

are greater; for what the antique statues and bas-reliefs which Italy enjoys are to the history-painters, the beautiful and noble faces with which England is confessed to abound, are to face-painters; and, besides, we have the greatest number of the works of the best masters in that kind of any people, not without a competent number of those of the most excellent in every other part of painting. And for encouragement, the wealth and generosity of the English nation affords that in such a degree as artists have no reason to complain.

And accordingly, in fact, face-painting is no where so well performed as in England: I know not whether it has lain in your way to observe it, but I have, and pretend to be a tolerable judge. I have seen what is done abroad; and can assure you, that the honour of that branch of painting is justly due to us. I appeal to the judicious observers for the truth of what I assert. If foreigners have oftentimes, or even for the most part excelled our natives, it ought to be imputed to the advantages they have met with here, joined to their own ingenuity and industry; nor has any one nation distinguished themselves so as to raise an argument in favour of their country: but it is to be observed that neither French nor Italians, nor any one of either nation, notwithstanding all our prejudices in their favour, have, or ever had, for any considerable time, any character among us as face-painters.

This honour is due to our own country, and has been so for near an age: so that, instead of going to Italy, or elsewhere, one that designs for portrait-painting ought to study in England. Hither such should come from Holland, France, Italy, Germany, &c. as he that intends to practise any other kinds of painting should go to those parts where it is in the greatest perfection. It is said the blessed Virgin descended from heaven to sit to St. Luke. I dare venture to affirm that, if she should desire another Madonna to be painted by the life, she would come to England; and am of opinion that your present president, Sir Godfrey Kneller, from his improvement since he arrived in this kingdom, would perform that office better than any foreigner living. I am, with all possible respect, sir, your most humble and most obedient servant, &c.*

** The ingenious letter signed the Weather Glass, with several others, were received, but came too late.

POSTSCRIPT.

It had not come to my knowledge, when I left off the Spectator, that I owe several excellent sentiments and agreeable pieces in this work to Mr. Ince, of Gray's-Inn.*

R. STEELE.

* This paper concluded the seventh volume of the Spectator, as originally published. The intermediate time was filled up by our authors in the production of the Guardian.

No. 556.] *Friday, June 18, 1714.*

Qualis ubi in lucem coluber mala gramina pastus
Frigida, sub terra tumidum quem bruma tegebat;
Nunc positus novus exuviis, nitidusque juvenat,
Lubrica convolvit sublato pectore terga
Arduus ad solem, et linguis micat ore trisulcis.

Virg. Æn. ii. 471

So shines, renew'd in youth, the crested snake,
Who slept the winter in a thorny brake:
And casting off his slough, when spring returns,
Now looks aloft, and with new glory burns:
Restor'd with pois'nous herbs, his ardent sides
Reflect the sun, and rais'd on spires he rides;
High o'er the grass hissing he rolls along,
And brandishes by fits his forky tongue.—*Dryden.*

UPON laying down the office of Spectator. I acquainted the world with my design of electing a new club, and of opening my mouth in it after a most solemn manner. Both the election and the ceremony are now past; but not finding it so easy, as I at first imagined, to break through a fifty years' silence, I would not venture into the world under the character of a man who pretends to talk like other people, until I had arrived at a full freedom of speech.

I shall reserve for another time the history of such club or clubs of which I am now a talkative but unworthy member; and shall here give an account of this surprising change which has been produced in me, and which I look upon to be as remarkable an accident as any recorded in history, since that which happened to the son of Cæsus, after having been many years as much tongue-tied as myself.

Upon the first opening of my mouth, I made a speech, consisting of about half a dozen well-turned periods; but grew so very hoarse upon it, that for three days together, instead of finding the use of my tongue, I was afraid that I had quite lost it. Besides, the unusual extension of my muscles on this occasion made my face ache on both sides to such a degree, that nothing but an invincible resolution and perseverance could have prevented me from falling back to my monosyllables.

I afterwards made several essays towards speaking; and that I might not be startled at my own voice, which has happened to me more than once, I used to read aloud in my chamber, and have often stood in the middle of the street to call a coach, when I knew there was none within hearing.

When I was thus grown pretty well acquainted with my own voice, I laid hold of all opportunities to exert it. Not caring however to speak much by myself, and to draw upon me the whole attention of those I conversed with, I used for some time to walk every morning in the Mall, and talk in chorus with a parcel of Frenchmen. I found my modesty greatly relieved by the communicative temper of this nation, who are so very sociable as to think they are never better company than when they are all opening at the same time.

I then fancied I might receive great benefit from female conversation, and that I should have a convenience of talking with

the greater freedom, when I was not under any impediment of thinking; I therefore threw myself into an assembly of ladies, but could not for my life get in a word among them; and found that if I did not change my company, I was in danger of being reduced to my primitive taciturnity.

The coffee-houses have ever since been my chief places of resort, where I have made the greatest improvements; in order to which I have taken a particular care never to be of the same opinion with the man I conversed with. I was a tory at Button's, and a whig at Child's, a friend to the Englishman, or an advocate for the Examiner, as it best served my turn: some fancy me a great enemy to the French king, though in reality I only make use of him for a help to discourse. In short, I wrangle and dispute for exercise; and have carried this point so far, that I was once like to have been run through the body for making a little too free with my betters.

In a word, I am quite another man to what I was.

— Nil fuit unquam
Tam dispar sibi.

Her. Sat. iii. Lib. 1. 18.

Nothing was ever so unlike itself.

My old acquaintance scarce know me; nay, I was asked the other day by a Jew at Jonathan's, whether I was not related to a dumb gentleman, who used to come to that coffee-house? But I think I never was better pleased in my life than about a week ago, when, as I was battling it across the table with a young Templar, his companion gave him a pull by the sleeve, begging him to come away, for that the old prig would talk him to death.

Being now a very good proficient in discourse, I shall appear in the world with this addition to my character, that my countrymen may reap the fruits of my newly-acquired loquacity.

Those who have been present at public disputes in the university know that it is usual to maintain heresies for argument's sake. I have heard a man a most impudent Socinian for half an hour, who has been an orthodox divine all his life after. I have taken the same method to accomplish myself in the gift of utterance, having talked above a twelvemonth, not so much for the benefit of my hearers, as of myself. But, since I have now gained the faculty I have been so long endeavouring after, I intend to make a right use of it, and shall think myself obliged for the future, to speak always in truth and sincerity of heart. While a man is learning to fence, he practises both on friend and foe; but when he is a master in the art, he never exerts it but on what he thinks the right side.

That this last allusion may not give my reader a wrong idea of my design in this paper, I must here inform him, that the author of it is of no faction; that he is a

friend to no interests but those of truth and virtue; nor a foe to any but those of vice and folly. Though I make more noise in the world than I used to do, I am still resolved to act in it as an indifferent spectator. It is not my ambition to increase the number either of whigs or tories, but of wise and good men; and I could heartily wish there were not faults common to both parties, which afford me sufficient matter to work upon, without descending to those which are peculiar to either.

If in a multitude of counsellors there is safety, we ought to think ourselves the securest nation in the world. Most of our garrets are inhabited by statesmen, who watch over the liberties of their country, and make a shift to keep themselves from starving by taking into their care the properties of their fellow-subjects.

As these politicians of both sides have already worked the nation into a most unnatural ferment, I shall be so far from endeavouring to raise it to a greater height, that, on the contrary, it shall be the chief tendency of my papers to inspire my countrymen with a mutual good-will and benevolence. Whatever faults either party may be guilty of, they are rather inflamed than cured by those reproaches which they cast upon one another. The most likely method of rectifying any man's conduct, is by recommending to him the principles of truth and honour, religion and virtue: and so long as he acts with an eye to these principles, whatever party he is of, he cannot fail of being a good Englishman, and a lover of his country.

As for the persons concerned in this work, the names of all of them, or at least of such as desire it, shall be published hereafter: until which time I must entreat the courteous reader to suspend his curiosity, and rather to consider what is written, than who they are that write it.

Having thus adjusted all necessary preliminaries with my reader, I shall not trouble him with any more prefatory discourses, but proceed in my old method, and entertain him with speculations on every useful subject that falls in my way. C.

No. 557.] Monday, June 21, 1714.

Quippe domum timet ambiguum Tyriosque bilingues.
Virg. Æn. i. 665.

He fears the ambiguous race, and Tyrians double-tongued.

'THERE is nothing,' says Plato, 'so delightful as the hearing or the speaking of truth.' For this reason there is no conversation so agreeable as that of the man of integrity, who hears without any intention to betray, and speaks without any intention to deceive.

Among all the accounts which are given of Cato, I do not remember one that more redounds to his honour than the following

passage related by Plutarch. As an advocate was pleading the cause of his client before one of the prætors, he could only produce a single witness in a point where the law required the testimony of two persons; upon which the advocate insisted on the integrity of that person whom he had produced; but the prætor told him, that where the law required two witnesses he would not accept of one, though it were Cato himself. Such a speech from a person who sat at the head of a court of justice, while Cato was still living, shows us, more than a thousand examples, the high reputation this great man had gained among his contemporaries upon the account of his sincerity.

When such an inflexible integrity is a little softened and qualified by the rules of conversation and good-breeding, there is not a more shining virtue in the whole catalogue of social duties. A man however ought to take great care not to publish himself out of his veracity, nor to refine his behaviour to the prejudice of his virtue.

This subject is exquisitely treated in the most elegant sermon of the great British preacher.* I shall beg leave to transcribe out of it two or three sentences, as a proper introduction to a very curious letter, which I shall make the chief entertainment of this speculation.

‘The old English plainness and sincerity, that generous integrity of nature, and honesty of disposition, which always argues true greatness of mind, and is usually accompanied with undaunted courage and resolution, is in a great measure lost among us.

‘The dialect of conversation is now-a-days so swelled with vanity and compliment, and so surfeited (as I may say) of expressions of kindness and respect, that if a man that lived an age or two ago should return into the world again, he would really want a dictionary to help him to understand his own language, and to know the true intrinsic value of the phrase in fashion; and would hardly at first believe at what a low rate the highest strains and expressions of kindness imaginable do commonly pass in current payment; and when he should come to understand it, it would be a great while before he could bring himself, with a good countenance, and a good conscience, to converse with men upon equal terms and in their own way.’

I have by me a letter which I look upon as a great curiosity, and which may serve as an exemplification to the foregoing passage, cited out of this most excellent prelate. It is said to have been written in king Charles the Second’s reign by the ambassador of Bantam, † a little after his arrival in England.

‘MASTER,—The people where I now am have tongues farther from their hearts

than from London to Bantam; and thou knowest the inhabitants of one of these places do not know what is done in the other. They call thee and thy subjects barbarians, because we speak what we mean; and account themselves a civilized people, because they speak one thing and mean another; truth they call barbarity, and falsehood politeness. Upon my first landing, one, who was sent from the king of this place to meet me, told me that he was extremely sorry for the storm I had met with just before my arrival. I was troubled to hear him grieve and afflict himself upon my account; but in less than a quarter of an hour he smiled, and was as merry as if nothing had happened. Another who came with him told me by my interpreter, he should be glad to do me any service that lay in his power. Upon which I desired him to carry one of my portmantaus for me; but, instead of serving me according to his promise, he laughed, and bid another do it. I lodged, the first week, at the house of one who desired me to think myself at home, and to consider his house as my own. Accordingly, I the next morning began to knock down one of the walls of it, in order to let in the fresh air, and had packed up some of the household goods, of which I intended to have made thee a present; but the false varlet no sooner saw me falling to work, but he sent word to desire me to give over, for that he would have no such doings in his house. I had not been long in this nation before I was told by one, for whom I had asked a certain favour from the chief of the king’s servants, whom they here call the lord-treasurer, that I had eternally obliged him. I was so surprised at his gratitude, that I could not forbear saying, “What service is there which one man can do for another, that can oblige him to all eternity!” However, I only asked him, for my reward, that he would lend me his eldest daughter during my stay in this country; but I quickly found that he was as treacherous as the rest of his countrymen.

‘At my first going to court, one of the great men almost put me out of countenance, by asking ten thousand pardons of me for only treading by accident upon my toe. They call this kind of lie a compliment; for, when they are civil to a great man they tell him untruths, for which thou wouldst order any of thy officers of state to receive a hundred blows upon his foot. I do not know how I shall negotiate any thing with this people, since there is so little credit to be given to them. When I go to see the king’s scribe, I am generally told that he is not at home, though perhaps I saw him go into his house almost the very moment before. Thou wouldst fancy that the whole nation are physicians, for the first question they always ask me is, how I do; I have this question put to me above a hundred times a-day. Nay, they are not

* Archbishop Tillotson, vol. ii. sermon i. folio edition.

† In 1682.

only thus inquisitive after my health, but wish it in a more solemn manner, with a full glass in their hands, every time I sit with them at table, though at the same time they would persuade me to drink their liquors in such quantities as I have found by experience will make me sick. They often pretend to pray for thy health also in the same manner; but I have more reason to expect it from the goodness of thy constitution than the sincerity of their wishes. May thy slave escape in safety from this double-tongued race of men, and live to lay himself once more at thy feet in the royal city of Bantam !'

No. 558.] *Wednesday, June 23, 1714.*

Qui fit, Mæcenas, ut nemo, quam sibi sortem
Seu ratio dederit, seu fors objecerit, illa
Contentus vivat : laudet diversa sequentes ?
O fortunati mercatores, gravis annis
Miles ait, multo jam fractus membra labore !
Contra mercator, navim jactantibus austris,
Militia est potior. Quid enim ? concurritur : hora
Momento cita mors venit, aut victoria læta.
Agricolam laudat juris legumque peritus,
Sub galli cantum consultor ubi ostia pulsat.
Ille, datis vadibus, qui rure extractus in urbem est,
Solos felices viventes clamat in urbe.
Cætera de genere hoc (adeo sunt multa) loquacem
Delassare valent Fabium. Ne to morer, audi
Quo rem deducam. Si quis Deus, en ego, dicat,
Jam faciam quod vultis : eris tu, qui modo miles,
Mercator : tu consultus modo, rusticus. Hinc vos,
Vos hinc mutatis discedite partibus. Eja,
Quid statis ? Nolint. Atqui licet esse beatas.

Hor. Sat. i. Lib. 1. 1.

Whence is't, Mæcenas, that so few approve
The state they're plac'd in, and incline to rove ;
Whether against their will by fate impos'd,
Or by consent and prudent choice espous'd ?
Happy the merchant ! the old soldier cries,
Broke with fatigues and warlike enterprise
The merchant, when the dreaded hurricane
Tosses his wealthy cargo on the main,
Applauds the wars and toils of a campaign :
There an engagement soon decides your doom,
Bravely to die, or come victorious home.
The lawyer vows the farmer's life is best,
When at the dawn the clients break his rest.
The farmer, having put in bail 't appear,
And forc'd to town, cries they are happier there :
With thousands more of this inconstant race,
Would tire e'en Fabius to relate each case.
Not to detain you longer, pray attend
The issue of all this : Should Jove descend,
And grant to every man his rash demand,
To run his lengths with a neglectful hand ;
First, grant the harass'd warrior a release ;
Bid him to trade, and try the faithless seas,
To purchase treasure from his learned strife,
Next call the pleader from his learned life,
To the calm blessings of a country life ;
And, with these separate demands dismiss
Each suppliant to enjoy the promis'd bliss :
Don't you believe they'd run ? Not one will move,
Though proffer'd to be happy from above.—*Horneck.*

It is a celebrated thought of Socrates, that if all the misfortunes of mankind were cast into a public stock, in order to be equally distributed among the whole species, those who now think themselves the most unhappy, would prefer the share they are already possessed of before that which could fall to them by such a division. Horace has carried this thought a great deal farther in the motto of my paper, which implies, that the hardships or misfortunes we lie under are more easy to us than those

of any other person would be, in case we would change conditions with him.

As I was ruminating upon these two remarks, and seated in my elbow chair, I insensibly fell asleep; when on a sudden, methought, there was a proclamation made by Jupiter, that every mortal should bring in his griefs and calamities, and throw them together in a heap. There was a large plain appointed for this purpose. I took my stand in the centre of it, and saw with a great deal of pleasure the whole human species marching one after another, and throwing down their several loads, which immediately grew up into a prodigious mountain, that seemed to rise above the clouds.

There was a certain lady of a thin airy shape, who was very active in this solemnity. She carried a magnifying glass in one of her hands, and was clothed in a loose flowing robe, embroidered with several figures of fiends and spectres, that discovered themselves in a thousand chimerical shapes, as her garment hovered in the wind. There was something wild and distracted in her looks. Her name was Fancy. She led up every mortal to the appointed place, after having very officiously assisted him in making up his pack, and laying it upon his shoulders. My heart melted within me to see my fellow-creatures groaning under their respective burdens, and to consider that prodigious bulk of human calamities which lay before me.

There were however several persons who gave me great diversion upon this occasion. I observed one bringing in a fardel very carefully concealed under an old embroidered cloak, which, upon his throwing it into the heap, I discovered to be Poverty. Another, after a great deal of puffing, threw down his luggage, which, upon examining, I found to be his wife.

There were multitudes of lovers saddled with very whimsical burdens composed of darts and flames; but, what was very odd, though they sighed as if their hearts would break under these bundles of calamities, they could not persuade themselves to cast them into the heap, when they came up to it; but, after a few faint efforts, shook their heads, and marched away as heavy loaden as they came. I saw multitudes of old women throw down their wrinkles, and several young ones who stripped themselves of a tawny skin. There were very great heaps of red noses, large lips, and rusty teeth. The truth of it is, I was surprised to see the greatest part of the mountain made up of bodily deformities. Observing one advancing towards the heap with a larger cargo than ordinary upon his back, I found upon his near approach that it was only a natural hump, which he disposed of, with great joy of heart, among this collection of human miseries. There were likewise distempers of all sorts; though I could not but observe, that there

were many more imaginary than real. One little packet I could not but take notice of, which was a complication of all the diseases incident to human nature, and was in the hand of a great many fine people: this was called the spleen. But what most of all surprised me, was a remark I made, that there was not a single vice or folly thrown into the whole heap; at which I was very much astonished, having concluded within myself, that every one would take this opportunity of getting rid of his passions, prejudices, and frailties.

I took notice in particular of a very profligate fellow, who I did not question came loaded with his crimes: but upon searching into his bundle I found, that instead of throwing his guilt from him, he had only laid down his memory. He was followed by another worthless rogue, who flung away his modesty instead of his ignorance.

When the whole race of mankind had thus cast their burdens, the phantom which had been so busy on this occasion, seeing me an idle Spectator of what had passed, approached towards me. I grew uneasy at her presence, when of a sudden she held her magnifying glass full before my eyes. I no sooner saw my face in it, but was startled at the shortness of it, which now appeared to me in its utmost aggravation. The immoderate breadth of the features made me very much out of humour with my own countenance, upon which I threw it from me like a mask. It happened very luckily that one who stood by me had just before thrown down his visage, which it seems was too long for him. It was indeed extended to a most shameful length; I believe the very chin was, modestly speaking, as long as my whole face. We had both of us an opportunity of mending ourselves; and all the contributions being now brought in, every man was at liberty to exchange his misfortunes for those of another person. But as there arose many new incidents in the sequel of my vision, I shall reserve them for the subject of my next paper.

No. 559.] *Friday, June 25, 1714.*

Quid causæ est, merito quin illis Jupiter ambas
Iratus buccas inflet, neque se fore posthac
Tam facilem dicat, votis ut præbeat aurem?

Hor. Sat. i. Lib. 1. 20.

Were it not just that Jove, provok'd to heat,
Should drive these triflers from the hallow'd seat,
And unrelenting stand when they entreat?

Horneck.

In my last paper, I gave my reader a sight of that mountain of miseries which was made up of those several calamities that afflict the minds of men. I saw with unspeakable pleasure the whole species thus delivered from its sorrows; though at the same time, as we stood round the heap, and surveyed the several materials of which it was composed, there was scarcely a mortal in this vast multitude, who did not discover what he thought pleasures of life,

and wondered how the owners of them ever came to look upon them as burdens and grievances.

As we were regarding very attentively this confusion of miseries, this chaos of calamity, Jupiter issued out a second proclamation, that every one was now at liberty to exchange his affliction, and to return to his habitation with any such other bundle as should be delivered to him.

Upon this, Fancy began again to bestir herself, and, parcelling out the whole heap with incredible activity, recommended to every one his particular packet. The hurry and confusion at this time was not to be expressed. Some observations which I made upon this occasion, I shall communicate to the public. A venerable gray-headed man, who had laid down the colick, and who I found wanted an heir to his estate, snatched up an undutiful son that had been thrown into the heap by his angry father. The graceless youth, in less than a quarter of an hour, pulled the old gentleman by the beard, and had like to have knocked his brains out; so that meeting the true father, who came towards him with a fit of the gripes, he begged him to take his son again, and give him back his colick; but they were incapable either of them to recede from the choice they had made. A poor galley-slave, who had thrown down his chains, took up the gout in their stead, but made such wry faces, that one might easily perceive he was no great gainer by the bargain. It was pleasant enough to see the several exchanges that were made, for sickness against poverty, hunger against want of appetite, and care against pain.

The female world were very busy among themselves in bartering for features: one was trucking a lock of gray hairs for a carbuncle, another was making over a short waist for a pair of round shoulders, and a third cheapening a bad face for a lost reputation: but on all these occasions there was not one of them who did not think the new blemish, as soon as she had got it into her possession, much more disagreeable than the old one. I made the same observation on every other misfortune or calamity which every one in the assembly brought upon himself in lieu of what he had parted with: whether it be that all the evils which befall us, are in some measure suited and proportioned to our strength, or that every evil becomes more supportable by our being accustomed to it, I shall not determine.

I could not from my heart forbear pitying the poor hump-backed gentleman mentioned in the former paper, who went off a very well shaped person with a stone in his bladder; nor the fine gentleman who had struck up this bargain with him, that limped through a whole assembly of ladies, who used to admire him, with a pair of shoulders peeping over his head.

I must not omit my own particular adventure. My friend with a long visage had

no sooner taken upon him my short face, but he made such a grotesque figure in it, that as I looked upon him I could not forbear laughing at myself, insomuch that I put my own face out of countenance. The poor gentleman was so sensible of the ridicule, that I found he was ashamed of what he had done: on the other side, I found that I myself had no great reason to triumph, for as I went to touch my forehead I missed the place, and clapped my finger upon my upper lip. Besides, as my nose was exceeding prominent, I gave it two or three unlucky knocks as I was playing my hand about my face, and aiming at some other part of it. I saw two other gentlemen by me who were in the same ridiculous circumstances. These had made a foolish swap between a couple of thick bandy legs and two long trap-sticks that had no calves to them. One of these looked like a man walking upon stilts, and was so lifted up into the air, above his ordinary height, that his head turned round with it; while the other made such awkward circles, as he attempted to walk, that he scarcely knew how to move forward upon his new supporters. Observing him to be a pleasant kind of fellow, I stuck my cane on the ground, and told him I would lay him a bottle of wine that he did not march up to it on a line that I drew for him in a quarter of an hour.

The heap was at last distributed among the two sexes, who made a most piteous sight, as they wandered up and down under the pressure of their several burdens. The whole plain was filled with murmurs and complaints, groans and lamentations. Jupiter at length taking compassion on the poor mortals, ordered them a second time to lay down their loads, with a design to give every one his own again. They discharged themselves with a great deal of pleasure: after which, the phantom who had led them into such gross delusion was commanded to disappear. There was sent in her stead a goddess of a quite different figure; her motions were steady and composed, and her aspect serious but cheerful. She every now and then cast her eyes towards heaven, and fixed them upon Jupiter: her name was Patience. She had no sooner placed herself by the Mount of Sorrows, but, what I thought very remarkable, the whole heap sunk to such a degree, that it did not appear a third part so big as it was before. She afterwards returned every man his own proper calamity, and teaching him how to bear it in the most commodious manner, he marched off with it contentedly, being very well pleased that he had not been left to his own choice as to the kind of evil which fell to his lot.

Besides the several pieces of morality to be drawn out of this vision, I learnt from it never to repine at my own misfortunes, or to envy the happiness of another, since it is impossible for any man to form a right

judgment of his neighbour's sufferings; for which reason also I have determined never to think too lightly of another's complaints, but to regard the sorrows of my fellow-creatures with sentiments of humanity and compassion. O.

No. 560.] Monday, June 28, 1714.

—Verba intermissa retentat.

Ovid, Met. Lib. i. 745.

He tries his tongue, his silence softly breaks.

Dryden.

EVERY one has heard of the famous conjuror, who, according to the opinion of the vulgar, has studied himself dumb: for which reason, as it is believed, he delivers out his oracles in writing. Be that as it will, the blind Tiresias was not more famous in Greece than this dumb artist has been for some years last past in the cities of London and Westminster. Thus much for the profound gentleman who honours me with the following epistle.

From my cell, June 24, 1714.

SIR,—Being informed that you have lately got the use of your tongue, I have some thoughts of following your example, that I may be a fortune-teller, properly speaking. I am grown weary of my taciturnity, and having served my country many years under the title of “the dumb doctor,” I shall now prophesy by word of mouth, and (as Mr. Lee says of the magpie, who you know was a great fortune-teller among the ancients) chatter futurity. I have hitherto chosen to receive questions and return answers in writing, that I might avoid the tediousness and trouble of debates, my querists being generally of a humour to think that they have never predictions enough for their money. In short, sir, my case has been something like that of those discreet animals the monkeys, who, as the Indians tell us, can speak if they would, but purposely avoid it that they may not be made to work. I have hitherto gained a livelihood by holding my tongue, but shall now open my mouth in order to fill it. If I appear a little word-bound in my first solutions and responses, I hope it will not be imputed to any want of foresight, but to the long disuse of speech. I doubt not by this invention to have all my former customers over again; for, if I have promised any of them lovers or husbands, riches or good luck, it is my design to confirm to them, *viva voce*, what I have already given them under my hand. If you will honour me with a visit, I will compliment you with the first opening of my mouth: and if you please, you may make an entertaining dialogue out of the conversation of two dumb men. Excuse this trouble, worthy sir, from one who has been a long time, your silent admirer,

‘CORNELIUS AGRIPPA.’

I have received the following letter, or rather billet-doux, from a pert young baggage, who congratulates with me upon the same occasion.

‘June 23, 1714.

‘DEAR MR. PRATE-APACE,—I am a member of a female society who call ourselves the Chit-chat club, and am ordered by the whole sisterhood to congratulate you upon the use of your tongue. We have all of us a mighty mind to hear you talk; and if you will take your place among us for an evening, we have unanimously agreed to allow you one minute in ten, without interruption. I am, sir, your humble servant,
S. T.

‘P. S. You may find us at my lady Betty Clack’s, who will leave orders with her porter, that if an elderly gentleman, with a short face, inquires for her, he shall be admitted, and no questions asked.’

As this particular paper shall consist wholly of what I have received from my correspondents, I shall fill up the remaining part of it with other congratulatory letters of the same nature.

‘Oxford, June 25, 1714.

‘SIR,—We are here wonderfully pleased with the opening of your mouth, and very frequently open ours in approbation of your design; especially since we find you are resolved to preserve your taciturnity as to all party matters. We do not question but you are as great an orator as sir Hudibras, of whom the poet sweetly sings.

“———He could not open
His mouth, but out there flew a trope.”

If you will send us down the half dozen well-turned periods, that produced such dismal effects in your muscles, we will deposit them near an old manuscript of Tully’s orations, among the archives of the university; for we all agree with you, that there is not a more remarkable accident recorded in history, since that which happened to the son of Cæsus; nay, I believe you might have gone higher, and have added Balaam’s ass. We are impatient to see more of your productions; and expect what words will next fall from you with as much attention as those who were set to watch the speaking head which friar Bacon formerly erected in this place. We are, worthy sir, your most humble servants,
‘B. R. T. D. &c.’

‘Middle-Temple, June 24.

‘HONEST SPEC,—I am very glad to hear that thou beginnest to prate; and find, by thy yesterday’s vision, thou art so used to it, that thou canst not forbear talking in thy sleep. Let me only advise thee to speak like other men; for I am afraid thou wilt be very queer, if thou dost not intend to use the phrases in fashion, as thou callest them in thy second paper. Hast thou a

mind to pass for a Bantamite, or to make us all Quakers? I do assure thee, dear Spec, I am not polished out of my veracity when I subscribe myself, thy constant admirer, and humble servant,

‘FRANK TOWNLY.’

No. 561.] *Wednesday, June 30, 1714.*

Paulatim abolere Sichæum
Incipit, et vivo tentat prævertere amore
Jampridem resides animos desuetaque corda.
Virg. Æn. i. 724.

But he
Works in the pliant bosom of the fair,
And moulds her heart anew, and blots her former
care.

The dead is to the living love resign’d,
And all Æneas enters in her mind.—*Dryden.*

‘SIR,—I am a tall, broad-shouldered, impudent, black fellow, and as I thought, every way qualified for a rich widow: but after having tried my fortune for above three years together, I have not been able to get one single relict in the mind. My first attacks were generally successful, but always broke off as soon as they came to the word settlement. Though I have not improved my fortune this way, I have my experience, and have learnt several secrets which may be of use to these unhappy gentlemen, who are commonly distinguished by the name of widow-hunters, and who do not know that this tribe of women are, generally speaking, as much upon the catch as themselves. I shall here communicate to you the mysteries of a certain female cabal of this order, who call themselves the Widow-club. This club consists of nine experienced dames, who take their places once a week round a large oval table.

‘1. Mrs. President is a person who has disposed of six husbands, and is now determined to take a seventh; being of opinion that there is as much virtue in the touch of a seventh husband as of a seventh son. Her comrades are as follow:

‘2. Mrs. Snap, who has four jointures, by four different bed-fellows, of four different shires. She is at present upon the point of marriage with a Middlesex man, and is said to have an ambition of extending her possessions through all the counties in England on this side the Trent.

‘3. Mrs. Medlar, who, after two husbands and a gallant, is now wedded to an old gentleman of sixty. Upon her making her report to the club after a week’s cohabitation, she is still allowed to sit as a widow, and accordingly takes her place at the board.

‘4. The widow Quick, married within a fortnight after the death of her last husband. Her weeds have served her thrice, and are still as good as new.

‘5. Lady Catherine Swallow. She was a widow at eighteen, and has since buried a second husband and two coachmen.

‘6. The lady Waddle. She was married in the fifteenth year of her age to Sir Simon Waddle, knight, aged threescore and twelve, by whom she had twins nine months after his decease. In the fifty-fifth year of her age she was married to James Spindle, Esq. a youth of one-and-twenty, who did not outlive the honey-moon.

‘7. Deborah Conquest. The case of this lady is something particular. She is the relict of Sir Sampson Conquest, some time justice of the quorum. Sir Sampson was seven foot high, and two foot in breadth from the tip of one shoulder to the other. He had married three wives, who all of them died in child-bed. This terrified the whole sex, who none of them durst venture on Sir Sampson. At length Mrs. Deborah undertook him, and gave so good an account of him, that in three year’s time she very fairly laid him out, and measured his length upon the ground. This exploit has gained her so great a reputation in the club, that they have added Sir Sampson’s three victories to her’s, and give her the merit of a fourth widowhood; and she takes her place accordingly.

‘8. The widow Wildfire, relict of Mr. John Wildfire, fox-hunter, who broke his neck over a six-bar gate. She took his death so much to heart, that it was thought it would have put an end to her life, had she not diverted her sorrows by receiving the addresses of a gentleman in the neighbourhood, who made love to her in the second month of her widowhood. The gentleman was discarded in a fortnight for the sake of a young templar, who had the possession of her for six weeks after, till he was beaten out by a broken officer, who likewise gave up his place to a gentleman at court. The courtier was as short-lived a favourite as his predecessors, but had the pleasure to see himself succeeded by a long series of lovers, who followed the widow Wildfire to the thirty-seventh year of her age, at which time there ensued a cessation of ten years, when John Felt, haberdasher, took it in his head to be in love with her, and it is thought will very suddenly carry her off.

‘9. The last is pretty Mrs. Runnet, who broke her first husband’s heart before she was sixteen, at which time she was entered of the club, but soon after left it upon account of a second, whom she made so quick a despatch of, that she returned to her seat in less than a twelvemonth. This young matron is looked upon as the most rising member of the society, and will probably be in the president’s chair before she dies.

‘These ladies, upon their first institution, resolved to give the pictures of their deceased husbands to the club-room; but two of them bringing in their dead at full length, they covered all the walls. Upon which they came to a second resolution, that every matron should give her own

picture, and set it round with her husband’s in miniature.

‘As they have most of them the misfortune to be troubled with the colick, they have a noble cellar of cordials and strong waters. When they grow maudlin, they are very apt to commemorate their former partners with a tear. But ask them which of their husbands they condole, they are not able to tell you, and discover plainly that they do not weep so much for the loss of a husband as for the want of one.

‘The principal rule by which the whole society are to govern themselves, is this, to cry up the pleasures of a single life upon all occasions, in order to deter the rest of their sex from marriage, and engross the whole male world to themselves.

‘They are obliged, when any one makes love to a member of the society, to communicate his name, at which the whole assembly sit upon his reputation, person, fortune, and good humour, and if they find him qualified for a sister of the club, they lay their heads together how to make him sure. By this means they are acquainted with all the widow-hunters about town, who often afford them great diversion. There is an honest Irish gentleman, it seems, who knows nothing of this society, but at different times has made love to the whole club.

‘Their conversation often turns upon their former husbands, and it is very diverting to hear them relate their several arts and stratagems with which they amused the jealous, pacified the choleric, or wheedled the good-natured man, till at last, to use the club phrase, “they sent him out of the house with his heels foremost.”

‘The politics which are most cultivated by this society of she-Machiavels relate chiefly to these two points, how to treat a lover, and how to manage a husband. As for the first set of artifices, they are too numerous to come within the compass of your paper, and shall therefore be reserved for a second letter.

‘The management of a husband is built upon the following doctrines, which are universally assented to by the whole club. Not to give him his head at first. Not to allow him too great freedoms and familiarities. Not to be treated by him like a raw girl, but as a woman that knows the world. Not to lessen any thing of her former figure. To celebrate the generosity, or any other virtue, of a deceased husband, which she would recommend to his successor. To turn away all his old friends and servants, that she may have the dear man to herself. To make him disinheritor the undutiful children of any former wife. Never to be thoroughly convinced of his affection, until he has made over to her all his goods and chattels.

‘After so long a letter, I am, without more ceremony, your humble servant, &c.’