
N° 35. Thursday, June 30, 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.

GRECIAN Coffee-house, June 28.

THERE is an habit or custom which I have put my patience to the utmost stretch to have suffered so long, because several of my intimate friends are in the guilt; and that is, the humour of Taking SNUFF, and looking dirty about the mouth by way of ornament.

My method is, to dive to the bottom of a fore before I pretend to apply a remedy. For this reason, I sat by an eminent story-teller and politician, who takes half an ounce in five seconds, and has mortgaged a pretty tenement near the town, merely to improve and dung his brains with this prolific powder. I observed this gentleman, the other day, in the midst of a story, diverted from it by looking at

at something at a distance, and I softly hid his box. But he returns to his tale, and, looking for his box, he cries, "And so, Sir—" Then, when he should have taken a pinch, "As I was saying—" says he, "has nobody seen my box?" His friend beseeches him to finish his narration: then he proceeds; "And so, Sir——where can my box be?" Then turning to me, "Pray, Sir, did you see my box?" "Yes, Sir," said I, "I took it to see how long you could live without it." He resumes his tale, and I took notice that his dulness was much more regular and fluent than before. A pinch supplied the place of "As I was saying," and "So, Sir;" and he went on currently enough in that style which the learned call the insipid. This observation easily led me into a philosophic reason for Taking SNUFF, which is done only to supply with sensations the want of reflection. This I take to be an εὐρηκα*, a *nostrum*; upon which I hope to receive the thanks of this board: for as it is natural to lift a man's hand to a fore, when you fear any thing coming at you; so when a person feels his thoughts are

* "I have found it out!" The exclamation of ARCHIMEDES, when, by observing that the quantity of water which overflowed the bath he bathed in, was precisely equal to the weight of his body, he was led into a method of ascertaining the degree of adulteration in the workmanship of a golden crown. The process of this curious discovery is related by VITRUVIUS, *Lib. IX. Cap. 3.*

run out, and he has no more to say, it is as natural to supply his weak brain with powder at the nearest place of access, *viz.* the nostrils. This is so evident, that nature suggests the use according to the indigence of the persons who take this medicine, without being prepossessed with the force of fashion or custom. For example; the native Hibernians, who are reckoned not much unlike the ancient Bæotians, take this specific for emptiness in the head, in greater abundance than any other nation under the sun. The learned SORUS, as sparing as he is in his words, would be still more silent if it were not for this powder*.

However low and poor the Taking of SNUFF argues a man to be in his own stock of thoughts, or means to employ his brains and his fingers; yet there is a poorer creature in the world than he, and this is a borrower of SNUFF; a fellow that keeps no box of his own, but is always asking others for a pinch. Such poor rogues put me always in mind of a common phrase among school-boys when they are composing their exercise, who run to an upper scholar, and cry, "Pray give me a little sense." But of all things commend me to the ladies who are got into this pretty help to discourse. I have been these three years persuading SA-

* See N° 197; N° 1, N° 27, and N° 142, *ad finem.*

GISSA* to leave it off; but she talks so much, and is so learned, that she is above contradiction. However, an accident the other day brought that about, which my eloquence could never accomplish. She had a *very Pretty Fellow* in her closet, who ran thither to avoid some company that came to visit her: she made an excuse to go in to him for some implement they were talking of. Her eager gallant snatched a kiss; but, being unused to SNUFF, some grains from off her upper lip made him sneeze aloud, which alarmed the visitants, and has made a discovery, that profound reading, very much intelligence, and a general knowledge of who and who are together, cannot fill her vacant hours so much, but she is sometimes obliged to descend to entertainments less intellectual.

WHITE's Chocolate-house, June 29:

I know no manner of news from this place, but that CYNTHIO, having been long in despair for the inexorable CLARISSA, lately re-

* Mrs. DE LA RIVIERE MANLEY, who provoked STEELE by the liberties she had taken with his character in her "Secret Memoirs from the New Atlantis," &c. She indiscreetly renewed similar provocations in her after-writings, and in return was treated most unmercifully. See THEATRE, N^o 26.

The latter years of Mrs. MANLEY's life were spent in Alderman BARBER's house, where she died in 1723, and was buried at St. Bennet Fink Church.

solved

solved to fall in love with the good old way of bargain and sale, and has pitched upon a very agreeable young woman. He will undoubtedly succeed; for he accosts her in a strain of familiarity, without breaking through the deference that is due to a woman whom a man would choose for his life*. I have hardly ever heard rough truth spoken with a better grace than in this his letter.

“MADAM†,

“I writ to you on Saturday by Mrs. Lucy,
“and give you this trouble to urge the same
“request I made then, which was, that I may
“be permitted to wait upon you. I should be

* LORD HINCHINBROKE married, Lady ELIZABETH POPHAM, only daughter of ALEXANDER POPHAM, Esq; of Littlecote, in Wiltshire.

† See N^o 1; N^o 5; N^o 22; N^o 85; and LOVER, N^o 38. This gay nobleman did not live long enough to shew what he would have been. The following anecdote of him is given on good authority. An old justice in Westminster had committed him to the round-house for a drunken frolic, and obliged him to pay for some windows that had been broken on the occasion. Soon after his lordship knocked up the justice at midnight, alledging business of importance, which could not admit of delay. The magistrate made his appearance, after some time, in his furred-gown and double night-cap; when his lordship told him, that he had had the misfortune that evening to tear his ruffle, and had only called on his honour to borrow a pin. This letter was written originally by STEELE himself, to Mrs. Scurlock, afterwards Lady STEELE. See STEELE's "Letters," Vol. I. Let. II. p. 2. 2 Vol. 1787.

“very

“ very far from desiring this, if it was a trans-
“ gression of the most severe rules to allow it :
“ I know you are very much above the little
“ arts which are frequent in your sex, of giving
“ unnecessary torments to their admirers ;
“ therefore hope you will do so much justice to
“ the generous passion I have for you, as to let
“ me have an opportunity of acquainting you
“ upon what motives I pretend to your good
“ opinion. I shall not trouble you with my
“ sentiments, until I know how they will be
“ received ; and as I know no reason why dif-
“ ference of sex should make our language to
“ each other differ from the ordinary rules of
“ right reason ; I shall affect plainness and sin-
“ cerity in my discourse to you, as much as
“ other lovers do perplexity and rapture. In-
“ stead of saying, I shall die for you, I profess,
“ I should be glad to lead my life with you :
“ you are as beautiful, as witty, as prudent,
“ and as good-humoured, as any woman breath-
“ ing ; but I must confess to you, I regard all
“ these excellencies as you will please to direct
“ them for my happiness or misery. With
“ me Madam, the only lasting motive to love
“ is the hope of its becoming mutual. I beg
“ of you to let Mrs. Lucy send me word when
“ I may attend you. I promise you I will talk
“ of nothing but indifferent things ; though, at
“ the same time, I know not how I shall ap-
“ proach you in the tender moment of first see-
“ ing you, after this declaration of, Madam,
“ your

“ your most obedient, and most faithful humble servant,” &c.



WILL's Coffee-house, June 29.

Having taken a resolution, when plays are acted next winter by an entire good company, to publish observations from time to time on the performance of the actors, I think it but just to give an abstract of the laws of action, for the help of the less learned part of the audience, that they may rationally enjoy so refined and instructive a pleasure as a just representation of human life. The great errors in playing are admirably well exposed in HAMLET's directions to the actors who are to play in his supposed tragedy; by which we shall form our future judgments on their behaviour, and for that reason you have the discourse as follows :

“ Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounce'd it to you, trippingly on the tongue:
 “ but if you mouth it, as many of our players do, I had as lieve the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus; but use all gently: for in the very torrent, tempest, and (as I may say) whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance, that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul,
 “ to

“ to hear a robustious perriwig-pated * fellow
 “ tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to
 “ split the ears of the groundlings; who, for
 “ the most part, are capable of nothing but
 “ inexplicable dumb shews, and noise: I
 “ would have such a fellow whipp’d for o’er-
 “ doing **TERMAGANT**; it out-herods **HEROD**:
 “ pray you, avoid it. Be not too tame nei-
 “ ther, but let your own discretion be your
 “ tutor: suit the action to the word, the
 “ word to the action; with this special ob-
 “ servance, that you o’erstep not the modesty
 “ of nature: for any thing so overdone is
 “ from the purpose of playing, whose end,
 “ both at the first, and now, was, and is, to
 “ hold as ’twere the mirror up to nature;
 “ to shew virtue her own feature, scorn her
 “ own image, and the very age and body of
 “ the time his form and pressure. Now this,
 “ over-done, or come tardy off, though it make
 “ the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the
 “ judicious grieve; the censure of which one,
 “ must, in your allowance, o’er-weigh a whole
 “ theatre of others. O, there be players,
 “ that I have seen play,—and heard others
 “ praise, and that highly—not to speak it
 “ profanely, that, neither having the accent
 “ of Christians, nor the gait of Christian,

* This is a ridicule on the quantity of false hair worn
 in SHAKSPEARE’S time, for wigs were not in common use
 till the reign of CHARLES II.; players, however, seem to
 have worn them most generally. STEEVENS.

“ Pagan,

“ Pagan, nor man, have so strutted, and bel-
 “ low’d, that I have thought some of nature’s
 “ journeymen had made men, and not made
 “ them well, they imitated humanity so abomi-
 “ nably. This should be reformed altogether.
 “ And let those, that play your clowns, speak
 “ no more than is set down for them: for there
 “ be of them, that will themselves laugh, to
 “ set on some quantity of barren spectators to
 “ laugh too; though in the mean time, some
 “ necessary question of the play be then to be
 “ considered: that’s villainous, and shews a
 “ most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses
 “ it.”

From my own Apartment, June 29.

It would be a very great obligation, and an
 assistance to my treatise upon Punning, if any
 one would please to inform me in what class
 among the learned*, who play with words, to
 place the author of the following letter:

“ S I R,

“ Not long since you were pleased to give
 “ us a chimerical account of the famous family

* Considering what trash has appeared under the name
 of SWIFT, and with the sanction of his countenance, it
 may be pardonable to suspect him as the author of this
bagatelle. STEELE certainly might have declined publish-
 ing it, and left it to have been classed more suitably with
 the insignificant things, which are not after all, the most
 disgraceful parts of SWIFT’s works.

Charles Dartiquenave, or Dartineuf, Esq; celebrated by
 SWIFT as a punster inferior only to himself, is said to have
 written in the TATLER, and, it may be, on this occasion.
 See N° 252, Note on C. Dartiquenave, Esq.

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“ of

“ of the STAFFS, from whence I suppose you
 “ would insinuate, that it is the most an-
 “ cient and numerous house in all Europe.
 “ But I positively deny that it is either, and
 “ wonder much at your audacious proceedings
 “ in this manner, since it is well known, that
 “ our most illustrious, most renowned, and
 “ most celebrated Roman family of IX has
 “ enjoyed the precedency to all others, from
 “ the reign of good old Saturn. I could say
 “ much to the defamation and disgrace of your
 “ family; as, that your relations DISTAFF
 “ and BROOMSTAFF were both inconsiderable
 “ mean persons, one spinning, the other sweep-
 “ ing the streets, for their daily bread. But
 “ I forbear to vent my spleen on objects so
 “ much beneath my indignation. I shall only
 “ give the world a catalogue of my ancestors,
 “ and leave them to determine which hath
 “ hitherto had, and which for the future
 “ ought to have, the preference.

“ First then comes the most famous and po-
 “ pular lady MERETRIX, parent of the fertile
 “ family of BELLATRIX, LOTRIX, NETRIX,
 “ NUTRIX, OBSTETRIX, FAMULATRIX, COC-
 “ TRIX, ORNATRIX, SARCINATRIX, FEX-
 “ TRIX, BALNEATRIX, PORTATRIX, SALTA-
 “ TRIX, DIVINATRIX, CONJECTRIX, COM-
 “ TRIX, DEBITRIX, CREDITRIX, DONA-
 “ TRIX, AMBULATRIX, MERCATRIX, AD-
 “ SECTRIX, ASSECTATRIX, PALPATRIX,
 “ PRÆCEPTRIX, PISTRIX. I am yours,
 “ ELIZ. POTATRIX.”