

Why are so many so very solicitous to screen themselves under ambiguous Terms, and to give a plausible Turn to the most dangerous Errors? Is it to impose upon the Bulk of Mankind, as Pirates do upon unwary Sailors, by hanging out false Colours? Does it not bespeak a much greater Turn of Mind to retract an untenable Notion, than even to carry one's Point on the Side of Truth? The latter may be often owing merely to the strength of a good Cause; whereas the former is the Result of that ingenuous Temper, and that Largeness of Soul, which animates a Man with the noblest Views, and makes him willing to sacrifice the Vanity of being thought an able Disputant to the disinterested Pursuit of Truth. His Opponent only conquers *him*; whilst *he* triumphs over two very powerful Enemies, Error and himself: By the latter, I mean those Prejudices and Passions, which hang a wrong Bias upon the Mind.

Good-Nature is undoubtedly the first Ingredient in good Conversation. The Man that is always pleased, and in good Humour, never fails of pleasing the Company. *Learning* should be grafted upon this Quality; and the World has too great Reason to lament, that ill-natured Men, especially if they be ingenious, should ever have the Advantage of a *refined* Education. For though it be a common Observation, that Learning sours a Man's Temper; yet I am apt to think it is a much truer Observation, that his Temper sours his Learning. The Mind is the Cask, and if that be sour and impure, the most generous Wine will lose its own Taste, and receive a Tincture from the Vessel. When therefore the Bent of a Man's Inclinations is naturally perverse, Learning falls in with it; and teaches *him*, whose Wit and Malice made him but too satirical before, to give a keener Edge to his Raillery, and wound with more Success. So that the Superstructure of Education to a Man of this Complexion, is like adding Poison to that Arrow, which before was too apt to kill.

Humility is another endearing Quality. Nothing can be more odious than Self-sufficiency in Men of superior Attainments, or more ridiculous in Men of inferior Abilities. The World is generally even with these Men; and, as they despise all, they are in Return despised by all Mankind. How contrary is that Character which is given of Dr. HAMMOND in his Epitaph:

*Nihil eo excelsis erat aut humilius:
Scriptis suis Factisque,
Sibi uni non placuit,
Qui, tam Calamo quam Vita,
Humano Generi complacuerat.*

None bid fairer for being Great Men, than those, in whom a modest Opinion of themselves is interwoven with a laudable Ambition: The latter is an Incentive to those Actions which may make them glorious; and the former is a Bar to all those Attempts, which, being beyond their Strength, may make them ridiculous. The one prompts them to display themselves; and the other prevents them from exposing themselves. A Desire of Glory, tempered with a Tincture of Humility, is (to use the Simile of an ingenious Writer upon a different Occasion) like a Flame, that trembles as it aspires. A Person of this excellent Frame of Mind knows how to condescend without stooping too low, and how to rise, without towering too high.

Good-Breeding is little else than Good Nature polished and beautified by Art. An ill-natured Man may, it is true, observe the little Punctilio's and Forms of Civility; but he will be deficient in the very Essentials. To constitute a finished Character, the inflexible Integrity of the *Man of Honour* must be sweetened and qualified by the winning Condescension of the *Courtier*, and regulated by the Piety and Erudition of the *Divine*. How gracefully does Learning sit upon a Man, how venerably amiable does Religion appear to the Eye of the World, when attended with *Good-Breeding*? And how does *Good-Breeding* plead a more solid Title to our Value and Respect, when accompanied with Religion and Learning?

The *Gentleman* makes the *Christian* and *Scholar* beloved; and the *Christian* and *Scholar* make the *Gentleman* esteemed. All these Accomplishments must enter into the Composition of *refined* Conversation, which is then carried to its greatest Height of Perfection, when what is said upon Matters of Moment, is at once endeared to us by a graceful Manner, and an agreeable Complacency of Behaviour; is enforced by the Weight and nervous Energy of sound Reason, is enlivened by the exquisite Beauties of fine Sense and elegant Reflections.

An affable Deportment, and Meekness of Temper, will disarm the most violent Antagonist of his Obstinacy, and we need never fear
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