

very consistent reasoning, have resolv'd deliberately to do all that by *Power* or *Art* they are able, for their private Advantage. But such as these never open themselves in Friendship to others. They have no such Passion for Truth, or Love for Mankind. They have no Quarrel with *Religion*, or *Morals*; but know what use to make of both, upon occasion. If they discover their Principles, 'tis never but at unawares. They are sure to preach Honesty, and go to Church.

On the other side, the Gentlemen for whom I am apologizing, cannot however be call'd *Hypocrites*. They speak as ill of themselves as they possibly can. If they have hard Thoughts of Human Nature; 'tis a proof still of their Humanity, that they give such Warning to the World. If they represent Men by Nature treacherous and wild, 'tis out of Care  
† for

for Mankind; lest by being too *tame* and *trusting*, they shou'd easily be caught.

Impostors naturally speak the best of Human Nature, that they may the easier abuse it. These Gentlemen on the contrary speak the worst, and had rather they themselves shou'd be ill thought of, with the rest, than that a *Few* shou'd by Imposture prevail over *the Many*. For 'tis Opinion of *Goodness* that creates Easiness of *Trust*: and by *Trust* we are betray'd to *Power*; our very *Reason* being thus captivated by those in whom we come insensibly to have an *implicit Faith*. But supposing one another to be by Nature such very *Savages*; we shall take care to come less in one another's *Power*: and apprehending *Power* to be *insatiably coveted by all*, we shall the better fence against the *Evil*; not by giving all into one hand (as the *Champion* of

this Cause wou'd have us) but by a right Division and Ballance of Power, and by the Restraint of good Laws and Limitations, which may secure the publick Liberty.

Shou'd you therefore ask me, whether I really thought these Gentlemen were fully persuaded of the Principles they so often advance in Company : I shou'd tell you, that tho I wou'd not absolutely arraign the Gentlemens Sincerity ; yet there was something of Mystery in the Case, more than was imagin'd. The Reason perhaps why Men of Wit delight so much to espouse these paradoxical Systems, is not in truth that they are so fully satisfy'd with 'em ; but that they may the better oppose some other Systems, which by their fair Appearance have help'd, they think, to bring Mankind under Subjection. They imagine that by this *general Scepticism*, which they  
wou'd

wou'd introduce, they shall better deal with the dogmatical Spirit which prevails in some *particular Subjects*. And when they have accustom'd Men to bear Contradiction *in the main*, and hear the Nature of Things disputed of, *at large*; they conclude it may be safer to argue *separately*, upon certain Points in which they are not so well satisfy'd. So that from hence perhaps you may still better apprehend why, in Conversation, *the Spirit of Raillery* prevails so much, and Notions are taken up for no reason besides their being *odd*, and *out of the way*.

BUT let who will condemn *the Humour*: For my own part, I am in no such apprehension from this sceptical kind of Wit. Men indeed may, in a serious way, be so wrought on, and confounded, by different Modes of Opinion, different Systems and

Schemes *impos'd by Authority*, that they may wholly lose all Notion or Comprehension of *Truth*. I can easily apprehend what Effect *Awe* has over Mens Understandings. I can very well suppose Men may be frightened out of their Wits: But I have no apprehension they shou'd be laugh'd out of 'em. I can have no suspicion that in a pleasant way they shou'd be talk'd out of their Love for Society, or reason'd out of *common Sense*. A mannerly Wit can hurt no Cause that I am concern'd for: And Philosophical Speculations, politely manag'd, can never surely render us more unfociable or unciviliz'd. This is not the Quarter from whence I can possibly expect an Inroad of Savageness and Barbarity. And by the best of my Observation, I have learnt, that Virtue is never such a Sufferer by being *contested*, as by being *betray'd*. My Fear is not so  
much

much from its witty *Antagonists* who give it Exercise, and put it on its Defence, as from its tender *Nurses*, who are apt to over-lay it, and kill it, with Excess of Care and Cherishing.

I have known a Building, which by the *Officioufness* of the Workmen has been so *shor'd*, and *screw'd up*, on the side where they pretended it had a Leaning, that it has at last been turn'd the contrary way, and overthrown. There has something perhaps of this kind happen'd in *Morals*. Men have not been contented to shew the natural Advantages of Honesty and Virtue. They have rather lessen'd these, the better, as they thought, to advance another Foundation. They have made *Virtue* so mercenary a Thing, and have talk'd so much of its *Rewards*, that one can hardly tell what there is in it, after all, that can be worth rewarding.

For to be brib'd only, or terrify'd into an honest Practice, bespeaks little of real Honesty or Worth. We may make, it's true, whatever *Bargain* we think fit; and may bestow *in favour* what Overplus we please. But there can be no Excellence or Wisdom in voluntarily rewarding what is neither estimable nor deserving. And if Virtue be not really estimable in it self, I can see nothing estimable in following it for the sake of a *Bargain*.

If the Love of doing Good, be not, of it self, a *good and right Inclination*; I know not how there can be such a thing as *Goodness or Virtue*. If the Inclination be *right*; 'tis a perverting of it, to apply it solely to *the Reward*, and make us conceive such Wonders of the Grace and Favour that is to attend Virtue; when there is so little shewn of the intrinsic Worth or Value of the Thing it self.

I cou'd be almost tempted to think, that the true Reason why some of the most Heroick Virtues have so little notice taken of 'em in our Holy Religion, is because there wou'd have been no room left for *Disinterestedness*, had they been intitled to a share of that infinite Reward, which Providence has by Revelation assign'd to other Dutys. *Private Friendship*, and *Zeal for the Publick, and our Country*, are Virtues purely voluntary in a Christian. They are no essential Parts of his *Charity*. He is not so ty'd to the Affairs of this Life; nor is he oblig'd to enter into such Engagements with this World, as are of no help to him in acquiring a better. His Conversation is in Heaven. Nor has he occasion for such supernumerary Cares or Embarrassments here on Earth, as may obstruct his way thither, or retard him in the careful Task of working

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out

out his own Salvation. If nevertheless any Portion of Reward be reserv'd hereafter for the generous Part of a Patriot, or that of a *thorow Friend*; this is still behind the Curtain, and happily conceal'd from us; that we may be the more deserving of it, when it comes.

It appears indeed under the *Jewish Dispensation*, that each of these Virtues had their illustrious Examples, and were in some manner recommended to us as honourable, and worthy our Imitation. Even SAUL himself, as ill a Prince as he is represented, appears both living and dying to have been respected and prais'd for the Love he bore his native Country. And the Love which was so remarkable between his Son and his Successor, gives us a noble View of a disinterested Friendship, at least on one side. But the heroïck Virtue of these Persons had only the common

common Reward of Praise attributed to it, and cou'd not claim a future Recompence under a Religion which taught no future State, nor exhibited any Rewards or Punishments, besides such as were Temporal, and had respect to the written Law.

And thus the *Jews* as well as *Heathens* were left to their Philosophy, to be instructed in the sublime part of Virtue, and induc'd by Reason to that which was not injoin'd 'em by Command. No Premium or Penalty being inforc'd in these Cases, the disinterested Part subsisted, the Virtue was a *free Choice*, and the Magnanimity of the Act was left intire. He that wou'd be generous, had the Means. He that wou'd love a Friend, or serve his Country at the expence of his Life, might do it on fair Terms. DULCE ET DECORUM EST was his sole Reason. 'Twas *Inviting* and *Becoming*. 'Twas  
*Good*

*Good and Honest.* And that this is still a good Reason, and according to *Common Sense*, I will endeavour to satisfy you. For I shou'd think my self very ridiculous to be angry with any one for thinking me dishonest; if I cou'd give no account of my *Honesty*, nor shew upon what Principle I differ'd from a *Knave*.

THE *Roman* Satyrist may be thought more than ordinarily satyri- cal, when speaking of the *Nobility* and *Court*, he is so far from allowing them to be the Standard of Polite- ness and good Sense, that he makes 'em in a manner the Reverse.

*Rarus enim ferme Sensus communis  
in illâ  
Fortunâ*—————

Some

Some of the most ingenious Commentators, however, interpret this very differently from what is generally apprehended. They make this *Common Sense* of the Poet's, by a Greek Derivation, to signify *Sense of Publick Weal*, and of the *Common-Interest*; Love of the *Community* or *Society*, Natural Affection, Humanity, Obligingness, or that sort of *Civility* which rises from a just *Sense* of the *common Rights* of Mankind, and the *natural Equality* there is amongst those of the same Species.

And indeed if we consider the thing nicely, it must seem somewhat hard in the Poet, to have deny'd *Ability* and *Wit* to a Court such as that of ROME, even under a TIBERIUS, or a NERO. But for *Humanity*, or *Sense of Publick Good*, and the *common Interest* of Mankind, 'twas no such deep Satyr to question whether this was properly *the Spirit of a Court*.

*Court.* 'Twas difficult to apprehend what *Community* subsisted among Courtiers: or what *Publick* between an Absolute Prince and his Slave-Subjects. And for real *Society*, there cou'd be none between such as had no other *Sense* than that of *private Good*.

Our Poet therefore seems not so immoderate in his Censure; if we consider it is the *Heart*, rather than the *Head*, he takes to task: when reflecting on a *Court-Education*, he thinks it unapt to raise any Affection towards a *Country*; and looks upon young Princes, and Lords, as *the young Masters* of the World; who being indulg'd in all their Passions, and train'd up in all manner of Licentiousness, have that thorow Contempt and Disregard of Mankind, which Mankind in a manner deserves, where Arbitrary Power is permitted, and a Tyranny ador'd.

*Hec*

*Hæc satis ad Juvenem, quem nobis  
fama superbum  
Tradit, & inflatum, plenumque Ne-  
rone propinquo.*

A publick Spirit can come only from a social Feeling or Sense of Partnership with Human Kind. Now there are none so far from being Partners in this Sense, or Sharers in this common Affection, as they who scarcely know an Equal, nor consider themselves as subject to any Law of Fellowship or Community. And thus Morality and good Government go together. There is no real Love of Virtue, without the Knowledg of Publick Good. And where Absolute Power is, there is no PUBLICK.

They who live under a Tyranny, and have learnt to admire its Power as Sacred and Divine, are debauch'd as much in their Religion, as in their  
Morals.

Morals. *Publick Good*, according to their Apprehension, is as little the Measure or Rule of Government in *the Universe*, as in *the State*. They have scarce a Notion of what is Good or Just, but as *Will* and *Power* have made it. Omnipotence, they think, wou'd hardly be it self, were it not at liberty to dispense with the Laws of Equity, and change at pleasure the Standard of moral Rectitude.

But notwithstanding the Prejudices and Corruptions of this kind, 'tis plain there is something still of a *publick Principle*, even where it is most perverted and deprest'd. The worst of Magistracys, *the mere Despotick kind*, can shew sufficient Instances of Zeal and Affection towards it. Where no other Government is known, it seldom fails of having that Allegiance and Duty paid it, which is owing to a better Form. The Eastern Countrys, and many barbarous Nations, have

have been and still are Examples of this kind. The personal Love they bear their Prince, however severe towards them, may shew how natural an Affection there is towards Government and Order among Mankind. If Men have *really* no publick Parent, no Magistrate in common, to cherish and protect 'em, they will still *imagine* they have such a one; and, like new-born Creatures that have never seen their Dam, will fancy one for themselves, and apply (as by Nature prompted) to some like Form, for Favour and Protection. In the room of a *true Foster-Father*, and *Chief*, they will take after a *false one*; and in the room of a *legal Government* and *just Prince*, obey even a *Tyrant*, and endure a whole Lineage and Succession of such.

As for us BRITTONS, thank Heaven, we have a better *Sense* of Government deliver'd to us from our Ancestors. We have the Notion of

A PUBLICK, and A CONSTITUTION; how a *Legislative*, and how an *Executive* is model'd. We understand *Weight* and *Measure* in this kind, and can reason justly on the *Ballance of Power* and *Property*. The *Maxims* we draw from hence, are as evident as those in *Mathematicks*. Our increasing *Knowledg* shews us every day, more and more, what COMMON SENSE is in *Politicks*: And this must of necessity lead us to understand a like *Sense* in *Morals*; which is the *Foundation*.

'Tis ridiculous to say, there is any *Obligation* on *Man* to act sociably, or honestly, in a form'd *Government*; and not in that which is call'd *the State of Nature*. For, to speak in the fashionable *Language* of our modern *Philosophy*: "Society: being  
 " founded on a *Compact*; the *Sur-*  
 " render made of every *Man's* pri-  
 " vate unlimited *Right*, into the  
 " hands of the *Majority*, or such as

†

" the

“ the Majority shou’d appoint, was  
“ of free Choice, and by a Promise.”

Now *the Promise* it self was made in  
*the State of Nature*: And that which  
cou’d make a *Promise* obligatory in  
*the State of Nature*, must make *all*  
other Acts of Humanity as much  
our real Duty, and natural Part.

Thus *Faith, Justice, Honesty* and *Vir-*  
*tue*, must have been as early as the  
*State of Nature*, or they cou’d ne-  
ver have been *at all*. The Civil U-

nion, or Confederacy, cou’d never  
make *Right* or *Wrong*; if they sub-  
sisted not before. He who was free  
to any Villany before his Contract,  
will, and ought to make as free with  
his Contract, when he thinks fit.

The *natural Knave* has the same Rea-  
son to be a *Civil one*; and may dis-  
pense with his Politick Capacity as  
oft as he sees occasion: ’Tis only *his*  
*Word* stands in his way.—A Man is  
oblig’d to keep *his Word*. Why?

Because he has given *his Word* to keep

*it.*—Is not this a notable Account of the Original of moral Justice, and the Rise of Civil Government and Allegiance!

BUT to pass by these Cavils of a Philosophy, which speaks so much of *Nature* with so little Meaning; we may with Justice surely place it as a Principle, “That if any thing  
 “ be *natural*, in any Creature, or any  
 “ Kind; ’tis that which is *Preserva-*  
 “ *tive* of the Kind it self, and con-  
 “ ducing to its Welfare and Support.” If in original and pure Nature, it be *Wrong* to break a Promise, or be treacherous; ’tis as truly *Wrong* to be in any respect inhuman, or any way wanting in our natural part towards Human Kind. If *Eating* and *Drinking* be natural, *Herding* is so too. If any *Appetite* or *Sense* be natural, the *Sense of Fellowship* is the same. If there be any thing of Nature in that Affection which is be-  
 tween

draw you up a *Scheme* of the *Passions*, or pretend to shew you their *Genealogy* and *Relation*; how they are interwoven with one another, or interfere with our *Happiness* and *Interest*. 'Twou'd be out of the *Genius* and *Compass* of such a *Letter* as this, to frame a just *Model*; by which you might, with an accurate *View*, observe what *Proportion* the *friendly* and *natural Affections* seem to bear in this *Order of Architecture*.

Modern *Projectors*, I know, wou'd willingly rid their *Hands* of these *natural Materials*; and wou'd fain build after a more uniform way. They wou'd new frame the *Human Heart*; and have a mighty *Fancy* to reduce all its *Motions*, *Ballances* and *Weights*, to that one *Principle* and *Foundation* of a cool and deliberate *Selfishness*. Men, it seems, are unwilling to think they can be so outwitted, and impos'd on by *Nature*, as to be made to serve her *Purposes*,

poses; rather than their own. They are ashamed to be drawn thus out of themselves, and forc'd from what they esteem their *true Interest*.

There has been in all times a sort of narrow-minded Philosophers, who have thought to set this Difference to rights, by conquering *Nature* in themselves. A Primitive Father and Founder among these, saw well this Power of *Nature*, and understood it so far, that he earnestly exhorted his Followers neither to beget Children, nor serve their Country. There was no dealing with *Nature*, it seems, while these alluring Objects stood in the way. Relations, Friends, Countrymen, Laws, Politick Constitutions, the Beauty of Order and Government, and the Interest of Society and Mankind, were Objects which, he well saw, wou'd naturally raise a stronger Affection than any that was grounded upon the narrow bottom of mere Self. His Advice, therefore, not to  
marry,

marry, nor engage at all in the Publick, was wise, and suitable to his Design. There was no way to be truly a Disciple of this Philosophy, but to leave Family, Friends, Country, and Society, *to cleave to it.*— And who wou'd not, if it were *Happiness* to do so?—The Philosopher, however, was *kind*, in telling us his Thought. 'Twas a Token of his *Fatherly Love* of Mankind.

*Tu Pater, & rerum Inventor ! Tu  
Patria nobis  
Suppeditas præcepta !*

But the Revivers of this Philosophy in latter Days, appear to be of a lower Genius. They seem to have understood less of this force of Nature, and have thought to alter *the Thing*, by shifting a Name. They wou'd so explain all the social Passions, and natural Affections, as to denominate them of *the selfish kind*. Thus Civility, Hospitality, Humanity

nity

nity towards Strangers or People in Distress, is but a more deliberate Selfishness. An honest Heart is only a more cunning one: and Honesty and good Nature, a more deliberate, or better regulated Self-Love. The Love of Kindred, Children and Posterity, is purely Love of Self, and of one's own Blood: As if, by this Reckoning, all Mankind were not as well included; All being of one Blood, and join'd by Inter-Marriages and Alliances; as they have been transplanted in Colonys, and mix'd one with another. And thus Love of one's Country, and Love of Mankind, must also be Self-Love. Magnanimity and Courage, no doubt, are Modifications of this universal Self-Love. For Courage (says our modern Philosopher) is constant Anger. And all Men (says a witty Poet) wou'd be Cowards if they durst.

That the Poet, and the Philosopher both, were Cowards, may be yielded perhaps without Dispute. They

They may have spoken the best of their Knowledg. But for *true Courage*, it has so little to do with *Anger*; that there is always the strongest Suspicion against it, where this Passion is highest. The *true Courage* is the *cool and calm*. The bravest of Men have the least of a brutal bullying Insolence; and in the very time of Danger are found the most serene, pleasant, and free. Rage, we know, can make a Coward forget himself and fight. But what is done in *Fury*, or *Anger*, can never be plac'd to the Account of *Courage*. Were it otherwise, Womankind might claim to be the *stoutest* Sex: For their Hatred and Anger have ever been allow'd to be the strongest and most lasting.

Other Authors there have been of a yet inferiour Kind: a sort of Distributers and petty Retailers of this Wit; who have run Changes, and Divisions, without end, upon this Article of *Self-Love*. You have the

same Thought spun out a hundred Ways, and drawn into Motto's, and Devises, to set forth this Riddle; That "act as disinterestedly or generously as you please, Self still is at the bottom, and nothing else." Now if these Gentlemen, who delight so much in the Play of Words, but care not to grapple with Definitions, wou'd tell us only what *Self-Interest* was, and determine *Happiness*, and *Good*, there wou'd be an End of this Enigmatical Wit. For in this we shou'd all agree, that Happiness was to be pursu'd, and in fact was always sought after: but whether found in *following Nature*, and giving way to *common Affection*; or in suppressing it, and turning every Passion towards *private Advantage*, a narrow *Self-End*, or the Preservation of *mere Life*; this wou'd be the matter in Debate between us. The Question wou'd not be; Who lov'd himself; or Who *not*: But who lov'd  
† and

and serv'd himself the *rightest*, and after the truest manner.

'Tis the height of Wisdom, no doubt, to be rightly *selfish*. And to love Life, as far as Life is good, belongs as much to Courage as to Discretion. But a wretched Life is no wise Man's Wish. To be without *Honesty*, is, in effect, to be without *natural Affection* or *Sociableness* of any kind. And a Life without *natural Affection*, *Friendship*, or *Sociableness*, wou'd be found a wretched one, were it to be try'd. 'Tis as these Feelings and Affections are intrinsically valuable and worthy, that *Self-Interest* is to be rated and esteem'd. A Man is by nothing so much himself, as by his *Temper*, and the *Character* of his *Passions* and *Affections*. If he loses what is manly and worthy in these, he is as much lost to himself as when he loses his Memory and Understanding. The least step into Villany or Baseness, changes

the Character and Value of a Life. He who wou'd preserve Life at any rate, must abuse *himself* more than any one can abuse him. And if Life be not a dear Thing indeed, he who has refus'd to live a Villain, and has prefer'd Death to a base Action, has been a Gainer by the Bargain.

'TIS well for you (my Friend!) that in your Education you have had little to do with the *Philosophy*, or *Philosophers* of our Days. A good Poet, and an honest Historian, may afford Learning enough for a *Gentleman*. And such a one, whilst he reads these Authors as his Diversion, will have a truer relish of their sense, and understand 'em better, than a *Pedant*, with all his Labours, and the Assistance of his Volumes of Commentators. I am sensible, that of old 'twas the Custom to send the Youth of highest Quality to *Philosophers* to be form'd. 'Twas in their Schools,

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in

in their Companys and by their Precepts and Example, that the illustrious Pupils were inur'd to Hardship, and exercis'd in the severest Courses of Temperance and Self-denial. By such an early Discipline, they were fitted for the Command of others; to maintain their Country's Honour in War, rule wisely in the State, and fight against Luxury and Corruption in times of Prosperity and Peace. If any of these Arts are comprehended in *University-Learning*, 'tis well. But as some Universitys in the World are now model'd, they seem not so very effectual to these Purposes, nor so fortunate in preparing for a right Practice of the World, or a just Knowledg of Men and Things. Had you been thorow-pac'd in the *Ethicks* or *Politicks* of the Schools, I shou'd never have thought of writing a word to you upon *common Sense*, or *the Love of Mankind*. I shou'd not have cited the Poet's

*Dulce & Decorum.* Nor, if I had made a Character for you, as he for his Friend, shou'd I have crown'd it with his

*Non ille pro caris Amicis,  
Aut Patria timidus perire.*

Our Philosophy now-a-days runs after the manner of that able Sophister, who said, *Skin for Skin: All that a Man has, will he give for his Life.* 'Tis Orthodox Divinity, as well as sound Philosophy, with some Men, to rate *Life* by the Number and Exquisite-ness of *the pleasing Sensations.* These they constantly set in opposition to *dry Virtue and Honesty.* And upon this foot, they think it proper to call all Men Fools, who wou'd risk a *Life*, or part with any of these *pleasing Sensations*; except on the Condition of being repaid in the same Coin, and with good Interest into the Bargain. Thus, it seems,

we

we are to learn Virtue by Usury ; and enhance the Value of *Life*, and of the *Pleasures of Sense*, in order to be wise, and to *live well*.

But you, my Friend, are stubborn in this Point : and instead of being brought to think mournfully of Death, or to repine at the Loss of what you may sometimes hazard by your Honesty, you can laugh at such Maxims as these ; and divert your self with the improv'd Selfishness, and Philosophical Cowardice of these fashionable Moralists. You will not be taught to value *Life*, at their rate, or degrade H O N E S T Y as they do, who make it only a *Name*. You are persuaded there is something more in the Thing than *Fashion* or *Applause* ; that W O R T H and M E R I T are substantial, and no way variable by *Fancy* or *Will* ; and that H O N O U R is as much it self, when acting *by it self*, and *unseen*, as when *seen*, and applauded by all the World.

Shou'd One, who had the Countenance of a Gentleman, ask me, "Why I wou'd avoid being *nasty*, "when no body was by?" In the first place I shou'd be fully satisfy'd that he himself was a very nasty Gentleman who cou'd ask this Question; and that it wou'd be a hard matter for me to make him ever conceive what *true Cleanliness* was. However, I might be contented perhaps to give him a slight Answer, and say, " 'Twas because I had a "Nose." Shou'd he trouble me further, and ask, "What if I had a "Cold? Or what if naturally I had "no such nice Smell?" I might answer perhaps, "That I car'd as "little to see my self *nasty*, as that "others shou'd see me so." But what if it were *in the Dark*? Why tho I had neither Nose, nor Eyes, my Sense of the Thing wou'd be still the same; my Nature wou'd rise at the Thought of what was for-  
did :

did: or if it did not; I shou'd have a wretched Nature indeed, and *hate my self* for a Beast: *Honour my self* I never cou'd; whilst I had no better a sense of what I ow'd my self, and what in reality became me, as a *human Creature*.

Much in the same manner have I heard it ask'd, *Why shou'd a Man be honest in the Dark?* What a Man must be to ask this Question, I won't say. But for Those who have no better a Reason for being *honest* than the Fear of a *Gibbet* or a *Fail*; I shou'd not, I confess, much covet their Company, or Acquaintance. And if any Guardian of mine who had kept his Trust, and given me back my Estate when I came of Age, had been found to have acted thus, thro *Fear* only of what might happen to him; I shou'd for my own part, no doubt, continue civil to him: but for my Opinion of his Worth, it wou'd be the same as the  
*Pythian*

Pythian God had of his Votary, who devoutly fear'd him, and therefore restor'd to a Friend what had been deposited in his Hands.

*Reddidit ergo metu, non moribus;  
 & tamen omnem  
 Vocem adyti dignam templo, veramque  
 probavit,  
 Extinctus totâ pariter cum prole do-  
 moque.*

I know very well that many Services to the Publick are done merely for the sake of a *Gratuity*; and that *Informers* in particular, are to be taken care of, and sometimes made *Pensioners of State*. But I must beg pardon for the particular Thoughts I may have of these Gentlemens Merit; and shall never bestow my Esteem on any other than the *voluntary Discoverers of Villany*, and *heartly Prosecutors of their Country's Interest*. And in this respect, I know  
 nothing

nothing greater or nobler than the undertaking and managing some important Accufation ; by which some high Criminal of State, or some form'd Body of Conspirators againſt the Publick, may be arraign'd and brought to Punifhment, thro the honeſt Zeal and publick Affection of a private Man.

I know too, that the mere Vulgar of Mankind often ſtand in need of ſuch a rectifying Object as *the Gallows* before their Eyes. Yet I have no belief, that any Man of a liberal Education, or common Honesty, ever needed to have recourſe to this Idea in his Mind, the better to reſtrain him from playing the Knave. And if a SAINT had no other Virtue than what was rais'd in him by the ſame Objects of Reward and Punifhment, in a more diſtant State ; I know not whoſe Love or Eſteem he might gain beſides : but for my own part, I ſhou'd never think him worthy of mine.

*Nec*

*Nec furtum feci, nec fugi, si mihi  
dicat*

*Servus: Habes pretium, loris non ure-  
ris, aio.*

*Non hominem occidi: Non pasces in  
cruce corvos.*

*Sum Bonus & Frugi: Renuit, negat  
atque Sabellus.*

BY this time (my Friend!) you may possibly, I hope, be satisfy'd, that as I am in earnest in defending *Raillery*, so I can be sober too in the Use of it. 'Tis in reality a serious Study, to learn to temper and regulate that *Humour* which Nature has given us, as a more lenitive Remedy against Vice, and a kind of Specifick against Superstition and Melancholy Delusion. There is a great difference between seeking how to raise a Laugh from every thing; and seeking, in every thing, what justly may

may

may be laugh'd at. For nothing is ridiculous, but what is deform'd: Nor is any thing proof against *Raillery*, but what is handsom and just. And therefore 'tis the hardest thing in the World, to deny *Fair HONESTY* the use of this Weapon, which can never bear an Edge against herself, and bears against every thing that is contrary.

If the very *Italian* Buffoons were to give us the Rule in this Case, we shou'd learn by them, that in their lowest and most scurrilous way of Wit, there was nothing so successfully to be play'd upon, as the Passions of Cowardice and Avarice. One may defy the World to turn real *Bravery* or *Generosity* into Ridicule. A Glutton, and a mere Sensualist, is as ridiculous as the other two Characters. Nor can an unaffected *Temperance* be made the Subject of Contempt to any besides the grossest and most contemptible of Mankind. Now these

*three*

*three* Ingredients make up a virtuous Character : as *the contrary three* a vicious one. How therefore can we possibly make a Jest of Honesty?— To laugh *both* ways, is nonsensical. And if the Ridicule lie against *Sottishness, Avarice, and Cowardice*; you see the Consequence. A Man must be soundly ridiculous, who, with all the Wit in the World, wou'd go about to ridicule Wisdom, or laugh at Honesty, or Good Manners.

A Man of thorow *Good-Breeding*, whatever else he be, is incapable of doing a rude or brutal Action. He never *deliberates* in this case, or considers of the Matter by prudential Rules of Self-Interest and Advantage. He acts from his Nature, in a manner necessarily, and without Reflection: and if he did not, it were impossible for him to answer his Character, or be found that truly well-bred Man, on every occasion. 'Tis the same with  
the

the *Honest Man*. He can't deliberate in the Case of a plain Villany. A *Plum* is no Temptation to him. He likes and loves himself too well, to change Hearts with one of those corrupt Miscreants, who amongst 'em, gave that name to one of those round Sums which they had gain'd by Rapine and Plunder of the Commonwealth. He who wou'd enjoy a *Freedom of Mind*, and be truly *Possessor of himself*, must be above the Thought of stooping to what is villainous or base. He who has a Heart to stoop, must quit the Thought of *Manliness, Resolution, Friendship, Merit,* and a *Character with himself and others*: But to affect these Enjoyments, or Advantages, together with the other; to pretend to enjoy *Society*, and a *free Mind*, in company with a *knavish Heart*, is as ridiculous as the way of Children, who first eat their Cake, and then cry for it. When Men begin to *deliberate* about Dishonesty, and  
finding

finding it go lefs against their Stomach, ask, “Why they shou’d stick  
“at a good Piece of Knavery for a  
“good Sum?” They shou’d be  
told, as Children, that *They can’t eat  
their Cake, and have it.*

When Men, indeed, are become  
*accomplish’d Knaves*, they are past cry-  
*ing for their Cake.* They know *Them-*  
*selves*, and are *known* by Mankind.  
’Tis not *These* who are so much en-  
vy’d or admir’d. The *moderate* Kind  
are the more taking with us. Yet  
had we Sense, we shou’d consider ’tis  
in reality the *thorow profligate Knave*,  
the very *compleat unnatural Villain* a-  
lone, who can any way bid for Hap-  
piness with the *Honest Man*. True  
Interest is wholly on *one* side, or *the*  
*other*. All between is Inconsistency,  
Irresolution, Remorse, Vexation, and  
an Ague-Fit : from hot to cold ;  
from one Passion to another quite  
contrary ; a perpetual Discord of  
Life ; and an alternate Disquiet and  
Self-

Self-Dislike. The only Rest or Repose must be thro' *one*, determin'd, considerate Resolution: which when once taken, must be courageously kept; and the Passions and Affections brought under Obedience to it; the Temper steel'd and harden'd to the Mind; the Disposition to the Judgment. Both must agree; else all must be Disturbance and Confusion. So that to think with one's self, "Why may not one do this little Villany, or commit this *one* Treachery, and but for *once*;" is the most ridiculous Imagination in the world, and contrary to COMMON SENSE. For a common honest Man, whilst left to himself, and undisturb'd by Philosophy and subtle Reasonings about his Interest, gives no other Answer to the Thought of Villany, than that *he can't find in his heart* to set about it, or conquer the natural Aversion he has to it. And this is *natural*, and *just*.

The Truth is; as Notions stand now in the World, with respect to Morals; Honesty is like to gain little by Philosophy, or deep Speculations of any kind. In the main, 'tis best to stick to *Common Sense*, and go no further. Mens first Thoughts, in this matter, are generally better than their second: their natural Notions better than those refin'd by Study, or Consultation with *Casuists*. According to common Speech, as well as common Sense, *Honesty is the best Policy*: But according to refin'd Sense, the only *well-advis'd* Persons, as to this World, are *errant Knaves*; and they alone are thought to serve themselves, who serve their Passions, and indulge their loosest Appetites and Desires.—Such, it seems, are *the Wise*, and such *the Wisdom of this World*!

An ordinary Man talking of a vile Action, in a way of *Common Sense*, says naturally and heartily,

‡

“ He

“ He wou’d not do the thing for  
“ all the World.” But *Speculative*  
*Men* find great Modifications in the  
Case ; many ways of Evasion ; ma-  
ny Remedys ; many Alleviations. A  
good Gift *rightly* apply’d ; a *right* Me-  
thod of suing out a Pardon ; good  
Alms-Houses, and Charitable Foun-  
dations erected for *right* Worshippers ;  
and a good Zeal shewn for the *right*  
*Belief*, may sufficiently atone for *one*  
*wrong Practice* ; especially when it is  
such as raises a Man to a considerable  
power of *doing Good*, and serving *the*  
*true Cause*.

Many a good Estate, many a high  
Station has been gain’d upon such a  
foot as this. Some *Crowns* too may  
have been purchas’d on these terms :  
and some great *Emperors* (if I mis-  
take not) there have been of old,  
who were much assisted by these or  
the like Principles ; and in return were  
not ingrateful to the Cause and Parry  
which had assisted ’em. The For-

gers of such Morals have been amply endow'd : and the World has paid roundly for its Philosophy ; since the original plain Principles of Humanity, and the simple honest Precepts of *Peace* and *mutual Love*, have, by a sort of spiritual Chymists, been so sublimated, as to become the highest Corrosives ; and passing thro their Limbecks, have yielded the strongest Spirit of *mutual Hatred* and *malignant Persecution*.

BUT our Humours (my Friend) incline us not to melancholy Reflections. Let the *solemn* Reprovers of Vice proceed in the manner most suitable to their Genius, and Character. I am ready to congratulate with 'em on the Success of their Labours, in that authoritative way which is allow'd 'em. I know not in the mean while, why others may not be allow'd to *ridicule* Folly, and recommend Wisdom and Virtue (if possibly they can) in a way of Pleasantry

santry and Mirth. I know not why Poets, or such as write chiefly for the Entertainment of themselves and others, may not be allow'd this Privilege. And if it be the Complaint of our *standing Reformers*, that they are not heard so well by *the Gentlemen of Fashion*; if they exclaim against those airy Wits who fly to *Ridicule* as a Protection, and make successful Sallys from that Quarter; why shou'd it be deny'd one, who is but a *Volunteer* in this Cause, to engage the Adversary on his own Terms, and expose himself willingly to such Attacks, on the Condition only of being allow'd *fair Play* in the same kind?

By *Gentlemen of Fashion*, I understand those to whom a natural good Genius, or the Force of good Education, has given a *Sense* of what is *naturally graceful and becoming*. Some by mere Nature, others by Art and Practice, are Masters of an Ear in Musick, an Eye in Painting, a Fancy

in the ordinary things of Ornament and Grace, a Judgment in Proportions of all kinds, and a Taste in most of those Subjects which make the Amusement and Delight of the ingenious People of the World. Let such Gentlemen as these be as extravagant as they please, or as irregular in their Morals; they must at the same time discover their Inconsistency, live at variance with themselves, and in contradiction to that Principle, on which they ground their highest Pleasure and Entertainment.

Of all other Beautys which *Virtuosos* run after, *Poets* celebrate, *Musicians* sing, and *Architects* or *Artists*, of whatever kind, describe or form; the most delightful, the most engaging and pathetick, is that which is drawn from *Life* and from the *Passions*. Nothing affects the Heart like that which is *from it self*, and of its own nature; such as the *Beauty of Sentiments*; the *Grace of Actions*; the *Turn*  
of

withstand the force of *Beauty*, in other kinds. Every one is a *Virtuoso*, of a higher or lower degree: Every one pursues a *GRACE*, and courts a *VENUS* of one kind or another. The *Venustum*, the *Honestum*, the *Decorum* of Things, will force its way. They who refuse to give it Scope in the nobler Subjects of a rational and moral kind, will find its Prevalency elsewhere, in an inferiour Order of Things. They who overlook the *main Springs* of Action, and despise the Thought of Numbers and Proportion in a *Life at large*, will in the mean *Particulars* of it, be no less taken up, and engag'd; as either in the Study of common Arts, or in the Care and Culture of mere mechanic Beautys. The Models of Houses, Buildings, and their accompanying Ornaments; the Plans of Gardens and their Compartments; the ordering of Walks, Plantations, Avenues; and a thousand other Symmetrys,

metrys, will succeed in the room of that happier and higher Symmetry and Order of a Mind. The *Species* of *Fair, Noble, Handsome*, will discover it self on a thousand Occasions, and in a thousand Subjects. The *Specter* still will haunt us, in some Shape or other : and when driven from our cool Thoughts, and frightened from *the Closet*, will meet us even *at Court*, and fill our Heads with Dreams of Grandure, Titles, Honours, and a false Magnificence and Beauty ; to which we are ready to sacrifice our highest Pleasure and Ease ; and for the sake of which, we become the merest Drudges, and most abject Slaves.

The Men of Pleasure, who seem the greatest Contemners of this Philosophical Beauty, are forc'd often to confess her Charms. They can as heartily as others commend *Honesty* ; and are as much struck with the Beauty of a *generous Part*. They  
admire

admire the Thing it self; tho not the Means. And, if possible, they wou'd so order it, as to make Probity and Luxury agree. But the Rules of Harmony will not permit it. The Dissonancys are too strong. However the Attempts of this kind, are not unpleasant to observe. For tho some of the Voluptuous are fordid Pleaders for Baseness and Corruption of every kind: yet others, more generous, endeavour to keep Measures with Honesty; and understanding Pleasure better, are for bringing it under some Rule. They condemn *this* manner: they praise *the other*. "So far was *right*: but  
" further, *wrong*. Such a Case was  
" allowable: but such a one, not to  
" be admitted." They introduce a *Justice*, and an *Order* in their Pleasures. They wou'd bring *Reason* to be of their Party, account in some manner for their Lives, and form themselves to some kind of Consonancy,

nancy, and Agreement: Or if they find this impracticable on certain Terms, they wou'd chuse to sacrifice their other Pleasures to those which arise from a generous Behaviour, a Regularity of Conduct, and a Consistency of Life and Manners:

*Et veræ Numerosque Modosque ediscere vitæ.*

Other Occasions will put us upon this Thought: but chiefly a strong View of Merit, in a generous Character, oppos'd to some detestably vile one. Hence it is that among Poets, the Satyrists seldom fail in doing Justice to Virtue. Nor are any of the nobler Poets false to this Cause. Even modern Wits, whose Turn is all towards Gallantry and Pleasure, when bare-fac'd Villany stands in their way, and brings the contrary Species in view, can sing in passionate Strains  
the

the Praises of plain *Honesty*.

When we are highly Friends with the World, and prosperous in the possession of other Beautys; we may perchance, as is usual, despise this sober Mistress. But when we see, in the issue, what Riot and Excess naturally produce; when by *Luxury's* means, and for the service of vile Interests, Knaves, we see, are advanc'd, and the vilest of Men are prefer'd before the honestest; we then behold VIRTUE in a new Light, and by the help of such a Foil, can discern the Beauty of *Honesty*, and the reality of those Charms, which before we understood not to be either natural, or powerful.

AND thus, after all, the most natural Beauty in the World is *Honesty*, and *Moral Truth*. For all Beauty is TRUTH. True Features make the Beauty of a Face; and true Proportions