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In Four Volumes

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therefore bid them look upon themselves as no better than a kind of Assassins and Murderers within the law. However, since they had dealt so clearly with me, and laid before me their whole practice, I dismissed them for that time; with a particular request, That they would not poison any of my friends and acquaintance, and take to some honest livelihood without loss of time.

For my own part, I have resolved hereafter to be very careful in my liquors, and have agreed with a friend of mine in the army, upon their next march, to secure me two hogshheads of the best Stomach-wine in the cellars of *Versailles*, for the good of my lucubrations, and the comfort of my old age.

N^o 133. *Tuesday, February 14. 1709.*

Dum tacent, clamant.

Tull.

Sheer-Lane, February 13.

SILENCE is sometimes more significant and sublime than the most noble and most expressive Eloquence, and is on many occasions the indication of a Great Mind. Several Authors have treated of Silence as a part of duty and discretion, but none of them have considered it in this light. *Homer* compares the noise and clamour of the *Trojans* advancing towards the enemy, to the cackling of cranes when they invade an army of pygmies. On the contrary, he makes his countrymen and favourites, the *Greeks*, move forward in a regular determined march, and in the depth of silence. I find in the accounts which are given us of some of the more *Eastern* nations, where the inhabitants are disposed by their constitutions and climates to higher strains of thought, and more elevated raptures than what we feel in the *Northern* regions of the world, that Silence is a religious exercise among them. For when their publick devotions are in the greatest fervour, and their hearts lifted up as high as words can raise them, there are certain suspensions of sound and motion for a time, in which the mind is left to it self, and supposed to swell with

with such secret conceptions as are too big for utterance. I have myself been wonderfully delighted with a master-piece of musick, when in the very tumult and ferment of their harmony, all the voices and instruments have stopped short on a sudden, and after a little pause recovered themselves again as it were, and renewed the concert in all its parts. Methoughts this short interval of silence has had more musick in it than any the same space of time before or after it. There are two instances of Silence in the two greatest Poets that ever wrote, which have something in them as sublime as any of the speeches in their whole works. The first is that of *Ajax*, in the eleventh book of the *Odyssey*. *Ulysses*, who had been the Rival of this Great man in his life, as well as the occasion of his death, upon meeting his Shade in the region of departed Heroes, makes his submission to him with an humility next to adoration, which the other passes over with dumb fullen majesty, and such a silence, as (to use the words of *Longinus*) had more greatness in it than any thing he could have spoken.

The next instance I shall mention is in *Virgil*, where the Poet, doubtless, imitates this silence of *Ajax* in that of *Dido*; though I do not know that any of his commentators have taken notice of it. *Aeneas* finding among the shades of despairing Lovers, the Ghost of her who had lately died for him, with the wound still fresh upon her, addresses himself to her with expanded arms, floods of tears, and the most passionate professions of his own innocence as to what had happened; all which *Dido* receives with the dignity and disdain of a resenting Lover, and an injured Queen; and is so far from vouchsafing him an answer, that she does not give him a single look. The Poet represents her as turning away her face from him while he spoke to her; and after having kept her eyes for some time upon the ground, as one that heard and contemned his protestations, flying from him into the grove of Myrtle, and into the arms of Another, whose fidelity had deserved her love.

I have often thought our writers of Tragedy have been very defective in this particular, and that they might have given great beauty to their works, by certain stops and pauses in the representation of such passions, as it is not in the power of language to express. There is something like this in the last act of *Venice Preserved*, where *Pierre* is brought to an infamous execution, and begs of his friend, as a reparation for past injuries, and the only favour he could do him, to rescue him from the ignominy of the Wheel, by stabbing him. As he is going to make this dreadful request, he is not able to communicate it, but withdraws his face from

from his friend's ear, and bursts into tears. The melancholy silence that follows hereupon, and continues till he has recovered himself enough to reveal his mind to his friend, raises in the spectators a grief that is inexpressible, and an Idea of such a complicated distress in the Actor as words cannot utter. It would look as ridiculous to many Readers to give rules and directions for proper Silences, as for *Penning a Whisper*: But it is certain, that in the extremity of most passions, particularly Surprize, Admiration, Astonishment, nay, Rage it self, there is nothing more graceful than to see the Play stand for a few moments, and the Audience fixed in an agreeable suspense during the Silence of a skilful Actor.

But Silence never shows it self to so great an advantage, as when it is made the reply to calumny and defamation, provided that we give no just occasion for them. We might produce an example of it in the behaviour of one in whom it appeared in all its Majesty, and one whose silence, as well as his person, was altogether Divine. When one considers this subject only in its Sublimity, this great Instance could not but occur to me; and since I only make use of it to show the highest example of it, I hope I do not offend in it. To forbear replying to an unjust reproach, and overlook it with a generous, or (if possible) with an entire neglect of it, is one of the most heroick acts of a Great Mind. And I must confess, when I reflect upon the behaviour of some of the greatest men of Antiquity, I do not so much admire them that they deserved the praise of the whole age they lived in, as because they contemned the envy and detraction of it.

All that is incumbent on a man of Worth, who suffers under so ill a treatment, is to lie by for some time in silence and obscurity, till the prejudice of the times be over, and his reputation cleared. I have often read with a great deal of pleasure a Legacy of the famous Lord *Bacon*, one of the greatest Genius's that our own or any country has produced; After having bequeathed his Soul, Body, and Estate, in the usual form, he adds, "My Name and Memory I leave to foreign Nations, and to my Countrymen, after some time be passed over."

At the same time that I recommend this Philosophy to others, I must confess, I am so poor a Proficient in it my self, that if in the course of my Lucubrations it happens, as it has done more than once, that my paper is duller than in conscience it ought to be, I think the time an age till I have an opportunity of putting out another, and growing famous again for two days.

I must not close my discourse upon Silence, without informing my Reader, that I have by me an elaborate Treatise on the *Apostrophe* called an *Et cetera*, it being a Figure much used by some learned Authors, and particularly by the great *Littleton*, who, as my Lord Chief Justice *Coke* observes, had a most admirable Talent at an *Et*.

N^o 146. Thursday, March 16. 1709.

*Permites ipsis expendere numinibus, quid
 Conveniat nobis, rebusque sit utile nostris.
 Nam pro jucundis aptissima queque dabunt Di.
 Charior est illis homo, quam sibi. Nos animorum
 Impulsu et cæca magaque cupidine ducti
 Conjugium petimus, partumque uxoris; at illis
 Notum, qui pueri, qualisque futura sit uxor.* Juv.

From my own Apartment, March 15.

AMong the various sets of Correspondents who apply to me for advice, and send up their Cases from all parts of *Great Britain*, there are none who are more importunate with me, and whom I am more inclined to answer, than the *Complainers*. One of them dates his Letter to me from the Banks of a purling Stream, where he used to ruminate in Solitude upon the divine *Clarissa*, and where he is now looking about for a convenient Leap, which he tells me he is resolved to take, unless I support him under the loss of that charming perjured Woman. Poor *Lavinia* presses as much for consolation on the other side, and is reduced to such an extremity of despair by the inconstancy of *Philander*, that she tells me she writes her Letter with her Pen in one hand, and her Garter in the other. A Gentleman of an ancient family in *Norfolk* is almost out of his wits upon account of a Greyhound, that after having been his inseparable companion for ten years, is at last run mad. Another