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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

ther (who I believe is serious) complains to me, in a very moving manner, of the loss of a wife; and another, in terms still more moving, of a purse of money that was taken from him on *Bagshot* Heath, and which, he tells me, would not have troubled him if he had given it to the poor. In short, there is scarce a Calamity in humane life that has not produced me a Letter.

It is indeed wonderful to consider, how men are able to raise affliction to themselves out of every thing. Lands and Houses, Sheep and Oxen, can convey happiness and misery into the hearts of reasonable creatures. Nay, I have known a Muff, a Scarf, or a Tippet, become a solid blessing or misfortune. A Lap-dog has broke the hearts of thousands. *Flavia*, who had buried five children, and two husbands, was never able to get over the loss of her Parrat. How often has a divine creature been thrown into a fit by a neglect at a Ball or an Assembly? *Mopsa* has kept her chamber ever since the last Masquerade, and is in greater danger of her life upon being left out of it, than *Clarinda* from the violent cold which she caught at it. Nor are these dear Creatures the only sufferers by such Imaginary calamities: Many an Author has been dejected at the censure of one whom he ever looked upon as an Idiot; and many a Hero cast into a fit of Melancholy, because the Rabble have not hooted at him as he passed through the streets. *Theron* places all his happiness in a running Horse, *Suffenus* in a gilded Chariot, *Fulvius* in a Blue string, and *Florio* in a Tulip-root. It would be endless to enumerate the many fantastical afflictions that disturb mankind; but as a misery is not to be measured from the Nature of the Evil, but from the Temper of the Sufferer, I shall present my Readers, who are unhappy either in Reality or Imagination, with an Allegory, for which I am indebted to the great Father and Prince of Poets.

As I was sitting after dinner in my Elbow-chair, I took up *Homer*, and dipped into that famous Speech of *Achilles* to *Priam*, in which he tells him, that *Jupiter* has by him two great Vessels, the one filled with Blessings, and the other with Misfortunes; out of which he mingles a composition for every man that comes into the world. This passage so exceedingly pleased me, that as I fell insensibly into my afternoon's slumber, it wrought my Imagination into the following Dream.

When *Jupiter* took into his hands the government of the world, the several parts of Nature, with the presiding Deities, did homage to him. One presented him with a mountain of Winds, another with a magazine of Hail, and a third with a pile of Thunder-bolts. The Stars offered

up their Influences, the Ocean gave in his Trident, the Earth her Fruits, and the Sun his Seasons. Among the several Deities who came to make their Court on this occasion, the Destinies advanced with two great Tuns carried before them, one of which they fixed at the Right hand of *Jupiter* as he sat upon his Throne, and the other on his Left. The first was filled with all the Blessings, and the other with all the Calamities of humane life. *Jupiter*, in the beginning of his reign, finding the world much more innocent than it is in this Iron age, poured very plentifully out of the Tun that stood at his Right hand; but as mankind degenerated, and became unworthy of his Blessings, he set abroad the other vessel, that filled the world with pain and poverty, battles and distempers, jealousy and falshood, intoxicating pleasures and untimely deaths.

He was at length so very much incensed at the great depravation of human nature, and the repeated provocations which he received from all parts of the earth, that having resolved to destroy the whole Species, except *Deucalion* and *Pyrrha*, he commanded the Destinies to gather up the Blessings which he had thrown away upon the sons of men, and lay them up till the world should be inhabited by a more virtuous and deserving race of mortals.

The three Sisters immediately repaired to the earth, in search of the several Blessings that had been scattered on it; but found the task which was enjoined them, to be much more difficult than they had imagined. The first places they resorted to, as the most likely to succeed in, were Cities, Palaces, and Courts; but instead of meeting with what they looked for here, they found nothing but Envy, Repining, Uneasiness, and the like bitter ingredients of the Left-hand vessel. Whereas, to their great surprize, they discovered Content, Chearfulness, Health, Innocence, and other the most substantial Blessings of life, in Cottages, Shades, and Solitudes.

There was another circumstance no less unexpected than the former, and which gave them very great perplexity in the discharge of the Trust which *Jupiter* had committed to them. They observed, that several Blessings had degenerated into Calamities, and that several Calamities had improved into Blessings, according as they fell into the possession of wise or foolish men. They often found Power with so much Insolence and Impatience cleaving to it, that it became a Misfortune to the person on whom it was conferred. Youth had often distempers growing about it, worse than the infirmities of Old age: Wealth was often united to such a fordid Avarice, as made it the most uncomfortable and painful kind of Poverty.

Poverty. On the contrary, they often found Pain made glorious by Fortitude, Poverty lost in Content, Deformity beautified with Virtue. In a word, the Blessings were often like good fruits planted in a bad soil, that by degrees fall off from their natural relish, into tastes altogether insipid or unwholesome; and the Calamities, like harsh fruits, cultivated in a good soil, and enriched by proper grafts and inoculations, till they swell with generous and delightful juices.

There was still a third circumstance that occasioned as great a surprize to the three Sisters as either of the foregoing, when they discovered several Blessings and Calamities which had never been in either of the Tuns that stood by the Throne of *Jupiter*, and were nevertheless as great occasions of happiness or misery as any there. These were that spurious crop of blessings and calamities which were never sown by the hand of the Deity, but grow of themselves out of the fancies and dispositions of humane creatures. Such are Dress, Titles, Place, Equipage, false Shame, and groundless Fear, with the like vain imaginations that shoot up in trifling, weak, and irresolute minds.

The Destinies finding themselves in so great a perplexity, concluded, that it would be impossible for them to execute the commands that had been given them according to their first intention; for which reason they agreed to throw all the Blessings and Calamities together into one large vessel, and in that manner offer them up at the feet of *Jupiter*.

This was performed accordingly, the eldest Sister presenting her self before the vessel, and introducing it with an apology for what they had done.

O *Jupiter!* (*says she*) we have gathered together all the Good and Evil, the Comforts and Distresses of humane life, which we thus present before thee in one promiscuous heap. We beseech thee that thou thy self wilt sort them out for the future, as in thy wisdom thou shalt think fit. For we acknowledge, that there is none beside thee that can judge what will occasion grief or joy in the heart of a humane creature, and what will prove a Blessing or a Calamity to the person on whom it is bestowed,