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N° 21. Saturday, May 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, May 26.

A Gentleman has writ to me out of the country a very civil letter, and said things which I suppress with great violence to my vanity. There are many terms in my narratives which he complains want explaining; and has therefore desired that, for the benefit of my country readers, I would let him know what I mean by a GENTLEMAN, a PRETTY FELLOW, a TOAST, a COQUET, a CRITIC, a WIT, and all other appellations of those now in the gayer world, who are in possession of these several characters; together with an account of those who unfortunately pretend to them. I shall begin with him we usually call a GENTLEMAN, or “Man of Conversation.”

It



It is generally thought, that warmth of imagination, quick relish of pleasure, and a manner of becoming it, are the most essential qualities for forming this sort of man. But any one that is much in company will observe, that the height of good breeding is shewn rather in never giving offence, than in doing obliging things. Thus he that never shocks you, though he is seldom entertaining, is more likely to keep your favour, than he who often entertains, and sometimes displeases you. The most necessary talent therefore in a "Man of Conversation," which is what we ordinarily intend by a FINE GENTLEMAN, is a good judgement. He that has this in perfection, is master of his companion, without letting him see it; and has the same advantage over men of any other qualifications whatsoever, as one than can see would have over a blind man of ten times his strength.

This is what makes SOPHRONIUS the darling of all who converse with him, and the most powerful with his acquaintance of any man in town. By the light of this faculty he acts with great ease and freedom among the men of pleasure, and acquits himself with skill and dispatch among the men of business. All which he performs with such success, that, with as much discretion in life as any man ever had, he neither is, nor appears, cunning. But as he does a good office, if ever he does it, with readiness and alacrity; so he denies what he does  
not



not care to engage in, in a manner that convinces you that you ought not to have asked it. His judgement is so good and unerring, and accompanied with so chearful a spirit, that his conversation is a continual feast, at which he helps some, and is helped by others, in such a manner, that the equality of society is perfectly kept up, and every man obliges as much as he is obliged: for it is the greatest and justest skill in a man of superior understanding, to know how to be on a level with his companions. This sweet disposition runs through all the actions of SOPHRONIUS, and makes his company desired by women, without being envied by men. SOPHRONIUS would be as just as he is, if there were no law; and would be as discreet as he is, if there were no such things as calumny.

In imitation of this agreeable being, is made that animal we call a PRETTY FELLOW; who, being just able to find out, that what makes SOPHRONIUS\* acceptable is a natural behaviour, in order to the same reputation, makes his own an artificial one. JACK DIMPLE is his perfect mimic, whereby he is, of course, the most unlike him of all men living. SOPHRONIUS just now passed into the inner room directly forward: JACK comes as fast after as he can for

\* One, and by much the ablest of the many continuators of The TATLER, speaking of this fine character of *Sophronius* says, "One would think that STEELE sat here to his own picture, or at least that he complimented another with his own features."

the



the right and left looking-glass, in which he had but just approved himself by a nod at each, and marched on. He will meditate within for half an hour until he thinks he is not careless enough in his air, and come back to the mirror to recollect his forgetfulness.

WILL'S Coffee-house, May 27.

This night was acted the comedy called *THE FOX*\*; but I wonder the modern writers do not use their interest in the house to suppress such representations. A man that has been at this, will hardly like any other play during the season: therefore I humbly move, that the writings, as well as dresses, of the last age should give way to the present fashion. We are come into a good method enough (if we were not interrupted in our mirth by such an apparition as a play of JONSON'S) to be entertained at more ease, both to the spectator and the writer, than in the days of old. It is no difficulty to get hats and swords, and wigs and shoes, and every thing else, from the shops in town; and make a man shew himself by his habit, without more ado, to be a counsellor, a fop, a courtier, or a citizen, and not be obliged to make those characters talk in different dialects to be distin-

\* By B. JONSON, who succeeded to the laurel at the death of S. Daniel, in 1619, when the Laureat's salary was raised from 100 marks, to 100*l*. and a tierce of Spanish wine, *per annum*. "*The Fox*" was first acted in 1605, and printed in 4*to*. the same year, *with the allowance of the Master of the Revells*.

guished



guished from each other. This is certainly the surest and best way of writing: but such a play as this makes a man for a month after over-run with criticism, and enquire, "What every man  
" on the stage said? what had such a one to do  
" to meddle with such a thing? how came the  
" other, who was bred after this or that man-  
" ner, to speak so like a man conversant among  
" a different people?" These questions rob us of all our pleasure; for, at this rate, no sentence in a play should be spoken by any one character which could possibly enter into the head of any other man represented in it; but every sentiment should be peculiar to him only who utters it. Laborious BEN's works will bear this sort of inquisition; but if the present writers were thus examined, and the offences against this rule cut out, few plays would be long enough for the whole evening's entertainment.

But I do not know how they did in those old times: this same BEN JONSON has made every one's passion in this play be towards money; and yet not one of them expresses that desire, or endeavours to obtain it, any way but what is peculiar to him only: one sacrifices his wife, another his profession, another his posterity, from the same motive: but their characters are kept so skilfully apart, that it seems prodigious their discourses should rise from the invention of the same author.

But the poets are a nest of hornets, and I will drive these thoughts no farther; but must  
mention



mention some hard treatment I am like to meet with from my brother-writers. I am credibly informed, that the author of a play, called "Love in a Hollow Tree\*," has made some remarks upon my late discourse on "The Naked Truth." I cannot blame a gentleman for writing against any error; it is for the good of the learned world. But I would have the thing fairly left between us two, and not under the protection of patrons. But my intelligence is, that he hath dedicated his treatise to the honourable Mr. ED——D H——RD†.

\* The comedy, called "Love in a hollow Tree," or, "The Lawyer's Fortune," (see TATLER, N<sup>o</sup> 17. and *note*) was published by WILLIAM Lord Viscount GRIMSTON, when he was only thirteen years of age, which is some apology for the many absurdities in it. It was printed in 4to. in 1705, and was never acted, unless at school, but by a company of strollers at Windsor. On the occasion of a contested election for the borough of St. Alban's it was invidiously re-printed by the duchess of MARLBOROUGH, with notes, in which his lordship was treated with the utmost indecency and ill-manners. It was adorned with the frontispiece of an elephant dancing on a rope. The viscount bought up as nearly as he could the whole edition. The duchess made his lordship ample reparation, by printing her own "Memoirs," not written in her childhood. See WALPOLE, Catal. vol. II. p. 250. "This worthy nobleman was a good husband to one of the best of wives, an indulgent father of a numerous offspring, a kind master to his servants, a generous friend, and an affable, hospitable neighbour. He died in 1756." See TAT. N<sup>o</sup> 17. and *Note*.

† Hon. EDWARD HOWARD, author of seven plays, and of an epic poem, called "The British Princes." He gained, however, no reputation as a writer, but furnished food to the contemporary wits, who treated him with great severity. N.

From



From my own Apartment, May 27.

To ISAAC BICKERSTAFF, Esquire.

“SIR, York, May 16, 1709.

“Being convinced, as the whole world is,  
 “how infallible your predictions are, and hav-  
 “ing the honour to be your near relation of  
 “the STAFFIAN family, I was under great con-  
 “cern at one of your predictions relating to  
 “yourself, wherein you foretold your own death  
 “would happen on the seventeenth instant\*,  
 “unless it were prevented by the assistance of  
 “well disposed people: I have therefore pre-  
 “vailed on my own modesty to send you a  
 “piece of news, which may serve instead of  
 “Goddard’s † drops, to keep you alive for two  
 “days, until nature be able to recover itself, or  
 “until you meet with some better help from  
 “other hands. Therefore, without further  
 “ceremony, I will relate a singular adventure

\* See this conditional prediction, TAT. N<sup>o</sup> 7.

† Dr. JONATHAN GODDARD was the physician and confidant of CROMWELL, a member of the Royal Society, and medical professor of Gresham College. He was the first Englishman who made telescopes; and in the course of his accurate chemical experiments discovered the famous elixir, called here his drops, the basis of which, was the volatile spirit of raw silk, rarified with oil of cinnamon or some other essential oil. See *Biogr. Brit.* 1st ed. Art. LISTER, Note E. p. 2975.



“ just happened in the place where I am  
“ writing, wherewith it may be highly useful  
“ for the public to be informed.

“ Three young ladies of our town were on  
“ Saturday last indicted for witchcraft. The  
“ witnesses against the first deposed upon oath  
“ before Justice Bindover, that she kept spirits  
“ locked up in vessels, which sometimes ap-  
“ peared in flames of blue fire; that she used  
“ magical herbs, with some of which she drew  
“ in hundreds of men daily to her, who went  
“ out from her presence all inflamed, their  
“ mouths parched, and a hot steam issuing  
“ from them, attended with a grievous stench:  
“ that many of the said men were by the force  
“ of that herb metamorphosed into swine, and  
“ lay wallowing in the kennels for twenty-four  
“ hours, before they could re-assume their  
“ shapes, or their senses.

“ It was proved against the second, That she  
“ cut off by night the limbs from dead bodies  
“ that were hanged, and was seen to dig holes  
“ in the ground, to mutter some conjuring  
“ words, and bury pieces of the flesh after  
“ the usual manner of witches.

“ The third was accused for a notorious piece  
“ of sorcery, long practised by hags, of mould-  
“ ing up pieces of dough into the shapes of  
“ men, women, and children; then heating  
“ them at a gentle fire, which had a sympa-  
“ thetic power to torment the bowels of those  
“ in the neighbourhood.

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P

“ This



“ This was the sum of what was objected  
“ against the three ladies, who indeed had  
“ nothing to say in their own defence, but  
“ downright deny the facts, which is like  
“ to avail very little when they come upon  
“ their trials.

“ But the parson of our parish, a strange re-  
“ fractory man, will believe nothing of all this:  
“ so that the whole town cries out ‘ Shame!  
“ that one of his coat should be such an atheist;’  
“ and design to complain of him to the bishop.  
“ He goes about very oddly to solve the matter.  
“ He supposes, that the first of these ladies  
“ keeping a brandy and tobacco shop, the  
“ fellows went out smoking; and got drunk  
“ towards evening, and made themselves beasts.  
“ He says, the second is a butcher’s daughter,  
“ and sometimes brings a quarter of mutton  
“ from the slaughter-house over-night against  
“ a market-day, and once buried a bit of beef  
“ in the ground, as a known receipt to cure  
“ warts on her hands. The parson affirms,  
“ that the third sells gingerbread, which, to  
“ please the children, she is forced to stamp  
“ with images before it is baked; and if it  
“ burns their guts, it is because they eat too  
“ much, or do not drink after it.

“ These are the answers he gives to solve  
“ those wonderful *phenomena*; upon which I  
“ shall not animadvert, but leave it among  
“ Philosophers: and so, wishing you all suc-  
“ cess



“ cefs in your undertakings for the amend-  
“ ment of the world, I remain, dear coufin,

“ Your moft affectionate kinfman,

“ and humble fervant,

“ EPHRAIM BEDSTAFF



“ P. S. Thofe who were condemned to death  
“ among the Athenians were obliged to take  
“ a dofe of poifon, which made them die up-  
“ wards; feizing firft upon their feet, mak-  
“ ing them cold and infenfible, and fo afcend-  
“ ing gradually, until it reached the vital parts.  
“ I believe your death, which you foretold  
“ would happen on the feventeenth inftant, will  
“ fall out the fame way, and that your diftem-  
“ per hath already feized on you, and makes  
“ progrefs daily. The lower part of you, that  
“ is, the Advertisements, is dead\*; and thefe  
“ have rifen for thefe ten days laft paft, fo that  
“ they now take up almoft a whole column.  
“ Pray, Sir, do you endeavour to drive this  
“ diftemper as much as poffible to the extreme  
“ parts, and keep it there, as wife folks do the  
“ gout: for if it once gets into your ftomach,  
“ it will foon fly up into your head, and you  
“ are a dead man.”

\* BICKERSTAFF was far from mending in this particu-  
lar. The number of advertisements increafed furprizingly  
in the courfe of the work; and juftled out the articles of  
news, being probably more lucrative.

P 2

“ Any



“ Any person that shall come publicly abroad  
 “ in a fantastical habit, contrary to the present  
 “ mode and fashion, except *Don Diego Dis-*  
 “ *mallo*\*, or any other out of poverty, shall  
 “ have his name and dress inserted in our  
 “ next.”

“ N. B. Mr. How’d’yecall is desired to leave  
 “ off those buttons.”

N° 22. Tuesday, May 31, 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.

WHITE’S Chocolate-house, May 28.

I CAME hither this evening to see fashions;  
 and who should I first encounter but my old  
 friend CYNTHIO † (encompassed by a croud of  
 young fellows) dictating on the passion of Love

\* A nick-name given in the rage of party, to a very respectable nobleman, the Earl of NOTTINGHAM. STEELE objects to this application of the character. See GUARD. N° 53.

† See TAT. N° 15. N° 35. N° 85; and LOVER, N° 38.  
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