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John Grant
Duidorat

REFLECTIONS

UPON

LAUGHTER,

AND

REMARKS

UPON

The FABLE of the BEES.

BY

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CAREFULLY CORRECTED.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following papers were originally publiſhed, in the Dublin Journal, by the late Mr. ARBUCKLE. Concerning the merit of them, that ingenious author, at the cloſe of his work, expreſſes himſelf in the following manner.——"The learned "and ingenious Author of the *In-* "*quiry into the original of our ideas* "*of beauty and virtue*, will there- "fore, I hope, excuſe me, if, to do "juſtice to myſelf, I am obliged to "name him for the three papers up- "on LAUGHTER, which are writ- "ten in ſo curious and new a ſtrain of "thinking; and alſo for the forty "fifth, forty ſixth, and forty ſeventh "papers, containing ſo many judici- "ous REMARKS on that pernicious "Book, *The Fable of the Bees.*"

REFLECTIONS UPON LAUGHTER.

——*Rapias in jus malis ridentem alienis.*
HOR.

To HIBERNICUS.

THERE is ſcarce any thing that concerns human nature, which does not deſerve to be inquired into: I ſend you ſome thoughts upon a very common ſubject, LAUGHTER; which you may publiſh, if you think they can be of any uſe, to help us to underſtand what ſo often happens in our own minds, and to know the uſe for which it is deſigned in the conſtitution of our nature.

ARISTOTLE, in his Art of Poetry, has very juſtly explained the nature of one ſpecies of Laughter, viz. the Ridiculing of Perſons; the occaſion or object of which he tells us, is Ἁμάρτημά τι καὶ αἶσχος ἀνώδυνον καὶ οὐ φθαρτικόν; "Some miſtake, or ſome turpitude, without "grievous pain, and not very pernicious or "deſtructive." But this he never intended as a general account of all ſorts of Laughter.

But Mr. Hobbes, who very much owes his character of a Philoſopher to his aſſuming poſitive ſolemn airs, which he uſes moſt when he is going to aſſert ſome palpable abſurdity, or ſome ill-natured nonſenſe, aſſures us, that "Laughter is nothing elſe but ſudden glory, "ariſing from ſome ſudden conception of ſome "eminency in ourſelves, by compariſon with "the infirmity of others, or with our own for-"merly: for men laugh at the follies of them-"ſelves paſt, when they come ſuddenly to re-"membrance, except they bring with them "any preſent diſhonour."

This notion the authors of the Spectators, No 47, have adopted from Mr. Hobbes. That bold author having carried on his inquiries, in a ſingular manner, without regard to authorities; and having fallen into a way of ſpeaking, which was much more intelligible than that of the Schoolmen, ſoon became agreeable to many free wits of his age. His grand view was to deduce all human actions from Self-Love: by ſome bad fortune he has over-looked every thing which is generous or kind in mankind; and repreſents men in that light in which a thorow knave or coward beholds them, ſuſpecting all friendſhip, love, or ſocial affection, of hypocriſy, or ſelfiſh deſign or fear.

The learned world has often been told that Puffendorf had ſtrongly imbibed Hobbes's firſt principles,

principles, although he draws much better conſequences from them; and this laſt author, as he is certainly much preferable to the generality of the Schoolmen, in diſtinct intelligible reaſoning, has been made the grand inſtructor in morals to all who have of late given themſelves to that ſtudy: hence it is that the old notions of natural affections, and kind inſtincts, the ſenſus communis, the decorum, and honeſtum, are almoſt baniſhed out of our books of morals; we muſt never hear of them in any of our lectures for fear of innate ideas: all muſt be intereſt, and ſome ſelfiſh view; Laughter itſelf muſt be a joy from the ſame ſpring.

If Mr. Hobbes's notion be juſt, then, firſt, there can be no Laughter on any occaſion where we make no compariſon of ourſelves to others, or of our preſent ſtate to a worſe ſtate, or where we do not obſerve ſome ſuperiority of ourſelves above ſome other thing: and again, it muſt follow, that every ſudden appearance of ſuperiority over another muſt excite Laughter, when we attend to it. If both theſe concluſions be falſe, the notion from whence they are drawn muſt be ſo too.

First then, that Laughter often ariſes without any imagined ſuperiority of ourſelves, may appear from one great fund of pleaſantry, the Parody, and Burleſque Alluſion; which move

Laugh-

Laughter in thoſe who may have the higheſt veneration for the writing alluded to, and alſo admire the wit of the perſon who makes the alluſion. Thus many a profound admirer of the machinery in Homer and Virgil has laughed heartily at the interpoſition of Pallas, in Hudibras, to ſave the bold Talgol from the knight's piſtol, preſented to the outſide of his ſkull:

But Pallas came in ſhape of ruſt,
And 'twixt the ſpring and hammer thruſt
Her Gorgon ſhield, which made the cock
Stand ſtiff, as 'twere transform'd to ſtock.

And few, who read this, imagine themſelves ſuperior either to Homer or Butler; we indeed generally imagine ourſelves ſuperior in ſenſe to the valorous knight, but not in this point, of firing ruſty piſtols. And pray, would any mortal have laughed, had the poet told, in a ſimple unadorned manner, that his knight attempted to ſhoot Talgol, but his piſtol was ſo ruſty that it would not give fire? and yet this would have given us the ſame ground of ſudden glory from our ſuperiority over the doughty knight.

AGAIN, to what do we compare ourſelves, or imagine ourſelves ſuperior, when we laugh at this fantaſtical imitation of the poetical imagery, and ſimilitudes of the morning?

The ſun, long ſince, had in the lap
Of Thetis taken out his nap;

And,

And, like a lobſter boil'd, the morn
From black to red began to turn.

MANY an orthodox Scotch Preſbyterian, which ſect few accuſe of diſregard for the holy ſcriptures, has been put to it to preſerve his gravity, upon hearing the application of Scripture made by his countryman Dr. Pitcairn, as he obſerved a croud in the ſtreets about a maſon, who had fallen along with his ſcaffold, and was over-whelmed with the ruins of the chimney which he had been building, and which fell immediately after the fall of the poor maſon; "Bleſſed are the dead which die in the "Lord, for they reſt from their labours, and "their works follow them." And yet few imagine themſelves ſuperior either to the apoſtle or the doctor. Their ſuperiority to the poor maſon, I am ſure, could never have raiſed ſuch Laughter, for this occurred to them before the doctor's conſolation. In this caſe no opinion of ſuperiority could have occaſioned the Laughter, unleſs we ſay, that people imagined themſelves ſuperior to the doctor in religion: but an imagined ſuperiority to a doctor in religion, is not a matter ſo rare as to raiſe ſudden joy; and with people who value religion, the impiety of another is no matter of Laughter.

IT is ſaid, "* That when men of wit make "us

* See the Spectator.

" us laugh, it is by repreſenting ſome oddneſs " or infirmity in themſelves, or others." Thus alluſions made on trifling occaſions, to the moſt ſolemn figured ſpeeches of great writers, contain ſuch an obvious impropriety, that we imagine ourſelves incapable of ſuch miſtakes as the alluder ſeemingly falls into; ſo that in this caſe too, there is an imagined ſuperiority. But in anſwer to this, we may obſerve, that we often laugh at ſuch alluſions, when we are conſcious, that the perſon who raiſes the laugh knows abundantly the juſteſt propriety of ſpeaking, and knows, at preſent, the oddneſs and impropriety of his own alluſion as well as any in company; nay, laughs at it himſelf: we often admire his wit in ſuch alluſions, and ſtudy to imitate him in it, as far as we can. Now, what ſudden ſenſe of glory, or joy in our ſuperiority, can ariſe from obſerving a quality in another, which we ſtudy to imitate, I cannot imagine. I doubt, if men compared themſelves with the alluder, whom they ſtudy to imitate, they would rather often grow grave or ſorrowful.

NAY, farther, this is ſo far from truth, that imagined ſuperiority moves our Laughter, that one would imagine from ſome inſtances the very contrary: for if Laughter aroſe from our imagined ſuperiority, then, the more that any object appeared inferior to us, the greater would

would be the jeſt; and the nearer any one came to an equality with us, or reſemblance of our actions, the leſs we ſhould be moved with Laughter. But we ſee, on the contrary, that ſome ingenuity in dogs and monkeys, which comes near to ſome of our own arts, very often makes us merry; whereas their duller actions, in which they are much below us, are no matter of jeſt at all. Whence the author in the Spectator drew his obſervation, "That the actions of beaſts, which move our "Laughter, bear a reſemblance to a human "blunder," I confeſs I cannot gueſs; I fear the very contrary is true, that their imitation of our grave wiſe actions would be fitteſt to raiſe mirth in the obſerver.

The ſecond part of the argument, that opinion of ſuperiority ſuddenly incited in us does not move Laughter, ſeems the moſt obvious thing imaginable. If we obſerve an object in pain while we are at eaſe, we are in greater danger of weeping than laughing: and yet here is occaſion for Hobbes's ſudden joy. It muſt be a very merry ſtate in which a fine gentleman is, when well dreſſed, in his coach, he paſſes our ſtreets, where he will ſee ſo many ragged beggars, and porters and chairmen ſweating at their labour, on every ſide of him. It is a great pity that we had not an infirmary or lazar-houſe to retire to in cloudy weather,

ther, to get an afternoon of Laughter at theſe inferior objects: Strange! that none of our Hobbiſts baniſh all Canary birds and ſquirrels, and lap-dogs and pugs, and cats out of their houſes, and ſubſtitute in their places aſſes, and owls, and ſnails, and oyſters, to be merry upon. From theſe they might have higher joys of ſuperiority, than from thoſe with whom we now pleaſe ourſelves. Pride, or an high opinion of ourſelves, muſt be entirely inconſiſtent with gravity; emptineſs muſt always make men ſolemn in their behaviour; and conſcious virtue and great abilities muſt always be upon the ſneer. An orthodox believer, who is very ſure that he is in the true way to ſalvation, muſt always be merry upon heretics, to whom he is ſo much ſuperior in his own opinion; and no other paſſion but mirth ſhould ariſe upon hearing of their heterodoxy. In general, all men of true ſenſe, and reflection, and integrity, of great capacity for buſineſs, and penetration into the tempers and intereſts of men, muſt be the merrieſt little grigs imaginable; Democritus muſt be the ſole leader of all the philoſophers; and perpetual Laughter muſt ſucceed into the place of the long beard,

——*To be the grace*
Both of our wiſdom and our face.

It is pretty ſtrange, that the authors whom we

we mentioned above, have never diſtinguiſhed between the words Laughter and Ridicule: this laſt is but one particular ſpecies of the former, when we are laughing at the follies of others; and in this ſpecies there may be ſome pretence to allege that ſome imagined ſuperiority may occaſion it; but then there are innumerable inſtances of Laughter, where no perſon is ridiculed; nor does he who laughs compare himſelf to any thing whatſoever. Thus how often do we laugh at ſome out-of-the-way deſcription of natural objects, to which we never compare our ſtate at all. I fancy few have ever read the City Shower without a ſtrong diſpoſition to Laughter; and inſtead of imagining any ſuperiority, are very ſenſible of a turn of wit in the author which they deſpair of imitating: thus what relation to our affairs has that ſimile in Hudibras,

Inſtead of trumpet and of drum,
Which makes the warriour's ſtomach come,
And whets mens valour ſharp, like beer
By thunder turn'd to vinegar.

The Laughter is not here raiſed againſt either valour or martial muſic, but merely by the wild reſemblance of a mean event.

And then farther, even in ridicule itſelf there muſt be ſomething elſe than bare opinion to raiſe it, as may appear from this, that if

any one would relate in the ſimpleſt manner theſe very weakneſſes of others, their extravagant paſſions, their abſurd opinions, upon which the man of wit would rally, ſhould we hear the beſt vouchers of all the facts alleged, we ſhall not be diſpoſed to Laughter by bare narration; or ſhould one do a real important injury to another, by taking advantage of his weakneſs, or by ſome pernicious fraud let us ſee another's ſimplicity, this is no matter of Laughter: and yet theſe important cheats do really diſcover our ſuperiority over the perſon cheated, more than the trifling impoſtures of our humouriſts. The opinion of our ſuperiority may raiſe a ſedate joy in our minds, very different from Laughter; but ſuch a thought ſeldom ariſes in our minds in the hurry of a chearful converſation among friends, where there is often an high mutual eſteem. But we go to our cloſets often to ſpin out ſome fine conjectures about the principles of our actions, which no mortal is conſcious of in himſelf during the action; thus the ſame authors abovementioned tell us, that the deſire which we have to ſee tragical repreſentations is, becauſe of the ſecret pleaſure we find in thinking ourſelves ſecure from ſuch evils; we know from what ſect this notion was derived.

Quibus ipſe malis liber es, quia cernere ſuave.
Lucr.

THIS pleaſure muſt indeed be a ſecret one, ſo very ſecret, that many a kind compaſſionate heart was never conſcious of it, but felt itſelf in a continual ſtate of horror and ſorrow; our deſiring ſuch ſights flows from a kind inſtinct of nature, a ſecret bond between ús and our fellow-creatures.

Naturae imperio gemimus cum funus adultae
Virginis occurrit, vel terra clauditur infans.
——————*Quis enim bonus*——————
Ulla aliena ſibi credat mala. Juven.

To the AUTHOR of the DUBLIN JOURNAL.

Humano capiti cervicem pictor equinam
Jungere ſi velit, et varias inducere plumas,
Undique conlatis membris, ut turpiter atrum
Deſinat in piſcem mulier formoſa ſuperne;
Spectatum admiſſi riſum teneatis amici?

HOR.

SIR,

IN my former letter, I attempted to ſhew that Mr. Hobbes's account of Laughter was not juſt. I ſhall now endeavour to diſcover ſome other ground of that ſenſation, action, paſſion, or affection, I know not which of them a philoſopher would call it.

THE ingenious Mr. Addiſon, in his treatiſe of the pleaſures of the imagination, has juſtly obſerved many ſublimer ſenſations than thoſe commonly mentioned among philoſophers: he obſerves particularly, that we receive ſenſations of pleaſure from thoſe objects which are great, new, or beautiful; and on the contrary, that objects which are more narrow and confined, or deformed and irregular, give us diſagreeable

agreeable ideas. It is unqueſtionable, that we have a great number of perceptions, which one can ſcarcely reduce to any of the five ſenſes, as they are commonly explained; ſuch as either the ideas of grandeur, dignity, decency, beauty, harmony; or, on the other hand, of meanneſs, baſeneſs, indecency, deformity; and that we apply theſe ideas not only to material objects, but to characters, abilities, actions.

It may be farther obſerved, that by ſome ſtrange aſſociations of ideas made in our infancy, we have frequently ſome of theſe ideas recurring along with a great many objects, with which they have no other connection than what cuſtom and education, or frequent alluſions, give them, or at moſt, ſome very diſtant reſemblance. The very affections of our minds are aſcribed to inanimate objects; and ſome animals, perfect enough in their own kind, are made conſtant emblems of ſome vices or meanneſs: whereas other kinds are made emblems of the contrary qualities. For inſtances of theſe aſſociations, partly from nature, partly from cuſtom, we may take the following ones; ſanctity in our churches, magnificence in public buildings, affection between the oak and ivy, the elm and vine; hoſpitality in a ſhade, a pleaſant ſenſation of grandeur in the ſky, the ſea, and mountains, diſtinct

from a bare apprehenſion or image of their extenſion; ſolemnity and horror in ſhady woods. An aſs is the common emblem of ſtupidity and ſloth, a ſwine of ſelfiſh luxury; an eagle of a great genius; a lion of intrepidity; an ant or bee of low induſtry, and prudent oeconomy. Some inanimate objects have in like manner ſome acceſſary ideas of meanneſs, either for ſome natural reaſon, or oftner by mere chance and cuſtom.

Now, the ſame ingenious author obſerves, in the Spectator, Vol. I. No 62. that what we call a great genius, ſuch as becomes a heroic poet, gives us pleaſure by filling the mind with great conceptions; and therefore they bring moſt of their ſimilitudes and metaphors from objects of dignity and grandeur, where the reſemblance is generally very obvious. This is not uſually called wit, but ſomething nobler. What we call grave wit, conſiſts in bringing ſuch reſembling ideas together, as one could ſcarce have imagined had ſo exact a relation to each other; or when the reſemblance is carried on through many more particulars than we could have at firſt expected: and this therefore gives the pleaſure of ſurprize. In this ſerious wit, though we are not ſolicitous about the grandeur of the images, we muſt ſtill beware of bringing in ideas of baſeneſs

baſeneſs or deformity, unleſs we are ſtudying to repreſent an object as baſe and deformed. Now this ſort of wit is ſeldom apt to move Laughter, more than heroic poetry.

THAT then which ſeems generally the cauſe of Laughter, is "the bringing together of i-"mages which have contrary additional ide-"as, as well as ſome reſemblance in the prin-"cipal idea: this contraſt between ideas of "grandeur, dignity, ſanctity, perfection, and "ideas of meanneſs, baſeneſs, profanity, ſeems "to be the very ſpirit of burleſque; and the "greateſt part of our raillery and jeſt is "founded upon it."

WE alſo find ourſelves moved to Laughter by an overſtraining of wit, by bringing reſemblances from ſubjects of a quite different kind from the ſubject to which they are compared. "When we ſee, inſtead of the eaſineſs, and "natural reſemblance, which conſtitutes true "wit, a forced ſtraining of a likeneſs, our "Laughter is apt to ariſe; as alſo, when the "only reſemblance is not in the idea, but in "the ſound of the words." And this is the matter of Laughter in the pun.

LET us ſee if this thought may not be confirmed in many inſtances. If any writing has obtained an high character for grandeur, ſanctity, inſpiration, or ſublimity of thoughts, and boldneſs of images; the application of any

any known ſentence of ſuch writings to low, vulgar, or baſe ſubjects, never fails to divert the audience, and ſet them a-laughing. This fund of Laughter the ancients had by alluſions to Homer: of this the lives of ſome of the philoſophers in Diogenes Laertius ſupply abundance of inſtances. Our late burleſque writers derive a great part of their pleaſantry from their introducing, on the moſt trifling occaſions, alluſions to ſome of the bold ſchemes, or figures, or ſentences, of the great poets, upon the moſt ſolemn ſubjects. Hudibras and Don Quixote will ſupply one with inſtances of this in almoſt every page. It were to be wiſhed that the boldneſs of our age had never carried their ludicrous alluſions to yet more venerable writings. We know that alluſions to the phraſes of holy writ have obtained to ſome gentlemen a character of wit, and often furniſhed Laughter to their hearers, when their imaginations have been too barren to give any other entertainment. But I appeal to the religious themſelves, if theſe alluſions are not apt to move Laughter, unleſs a more ſtrong affection of the mind, a religious horror at the profanity of ſuch alluſions, prevents their allowing themſelves the liberty of laughing at them. Now in this affair I fancy any one will acknowlege that an opinion of ſuperiority is not at all the occaſion of the Laughter.

Again, any little accident to which we have joined the idea of meanneſs, befalling a perſon of great gravity, ability, dignity, is a matter of Laughter, for the very ſame reaſon; thus the ſtrange contortions of the body in a fall, the dirtying of a decent dreſs, the natural functions which we ſtudy to conceal from ſight, are matter of Laughter, when they occur to obſervation in perſons of whom we have high ideas: nay, the very human form has the ideas of dignity ſo generally joined with it, that even in ordinary perſons ſuch mean accidents are matter of jeſt; but ſtill the jeſt is increaſed by the dignity, gravity, or modeſty of the perſon; which ſhews that it is this contraſt, or oppoſition of ideas of dignity and meanneſs, which is the occaſion of Laughter.

We generally imagine in mankind ſome degree of wiſdom above other animals, and have high ideas of them on this account. If then along with our notion of wiſdom in our fellows, there occurs any inſtance of groſs inadvertence, or great miſtake; this is a great cauſe of Laughter. Our countrymen are very ſubject to little trips of this kind, and furniſh often ſome diverſion to their neighbours, not only by miſtakes in their ſpeech, but in actions. Yet even this kind of Laughter cannot well be ſaid to ariſe from our ſenſe of ſuperiority. This alone may give a ſedate joy, but

but not be a matter of Laughter; ſince we ſhall find the ſame kind of Laughter ariſing in us, where this opinion of ſuperiority does not attend it: for if the moſt ingenious perſon in the world, whom the whole company eſteems, ſhould through inadvertent hearing, or any other miſtake, anſwer quite from the purpoſe, the whole audience may laugh heartily, without the leaſt abatement of their good opinion. Thus we know ſome very ingenious men have not in the leaſt ſuffered in their characters by an extemporary pun, which raiſes the laugh very readily; whereas a premeditated pun, which diminiſhes our opinion of a writer, will ſeldom raiſe any Laughter.

AGAIN, the more violent paſſions, as fear, anger, ſorrow, compaſſion, are generally looked upon as ſomething great and ſolemn; the beholding of theſe paſſions in another ſtrikes a man with gravity: now if theſe paſſions are artfully, or accidentally, raiſed upon a ſmall, or a fictitious occaſion, they move the Laughter of thoſe who imagine the occaſions to be ſmall and contemptible, or who are conſcious of the fraud: this is the occaſion of the laugh in biting, as they call ſuch deceptions.

ACCORDING to this ſcheme, there muſt neceſſarily ariſe a great diverſity in mens ſentiments of the ridiculous in actions or characters, according as their ideas of dignity and

wiſdom

wiſdom are various. A truly wiſe man, who places the dignity of human nature in good affections and ſuitable actions, may be apt to laugh at thoſe who employ their moſt ſolemn and ſtrong affections about what, to the wiſe man, appears perhaps very uſeleſs or mean. The ſame ſolemnity of behaviour and keenneſs of paſſion, about a place or ceremony, which ordinary people only employ about the abſolute neceſſaries of life, may make them laugh at their betters. When a gentleman of pleaſure, who thinks that good fellowſhip and gallantry are the only valuable enjoyments of life, obſerves men, with great ſolemnity and earneſtneſs, heaping up money, without uſing it, or incumbering themſelves with purchaſes and mortgages, which the gay gentleman, with his paternal revenues, thinks very ſilly affairs, he may make himſelf very merry upon them: and the frugal man, in his turn, makes the ſame jeſt of the man of pleaſure. The ſucceſsful gameſter, whom no diſaſter forces to lay aſide the trifling ideas of an amuſement in his play, may laugh to ſee the ſerious looks and paſſions of the graveſt buſineſs ariſing in the loſer, amidſt the ideas of a recreation. There is indeed in theſe laſt caſes an opinion of ſuperiority in the Laugher; but this is not the proper occaſion of his Laughter; otherwiſe I ſee not how we ſhould ever meet with a compoſed

poſed countenance any where: men have their different reliſhes of life, moſt people preſer their own taſte to that of others; but this moves no Laughter, unleſs, in repreſenting the purſuits of others, they do join together ſome whimſical image of oppoſite ideas.

In the more polite nations, there are certain modes of dreſs, behaviour, ceremony, generally received by all the better ſort, as they are commonly called: to theſe modes, ideas of decency, grandeur, and dignity are generally joined; hence men are fond of imitating the mode: and if in any polite aſſembly, a contrary dreſs, behaviour, or ceremony appear, to which we have joined in our country the contrary ideas of meanneſs, ruſticity, ſullenneſs, a laugh does ordinarily ariſe, or a diſpoſition to it, in thoſe who have not the thorough good breeding, or reflection to reſtrain themſelves, or break through theſe cuſtomary aſſociations.

And hence we may ſee, that what is counted ridiculous in one age or nation, may not be ſo in another. We are apt to laugh at Homer, when he compares Ajax unwillingly retreating, to an aſs driven out of a corn-field; or when he compares him to a boar: or Ulyſſes toſſing all night without ſleep through anxiety, to a pudding frying on the coals. Thoſe three ſimiles have got low mean ideas joined

ed to them with us, which it is very probable they had not in Greece in Homer's days; nay, as to one of them, the boar, it is well known that in ſome countries of Europe, where they have wild boars for hunting, even in our times, they have not theſe low ſordid ideas joined to that animal, which we have in theſe kingdoms, who never ſee them but in their dirty ſties, or on dunghills. This may teach us how impertinent a great many jeſts are, which are made upon the ſtyle of ſome other ancient writings, in ages when manners were very different from ours, though perhaps fully as rational, and every way as human and juſt.

To the AUTHOR of the DUBLIN JOURNAL.

———*Ridiculum acri*
Fortius et melius magnas plerumque ſecat res.

SIR,

TO treat this ſubject of Laughter gravely, may ſubject the author to a cenſure, like to that which Longinus makes upon a prior treatiſe of the Sublime, becauſe wrote in a manner very unſuitable to the ſubject. But yet it may be worth our pains to conſider the effects of Laughter, and the ends for which it was implanted in our nature, that thence we may know the proper uſe of it: which may be done in the following obſervations.

FIRST, we may obſerve, that Laughter, like many other diſpoſitions of our mind, is neceſſarily pleaſant to us, when it begins in the natural manner, from ſome perception in the mind of ſomething ludicrous, and does not take its riſe unnaturally from external motions in the body. Every one is conſcious that a ſtate of Laughter is an eaſy and agreeable ſtate, that the recurring or ſuggeſtion of ludicrous images tends to diſpel fretfulneſs, anxiety, or ſorrow, and to reduce the mind to an eaſy, happy

happy ſtate; as on the other hand, an eaſy and happy ſtate is that in which we are moſt lively and acute in perceiving the ludicrous in objects: any thing, that gives us pleaſure, puts us alſo in a fitneſs for Laughter, when ſomething ridiculous occurs; and ridiculous objects, occurring to a ſoured temper, will be apt to recover it to eaſineſs. The implanting then a ſenſe of the ridiculous, in our nature, was giving us an avenue to pleaſure, and an eaſy remedy for diſcontent and ſorrow.

AGAIN, Laughter, like other affections, is very contagious; our whole frame is ſo ſociable, that one merry countenance may diffuſe chearfulneſs to many; nor are they all fools who are apt to laugh before they know the jeſt, however curioſity in wiſe men may reſtrain it, that their attention may be kept awake.

WE are diſpoſed by Laughter to a good opinion of the perſon who raiſes it, if neither ourſelves nor our friends are made the butt. Laughter is none of the ſmalleſt bonds of common friendſhips, though it be of leſs conſequence in great heroic friendſhips.

IF an object, action, or event, be truly great in every reſpect, it will have no natural relation or reſemblance to any thing mean or baſe; and conſequently, no mean idea can be joined to it with any natural reſemblance. If we

make ſome forced remote jeſts upon ſuch ſubjects, they can never be pleaſing to a man of ſenſe and reflection, but raiſe contempt of the ridiculer, as void of juſt ſenſe of thoſe things which are truly great. As to any great and truly ſublime ſentiments, we may perhaps find that, by a playing upon words, they may be applied to a trifling or mean action, or object; but this application will not diminiſh our high idea of the great ſentiment. He muſt be of a poor trifling temper who would loſe his reliſh of the grandeur and beauty of that noble ſentence of holy writ, mentioned in a former paper, from the doctor's application of it. Virgil Traveſty may often come into an ingenious man's head, when he reads the original, and make him uneaſy with impertinent interruptions; but will never diminiſh his admiration of Virgil. Who diſlikes that line in Homer, by which Diogenes the Cynic anſwered a neighbour at an execution, who was inquiring into the cauſe of the criminal's condemnation? which had been the counterfeiting of the ancient purple.

Ἔλλαβε πορφύρεος θάνατος καὶ μοῖρα κραταιή.

Let any of our wits try their mettle in ridiculing the opinion of a good and wiſe mind governing the whole univerſe; let them try to ridicule integrity and honeſty, gratitude, generoſity,

generoſity, or the love of one's country, accompanied with wiſdom. All their art will never diminiſh the admiration which we muſt have for ſuch diſpoſitions, where-ever we obſerve them pure and unmixed with any low views, or any folly in the exerciſe of them.

When in any object there is a mixture of what is truly great, along with ſomething weak or mean, ridicule may, with a weak mind which cannot ſeparate the great from the mean, bring the whole into diſeſteem, or make the whole appear weak or contemptible: but with a perſon of juſt diſcernment and reflection it will have no other effect, but to ſeparate what is great from what is not ſo.

When any object either good or evil is aggravated and increaſed by the violence of our paſſions, or an enthuſiaſtic admiration, or fear, the application of ridicule is the readieſt way to bring down our high imaginations to a conformity to the real moment or importance of the affair. Ridicule gives our minds as it were a bend to the contrary ſide; ſo that upon reflection they may be more capable of ſettling in a juſt conformity to nature.

Laughter is received in a different manner by the perſon ridiculed, according as he who uſes the ridicule evidences good-nature, friendſhip, and eſteem of the perſon whom he laughs at; or the contrary.

The enormous crime or grievous calamity of another, is not of itſelf a ſubject which can be naturally turned into ridicule: the former raiſes horror in us, and hatred; and the latter pity. When Laughter ariſes on ſuch occaſions, it is not excited by the guilt or the miſery. To obſerve the contorſions of the human body in the air, upon the blowing up of an enemy's ſhip, may raiſe Laughter in thoſe who do not reflect on the agony and diſtreſs of the ſufferers; but the reflecting on this diſtreſs could never move Laughter of itſelf. So ſome fantaſtic circumſtances accompanying a crime may raiſe Laughter; but a piece of cruel barbarity, or treacherous villany, of itſelf, muſt raiſe very contrary paſſions. A jeſt is not ordinary in an impeachment of a criminal, or an invective oration: it rather diminiſhes than increaſes the abhorrence in the audience, and may juſtly raiſe contempt of the orator for an unnatural affectation of wit. Jeſting is ſtill more unnatural in diſcourſes deſigned to move compaſſion toward the diſtreſſed. A forced unnatural ridicule, on either of theſe occaſions, muſt be apt to raiſe, in the guilty or the miſerable, hatred againſt the Laugher; ſince it muſt be ſuppoſed to flow from hatred in him toward the object of his ridicule, or from want of all compaſſion. The guilty will take Laughter to be a triumph over him as contemptible; the miſerable

ſerable will interpret it as hardneſs of heart, and inſenſibility of the calamities of another. This is the natural effect of joining to either of theſe objects mean ludicrous ideas.

If ſmaller faults, ſuch as are not inconſiſtent with a character in the main amiable, be ſet in a ridiculous light, the guilty are apt to be made ſenſible of their folly, more than by a bare grave admonition. In many of our faults, occaſioned by too great violence of ſome paſſion, we get ſuch enthuſiaſtic apprehenſions of ſome objects, as lead us to juſtify our conduct: the joining of oppoſite ideas or images allays this enthuſiaſm; and, if this be done with good nature, it may be the leaſt offenſive, and moſt effectual, reproof.

Ridicule upon the ſmalleſt faults, when it does not appear to flow from kindneſs, is apt to be extremely provoking; ſince the applying of mean ideas to our conduct diſcovers contempt of us in the ridiculer, and that he deſigns to make us contemptible to others.

Ridicule applied to thoſe qualities or circumſtances in one of our companions, which neither he nor the ridiculer thinks diſhonourable, is agreeable to every one; the butt himſelf is as well pleaſed as any in company.

Ridicule upon any ſmall misfortune or injury, which we have received with ſorrow or keen reſentment, when it is applied by a third perſon,

perſon, with appearance of good-nature, is exceeding uſeful to abate our concern or reſentment, and to reconcile us to the perſon who injured us, if he does not perſiſt in his injury.

From this conſideration of the effects of Laughter, it may be eaſy to ſee for what cauſe, or end, a ſenſe of the ridiculous was implanted in human nature, and how it ought to be managed.

It is plainly of conſiderable moment in human ſociety. It is often a great occaſion of pleaſure, and enlivens our converſation exceedingly, when it is conducted by good-nature. It ſpreads a pleaſantry of temper over multitudes at once; and one merry eaſy mind may by this means diffuſe a like diſpoſition over all who are in company. There is nothing of which we are more communicative than of a good jeſt: and many a man, who is incapable of obliging us otherwiſe, can oblige us by his mirth, and really inſinuate himſelf into our kind affections, and good wiſhes.

But this is not all the uſe of Laughter. It is well known, that our paſſions of every kind lead us into wild enthuſiaſtic apprehenſions of their ſeveral objects. When any object ſeems great in compariſon of ourſelves, our minds are apt to run into a perfect veneration: when an object appears formidable, a weak

weak mind will run into a panic, an unreaſonable, impotent horror. Now in both theſe caſes, by our ſenſe of the ridiculous, we are made capable of relief from any pleaſant, ingenious well-wiſher, by more effectual means, than the moſt ſolemn, ſedate reaſoning. Nothing is ſo properly applied to the falſe grandeur, either of good or evil, as ridicule: nothing will ſooner prevent our exceſſive admiration of mixed grandeur, or hinder our being led by that, which is, perhaps, really great in ſuch an object, to imitate alſo and approve what is really mean.

I QUESTION not but the jeſt of Elijah upon the falſe deity, whom his countrymen had ſet up, has been very effectual to rectify their notions of the divine nature; as we find that like jeſts have been very ſeaſonable in other nations. Baal, no doubt, had been repreſented as a great perſonage of unconquerable power: but how ridiculous does the image appear, when the prophet ſets before them, at once, the poor ideas which muſt ariſe from ſuch a limitation of nature as could be repreſented by their ſtatues, and the high ideas of omniſcience, and omnipotence, with which the people declared themſelves poſſeſſed by their invocation. "Cry aloud, either he is "talking, or purſuing, or he is on a journey, "or he is aſleep."

THIS

This engine of ridicule, no doubt, may be abuſed, and have a bad effect upon a weak mind; but with men of any reflection, there is little fear that it will ever be very pernicious. An attempt of ridicule before ſuch men, upon a ſubject every way great, is ſure to return upon the author of it. One might dare the boldeſt wit in company with men of ſenſe, to make a jeſt upon a completely great action, or character. Let him try the ſtory of Scipio and his fair captive, upon the taking of Cartagena; or the old ſtory of Pylades and Oreſtes; I fancy he would ſooner appear in a fool's coat himſelf, than he could put either of theſe characters in ſuch a dreſs. The only danger is in objects of a mixed nature before people of little judgment, who, by jeſts upon the weak ſide, are ſometimes led into neglect, or contempt, of that which is truly valuable in any character, inſtitution, or office. And this may ſhew us the impertinence, and pernicious tendency of general undiſtinguiſhed jeſts upon any character, or office, which has been too much over-rated. But, that ridicule may be abuſed, does not prove it uſeleſs, or unneceſſary, more than a like poſſibility of abuſe would prove all our ſenſes and paſſions, impertinent or hurtful. Ridicule, like other edged tools, may do good in a wiſe man's hands, though fools may cut

cut their fingers with it, or be injurious to an unwary by-ſtander.

THE rules to avoid abuſe of this kind of ridicule, are, firſt, "Either never to attempt "ridicule upon what is every way great, whe- "ther it be any great being, character, or "ſentiments:" or, if our wit muſt ſometimes run into alluſions, on low occaſions, to the expreſſions of great ſentiments, "Let it not "be in weak company, who have not a juſt "diſcernment of true grandeur." And, ſecondly, concerning objects of a mixed nature, partly great, and partly mean, "Let us ne- "ver turn the meanneſs into ridicule, with- "out acknowleging what is truly great, and "paying a juſt veneration to it." In this ſort of jeſting we ought to be cautious of our company.

Diſcit enim citius, meminitque libentius illud,
Quod quis deridet, quam quod probat et veneratur.
HOR.

ANOTHER valuable purpoſe of ridicule is with relation to ſmaller vices, which are often more effectually corrected by ridicule, than by grave admonition. Men have been laughed out of faults which a ſermon could not reform; nay, there are many little indecencies which are improper to be mentioned in ſuch ſolemn diſcourſes. Now ridicule, with contempt

tempt or ill-nature, is indeed always irritating and offenſive; but we may, by teſtifying a juſt eſteem for the good qualities of the perſon ridiculed, and our concern for his intereſts, let him ſee that our ridicule of his weakneſs flows from love to him, and then we may hope for a good effect. This then is another neceſſary rule, "That along with our ridicule of ſmaller "faults we ſhould always join evidences of "good-nature and eſteem."

As to jeſts upon imperfections, which one cannot amend, I cannot ſee of what uſe they can be: men of ſenſe cannot reliſh ſuch jeſts; fooliſh trifling minds may by them be led to deſpiſe the trueſt merit, which is not exempted from the caſual misfortunes of our mortal ſtate. If theſe imperfections occur along with a vitious character, againſt which people ſhould be alarmed and cautioned, it is below a wiſe man to raiſe averſions to bad men from their neceſſary infirmities, when they have a juſter handle from their vitious diſpoſitions.

I SHALL conclude this eſſay with the words of father Malebranche, upon the laſt ſubject of Laughter, the ſmaller misfortunes of others. That author amidſt all his viſions ſhews ſometimes as fine ſenſe as any of his neighbours.

"*THERE is nothing more admirably con-"trived than thoſe natural correſpondences obſervable

* Book IV. ch. 13.

" obſervable between the inclinations of mens
" minds and the motions of their bodies.——
" All this ſecret chain-work is a miracle, which
" can never ſufficiently be admired or under-
" ſtood. Upon ſenſe of ſome ſurprizing evil,
" which appears too ſtrong for one to over-
" come with his own ſtrength, he raiſes, ſup-
" poſe, a loud cry: this cry, forced out by the
" diſpoſition of our machine, pierces the ears
" of thoſe who are near, and makes them un-
" derſtand it, let them be of what nation or
" quality ſoever: for it is the cry of all nati-
" ons, and all conditions, as indeed it ought
" to be. It raiſes a commotion in their
" brain,——and makes them run to give
" ſuccour without ſo much as knowing it.
" It ſoon obliges their will to deſire, and
" their underſtanding to contrive, provided
" that it was juſt and according to the rules
" of ſociety. For an indiſcreet out-cry, made
" upon no occaſion, or out of an idle fear,
" produces, in the aſſiſtants, indignation or
" Laughter inſtead of pity.——That indiſ-
" creet cry naturally produces averſion, and
" deſire of revenging the affront offered to
" nature, if he that made it without cauſe,
" did it wilfully: but it ought only to pro-
" duce the paſſion of deriſion, mingled with
" ſome compaſſion, without averſion or de-

" fire of revenge, if it were a fright, that is, a
" falſe appearance of a preſſing exigency,
" which cauſed the clamour. For ſcoff or
" ridicule is neceſſary to re-aſſure and correct
" the man as fearful; and compaſſion to ſuc-
" cour him as weak. It is impoſſible to con-
" ceive any thing better ordered."

I am, Sir,

Your very humble Servant,

PHILOMEIDES.

RE-

REMARKS

UPON

The FABLE of the BEES.

REMARKS

REMARKS

UPON

The FABLE of the BEES.

To HIBERNICUS.

Nunquam aliud natura aliud ſapientia dicit.
JUVEN.

SIR,

A GREAT part of your readers muſt have heard of a book entituled, Private Vices public Benefits. I do not intend any anſwer to that book; but rather hereafter to ſhew it to be unanſwerable, notwithſtanding the zealous attempts of ſome of the clergy. Yet it is to be hoped that that author's performance will not ſuperſede the labours of others on the ſame ſubject, without deſign of anſwering what he has wrote.

IT is not the intereſt of every writer to free his words from ambiguity. Private vices public benefits, may ſignify any one of theſe five

propoſitions: viz. "Private vices are them-
"ſelves public benefits:" or, "private vices
"naturally tend, as the direct and neceſſary
"means, to produce public happineſs:" or,
"private vices by dextrous management of
"governors may be made to tend to public
"happineſs:" or, "private vices natively and
"neceſſarily flow from public happineſs:" or
laſtly, "private vices will probably flow from
"public proſperity through the preſent cor-
"ruption of men." Were it proper to croud your margin with citations, you ſhould have ſeveral paſſages of that book for each of theſe five ſentences, as if it were the meaning of the title. Far be it therefore from a candid writer to charge upon him any one of theſe opinions more than another; for if we treat him fairly, and compare the ſeveral parts of his work together, we ſhall find no ground for ſuch a charge.

WHAT his own private happineſs is, any one may know by reflecting upon the ſeveral ſorts of pleaſant perceptions he is capable of. We imagine our fellows capable of the ſame, and can in like manner conceive public happineſs. They are happy who have what they deſire, and are free from what occaſions pain. He is in a ſure ſtate of happineſs, who has a ſure proſpect that in all parts of his exiſtence he ſhall have all things which he deſires, or

at

at leaſt thoſe which he moſt earneſtly deſires, without any conſiderable pains. He is miſerable who is under grievous pain, or who wants what he moſt violently deſires.

THERE is one old diſtinction of our deſires, according as ſome of them are preceded naturally by a ſenſe of pain, previouſly to any opinion of good to be found in the object; which is deſired chiefly in order to remove the pain; whereas other deſires ariſe only upon a previous opinion of good in the object, either to ourſelves, or to thoſe we love. Theſe deſires, though they do not preſuppoſe any ſenſe of pain previous to the opinion, yet may be attended with pain, when the object imagined to be good is uncertain. The former ſort of deſires are called appetites; the latter affections, or paſſions. The pains of the appetites when they are not gratified are unavoidable. But the pains of many diſappointed paſſions might have been prevented, by correcting the falſe opinions, or by breaking fooliſh aſſociations of ideas, by which we imagine the moſt momentous good or evil to be in theſe objects or events, which really are of little or no conſequence in themſelves.

No reaſon or inſtruction will prevent ſenſible pain, or ſtop a craving appetite. Men muſt firſt be free from violent bodily pain, and have what will remove hunger and thirſt, before

before they can be made happy. Thus much is abſolutely neceſſary. If there be but ſmall pleaſure attending the enjoyment of the bare neceſſaries of life, yet there is violent pain in their abſence. Whatever farther pleaſures men enjoy, we may count ſo much poſitive happineſs above neceſſity.

THE world is ſo well provided for the ſupport of mankind, that ſcarce any perſon in good health need be ſtraitened in bare neceſſaries. But ſince men are capable of a great diverſity of pleaſures, they muſt be ſuppoſed to have a great variety of deſires, even beyond the neceſſaries of life. The commoneſt gratifications of the appetites do not ſatisfy them fully: they deſire thoſe objects, which give ſome more grateful ſenſations, as well as allay their pain; they have perceptions of beauty in external objects, and deſire ſomething more in dreſs, houſes, furniture, than mere warmth or neceſſary uſe. There is no mortal without ſome love towards others, and deſire of the happineſs of ſome other perſons as well as his own. Men naturally perceive ſomething amiable in obſerving the characters, affections and tempers of others, and are ſtruck with a harmony in manners, ſome ſpecies of morality, as well as with a harmony of notes. They are fond of the approbation of each other, and deſirous of whatever either directly

procures

procures approbation and eſteem, or, by a confuſed aſſociation of ideas, is made an evidence of any valuable ability or kind diſpoſition. Wealth and power are in like manner deſired, as ſoon as we obſerve their uſefulneſs to procure any kind of pleaſures.

SINCE then our deſires are ſo various, and all deſire of an object, while it is uncertain, is accompanied with ſome uneaſineſs; to make a ſociety happy, it muſt be neceſſary, either to gratify all deſires, or to ſuppreſs, or at leaſt to regulate them. The univerſal gratification is plainly impoſſible, and the univerſal ſuppreſſing or rooting them out as vain an attempt. What then remains, in order to public happineſs after the neceſſary ſupply of all appetites, muſt be to ſtudy, as much as poſſible, to regulate our deſires of every kind, by forming juſt opinions of the real value of their ſeveral objects, ſo as to have the ſtrength of our deſires proportioned to the real value of them, and their real moment to our happineſs. Now all men of reflection, from the age of Socrates to that of Addiſon, have ſufficiently proved that the trueſt, moſt conſtant, and lively pleaſure, the happieſt enjoyment of life, conſiſts in kind affections to our fellow-creatures, gratitude and love to the deity, ſubmiſſion to his will, and truſt in his providence, with a courſe of ſuitable actions. This is the

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true good in our power, which we can never too ſtrongly deſire. The pleaſures of this kind are ſo great and durable, and ſo much above the power of fortune, ſo much ſtrengthened by the probable hope of every other valuable pleaſure of life, eſpecially the eſteem and love of our fellows, or at leaſt of the better part of them, that other pleaſures ſeem almoſt to vaniſh when ſeparated from them; and even the greateſt pains ſeem ſupportable if they do not exclude them. By this means we may be ſure, if not of all the pleaſures we can deſire, yet of thoſe which we moſt deſire, and which may make our exiſtence agreeable to ourſelves in the abſence of others.

This thorough correction of our opinions will not indeed extinguiſh our appetites, or prevent all pain; but it will keep our appetites unmixed with foreign ideas, ſo as to be ſatisfied with the plaineſt nouriſhing food, without being diſturbed by imaginations of worth, dignity and merit, in a manner of living which is not in our power. We may in like manner break the fooliſh conjunction of moral ideas with the finer ſort of habitation, dreſs, equipage, furniture, ſo as not to be dejected upon the unavoidable want of ſuch things; we may learn to look upon them as they really are, without imagining them neceſſary to a

happy

happy and honourable life, however they may be ſome additional advantage to it.

THEN we may obſerve, that though this correcting our opinions and imaginations will make the abſence of the pleaſures above neceſſity very tolerable to us, and cut off many vain anxieties, yet no perſon is thereby rendered inſenſible of any real pleaſure which theſe objects do give. Though we ſhall not look upon them as the chief good in life, or preferable to the public intereſt, to our virtue, or our honour; yet, when they can be enjoyed conſiſtently with ſuperior pleaſures, our ſenſe of them may be as acute as that of others. An affectionate temper never ſtupified the palate; love of a country, a family, or friends, never ſpoiled a taſte for architecture, painting, or ſculpture; the knowlege of the true meaſures and harmony of life never vitiated an ear, or genius for the harmony of muſic or poetry. This certainly is the only way in our power of preſerving the full reliſh for all the pleaſures of life, and yet ſecuring ourſelves againſt its pains.

BUT if the fulleſt preſent enjoyment cannot make the human mind eaſy and fully ſatisfied; if we be diſturbed by the uncertainty either of external objects, or of our own exiſtence in this world; if any are ſubjected to ſuch acute pains, that nothing can make them a-

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mends for them in this life; if no man can be ſure but this may be his condition in the future part of his exiſtence in this life; if the preſent ſeeming diſorders and calamities, ſometimes befalling the beſt of men, and the inſolent proſperity of the worſt, diſturb an honeſt compaſſionate heart: the hope of a future ſtate is the only univerſal ſupport to all conditions of good men, which can make them fully ſatisfied with their exiſtence at all adventures; eſpecially if the means of obtaining this future happineſs are no way oppoſite to their greateſt preſent happineſs.

It is too improbable, I own, that all men will ever thus correct their vain opinions and imaginations: but whoever do ſo in any meaſure are ſo much the happier: and if all did ſo, all would be as near happineſs as our preſent ſtate will allow. No trade, no manufacture, or ingenious art would be ſunk by it, which produces any new pleaſures to the ſenſes, imagination, or underſtanding, without bringing along with it prepollent evil.

It is obvious to all, that in a nation of any tolerable extent of ground, three fourths employed in agriculture will furniſh food to the whole. Were this land divided to all, except a few artificers to prepare inſtruments of husbandry, the whole nation muſt want all the pleaſure ariſing from other arts, ſuch as fine convenient

convenient habitations, beautiful dreſs, furniture, and handy utenſils. There would be no knowlege of arts, no agreeable amuſements or diverſions; and they muſt all be idle one half of their time, ſince much of the huſbandman's time is now ſpent in providing materials for more curious arts. Would it be adviſable to any impartial mind, who regarded the good of the whole, to keep them in this ſtate, and to prohibit all arts but huſbandry, with what was abſolutely neceſſary to it, confining them to their huts, and caves, and beaſts ſkins, to ſecure them from cold; allowing them no farther compenſation for the conveniences they might procure by induſtry, than the pleaſure of idleneſs for half their lives? What other anſwer do we need to this queſtion, than what every one will give for himſelf?

What man, who had only the abſolute neceſſaries of meat and drink, and a cave or a beaſt's ſkin to cover him, would not, when he had leiſure, labour for farther conveniences, or more grateful food? Would not every mortal do ſo, except ſome few pretended gentlemen, inured to ſloth from their infancy, of weak bodies and weaker minds, who imagine the lower employments below their dignity? Does not the univerſal choice of mankind, in

preferring to bear labour for the conveniences and elegancies of life, ſhew that their pleaſures are greater than thoſe of ſloth, and that induſtry, notwithſtanding its toils, does really increaſe the happineſs of mankind? Hence it is that in every nation great numbers ſupport themſelves by mechanic arts not abſolutely neceſſary; ſince the huſbandman is always ready to purchaſe their manufactures by the fruits of his labours, without any conſtraint; which they would not do if the pleaſures or happineſs of idleneſs were greater. This may ſhew us how little juſtice there is in imagining an Arcadia, or unactive golden age, would ever ſuit with the preſent ſtate of the world, or produce more happineſs to men than a vigorous improvement of arts.

THE comparative wealth of any country is plainly proportioned to the "quantity of the "whole produce of huſbandry, and other me-"chanic arts" which it can export. Upon the wealth of any country, when other circumſtances are equal, does its ſtrength depend, or its power in compariſon with others. Now if any allege that the improvement of arts, by foreign trade, is at leaſt pernicious to the public, by its occaſioning many calamities to families, and deaths in ſhipwrecks; that therefore the whole would have been happier without it;

it; let us only consider, that in computing the good or evil consequences of any actions, we are not only to consider the bare quantities of good or evil, but the probabilities on both sides. Now had a country once as many inhabitants as would consume its natural wild product in their caves or thickets, it is plain that according to the usual increase of mankind in peace, the next generation could not subsist without labour, and vigorous agriculture. It is certain also that many diseases and deaths are occasioned by the labours of husbandry: is it therefore for the public good that a thousand should barely subsist as Hottentots without labour, rather than the double number by agriculture, though a small number should die by that means? When our minds are dejected with old age, or sudden apprehensions of death or its consequences, we may prefer a few days or hours to all things else: but what man of good understanding, in sound health, would not prefer a life of sixty or seventy years with good accommodation, and a numerous offspring, to eighty or ninety years as a Hottentot or worse? What man of common sense would refuse to cross the channel for a considerable advantage to his family, though they had the bare necessaries? And yet even this voyage hazards life more than staying at home.

If the agriculture of three fourths can ſupport the whole, the other fourth, by applying themſelves wholly to mechanic arts, will produce more conveniences or pleaſures than could be hoped from a fourth of the labours of each man; ſince by confining their thoughts to a particular ſubject, the artificers acquire greater knowlege and dexterity in their work. Again, if navigation and foreign trade will ſupport more men than domeſtic induſtry and barter, it may really tend to the good of the whole, though it endangers many lives. Five millions, ſubſiſting in any country by help of foreign trade, are a greater advantage in the whole than four millions without trade, though in each age twenty thouſand ſhould periſh by ſhipwrecks. The rates of inſurance will teach us that the loſſes at ſea are not even in this proportion to the number ſupported by trade, many of whom go not abroad at all, and others eſcape when the goods are loſt. Either then the propagation of mankind muſt be diminiſhed, or men muſt endure even the hazardous labours of the ſea. But how few are there in the world who would not, even without any conſtraint, hazard a voyage rather than die childleſs: nay, rather than want any conveniences and pleaſures of life above neceſſity for themſelves or families? The increaſe therefore of trade does

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plainly tend to the good of the whole, notwithſtanding all its hazards, which we ſee men voluntarily ſubmit to every day.

Now if any own that the increaſe of trade promotes the preſent happineſs of human life in the whole, and yet maintain that it is vitious; the debate will turn upon the idea of vice. It is certain that almoſt all the heathen moraliſts agreed with him "who ſpake "as never man ſpake," that virtue conſiſts in love, gratitude, and ſubmiſſion to the deity, and in kind affections towards our fellows, and ſtudy of their greateſt good. All ſects, except the Epicureans, owned that kind affections were natural to men; and that conſulting the greateſt public good of the whole, as it was the ſureſt way for each individual to be happy, ſo it was *vita ſecundum naturam*, or *ſecundum rectam rationem*. The Epicureans of the better ſort, however they denied any affection diſtinct from ſelf-love, yet taught the ſame way to private happineſs, by reaſons like to thoſe uſed by Puffendorf, only without conſideration of the providence of the deity, or a future ſtate. If vice be the oppoſite to virtue, viz. thoſe affections or actions which tend to the public detriment, or evidence ingratitude or contumacy towards the deity, we may eaſily con-

clude that the utmoſt improvement of arts, manufactures, or trade, is ſo far from being neceſſarily vicious, that it muſt rather argue good and virtuous diſpoſitions; ſince it is certain that men of the beſt and moſt generous tempers would deſire it for the public good.

But this ſubject will require farther conſideration.

I am, Sir, yours, etc.

P. M.

To

To Hibernicus.

Cui non conveniet ſua res, ut calceus olim,
Si pede major erit, ſubvertet; ſi minor, uret.
Hor.

SIR,

THE only arguments brought to prove that vice tends to the public happineſs of ſociety in this world, are theſe; "That the "power and grandeur of any nation depends "much upon the numbers of people and their "induſtry, which cannot be procured unleſs "there be conſumption of manufactures: "now the intemperance, luxury, and pride, "of men conſume manufactures, and pro- "mote induſtry." In like manner it is aſſerted, "That in fact all wealthy and powerful "ſtates abound with theſe vices, and that "their induſtry is owing to them."

But if it can be made appear that there may be an equal conſumption of manufactures without theſe vices, and the evils which flow from them; that wealth and power do not naturally tend to vice, or neceſſarily produce it; then, though we allow that theſe vices do conſume manufactures and encourage induſtry

ſtry in the preſent corruption of manners, and that theſe vices often attend wealth and power, yet it will be unjuſt to conclude, either that "vices naturally tend to public proſperity, or "are neceſſary to it; or that public happi-"neſs does neceſſarily occaſion them."

INTEMPERANCE is that uſe of meat and drink which is pernicious to the health and vigour of any perſon in the diſcharge of the offices of life. Luxury is the uſing more curious and expenſive habitation, dreſs, table, equipage, than the perſon's wealth will bear, ſo as to diſcharge his duty to his family, his friends, his country, or the indigent. Pride is having an opinion of our own virtues, abilities, or perfection of any kind, in compariſon of others, as greater than what they really are; arrogating to ourſelves either obedience, ſervice, or external marks of honour, to which we have no right; and with this view deſiring to equal thoſe of higher ſtations in our whole manner of living. There is no ſort of food, architecture, dreſs, or furniture, the uſe of which can be called evil of itſelf. Intemperance and luxury are plainly terms relative to the bodily conſtitution, and wealth of the perſon. Pride, as it affects our expences, is alſo relative to the ſtation and fortune of the perſon; ſo that it is impoſſible to fix one invariable quantity of food, one fixed ſum in

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expences, the ſurpaſſing of which ſhould be called intemperance, luxury, or pride. Every one's own knowlege, and experience of his conſtitution and fortune, will ſuggeſt to him what is ſuitable to his own circumſtances. It is ridiculous to ſay, " that uſing any thing a-
" bove the bare neceſſaries of life is intempe-
" rance, pride, or luxury; and that no other
" univerſal boundaries can be fixed; becauſe
" what in one ſtation or fortune is bare ſtudy
" of decency, or conveniency, would be ex-
" travagance in another." As if temperance, frugality, or moderation, denoted fixed weights or meaſures or ſums, which all were to obſerve, and not a proportion to mens circumſtances. Great and little are relative to a ſpecies or kind. Thoſe dimenſions are great in a deer which are ſmall in a horſe: what is great in a houſe would be ſmall in a mountain. Will any one thence argue, that there can be no adapting one form to another, ſo that it ſhall neither be too big nor little? Cannot a coat ſuit a middle ſtature, becauſe the ſame dimenſions would be too great for a dwarf, and too little for a giant? If then in each conſtitution, ſtation, or degree of wealth, a man of good ſenſe may know how far he may go in eating and drinking, or any other expences, without impairing his health or fortune, or hindering any offices of religion or humanity,

nity, he has found the bounds of temperance, frugality, and moderation for himſelf; and any other, who keeps the ſame proportion, is equally temperate, though he eats and drinks, or ſpends more than the other.

THAT theſe are the ideas of temperance, frugality, and moderation, given by all moraliſts, antient and modern, except a few Cynics of old, and ſome popiſh Hermits, is plain to all who read them. All ſects, as well as the Stoics, recommended the correction of our opinions and imaginations about the pleaſures above neceſſity; and yet the uſe of them they all allow, when it is not inconſiſtent with the offices of life: in ſuch circumſtances they were always looked upon as preferable to their contraries. The Chriſtian law ſuggeſts nothing contrary to this; it has ſet before us, beſide the preſent pleaſures of virtue, which it repreſents as ſuperior to all others, the hopes of eternal happineſs; yet it frequently recommends diligence and induſtry in providing for ourſelves and families, and for a fund of good offices toward others: it no where condemns the rich or powerful for being ſo, or for deſiring high ſtations, unleſs when theſe deſires are ſo violent as to counteract our duty. The requiring ſome to part with their poſſeſſions, was only a candid forewarning of the firſt diſciples, what their profeſſion of Chriſti-

Chriſtianity would probably coſt them in thoſe days of perſecution. A community of goods is no where commanded; though men who knew the approaching perſecution did wiſely ſell their poſſeſſions, to turn them to the only valuable purpoſe then in their power, and conveyed them to perſons who could poſſeſs them.

SINCE then intemperance, or pride, were ſcarce ever underſtood to denote all uſe of any thing above bare neceſſaries, all conveniency of life above Hottentots; why any one ſhould affect to change their meaning, is not eaſily gueſſed, unleſs it be with this view. Luxury, intemperance, and pride, in their common meaning, are vices; but in this new meaning are often innocent, nay virtuous; and without them, in this new ſenſe, there can be no conſumption of manufactures. Common readers however will ſtill imagine that theſe ſounds denote vices; and finding that what they confuſedly imagine as vitious is neceſſary to public good, they will loſe their averſion to moral evil in general, and imagine it well compenſated by ſome of its advantages.

BUT let us retain the common meaning of theſe words. It is certain, luxury, intemperance, and pride, tend to conſume manufactures; but the luxurious, intemperate, or proud,

proud, are not a whit the leſs odious, or free from inhumanity and barbarity, in the neglect of families, friends, the indigent, or their country, ſince their whole intention is a poor ſelfiſh pleaſure. The good ariſing to the public is no way owing to them, but to the induſtrious, who muſt ſupply all cuſtomers, and cannot examine whether their expences are proportioned to their fortunes or not. To illuſtrate this by an inſtance in the manner of that notable writer: " Suppoſe his " Decio, or Alcander, or Jack, ſurfeited with " beef, falls into ſome light diſtemper, and " in hopes of attendance at low rates, ſends " for a neighbouring quack: the quack ima- " gines no danger, but makes the patient be- " lieve it; he talks much in the uſual cant of " bilious temperaments and ſanguine com- " plexions, of the ſinking of ſpirits, and the " heart's feeling cold and condenſed, and " heavy as lead, of miſts and confuſion about " his eyes; he promiſes, after ſome previ- " ous preparations, which the quack finds ne- " ceſſary to prolong the diſorder, by ſome " powerful medicines, to ſwell his ſpirits, " reſtore them to their ſtrength, elaſticity, " and due contexture, that they may fan the " arterial blood again, and make him ſo light " that he may tread upon air. The patient " grows worſe, fears death, thinks on his paſt life,

" life, and ſends for an honeſt parſon, who " inſtructs him in true principles of virtue, " and ſhews him wherein he has been defi- " cient: the ſtrength of his conſtitution over- " comes both the drugs and the diſeaſe, the " patient recovers, becomes a man of inte- " grity and religion, and ever after honours " the honeſt clergy as the moſt uſeful men " in any ſtate." Now are theſe effects to be aſcribed to the quacks? Are ſuch pretenders the leſs odious? Is quackery the cauſe of religion or virtue, or neceſſary to it? Does the honour of the clergy depend upon the practice of quacks? It is beſt in ſuch affairs to go no farther than confuſed apothegms: " private " quackery, public virtue: medicinal non- " ſenſe, patients repentance: quacks preſcri- " ptions, honours to the clergy."

But let us in the next place examine if an equal conſumption of manufactures, and encouragement of trade, may be without theſe vices. Any given number, in a ſmall time, will certainly conſume more wine by being drunkards, than by being ſober men; will conſume more manufactures by being luxurious or proud, if their pride turn upon expences, than by being frugal and moderate. But it may be juſtly queſtioned, whether that ſame number would not have conſumed more in their whole lives, by being temperate and

frugal: ſince all allow that they would probably live longer, and with better health and digeſtion; and temperance makes a country populous, were it only by prolonging life.

AGAIN, would there not be the ſame conſumption of the ſame products, if inferior people contracted their drinking and dreſs within the bounds of temperance and frugality, and allowed poor wives and children what might be neceſſary to exhilarate and ſtrengthen them for labour, and to defend them from the cold, or make their lives eaſier? Would there be a leſs conſumption, if thoſe of greater wealth kept themſelves within the bounds of temperance; and reſerved the money thus ſaved to ſupply the intereſt of money lent gratis to a friend, who may be thereby enabled, conſiſtently with temperance, to drink as much wine, as, had it been added to the quantity drunk by the lender, would have taken away his ſenſes? Or, if all men drink too much, and families too; what if they retrenched? The money ſaved might improve their dreſs, habitation, or ſtudies; or might enable a poorer friend to conſume the ſame, or other manufactures, with equal advantage to the public; or might preſerve the ſame perſons longer in life, and health and good circumſtances, ſo as in their whole lives to conſume more.

IN general, if the ſingle luxury of the maſter

ſter of a family conſumes manufactures, might not an equal quantity be conſumed by retrenching his own expences, and allowing conveniences to his family? If a whole family be luxurious in dreſs, furniture, equipage; ſuppoſe this retrenched, the increaſe of wealth to the family may ſoon enable younger children in their families to conſume among them frugally, as much as would have been conſumed luxurioufly by the anceſtor; or the frugal conſumption of fifty years, in the condition of a wiſe gentleman, may be as great, as the luxurious conſumption of twenty years, ſucceeded by thirty years of pinching, remorſe or beggary. If a man of wealth has no children, his own moderate enjoyment, with what he may enable worthy friends to conſume in their own houſes, or what he may ſpend temperately at a hoſpitable table, and genteel equipage, may amount to as much as the ſquandering of a luxurious epicure, or vain fool, upon his own perſon, in the ſhort time his life or fortune will laſt.

Unless therefore all mankind are fully provided not only with all neceſſaries, but all innocent conveniences and pleaſures of life, it is ſtill poſſible without any vice, by an honeſt care of families, relations, or ſome worthy perſons in diſtreſs, to make the greateſt conſumption. Two or three plain ſuits be-

coming gentlemen, worn by younger brothers or friends, will employ as many hands as a foppiſh one worn by a vain heir. The ſame may be ſaid of furniture of houſes, equipage, or table. If there be ſufficient wealth to furniſh the moſt ſumptuous dreſs, habitation, equipage, and table, to the proprietor, and diſcharge all offices of humanity, after a proportionable rate, why ſhould this be called vice? It plainly tends to public good, and injures no man. It is indeed the buſineſs of a wiſe man to look before him, and to be armed againſt thoſe hazards or accidents which may reduce the higheſt fortunes: all men ſhould correct their imaginations, and avoid any habit of body or mind, which might be pernicious upon a change of fortune, or unfit them for any duty of life: but this may be done without reducing men to a Cynical tub, or frize coats. Wherein then the virtue of this retrenchment ſhould conſiſt, or the vice of a more pleaſant chearful way of life, is not eaſy to tell; unleſs it lies in the confuſed uſe of ambiguous words, temperance, and frugality, and humility.

Who needs be ſurprized that luxury or pride are made neceſſary to public good, when even theft and robbery are ſuppoſed by the ſame author to be ſubſervient to it, by employing lockſmiths? Not to repeat again, that all the

the good effect is plainly owing to the induſtrious, and not to the robber; were there no occaſion for locks, had all children and ſervants diſcretion enough never to go into chambers unſeaſonably, this would make no diminution of manufactures; the money ſaved to the houſe-keeper would afford either better dreſs, or other conveniences to a family, which would equally ſupport artificers: even ſmiths themſelves might have equal employment. Unleſs all men be already ſo well provided with all ſorts of convenient utenſils, or furniture, that nothing can be added, a neceſſity or conſtant uſefulneſs of robbers can never be pretended, any more than the public advantages of ſhipwrecks and fires, which are not a little admired by the author of the fable.

It is probable indeed we ſhall never ſee a wealthy ſtate without vice. But what then? it is not impoſſible: and the leſs any nation has of it, ſo much the happier it is. Wiſe governors will force ſome public good out of vices, if they cannot prevent them: and yet much greater public good would have flowed from oppoſite virtues. The exciſe is now increaſed by the drunkenneſs of ſome poor maſters of families: but ſharing their drink with their poor families might make equal conſumption of the ſame kind; or if they retrenched this article, they might conſume other kinds

of goods, paying equal duty to the public. The perſons themſelves would avoid many diſeaſes, be more capable of labour, live longer, in all probability, in contentment and good temper, without fooliſh contention, quarrels, and diſſatisfaction both in their families and among their neighbours. The like would be the effect of a ſober and temperate deportment in better ſtations.

As to the queſtion of fact in this matter: perhaps, whoever looks into all the ranks of men, will find it is but a ſmall part of our conſumptions which is owing to our vices. If we find too ſplendid dreſs at court, or at * Lucas's, or at public meetings for diverſion; we ſhall find plain dreſſes at the exchange, at the cuſtom-houſe, at churches. The expenſive gaiety continues but a few years of moſt peoples lives, during their amours, or expectation of preferment: nor would a good-natured man call this gaiety always vitious. Our gentlemen in the country ſeldom ſuffer in their fortunes by their dreſs. The conſumption in tables would not be much diminiſhed, though men would never run into ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs: it is not one in a hundred who is frequently guilty of theſe vices, and yet all are every day conſuming. The extraordinary conſumption of revels occaſions generally abſtinence

* The gayeſt coffee-houſe in Dublin.

abſtinence for ſome time following; ſo that in a ſober week as much may be conſumed as in the week one has had a debauch. Did we examine our own manufactures, either linen or woolen, we ſhould find that coarſe cloths and ſtuff, the wearing of which none count extravagant, employ ten times as many hands as the fine. And of the fine cloths which are bought, not one of the buyers in ten can be called extravagant. Were even this extravagance removed, the conſumption of the ſame perſons during their lives might be as great, as by the vanity of a few years with the poverty of the remainder.

Thus we may ſee with how little reaſon vices are either counted neceſſary, or actually ſubſervient to the public happineſs, even in our preſent corruption.

I am, Sir, Yours, etc.

P. M.

To Hibernicus.

——*Cujus, velut aegri ſomnia, vanae*
Fingentur ſpecies, ut nec pes, nec caput uni
Reddatur formae. Hor.

SIR,

MR. Addiſon in his fourth Whig Examiner has given an excellent deſcription of a certain way of writing which is abſolutely unanſwerable, and he has pointed out the ſecret ſtrength by which it is made ſo. That the Fable of the Bees is a performance of this kind, may be eaſily ſhewn, not by general encomiums, but by pointing out its particular excellencies.

There is one outwork of this ſort of authors, which though it be not their main ſtrength, yet is often of great conſequence to terrify the timorous reader, or adverſary; I mean open vanity, and pretences to the deepeſt knowlege.——*Hic murus aheneus eſto.*

How formidable muſt that writer be, who lets us know * "he has obſerved ſo much a-"bove the ſhort-ſighted vulgar, and has giv-"en himſelf leiſure to gaze upon the proſpect "of

* Pag. 89.

" of concatenated events, and ſeen good " ſpring and pullulate from evil as naturally," ſo condeſcending is he to the meaneſt of his readers, " as chickens do from eggs!" How does he raiſe admiration in the firſt paragraph of his preface, letting us know that he has ſeen the " chief organs and niceſt ſprings of " our machine," which are yet but " trifling " films, and little pipes, not ſuch groſs ſtrong " things as nerves, bone, or ſkin!" Nay, he has no doubt ſeen * " the very ſtrength, ela- " ſticity, and due contexture of ſpirits which " conſtitute the fear of ſhame, and anger, or " courage;" and alſo all the other qualities of ſpirits which conſtitute the other paſſions: theſe paſſions " along with ſkin, fleſh, and " bone, make the compound man." But this is not all his knowlege; he has † " anatomiſ- " ed the inviſible part, has ſeen the gentle " ſtrokes, and ſlight touches of the paſſions."

THIS author can ‡ " ſwagger about forti- " tude and poverty as well as Seneca, and " ſhew the way to ſummum bonum as eaſily " as his way home. § He has ſearched through " every degree of life; and foreſees oppoſition " only from thoſe who have loſt public ſpirit, " and are narrow-ſouled, incapable of think- " ing of things of uncommon extent, which " are

* Pag. 234. † Pag. 153. and Pag. 77. ‡ Pag. 162. § Pag. 163. and Pag. 366, 367.

" are noble and ſublime. He cries *apage* " *vulgus* to every oppoſer, and * writes only " for the few who think abſtractly, and are " elevated above the vulgar."

He tells us, " he has pleaſed men of unque- " ſtionable ſenſe; will always live, and be " eſteemed while ſuch read him."

WHO will not ſtand in awe of that author, " who † deſcribes the nature and ſymptoms " of human paſſions; detects their force and " diſguiſes; and traces ſelf-love in its darkeſt " receſs beyond any other ſyſtem of ethics?" Who, after all this and much more, and egotiſms, and affectations in every page, needs be told by the author that " his vanity he could " never conquer?" ‡

ANOTHER uſeful ſecret of invincible authors is to interſperſe a contempt of pedantry and of the clergy. Theſe damned pedants have got a trick of reading many authors, obſerving the ſentiments of the greateſt men in all ages; and acquire an impertinent facility of diſcerning nonſenſe in the writings of your eaſy genteel authors, who are above perplexing themſelves with the ſourneſs and intricacies of thought. Without ſome defiances and contempt of pedants and clergy, readers would never have ſo much as dreamed that ſome of our

* See the journal ſubjoined to the Fable. † Pag. 467.
‡ Pag. 472.

our authors were witty and eaſy writers. When this point is obtained, then we may fall upon our readers like thunder, with all the little learning we are maſters of, in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon: "about Greek and Roman religions, Egyptian worſhip of onions (though long ago laughed at by a pedantic clergyman in a brother-eaſy-writer on freethinking) trophies, monuments, arches, military crowns, Alexander, Lorenzo Gratian, Hydaſpes, Oſtraciſms; the Laconic ſpirit of our nation appearing in the word *gin:* that fiery lake, the Lethe, the Stygian and Circean cup, from whence pullulate Leucophlegmacies:" we may talk of Stoics, Epicureans, Seneca's eſtate; nay, even cite Ovid, and tranſpoſe a paſſage in Juvenal: *ſi licet exemplis;* make double entendres upon the word *enervate; trahat ſua quemque voluptas;* a Latin joke from Eraſmus: nay, may make moſt philoſophico-philological digreſſions about "the eſſences of hope, inkerns, ice, and oak;" we may launch out into thoſe profound depths in optics, that "air is not the object of ſight; that bulk "diminiſhes by diſtance, is owing to our im-"perfection; that the ſky might appear through "a hole in a wall as near as the ſtones; talk "of Pythagoras's abſtaining from fleſh, Æ-"ſop's making beaſts to ſpeak; *ira furor* "*brevis eſt;* Lucretia killed herſelf for fear

"of

" of ſhame." We may improve our language by that eaſy phraſe, " meliorating our condition." We may uſe that moſt grammatical epithet " ſuperlative;" talk of Vannini, Bruno and Effendi as martyrs, though ſome of the facts have been diſaproved long ago; " that Homer's heroes talk as porters; Lycurgus's laws; Epaminondas, Leotychidas, Agis, the Polemarchi; ſaturnine tempers, adoration of the manes of the Britiſh Æſculapius; Cicero's vanity, he wrote O fortunatam, *etc.* My friend Horace:" with many other moſt pert evidences of immenſe tritical erudition; which no mortal could have known, without having ſpent ſeveral years at a Latin ſchool, and reading Plutarch's lives Engliſhed by ſeveral hands.

When thus the character of erudition is ſecured, next comes knowlege of the world, another eſſential quality of an eaſy writer. This may be diſplayed by a word or two of French, though we have Engliſh words exactly of the ſame meaning; by talking in the ſtrain of porters and bauds, about their affairs. Then the polite gentleman of fine genius will ſoon appear by a great deal of poetical language, mixed with proſe. What pity it had not at all been in rhime, like the fable itſelf! the author's ſlaughter-houſe and gin-ſhop would have been as renowned as the

cave

cave of the Cyclops, or the dwelling of Circe: *ingenium par materiae!*

THESE are but additional helps. The main ſtrength of the impregnable writer conſiſts in intricate contradictions and inconſiſtencies; with ſome manifeſt abſurdities boldly aſſerted, againſt which no man can produce an argument, any more than to prove that twice three are not ten. Thus his firſt ſentence is, that "all untaught animals deſire only to pleaſe "themſelves, and follow the bent of their "inclination, without regard to the good or "harm of others:" but a * few pages after we ſhall find that gratitude is natural, or that men "muſt wiſh well to benefactors: that "pity or averſion to the miſery of others is a "natural paſſion; that affection to offſpring, "and deſire of their happineſs, is natural: "that men may wiſh well to any other in "what they themſelves cannot obtain."

HIS very definition of vice is "† gratifying "appetite without regard to the public:" by, "without regard," we may charitably underſtand him to have intended "pernicious to the public;" unleſs he can ſhew that all men have agreed to call eating when one is hungry, or going to ſleep when one is weary, vitious, whenever he does not think of a community. Vice then here is "doing detriment to the

* Pag. 34. and pag. 68. and 140. † Pag. 34.

" public by gratifying appetite". But go on, and you will find the whole ſtrain of the book to be, that " vices are uſeful to the public, " and neceſſary to its happineſs: the ſolid " comforts and happineſs of life are the gra- " tifications of appetite."

His definition of virtue is * " endeavour- " ing the benefit of others contrary to the im- " pulſe of nature." Yet through the whole book " Univerſal virtue would be detrimen- " tal to ſociety;" that is, all mens endeavour- ing to benefit others would be detrimental to all. " † The moral virtues are the offspring of " flattery begot upon pride;" yet in the very ſame page, and many other places, " No paſ- " ſion more natural or univerſal than pride." Virtue then, which was before contrary to the impulſe of nature, now is become following the ſtrongeſt impulſe of nature.

Again, ‡ " Virtue is the conqueſt of paſ- " ſion out of the rational ambition of being " good;" but a few pages after this, " Do- " ing worthy actions from love of goodneſs " has certain ſigns of pride, which is the " ſtrongeſt paſſion:" and yet, ſays the author, " This is a ſublimer notion of virtue than his " own."

§ " Heathen religion could not influence " men to virtue," ſays he: the direct contrary is

* Pag. 34. † Pag. 37. ‡ Pag. 34. § Pag. 36.

is asserted by all the heathen philosophers, historians, orators, tragedians and comedians. The wiser men saw the folly of their theological fables, but never denied a governing mind: the vulgar might believe the fables of Jupiter and his brothers; but imagining in the gods a right superior to that of men, they might fear the judgment of the gods for like facts to those done by Jupiter, and expect rewards for obedience to laws given to men, which yet did not bind superior natures. This notion may make it probable that even very corrupt religions may have in the whole much more good effects than evil. But who will regard the testimonies of poor heathens, against this "Observer of concatenated events?"

Presently we find * "the seeds of all "virtue in the two passions of pride and shame, "which are most natural." In another place, "Virtue was contrary to the impulse of na- "ture, and the conquest of the passions;" and soon after it will become what it was again, † "No virtue in what is designed to gra- "tify pride; the only recompence of virtue "is the pleasure of doing good;" but even this pleasure of "doing good, or acting from "love of goodness, was pride‡."

Pag. 59. He begins his anatomizing of passions;

* Pag. 56. † Pag. 68. and Pag. 246. ‡ Pag. 43.

ſions; "The paſſions, concealed from modeſty "or good manners, are pride, luſt, and ſelfiſh-"neſs." Either then pride and luſt is not ſelfiſh, but diſintereſted; or this diviſion amounts to theſe three members, to wit, "one ſort of "ſelfiſhneſs, another ſort of ſelfiſhneſs, and "ſelfiſhneſs in general."

He aſſerts, that * "Ambaſſadors debates "about precedency flow from pride conceal-"ed under ſhew of virtue," that is, of "con-"quering the paſſions from the ambition of "being good." It ſeems they all naturally deſire to be hindmoſt, but affect precedency, that they may ſeem to conquer this paſſion.

† "Gratitude is a natural motive of in-"clination, and not virtue: returns of good "offices are not from gratitude but from vir-"tue, that is, oppoſition to the impulſe of "nature; or manners, that is, concealment "of pride, luſt, and ſelfiſhneſs, in order to "gratify them."

‡ "Luxury is the uſe of any thing above "neceſſity; nor can any other bounds be fix-"ed:" and yet a few pages after, "All men "ought to dreſs ſuitably to condition."

§ "Envy is a mixture of ſorrow and anger. "Sorrow ariſes from our want of what we "deſire, and anger is raiſed by us for our "eaſe."

* Pag. 73. † Pag. 76. ‡ Pag. 108. and 132.
§ Pag. 140. and 221.

" eaſe." A pleaſing paſſion ſurely! " Anger " is the paſſion ariſing when our deſire is " croſſed." Thus envy amounts to ſorrow for want of what we deſire, compounded with the " paſſion ariſing when deſire is croſ- " ſed." This compoſition is as artful as that of a merry fellow's punch, who liked to have it made of two quarts of brandy, and one quart of brandy; *ſi licet exemplis*.

* " SELF-LOVE bids us look on every ſa- " tisfied being as a rival:" and " yet nothing " can excite any being to oppoſe another but " his being unſatisfied."

† " LAUGHING at another's fall, is either " from envy or malice."

‡ " LOVE ſignifies affection, that is, lik- " ing or wiſhing well." The object's intereſt becomes our own in this wonderful manner. " Self-love makes us believe that the " ſufferings we feel muſt leſſen thoſe of our " friend; and then a ſecret pleaſure ariſes " from our grieving, becauſe we imagine " we are relieving him." How ſtrangely does our ſelf-love govern us! It firſt forms an opinion ſo prodigiouſly ſecret, that never any mortal believed it; and then makes us feel pleaſure, not in relieving ourſelves, but another. Nay, what is it that ſelf-love can-

* Pag. 145. † Pag. 146. ‡ Pag. 149.

not perform? * "When a man ſtands in the "ſtreet, and ſhrieks at another's fall "from a high window or ſcaffold, he be- "lieves that he himſelf is flying through the "air: when a man bluſhes, upon ſeeing an- "other do a baſe action, he believes he is "doing it himſelf."

I HAVE got yet no farther than the 150th page, but with many omiſſions: you may have, when you pleaſe, twice as many, rather greater beauties of the ſame nature; but theſe may ſuffice at preſent. Only I cannot paſs over two paſſages more; the one is a wonderful compoſition, ſo dearly does he love making a very diſpenſatory of paſſions, that rather than want compoſition, he will take two pieces of the ſame thing for want of different materials: † "Lazineſs is an averſion "to buſineſs, generally attended with a de- "ſire of being unactive." The other paſſage is a moſt important maxim; "That "man never exerts himſelf but when he is "rouſed by deſire;" or, never exerts himſelf but when he deſires ſomething or other. And he ſubjoins this ſublime ſimile, of "a "huge windmill without a breath of air."

BEFORE any one pretends to anſwer this book, he muſt know what the author means by

* Pag. 55. † Pag. 267.

by " good opinion, high value, worth, un-
" worthineſs, merit, noble actions, overva-
" luing, thinking well, or having a right to
" do any thing." But upon theſe terms, all mortals may deſpair of it.

We may make one general obſervation on the dexterity of this author in confuting oppoſite ſchemes. Suppoſe the ſcheme of almoſt all moraliſts, except Epicureans, to be true; " That we have in our nature kind
" affections in different degrees, that we have
" a moral ſenſe determining us to approve
" them whenever they are obſerved, and all
" actions which flow from them; that we
" are naturally bound together by deſire of
" eſteem from each other, and by compaſſi-
" on; and that withal we have ſelf-love or
" deſire of private good." What would be the conſequence of this conſtitution, or the appearances in human nature? All men would call thoſe actions virtuous, which they imagine do tend to the public good: where men differ in " opinions of the natural tendencies
" of actions," they muſt differ in approbation or condemnation: they will find pleaſure in contemplating or reflecting on their own kind affections and actions: they will delight in the ſociety of the kind, good-natured, and beneficent: they will be uneaſy upon ſeeing

or

or even hearing of the misery of others, and be delighted with the happiness of any persons beloved: men will have regard to private good as well as public: and when other circumstances are equal, will prefer what tends most to private advantage. Now these are the direct and necessary consequences of this supposition: and yet this penetrating swaggerer, who surpasses all writers of ethics, makes those very appearances proofs against the hypothesis. No proofs will please him but the contrary appearances: if he saw "men approving what is pernicious to the "public; or men agreeing to approve the "same action, though one thought it use-"ful to the public, and another thought it "pernicious; or if men had no manner of "pleasure in good actions, or in reflecting "upon them, nor would value themselves "more for heroism than villany; then in-"deed he would acknowlege a moral sense "independent of interest and true virtue."

So also, "Men must delight in the com-"pany of the proud, morose, revengeful and "quarrelsom; they must be indifferent in "beholding the most cruel tortures, or the "greatest joy and happiness of our fellows, "or even of our offspring. Men must do "mischief to themselves, or neglect their

"most

" moſt innocent pleaſures, and intereſt, by " a thorough ſelf-denial, without any inclina- " tion to the good of others; and muſt have " no more pleaſure in gratitude, generoſity, " or humanity, than in malice and revenge; " otherwiſe this author will never believe " any other affection than ſelf-love: at pre- " ſent he ſees all to be but diſguiſes of it, " from his deep reflections about freſh her- " rings, and the company he would chooſe."

He has probably been ſtruck with ſome old fanatic ſermon upon ſelf-denial in his youth, and can never get it out of his head ſince. It is abſolutely impoſſible upon his ſcheme, that God himſelf can make a being naturally diſpoſed to virtue: for virtue is " ſelf-de- " nial, and acting againſt the impulſe of na- " ture." What elſe then can we imagine concerning all the works of God in their beſt ſtate, but

——*That they were intended,*
For nothing elſe but to be mended? Hud.

Might we poor vulgar make conjectures concerning the ſpirits of nations, we would be apt to conclude, that through incapacity for abſtract thinking, the Boeotic ſpirit of the Britiſh is much better diſcovered by a fourth

edition

edition of this book, than the Laconic by the word *Gin.*

THUS may thine enemies triumph, O Virtue and Christianity!

I am, Sir,

Your very humble Servant,

F. M.

THE END.

Page 46. at the close of line 24. for ide- *read*--

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