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Extracts from the
SPECTATOR
By the

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GEO Add. MSS. 43/10

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Windsor.

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Spect
No:

No.

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Spectator.

No: 6. When modesty ceases to be the chief ornament of one sex, and integrity of the other, society is upon a wrong basis, and we shall be ever after without rules to guide our judgment in what is really becoming and ornamental. Nature and reason direct one thing, passion and humour another: To follow the dictates of the two latter, is going into a road that is both endless and intricate; when we pursue the other, our passage is delightful, and what we aim at easily attainable.

&c.

No: 7. I know but one way of fortifying my soul against gloomy presages and terrors of mind, and that is, by securing to myself the friendship and protection of that Being who disposes of events, and governs futurity. He sees, at one view, the whole thread of my existence, not only that part of it which I have already passed through, but that which runs forward into all the depths of eternity. When I lay me down to sleep, I recommend myself to his care; when I awake, I give myself up to his direction. Amidst all the evils that threaten me, I will look up to him for help, and question not but he will either avert them, or turn them to my advantage. Though I know neither the time nor the manner of the death I am to die, I am not at all solicitous about it; because I am sure that he knows them both, and that he will not fail to comfort and support me under them.

&c.

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No: 15.

True happiness is of a retired nature, and an enemy to pomp and noise; it arises, in the first place, from the enjoyment of one's self; and in the next, from the friendship and conversation of a few select companions: it loves shade and solitude, and naturally haunts groves and fountains, fields and meadows: In short it feels every thing it wants within itself, and receives no addition from multitudes of witnesses and spectators. On the contrary, false happiness loves to be in a crowd, and to draw the eyes of the world upon her. She does not receive any satisfaction from the applauses which she gives herself, but from the admiration which she raises in others. She flourishes in courts and palaces, theatres and assemblies, and has no existence but when she is looked upon.

No: 19.

The envious man is in pain upon all occasions which ought to give him pleasure. The relish of his life is inverted; and the objects which administer the highest satisfaction to those who are exempt from this passion, give the quickest pangs to persons who are subject to it. All the perfections of their fellow-creatures are odious: Youth, Beauty, Valour, and Wisdom are provocations of their displeasure. What a wretched and apostate state is this! To be offended with excellence, and to hate a man because we approve him! The condition of the envious man

is the most emphatically miserable; he is not only incapable of rejoicing in another's merit or success, but lives in a world wherein all mankind are in a plot against his quiet, by studying their own happiness and advantage.

No: 23. An indiscreet man is more hurtfull than an ill-natured one; for as the latter will only attack his enemies, and those he wishes ill to; the other injures indifferently both friends and foes.

No: 27. It is a fantastical way of thinking, when we promise ourselves an alteration in our conduct from change of place, and difference of circumstances; the same passions will attend us wherever we are until they are conquered; and we can never live to our satisfaction in the deepest retirement, unless we are capable of living so in some measure amidst the noise and business of the world.

No: 75. No man ought to have the esteem of the rest of the world, for any actions which are disagreeable to those maxims which prevail, as the standards of behaviour, in the country wherein he lives. What is opposite to the eternal rules of reason and good sense, must be

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excluded from any place in the carriage of a well-bred man. Humanity obliges a Gentleman to give no part of humankind reproach, for what they, whom they reproach, may possibly have in common with the most virtuous and worthy amongst us. When a Gentleman speaks coarsly, he has dressed himself clean to no purpose: The clothing of our minds certainly ought to be regarded before that of our bodies. To betray in a man's talk a corrupted imagination, is a much greater offence against the conversation of Gentlemen, than any negligence of dress imaginable.

The man who formes himself upon those principles, which are agreeable to the dictates of <u>honour</u> and <u>religion</u> will fill his several duties of life with ease to himself and universal satisfaction to society. All the under parts of his behaviour and such as are exposed to common observation, have their rise in him from great and noble motives. A firm and unshaken expectation of another life, makes him become this. Humanity and good-nature, fortified by the sense of virtue, has the same effect upon him, as the neglect of all goodness has upon many others. Being firmly established in all matters of importance, that certain inattention which makes mens actions look easy appears in

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him with greater beauty: By a thorough contempt of little excellencies, he is perfectly master of them. This temper of mind leaves him under no necessity of studying his air, and he has this peculiar distinction, that his negligence is unaffected.

He that can work himself into a pleasure in considering this Being as an uncertain one, and think to reap an advantage by its discontinuance, is in a fair way of doing all things with a graceful unconcern, and gentleman-like ease. Such a one does not behold his life as a short, transient, perplexing state, made up of trifling pleasures, and great anxieties: but sees it in quite another light; his griefs are momentary and his joys immortal. Reflexion upon death is not a gloomy and sad thought of resigning every thing that he delights in, but it is a short night followed by an endless day. The more virtuous the man is, the nearer he will naturally be to the character of genteel and agreeable. A man whose fortune is plentiful, shews an ease in his countenance, and confidence in his behaviour, which he that is under wants and difficulties cannot assume. It is thus with the state of the mind; he that governs his thoughts with the everlasting rules of reason and sense, must have something so inexpressibly graceful in his words and actions, that

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every circumstance must become him. The change of persons or things around him do not at all alter his situation, but he looks disinterested in the occurrences with which others are distracted, because the greatest purpose of his life is to maintain an indifference both to it and all its enjoyments. In a word, to be a Gentleman, is to be a generous and a brave man. What can make a man so much in constant good-humour and shine, as we call it, than to be supported by what can never fail him, and to believe that whatever happens to him was the best thing that could possibly befal him, or else he on whom it depends would not have permitted it to have befallen him at all?

No: 87. Diffidence and presumption, upon account of our persons, are equally faults; and both arise from the want of knowing, or rather endeavouring to know, ourselves, and for what we ought to be valued or neglected.

No: 93. Methods for the filling up the empty spaces of life.

The first is the exercise of Virtue, in the most general acceptation of the word. That particular scheme which comprehends the social Virtues, may give employment to the most industrious temper, and find a man in business more than the most active station

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of life. To advise the ignorant, relieve the needy, comfort the afflicted, are duties that fall in our way almost every day of our lives. A man has frequent opportunities of mitigating the fierceness of a party: of doing justice to the character of a deserving man; of softening the envious, quieting the angry, and rectifying the prejudiced; which are all of them employments suited to a reasonable nature, and bring great satisfaction to the person who can busy himself in them with discretion.

There is another kind of Virtue that may find employment for those retired hours in which we are altogether left to ourselves, and destitute of company and conversation; I mean that intercourse and communication which every reasonable creature ought to maintain with the great Author of his Being. The man who lives under an habitual sense of the divine presence keeps up a perpetual chearfulness of temper and enjoys every moment the satisfaction of thinking himself in company with his dearest and best of Friends. The time never lies heavy upon him: It is impossible for him to be alone. His thoughts and passions are the most busied at such hours when those of other men are the most unactive: He no sooner steps out of the world but his heart burns with devotion, swells with hope, and triumphs in the consciousness

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of that presence which every where surrounds him; or, on the contrary, pours out its fears, its sorrows, its apprehensions, to the great supporter of its existence.

I have here only considered the necessity of a man's being virtuous, that he may have something to do; but if we consider further; that the exercise of Virtue is not only an amusement for the time it lasts, but that its influence extends to those part of our existence which lie beyond the grave, and that our whole Eternity is to take its colour from those hours which we here employ in Virtue or in Vice, the argument redoubles upon us, for putting in practice this method of passing away our time.

The next method to fill up our time, should be useful and innocent diversions. It is below a reasonable creature to be altogether conversant in such diversions as are merely innocent, and have nothing else to recommend them, but that there is no hurt in them.

But the mind never unbends itself so agreeably as in the conversation of a well-chosen Friend. There is indeed no blessing of life that is any way comparable to the enjoyment of a discreet and virtuous friend. It eases and unloads the mind, clears and improves

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the understanding, engenders thoughts and knowledge, animates virtue and good resolution, sooths and allays the passions, and finds employment for most of the vacant hours in life.

Next to such an intimacy with a particular person, one would endeavour after a more general conversation with such as are able to entertain and improve those with whom they converse, — which are qualifications that seldom go asunder.

But of all the diversions of life, there is none so proper to fill up its empty spaces, as the reading of useful and entertaining authors. being the pursuit of knowledge.

No: 94. The hours of a Wise man are lengthened by his Ideas, as those of a fool are by his passions: The time of the one is long, because he does not know what to do with it; so is that of the other, because he distinguishes every moment of it with useful or amusing thoughts; or in other words, because the one is always wishing it away, and the other always enjoying it.

How different is the view of past life, in the man who is grown old in Knowledge and Wisdom, from that of him who is grown

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old in Ignorance and Folly? The latter is like the owner of a barren country that fills his eye with the prospect of naked hills and plains, which produce nothing either profitable or ornamental; the other beholds a beautiful and spacious landskip divided into delightful gardens, green meadows, fruitful fields, and can scarce cast his eye on a single spot of his possesions, that is not covered with some beautiful plant or flower.

No: 103.

If the show of any thing be good for any thing, I am sure sincerity is better than dissembling: For why does any man dissemble, or seem to be that which he is not, but because he thinks it good to have such a quality as he pretends to? For to counterfeit and dissemble, is to put on the appearance of some real excellency. Now the best way in the world to seem to be any thing, is really to be what he would seem to be. Besides, that it is many times as troublesome to make good the pretence of a good quality, as to have it; and if a man have it not, it is ten to one but he is discovered to want it: and then all his pains and labour to seem to have it is lost.

All artifice must naturally tend to the disappointment of

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him that practises it.

Whatsoever convenience may be thought to be in falsehood and dissimulation, it is soon over; but the inconvenience of it is perpetual, because it brings a man under an everlasting jealousy and suspicion, so that he is not believed when he speaks truth, nor trusted when perhaps he means honestly. When a man hath once forfeited the reputation of his integrity, he is set fast, and nothing will then serve his turn, neither truth nor falshood.

No: III.

How can we find that wisdom which shines through all his works, in the formation of man, without looking on this world as only a nursery for the next, and believing that the several generations of rational creatures, which rise up and disappear in such quick successions, are only to receive their first rudiments of existence here, and afterwards to be transplanted into a more friendly climate, where they may spread and flourish to all eternity?

There is not a more pleasing and triumphant consideration in religion than this of the perpetual progress which the Soul makes towards the perfection of its nature, without ever arriving at a period in it. To look upon the Soul as going on from strength to strength, to consider that she is to shine for ever with

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new accessions of glory, and brighten to all eternity; that she will be still adding virtue to virtue, and Knowledge to knowledge; carries in it something wonderfully agreeable to that ambition which is natural to the mind of man. Nay, it must be a prospect pleasing to God himself to see his creation for ever beautifying in his eyes, and drawing nearer to him, by greater degrees of resemblance.

With what astonishment and veneration may we look into our own Souls, where there are such hidden stores of virtue and knowledge, such inexhausted sources of perfection! we know not yet what we shall be, nor will it ever enter into the heart of man to conceive the glory that will be always in reserve for him. The Soul, considered with its Creator, is like one of those mathematical lines that may draw nearer to another for all eternity without a possibility of touching it: and can there be a thought so transporting, as to consider ourselves in these perpetual approaches to Him, who is not only the standard of perfection but of happiness.

No: 122. A Man's first care should be to avoid the reproaches of his own heart; his next, to escape the censures of the world: If the last interferes with the former, it ought to be intirely neglected, but otherwise there cannot be a greater sa-

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tisfaction to an honest mind, than to see those approbations which it gives itself seconded by the applauses of the public: A man is more sure of his conduct, when the verdict which he passes upon his own behaviour is thus warranted and confirmed by the opinion of all that know him.

No: 125. A man should not allow himself to hate even his enemies, because, if you indulge this passion in some occasions, it will rise of itself in others; if you hate your enemies, you will contract such a vicious habit of mind, as by degrees will break out upon those who are your friends, or those who are indifferent to you.

No: 139. Though men may impose upon themselves what they please by their corrupt imaginations, truth will ever keep its station; and as Glory is nothing else but the shadow of virtue, it will certainly disappear at the departure of virtue. But how carefully ought the true notions of it to be preserved, and how industrious should we be to encourage any impulses towards it.

The perfection of Glory, says Tully, consists in these three particulars: "That the people love us; that they have confidence in us; that being affected with a certain admiration towards us, they think we deserve honour.

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No: 143. It is certain that to enjoy life and Health as a constant feast, we should not think pleasure necessary; but, if possible, to arrive at an equality of mind. It is as mean to be overjoyed upon occasions of good-fortune, as to be dejected in circumstances of distress. Laughter in one condition, is as unmanly as weeping in the other. We should not form our minds to expect transport on every occasion, but know how to make enjoyment to be out of pain. Ambition, envy, ingrant desire, or impertinent mirth will take up our minds, without we can posses ourselves in that sobriety of heart which is above all pleasures, and can be felt much better than described. But the ready way, I believe, to the right enjoyment of Life, is by a prospect towards another to have but a very mean opinion of it. A great Author has set this in an excellent light in the following manner.

No:

" For what is this life but a circulation of little mean actions?
" We lie down and rise again, dress and undress, feed and wax hungry, work
or play, and are weary, and then we lie down again, and the circle returns.
" We spend the day in trifles, and when the night comes we throw ourselves
" into the bed of folly, amongst dreams and broken thoughts and wild ima-
" ginations. Our reason lies asleep by us, and we are for the time as ar-
" rant brutes as those that sleep in the stalls or in the field. Are not the ca-

pacities of man higher than these! And ought not his ambition and expectations to be greater? Let us be adventurers for another world: It is at least a fair and noble chance; and there is nothing in this worth our thoughts or our passions. If we should be disappointed, we are still no worse than the rest of our fellow-mortals; and if we succeed in our expectations, we are eternally happy.

&

No: 151. Pleasure, when it is a man's chief purpose, disappoints itself; and the constant application to it palls the faculty of enjoying it, though it leaves the sense of our inability for that we wish, with a disrelish of every thing else. Thus the intermediate seasons of the man of pleasure are more heavy than one would impose upon the vilest criminal. Take him when he is awaked too soon after a debauch, or disappointed in following a worthless woman without truth, and there is no man living whose Being is such a weight or vexation as his is. He is an utter stranger to the pleasing reflexions in the evening of a well-spent day, or the gladness of heart or quietness of spirit in the morning after profound sleep or indolent slumbers.

Pleasure seizes the whole man who addicts himself to it, and will not give him leisure for any good office in life which contradicts the

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gaiety of the present hour. You may indeed observe in people of pleasure a certain complacency and absence of all severity, which the habit of a loose unconcerned life gives them; but tell the man of pleasure your secret wants, cares, or sorrows, and you will find he has given up the delicacy of his passions to the cravings of his appetites. He little knows the perfect joy he loses, for the disappointing gratifications which he pursues. He looks at pleasure as she approaches, and comes to him with the recommendation of warm wishes, gay looks, and graceful motion; but he does not observe how she leaves his presence with disorder, impotence, downcast shame, and conscious imperfection. She makes our youth inglorious, our age shameful.

In all orders of men, whereever this is the chief character, the person who wears it is a negligent friend, father, and husband, and entails poverty on his unhappy descendants. Mortgages, diseases, and settlements are the legacies a man of Wit and pleasure leaves to his family.

Irresolution and procrastination in all a man's affairs, are the natural effects of being addicted to pleasure: Dishonour to the Gentleman and Bankruptcy to the Trader, are the portion of either whose chief purpose of life is delight. The chief cause that this pursuit has been in all ages

No:

received with so much quarter from the soberer part of mankind, has been that some men of great talents have sacrificed themselves to it: The shining qualities of such people have given a beauty to whatever they were engaged in, and a mixture of Wit has recommended madness. For let any man who knows what it is to have passed much time in a series of Jollity, Mirth, Wit, or humorous Entertainments, look back at what he was all that while a doing, and he will find that he has been at one instant sharp to some man he is sorry to have offended, impertinent to some one it was cruelty to treat with such freedom, ungracefully noisy at such a time, unskilfully open at such a time, unmercifully calumnious at such a time; and from the whole course of his applauded satisfactions, unable in the end to recollect any circumstance which can add to the enjoyment of his own mind alone, or which he would put his character upon with other men. Thus it is with those who are best made for becoming pleasures; but how monstrous is it in the generality of mankind who pretend this way, without genius or inclination towards it? The scene then is wild to an extravagance: This is as if fools should mimic madmen.

No: 153. The memory of a well-spent youth gives a peaceable, unmixed, and

elegant pleasure to the mind; and to such who are so unfortunate as not to be able to look back on youth with satisfaction, they may give themselves no little consolation that they are under no temptation to repeat their follies, and that they at present despise them. "He that would be long an old man, must "begin early to be one." It is too late to resign a thing after a man is robbed of it; therefore it is necessary that before the arrival of age we bid adieu to the pursuits of youth, otherwise sensual habits will live in our imaginations when our limbs cannot be subservient to them.

The fond humour of appearing on the gay and fashionable world, and being applauded for trivial excellencies, is what makes youth have age in contempt, and makes age resign with so ill a grace the qualifications of youth:

Age, in a virtuous person, of either Sex, carries in it an authority which makes it preferable to all the pleasures of youth. If to be saluted, attended, and consulted with deference, are instances of pleasure, they are such as never fail a virtuous old age. In the enumeration of the imperfections and advantages of the younger and later years of man, they are so near in their condition, that methinks, it should be incredible we see so little commerce of kindness between them. If we

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consider youth and age with Tully, regarding the affinity to death, youth has many more chances to be near it than age; what youth can say more than an old man, He shall live until night.; Youth catches distempers more easily, its sickness is more violent, and its recovery more doubtful. The youth indeed hopes for many more days, so cannot the old man. The youth's hopes are ill-grounded; for what is more foolish than to place any confidence upon an uncertainty? But the old man has not room so much as for hope; he is still happier than the youth, he has already enjoyed what the other does but hope for: One wishes to live long, the other has lived long. But alas, is there any thing in human life, the duration of which can be called long? There is nothing which must end to be valued for its continuance. If hours, days, months, and years pass away, it is no matter what hour, what day, what month, or what year we die. The applause of a good Actor is due to him at whatever scene of the play he makes his exit. It is thus in the life of a man of sense, a short life is sufficient to manifest himself a man of honour and virtue; when he ceases to be such he has lived too long, and while he is such, it is of no consequence to him how long he shall be so, provided he is so to his life's end.

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No: 162. Irresolution on the schemes of life which offer themselves to our choice, and inconstancy in pursuing them, are the greatest and most universal causes of all our disquiet and unhappiness. When ambition pulls one way, interest another, inclination a third, and perhaps reason contrary to all, a man is likely to pass his time but ill who has so many different parties to please. When the mind hovers among such a variety of allurements, one had better settle on a way of life that is not the very best we might have chosen, than grow old without determining our choice, and go out of the world as the greater part of mankind do, before we have resolved how to live in it. There is but one method of setting ourselves at rest in this particular, and that is by adhering stedfastly to one great end as the chief and ultimate aim of all our pursuits. If we are firmly resolved to live up to the dictates of reason, without any regard to wealth, reputation, or the like considerations, any more than as they fall in with our principal design, we may go through life with steadiness and pleasure; but if we act by several broken views, and will not only be virtuous, but wealthy, popular, and every thing that has a value set upon it by the world, we shall live and die in misery and repentance.

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There is scarce a state of life, or stage in it which does not produce changes and revolutions in the mind of man. Our schemes of thought in infancy are lost in those of youth; these too take a different turn in manhood, until old age often leads us back into our former infancy. A new title or an unexpected success throws us out of ourselves, and in a manner destroys our identity. A cloudy day, or a little sunshine, have as great an influence on many constitutions, as the most real blessings or misfortunes. A dream varies our Being, and changes our condition while it lasts; and every passion, not to mention health and sickness, and the greater alterations in body and mind, makes us appear almost different creatures. If a man is so distinguished among other Beings by this infirmity, what can we think of such as make themselves remarkable for it even among their own species? If it is a very trifling character to be one of the most variable Beings of the most variable kind, especially if we consider that He who is the great standard of perfection has in him no shadow of change, but is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

As this mutability of temper and inconsistency with ourselves is the greatest weakness of human nature, so it makes the person who is remarkable for it in a very particular manner more rediculous

than any other infirmity whatsoever, as it sets him in a greater variety of foolish lights, and distinguishes him from himself by an opposition of party-coloured characters.

No: 163. Enquiries after happiness, and rules for attaining it, are not so necessary and useful to mankind as the arts of consolation, and supporting ones self under affliction. The utmost we can hope for in this world is contentment; if we aim at any thing higher, we shall meet with nothing but grief and disappointment. A man should direct all his studies and endeavours at making himself easy now, and happy hereafter.

No: 166. Books are the legacies that a great Genius leaves to mankind, which are delivered down from generation to generation, as presents to the posterity of those who are yet unborn

All other arts of perpetuating our Ideas continue but a short time: Statues can last but a few thousands of years, edifices fewer, and colours still fewer than edifices. No:

The circumstance which gives Authors an advantage above all these great masters, is this, that they can multiply their originals: or rather can make copies

of their works, to what number they please, which shall be as valuable as the originals themselves. This gives a great Author something like a prospect of eternity, but at the same time deprives him of those other advantages which Artists meet with. The Artist finds greater returns in profit, as the Author in fame.

If writings are thus durable, and may pass from age to age throughout the whole course of time, how careful should an Author be of committing any thing to print that may corrupt posterity, and poison the minds of men with vice and error? Writers of great talents, who employ their parts in propagating immorality, and seasoning vicious sentiments with wit and humour, are to be looked upon as the pests of society, and the enemies of mankind: They leave books behind them (as it is said of those who die in distempers which breed an ill-will towards their own species) to scatter infection and destroy their posterity. They act the counterparts of Confucius or Socrates; and seem to have been sent into the world to deprave human nature, and sink it into the condition of brutality.

No: 169. Half the misery of human life might be extinguished, would men alleviate the general curse they lie under, by mutual offices of compassion, benevolence, and humanity. There is nothing therefore which we ought more to encourage in ourselves and others, than that disposition of mind which in the English

language goes under the title of good-nature. Good-nature is more agreeable in conversation than wit, and gives a certain air to the countenance which is more amiable than beauty. It shews virtue in the fairest light, takes off in some measure from the deformity of vice, and makes even folly and impertinence supportable.

There is no conversation or society to be kept up in the world without good-nature, or something which must bear its appearance, and supply its place. For this reason mankind have been forced to invent a kind of artificial humanity, which we express by the word Good-breeding. For if we examine thoroughly the idea of what we call so, we shall find it to be nothing else but an imitation and mimicry of good-nature, or in other terms, affability, complaisance and easiness of temper reduced into an art.

These exterior shows and appearances of humanity render a man wonderfully popular and beloved when they are founded upon a real good-nature; but without it are like hypocrisy in religion, or a bare form of holiness, which, when it is discovered, makes a man more detestable than professed impiety.

Good-nature is generally born with us: Health, prosperity and kind treatment from the world are great cherishers of it where they find it; but nothing is capable of forcing it up, where it does not grow of itself.

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It is one of the blessings of a happy constitution, which education may improve but not produce.

Justice seems most agreeable to the nature of God, and Mercy to that of man. A being who has nothing to pardon in himself, may reward every man according to his works; but he whose very best actions must be seen with grains of allowance, cannot be too mild, moderate, and forgiving. For this reason, among all the monstrous characters in human nature, there is none so odious, nor indeed so exquisitely ridiculous, as that of a rigid severe temper in a worthless man.

This part of good-nature, however, which consists in the pardoning and overlooking of faults is to be exercised only in doing ourselves justice, and that too in the ordinary commerce and occurrences of life; for in the public administrations of justice, mercy to one may be cruelty to others.

No: 172.

Those men only are truly great, who place their ambition rather in acquiring to themselves the conscience of worthy enterprizes, than in the prospect of glory which attends them. These exalted spirits would rather be secretly the authors of events which are serviceable to mankind, than, without

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being such, to have the public fame of it. Where therefore an eminent merit is robbed by artifice or detraction, it does but increase by such endeavours of its enemies: The impotent pains which are taken to sully it, or diffuse it among a crowd to the injury of a single person, will naturally produce the contrary effect; the fire will blaze out, and burn up all that attempt to smother what they cannot extinguish.

There is but one thing necessary to keep the possession of true glory, which is, to bear the opposers of it with patience, and preserve the virtue by which it was acquired. When a man throughly persuaded that he ought neither to admire, wish for, or pursue any thing but what is exactly his duty, it is not in the power of seasons, persons or accidents, to diminish his value. He only is a great man who can neglect the applause of the multitude, and enjoy himself independent of its favour. This is indeed an arduous task; but it should comfort a glorious spirit that it is the highest step to which human nature can arrive. Triumph, applause, acclamation, are dear to the mind of man; but it is still a more exquisite delight to say to yourself, you have done well, than to hear the whole human race pronounce you glorious, except you yourself can join with them in your own reflexions. A mind thus equal and uniform may be deserted by little fashionable admirers and followers, but will ever be had in reverence

by Souls life itself. The Branches of the oak endure all the seasons of the year, though its leaves fall off in autumn; and these too will be restored with the returning spring.

No: 177.

In order to try our Good-nature, whether it arises from the body or the mind, whether it be founded in the animal or rational part of our nature; in a word, whether it be such as is intitled to any other reward, besides that secret satisfaction and contentment of mind which is essential to it, and the kind reception it procures us in the world, we must examine it by the following rules.

First, whether it acts with steadiness and uniformity in sickness and in health, in prosperity, and in adversity; if otherwise, it is to be looked upon as nothing else but an irradiation of the mind from some new supply of spirits, or a more kindly circulation of the blood.

The next way of a man's bringing his Good-nature to the test, is, to consider whether it operates according to the rules of reason and duty. For if, notwithstanding its general benevolence to mankind, it makes no distinction between its objects, if it exerts itself promiscuously towards the deserving and undeserving, if it relieves alike the idle and the indigent, if it gives itself up to the first petitioner, and lights upon any one

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rather by accident than choice, it may pass for an amiable instinct, but must not assume the name of a moral virtue. No: 1

The third trial of Good-nature will be, the examining ourselves, whether or no we are able to exert it to our own disadvantage, and employ it on proper objects, notwithstanding any little pain, want, or inconvenience which may arise to ourselves from it: In a word, whether we are willing to risk any part of our fortune, our reputation, or health or ease, for the benefit of mankind.

I should propose it as a rule to every one who is provided with any competency of fortune more than sufficient for the necessaries of life, to lay aside a certain proportion of his income for the use of the poor. For there are few man so cramped in their private affairs, who may not be charitable. It is but sometimes sacrificing a diversion or convenience to the poor, and turning the usual course of our expences into a better channel. This is, I think, not only the most prudent and convenient, but the most meritorious peace of charity, which we can put in practice. By this method we in some measure share the necessities of the poor at the same time that we relieve them, and make ourselves not only their patrons, but their fellow sufferers.

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No: 186. The prospect of a future state is the secret comfort and refreshment of my soul; it is that which makes nature look gay about me; it doubles all my pleasures, and supports me under all my afflictions. I can look at disappointments and misfortunes, pain and sickness, death itself, and what is worse than death, the loss of those who are dearest to me, with indifference, so long as I keep in view the pleasures of Eternity, and the state of being in which there will be no fears nor apprehensions, pains nor sorrows, sickness nor separation.

The great received articles of the Christian religion have been so clearly proved, from the authority of that divine revelation in which they are delivered, that it is impossible for those who have ears to hear, and eyes to see, not to be convinced of them. But were it possible for any thing in the Christian faith to be erroneous, I can find no ill consequences in adhering to it. The great point of the incarnation and sufferings of our Saviour produce naturally such habits of virtue in the mind of man, that I say, supposing it were possible for us to be mistaken in them, the Infidel himself must at least allow that no other system of religion could so effectually contribute to the heightening of morality.

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They give us great ideas of the dignity of human nature, and of the love which the supreme Being bears to his creatures, and consequently engage us in the highest acts of Duty towards our Creator, our Neighbour, and ourselves. How many noble arguments has Saint Paul raised from the chief articles of our religion, for the advancing of morality in its three great branches? To give a single example in each kind: What can be a stronger motive to a firm trust and reliance on the mercies of our Maker, than the giving us his Son to suffer for us? What can make us love and esteem even the most inconsiderable of mankind, more than the thought that Christ died for him? Or what dispose us to set a stricter guard upon the purity of our own hearts, than our being members of Christ, and a part of the society of which that immaculate Person is the head? but these are only a specimen of those admirable enforcements of morality, which the Apostle has drawn from the history of our blessed Saviour.

No: 188. He is a very unhappy man who sets his heart upon being admired by the multitude, or affects a general and undistinguishing applause among men. What pious men call the testimony of a good conscience,

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should be the measure of our ambition in this kind; that is to say, a man of spirit should contemn the praise of the ignorant, and like being applauded for nothing but what he knows in his own heart he deserves. Besides which the character of the person who commends you is to be considered, before you set a value upon his esteem. The praise of an ignorant man is only good-will, and you should receive his kindness as he is a good Neighbour in society, and not as a good judge of your actions in point of fame and reputation. It is an argument of a loose and ungoverned mind to be affected with the promiscuous approbation of the generality of mankind; and a man of virtue should be too delicate for so course an appetite of fame. Men of honour should endeavour only to please the worthy, and the man of merit should desire to be tried only by his peers. It is a frivolous pleasure to be the admiration of gaping crowds; but to have the approbation of a good man in the cool reflexions of his closet, is a gratification worthy an heroic spirit. The applause of the crowd makes the head giddy, but the attestation of a reasonable man makes the heart glad.

What makes the love of popular or general praise still more ridiculous, is, that it is usually given for circumstances which are foreign

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to the persons admired. Thus they are the ordinary attendance on power and riches, which may be taken out of one mans hands, and put into another's. The application only, and not the possession, makes those outward things honorable. The vulgar and men of sense agree in admiring men for having what they themselves would rather be possessed of; the wise man applauds him whom he thinks most virtuous, the rest of the world him who is most wealthy.

No: 197. In order to appear easy and well-bred in conversation, you may assure yourself that it requires more wit, as well as more good-humour, to improve than to contradict the notions of another: But if you are at any time obliged to enter on an argument, give your reasons with the utmost coolness and modesty, two things which scarce ever fail of making an impression on the hearers. Besides, if you are neither dogmatical, nor shew either by your actions or words, that you are full of yourself, all will the more heartily rejoyce at your victory.

In order to keep that temper which is so difficult, and yet so necessary to preserve, you may please to consider, that nothing can be more un-

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just or ridiculous, than to be angry with another because he is not of your opinion. The interests, education, and means by which men attain their knowledge, are so very different, that it is impossible they should all think alike; and he has at least as much reason to be angry with you, as you with him.

No: 201.

It is of the last importance to season the passions of a child with Devotion, which seldom dies in a mind that has received an early tincture of it. Though it may seem extinguished for a while by the cares of the world, the heats of youth, or the allurements of vice, it generally breaks out and discovers itself again as soon as discretion, consideration, age, or misfortunes have brought the man to himself. The fire may be covered and overlaid, but cannot be entirely quenched and smothered.

Devotion opens the mind to great conceptions, and fills it with more sublime ideas than any that are to be met with in the most exalted science; and at the same time warms and agitates the soul more than sensual pleasure. For the natural tendency of the soul to fly to some superior Being for succour in dangers and distresses, the gratitude to an invisible Superintendent which arises in us upon receiving any extraordinary and unexpected good fortune, the acts of love and admiration with which the thoughts of man are so wonderfully transported in meditating upon the divine perfections, and the universal concurrence of

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all the nations under heaven in the great article of adoration, plainly shew that Devotion or religious worship must be the effect of tradition from some first founder of mankind, or that it is conformable to the natural light of reason, or that it proceeds from instinct implanted in the Soul itself. For my part, I look upon all these to be the concurrent causes: But which ever of them shall be assigned as the principle of divine worship, it manifestly points out to a supreme Being as the first author of it.

&c.

No: 206. There is a call upon mankind to value and esteem those who set a moderate price upon their own merit; and self-denial is frequently attended with unexpected blessings, which in the end abundantly recompense such losses as the modest seem to suffer in the ordinary occurrences of life. A modest man preserves his character, as a frugal man does his fortune; if either of them live to the height of either, one will find losses, the other errors, which he has not stock by him to make up. It were therefore a just rule, to keep your desires, your words and actions, within the regard you observe your friends have for you; and never, if it were in a man's power, to take as much as he possibly might either in preferment or reputation. I say then, he that in his air, his treatment of others, or an ha-

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bitual arroganee to himself, gives himself credit for the least article of more Wit, wisdom, goodness, or valour than he can possibly produce if he is called upon, will find the world break in upon him, and consider him as one who has cheated them of all the esteem they had before allowed him.

All that is in a man's power to do to advance his own pomp and glory, and forbears, is so much laid up against the day of distress; and pity will always be his portion in adversity, who acted with gentleness in prosperity.

The great Officer who foregoes the advantages he might take to himself, and renounces all prudential regards to his own person in danger, has so far the merit of a volunteer; and all his honours and glories are unenvied, for sharing the common fate with the same frankness as they do who have no such endearing circumstances to part with. But if there were no such considerations as the good effect which self-denial has upon the sense of other men towards us, it is of all qualities the most desirable for the agreeable disposition in which it places our own minds. I cannot tell what better to say of it, than that it is the very contrary of ambition; and that Modesty allays all those passions and inquietudes to which that vice exposes us. He that is moderate in his wishes from reason and choice, and not re-

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signed from sourness, distaste, or disappointment, doubles all the pleasures of his life. The air, the season, a sun-shiny day, or a fair prospect, are instances of happiness, and that which he enjoys in common with all the world, by his exemption from the enchantments by which all the world are bewitched are to him uncommon benefits and new acquisitions. Health is not eaten up with care, nor pleasure interrupted by envy. It is not to him of any consequence what this man is famed for, or for what the other is preferred. He knows there is in such a place an uninterrupted walk; he can meet in such a company an agreeable conversation; he has no emulation, he is no mans rival, but every man's well wisher; can look at a prosperous man, with a pleasure in reflecting that he hopes he is as happy as himself; and has his mind and his fortune (as far as prudence will allow) open to the unhappy and to the stranger.

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No: 210. I am fully persuaded that one of the best springs of generous and worthy actions, is the having generous and worthy thoughts of ourselves. Whoever has a mean opinion of the dignity of his nature, will act in no higher degree of rank than he has allotted himself in his own estimation. If he considers his Being as circumscribed by the uncertain term

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of a few years, his designs will be contracted into the same narrow span he imagines is to bound his existence. How can he exalt his thoughts to any thing great and noble, who only believes that, after a short turn on the stage of this world, he is to sink into oblivion, and to lose his consciousness for ever?

There is not a more improving exercise to the human mind, than to be frequently reviewing its own great privileges and endowments; nor a more effectual means to awaken in us an ambition raised above low objects and little pursuits, than to value ourselves as heirs of eternity.

We are complaining, of the shortness of life, and yet are perpetually hurrying over the parts of it, to arrive at certain little settlements, or imaginary points of rest, which are dispersed up and down in it.

Now let us consider what happens to us when we arrive at these imaginary points of rest: Do we stop our motion, and sit down satisfied in the settlement we have gained? or are we not removing the boundary, and marking out new points of rest, to which we press forward with the like eagerness, and which cease to be such as fast as we attain them?

This is so plainly every man's condition in life, that there is no

one who has observed any thing, but may observe, that as fast as his time wears away, his appetite to something Future remains. The use therefore I would make of it is this, that since nature (as some love to expressity) does nothing in vain, or, to speak properly, since the Author of our Being has planted no wandering passion in it, no desire which has not its object, Futurity is the proper object of the passion so constantly exercised about it; and this restlessness in the present, this assigning ourselves over to farther stages of duration, this successive grasping at somewhat still to come, appears to me (whatever it may be to others) as a kind of instinct or natural symptom which the mind of man has of its own Immortality.

There is something so pitifully mean in the inverted ambition of that man who can hope for annihilation, and please himself to think that his whole fabric shall one day crumble into dust, and mix with the mass of inanimate Beings, that it equally deserves our admiration and pity. The mistery of such men's unbelief is not hard to be penetrated; and indeed amounts to nothing more than a sordid hope that they shall not be immortal, because they dare not be so. No:

This brings me back to my first observation, and gives me occasion to say further, that as worthy actions spring from worthy thoughts, so

worthy thoughts are likewise the consequence of worthy actions: But the wretch who has degraded himself below the character of Immortality, is very willing to resign his pretensions to it, and substitute in its room a dark negative happiness in the extinction of his Being.

I shall not pursue this thought farther, but only add, that as annihilation is not to be had with a wish, so it is the most abject thing in the world to wish it. What are honour, fame, wealth, or power, when compared with the generous expectation of a Being without end, and a happiness adequate to that Being?

C.

No: 213.

It is the great art and secret of christianity, if I may use that phrase, to manage our actions to the best advantage, and direct them in such a manner, that every thing we do may turn to account at that great day, when every thing we have done will be set before us.

In order to give this consideration its full weight, we may cast all our actions under the division of such as are in themselves either good, evil, or indifferent. If we divide our intentions after the same manner, and consider them with regard to our actions, we may discover that great art and secret of Religion which I have here mentioned.

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A good intention joyned to a good Action, gives it its proper force and efficacy; joined to an evil Action, extenuates its malignity, and in some cases may take it wholly away; and joined to an indifferent Action turns it to a Virtue, and makes it meritorious as far as human Actions can be so.

In the next place, to consider in the same manner the influence of an evil Intention upon our Actions. An evil Intention perverts the best of Actions, and makes them in reality, what the fathers with a witty kind of zeal have termed the virtues of the heathen world, so many shining sins. It destroys the innocence of an indifferent Action, and gives an evil Action all possible blackness and horror, or in the emphatical language of sacred Writ, makes (Sin exceeding sinful.

If in the last place, we consider the nature of an indifferent Intention, we shall find that it destroys the merit of a good Action; abates, but never takes away, the malignity of an evil Action; and leaves an indifferent Action in its natural state of indifference.

It is therefore of unspeakable advantage to possess our minds with an habitual good intention, and to aim all our thoughts, words, and actions at some laudable end, whether it be the glory of our Maker, the good of Mankind, or the benefit of our own Souls.

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This is a sort of thrift or good-husbandry in moral life, which does not throw away any single Action, but makes every one go as far as it can. It multiplies the means of salvation, increases the number of our Virtues, and diminishes that of our vices.

If then We apply a good intention to all our most indifferent Actions, we make our very existence one continued act of obedience, we turn our diversions and amusements to our eternal advantage, and are pleasing Him (whom we are made to please) in all the circumstances and occurrences of life.

It is this excellent frame of mind, which is recommended to us by the Apostle in that uncommon precept, wherein he directs us to propose to ourselves the glory of our Creator in all our most indifferent Actions, (whether we eat, or drink, or Whatsoever we do.)

A person therefore who is possessed with such an habitual good intention, as that which I have been here speaking of, enters upon no single circumstance of life, without considering it as well pleasing to the great Author of his Being, conformable to the dictates of reason, suitable to human nature in general or to that particular station in which Providence has placed him. He lives in a perpetual sense of the Divine

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presence, regards himself as acting, in the whole course of his existence, under the observation and inspection of that Being, who is privy to all his motions and all his thoughts, who knows his „ down-sitting and his up-rising, who is — „ about his path, and about his bed, and spieth out all his ways. „ In a word he remembers that the eye of his Judge, is always upon him, and in every action he reflects that he is doing what is commanded or allowed by him who will hereafter either reward or punish it. This was the character of those wholy men of old, who in that beautiful phrase of Scripture are said to have „ walked with God.

No: 214.

There are but two ways of doing any thing with great people, and these are by making yourself either considerable or agreeable: The former is not to be attained but by finding a way to live without them, or concealing that you want them; the latter is only by falling into their taste and pleasures: This is of all the employments in the world the most servile, except it happens to be of your own natural humour. For to be agreeable to another, especially if he be above You, is not to be possessed of such qualities and accomplishments as should render You agreeable in respect to him. An imitation of his faults, or a compliance,

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if not subservience, to his vices, must be the measures of your conduct.

When it comes to that, the unnatural state a man lives in, when his Patron pleases, is ended; and his guilt and complaisance are objected to him, though the man who rejects him for his vices was not only his partner but seducer. Thus the Client (like a young Woman who has given up the innocence which made her charming) has not only lost his time, but also the virtue which could render him capable of resenting the injury which is done him.

No: 215.

I consider an human Soul without education like marble in the quarry, which shews none of its inherent beauties, untill the skill of the polisher fetches out the colours, makes the surface shine, and discovers every ornamental cloud, spot, and vein that runs through the body of it. Education, after the same manner, when it works upon a noble mind, draws out to view every latent virtue and perfection, which without such helps are never able to make their appearance.

Aristotle tells us that a statue lies hid in a block of marble, and that the art of the Statuary only clears away the superfluous matter, and removes the rubbish. The figure is in the Stone, the Sculptor only finds it. What sculpture is to a block of Marble, education is to an human Soul.

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The Philosopher, the Saint, or the Hero, the wise, the good, or the great man, very often lie hid and concealed in a plebeian, which a proper education might have dis-interred and have brought to light.

Discourses of morality, and reflexions upon human nature, are the best means we can make use of to improve our minds, and gain a true knowledge of ourselves, and consequently to recover our Souls out of the vice, ignorance, and prejudice, which naturally cleave to them.

No: 219. There are but few men, who are not ambitious of distinguishing themselves in the nation or country where they live, and of growing considerable among those with whom they converse. There is a kind of grandeur and respect, which the meanest and most insignificant part of mankind endeavour to procure in the little circle of their friends and acquaintance. The poorest mechanic, nay the man who lives upon common alms, gets him set of admirers, and delights in that superiority which he enjoys over those who are in some respects beneath him. This ambition, which is natural to the soul of man, might methinks receive a very happy turn; and, if it were rightly

directed, contribute as much to a person's advantage, as it generally does to his uneasiness and disquiet.

All superiority and pre-eminence that one man can have over another, may be reduced to the notion of Quality, which, considered at large, is either that of fortune, body, or mind. The first is that which consists in birth, title, or riches; and is the most foreign to our natures, and what we can the least call our own of any of the three kinds of Quality. In relation to the body, Quality arises from health, strength, or beauty; which are nearer to us, and more a part of ourselves than the former. Quality, as it regards the mind, has its rise from knowledge or virtue; and is that which is more essential to us, and more intimately united with us than either of the other two.

The Quality of fortune, though a man has less reason to value himself upon it than on that of the body or mind, is however the kind of Quality which makes the most shining figure in the eye of the world.

The death-bed shews the emptiness of titles in a true light. A poor dispirited sinner lies trembling under the apprehensions of

the state he is entering on; and therefore titles at such a time look rather like insults and mockery than respect.

The truth of it is, Honours are in this world under no regulation; true Quality is neglected, virtue is oppressed, and vice triumphant. The last day will rectify this disorder, and assign to every one a station suitable to the dignity of his character; ranks will be then adjusted, and precedency set right.

Methinks we should have an ambition, if not to advance ourselves in another world, at least to preserve our post in it, and outshine our inferiors in virtue here, that they may not be put above us in a state which is to settle the distinction for eternity.

Men in Scripture are called (strangers and sojourners upon earth) (and life a pilgrimage) Several heathen as well as Christian Authors, under the same kind of metaphor, have represented the World as an Inn, which was only designed to furnish us with accommodations in this our passage. It is therefore very absurd to think of setting up our rest before we come to our journeys end, and not rather to take care of the reception we shall there meet, than to fix our thoughts on the little conveniences and

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advantages which we enjoy one above another in the way to it.

Epictetus, makes use of another kind of allusion, which is very beautiful, and wonderfully proper to incline us to be satisfied with the post in which Providence has placed us. We are here, says he, as in a Theatre, where everyone has a part allotted to him. The great duty which lies upon a man is to act his part in perfection. We may indeed say, that our part does not suit us, and that we could act another better. But this (says the Philosopher) is not our business. All that we are concerned in is to excel in the part which is given us. If it be an improper one, the fault is not in us, but in him who has cast our several parts, and is the great disposer of the drama.

The part that was acted by this Philospher himself was but a very indifferent one, for he lived and died a slave. His motive to contentment in this particular, receives a very great enforcement from the above-mentioned consideration, if we remember that our parts in the other world will be new cast, and that mankind will be there ranged in different stations of superiority and pre-eminence, in proportion as they have here excelled one another in virtue, and performed in their several posts of life

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the duties which belong to them.

If the reader would see the discription of a life that is passed away in vanity and among the shadows of pomp and greatness, he may see it very finely drawn in the little apocryphal book, entitled the Wisdom of Solomon. In the mean time, since it is necessary in the present constitution of things, that order and distinction should be kept in the world, we should be happy, if those who enjoy the upper station in it, would endeavour to surpass others in virtue, as much as in rank, and by their humanity and condescension make their superiority easy and acceptable to those who are beneath them; and if, on the contrary, those who are in meaner posts of life, would consider how they may better their condition hereafter, and by a just deference and submission to their superiors, make them happy in those blessings with which Providence has thought fit to distinguish them.

C.

No. 224.

If we look abroad upon the great multitude of mankind, and endeavour to trace out the principles of action in every individual, it will, I think, seem highly probable that Ambition runs through

the whole species, and that every man in proportion to the vigour of his complexion is more or less actuated by it. It is indeed no uncommon thing to meet with men, who, by the natural bent of their inclinations, and without the discipline of Philosophy, aspire not to the heights of power and grandeur; who never set their hearts upon a numerous train of clients and dependencies, nor other gay appendages of greatness; who are contented with a competency, and will not molest their tranquillity to gain an abundance: But it is not therefore to be concluded that such a man is not ambitious: His desires may have cut out another channel, and determined him to other pursuits; the motive however may be still the same; and in these cases likewise the man may be equally pushed on with the desire of distinction

Though the pure consciousness of worthy actions, abstracted from the views of popular applause, be to a generous mind an ample reward, yet the desire of distinction was doubtless implanted in our natures as an additional incentive to exert ourselves in virtuous excellence.

This passion indeed, like all others, is frequently perverted to evil and ignoble purposes; so that we may account for many of

the excellencies and follies of life upon the same innate principle, to wit, the desire of being remarkable: For this, as it has been differently cultivated by education, study and converse, will bring forth suitable effects as it falls in with an ingenuous disposition, or a corrupt mind; it does accordingly express itself in acts of magnanimity or selfish cunning, as it meets with a good or a weak understanding. As it has been employed in embellishing the mind, or adorning the outside, it renders the man eminently praise-worthy or ridiculous. Ambition therefore is not to be confined only to one passion or pursuit; for as the same humours, in constitutions otherwise different, affect the body after different manners, so the same aspiring principle within us sometimes breaks forth upon one object, sometimes upon another.

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The man who goes into the world only with the narrow views of self-interest, who catches at the applause of an idle multitude, as he can find no solid contentment at the end of his journey, so he deserves to meet with disappointments in his way; but he who is actuated by a noble principle, whose mind is so far enlarged as to take in the prospect of his country's good, who is enamoured with that praise which is one of the fair attendants of virtue, and values not those acclamations which are not seconded by the impartial testimony of his own mind; who repines

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not at the low station which providence has at present allotted him, but yet would willingly advance himself by justifiable means to a more rising and advantageous ground; such a man is warmed with a generous emulation; it is a virtuous movement in him to wish and to endeavour that his power of doing good may be equal to his will.

The man who is fitted out by Nature, and sent into the world with great abilities, is capable of doing great or mischief in it. It ought therefore to be the care of education to infuse into the untainted youth early notices of justice and honour, that so the possible advantages of good parts may not take an evil turn, nor be perverted to base and unworthy purposes. It is the business of Religion and Philosophy not so much to extinguish our passions, as to regulate and direct them to valuable well chosen objects: When these have pointed out to us which course we may lawfully steer, it is no harm to set out all our sail; if the storms and tempests of adversity should rise upon us, and not suffer us to make the haven where we would be, it will however prove no small consolation to us in these circumstances, that we have neither mistaken our course, nor fallen into calamities of our ow procuring

Religion therefore (were we to consider it no farther than as it

interposes in the affairs of this life) is highly valuable, and worthy of great veneration; as it settles the various pretensions, and otherwise interfering interests of mortal men, and thereby consults the harmony and order of the great community; as it gives a man room to play his part, and exert his abilities; as it animates to actions truly laudable in themselves, in their effects beneficial to society; as it inspires rational ambition, correct love, and elegant desire.

No. 225.

I have often thought if the minds of men were laid open, we should see but little difference between that of the wise man and that of the fool. There are infinite reveries, numberless extravagancies, and a perpetual train of vanities which pass through both. The great difference is, that the first knows how to pick and cull his thoughts for conversation, by suppressing some, and communicating others; whereas the other lets them all indifferently fly out in words. This sort of Discretion, however has no place in private conversation between intimate friends. On such occasions the wisest men very often talk like the weakest; for indeed the talking with a friend is nothing else but thinking aloud.

Discretion does not only shew itself in words, but in all the circum-

stances of action; and is like an under-agent of Providence, to guide and direct us in the ordinary concerns of life.

There are many more shining qualities in the mind of man, but there is none so useful as Discretion; it is this indeed which gives value to all the rest, which sets them at work in their proper times and places, and turns them to the advantage of the person who is possessed of them. Without it learning is pedantry, and wit impertinence; virtue itself looks like weakness; the best parts only qualify a man to be more sprightly in errors, and active to his own prejudice.

Nor does Discretion only make a man the master of his own parts, but of other mens. The discreet man finds out the talents of those he converses with, and knows how to apply them to proper uses. Accordingly if we look into particular communities and divisions of men, we may observe that it is the discreet man, not the witty, nor the learned, nor the brave, who guides the conversation, and gives measures to the society. A man with great talents, but void of Discretion, is like Polyphemus in the Fable, strong and blind, endued with an irresistible force, which for want of sight is of no use to him.

Though a man has all other perfections, and wants Discretion, he

will be of no great consequence in the world; but if he has this single talent in perfection, and but a common share of others, he may do what he pleases in his particular station of life.

At the same time that I think Discretion the most useful talent a man can be master of, I look upon Cunning to be the accomplishment of little, mean, ungenerous minds. Discretion points out the noblest ends to us, and pursues the most proper and laudable methods of attaining them: Cunning has only private selfish aims, and sticks at nothing which may make them succeed. Discretion has large and extended views, and, like a well-formed eye, commands a whole horizon: Cunning is a kind of short-sightedness, that discovers the minutest objects which are near at hand, but is not able to discern things at a distance. Discretion, the more it is discovered, gives a greater authority to the person who posesses it: Cunning, when it is once detected, loses its force, and makes a man incapable of bringing about even those events which he might have done, had he passed only for a plain man. Discretion is the perfection of Reason, and a guide to us in all the duties of life. Cunning is a kind of Instinct, that only looks out after our immediate interest and welfare. Discretion is only

found in men of strong sense and good understanding: Cunning is often to be met with in brutes themselves, and in persons who are but the fewest removes from them. In short, Cunning is only the mimic of Discretion, and may pass upon weak men, in the same manner as vivacity is often mistaken for wit, and gravity for wisdom.

The cast of mind which is natural to a discreet man, makes him look forward into Futurity, and consider what will be his condition millions of ages hence, as well as what it is at present. He knows that the misery or happiness which are reserved for him in another world, lose nothing of their reality by being placed at so great a distance from him. The objects do not appear little to him because they are remote. He considers that those pleasures and pains which lie hid in Eternity, approach nearer to him every moment, and will be present with him in their full weight and measure, as much as those pains and pleasures which he feels at this very instant. For this reason he is careful to secure to himself that which is the proper happiness of his nature, and the ultimate design of his Being. He carries his thoughts to the end of every action, and considers the most distant, as well as the most immediate effects of it. He supercedes every

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little prospect of gain and advantage which offers itself here, if he does not find it consistent with his views of an Hereafter. In a word, his hopes are full of Immortality, his schemes are large and glorious, and his conduct suitable to one who knows his true interest, and how to pursue it by proper methods.

No:

No: 230. Human nature appears a very deformed, or a very beautiful object, according to the different lights in which it is viewed. When we see men of inflamed passions, or of wicked designs, tearing one another to pieces by open violence, or undermining each other by secret treachery; when we observe base and narrow ends pursued by ignominious and dishonest means; when we behold men mixed in society as if it were for the destruction of it; we are even ashamed of our Species, and out of humour with our own Being. But in another light, when we behold them mild, good, and benevolent, full of a generous regard for the public prosperity, compassionating each other's distresses, and relieving each other's wants, we can hardly believe they are creatures of the same kind. In this view they appear Gods to each other, in the exercise of the noblest power, that of doing good; and the greatest compliment we have ever been able to make to

our own Being, has been by calling this disposition of mind humanity. We cannot but observe a pleasure arising in our own breast upon the seeing or hearing of a generous action, even when we are wholly disinterested in it.

C.

No: 231. A just and reasonable Modesty sets off every great talent which a man can be possessed of. It heightens all the virtues which it accompanies; like the shades in paintings, it raises and rounds every figure, and makes the colours more beautiful, though not so glaring as they would be without it.

Modesty is not only an ornament, but also a guard to virtue. It is a kind of quick and delicate feeling in the Soul, which makes her shrink and withdraw herself from every thing that has danger in it. It is such an exquisite sensibility, as warns her to shun the first appearance of every thing which is hurtful.

If Modesty has so great an influence over our actions, and is in many cases so impregnable a fence to virtue; what can more undermine morality than that politeness which reigns among the unthinking part of mankind, and treats as unfashionable the most ingenuous part of our behaviour; which recommends impudence as good

breeding, and keeps a man always in countenance, not because he is innocent, but because he is shameless?

Seneca thought Modesty so great a check to vice, that he prescribes to us the practice of it in secret, and advises us to raise it in ourselves upon imaginary occasions, when such as are real do not offer themselves; for this is the meaning of his precept, that when we are by ourselves, and in our greatest solitudes, we should fancy that Cato stands before us and sees every thing we do. In short, if you banish Modesty out of the world, she carries away with her half the virtue that is in it.

After these reflexions on Modesty, as it is a virtue; I must observe, that there is a vicious Modesty, which justly deserves to be ridiculed, and which those persons very often discover, who value themselves most upon a well-bred confidence. This happens when a man is ashamed to act up to his reason, and would not upon any consideration be surprised in the practice of those duties, for the performance of which he was sent into the world. Many an impudent libertine would blush to be caught in a serious discourse, and would scarce be able to shew his head, after having disclosed a religious thought. Decency of behaviour, all outward

shew of virtue, and abhorrence of vice, are carefully avoided by this set of shame-faced people, as what would disparage their gaiety of temper, and infallibly bring them to dishonour. This is such a poorness of spirit, such a despicable cowardice, such a degenerate abject state of mind, as one would think human nature incapable of, did we not meet with frequent instances of it in ordinary conversation.

There is another kind of vicious Modesty which makes a man ashamed of his person, his birth, his profession, his poverty, or the like misfortunes, which it was not in his choice to prevent, and is not in his power to rectify. If a man appears ridiculous by any of the aforementioned circumstances, he becomes much more so by being out of countenance for them. They should rather give him occasion to exert a noble spirit, and to palliate those imperfections which are not in his power, by those perfections which are; or to use a very witty allusion of an eminent Author, he should imitate Cæsar, who, because his head was bald, covered that defect with Laurels.

No: 237. It is very reasonable to believe, that part of the pleasure which happy minds shall enjoy in a future State, will arise from an enlarged contemplation

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of the divine Wisdom in the government of the world, and a discovery of the secret and amazing steps of providence, from the beginning to the end of time. Nothing seems to be an entertainment more adapted to the nature of man, if we consider that Curiosity is one of the strongest and most lasting appetites implanted in us, and that Admiration is one of our most pleasing passions; and what a perpetual succession of enjoyments will be afforded to both these, in a scene so large and various as shall then be laid open to our view in the society of superior Spirits, who perhaps will join with us in so delightful a prospect.

It is not impossible, on the contrary, that part of the punishment of such as are excluded from bliss, may consist not only in their being denied this privilege, but in having their appetites at the same time vastly increased, without any satisfaction afforded to them. In these, the vain pursuit of knowledge shall, perhaps, add to their infelicity, and bewilder them into labyrinths of error, darkness, distraction and uncertainty of every thing but their own evil state.

In our present condition, which is a middle state, our minds are, as it were, chequered with truth and falshood; and as our faculties are narrow, and our views imperfect, it is impossible but our Curiosity must meet with many

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repulses. The business of mankind in this life being rather to act than to know, their portion of knowledge is dealt to them accordingly.

It ought to be laid down as a principle, that whatever is permitted to befal a just man, whether poverty, sickness, or any of those things which seem to be evils, shall either in life or death conduce to his good. Demetrius says, that nothing would be more unhappy than a man who had never known affliction. He compares prosperity to the indulgence of a fond mother to a child, which often proves his ruin; but the affection of the divine Being to that of a wise father who would have his sons exercised with labour, disappointment, and pain, that they may gather strength and improve their fortitude. On this occasion Seneca says „That there is not on earth a spectacle more worthy the regard „ „of a Creator intent on his works than a brave man superior to his „ „sufferings.

This thought will appear yet more reasonable, if we consider human life as a state of probation, and adversity as the post of honour in it, assigned often to the best and most select Spirits.

We are not at present in a proper situation to judge of the counsels by which Providence acts, since but little arrives at our know-

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ledge, and even that little we discern imperfectly; or according to the elegant figure in holy Writ, (We see but in part, and as in a glass darkly). It is to be considered, that Providence in its oeconomy regards the whole system of time, and things together, so that we cannot discover the beautiful connexion between incidents which lie widely separate in time, and by losing so many links of the chain, our reasonings become broken and imperfect. Thus those parts of the moral world which have not an absolute, may yet have a relative beauty, in respect of some other parts concealed from us, but open to his eye before whom past, present, and to come, are set together in one point of view: and those events, the permission of which seems now to accuse his goodness, may in the consummation of things both magnify his goodness, and exalt his wisdom. And this is enough to check our presumption, since it is in vain to apply our measures of regularity to matters of which we know neither the antecedents nor the consequents, the beginning nor the end.

No: 238. Among all the diseases of the mind, there is not one more epidemical or more pernicious than the love of Flattery. For as where the

juices of the body are prepared to receive a malignant influence, there the disease rages with most violence; so in this distemper of the mind, where there is ever a propensity and inclination to suck in the poison, it cannot be but that the whole order of reasonable action must be overturned, for, like Musick, it

So softens and disarms the mind,
That not one arrow can resistance find.

First we flatter ourselves, and then the flattery of others is sure of success. It awakens our Self-love within, a party which is ever ready to revolt from our better judgment, and join the enemy without. Hence it is, that the profusion of favours we so often see poured upon the parasite, are represented to us, by our Self-love, as justice done to the man, who so agreeably reconciles us to ourselves. When we are overcome by such soft insinuations and ensnaring compliances, we gladly recompence the artifices that are made use of to blind our reason, and which triumph over the weaknesses of our temper and inclinations.

But were every man persuaded from how mean and low a principle this passion is derived, there can be no doubt but the person who should attempt to gratify it, would then be as contemptible as he is now successful. It is the desire of some quality we are not possessed of, or inclination to be something we are not, which are the

causes of our giving ourselves up to that man, who bestows upon us the characters and qualities of others; which perhaps suit us as ill and were as little designed for our wearing, as their clothes. Instead of going out of our own complexional nature into that of others, it were a better and more laudable industry to improve our own, and instead of a miserable copy become a good original; for there is no temper, no disposition so rude and untractable, but may in its own peculiar cast and turn be brought to some agreeable use in conversation, or in the affairs of life. A person of a rougher deportment, and less tied up to the usual ceremonies of behaviour, will, like Manly in the play, please by the grace which nature gives to every action wherein she is complied with; the brisk and lively will not want their admirers, and even a more reserved and melancholy temper may at some times be agreeable.

When there is not vanity enough awake in a man to undo him, the Flatterer stirs up that dormant weakness, and inspires him with merit enough to be a Coxcomb. But if Flattery be the most sordid act that can be complied with, the art of Praising justly is as commendable: For it is laudable to praise well; as poets at one and the same time give Immortality and receive it themselves for a reward: Both are pleased, the one whilst he receives the recompence of merit, the other whilst he shews he knows how to discern it; but above

all, that man is happy in this art, who like a skilful painter, retains the features and complexion, but still softens the picture into the most agreeable likeness.

There can hardly, I believe, be imagined a more desirable pleasure, than that of praise unmixed with any possibility of Flattery. Such was that which Germanicus enjoyed, when, the night before a battle, desirous of some sincere mark of the esteem of his Legions for him, he is described by Tacitus listening in a disguise to the discourse of a Soldier, and wrapt up in the fruition of his glory, whilst with an undesigned Sincerity they praised his noble and majestic mien, his affability, his valour, conduct, and success in war. How must a man have his heart full-blown with joy in such an article of glory as this? What a spur and encouragement still to proceed in those steps which had already brought him to so pure a taste of the greatest of mortal enjoyments?

It sometimes happens, that even enemies and envious persons bestow the sincerest marks of esteem when the least design it. Such afford a greater pleasure, as extorted by merit, and freed from all suspicion of favour or flattery.

A good name is fitly compared to a precious ointment, and when we are praised with skill and decency, it is indeed the most agreeable perfume, but if too strongly admitted into a brain of a less vigorous and happy texture, it will, like too strong an odour, overcome the senses, and prove pernicious

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to those nerves it was intended to refresh. A generous mind is of all others the most sensible of Praise and Dispraise; and a noble spirit is as much invigorated with its due proportion of honour and applause, as it is depressed by neglect and contempt: But it is only persons far above the common level who are thus affected with either of these extremes; as in a Thermometer, it is only the purest and most sublimated spirit that is either contracted or dilated by the benignity or inclemency of the season.

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No: 243. I shall consider virtue as it is in itself of an amiable nature, after having premised, that I understand by the word Virtue such a general notion as is affixed to it by the writers of morality, and which by devout men generally goes under the name of religion, and by men of the world under the name of honour.

Hypocrisy itself does great honour, or rather justice, to religion, and tacitly acknowledges it to be an ornament to human nature. The hypocrite would not be at so much pains to put on the appearance of Virtue, if he did not know it was the most proper and effectual means to gain the love and esteem of mankind

It is a common observation, that the most abandoned to all sense of

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goodness, are apt to wish those who are related to them of a different character; and it is very observable, that none are more struck with the charms of Virtue in the fair Sex, than those who by their very admiration of it are carried to a desire of ruining it.

A virtuous mind in a fair body is indeed a fine picture in a good light, and therefore it is no wonder that it makes the beautiful Sex all over charms.

As Virtue in general is of an amiable and lovely nature, there are some particular kinds of it which are more so than others, and these are such as dispose us to do good to mankind. Temperance and abstinence, faith and devotion, are in themselves perhaps as laudable as any other virtues; but those which make a man popular and beloved, are justice, charity, munificence, and, in short, all the good qualities that render us beneficial to each other. For which reason even an extravagant man, who has nothing else to recommend him but a false generosity, is often more beloved and esteemed than a person of a much more finished character, who is defective in this particular.

The two great ornaments of Virtue, which shew her in the most advantageous views, and make her all together lovely, are chearfulness and good-nature. These generally go together, as a man cannot be agreeable to others who is not easy within himself. They are both very requisite in a virtuous mind,

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to keep out melancholy from the many serious thoughts it is engaged in, and to hinder its natural hatred to vice from soaring into severity and censoriousness.

If Virtue is of this amiable nature, what can we think of those who can look upon it with an eye of hatred and ill-will, or can suffer their aversion for a party to blot out all the merit of the person who is engaged in it. A man must be excessively stupid, as well as uncharitable, who believes that there is no Virtue but on his own side, and that there are not men as honest as himself who may differ from him in political principles. Men may oppose one another in some particulars, but ought not to carry their hatred to those qualities which are of so amiable a nature in themselves, and have nothing to do with the points in dispute. Men of Virtue, though of different interests, ought to consider themselves as more nearly united with one another, than with the vicious part of mankind, who embark with them in the same civil concerns. We should bear the same love towards a man of honour, who is a living antagonist, for short, we should esteem Virtue though in a foe, and abhor Vice though in a Friend.

I speak this with an eye to those cruel treatments which men of all sides are apt to give the characters of those who do not agree with

them. How many persons of undoubted probity, and exemplary Virtue, on either side, are blackened and defamed? How many men of honour exposed to public obloquy and reproach? Those therefore who are either the instruments or abettors in such infernal dealings, ought to be looked upon as persons who make use of religion to promote their cause, not of their cause to promote religion.

No: 248. There are none who deserve superiority over others in the esteem of mankind, who do not make it their endeavour to be benificial to society; and who upon all occasions with their circumstances of life can administer, do not take a certain unfeigned pleasure in conferring benefits of one kind or other. Those whose great talents and high birth have placed them in conspicuous stations of life, are indispensably obliged to exert some noble inclinations for the service of the world, or else such advantages become misfortunes, and shade and privacy are a more eligible portion. Where opportunities and inclinations are given to the same person, we sometimes see sublime instances of virtue, which so dazzle our imaginations, that we look with scorn on all which in lower scenes of life we may ourselves be able to practice. But this is a vicious way of thinking; and it bears some spice of Romantic madness, for a man to imagine that he must grow asm-

bitious, or seek adventures to be able to do great actions. It is in every mans power in the world who is above mere poverty, not only to do things worthy but heroic. The great foundation of civil virtue is self-denial, and there is no one above the necessities of life, but has opportunities of exercising that noble quality, and doing as much as his circumstances will bear for the ease and convenience of other men; and he who does more than ordinary men practise upon such occasions as occur in his life, deserves the value of his friends as if he had done enterprizes which are usually attended with the highest glory. Men of public spirit differ rather in their circumstances than their virtue; and the man who does all he can in a low station, is more a Hero than he who omits any worthy action he is able to accomplish in a great one.

And as great and exalted spirits undertake the pursuit of hazardous actions for the good of others, at the same time gratifying their passion for glory; so do worthy minds in the domestic way of life deny themselves many advantages, to satisfy a generous benevolence which they bear to their friends oppressed with distresses and calamities. Such natures one may call stores of Providence, which are actuated by a secret celestial influence to undervalue the ordinary gratifications of wealth, to give comfort to an heart loaded with affliction, to save a falling family, to preserve a branch of trade in their neighbourhood,

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and give work to the industrious, preserve the portion of the helpless infant, and raise the head of the mourning father. People whose hearts are wholly bent towards pleasure, or intent upon gain, never hear of the noble occurrences among men of industry and humanity.

N: 249. The talent of turning men into Ridicule and exposing to laughter those one converses with, is the qualification of little ungenerous tempers. A young man with this cast of mind cuts himself off from all manners of improvement. Every one has his flaws and weaknesses; nay, the greatest blemishes are often found in the most shining characters; but what an absurd thing is it to pass over all the valuable parts of a man, and fix our attention on his infirmities? To observe his imperfections more than his virtues? and to make use of him for the sport of others, rather than for own improvement?

We therefore very often find, that persons the most accomplished in Ridicule are those who are very shrewd at hitting a blot, without exerting any thing masterly in themselves. As there are many eminent Critics who never writ a good line, there are many admirable Buffoons that animadvert upon every single defect in another, without ever discovering the least beauty of their own. By this means, these unlucky little Wits often

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gain reputation in the esteem of vulgar minds, and raise themselves above persons of much more laudable characters.

If the talent of Ridicule were employed to laugh men out of vice and folly, it might be of some use to the world; but instead of this, we find that it is generally made use of to laugh men out of virtue and good sense, by attacking every thing that is solemn and serious, decent and praise-worthy in human life.

We may observe, that in the first ages of the world, when the great Souls and master-pieces of human nature were produced, men shined by a noble simplicity of behaviour, and were strangers to those little embellishments which are so fashionable in our present conversation. And it is very remarkable, that notwithstanding we fall short at present of the ancients in poetry, painting, oratory, history, architecture, and all the noble arts and sciences which depend more upon genius than experience, we exceed them as much in doggerel, humour, burlesque, and all the trivial arts of Ridicule. We meet with more raillery among the moderns, but more good sense among the ancients.

C.

No: 235.

A solid and substantial greatness of Soul looks down with a generous neglect on the censures and applauses of the multitude, and places a man be-

yond the little noise and strife of tongues. Accordingly we find in ourselves a secret awe and veneration for the character of one who moves above us in a regular and illustrious course of virtue, without any regard to our good or ill opinions of him, to our reproaches or commendations. As on the contrary it is usual for us, when we would take off from the fame and reputation of an action, to ascribe it to vain-glory, and a desire of Fame in the actor. Nor is this common judgment and opinion of mankind ill-founded: For certainly it denotes no great bravery of mind to be worked up to any noble action by so selfish a motive, and to do that out of a desire of Fame, which we could not be prompted to by a disinterested love to mankind, or by a generous passion for the glory of him that made us.

Thus is Fame a thing difficult to be obtained by all, but particularly by those who thirst after it, since most men have so much either of ill-nature, or of wariness, as not to gratify or sooth the vanity of the ambitious man, and since this very thirst after Fame naturally betrays him into such indecencies as are a lessening to his reputation, and is itself looked upon as a weakness in the greatest characters.

No: 256. Admiration is a very short-lived passion, that immediately decays

upon growing familiar with its object, unless it be still fed with fresh discoveries, and kept alive by a new perpetual succession of miracles rising ups to its view. And even the greatest actions of a celebrated person labour under this disadvantage, that however surprising and extraordinary they may be, they are no more than what are expected from him; but on the contrary, if they fall any thing below the opinion that is conceived of him, though they might raise the reputation of another, they are a diminution to his.

One would think there should be something wonderfully pleasing in the possession of Fame, that, notwithstanding all these mortifying considerations, can engage a man in so desperate a pursuit; and yet if we consider the little happiness that attends a great character, and the multitude of disquietudes to which the desire of it subjects an ambitious mind, one would be still the more surprised to see so many restless candidates for glory.

Ambition raises a secret tumult in the Soul, it inflames the mind, and puts it into a violent hurry of thought: It is still reaching after an empty imaginary good, that has not in it the power to abate or satisfy it. Most other things we long for can allay the cravings of their proper sense, and for a while set the

appetite at rest: But Fame is a good so wholly foreign to our natures, that we have no faculty in the Soul adapted to it, nor any organ in the body to relish it; an object of desire placed out of the possibility of fruition. It may indeed fill the mind for a while with a giddy kind of pleasure, but it is such a pleasure as makes a man restless and uneasy under it; and which does not so much satisfy the present thirst, as it excites fresh desires, and sets the Soul on new enterprises. For how few ambitious men are there, who have got as much Fame as they desired, and whose thirst after it has not been as eager in the very height of their reputation, as it was before they became known and eminent among men. Many indeed have given over their pursuits after Fame, but that has proceeded either from the disappointments they have met in it, or from their experience of the little pleasure which attends it, or from the better informations or natural coldness of old age; but seldom from a full satisfaction and acquiescence in their present enjoyment of it.

Nor is Fame only unsatisfying in itself but the desire of it lays us open to many accidental troubles which those are free from who have no such tender regard for it. How often is the ambitious man cast down and disappointed, if he receives no praise where

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he expected it? May how often is he mortified with the very praises he receives, if they do not rise so high as he thinks they ought, which they seldom do unless increased by flattery, since few men have so good an opinion of us as we have of ourselves? But if the ambitious man can be so much grieved even with praise itself, how will he be able to bear up under scandal and defamation? For the same temper of mind which makes him desire Fame, makes him hate Reproach. If he can be transported with the extraordinary praises of men, he will be as much dejected by their censures. How little therefore is the pleasure of an ambitious man, who gives every one a dominion over it, who thus subjects himself to the good or ill speeches of others, and puts it in the power of every malicious tongue to throw him into a fit of melancholy, and distroy his natural rest and repose of mind? Especially when we consider that the world is more apt to censure than applaud, and himself fuller of imperfections than virtues.

We may farther observe, that such a man will be more grieved for the loss of Fame, than he could have been pleased with the enjoyment of it. For though the presence of this imaginary good cannot make us happy, the absence of it may make us miserable: Because in the enjoyment of an object we only find that share of pleasure which it is capable of giving us, but in the loss of it we do not proportion our grief to the real value it bears, but to the value of our fancies and imagination set upon it.

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So inconsiderable is the satisfaction that Fame brings along with it, and so great the disquietudes, to which it makes us liable. The desire of it stirs up very uneasy motions in the mind, and is rather inflamed than satisfied by the presence of the thing desired. The enjoyment of it brings but very little pleasure, though the loss or want of it be very sensible and afflicting; and even this little happiness is so very precarious, that it wholly depends on the will of others. We are not only tortured by the reproaches which are offered us, but are disappointed by the silence of men when it is unexpected; and humbled even by their praises.

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No: 257. We have treated the subject of Fame in a particular order and method. First we have considered the reasons why Providence may have implanted in our mind such a principle as action. In the next place we have shewn from many considerations, first that Fame is a thing difficult to be obtained, and easily lost; secondly, that it brings the ambitious man very little happiness, but subjects him to much uneasiness and dissatisfaction. We shall in the last place shew, that it hinders us from obtaining an end which we have abilities to acquire, and which is accompanied with fulness of satisfaction. We need not tell the reader, that we mean by this end that happiness which is reserved for us in another world, which every one has abilities to procure, and which

will bring along with it a fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore...

How the pursuit after Fame may hinder us in the attainment of this great end, We are to collect from the three following considerations.

First, Because the strong desire of Fame breeds several vicious habits in the mind.

Secondly, Because many of those actions, which are apt to procure Fame, are not in their nature conducive to this our ultimate happiness.

Thirdly, Because if we should allow the same actions to be the proper instruments, both of acquiring Fame, and of procuring this happiness, they would nevertheless fail in the attainment of this last end, if they proceeded from a desire of the first.

These three propositions are self-evident to those who are versed in Speculations of morality. For which reason we shall not enlarge upon them, but proceed to a point of the same nature, which may open to us a more uncommon field of speculation.

From what has already been observed, We may have a natural conclusion, that it is the greatest folly to seek the praise or approbation of any Being, besides the Supreme, and

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that for these two reasons; because no other Being can make a right judgment of us, and esteem us according to our merits; and because we can procure no considerable benefit or advantage from the esteem and approbation of any other Being.

In the first place, no other Being can make any right judgment of us, and esteem us according to our merits. Created Beings see nothing but our outside, and can therefore only frame a judgment of us from our exterior actions and behaviours; but how unfit these are to give us a right notion of each other's perfections, may appear from several considerations. There are many virtues, which in their own nature are incapable of any outward representation: Many silent perfections in the Soul of a good man, which are great ornaments to human nature, but not able to discover themselves to the knowledge of others; they are tranacted in private, without noise or shew, and are only visible to the great Searcher of hearts. What actions can express the intire purity of thought, which refines and sanctifies a virtuous man? That secret rest and contentedness of mind, which gives him a perfect enjoyment of his present condition? That inward pleasure and complacency, which he

feels in doing good? That delight and satisfaction which he takes in the prosperity and happiness of another? These and the like virtues are the hidden beauties of a Soul, the secret graces which cannot be discovered by a mortal eye, but make the Soul lovely and precious in his sight, from whom no secrets are concealed. Again, there are many virtues which want an opportunity of exerting and shewing themselves in actions. Every virtue requires time and place, a proper object and a fit conjuncture of circumstances, for the due exercise of it. A state of poverty obscures all the virtues of liberallity and munificence. The patience and fortitude of a Martyr or Confessor lie concealed in the flourishing times of Christianity. Some virtues are only seen in affliction, and some in prosperity; some in a private, and others in a public capacity. But the great Sovereign of the World beholds every perfection in its obscurity, and not only sees what we do, but what we would do. He views our behaviour in every concurrence of affairs, and sees us engaged in all the possibilities of action. He discovers the Martyr and Confessor without the trial of flames and tortures, and will hereafter entitle many to the reward of actions, which they had never the opportunity of performing.

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Another reason why men cannot form a right judgment of us is, because the same actions may be aimed at different ends, and arise from quite contrary principles. Actions are of so mixed a nature, and so full of circumstances, that as men pry into them more or less, or observe some parts more than others, they take different hints, and put contrary interpretations on them, so that the same actions may represent a man as hypocritical and designing to one, which makes him appear a Saint or Hero to another. He therefore who looks upon the Soul through its outward actions, often sees it through a deceitful medium, which is apt to discolour and pervert the object: So that on this account also, He is the only proper judge of our perfections, who does not guess at the sincerity of our intentions from the goodness of our actions, but weighs the goodness of our actions by the sincerity of our intentions.

But further; it is impossible for outward actions to represent the perfections of the Soul, because they can never shew the strength of those principles from whence they proceed. They are not adequate expressions of our virtues, and can only shew us what habits are in the Soul, without discovering the degree and perfections of such habits. They are at best but weak resemblances of our intentions, faint and imperfect copies that may acquaint us with the general design, but can never express the beauty and life of the original.

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But the great Judge of all the earth knows every different state and degree of human improvement, from those weak stirrings and tendencies of the will which have not yet formed themselves into regular purposes and designs, to the last intire finishing and consummation of a good habit. He beholds the first imperfect rudiments of a virtue in the Soul, and keeps a watchful eye over it in all its progress, until it has received every grace it is capable of, and appears in its full beauty and perfection. Thus we see that none but the Supreme Being can esteem us according to our proper merits, since all others must judge of us from our outward actions, which can never give them a just estimate of us, since there are many perfections of a man which are not capable of appearing in actions; many which, allowing no natural incapacity of shewing themselves, want an opportunity of doing it; or should they all meet with an opportunity of appearing by actions, yet those actions may be misinterpreted, and applied to wrong principles; or though they plainly discovered the principles from whence they proceeded, they could never shew the degree, strength and perfection of those principles.

And as the Supreme Being is the only proper Judge

of our perfections, so is he the only fit Rewarder of them. This is a consideration that comes home to our interest, as the other adapts itself to our ambition. And what could the most aspiring, or the most selfish man desire more, were he to form the notion of a Being to whom he would recommend himself, than such a knowledge as can discover the least appearance of perfection in him, and such a goodness as will proportion a reward to it?

Let the ambitious man therefore turn all his desire of Fame this way; and, that he may propose to himself a Fame worthy of his ambition, let him consider that if he employs his abilities to the best advantage, the time will come when the Supreme Governor of the world, the great Judge of mankind, who sees every degree of perfection in others, and posseses all possible perfection in himself, shall proclaim his worth before men and angels, and pronounce to him in the presence of the whole creation — that best and most significant of applauses, „ Well done, thou good „ and faithful Servant, enter thou into thy Masters joy „.

C.

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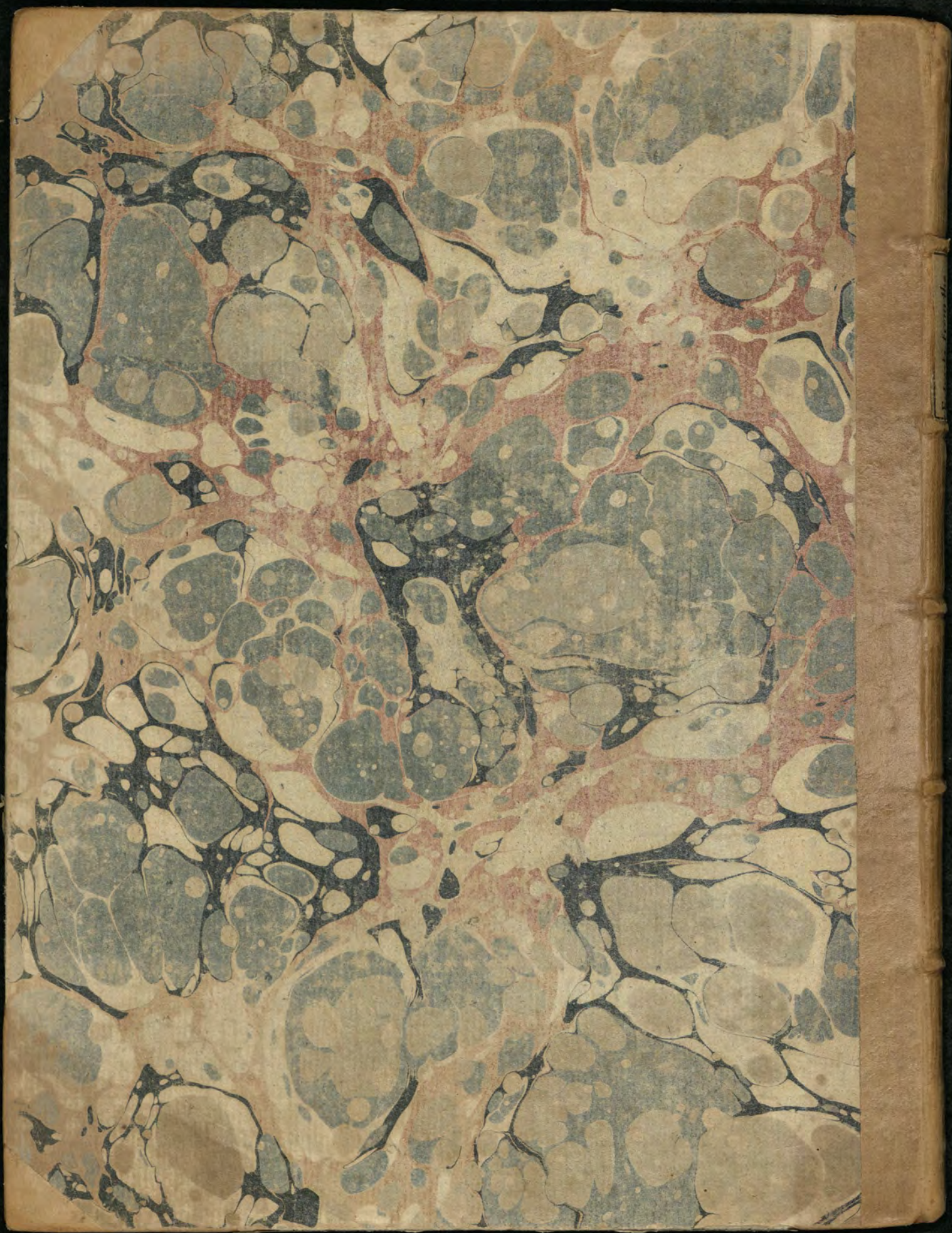

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