of the
“address and capacity with which you have
“hitherto transacted the great affair under your
“management. You well observe, that our

* “Cette lettre est purement d’invention. Je n’ai d’autre
“vue en la traduisant que de faire voir de quelle maniere on
“parloit alors en Angleterre de l’état de la France, et de quelle
“maniere parlent tous les peuples dans la prospérité.” BAILLARD.

It seems then, that this letter of M. MAINTENON was originally written in English, and probably STEELE was both the editor, and the author of it.

“wants

“ wants here are not to be concealed: and that
“ it is vanity to use artifices with the knowing
“ men with whom you are to deal. Let me
“ beg you, therefore, in this representation of
“ our circumstances, to lay aside art, which
“ ceases to be such when it is seen, and make
“ use of all your skill to gain us what advan-
“ tages you can from the enemy’s jealousy of
“ each other’s greatness; which is the place
“ where only you have room for any dexterity.
“ If you have any passion for your unhappy
“ country, or any affection for your distressed
“ master, come home with peace. Oh heaven!
“ do I live to talk of LEWIS THE GREAT, as
“ the object of pity? The king shews a great
“ uneasiness to be informed of all that passes:
“ but at the same time, is fearful of every one
“ who appears in his presence, lest he should
“ bring an account of some new calamity. I
“ know not in what terms to represent my
“ thoughts to you, when I speak of the king,
“ with relation to his bodily health. Figure
“ to yourself that immortal man, who stood in
“ our public places represented with trophies,
“ armour, and terrors, on his pedestal: con-
“ sider, the invincible, the great, the good,
“ the pious, the mighty, which were the usual
“ epithets we gave him, both in our language
“ and thoughts. I say, consider him whom
“ you knew the greatest and most glorious of
“ monarchs, and now think you see the same
“ man an unhappy lazar, in the lowest circum-
stances

“stances of human nature itself, without regard to the state from whence he is fallen. I write from his bed-side: he is at present in a slumber. I have many, many things to add; but my tears flow too fast, and my sorrow is too big for utterance*.

“I am, &c.”

Nº 20. Thursday, May 26, 1709.

ADDISON and STEELE†.

*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 24.

IT is not to be imagined how far prepossession will run away with people’s understandings, in cases wherein they are under present uneasiness. The following narration is a sufficient testimony of the truth of this observation.

* See TAT. Nº 23. Nº 24. and Nº 26.

† The assignment of this Paper Nº 20, rests on the authority of the list of ADDISON’S Papers delivered by STEELE to Mr. Tickell. See TICKELL’S ed. of ADDISON’S Works, 4to.

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