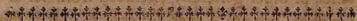


or persuasions, you could make mothers ashamed of rivalling their children; if you could shew them, that though they may refuse to grow wise, they must inevitably grow old; and that the proper solaces of age are not musick and compliments, but wisdom and devotion; that those who are so unwilling to quit the world will soon be driven from it; and that it is therefore their interest to retire while there yet remain a few hours for nobler employments.



NUMB. 56. SATURDAY, Sept. 29, 1750.

———*Valeat res ludicra, si me*

Palma negata macrum, donata reducit opimum.

HOR.

NOTHING is more unpleasing than to find that others have received offence when none was intended, and that pain has been given to those who were not guilty of any provocation. As the great end of society is mutual beneficence, a good man is always uneasy when he finds himself acting in opposition to the purposes of life; because tho' his conscience may easily acquit him of *malice prepense*, of settled hatred or contrivances of mis-

chief, yet he seldom can be certain, that he has not failed by negligence, or indolence; that he has not been hindered from consulting the common interest by too much regard to his own ease, or too much indifference to the happiness of others.

NOR is it necessary, that, to feel this uneasiness, the mind should be extended to any great diffusion of generosity, or melted by any uncommon warmth of benevolence; for that prudence which rises from observation of the world, and a quick sensibility of private interest, will easily direct us to shun needless enmities; since there is no man whose kindness we may not some time want, or by whose malice we may not some time suffer.

I HAVE therefore frequently looked with repentment and wonder, and now and then with pity, at the thoughtlessness and folly with which some alienate from themselves the affections of all whom chance, or business, or inclination brings in their way. When we see a man pursuing some darling interest, without much regard to the opinion of the world, though we may justly consider him as corrupt and dangerous, we are not long in discovering

ing his motives ; we see him actuated by passions which are hard to be resisted, and deluded by appearances which have dazzled stronger eyes. But the greatest part of those who set mankind at defiance by hourly irritation, and who live but to infuse malignity, and multiply enemies, have no hopes to foster, no designs to promote, nor any expectations of attaining power by insolence, or of climbing to greatness by trampling on others. They give up all the sweets of private kindness, and all the satisfaction of general regard, for the sake of peevishness, petulance, or gloom ; by neglect of the common forms of civility, and breach of the established laws of conversation.

EVERY one must, in the walks of life, have met with men of whom all speak with censure, though they are not chargeable with any crime, and whom none can be persuaded to love, though no reason can be assigned why they should be hated ; and who, if their good qualities and actions sometimes force a commendation, have their panegyrick always concluded with confessions of disgust ; “ he is a good man, but I cannot like him.” Surely such persons have sold the esteem of the world at too low a price, since they have lost

one of the rewards of virtue, without gaining the profits of wickedness.

THIS ill economy of fame is sometimes the effect of stupidity. Men whose perceptions are languid and sluggish, who lament nothing but losses, and feel nothing but a blow, are often at a difficulty to guess by what means they have encompassed themselves with enemies, though they lived in total neglect of all those arts by which men are endeared to one another. They comfort themselves that they have lived irreproachably; that none can charge them with having endangered his life, or diminished his possessions; and therefore conclude that they suffer by some invincible fatality, or impute the malice of their neighbours to ignorance or envy. They wrap themselves up in their innocence, and enjoy the congratulations of their own hearts, without knowing or suspecting that they are every day deservedly incurring resentments, by withholding from those with whom they converse, that regard, or appearance of regard, to which every one is entitled by the customs of the world.

THERE are many injuries, which almost
every

very man feels, though he does not complain and which, upon those whom virtue, elegance, or vanity have made delicate and tender, fix deep and lasting impressions; as there are many arts of graciousness and conciliation, which are to be practised without expence, and by which those may be made our friends, who have never received from us any real benefit. Such arts, when they include neither guilt nor meanness, it is surely reasonable to learn; for who would want that love which is so easily to be gained? And such injuries are to be avoided; for who would be hated without profit?

SOME, indeed, there are, for whom the excuse of ignorance or negligence cannot be alleged, because it is apparent that they are not only careless of pleasing, but studious to offend; that they contrive to make all approaches to them difficult and vexatious, and imagine that they aggrandize themselves by wasting the time of others in useless attendance, by mortifying them with slights, and teasing them with affronts.

Men of this kind, are generally to be found among those that have not mingled much with

the general mass of the community, but spent their lives amidst the obsequiousness of dependants, and the flattery of parasites; and have by long consulting only their own inclination, forgotten that others have an equal claim to the same deference.

TYRANNY thus avowed, is indeed an exuberance of pride, by which all mankind is so much enraged, that it is never quietly endured, except in those who can reward the patience which they exact; and insolence is generally surrounded only by such whose baseness inclines them to think nothing insupportable that produces gain, and who can laugh at scurrility and rudeness with a luxurious table and an open purse.

BUT though all wanton provocations and contemptuous insolence are to be diligently avoided, there is no less danger in timid compliance and tame resignation. It is common, for soft and fearful tempers, to give themselves up implicitly to the direction of the bold, the turbulent, and the overbearing; of those whom they do not believe wiser or better than themselves; to recede from the best designs where

opposition must be encountered, and to fall off from virtue for fear of censure.

SOME firmness and resolution is necessary to the discharge of duty; but it is a very unhappy state of life in which the necessity of such struggles frequently occurs; for no man is defeated without some resentment, which will be continued with obstinacy while he believes himself in the right, and exerted with bitterness if even to his own conviction he is detected in the wrong; and, though no regard were to be had to the consequences of contrariety and dispute, it must always be painful to a worthy mind to put others in pain, and there will be some danger lest the kindest nature may be vitiated by too long a custom of debate and contest.

I KNOW not whether I may not be taxed with insensibility by many of my correspondents, who believe their contributions unjustly neglected. And indeed when I sit before a pile of papers, of which each is the production of laborious study, and the offspring of a fond parent, I, who know the passions of an author, cannot remember how long they have lain in my boxes unregarded, without imagining

to myself the various changes of sorrow, impatience, and resentment, which the writers must have felt in this tedious interval.

THESE reflexions are still more awakened, when, upon perusal, I find some of them calling for a place in the next paper, a place which they have never yet obtained; others writing in a style of superiority and haughtiness, as secure of deference, and above all fear of criticism; others humbly offering their weak assistance with softness and submission, which they believe impossible to be resisted; some introducing their compositions with a menace of the contempt, which he that refuses them will incur; others applying privately to the booksellers for their interest and solicitation; every one by different ways endeavouring to secure the bliss of publication. I cannot but consider myself, as placed in a very incommodious situation, where I am forced to repress confidence, which it is pleasing to indulge, to repay civilities with appearances of neglect, and so frequently to offend those by whom I never was offended.

I KNOW well how rarely an author, fired with the beauties of his new composition,
con-

contains his raptures in his own bosom, and how naturally he imparts to his friends his expectations of renown ; and as I can easily conceive the eagerness with which a new paper is snatched up, by one who expects to find it filled with his own production, and perhaps has called his companions to share the pleasure of a second perusal, I foresee and grieve for the disappointment which he is to feel at the fatal inspection. His hopes however do not yet forsake him ; he is certain of giving lustre to the next day. The next day comes, and again he pants with expectation, and having dreamed of laurels and Parnassus, casts his eyes upon the barren page with which he is doomed never more to be delighted.

For such cruelty what atonement can be made ? For such calamities what alleviation can be found ? I am afraid that the mischief already done must be without reparation, and all that deserves my care is prevention for the future. Let therefore the next friendly contributor, whoever he be, observe the cautions of *Swift*, and write secretly in his own chamber, without communicating his design to his nearest friend, for the nearest friend will be pleased with an opportunity of laughing.

Let

Let him carry it to the post himself, and wait in silence for the event. If it is published and praised, he may then declare himself the author; if it be suppressed, he may wonder in private without much vexation; and if it be censured, he may join in the cry, and lament the dulness of the writing generation.

NUMB. 57. TUESDAY, October 2, 1750.

Non intelligunt homines quam magnum vestigal sit parsimonia. TULL.

To the RAMBLER.

S I R,

I AM always pleased when I see literature made useful, and scholars descending from that elevation, which, as it raises them above common life, must likewise hinder them from beholding the ways of men otherwise than in a cloud of bustle and confusion. Having lived a life of business, and remarked how seldom any occurrences emerge for which great qualities are required, I have learned the necessity of regarding little things, and though I do not pretend to give laws to the legislators