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No. 108 Saturday, December 17, 1709. [Addison]

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*Pronaque cum spectant Animalia cætera Terram,  
Os Homini sublime dedid, Cœlumque tueri Jussit . . .*<sup>1</sup>—Ovid. Met.

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*Sheer-Lane, December 16.*

It is not to be imagined, how great an Effect well-disposed Lights, with proper Forms and Orders in Assemblies, have upon some Tempers. I am sure I feel it in so extraordinary a Manner, that I cannot in a Day or Two get out of my Imagination any very beautiful or disagreeable Impression which I receive or such Occasions. For this Reason I frequently look in at the Play-house, in order to enlarge my Thoughts, and warm my Mind with some new Ideas, that may be serviceable to me in my Lubrications.

In this Disposition I entered the Theatre the other Day, and placed my self in a Corner of it, very convenient for seeing, without being my self observed. I found the Audience hushed in a very deep Attention, and did not question but some noble Tragedy was just then in its Crisis, or than an Incident was to be unravelled which would determine the Fate of an Hero. While I was in this Suspence, expecting every Moment to see my old Friend Mr. *Betterton* appear in all the Majesty of Distress, to my unspeakable Amazement, there came up a Monster<sup>2</sup> with a Face between his Feet; and as I was look-

<sup>1</sup> "Although other animals face downward and look at the ground, he made man look up towards the heavens."

<sup>2</sup> A "posture-master" or contortionist.

ing on, he raised himself on one Leg in such a perpendicular Posture, that the other grew in a direct Line above his Head. It, afterwards twisted it self into the Motions and Wreathings of several different Animals, and after great Variety of Shapes and Transformations, went off the Stage in the Figure of an humane Creature. The Admiration, the Applause, the Satisfaction of the Audience, during this strange Entertainment, is not to be expressed. I was very much out of Countenance for my dear Countrymen; and looked about with some Apprehension for fear any Foreigner should be present. Is it possible (thought I) that humane Nature can rejoice in its Disgrace, and take Pleasure in seeing its own Figure turned to Ridicule, and distorted into Forms that raise Horror and Aversion? There is something disingenuous and immoral in the being able to bear such a Sight. Men of elegant and noble Minds, are shocked at seeing the Characters of Persons who deserve Esteem for their Virtue, Knowledge, or Services to their Country, placed in wrong Lights, and by Misrepresentation made the Subject of Buffoonry. Such a nice Abhorrence is not indeed to be found among the Vulgar; but methinks it is wonderful, that these who have nothing but the outward Figure to distinguish them as Men, should delight in seeing it abused, vilified, and disgraced.

I must confess, there is nothing that more pleases me, in-all that I read in Books, or see among Mankind, than such Passages as represent humane Nature in its proper Dignity. As Man is a Creature made up of different Extremes, he has something in him very great and very mean: A skilful Artist may draw an excellent Picture of him in either of these Views. The finest Authors of Antiquity have taken him on the more advantageous Side. They cultivate the natural Grandeur of the Soul, raise in her a generous Ambition, feed her with Hopes of Immortality and Perfection, and do all they can to widen the partition between the Virtuous and the Vicious, by making the Difference betwixt them as great as between Gods and Brutes. In short, it is impossible to read a Page in *Plato*, *Tully*,

a Thousand other ancient Moralists, without being a greater a better Man for it. On the contrary, I could never read of our modish *French* Authors, or those of our own Country who are the Imitators and Admirers of that trifling Nation, but being for some Time out of Humour with my self, and every Thing about me. Their Business is, to depreciate humane Nature, and consider it under its worst Appearances. They give mean Interpretations and base Motives to the worthy Actions: They resolve Virtue and Vice into Constitution. In short, they endeavour to make no Distinction between Man and Man, or between the Species of Men and that of Brutes. An Instance of this kind of Authors, among many others, may be seen in one who examines the celebrated *Rochefoucault*, who is a great Philosopher for administring of Consolation to the Proud, the Envious, and worthless Part of Mankind.

I remember a young Gentleman of moderate Understanding, but great Vivacity, who by dipping into many Authors of his Nature, had got a little Smattering of Knowledge, just enough to make an Atheist or a Free-thinker, but not a Philosopher or a Man of Sense. With these Accomplishments, he went to his Father in the Country, who was a plain rough, honest and wise, though not learned. The Son, who took all Opportunities to show his Learning, began to establish a new Opinion in the Family, and to enlarge the Narrowness of their ordinary Notions; in which he succeeded so well, that he had seduced the Butler by his Table-Talk, and staggered his eldest Son. The old Gentleman began to be alarmed at the Schisms that arose among his Children, but did not yet believe his Son's Opinions to be so pernicious as it really was, 'till one Day talking of his Setting-Dog, the Son said, He did not Question but that he was as immortal as any one of the Family; and in the Heat of the Argument told his Father, That for his own Part, he expected to die like a Dog. Upon which, the old Man starting with a very great Passion, cried out, Then, Sirrah, you shall be one; and taking his Cane in his Hand, cudgelled him through his System. This had so good an Effect upon him, that

he took up from that Day, fell to reading good Books, and is now a Bencher in the *Middle-Temple*.

I do not mention this Cudgelling Part of the Story with a Design to engage the secular Arm in Matters of this Nature; but certainly, if it ever exerts it self in Affairs of Opinion and Speculation, it ought to do it on such shallow and despicable Pretenders to Knowledge, who endeavour to give Man dark and uncomfortable Prospects of his Being, and destroy those Principles which are the Support, Happiness, and Glory, of all publick Societies, as well as private Persons.

I think it is one of *Pythagoras's* Golden Sayings, *That a Man should take Care above all Things to have a due Respect for himself*: And it is certain, that this licentious Sort of Authors, who are for depreciating Mankind, endeavoured to disappoint and undo what the most refined Spirits have been labouring to advance since the Beginning of the World, the very Design of Dress, Good-Breeding, outward Ornaments, and Ceremony, were to lift up humane Nature, and set it off to an Advantage. Architecture, Painting, and Statuary, were invented with the same Design; as indeed every Art and Science contributes to the Embellishment of Life, and to the wearing off or throwing into Shades the mean and low Parts of our Nature. Poetry carries on this great End more than all the rest, as may be seen in the following passage, taken out of *Sir Francis Bacon's Advancement of Learning*, which gives a truer and better Account of this Art than all the Volumes that were ever written upon it.

*Poetry, especially Heroical, seems to be raised altogether from a noble Foundation, which makes much for the Dignity of Man's Nature. For seeing this sensible World is in Dignity inferior to the Soul of Man, Poesy seems to endow humane Nature with that which History denies; and to give Satisfaction to the Mind, with at least the Shadow of Things, where the Subsance cannot be had. For if the Matter be thoroughly considered, a strong Argument may be drawn from Poesy, that a more stately Greatness of Things, a more perfect Order,*

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*and a more beautiful Variety, delights the Soul of Man, than any Way can be found in Nature since the Fall. Wherefore seeing the Acts and Events, which are the Subjects of true History, are not of that Amplitude as to content the Mind of Man; Poesy is ready at Hand to feign Acts more Heroical. Because true History reports the Successes of Business not proportionable to the Merit of Virtues and Vices, Poesy corrects it, and presents Events and Fortunes according to Desert, and according to the Law of Providence: Because true History, through the frequent Satiety and Similitude of Things, works a Distast and Misprision in the Mind of Man, Poesy cheareth and refresheth the Soul, chanting Things rare and various, and full of Vicissitudes. So as Poesy serveth and conferreth to Delectation, Magnanimity, and Morality; and therefore it may seem deservedly to have some Participation of Divineness, because it doth raise the Mind, and exalt the Spirit with high Raptures, by proportioning the Shews of Things to the Desires of the Mind; and not submitting the Mind to Things, as Reason and History do. And by these Allurements and Congruities, whereby it cherisheth the Soul of Man, joined also with Consort of Musick, whereby it may more sweetly insinuate it self; it hath won such Access, that it hath been in Estimation even in rude Times, and barbarous Nations, when other Learning stood excluded.<sup>3</sup>*

But there is nothing which favours and falls in with this natural Greatness and Dignity of humane Nature so much as Religion, which does not only promise the entire Refinement of the Mind, but the glorifying of the Body, and the Immortality of both.

<sup>3</sup> A better version of this passage from *The Advancement of Learning* (Book II, Chapter xiii) is to be found in James Spedding's edition of Bacon's *Works*, IV(1883), 315-316.

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*Hic segetes, illic veniunt felicius uvæ;  
 Arborei foetus alibi, atque injussa virescunt  
 Gramina. Nonne vides, croceos ut Tmolus odores,  
 India mittit ebur, molles sua thura Sabæi?  
 At Chalybes nudi ferrum, virosaque Pontus  
 Castorea, Eliadum palmas Epirus equarum?  
 Continuo has leges æternaque fœdera certis  
 Imposuit Natura locis . . .<sup>1</sup>—Virg.*

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There is no Place in the Town which I so much love to frequent as the *Royal Exchange*. It gives me a secret Satisfaction, and, in some measure, gratifies my Vanity, as I am an *Englishman*, to see so rich an Assembly of Country-men and Foreigners consulting together upon the private Business of Mankind, and making this Metropolis a kind of *Emporium* for the whole Earth. I must confess I look upon High-Change to be a great Council, in which all considerable Nations have their Representatives. Factors in the Trading World are what Ambassadors are in the Politick World; they negotiate Affairs, conclude Treaties, and maintain a good Correspondence between those wealthy Societies of Men that are divided from one another by Seas and Oceans, or live on the different Extremities of a Continent. I have often been pleased to hear Disputes ad-

<sup>1</sup> "Here corn, there grapes spring more luxuriantly; elsewhere young trees shoot up, and grasses unbidden. See you not, how Tmolus sends us saffron fragrance, India her ivory, the soft Sabæans their frankincense; but the naked Chalybes give us iron, Pontus the strong-smelling beaver's oil, and Epirus the Olympian victories of her mares? From the first, Nature laid these laws and eternal covenants on certain lands."

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justed between an Inhabitant of *Japan* and an Alderman of *London*, or to see a Subject of the *Great Mogul* entering into a League with one of the *Czar of Muscovy*. I am infinitely delighted in mixing with these several Ministers of Commerce, as they are distinguished by their different Walks and different Languages: Sometimes I am justled among a Body of *Armenians*: Sometimes I am lost in a Crowd of *Jews*; and sometimes make one in a Groupe of *Dutch-men*. I am a *Dane*, *Swede*, or *Frenchman* at different times, or rather fancy my self like the old Philosopher,<sup>2</sup> who upon being asked what Countryman he was, replied, That he was a Citizen of the World.

Though I very frequently visit this busie Multitude of People, I am known to no Body there but my Friend Sir ANDREW who often smiles upon me as he sees me bustling in the Croud, but at the same time connives at my Presence without taking any further Notice of me. There is indeed a Merchant of *Egypt*, who just knows me by sight, having formerly remitted me some Mony to *Grand Cairo*; but as I am not versed in the Modern *Coptick*, our Conferences go no further than a Bow and a Grimace.

This grand Scene of Business gives me an infinite Variety of solid and substantial Entertainments. As I am a great Lover of Mankind, my Heart naturally overflows with Pleasure at the Sight of a prosperous and happy Multitude, inso-much that at many publick Solemnities I cannot forbear expressing my Joy with Tears that have stolen down my Cheeks. For this Reason I am wonderfully delighted to see such a Body of Men thriving in their own private Fortunes, and at the same time promoting the Publick Stock; or in other Words, raising Estates for their own Families, by bringing into their Country whatever is wanting, and carrying out of it whatever is superfluous.

Nature seems to have taken a particular Care to dissemi-

<sup>2</sup>Diogenes.



nate her Blessings among the different Regions of the World, with an Eye to this mutual Intercourse and Traffick among Mankind, that the Natives of the several Parts of the Globe might have a kind of Dependance upon one another, and be united together by their common Interest.<sup>3</sup> Almost every *Degree* produces something peculiar to it. The Food often grows in one Country, and the Sauce in another. The Fruits of *Portugal* are corrected by the Products of *Barbadoes*: The Infusion of a *China* Plant sweetnd with the Pith of an *Indian Cane*: The *Philippick* Islands give a Flavour to our *European* Bowls. The single Dress of a Woman of Quality is often the Product of an Hundred Climates.<sup>4</sup> The Muff and the Fan come together from the different Ends of the Earth. The Scarf is sent from the Torrid Zone, and the Tippet from beneath the Pole. The Brocade Petticoat rises out of the Mines of *Peru*, and the Diamond Necklace out of the Bowels of *Indostan*.

If we consider our own Country in its natural Prospect, without any of the Benefits and Advantages of Commerce, what a barren uncomfortable Spot of Earth falls to our Share! Natural Historians tell us, that no Fruit grows originally among us, besides Hips and Haws, Acorns and Pig Nutts, with other Delicacies of the like Nature; That our climate of it self, and without the Assistances of Art, can make no further Advances towards a Plumb than to a Sloe, and carries an Apple to no greater a Perfection than a Crab: That or Melons, our Peaches, our Figs, our Apricots, and Cherries, are Strangers among us, imported in different Ages, and naturalized in our *English* Gardens; and that they would all degenerate and fall away into the Trash of our own Country, if they were wholly neglected by the Planter, and left to the Mercy of our Sun and Soil. Nor has Traffick more enriched our Vegetable World, than it has improved the whole Face of Nature among us. Our Ships are

<sup>3</sup> Compare Pope's *Windsor Forest*, ll. 385-400.

<sup>4</sup> Compare Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*, I, 129-136.

laden with the Harvest of every Climate: Our Tables are stored with Spices, and Oils, and Wines: Our Rooms are filled with Pyramids of *China*, and adorned with the Workmanship of *Japan*: Our Morning's-Draught comes to us from the remotest Corners of the Earth: We repair our Bodies by the Drugs of *America*, and repose our selves under *Indian* Canopies. My Friend Sir ANDREW calls the Vineyards of *France* our Gardens: the Spice-Islands our Hot-Beds; the *Persians* our Silk-Weavers, and the *Chinese* our Potters. Nature indeed furnishes us with bare Necessaries of Life, but Traffick gives us a great Variety of what is Useful, and at the same time supplies us with every thing that is Convenient and Ornamental. Nor is it the least Part of this our Happiness that whilst we enjoy the remotest Products of the North and Soth, we are free from those Extremities of Weather which give them Birth; That our Eyes are refreshed with the green Fields of *Britain*, at the same time that our Palates are feasted with Fruits that rise between the Tropicks.

For these Reasons there are not more useful Members in a Commonwealth than Merchants. They knit Mankind together in a mutual Intercourse of good Offices, distribute the Gifts of Nature, find Work for the Poor, add Wealth to the Rich, and Magnificence to the Great. Our *English* Merchant converts the Tin of his own Country into Gold, and exchanges his Wool for Rubies. The *Mahometans* are cloathed in our *British* Manufacture, and the Inhabitants of the Frozen Zone warmed with the Fleeces of our Sheep.

When I have been upon the 'Change, I have often fancied one of our old Kings standing in Person, where he is represented in Effigy, and looking down upon the wealthy Concourse of People with which that Place is every Day filled. In this Case, how would he be surprized to hear all the Languages of *Europe* spoken in this little Spot of his former Dominions, and to see so many private Men, who in his Time would have been the Vassals of some powerful Baron, Negotiating like

Princes for greater Sums of Money than were formerly to be met with in the Royal Treasury! Trade, without enlarging the *British* Territories, has given us a kind of additional Empire: It has multiplied the Number of the Rich, made our Landed Estates infinitely more Valuable than they were formerly, and added to them an Accession of other Estates as valuable as the Lands themselves.