

N^o 40. Tuesday, July 12, 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.

WILL’S Coffee-house, July 11.

LETTERS from the city of London give an account of a very great consternation that place is in at present, by reason of a late enquiry made at Guildhall, whether a noble person* has parts enough to deserve the enjoyment of the great estate of which he is possessed? The city is apprehensive, that this precedent may go farther than was at first imagined. The person against whom this inquisition is set up by his relations, is a peer of a neighbouring kingdom, and has in his youth made some few bulls, by which it is insinuated, that he has forfeited his goods and chattels.

* RICHARD, the fifth Viscount WENMAN.

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This is the more astonishing, in that there are many persons in the said city who are still more guilty than his lordship, and who, though they are idiots, do not only possess, but have also themselves acquired great estates, contrary to the known laws of this realm, which vests their possessions in the crown.

There is a gentleman in the coffee-house at this time exhibiting a bill in chancery against his father's younger brother, who by some strange magic has arrived at the value of half a *Plumb*, as the citizens call *an hundred thousand pounds*; and in all the time of growing up to that wealth, was never known in any of his ordinary words or actions to discover any proof of reason. Upon this foundation my friend has set forth, that he is illegally master of his coffers, and has writ two epigrams to signify his own pretensions and sufficiency for spending that estate. He has inserted in his plea some things which I fear will give offence; for he pretends to argue, that though a man has a little of the knave mixed with the fool, he is nevertheless liable to the loss of goods; and makes the abuse of reason as just an avoidance of an estate as the total absence of it. This is what can never pass; but witty men are so full of themselves, that there is no persuading them; and my friend will not be convinced, but that upon quoting SOLOMON, who always used the word fool as a term of the same signification with unjust, and makes all deviation from
goodness

goodness and virtue to come under the notion of folly; I say, he doubts not, but by the force of this authority, let his idiot uncle appear never so great a knave, he shall prove him a fool at the same time.

This affair led the company here into an examination of these points; and none coming here but wits, what was asserted by a young lawyer, that a lunatic is in the care of the chancery, but a fool in that of the crown, was received with general indignation. “Why
“that?” says old RENAULT. “Why that?
“Why must a fool be a courtier more than a
“madman? This is the iniquity of this dull
“age. I remember the time when it went on
“the mad side; all your top-wits were scour-
“ers, rakes, roarers, and demolishers of win-
“dows. I knew a mad lord, who was drunk
“five years together, and was the envy of
“that age, who is faintly imitated by the
“dull pretenders to vice and madness in this.
“Had he lived to this day, there had not been
“a fool in fashion in the whole kingdom.”
When RENAULT had done speaking, a very
worthy man assumed the discourse: “This
“is,” said he, “Mr. BICKERSTAFF, a proper
“argument for you to treat of in your article
“from this place; and if you would send your
“PACOLET into all our brains, you would find,
“that a little fibre or valve, scarce discern-
“able, makes the distinction between a poli-
“tician and an idiot. We should, therefore,
“throw

“ throw a veil upon those unhappy instances of
“ human nature, who seem to breathe without
“ the direction of reason and understanding,
“ as we should avert our eyes with abhorrence
“ from such as live in perpetual abuse and
“ contradiction to these noble faculties. Shall
“ this unfortunate man be divested of his estate,
“ because he is tractable and indolent, runs in
“ no man’s debt, invades no man’s bed, nor
“ spends the estate he owes his children and
“ his character; when one who shews no sense
“ above him, but in such practices, shall be
“ esteemed in his senses, and possibly may
“ pretend to the guardianship of him who is
“ no ways his inferior, but in being less wicked?
“ We see old age brings us indifferently into
“ the same impotence of soul, wherein nature
“ has placed this lord.”

There is something very fantastical in the distribution of civil power and capacity among men. The law certainly gives these persons into the ward and care of the crown, because that is best able to protect them from injuries, and the impositions of craft and knavery; that the life of an idiot may not ruin the intail of a noble house, and his weakness may not frustrate the industry or capacity of the founder of his family. But when one of bright parts, as we say, with his eyes open, and all men’s eyes upon him, destroys those purposes, there is no remedy. Folly and ignorance are punished! folly and guilt are tolerated! Mr. LOCKE has
somewhere

somewhere* made a distinction between a madman and a fool: a fool is he that from right principles makes a wrong conclusion; but a madman is one who draws a just inference from false principles. Thus the fool who cut off the fellow's head that lay asleep, and hid it, and then waited to see what he would say when he awaked, and missed his head-piece, was in the right in the first thought, that a man would be surprised to find such an alteration in things since he fell asleep; but he was a little mistaken to imagine he could awake at all after his head was cut off. A madman fancies himself a prince; but upon his mistake, he acts suitably to that character; and though he is out in supposing he has principalities, while he drinks gruel, and lies in straw, yet you shall see him keep the port of a distressed monarch in all his words and actions. These two persons are equally taken into custody: but what must be done to half this good company, who every hour of their *life*† are knowingly and wittingly both fools and madmen, and yet have capacities both of forming principles, and drawing conclusions, with the full use of reason?

From my own Apartment, July 11.

This evening some ladies came to visit my sister JENNY; and the discourse, after very

* LOCKE's "Essay concerning Human Understanding." Lond. ed. 1706. chap. XII. sect. 14. page 94. † *Lives*.
many

many frivolous and public matters, turned upon the main point among the women, the passion of LOVE. SAPPHO*, who always leads on this occasion, began to shew her reading, and told us, that Sir JOHN SUCKLING and MILTON had, upon a parallel occasion, said the tenderest things she ever read. "The circumstance," said she, "is such as gives us a notion of that protecting part, which is the duty of men in their honourable designs upon, or possession of women. In SUCKLING's tragedy of BRENNORALT he makes the Lover steal into his mistress's bedchamber, and draw the curtains; then, when his heart is full of her charms, as she lies sleeping, instead of being carried away by the violence of his desires into thoughts of a warmer nature, sleep, which is the image of death, gives this generous Lover reflections of a different kind, which regard rather her safety than his own passion. For, beholding her as she lies sleeping, he utters these words:

' So misers look upon their gold,
' Which, while they joy to see, they fear to lose:
' The pleasure of sight scarce equalling
' The jealousy of being dispossest'd by others.
' Her face is like the milky way i'th' sky,
' A meeting of gentle lights without name!

* Probably Mrs. D. Manley. See N^o 6; N^o 35; GUARDIAN, N^o 53; EXAMINER, vol. IV. N^o 2; and THEATRE, N^o 26.

VOL. I.

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"Heav'n!

“Heav’n! shall this fresh ornament of the world,
 “These precious Love-lines, pass with other com-
 “mon things
 “Amongst the wastes of time? what pity ’twere!

“When MILTON makes Adam leaning on
 “his arm, beholding Eve, and lying in the
 “contemplation of her beauty, he describes
 “the utmost tenderness and guardian affection
 “in one word;

‘Adam, with looks of cordial love,
 ‘Hung over her enamour’d.’

“This is that sort of passion which truly de-
 “serves the name of Love, and has something
 “more generous than FRIENDSHIP itself; for
 “it has a constant care of the object beloved,
 “abstracted from its own interests in the pos-
 “session of it.”

SAPPHO was proceeding on this subject, when
 my sister produced a letter sent to her in the
 time of my absence, in celebration of the MAR-
 RIAGE-*State*, which is the condition wherein
 only this sort of passion reigns in full authority.
 The epistle is as follows:

“DEAR MADAM,

“Your brother being absent, I dare take
 “the liberty of writing to you my thoughts of
 “that State, which our whole sex either is, or
 “desires to be in. You will easily guess I
 “mean

“ mean Matrimony, which I hear so much de-
“ cryed, that it was with no small labour I
“ maintained my ground against two oppo-
“ nents; but, as your brother observed of
“ SOCRATES, I drew them into my conclusion,
“ from their own concessions; thus:

“ In Marriage are two happy things allow’d,
“ A wife in wedding-sheets, and in a shroud.
“ How can a Marriage-state be then accurs’d,
“ Since the last day’s as happy as the first?

“ If you think they were too easily confuted,
“ you may conclude them not of the first sense,
“ by their talking against Marriage. Yours,

“ MARIANA.”

I observed SAPPHO began to redden at this epistle; and turning to a lady, who was playing with a dog she was so fond of as to carry him abroad with her; “ Nay,” says she, “ I cannot blame the men if they have mean ideas of our souls and affections, and wonder so many are brought to take us for companions for life, when they see our endearments so triflingly placed: for, to my knowledge, Mr. Truman would give half his estate for half the affection you have shewn to that SHOCK: nor do I believe you would be ashamed to confess, that I saw you cry, when he had the colic last week with lapping sour milk. What more could you do for your

D d 2

“ Lover

“lover himself?” “What more!” replied the lady. “There is not a man in England for whom I could lament half so much.” Then she stifled the animal with kisses, and called him beau, life, dear, *Monsieur*, pretty fellow, and what not, in the hurry of her impertinence. SAPPHO rose up; as she always does at any thing she observes done, which discovers in her own sex a levity of mind, that renders them inconsiderable in the opinion of ours.

N^o 41. Thursday, July 14, 1709.

S T E E L E.

— *Celebrare domestica facta.*

‘To record acts and rules of common life.’

WHITE’S Chocolate-house, July 12.

THERE is no one thing more to be lamented in our nation, than their general affectation of every thing that is foreign; nay, we carry it so far, that we are more anxious for our own countrymen when they have crossed the seas, than when we see them in the same dangerous condition before our eyes at home: else how is it possible, that on the twenty-ninth of