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302
S K E T C H E S :

O R

E S S A Y S

O N

V A R I O U S S U B J E C T S .

By LAUNCELOT TEMPLE, *Esq;*



124

L O N D O N :

Printed for A. MILLAR in the *Strand*.

M D C C L V I I I .

[Price One Shilling and Sixpence.]

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T H E
P R E F A C E.

TH E Author of the following Papers chuses to call them *Sketches* ; as the least imperfect amongst them is to a laboured Treatise what the Painter's Outlines, or his first rude Draughts, are

are to a finished Picture. This Declaration he hopes will be accepted by the proper Judges of Writing as a sufficient Apology for any thing, either in Thought or Expression, that may be found careless or incorrect in his *Essays*. He owns he could have given these little loose Fragments much bolder Strokes, as well as more delicate Touches: But as an Author's Reputation depends at present upon the Mobility, he dreads the Danger of
writing

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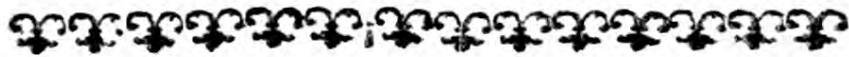
writing too well ; and feels the Value of his own Labour too sensibly to bestow it where, in all Probability, it might only serve to depreciate his Performance.

S K E T C H E S.

SECRET



S K E T C H E S.



B



SKETCHES.

Of LANGUAGE.

ALMOST every one that can read, pretends to judge of the Author's Style, as it is called: But how few are there who really know good Language from bad! Even the best Judges are sometimes divided in their Opinions, for want, it would seem, of a common Standard by which the Merits of different

ferent Languages, as well as of different Writers in the same Language, might be compared. If I was to reduce my own private Idea of the best Language to a Definition ; I should call it the shortest, clearest, and easiest Way of expressing one's Thoughts, by the most harmonious Arrangement of the best chosen Words, both for Meaning and Sound. The best Language is strong and expressive, without Stiffness or Affectation ; short and concise, without being either obscure or ambiguous ; and easy and flowing and disengaged, without one undetermined or superfluous Word.

Of GENIUS.

THERE is a Standard of Right and Wrong in the Nature of Things, of Beauty and Deformity, both in the natural and moral World. And as different Minds happen to be more or less exquisite, the more or less sensibly do they perceive the various Degrees of Good and Bad, and are the more or less susceptible
of

of being charmed with what is right or beautiful, and disgusted with what is wrong or deformed. It is chiefly this Sensibility that constitutes Genius; to which a sound Head and a good Heart are as essential as a delicate Imagination. And a Man of true Genius must necessarily have as exquisite a Feeling of the moral Beauties, as of whatever is great or beautiful in the Works of Nature, or masterly in the Arts which imitate Nature, in Poetry, Painting, Statuary and Music.

On the other side, where the Heart is very bad, the Genius and Taste, if there happen to be any Pretensions to them, will be found shocking and unnatural. NERO would be nothing less than a Poet; but his Verses were what one may call most *villainously* bad. His Taste of Magnificence and Luxury was horribly glaring, extravagant and unnatural to the last Degree.

CALIGULA's Taste was so outrageously wrong, that he detested the Works of the sweet MANTUAN Poet more passionately

than ever MOECENAS admired them ; and if VIRGIL had unfortunately lived down to those Times in which that Monster appeared, he would probably have been tortured to Death for no other Crime but that he wrote naturally, and like an honest Man.

True Genius may be said to consist of a perfect Polish of Soul, which receives and reflects the Images that fall upon it, without Warping or Distortion. And this fine Polish of Soul is, I believe, constantly attended with what Philosophers call the Moral Truth.

There are Minds which receive Objects truly, and feel the Impressions they ought naturally to make, in a very lively Manner, but want the Faculty of reflecting them ; as there are People who, I suppose, feel all the Charms of Poetry without being Poets themselves.

Of

Of TASTE.

OUR Notion of Taste may be easily understood by what has been said upon the Subject of Genius ; for mere good Taste is nothing else but Genius without the Power of Execution.

It must be born ; and is to be improved chiefly by being accustomed, and the earlier the better, to the most exquisite Objects of Taste in its various Kinds. For the Taste in Writing and Painting, and in every Thing else, is insensibly formed upon what we are accustomed to, as well as Taste in eating and drinking. One who from his Youth has been used to drink nothing but heavy dismal Port, will not immediately acquire a Relish for Claret or Burgundy.

In the most stupid Ages there is more good Taste than one would at first Sight imagine. Even the present, abuse it with what contemptuous epithets you please, cannot be totally void of it. As long as

there are noble humane and generous Dispositions amongst Mankind, there must be good Taste. For in general, I don't say always, the Taste will be in Proportion to those moral Qualities and that Sensibility of Mind from which they take their Rise. And while many, amongst the Great and the Learned, are allowed to have Taste for no better Reason than that it is their own Opinion, it is often possessed by those who are not conscious of it, and dream as little of pretending to it as to a Star and Garter. An honest Farmer, or Shepherd, who is acquainted with no Language but what is spoke in his own County, may have a much truer Relish of the *English* Writers than the most dogmatical Pedant that ever erected himself into a Commentator, and from his *Gothic* Chair, with awkward Arrogance, dictated false Criticism to the gaping Multitude.

But even those who are endued with good natural Taste, often judge implicitly and by rote, without ever consulting their own Taste. Instances of this passive
Indo-

Indolence, or rather this Unconsciousness of one's own Faculties, appear every Day ; not only in the fine Arts, but in Cases where the mere *Taste*, according to the original Meaning of the Word, is alone concerned. For I am positive there are many thousands who, if they were to bring their own Palate to a severe Examination, would discover that they really find a more delicious Flavour in Mutton than in Venison, in Flounder than in Turbut, and yet prefer middling or bad Venison to the best Mutton ; that is, what is scarcest and dearest, and consequently what is, from the Folly of Mankind, the most in Vogue, to what is really the most agreeable to their own private Taste.

In Matter of Taste, the Public, for the most part, suffers itself to be led by a few who perhaps are really no Judges; but who, under the Favour of some Advantages of Title, Place, or Fortune, set up for Judges, and are implicitly followed even by those who have Taste. These washy Dictators have learnt
at

at School to admire such Authors as have for Ages been possessed of an indisputed Renown: But they would never have been the first to have discovered Strokes of true Genius in a cotemporary Writer, tho' they had lived at the Court of AUGUSTUS or of Q. ELIZABETH.

So undistinguishing is our Taste, that if the flattest Dunce this fruitful Age can boast of, could by some artful Imposture prepossess the Public, that the most insipid of all his own Bread-fauce Compositions, to be published next Winter, was a Piece of MILTON's, or any other celebrated Author, recovered from Dust and Obscurity, it would be received with universal Applause, and perhaps be translated into *French* before the Town had doated six Weeks upon it. One might venture to say too, that if a Work of true Spirit and Genius was to be introduced into the World, uuder the Name of some Writer of low Reputation, it would be rejected even by the greatest part of those who pretend to lead the Taste. And no wonder, while

while an eminent Vintner has mistaken his own Old Hock at Nine Shillings the Bottle for that at Five.

Of TURGID WRITING.

NOISE and Bluster is what passes for Sublime with the great Majority of Readers ; and there are People who think nothing can be strong or solid but what is clumsy. Yet the genteel Dignity of WHITEHALL, and the elegant chearful Simplicity of ST. PAUL'S in COVENT GARDEN, may stand as long as that purse-proud Wittol the TREASURY, or even the squat Solidity of the HORSE GUARDS.

Unnatural, forced, exaggerated Swelling, whether in Sentiments or Language, is owing to false Taste and want of true Genius. The HERCULES of *Goltzius* is that very Sublime in Person. It is intended to express the most excessive Robustness of Figure ; but the Painter, in endeavouring to represent the human Form in its utmost Degree of Strength, has aggravated

gravated the Demi-god into a mere awkward Monster, as ridiculous a Giant as either of the Brothers at *Guildball*.

To take it in another View, that clumsy Robustness of Manner (which, by the way, does not partake of true Vigour, for that always performs its Business without straining) is the same Thing to that spirited Ease which is necessary to good Writing, that the awkward Efforts of a huge, heavy, ill-shaped Dray-horse, and a lame one too, are to the easy Actions of the most supple ARABIAN that ever was drest by ST. AMOUR.

That Writing can never be very good which is not easy ; but it does not follow that all easy Writing is good. Writing may be very easy, and yet, Heaven knows, very insipid. And when you begin to suspect that your Writing is easy indeed but wants Spirit, the wisest Thing you can do is to let your Pen drop and go to Bed.

Of

*Of AFFECTATION of WIT, and
FLORID WRITING.*

IT is not always so easy to get rid of an impertinent Companion as of a silly Book; otherwise to be for ever aiming at Wit would be as teizing and intolerable in Writing as in Conversation. Too much even of genuine Wit is cloying, and the Vanity of displaying it incessantly will fatigue and disgust every Reader whose Taste is true. Olives, Caveare, Anchovies, and *Dutch* Herrings, do very well in their Place; but, in the name of all the hospitable Powers, don't oblige us to dine upon them. Let us first lay a Foundation of good plain Beef or Mutton, if you please: for there is no living upon Pickles or Sweetmeats alone.

The Ground-work of every Performance, even of those which admit or require the greatest Profusion of Ornament, ought to be plain and simple. Observe Nature: In the Meadow, the sweet
I green,

green, which never dazzles the Sight, is the predominant Colour ; while the gaudy Flowers, red, white, yellow, blue, and purple, are carelessly interspersed. This is infinitely more pleasing and beautiful than that insipid, childish, uncomfortable Bawble, called a Flower-knot ; and the wild Variety of the Woods as far excels the richest Plantation of flowering Shrubs. I would not be above taking a Hint even from the mechanic Arts : If a Suit of Cloaths is overcharged with Lace, it becomes tawdry and ungenteel. In every Work, the true Taste is to dispose the Ornaments with Ease and Propriety, and not to be affectedly or too ostentatiously prodigal of them. By this Means you bestow upon your Performance an elegant Richness, and such a modest Dignity as will please every true Eye ; tho' it may quite escape the Notice of the Vulgar, and false Critics of all Ranks, who delight in nothing but what is glaring, tawdry, and ostentatious. — No, I beg their Pardon : For they are sometimes in
Rap-

Raptures, or seem to be so, with what is altogether insipid.

Let the Ornaments be never so well executed, if they are not easily and naturally introduced, they will have an awkward Effect. The most beautiful Woman may disgust you by Ostentation and a declared Intention to charm. As often as it is possible to contrive it so, the Ornaments should be, or at least appear to be, of some Use towards the main Design of the Work: But when they are bluntly produced, and with too barefaced a Purpose to dazzle or entertain, instead of your Admiration, they raise your Contempt. A Masque, a Coronation, or a Procession upon our Stage, is, for the most part, an insipid, tawdry, tiresome Shew. But if it was really an Ornament, to introduce it with Propriety and Grace, it ought to be contrived as an Incident to help on the Business of the Piece: as in the Masque in *ROMEO* and *JULIET*; and the Funeral Procession, such as it is, in *RICHARD the Third*; which, notwithstanding some want of

of *Decorum*, as the Critics call it, and of Probability in the Scene, has still some Kind of Pretence to assist in the Business of the Fable.

To conclude : The ornamental Parts of a Work cost the least Trouble to a Writer who has any Luxuriance of Imagination. To support the plain Parts with an easy Dignity, so as they shall neither become flat on the one hand, nor disgustingly stiff on the other, is a much more difficult Task. And yet if you succeed never so well here, you'll receive little Thanks from the Generality of Readers, who will be apt to imagine they could easily perform the same Kind of Work themselves, till they come to try it.

Of OBSCURE WRITING.

AS the first End of all Writing and Speaking is to be understood, it seems to follow that Obscurity must be the greatest Fault in either. One would think

think it needless to insist upon this ; yet there are Readers so absurd as to admire an Author the more for every now and then plunging into the Unintelligible : as a Dash of Mystery procures more Reverence from weak Minds to any Scheme of Religion than its most virtuous or most rational Precepts. Some clumsy Scholars too, who must needs be making awkward Love to the scornful Muses, and tumbling them with their coarse Paws, when they come to an obscure Passage in an Author, whom they are determined to admire, tell us we must not always expect the same Clearness in Writers of the first Class as in the more inferior ones. Such is their Cant even in talking of Dramatic Writing, in which Obscurity is more unpardonable than almost in any other Kind of Production. But the dullest and most shallow of those Critics could write obscurely himself ; and if he writes much he must have *ill luck* not to do it sometimes. For to write obscurely requires no

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other

other Talent or Skill than to express one's Meaning imperfectly; or if that is not enough, to write without any Meaning at all. However, amongst a different Kind of Critics, Perspicuity has always been reckoned an essential Quantity to good Writing; and if sometimes a great Author is found deficient in this Article, it only shews how difficult it is to express some Things with Clearness and Ease. For one may very safely presume that no good Writer, where it was prudent to speak out, ever express himself obscurely from Choice.

Of the MODERN ART of SPELLING.

AN Author seems reduced to great Extremities, who flies to new Spellings to distinguish himself.

These Innovations are pedantic and conceited Trifles; and the best, or rather the only good Reason for ever altering a long established Spelling is, that the Writing may come the nearer to the Pronunciation.

ciation. But our Reformers in the Art of Spelling, who at present chiefly confine themselves to one Class of Words, to Substantive Nouns and Verbs derived from the LATIN, such as *Honour, Favour, Labour*, while they write *Honor, Favor, Labor*, increase the Distance between the Writing and Pronunciation, or rather they produce one where there was none before; for the *u* in all these Words, except in a few where it is generally omitted in the common Spelling, as *Horror, Terror*, is at least as much felt in the Pronunciation as the retained Vowel *o*. Some have, unhappily enough, subjected to the same Innovation other Words, which contain the Diphthong *ou*, though they have no Relation at all to the LATIN, and write *Endeavor, Neighbor, Behavior*. Why don't they proscribe this hated *u* in *Adjectives* too; and instead of *invidious, odious, glorious*, write *invidios, odios, glorios*? As they have gone so far, I can see no good Reason why they should stop short here.

Trifles betray the Character : And it is somewhat strange, if it has escaped the Penetration of those Philosophers who have employed Part of their Talents in characterising the Age, that there hardly needed any other Instance to distinguish the present as an *unmanly* one than this very Aversion to the honest Vowel *u* ; without whose Assistance it would be impossible to pronounce some of the most important and most interesting Words, to any thing of a Man, in the whole *English* Language. And it is not unworthy our Observation here, that a late noble Author, whose Parts were manly enough in the earlier Days of his Life, did not begin to *castigate* his Spelling after this Manner, till he was considerably advanced in Years.

Of

Of NEW WORDS.

IT is the easiest Thing imaginable to coin Words. The most ignorant of the Mobility are apt to do it every Day, and are laughed at for it. What best can justify the introducing a new Word, is Necessity, where there is not an established one to express your Meaning. But while all the World understands what is meant by the Word *Pleasure*, which sounds very well too, what Occasion can there be for saying * *Volupty*?

Nothing can deform a Language so much as an Inundation of new Words and Phrases: It is, indeed, the readiest way to demolish it. If there is any need to illustrate the barbarous Effect which a Mixture of new Words must produce, only consider how a Discourse, patched all over with Sentences in different Languages, would sound; or how oddly it would strike you in a serious Conversation to hear, from the same Person, a Mixture

* See some posthumous Works published a few Years ago in *Defence* of our holy Religion.

of all the various Dialects and Tones of the several Counties and Shires of the three Kingdoms, tho' it is still the same Language. To make it sensible to the Eye; how greatly would a Mixture of *Roman, Italick, Greek, and Saxon* Characters deform a Page? A Picture, imitating the Style of different Masters, which is commonly called a Gallery of Painters, can never be pleasing for the same Reasons, want of Union and Harmony.

The present licentious Humour of coining and borrowing Words, seems to portend no good to the *English* Language: And it is grievous to think with what *Volupty* two or * *poetararorencouroac* eminent Personages have *opiniatred* the *Inchoation* of such *futile* Barbarisms.

In short, the Liberty of coining Words ought to be used with great Modesty. *Horace*, they say, gave but two, and *Virgil* only one to the *Latin* Tongue,

* The Word for the Number *three*, in one of the *American* Languages, which, to judge by this Specimen, cannot be barbarous for want of Polyfyllables.

which

which was squeamish enough not to swallow those, even from such Hands, without Reluctance.

I cannot conclude without putting our Writers and Speakers in mind of an excellent Advice from Mr. *Pope* on this Subject of new and old Words :

** Be not the first by whom the new are tried,
Nor yet the last to lay the old aside.*

Of SUPERANNATED WORDS.

INSTEAD of creating a Parcel of awkward new Words, I imagine it would be an Improvement to degrade many of the old ones from their Peerage. I am but a private Man, and without Authority ; but an absolute Prince, if he was of my Opinion, would make it capital to say *encroach* or *Encroachment*, or any thing that belongs to *encroaching*. I would commit *inculcate*, for all its Latinity, to the Care of the Pavours ; and it should never appear above Ground again. If you have the least Sympathy with the

* See Mr. POPE's *Essay on Criticism*.

human Ear, never say *Purport* while you breathe; nor *betwixt*, except you have first repeated *between* till we are quite tired of it. *Metbinks* strongly resembles the broken Language of a *German* in his first Attempts to speak *English*. *Metbought* lies under the same Objection, but it sounds better.

It is full Time that *froward* should be turned out of all good Company, especially as *perverse* is ready at hand to supply his Place. *Vouchsafe* is a very civil Gentleman; but as his Courtesy is somewhat old fashioned, we wish he would *deign* or *condescend*, or *be pleased* to retire.

From what rugged Road, I wonder, did *swerve* deviate into the *English* Language?—But this *Subject Matter*!—In the Name of every thing that's disgusting and detestable, what is it? Is it one or two ugly Words? What's the Meaning of it? Confound me if I ever could guess! Yet one dares hardly ever peep into a Preface, for fear of being stared in the Face with this nasty *Subject Matter*.

Wittol

Wittol is an old-fashioned, ill-founding Word ; but as there is frequent Occasion for it, and no other Word so perfectly expresses its Meaning, we cannot afford to part with it.

But to pick out all the awkward old Words, which continue to be as current amongst us as the worn-out Sixpences, it would be necessary to peruse the Dictionary from A to Z. A most desperate uncomfortable Labour ! As heart-breaking a Task as it would be to wade thro' half a Volume of the *Statutes at large* ; nay, by Heaven, I would almost as soon take it upon me to read the most insipid Tragedy that has been brought upon the Stage these seven Years. But if one could submit to this Labour, and should presume to set a Mark upon every Word one did not relish, there may be People of a different Opinion ; and no private Person has Authority enough to prohibit the Use of any Word, if he finds it ever so intolerable to his own Ear. For my part, I shall endeavour to pass through Life as inoffensively as possible,

fible, both to the World and my own Conscience ; and hope, and pray, I may never be reduced to the Necessity of using
 * *One WORD, which dying, I would wish to blot.*

Of MUSIC.

MUSIC, I presume, can no further be properly called one of the imitative Arts, than as it expresses the Passions ; and in this Respect only can be admitted, as the Sister of Poetry and Painting. So that mere Harmony has little Pretension to such an Alliance ; for it is no more Music than mere Versification is Poetry.

The *Italian* Compositions, I speak of the modern ones, for the most part mean nothing beyond harmonious Sound ; and are as much inferior to whatever is truly pathetic in Music, as a Tragedy, which depends upon Noise and Shew, is to a plain passionate one, which represents a natural and moving Picture of Life, and of the human Mind. A Family Piece,
 * See the Epilogue to Mr. *Thomson's* CORIOLANUS,
 even

even such an one as the celebrated Work of *Vandyke* at *Wilton*, where, tho' the Drawing is exact, and the Attitudes easy and natural, the Figures are all gaping and unemployed, is a mighty tame Performance when compared with a grand History by *Raphael*, *Rubens*, or the same *Vandyke* himself, where every thing is expressive, warm, passionate, and interesting.

But it is not even mere Harmony; Difficulty of Execution is the Sublime, at which the greatest Part of our modern Masters aspire; as if it required the least Genius either to compose or execute difficult Music. While these are the Objects of Emulation amongst our Composers and Performers, the Opera is likely to *continue* a most ravishing Entertainment.

We run mad, or rather foolish, after this imported Music; while perhaps we have much better of our own. Most of the modern *Italian* Compositions only trifle with the Ear: The *Welsh*, the *Scotch*, the *Irish* Music reaches the Heart.

The

The Productions of our present *Italian* Masters are thrummed over for a Season, because they are new; and forgot for ever afterwards, because when you have heard them twenty Times; you find them still as insipid as at first. The Music, which charmed these Islands perhaps long before the boasted Revival of this Art in *Italy*, or rather in *Flanders*, is as established as the ancient Classics; and those Compositions, short and simple as they are, never become thread-bare, but give Delight and Rapture every time they are heard.

There is a certain Resemblance of Air between the Music of the ancient *Britons*, the *Irish*, and the *Scotch*; and yet they are all very distinguishable from one another. There is a remarkable Difference of Character even between the Music of the North and the South of *Scotland*. The northern is generally martial, for the most part melancholy, and bears a strong Resemblance to the *Irish*: the southern is pastoral and amorous, with such an Air of tender Melancholy, as Love and Solitude, in

a wild romantic Country, are apt to inspire. Each of them has a Wildness peculiar to itself. The wild Spirit of the South breathes a sweeter Air of rural Solitude; that of the North is more solemn, and sometimes what one might almost call dreadful. Besides, the gay, sprightly Airs which each of them has produced, are in as different Styles as the Genius and Manners of the People in the two Extremities of *Scotland*, or the Face of the Countries they inhabit; both of which are wild, but I believe with a very different Air.

The *British* Poetry is universally allowed, by the best Judges of both, to be much superior to the *Italian*; and why should you wonder to find the Music of the one Country brought into Competition with that of the other? The Music of these Islands seems to agree in Character with that of the Ancients, which, from the Accounts we have of it, excelled in Simplicity and Passion. How simple the Music must have been that delighted *Greece* in the Days of *Alcæus*, *Sappho*, *Pindar*, and
Ana-

Anacreon, seems to appear from the very Make of their capital Instrument the Lyre.

Of ENGLISH VERSE.

RHYME, we have often been told, is a modern Invention; tho', if that was a Crime, it might perhaps be proved to be not so very modern neither. It is reckoned a barbarous one by some Pedants, who finding, I suppose, by the Opinion of better Judges than themselves, that it is abominable in *Greek* and *Latin*, conclude that it must not be less so in *French* and in *English*. The contrary is evident to every one that has Ears and dares think for himself; for in *English* Rhime is capable of much Harmony, and the *French* can have no Versification without it. But some People, who ought to know better, seem to make no Allowance for the original Difference between one Language and another; and are ready to quarrel with the *English* as a barbarous Language, because it is not *Latin* or *Greek*. They do not consider that every Language has Powers and Graces peculiar

cular to itself, and that what is becoming in one, would be quite ridiculous in another. Of this it is sufficient to produce one obvious Example: The Transposition of Words, which gives such a Grace and Spirit to the *Greek* and *Latin* Languages, and without which they would become detestably flat and insipid, does not at all suit the Genius of the *English*, except sometimes in Poetry; and, by the way, I am afraid there are too many ungraceful Transpositions current amongst our *English* Poets.

But it is not only a few obscure Pedants who are thus dissatisfied with their Mother-tongue; and would be glad for its Improvement to torture it from its native Shape, some into *Latin* and others into *French*: for Attempts of this Nature have been actually made by Men of superior Note. Sir *Philip Sidney*, who, notwithstanding his affected Manner, must be allowed to have possessed a great Share of Genius, would every now and then spur up his gallant *English* into a most unbecoming ridiculous Trot after the *Greek*

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and

and *Latin* Hexameters. It is certainly impossible to introduce the *Greek* and *Latin* Measures into *English* Poetry with any Success; yet Sir *Philip* was fond of this Project, and pursued it with a strange Obstinacy. He recommended it to *Spenser*; but *Spenser* had too true an Ear to relish such awkward unnatural Versification, or countenance it by his Example. At least there is nothing remains of him to shew that he ever practised it. There have been Attempts made since to the same Purpose by *Milton* and some later Authors. But there never was any thing seen to ungraceful or so despicably pedantick as all Effays of that Kind which have hitherto appeared. I do not know that it has ever yet been tried, except by *Milton* in some Parts of his *Samson*; but of all the *Greek* or *Latin* Measures, the Iambic seems the most capable of being adopted into the *English* Poetry.

I have either read or heard that a Poet of the last Century, whom I shall not name, because I am not perfectly sure of the Fact, pretended to some Secrets in Versification,
 which

which he did not chuse to communicate. If it was so, it shewed a Jealousy unworthy of so great a Master of Numbers: He might safely enough, for his own Superiority, have published those Secrets whatever they were; for it is impossible they could ever be of much Use. He could easily advise you to vary your Pauses, and tell you which are the most graceful; but these and all such Precepts are nothing to the Purpose: A good Ear will naturally produce Harmony without the least Regard or Attention to Rules; and there is no Cure for a bad one. The only way to improve the Ear, whether good or bad, is to accustom it to the most harmonious Writing.

Blank Verse admits of a greater Variety of Pauses than Rhime, and is partly for that Reason the fittest for Works of any considerable Length. But in *English* Poetry I question whether it is possible, with any Success, to write Odes, Epistles, Elegies, Pastorals or Satires, without Rhime. And it happens luckily, that in

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these short Pieces the Ear has not Time to be tired with the Return of the Chimes: which, in my humble Opinion, had better sometimes play a little false to one another than be for ever scrupulously exact; provided such Licences never shock the Ear.

It does not require a very exquisite Ear to write two smooth or even harmonious Lines running: Yet in Rhime, a Poet, who is always very careful to polish his Couplet, may pass with the Multitude for a great Master in Versification. But as long as his Harmony is confined within such narrow Bounds, he writes but like a School-boy, who keeps in the Line only with the Help of ruled Paper.

Dr. *Swift* and Mr. *Pope* took Offence, one does not know why, at the Triplet, and very rarely condescended to admit it into their Verse. It is true, it had been used to a nauseous Excess by some tasteless Writers; and Mr. *Pope's* own Imitation of *Rochester* might justly enough give him

a Disgust to the Triplet for his whole Life. Yet it contributes not a little to the Grace of *Dryden's* Versification; and I can see no Reason why it should be prohibited now, as it gives a Variety to the Numbers, which in Rhyme is sufficiently limited to require such an Help: Besides, it may often be in your Power by its Means to compress within three Lines, what must otherwise straggle into four, and of course become languid and spiritless.

Variety is the Soul of Versification; and the March of the Lines ought to be adapted to the Subject. The Measure is the same in both; but had *Horace* wrote his Epistles or Satires in the same Kind of Numbers with *Virgil's* ÆNEID, it would have been a monstrous Impropriety; like hunting the Fox or Hare on a War-horse, with the Equipage of a General at a Review, or on the Day of Battle. He knew very well, that in familiar Writing Dignity of Versification

would be quite ridiculous. Accordingly in those Parts his Numbers are loose, rambling, and often almost prosaic. But in his most careless and licentious Periods he seldom or never hurts the Ear: and as often as there is any thing great in his Sentiment, his Expression and Numbers rise in Proportion, and sustain themselves with a native unaffected Dignity; till without falling he descends on easy and dexterous Wings to the familiar again.

It does not seem quite foreign to the present Subject to take some Notice of a certain *French* Author, who after having given it as his Opinion, that *Mr. Pope is the most harmonious of all the English Poets*, adds, with a very plausible Assurance, that *he has reduced the sharp Hissings of the English Trumpet to the sweet Sounds of the Flute* *. It is no great wonder, that one who is apt to write much at random,

* *Mr. Pope—Est, je crois, le Poete le plus elegant, le plus correct, et ce qui est encore beaucoup, le plus harmonieux qu' ait eu l' Angleterre. Il a reduit les sifflemens aigres de la trompette Angloise au sons doux de la Flute. VOLTAIRE—Lettres sur les Anglois.*

should

should presume to talk so contemptuously of a noble and elegant Language with which he plainly appears to have but a very superficial Acquaintance. But who ever talked before of the *Hissings of a Trumpet*—or of *sharp Hissings*? We have all heard of the *hoarse Trumpet*, but the *hissing Trumpet* is an Instrument we are not yet acquainted with. However, to pass these little Improperities, this Compliment to Mr. *Pope* shews how well our Critic is qualified to pass Sentence upon the *English Poets*. No one is more sensible than I am of Mr. *Pope's* Merit; but his blindest Admirer might startle at the Preference bestowed upon him here. For, not to mention the great Names of *Spenser*, *Shakespear*, and *Milton*, upon such an Occasion, let us only compare Mr. *Pope* in this Point of View with a Writer upon whom, as they say, he formed himself, and whom not only in his own Opinion but in that of many others he is thought to have excelled in the Art of versifying. It is almost needless, after this, to say

that I mean *Dryden*, whose *Verfification* I take to be the moft musical that has yet appeared in Rhime. Round, fweet, pompous, spirited and various; it flows with fuch a happy Volubility, fuch an animated and mafterly Negligence, as I believe will not foon be excelled. From the Fineneſs of his Ear, his Proſe too is perhaps the fweeteſt, the moſt mellow and generous, that the *English* Language has yet produced.

Had Mr. *Voltaire* known as much of the *English* Poets as he pretends to do, he might have found ſomething like the *fweet Sound of the Flute* in Mr. *Waller*; who wrote before Mr. *Pope* was born. Mr. *Voltaire*, before he preſumed to compare the *English* Poets, ſhould have known that before Mr. *Waller* appeared there was one *Edmund Spenſer* a Poet, whoſe Verſe was not merely indolently ſmooth, but ſpirited alſo and harmonious. And if Mr. *Voltaire* was a perfect and a candid Judge in this Caſe, he would own that there was more Harmony in many of the
English

English Poets—much more than the *French* Language is can attain to, or an Ear debauched by the *French* Versification is capable of relishing.

Of the VERSIFICATION *of* ENGLISH
TRAGEDY.

THE greatest Part of our modern Writers of Tragedy seem to think it enough to write mere Blank Verse, no matter however hard it be, however void of Swelling and Harmony. Even those of them who write the best Numbers study to be solemn and pompous throughout, and affect a Monotony of heroic Versification, from the first Appearance of the Heroine with her Confidante to her last fatal Exit; without the least Regard to the Variety of Passions, which express themselves in quick or slow, flowing or interrupted, in languishing or impetuous Movements.

The proper Versification of *English* Tragedy is most certainly Blank Verse;

but as different from the solemn and majestic Movement of heroic Poetry as the Iambic is from the Hexameter. What a monstrous Production would a *Greek* or *Latin* Tragedy in Hexameter Verse appear!—The Ancients found the grave Iambic their proper Measure for Tragedy, as it is at the same Time capable of all the Dignity which that Kind of Poem requires, and descends with the greatest Ease to the Level of Prose and Conversation. Such as is the Iambick in *Latin*, is Blank Verse in *English*: but by no Means the Blank Verse of *Paradise Lost*.

The Numbers ought to be accommodated to the Passion; and though in some Parts of Tragedy it is proper they should be slow or solemn or languishing, they ought for the most part to run somewhat rambling and irregular, and often rapid and subsultory, so as to imitate the natural Cadence and quick Turns of Conversation.

Shakespear, who I will venture to say had the most musical Ear of all the *English*

lish Poets, is abundantly irregular in his Versification: But his wildest Licences seldom hurt the Ear; on the contrary, they give his Verse a Spirit and Variety, which prevents its ever cloying. Our modern Tragedy-Writers instead of using the Advantages of their own Language, seem in general to imitate the Monotony of the *French* Versification: and the only Licence they ever venture upon is that poor tame one the supernumerary Syllable at the End of a Line; which they are apt to manage in such a Manner as to give their Verse a most ungraceful Halt. But it is not want of Ear alone which makes our common Manufacturers of Tragedy so insipidly solemn and so void of Harmony; it is want of Feeling. For let the Ear be what it will, if the Passions are warmly felt, they will naturally express themselves in their proper Tones.

Tragedy requires a greater Variety of Numbers than any other poetical Production, as it is the most agitated with different

ferent Passions. The March of every Poem of any considerable Length, but chiefly of Tragedy, ought to resemble the Course of a River, through a large Extent of Country, diversified with Plains, Hills, and Mountains. The Stream, according as the Ground lies thro' which it flows, is either slow, smooth and solemn ; or brisk and sportful ; or rapid, impetuous and precipitate. Such and so various ought to be the Versification of Tragedy, instead of that stiff affected Importance of Movement which is now absurdly and awkwardly supported thro' the whole Course of these sublime Performances.

But besides this studied Dignity ; this inflexible Gravity of Pace ; this unvaried Exactness of Measure without Spirit or Harmony ; this immoveable Hardness and want of Fluctuation in the Lines ; there is no Language so unnatural as that you meet with in most of our modern Tragedies. The Characters they represent are too heroic, it would seem, and too much
ex-

exalted above common Life to speak *after the Manner of Men*. The Misfortune is, most of our Tragedy-Writers labour with all their Might, and keep themselves perpetually upon the Rack, to say every thing poetically : for it never enters into their Head, that the most natural is the most and the only poetical Way of saying common Things ; except sometimes where you can properly raise your Expression by an easy Metaphor. Let the Sentiments be such as best suit the Character and Situation, and they cannot be express'd with too much Plainness and Simplicity ; provided all Vulgarisms are as much as possible avoided.

As to the Characters, if it was not for a very few Exceptions, one would think the Art of drawing them was lost amongst our dramatic Writers. Those that appear in most of our modern Plays, Tragedies call them or Comedies, are like bad Portraits, which indeed represent the human Features, but without Life or
Mean-

Meaning, or those distinguishing Strokes which, in the incomparable HOGARTH and in every great History Painter, make you imagine you have seen such Persons as appear in the Picture. In short, those mechanical Performances are as imperfect as unnatural Representations of human Life, of the Manners and Passions of Mankind, as the *Gothic* Knights which lie along in Armour in the Temple Church are of the human Figure.

Of IMITATION.

THE humble Vanity, as one may call it, of imitating another Person's Manner, is one great Source of Affectation, which is generally ridiculous, and always disagreeable. A Person whose natural Turn is genteel, if he keeps good Company, will insensibly acquire as much of their Manner as becomes him; but if he sets up any one as a Pattern to be exactly imitated, his Behaviour will grow
con-

constrained, stiff and affected. Such will be the constant Success of so absurd an Attempt to confine the Variety of Nature; which plainly intends that Mankind should be distinguishable one from another by their Air, Voice, and Manner, no less than by their Faces.

A Poet, a Painter, or a Player, that imitates closely will never excell: and this will hold good in every thing else that belongs to Genius. It is true, that Education and Study are necessary to the Improvement of Genius; but to this Purpose it is sufficient to be familiarly acquainted with the greatest Masters, and the earlier in Life the better. By this Means, if you delight in them, and have any Similarity with them, you will catch their Graces without affecting it; and your own original characteristical Manner will still distinguish itself. But if you study to form yourself upon them, you become only a Copy of a Copy. The greatest of them excell by their happy
Skill

Skill in copying Nature ; and if you content yourself with servilely copying them, without drawing immediately from the common Subject NATURE, you will always be inferior to your Original, and have no Chance ever to produce any thing great or striking.

In the mean Time I do not imagine that true Genius was ever much hurt by imitating. For tho' it is natural for young People to imitate a favourite Author at first, it is not probable that true Genius will submit to be so fettered long.

*Of WRITING to the TASTE of the
AGE.*

WHATEVER some have pretended one may reasonably enough doubt whether ever an Author wrote much below himself from any Cause but the Necessity of writing too fast. When this happens to a Writer who, with the Advantages of Leisure and easy
Cir-

Circumstances, is capable of producing such Works as might charm succeeding Ages, it is a Disgrace to the Nation and the Times wherein such a Genius had the Misfortune to appear.

It belongs to true Genius to indulge its own Humour; to give a Loose to its own Sallies; and to be curbed, restrained and directed by that sound Judgment alone which necessarily attends it. It belongs to it to improve and correct the public Taste; not to humour or meanly prostitute itself to the gross or low Taste which it finds. And you may depend upon it, that whatever Author labours to accommodate himself to the Taste of his Age—Suppose it, if you please, this present Age—the sickly Wane, the impotent Decline of the eighteenth Century; which from a hopeful Boy became a most insignificant Man, and for any thing that appears at present will die a very fat drowsy Blockhead, and be damned to eternal Infamy and Contempt: Every such Author

I say, though he may thrive as far as an Author can in the present Age, will by Degrees languish into Obscurity in the next. For tho' naked and bare-faced Vanity; tho' an active Exertion of little Arts, and the most unremitting Perseverance in them; tho' Party, Cabal, and Intrigue; tho' accidental Advantages, and even whimsical Circumstances; may conspire to make a very moderate Genius the Idol of the implicit Multitude: Works that lean upon such fickle Props, that stand upon such a false Foundation, will not be long able to support themselves against the Injuries of Time. Such Buildings begin to totter almost as soon as their Scaffolding is taken down.

But if you find it necessary to comply with the Taste of your Age; the Writing best calculated to please a false Taste is what has something of the Air of good Writing, without being really so. For to the vulgar Eye the Specious is more striking than the Genuine. The best Writing is too plain, too simple, too unaffected, and too delicate to stir the callous Organs
of

of the Generality of Critics, who see nothing but the tawdry Glare of Tinsel, and are deaf to every thing but what is shockingly noisy to a true Ear. They are struck with the fierce glaring Colours of old *Frank*; with Attitudes and Expressions violent, distorted and unnatural: while the true, just and easy, the graceful, the moving, the sublime Representations of *Raphael* have not the least Power to attract them. The bullying, noisy March in *Judas Macchabeus* has perhaps more sincere Admirers than that most pathetic one in *Saul*: and in Conversation Pertness and mere Vivacity is more felt by the general run of Company than easy unaffected Wit; as flashy, bouncing, flatulent Cyder seems to promise more Spirit than the still Vigour of reserved *Madeira*.

But the easiest, as well as the most effectual Way of writing to the bad Taste of your Age, is to set out while your Genius is yet upon a Level with it. Accordingly, if you have a Son who begins to display a hopeful Bloom of Imagination,

be sure to publish, with all the Advantages that can be procured, the very first Essays of his Genius. They will hardly be too good to please ; and besides, they have a Chance to be received with particular Favour and Admiration as the Productions of a young Muse. When he has thus taken Possession of the public Ear, he may venture, as his Genius ripens, to do his best ; he may write as well as he can, perhaps without much Danger of sinking in Reputation. The Renown of his first crude Essays will be sufficient to prejudice the Mobility, great and small, in Favour of the most exquisite Pieces he can produce afterwards. But if he must live by his Wit, the best Thing you can do for him is to transplant him, as early as possible, to PARIS ; where in the worst of Days, in the most *Gotbic* Muse-detesting Reign, there is still some Shelter afforded to the most delicate as well as the most uncommon Flower that blossoms in the human Mind. In that gay, serene and genial Climate the Muses are still
more

more or less cultivated, tho' not with the same Ardour and Passion in every Age ; as appears from the following Passage translated from a * *French* Author, who wrote about the beginning of the present Century. “ Almost all the Arts have in “ their Turns experienced that Disgust “ and Love of Change which is natural “ to Mankind. But I don't know that “ any one of them has felt it more than “ Poetry ; which in some Ages has been “ exalted to a triumphal Heighth, in “ others neglected, discouraged, and despised. About sixty Years ago, under “ the Administration of one of the greatest “ Geniuses that ever *France* produced, “ Poetry found itself amongst us at its “ highest Pitch of Glory. Those who “ cultivated the Muses were regarded with “ particular Favour : This Art was the “ Road to Fortune and dignified Stations. “ But in these Days this Ardour seems “ to be considerably abated. We do not

* *Defense de la Poësie ; par M. l'Abbé Messiau. Memoires de Literature, Tome 2de.*

“ appear to be extremely sensible to poetical Merit, &c.”

Of PHYSIOGNOMY, *or the* SIMILITUDE *between the* PERSON *and the* MIND.

THAT the Face is a false Glass is a vulgar Error, and seems to have taken its Rise from a few Exceptions : For all Mankind are so much Physiognomists that whoever happens to find himself mistaken, tho' but for once, joins the Cry of the Proverb. All are not alike skilled in Faces, any more than in unravelling of Characters ; even the most penetrating Eye may be mistaken : yet I will presume to say, that the Face is seldom a false Glass ; and when it proves so, it is generally the Fault of the Beholder. Perhaps indeed Nature has made some Cheats, some to appear worse, many much better than they are. This is of a Piece with her usual Variety, and was perhaps partly intended to check the Presumption of Man-

Mankind in judging too rashly of one another. Yet still the Face is not a false Glass. On the contrary, where the Qualities of the Mind are eminent, it generally shews them. For the Features of the Mind commonly follow those of the Face; as the Figure of most Animals, whose Characters are strong, is expressive of their Nature. Tho' you had never heard of a Lion, a Tiger, a Serpent, or an Alligator, it is natural to think you would at the first Sight be afraid of them rather than of a Hare, or even a Horse, whose Appearance might prove formidable, but more from his Size than his Make.

The Mind is for the most part visible in the Person. Thus, a bearish Figure is almost certainly the Rhind or Husk of a rude rough Soul, never to be polished by any Cultivation. If you find any Sweetness in the Kernel of such a rugged Shell, it is more than you ought to expect; for a Man is one Thing, and a Chesnut another. The Voice too is in general harsh or sweet, conformably to the Features;

tures ; and where Faces resemble one another, you'll meet with a remarkable Similitude in the Voice.

Sense and Virtue are often to be found under a plain Face and clumsy Figure ; but Elegance and Delicacy of Mind generally appear in the Person. Where a false and specious Elegance appears in the Face, you may expect the same in the Mind ; and the Herd of Mankind will admire them more than the true. Sometimes you meet with a delicate and elegant Mind under a Face that cannot properly be called handsome : but then you will generally observe a Spirit and Expression in such a Face that pleases a true Eye much more than mere regular Beauty ; for the best Part of Beauty is Air, Meaning and Expression.

The ancient *Greeks*, besides their being the most ingenious and elegant, were the most beautiful Race of Mortals that ever appeared in the World. The modern *Greeks* preserve the fine Mould of their Ancestors ; and, if they were blest with Liberty, would probably in a short Time excell

excell all their Neighbours in every Excellence that human Nature can boast of, whether ornamental or solid. Exquisite Organs are, I believe, for the most part, beautiful too ; and it is better to have a handsome Ear than a very large one. Tho' the latter is by the Laws of the animal Oeconomy more favourably contrived for the over-hearing of a Whisper.

It is a common Observation, that the Painter constantly draws the finest *Hands* whose own is of an elegant Make. This is universally ascribed to a Cause which is perhaps more obvious and plausible than true : For the Painter often draws a Hand in Attitudes in which he never sees his own. It was probably more owing to something within themselves, than to the different Stiles of Nature to which they were accustomed, that RUBENS and RAPHAEL are so different in their Ideas of Beauty and their Representations of the human Form. VANDYKE studied under RUBENS; and as he lived in the same Country, was accustomed to the same

Kind of Objects with his Master: Yet their Works are as different as their Persons were; the one robust, but rather clumsy; the other handsome and genteel. In short, the Productions of the Genius seem to be a Kind of Propagation, and bear a Family Resemblance to the Parent.

Of PREJUDICES, political, religious, or national.

THIS ungenerous Spirit, these ill-natured Humours are so extremely absurd, that if strong Instances of them were not seen every Day, it would be impossible for a Man of Sense to believe them. For my own part, if I am totally free from any of the common Weaknesses of Mankind, I take it to be from this. What is it to me what any Man's Principles are as to Religion or Government? He has perhaps as good a Right as I, perhaps a better, to keep steady to the Principles in which he was educated. My Religion may, for want of early Instruction, ap-
 I pear

pear as strange to him as his can to me. These Things are all merely accidental and the Effect of Education: For a hot-headed Churchman, bred at any Protestant University, or the sourest Christian that ever dissented from the Orthodox Church of *England*, would have been as violent a Mahometan, if he had received his System of Religion from the MUFTI at *Constantinople*. Can it be supposed, that Heaven puts itself at the Head of any religious Party!—I humbly think it appears plain enough, that the Almighty who displays such infinite Variety in all his Works, no more intended that all Mankind should be of the same Religion, than that they should all be of one Colour, speak the same Language, observe the same Customs, and wear the same Dress: And it is not less reasonable than charitable to believe, that the Virtuous of all Religions are equally acceptable to the universal Father. For little as we know of Heaven, I hope we may, without any Blasphemy, presume that

that the superior Powers are at least as reasonable as the best of *us*.

It is still not quite out of Nature for People in certain Humours, whether from the Wine or the Weather, to grow sour to one another for Matters of mere Opinion, nay, and proceed to downright quarrelling, either for the Glory of God, or their own Vanity. But the utmost Effort of narrow-thinking, and what appears perfectly astonishing, is the Aversion which some People bear in their Minds to all those who did not happen to be born on the same Spot, in the same little Island, or the same Corner of an Island with themselves. Good God! would you have all the World to have been born in *Ireland*? In the Name of every thing that is whimsical, what does it signify where a Man was born? Can it be either a Merit or a Crime to have been born in any particular Spot of this Globe, were it in *St. Giles's*, the *Old-Bailey*, or even within the execrable Walls of *New-gate* itself? One would think they must
be

be at a prodigious Loss for something to value themselves upon who are proud of the Place of their Birth. Most People pretend to laugh at what is called Family Pride: and yet, tho' according to nice Herald-like Ceremony, the Son, as the better Gentleman, ought to take the Wall of the Father; this Kind of Pride is perhaps not quite a proper Object of Ridicule: for whoever esteems himself upon Account of his noble Ancestry, must of course emulate their Virtues, and be afraid to violate their Memory by any Action unworthy of them. It is needless, and might be mistaken for Flattery, to produce the many shining Examples of this generous Emulation which adorn the present Age. Even without any very distinguishing Merit of his own, the Son has often some Claim to a favourable Reception for the Sake of his Father. But he stands upon a very black Situation who has nothing to shelter him from Contempt but the Name of his Country. For Heaven's Sake what Country is it the
 most

most honourable to have been born in? What Climate? what Latitude?—Under the Equator? or at what particular Distance from it? I hope it is not in those Climates where the Weather is the finest, and the Seasons the most agreeable. But is there a Country, at least in *Christendom*, where the Generality of the People, rough as they run, are not as stupid and as wicked as the arch Enemy of Mankind would wish to make them? The great Bulk of the *Irish*,—I'm sorry to say it,—are bad enough, very ragged Cattle indeed; it is in vain to deny it—The general run of the *Scotch*, as well as of the *French*, *Spaniards*, and *Italians*, is so very, so extremely little better, that it might puzzle the most sagacious Connoisseur to pronounce which is worst—The *English*, tho' for every Kind of Merit, as estimable a People as any in *Europe*, are, with Regard to many of their Individuals, just as unhappy as the rest. God preserve us, what strange Animals, what shabby Christians have had the Honour to be born in
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the Metropolis of *Great Britain*!—of reputable, most reputable Parents too!—in this very *London*! and not to talk of *Rag-fair* or *Drury-lane*, in the superb Neighbourhood of *Grosvenor-square* and *St. James's* itself.

But the Merit or Value stamped upon any Animal from the Meridian of its Nativity, is not more fantastical than that which it receives from the Place of its Education. Yet there are thousands who dream, that no Science is to be learnt but within those very Walls whence after many Years Residence themselves had come into the World with a moderate enough Share of Erudition. It would be highly unreasonable to reflect upon any School because a great Number of Dunces happened to have been bred there: But People of this narrow Way of thinking are really a Reproach to their Tutors. One would be sorry to see any illiberal Jealousy rise amongst our Universities for such a simple Dispute (a yet *tetrior quam teterrima belli causa*) as which of them
has

has sent out the most numerous Herd of learned Blockheads. For any Blockhead, whose Genius leads him to much poring over musty Books, may become a Man of great Learning in the most illiterate Ground, in the most unconsecrated you can name. But for their own Sakes it is to be hoped, that those learned Bodies will agree to suppress all Animosities of this Nature ; lest in the Course of their Altercations it should be discovered, that all those Seminaries of Learning, however dignified with the specious Titles of Academies, Colleges, or Universities, are mere artful Impositions upon the Ignorance of Mankind. For there are many Instances to prove with what small Helps from Education good native Parts may shine : And a Man may turn out a very considerable Blockhead without ever having been taught Metaphysics.

As the most hopeful Antidote to the Poyson of this very domestic Education, one would prescribe a Visit to foreign
Parts.

Parts. And if after a Ramble through *Europe*, the obstinate Malignity should still shew itself in fresh Eruptions, it might be worth while to try a seven Years Residence in *America*: If the Patient returns before he is thoroughly cured, I can see no good Reason why he should not be transplanted for Life.

But a strong Obstacle to the Cure of this Folly, is the Advantage which some *honest* People find in fomenting it. For the Mob, I mean the great Bulk of Mankind, in judging of Men are mere Botanists: They distinguish them only by their outward Types; the Class or Tribe they belong to, or *seem* to belong to. For want of being able to penetrate a little deeper into the Character, they prefer a Man for the Cock of his Hat, or the Healths he toasts; and are the more obstinate in their Attachment to him, the less Reason they can give for it. As the Votaries of any Religion are the more zealous and violent, the further its

Prin-

Principles are removed from common Sense.

To conclude, as we begun, with Religion. It is nothing to me in whom or in what any Man believes. I have no Objection in the World to an honest Man, because he believes in MAHOMET, as long as he gives himself no impertinent Trouble about my Faith. Nay, I could live upon good Terms even with a Deist; provided he keeps within the Bounds of Decency, and does not carry with him thro' Life that juvenile Vanity which will not suffer him to be quiet, till he has told all the World that he laughs at those Things which they consider as the most sacred and inviolable.

Of moral ATTRACTION *and* RE-
PULSION.

Oderunt bilarem tristes, tristemq; jocos,
Sedatum celeres, agilem gnarvumq; remissi.

HOR.

The Sullen hate the Gay, the Gay the Sad,
The Slow the Active, and the Quick the Staid.

THIS was observed by one who knew Mankind as thoroughly as most Writers. And it is an Observation may justly be extended to all People of opposite Dispositions. For every Knave naturally hates an honest Man; and the dimmest, most misty Blockhead has Penetration enough, except you would rather call it Instinct, to discover a Man of Parts; and cold Virulence enough to detest him. The Miser abhors the Man who generously enjoys his Fortune; and hopes to see the Prodigal starve. As this is the Case, it would require some Skill in the Doctrine of Chances to calculate how many Enemies a Man of Sense and Integrity is likely to have for one Friend.

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On the other hand, People of similar Characters are apt to like one another. There is not a genuine Ruffian in *Turkey*, not even in *Christendom*, so abandoned to all Sense of Humanity, so void of all Sympathy with the human-kind, that would not take some little Pains at least to favour the Escape of the Wretch who had just murdered his Father. Upon these two Principles of Aversion and Attachment, if they are not rather, in the present View, one and the same, it is probable that the most important of human Affairs sometimes depend. It is perhaps more owing to this than to any single Cause besides, that one Age is so different from another. For a very few Individuals in a Nation may have Influence enough to throw the great Weight of its Business into such Hands as shall render it either glorious or contemptible, either miserable or prosperous.

But it is now full Time to conclude :
For when the Writer is tired, it is highly

probable the Reader must begin to yawn, if he is not fast asleep already. For which Reasons, what I had further to say shall be dispatched in as few Words as possible, and without a very scrupulous Regard to Method or Regularity.

SENTENCES.

THE sententious Manner of Writing is apt to be dry, and to give Disgust by its oracular Air and a dogmatical overbearing Pretension to Wisdom. Perhaps it would be better, if its Severity was alleviated with a comfortable Mixture of human Nonsense. For to be perpetually *wise*, is forbidding, unsocial, and something that does not become human Nature, as it does not belong to it. Why should a School-master, a Parson, or an Apothecary, affect to be as solemn and sublime the whole Year round, as if he was a Seraph or an Archangel come to *dwell amongst us*?

The World has been shamefully imposed upon by many an important Fool : But no Man of Sense ever took any Pains to appear wise ; as no honest Man ever used any Tricks to display his own Integrity.

Most Fools, and many sensible People, are conceited : But People of the best Sense never are so.

Affectation labours with a Diligence that fatigues every Spectator, but with infallible Success, to defeat its own Purpose ; for instead of creating Love or Admiration, it provokes our Aversion and Contempt. The most amiable People are always the least affected. Let us make the best of what Nature has done for us : She may be improved, but all Attempts to alter her from her original Shape will only expose us to Ridicule. That awkward Beast the Dromedary, as long as he has any Sense, will never pretend to be a BAJAZET or an OTHELLO.

I have heard of a poor Gentleman who used to be grievously tormented with
vio-

violent Fits of the Head-ach, because a celebrated Poet was subject to that Complaint. Such a Head-ach I suppose as JUPITER felt just before he was delivered of PALLAS by the rough Midwifry of VULCAN'S Hammer; which seems to give a broad Hint towards the Cure of this Kind of *Cephalalgia*, as the learned Doctors delight to call it.

Affectation is the Bane of every Thing. An honest, plain, downright Blockhead, supposing him at the same Time good-natured, may not only be an useful but an agreeable Creature. But when a Blockhead is seized with the Whim of being a fine Gentleman or a Wit, the Lord have Mercy upon him—and us.

I am not offended at the Insipidity of Mr. FITZ DOTTERELL'S Observation, nor even at its Impertinence, because I know he meant me no Harm: What provokes me, is that he calls it a Joke.

A Fellow who, without a Grain of Wit or Humour will always be joking, is not

only a disagreeable and contemptible Companion, but a dangerous one. For his awkward, unwary Nonsense will be apt one Time or another to make him stumble into a Quarrel; and he may lose his Friend, or perhaps his Life, without the Satisfaction to say he has had a good Joke for it.

T'other Bottle won't do——No, nor the other Hoghead neither——You great pale-eyed Loggerhead, you must have Patience——You must wait a good while before you rouse Mr. TRUEWIT's Mettle——A long Time, indeed!——You must wait till your own Wit begins to sparkle——I am afraid you must wait till you're gone. There is a secret Power in your Presence enough to check every Thing that's genial——You are worse than a Fog or the East Wind——The Candles burn dim while you're here—and the Burgundy drinks as flat as Port. Good Night. Here's to your good Repose. May you sleep like any Porpus!——But hark'ye,
good

good Mr. VAN NUMB, before you go——
 You can't live without Wit it seems—Bless
 your fat Head! are you sure that you
 know Wit when you hear it?——Let
 me be curst if you do, even when you pore
 over it in Print at the rate of an Octavo
 Page in an Hour.

It is illiberal, inhuman, and unreasonable
 in the highest Degree to insult any Man
 for his being dull: But when Dullness
 pretends to Genius or Parts, it becomes a
 fair Object of Ridicule.

True Satire may be called the Rage of
 Probity, and even of Good-nature. It
 is the Indignation of Virtue and Wit
 against Vice, Ill-nature, and Affectation.

From Satire to Metaphysics is a de-
 sperate Stride, yet we will venture it ra-
 ther than defer our Opinion of this
 Science to any future Occasion. We take
 Metaphysics, in the Degree to which they
 are carried by certain Philosophers, to be
*the Art of talking grave Nonsense upon
 Subjects that lie beyond the Reach of the*

human Understanding. Better talk about the Weather still, or blunder thro' the Mist of Politics; or retail those insipid daily Lies we call *News*.

I have seen People, that were no Fools, laugh at the wrong Place, and without being tickled, that they might not appear dull at taking a Joke. What is worse, I have known People, who were not quite Fools neither, affect to be angry without feeling any Affront; because they would not be thought to want Apprehension or Spirit.

Vanity, besides the secret Pleasure it gives one's self, is a very thriving Quality; and it is not politic to be at any Pains to disguise it, except amongst People of the best Sense. For the Generality of the World will have the same Opinion of you that you seem to have of yourself.

False or middling Genius is almost always arrogant and vain. The true may be provoked to do itself Justice; but is seldom apt to overvalue itself.

Tho'

Tho' Vanity and Pride are very different Things, we may talk here of that Kind of Pride which hurts your Inferiors, and keeps those at a Distance who are never likely to abuse your Familiarity. It seems to be the Consciousness of little Minds, who are afraid of being seen too near. It is to be proud only where you may, with the utmost Safety, be so; for *those* proud People are almost always mean and servile to such as rank above themselves.

Now that we are talking of unreasonable Animals; there is a waspish Fellow who must discharge his Venom where he dares, and every Day uses you like a Dog—because he's your *Cousin* truly, and may be free with you. When the Wind is Easterly, this dear *Cousin* becomes absolutely intolerable. Perhaps, after all, he intends you no great Mischief in the main. But, in my Opinion, the best way to manage such a *Cousin* is to give him a most inhuman Threshing. He'll bounce, and
 fling,

fling, and raise a cursed Outcry, but don't spare him: For with Heaven's Blessing it will do him an infinite deal of good; and make him as civil, till he begins to forget it, as the politest Enemy you ever had the Happiness to converse with. Besides, you'll find a sublime Pleasure in the Exercise of just Vengeance—By all that's Imperial, it is a Luxury almost too high for a Subject!

Superficial People are always the most ostentatious. I suppose you may remember that you used to be the fondest and most vain of the thing you were but just beginning to learn.

Many shallow People make their Fortunes by the mere Force of Gossiping. With some it passes for Knowledge of the World; whereas it is only practising an Art which, tho' insupportably tedious and insipid to Men of a different Turn, instead of costing *them* any Trouble, is their native Element; for they were born Gossips.

The

The blunt Sword is the trusty Weapon. And there is nothing so infallibly successful in all Trades and Professions as the Parts of a Blockhead ; Plodding, Selfishness, Cunning, and Impudence: which last Virtue may be reckoned the chief of *these* Cardinal ones ; for

Nullum numen abest si sit IMPUDENTIA.

The Ambition of a Man of Parts is often disappointed by the want of some common Quality, with whose Assistance very moderate Abilities are capable of making a great Figure.

Some People have just Parts enough to do their Country a great deal of Mischief: For if their Understanding was the smallest Degree lower, it would be too glaringly ridiculous to employ them.

Some have died upon the Scaffold for their faithful Services to their ungrateful Country. You remember the shocking Catastrophe of those great and good Men the DE WITS.—By all that's stern and horrible !

rible! by the black-hung Room! by the blood-thirsty saw-dust! you're in the right——The surest way to avoid Ingratitude, is never to do one good Thing while you live.

Many excellent Geniusses have been lost. But we ought not to repine too much at this seeming Inattention of Providence to human Affairs; as from the same Cause perhaps a much greater Number of shocking Monsters have been smothered and suppressed. * For I am afraid there are more NEROS and CARACALLAS than TITUSES or TRAJANS in private Life, who want nothing but to be Emperors to shew themselves. Immortal Gods! how many thousand CLAUDIUSES *are at this Hour asleep* between HYDE PARK CORNER and WAPPING!

I am afraid it is easier to corrupt good natural Dispositions by Education and Habit than to subdue bad ones.

There are People that were born Lyars; who tell you every Day very seriously a Parcel of insipid unmeaning Lies, and prob-

probably believe them. It is a mere odd kind of Weakness in them; they cannot help it; perhaps they are not sensible of it. Nay, I don't know whether there is not such an absurd Creature as a Thief that has little more Scheme or Meaning than a pilfering Jackdaw.

Tho' there are strange inconsistent Mixtures in human Nature, there never yet was a very fine Understanding where the Heart was bad.

There is a Parcel of crazy worthless People who set up for Wits, and bring the Name of POET under a Kind of Disgrace with those who do not know that there can be no true Genius without a sound Understanding and an honest Heart.

Some of those People do more indiscreet, irrational, absurd Things than even Nature prompts them to: some become Sots, and affect every Thing that is indecent and shocking, merely that they may pass, good God! for Men of Genius; and they
are

are admired as such by the Majority of their Acquaintance for no other Reason.

Oddities and Singularities of Behaviour may attend Genius; when they do, they are its Misfortunes, and its Blemishes. The Man of true Genius will be ashamed of them: At least he never will affect to distinguish himself by whimsical Particularities.

In short, good Sense is the solid Foundation of all Genius, and of every Thing that is truly ornamental. It is necessary, in some Degree, even to a good Fidler: still more so to one who composes Music. A Blockhead, drunk with mortal Port, might have drawled out such a pitiful Strain as *God save our noble King*,—or *To Arms*, and *Britons Strike Home*; but he must have had Taste and Genius who composed *Joy to great Cæsar*, or even *The Early Horn*.

Except HANDEL'S Oratorio one seldom goes to a musical Entertainment where the great Bulk of the Pieces is not insipid. They have Plenty of good Music, but the
Per-

Performers are most provokingly frugal of the best. The Reason I plainly take to be this : Almost every Scrapper upon the Violin has perhaps composed more or less Musick himself ; and, instead of the Works of the great Masters, they entertain you with their own. If Reading was a public Entertainment ; if Authors were the only Readers, and the Choice were left to them, I suppose the great Writers of former Ages would soon be forgotten.

It is a Question with me whether the Music of a Country is to be performed any more than its Language pronounced to Perfection, but by those that have been young in it ; or, what comes nearly to the same Thing, have been taught it young by a Native of that Country.

People of the finest Ear very often have not the least Turn to Mimickry : While, on the contrary, some of the best Mimicks are mis-tuned, and have not the least Ear to Harmony.

It is impossible to make such a Definition of Wit as shall comprehend every
Kind

Kind of it. But it seems to consist chiefly in a happy Faculty of comparing * distant Objects, and surprising you with the Discovery of a striking Resemblance where you did not dream of finding any.

The Wit of some, who have a large Share of it, is too much of one Kind, and proves cloying for want of Variety.

An Author, who affects to be fine in every Thing he says, and to write above his Subject, is just as ridiculous a Coxcomb as him who performs the most indifferent Actions with a studied Grace. And this Affectation is one principal Cause of the awkward, unnatural Language which prevails in most of our modern Tragedies.

Mr. *Voltaire* observes very justly of some Authors, that they have done themselves no good by endeavouring to be universal. It is a foolish enough Piece of

* In some ingenious Essays, which appeared a few Years ago in one of the daily Papers, Wit was called *a tall Faculty of the Mind*. There is something odd in the Expression, but the Meaning is good.

Vanity

Vanity to be sure ; for it requires no great Genius to write a spiritless Ode, an affected Epistle, an insipid Satire, a flat Comedy, a cold Tragedy, and even a flimsy, foppish, uninteresting Epick Poem. SHAKESPEAR perhaps possessed the greatest Compass of Genius that ever Man did, and could excell in every Thing, from the noblest Sublime down to the Burlesque.

In some Ages the few People of Genius ought to publish just enough to shew what they could have done in better Times : more is not worth their while.

If there wants any thing besides the Applause of the best Judges to establish the Reputation of your Performance, it is the Dislike of the worst. For false Taste, whatever it may pretend, tho' it may even impose upon itself, at its Heart naturally hates true Genius.

I have heard talk of an ITALIAN who thought the Soldier in VANDYKE'S BELISARIUS something quite wonderful from a FLEMISH Painter. It would seem he had never heard of one RUBENS, a Native

G

of

of FLANDERS, who, *take him for all in all*, weigh him in the nicest *Ballance*, is perhaps hardly inferior to any Painter that ITALY has produced. True Taste is always candid, and naturally delights in true Genius, without ever enquiring from what Soil it sprung.

I have been told, that some *French Abbé*, whose Name I forget, pronounces, with a very decisive Air, that SHAKESPEAR understood all the Passions but *Love*.— Good God!—SHAKESPEAR not understand *Love*!—Who does then?— VOLTAIRE ?

Love, Anger, Grief, all the Passions are contagious.

Love is the Cause of more Indiscretions in old People perhaps than in young.

DR. SWIFT says, that no wise Man ever wished himself younger, The Dean might perhaps have excepted a Man renowned for Wisdom, who seems to have been gloomy and unhappy in his latter Yarse'em ely from Want of Youth.

Died

Died by the Sting of a Snail would found oddly in the Bills of Mortality. Yet I have known a Woman of Beauty, Sense, and Spirit, in Love with one of the most insipid Fellows that ever glared weary Stupidity from a large dead Eye. Whence it appears, that the Infatuation of Queen MAB in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, however extravagant it appears, is not quite out of Nature.

As there have been many *small* Observations made upon *great* Classics, I must take the Liberty to venture one. *Iago* ends his Description of a good Woman with

She was a Wight, if ever such there were—

Here he stops, and *Desdemona* asks, *To do what?* It does not appear what leads her to this Question, except you add a little Word, which seems to have dropt out of its Place here without being missed—Suppose it was to be read thus:

*She was a Wight, if ever such they were,
To——*

Here the Buffoon pauses, to draw the Lady into the Question, which is it now natural for her to make ; and to give, what he is ready to add, its full Effect of surprising and disappointing archly.

*She that was ever fair, and never proud,
Had Wit at will, and yet was never loud ;
&c.*

*She was a Wight, if ever such there were,
To——
To do what ?——
To suckle Fools, and chronicle Small-beer.*

Why do the Players, in the Part of *Richard* the Third, always say, *Give me a Horse*. It not only sounds much better, but the Meaning is, in my Opinion, more warm and spirited as it stands in *Shakespeare*.

*Give me another Horse——Bind up my
Wounds——*

As

As I feel it, there is a Kind of tame Impropropriety, or even Absurdity, in that Action of HAMLET producing the two Miniatures of his Father and Uncle out of his Pocket. It seems more natural to suppose, that HAMLET was struck with the Comparison he makes between the two Brothers, upon casting his Eyes on their Pictures, as they hang up in the Apartment where this Conference passes with the Queen. There is not only more Nature, more Elegance, and Dignity in supposing it thus; but it gives Occasion to more passionate and more graceful Action, and is of Consequence likelier to be as SHAKESPEAR's Imagination had conceived it.

But I beg Pardon for these Trifles: and, in Hopes that you may not all be so ill-natured as to take me at my Word, shall conclude with a Scrap of *Latin* that has, like many others, led a weary Life, tho'
it

it is almost as insipid a Thing of the Kind
as ever came upon the Town—

Nos hæc novimus esse nihil.

Which, in plain *English*, means no more
than that, *I am sensible all these SKETCHES
and SENTENCES are mere Nothing.*

T H E E N D.