

Nº 28. Tuesday, June 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 it’s theme.” P.

WHITE’S Chocolate-house, June 13.

I HAD suspended the business of duelling to a distant time, but that I am called upon to declare myself on a point proposed in the following letter*.

“S I R,

June 9, at night.

“I DESIRE the favour of you to decide
“this question, whether calling a gentleman a
“Smart Fellow is an affront or not? A youth
“entering a certain coffee-house, with his cane
“tied to his button, wearing red-heeled shoes,
“I thought of your description, and could not
“forbear telling a friend of mine next to me,
“there enters a ‘Smart Fellow.’ The gen-

* See Nº 25. Nº 26. Nº 29. Nº 31. Nº 38. and Nº 39.

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"tleman hearing it, had immediately a mind
 "to pick a quarrel with me, and desired sa-
 "tisfaction; at which I was more puzzled
 "than at the other, remembering what mention
 "your familiar makes of those that had lost
 "their lives on such occasions. The thing is
 "referred to your judgement; and I expect you
 "to be my second, since you have been the
 "cause of our quarrel. I am, Sir, your friend
 "and humble servant."

I absolutely pronounce, that there is no oc-
 casion of offence given in this expression; for a
 "Smart Fellow" is always an appellation of
 praise, and is a man of double capacity. The
 true cast or mould in which you may be sure to
 know him is, when his livelihood or education
 is in the civil list, and you see him express a
 vivacity or mettle above the way he is in by a
 little jerk in his motion, short trip in his steps,
 well-fancied lining of his coat, or any other
 indications which may be given in a vigorous
 dress*. Now, what possible insinuation can
 there be, that it is a cause of quarrel for a man
 to say, he allows a gentleman really to be,
 what his tailor, his hosier, and his milliner,
 have conspired to make him? I confess, if this
 person who appeals to me had said, he was
 "not a Smart Fellow," there had been cause
 for resentment; but if he stands to it that he

* See N^o 9. N^o 24. N^o 26. N^o 27. and *Notes*.

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is one, he leaves no manner of ground for misunderstanding. Indeed it is a most lamentable thing, that there should be a dispute raised upon a man's saying another is what he plainly takes pains to be thought.

But this point cannot be so well adjusted, as by enquiring what are the sentiments of wise nations and communities, of the use of the sword, and from thence conclude whether it is honourable to draw it so frequently or not? An illustrious commonwealth of Italy* has preserved itself for many ages, without letting one of their subjects handle this destructive instrument; always leaving that work to such of mankind as understand the use of a whole skin so little, as to make a profession of exposing it to cuts and scars.

But what need we run to such foreign instances? Our own ancient and well-governed cities are conspicuous examples to all mankind in their regulation of military achievements. The chief citizens, like the noble Italians, hire mercenaries to carry arms in their stead; and you shall have a fellow of a desperate fortune, for the gain of one half crown, go through all the dangers of Tothill-Fields, or the Artillery-Ground, clap his right jaw within two inches of the touch-hole of a musquet, fire it off, and

* *Venice*, which declined engaging in the war of the *Grana Alliance* in 1702. This republic, when it has occasion for soldiers, commonly employs German, Swiss, or other foreign mercenaries.

huzza, with as little concern as he tears a pullet*. Thus you see, to what scorn of danger these mercenaries arrive, out of a mere love of sordid gain: but methinks it should take off the strong prepossession men have in favour of bold actions, when they see upon what low motives men aspire to them. Do but observe the common practice in the government of those heroic bodies, our militia and lieutenancies, the most ancient corps of soldiers, perhaps, in the universe; I question, whether there is one instance of an animosity between any two of these illustrious sons of Mars since their institution, which was decided by combat? I remember indeed to have read the chronicle of an accident which had like to have occasioned bloodshed in the very field before all the general officers, though most of them were justices of the peace. Captain CRABTREE of Birchin-lane, haberdasher, had drawn a bill upon major-general MAGGOT, cheesemonger in Thames-street. CRABTREE draws this upon Mr. WILLIAM MAGGOT and company. A country lad received this bill, and not understanding the word *company*, used in drawing bills on men in partnership, carried it to Mr. JEFFERY STITCH of Crooked-lane (lieutenant of the major general's company), whom he had the day before seen

* The state and discipline of the city train bands at this time was very justly a standing subject of ridicule. See TAT. N° 38. and N° 41.

march by the door in all the pomp of his commission. The lieutenant accepts it for the honour of the company, since it had come to him. But repayment being asked from the major general, he absolutely refuses. Upon this, the lieutenant thinks of nothing less than to bring this to a rupture, and takes for his second TOBIAS ARMSTRONG of the Counter*, and sends him with a challenge in a scrip of parchment, wherein was written STITCH *contra* MAGGOT, and all the fury vanished in a moment. The major-general gives *satisfaction* to the second, and all was well.

Hence it is, that the bold spirits of our city are kept in such subjection to the civil power. Otherwise, where would our liberties soon be, if wealth and valour were suffered to exert themselves with their utmost force? If such officers as are employed in the terrible bands abovementioned, were to draw bills as well as swords, these dangerous captains, who could victual an army as well as lead it, would be too powerful for the state. But the point of honour justly gives way to that of gain; and, by long and wise regulation, the richest is the bravest man. I have known a captain rise to a colonel in two days by the fall of stocks; and a major†, my good friend, near the Monument, ascended to that honour by the fall of the price of spirits, and the rising of right nantz. By

* A sheriff's officer.
N^o 79; and *Notes*.

† Major Gregory. See N^o 38;

this true sense of honour, that body of warriors are ever in good order and discipline, with their colours and coats all whole: as in other battalions (where their principles of action are less solid) you see the men of service look like spectres with long sides and lank cheeks. In this army you may measure a man's service by his waist, and the most prominent belly is certainly the man who has been most upon action. Besides all this, there is another excellent remark to be made in the discipline of these troops. It being of absolute necessity, that the people of England should see what they have for their money, and be eye-witnesses of the advantages they gain by it, all battles which are fought abroad are represented here. But, since one side must be beaten, and the other conquer, which might create disputes, the eldest company is always to make the other run, and the younger retreats, according to the last news and best intelligence. I have myself seen prince Eugene make Catinat fly from the backside of Grays-Inn-Lane to Hockley in the Hole, and not give over the pursuit, until obliged to leave the Bear-garden* on the right, to avoid being borne

* “ There was a sort of amphitheatre here, dedicated originally to bull-baiting, bear-baiting, prize-fighting, and all other sorts of *rough-game*; and it was not only attended by butchers, drovers, and great crouds of all sorts of mob, but likewise by Dukes, Lords, Knights, Squires, &c. There were seats particularly set apart for the quality, ornamented with old-tapestry hangings, into which none
“ were

borne down by fencers, wild bulls, and monsters, too terrible for the encounter of any heroes, but such whose lives are their livelihood†.

We have here seen, that wise nations do not admit of fighting, even in the defence of their country, as a laudable action; and they live within the walls of our own city in great honour and reputation without it. It would be very necessary to understand, by what force of the climate, food, education, or employment, one man's sense is brought to differ so essentially from that of another; that one is ridiculous and contemptible for forbearing a thing which makes for his safety; and another applauded for consulting his ruin and destruction.

It will therefore be necessary for us (to shew our travelling) to examine this subject fully, and tell you how it comes to pass, that a man

“ were admitted under half a crown at least. Its neighbourhood was famous for sheltering thieves, pickpockets, and infamous women; and for breeding bull-dogs.” N.
 † “ The profession of a soldier may be disesteemed by some unthinking, not to say ungrateful men. But *surely* to profess arms, is to profess being ready to die for others. Nor is it an ordinary struggle between reason, sense, and passion, that can raise men to a calm and ready negligence of life, and animate them to assault without fear, pursue without cruelty, and stab without hatred. Were soldiers to form to themselves (if any do not) a constant reason of their actions, they would find themselves better prepared for all the vicissitudes they are to meet with, when instead of the changeable heat of mere courage and blood, they acted upon the firm motives of duty, valour, and constancy of soul.” STEELE.

of honour in Spain, though you offend him *never* so gallantly, stabs you basely; in England, though you offend him *never* so basely, challenges fairly; the former kills you out of revenge, the latter out of good breeding. But to probe the heart of man in this particular to its utmost thoughts and recesses, I must wait for the return of PACOLET, who is now attending a gentleman lately in a Duel, and sometimes visits the person by whose hands he received his wounds *.

St. JAMES's Coffee-house, June 13.

Letters from Vienna of the eighth instant say, there has been a journal of the marches and actions of the king of Sweden, from the beginning of January to the eleventh of April, N. S. communicated by the Swedish ministers to that court. These advices inform, that his Swedish majesty entered the territories of Muscovy in February last, with the main body of his army, in order to oblige the enemy to a general engagement; but that, the Muscovites declining a battle, and an universal thaw having rendered

* See N° 25, *Note* on "STEELE's Duel," of the truth of which, this passage may be considered as a confirmation. The relation in the note referred to, was given on the authority of the late pious and learned Dr. Thomas Amory, who had it from his uncle, the Rev. Mr. H. Grove, an admirable writer in the SPECTATOR. The story and the concluding passage of this Paper N° 28, mutually illustrate and confirm each other. See SPEC. N° 588; N° 601; N° 635; and *Notes*.

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the rivers unpassable, the king returned into Ukrania. There are mentioned several rencounters between considerable detachments of the Swedish and Russian armies. Marshal Heister intended to take his leave of the court on the day after the date of these letters, and put himself at the head of the army in Hungary. The mal-contents had attempted to send in a supply of provision into Newhausel; but their design was disappointed by the Germans.

Advices from Berlin of the fifteenth instant, N. S. say, that his Danish majesty having received an invitation from the king of Prussia to an interview, designed to come to Potsdam within a few days, and that king Augustus resolved to accompany him thither. To avoid all difficulties in ceremony, the three kings and all the company who shall have the honour to sit with them at table, are to draw lots, and take precedence accordingly.

They write from Hamburgh of the eighteenth instant, N. S. that some particular letters from Dantzick speak of a late action between the Swedes and Muscovites near Jerislaw; but that engagement being mentioned from no other place, there is not much credit given to this intelligence.

We hear from Brussels, by letters dated the twentieth, that on the fourteenth in the evening, the duke of Marlborough and prince Eugene arrived at Courtray, with a design to proceed the day following to Lisle, in the neigh-

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bourhood of which city the confederate army was to rendezvous the same day. Advices from Paris inform us, that the Marshal de Bezons is appointed to command in Dauphine, and that the duke of Berwick is set out for Spain, with a design to follow the fortunes of the Duke of Anjou, in case the French king should comply with the late demands of the allies.

The court of France has sent a circular letter* to all the governors of the provinces, to recommend to their consideration his majesty's late conduct in the affair of peace. It is thought fit, in that epistle, to condescend to a certain appeal to the people, whether it is consistent with the dignity of the crown, or the French name, to submit to the preliminaries demanded by the confederates? That letter dwells upon the unreasonableness of the allies, in requiring his majesty's assistance in dethroning his grandson; and treats this particular in language more suitable to it, as it is a topic of oratory, than a real circumstance on which the interests of nations, and reasons of state, which affect all Europe, are concerned.

The close of this memorial seems to prepare the people to expect all events, attributing the confidence of the enemy to the goodness of their troops; but acknowledging, that his sole dependance is upon the the intervention of Providence.

* See TAT. N° 29, last letter.