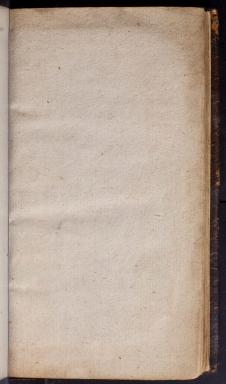


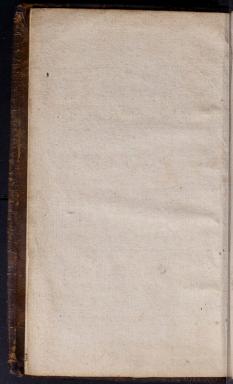


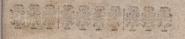
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August 20th. 1676.

Roger L'Estrange.

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Licensed,

August 20th. 1676.

Roger L'Estrange.



THE

WOMAN

As GOOD as the

MAR

OR, THE

Equallity of Both Sexes.

Written Originally in French, And Translated into English by A. L.



London: Printed by T. M. for N. Brooks, at the Angel in Cornbil, 1677.

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THE

PREFACE,

Containing

The Plat-form and Defigne, of the Discourse.

Here is nothing more nice and delicate, than to Treat on the Subject of Wamen.

When a Man speaketh to their advantage, it is presently imagined a peece of Gallantry, or Love: And tris very probable, that the most part Judging of this discourse by the Title, will take it at first for an effect of the one or on A 2 ther,

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ther; and will be glad to know the truth of the motive and defigne thereof. Take it thus:

The most happy thought, that can enter into the minds of those who labour, to acquire a solid Science, after that they have been instructed, according to the Vulgar Method, is to doubt if they have been taught aright, and to desire to discover the truth by themselves.

In the progress of their inquirry, it occurs to them necessarily, to observe that we are filled with prejudices, (that is to say, opinions past upon things without true Examination); And that we must absolutely Renounce them, to attain to clear, and distinct Knowledges.

In the designe of insinuating so important a Maxime, we have be-

lieved

lieved it the best, to choose a determinate, and famous Subject, where every one takes an interest; to the end, that having demonstrated, that a Sentiment as ancient as the World, of as great extent as the Earth, and as Universal as Mankind is a prejudice or errour, the Learned might at length, be Convinced of the necessity of Judging of things by themselves after having examined them, and not to referre themselves to the opinion or credit of other men; if they would avoid being deceived.

Of all prejudices, there is not any to be observed, more proper for this designe, than that which men commonly conceive of the inequa-

lity of the two Sexes.

Indeed, if we consider them in their present condition, we may

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observe them more different in their civil functions, and those which depend on the mind, than in such as belong to the body. And if we fearch for the reason of this in ordinary discourse, we find, that all the World, those that have Learning, and those that have none, and even Women themselves agree, to fay, that they have no share in Sciences nor Employments, because that they are not capable thereof; that they have not the parts of men, and that they ought in all things to be inferiour to them as they are.

After having tryed this opinion, according to the Rule of Verity, which is to admit of nothing for truth, but what is supported by clear, and distinct Notions, On the one hand it hath appeared sale, and grounded on a prejudice, and Popular tradition; and on the other

ther we have found that both Sexes are equal; that is to fay, that Wamen are as noble, as perfect, and as capable as men. This cannot be established, but by refuting two forts of adversaries; the vulgar, and almost all the learned.

The former having no other ground for what they believe, but Custome, and some slight appearences: the best way to consute them, seems to be, to let them see how that Women have been Subjected, and excluded from Sciences, and Employments; and having led them through the Principal conditions, and occurrences of life, give them occasion to acknowledge, that Women have advantages which renders them equal to men; and this is the designe of the first part of this Treatife.

A 5 The

The Preface.

The fecond is employed to shew, that all the arguments of the learned are vain. And having established the Sentiment of equality, by positive reasons, Women are Justified from the desects of which they are ordinarily accused, by making appear that they are either imaginary, or of little importance; that they proceed only from the education which is given them, and that they mark in them considerable advantages.

This Subject might be handled two wayes, either in a flourithing, brisk, and complementive Stile, or otherwayes after the manner of Philofophers by Principles, to the end of being instructed therein to the bottom.

Such as have the true idea of eloquence, know well that these two stiles are almost inconsistent

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together, and that one cannot enlighten the mind, and tickle it by the same Methode. It is not but that the flourish may be joyned with reason's but that such a mixture often hinders the end which ought to be proposed in discourse, which is to convince, and perswade, that which is pleasing, musing the mind, and not suffering it to rest on what is folid. and to as ashest III

And as men have peculiar regards for Women, if in a treatife made on their Subject, we mingle any thing that is gallant and courtly, those that read it, pursue their thoughts too far, and lofe fight of that which ought chiefly to affect them.

Wherefore there being nothing in the World that concerns Women more than this defigne, where we are obliged to speak in their favour, matters of the greatest force,

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force, and verity, as far as the capriciousness of the World can suffer it; we thought that it behooved us to speak feriously, and give notice thereof, lest that the conceit, that it might be a peece of airy Gallantry, should make it slightly perused, or rejected by scrupu-

lous persons.

We are not ignorant, that this discourse will render a great many male contented, and that they whose Interests and Maximes are contrary to what is proposed here, will not fail to cry out against it. To give means to answer to their complaints, we advertise persons of Spirit, and particularly the Women who are not the Spaniels of those that take authority over them, that if they give themselves the trouble to read this Treatise, with the attention at least that the variety of matters therein contained does

require, they will observe that the Essential Character of truth, is clearness, and evidence, Which may serve them to know whether the objections that may be adduced against them be considerable or not.

And they may remark, that the most specious shall be made to them by people whose profession seems at this day to engage them to renounce experience, common sense, and themselves, that they may blindly embrace all that agrees with their prejudices, and interests, and oppugne all kinds of Truths that seem to oppose them.

And we pray confider, that the bad effects, which a panick fear may make them apprehend from this enterprise, may never perhaps happen in one fingle Woman, and that they are counterposted with

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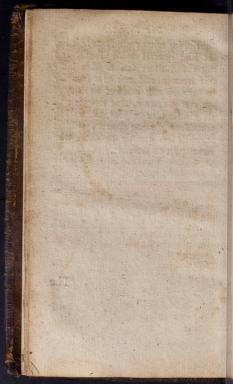
a great advantage, which may redound there-from; there being perhaps no way more natural, or fure, to draw the greatest part of women from idlenets, to which they are reduced, and the inconveniences that attend it, than to perswade them to study, which is almost the sole thing in which Ladies at present can imploy themselves, by making them know that they are as proper thereto as men.

And as there are none but unreasonable men, who abuse the advantages that custome hath given them, to the prejudice of Women; neither can there be likewise any, but indiscreet Women, that should make use of this peece, to make them rise against men, who would treat them as their companions, and equals. In fine, if any one be Choaked with this discourse.

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course, for what reason soever it be, let him quarrel with Truth, and not the Author: and to free himself from peevishnes, let him say to himself, that it is but an Essay of wit: it is certain, that this jurk of imagination or a like, hindering truth from gaining upon us, renders it much less uneasse to those who have pain to suffer it.

The





TRANSLATOR

TO THE Unprejudiced Reader.

Well fore-see, that my pains, in making this ingenious French Author speak English, will, according to the bias of prejudiced, and interested humours, undergoe various Censures; a great many men, especially those who defie the French, with their Shop-tooles, will be at it Tooth and Nail, and cry out, that so many out-landish Trinckioms having already crept into use amongs the Women; he that would endeavour to introduce more, is no friend to the liberty of the Subject. But such men do but

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but hunt their own shadow; my intent by this Translation being quite contrary.

When I Considered, that of all Nations, The English did most candidly affert, and sutably entertain the worth of the lovely Sex; and by civility, and good nature, as well as prudence, and justice, freely grant an equality to Women, in all things wherein established, and unalterable customes might not be violated; which strangers, even the French themselves, the great complimenters of that Sex, do by the force of Philosophy, and with reasons which wrestle against prejudices, but at most discourse of. I thought I could not do less for the Satisfaction of such English Men, who do not understand my Author in his own Language, than to make him intelligible, and so give them opportunity to infer from his opinions; that what in this matter the Virtuosi, and enquirers of that Nation, Squeeze from Subtile Speculation, and Logick, is no more than what every English Min Practiseth by common sense, and Natural inclination. And herein I bope not at all to have offended that Sex.

Unprejudiced Reader.

I think I have no great reason to apprehend ill will from the Vertuous Women, for my endeavours of letting them bear strangers speak in their favours; fince they may Lawfully conclude from thence, that if they enjoy more than their Neighbours of what is their acknowledged due, it must be their peculiar advantages beyond others, that makes them more considerable in the eyes of their Judges: there being no Countrey which produceth Women, who ought more Justly to boast of the favours, and endowments of nature, in respect of body and mind, than this; or who more fully enjoy, or modestly use the priviledges which upon that account, are reasonably allowed them.

This I conscive may be sufficient to warrant my undertakeing, especially seeing so candid a peece of Philosophy, may in a great measure vindicate the honour of the Nation, (which much grieves to be imposed upon by the modes, and punstitio's of the French so much in fashion) by letting the world see, that the English, Nobly complying with that suffice which is therein so strongly pleaded for; do in matters of importance give

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an Example so truly Imitable, that the more ingenious must impute it to Salick Lawes, long Custome, masculine, and has so constitutions, that they are not Univer-

fally proposed as patterns.

It is not my province to attempt the answering of objections, which may be made against this kind of Doctrine; both since my Author, whose task it was, hath fully done it; and that there is no great danger of inconveniencies, here to publish that which is already believed and put in practice. And therefore, if any corrupt minded fales man, who may pretend to know Women better than either the Author or my felf, because he bath feen more in their Bodices, fhall unlace and let flie a dotument, and tell me that in this medling generation I have been a little too pragmatical to follow the steps of a stranger, and tread upon snailes when they show their bornes; I am fo innocent as not to reply, but leave him in his chafe, to be convinced by reason, and a good wife: and speak a word to the impartial reader by way of advertisement concerning the Treatife.

Unprejudiced Reader.

The Author himself gives his Reason, why he hath handled this Subject in fo serious a manner, and in so short, and Doctrinal a stile: So that I need fay no more, but as a faithfull Translator, I have fuck to his words, and fenfe. I refolved indeed to have accommodated this Treatife as much as possibly I could to the manners, and present customes of this nation; but finding therein, somethings whereon the Author does insist as material to the establishing of his opinion, which are not well known in this Kingdome, there being no order of People, nor publick houses here, which in every thing runs Parallel with NUNS, ABBESSE, and MONS AS-TERIES, but especially with those whom he mentions: I thought it convenient to translate his words Literally, and for the understanding of one passage, which may seem difficult, advertise the Reader, that there is an order of Nuns at Paris, who, because they make it their business to relieve, and supply prisoners, and other indigent perfons, have the name of Charity; and that in the great Hospital the L'Hostel dieu there, which is indeed a great Theatre of Humane infirmities; all The Translator to the, &c.

the fick are attended by Religious Women. If the Reader be herewith satisfied I have my designe; and if not, I shall not, I hope, lose the name of a friend, which is.

Willoffel dieu mers, ware et maret a

chian labor

A. L.

Errata.

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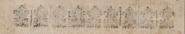
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THE

WOMAN as Good as the MAN,

OR, THE

Equality of the two Sexes.

The First Part.

Wherein is shewn, That the Vulgar Opinion is Prejudicated; and that, comparing (impartiality) that which may be remarked in the Conduct of Men, and Women, we are obliged to acknowledge an intire Equality between both Sexes.



en perfwade themfelves of very many things, for which they can give no Reafon; because their Affurance is founded onely upon slight Appearances, by which

they fuffer themselves to be hurried: and would have as strongly believed the Custom had thereto determined them

after the same manner.

Setting afide a fmall number of Learned, all the world hold, as a thing unquestionable, That the Sun moves about the Earth: Though that which appears in the Revolution of Dayes, and Years, equally inclineth those (who attentively confider) to think, That it is the Earth that takes its courfe round the Sun. Men Imagine, that in Bealts, there is a certain Knowledge that guides them, by the fame reason that wild Savages fancy, some little Spirits to be within Clocks, and other Engines which are shown them; whereof they understand not the Fabrick, or Movements.

Had we been brought up in the midst of the Seas, without having ever come Afhore, we should not have sailed, to have believed (as Children do when they put off in Boats), that in our Floating houses, the Land went from us. Every one esteems his own Countrey the best, because there he is most accussomed; and that the Religion, wherein he hath been Nursed, is the True.

True, which he ought to follow; although he hath never perhaps dream'd of examining, or comparing the fame with others. VVe find our felves alwayes more inclined for our Countreymen, than for Strangers, even in matters where Right is on their fide. VVe are more pleased to Converse with those of our own Prosession, than others; though neither their VVit, nor Vertue be so great. And the Disparity of Estates and Conditions, make many judge, that Men amongst themselves are altogether unequal.

If we enquire into the ground of all these diverse Opinions, we shall find them bottom'd on Interest, or Custom; and that it is incomparably more difficult, to draw Men from such Sentiments, wherein they are engaged by Prejudice, than from the Opinions which they have embraced upon the Motive of the strongest, and most convincing Argu-

ments.

Amongst these odd Opinions, we may reckon the common Judgment which Men make of the Difference of the two Sexes, and of all that depends thereon; there is not any mistake more

Antient, or Univerfal. For, both the Knowing and Ignorant, are fo prepoffeffed with the Opointon, That Women are inferiour to Men in Capacity and Worth, and that they ought to be placed in that dependance wherein we fee them; that the contrary Sentence will not mifs to be eyed, as a Paradox,

and piece of Singularity.

However, for the Establishing of it, it would not at all be necessary, to use any positive Reason; if Men were more just, and less interested in their Judgements, it might suffice to advertise them, That hitherto the difference of the Sexes (to the difadvantage of the Female), hath been but very lightly discoursed off; and that to judge soundly, whether our Sex have obtained any Natural Pre-eminence beyond theirs: we ought to think thereon feriously, and without Partiality, rejecting all which hath been hitherto believed upon the simple Report of other Men, without Tryal, or Examination.

It is certain, that if a Man would fet himself in this State of Indifferency, and Neutrality, he must acknowledge

on

(on the one hand) that it is Weakness and Precipitancy that make us reckon Women less Noble and Excellent, than our felves: and that certain Natural Indispositions render them obnoxious to the Failings, and Imperfections that are attributed to them; and thereby contemptible to many. And, on the other hand, he must see, That these very Colours which cheat People concerning their own Subjects, when they flightly pass them over, would serve to undeceive them, if they founded them a little deeper. In short, if that Man were a Philosopher, he would find that there are Natural Reasons, which invincibly prove, that both Sexes are a like, both as to Body, and Soul.

But as there are not many Perfons, in a condition of themselves, to put in Practice this Advice; so it must remain useless, without some pains be taken to labour with Men, and to put them in the way of making use of it. And seeing the Opinion of those who have less studied is the most general, with it we shall begin our Enquiry.

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Let every Man (in particular) be afked his Thoughts of Women (in general) and that he would furely confess his Mind, he will tell you without doubt, That they were not made but for Man; That they are fit for nothing, but to Nurse, and Breed little Children in their Low Age; and to mind the House. It may be the more Ingenious will add, That there are many Women that have indeed Parts, and Conduct ; but that even they who feem to have most, when they are nearly examined, discover still fome-what that speaks their Sex: That they have neither Solidity, nor Constancy; nor that depth of Judgement which they think to find in themfelves: And that it hath been an Effect of Divine Providence, and Wifdom of Men, to have barred them from Sciences, Government, and Offices: That it would be a pleasant thing indeed, to fee a Lady in the Chair (in quality of a Professor) teaching Rhethorick, or Medicine; marching along the Streets, followed by Officers, and Sergeants; putting in Execution Laws: Playing the part of a Counfellour; pleading before Judges: Seated on a Bench

Bench to Administer Justice, in Supream Courts: Leading of an Army; giving Battel; and Speaking before States, and Princes, as the Head of an

Embaffy.

I do confess, such Practices would furprize us; but for no other reason, but that of Novelty. For, if in modelling of States, and establishing the different Offices that compose them, Women had been like-wise called to Functions; we should have been ass much accustomed to have seen them in Dignity, as they are to see us. And should have found it no more strange to have seen a Lady on a Throne, than a Woman in a Shop.

If these Blades be pressed a little further, we shall find their mightiest Arguments reduced to this, That, as to Women, matters have alwayes past as now they go; which is a mark, that they are really such, as they are effectived: And that, if they had been capable of Sciencies, and Offices, Men world not have denyed them their

thares.

These kind of Reasonings proceed from the Conceit that we have of the Equity of our Sex; and a false Notion which Men forge to themselves of Custom: It is enough with them to find that a thing is established, to make them believe it well grounded. And as they judge, that men ought to do nothing without Reason; so the most part of People cannot imagine, but that Reafon hath been confulted for the introducing of fuch Practifes, as they fee univerfally received; and fancy to themselves, that Prudence, and right Reason, have established the Customes, to which they both oblige us to conforme ; fince, without breach of Order, we cannot therein dispence with our Obedience.

Every one fees (in his own Countrey) the Women in fuch Subjection, that, in all things, they depend on Men, without being admitted to Learning; or any of those Conditions, that afford opportunity to become remarkable by the advantage Parts: No Body affirms, that he hath ever feen them treated other-wise. And all know, That matters go so with them every where, that there

there is no place in the World, where they are not used after the same manner, as we find at Home. In some Countries their Usage is worse, where they are regarded as Slaves. In China they keep their Feet little from their Child-hood, to hinder them from rambling out of Doors; where they never fee any thing but their Husbands, and Children. In Turkey the Ladies are strictly enough confined; And in Italy they are not much better. Almost all the People of Asia, Affrica, and America, use their Wives, as we do our Serving-Maids. They are no where imployed in any thing, but that which is esteemed low, and base: And because they only discharge the lesser care of Huf-wivery and Nurfes, Men commonly perfwade themselves, that, for that end alone they are in the World; and that they are uncapable of any thing elfe: They cannot eafily represent to themselves how matters could be other-wayes; it appearing impossible to alter them, what endeavour soever be used.

The wifest Law-givers in founding their Common-Wealths have establish-

ed nothing on this Account, in favour of Women. All their Laws feem only to have been made to confirm Men in the Possession they have got. Most part of Men, who have passed for Learned, have not said any thing to the advantage of Women: And the Conduct of Men, in all Ages, and Places of the World, appears so uniform in this case, that it seems they have conspired; or other-wayes (as many imagine) have been led thereunto by a feeret Instinct; that is to say, Letters Patent from the Author of Nature.

Men are still the more perswaded in this, when they consider in what manner the Women (themselves) support this their Condition. They look upon it as a thing natural to them; whether it be that they resident not upon what they are, or that being born, and bred in dependence; they make the same Judgment thereon, as Men do. Now, upon all these views, the one, and the other, let themselves believe, both, That their Spirits are as different, as their Bodies; and that there ought to be as great distinction betwixt the two

Sexes,

Sexes, in all the Functions of Life, as there is in those which are peculiar to either: Whil'st, in the mean-time, that perswasion (like the most part of those which we draw from Use, and Custom,) is nothing but Prejudice. formed in us by the appearances of things, for want of closer Examination: and of which we might eafily undeceive our felves, if we would but take the pains to return back to the Fountainhead, and judge in many Occurrencies of that which hath been done in former times, by what is practifed at this day; and of the Custom of the Antients, by what we fee in Vogue in our own times: Had Men followed this Rule in many of their Sentiments, they had not so easily fallen into mistakes. And as to what concerns the present state of Women, they would have acknowledged, that they have not been fubie-Ated by any other Law, than that of the stronger; and that it hath not been for want of Natural Capacity, or Merit, that they have not shared with us in that which raifes our Sex above theirs.

Indeed, when we confider ferioufly the Affairs of this World, both past, and present, we find that all agree in this, That Reason hath alwayes been the weakest: And it seems, that Histories have only been composed, to Demonstrate that which every one fees in his own time, That ever fince there hath been Men in the World, force hath alwayes prevailed. The greatest Empires of Asia, in their beginnings, have been the work of Ufarpers, and Thieves. And the fcattered Wracks of the Grecian, and Roman Monarchies, have not been gathered, but by those who thought themselves strong enough to relift their Masters, and domineer over their Equals. This Conduct is no less visible in all other Societies. And if Men behave themfelves fo towards their Fellows, there is great likely-hood from stronger Reafon, That, in the beginning, they have done so, every one towards his Wife. And this is almost the manner how it hath happened.

Men observing, that they were the stronger, and that in relation of Sex, they had some advantage of Body,

fancyed that they had the fame in all; the Consequence was not great for Women in the beginning of the World, Affairs being in a Condition far different from what now they are: when neither Government, Science, Office, nor Religion, were established, the Notion of Dependence had in it nothing at all of Irksome. I Imagine that Men lived then like little Children, and all the Advantage that was, was like that of Play. Men and Women (who then were fimple, and innocent) were equally employed in labouring of the Land, or Hunting, (as the Wild Indians do at this day): The Man took his Course and the Woman her's ; And they that brought Home most Profit, were commonly most esteemed.

The Inconveniencies that attend and follow the big-Belly, weakening the Strength of the Female for fome Intervenal of time, and hindering them to labour as formerly, required (neceffarily) the Affiftance of their Husbands; and themore ftill, whil'ft they were taken up with the care of their young Children. This produced fome Regards

gards of Esteem, and Preferrence in Families, which then were only composed of Father, Mother, and some little Babes: But when Families began to be enlarged, and that in the fame House, lived not only the Father, but the Father's Mother, the Children's Children; with Brothers, and Sifters, Elder and younger: Then did Dependence dilate it felf, and become more fenfible: Then was to be feen, the Mistrifs submitting to her Husband, the Son honouring his Father, and he commanding his Children. And as it is most difficult for Brothers, alwayes, perfectly to agree; we may eafily conceive, that they lived not long together, before that some Difference happned amongst them: The Elder, ftronger than the rest, would condefcend to them in nothing: So, Force obliged the Leffer to bow under the Greater, and the Daughters to follow the Example of their Mo-

It is easie to be imagined, that in such Families, there were then several different Functions; That the Women, being bound to stay at Home to bring

up their Children, took the Care within Doors: The Men (more free and ftrong) charged themselves with the Affairs abroad; and that after the Death of the Father and Mother, the First-Born took upon him the Government. The Daughters, accustomed to the House, had no thoughts of going abroad; but some Younger Brothers, discontented, and more fierce than they, refusing to submit to the Yoak, were obliged to withdraw, and fet up for themselves: And so, several of the fame Humour meeting together, made a shift to live on their Fortunes, and easily contracted Friendthip: VVho, finding themselves without Estate, sought out means to purchase what they wanted: and seeing there was no other way but to take from their Neighbours; they fell upon that which came next to hand : And, to confirm themselves in the Possession . of their New Conquests, at the same time made themselves Masters of the owners. Hour rol reading flom onle

The voluntary Dependence, which was before in Families, ceafed by this Invafion; Fathers and Mothers, with their

their Children, being conftrained to obey an unjust Usurper: So that, the Condition of VVomen became harder than before. For, as till then, they had never been marryed but to Men of their own House, and Family; they were afterward forced to take Strangers, and unknown Husbands, who only confidered them as the loveliest part of their Booty.

It is ordinary with Conquerours, to despise those amongst the Subdued, whom they judge the weakest: And the Women appearing to be such, by reason of their Employments (which required not much Strength), were

looked upon as inferiour to Men.

Some there were who contented themselves with this first Usurpation; but others, more ambitious, (encouraged by the success of their Victory) resolved to proceed in their Conquests. The VVomen being more humane, than to serve such unjust Designes, were lest at Home; and the Menchosen as the most proper for such Enterprizes, where there is need of Force. In this state of Life matters being no other-wayes esteemed, but as Menthought

thought them useful to the ends which they proposed; and the desire of Dominion being now become the strongest of Paffions, which could not be fatiffied but by Violence, and Injuffice; of which, men were the only Instruments: It is no wonder that they were preferred to Women. Men like wife, ferving to maintain the Conquests which they had made: Their Counsels were only taken for to establish their Tyranny, because none so sit to put them in Execution. And so, the Mildness, and Humanity of Women, was the fole cause which excluded them from having any share in the Administration of Publick Government.

The Example of Princes was quickly imitated by their Subjects, every one would carry it over his Companion; and private men began to rule more abfolutely in their Families. So foon as a Lord found himfelf Master of a People, and considerable Countrey, he shaped it into a Kingdom, made Laws for Government, chose his Officers from amongst the Men; and raised to Places those who had best fer-

ved him in his Enterprizes. So notable a Preferrence of one Sex above the other, lessends fill more the Esteem for the VVomen; and their Humour, and Course of Life, being far from Butchery, and VVarr; Men believed them no other-wayes capable to contribute to the Safety and Preservation of Kingdomes, but only by helping to

people them.

States and Common-VVealth's could not be established, without the placing of some Distinction amongst those that did compose them: So Marks of Honour were introduced for distinguishing of Orders, and Signes of Respective to the compose the difference, which was acknowledged to be amongst Men. And to the Notion of Power, was added the External Submission, which is commonly rendred to those who have the Authority in their Hands.

It is not at all necessary to tell you, how God hath been known of Men; but it is certain, that since the beginning of the VVorld, he hath been adored by them; though the VVorship which Men have rendred to a Deity,

was never Regular, but fince they were affembled in Bodies to make up Publick Societies,

Now; as Men were accustomed to Reverence the Powers, by External Marks of Respect; they thought it like-wife their Duty, to Reverence God by fome Ceremonies, which might ferve to manifest the Sentiments which they entertained of his Greatness. Temples were built, Sacrifices appointed, and Men (who were already the Heads of Government) failed not also, to take to themfelves, the care of that which concerned Religion. And Custom having now prepoffessed the VVomen with an Opinion that all belonged to Men, they contentented themselves without aspiring to any part of the Publick Miniry. But the Idea which Men conceived of a God-Head, being extreamly corsupted by the Fables and Fictions of Poets, they forged to themselves Divinities, both Male, and Female; and appointed, Shee-Priests for the Service of those of their Sex; but still with Subordination to the Conduct, and Pleafure of their Priefts.

Women have been likewise known to have Governed great States; but we must not imagine, that it was because they have been called thereto out of a purpose of Restitution of their right; but because they had the Dexterity so to dispose of Affairs, that Men could not snatch the Authority out of their Hands.

It is true, there are at this day Hereditary States, where the Femules fucceed to Males, as Queens, or Princeffes; But we have no Reason to believe, but that if Man have suffered the Scepter to fall into the place of the Distaffe, it was only that they might prevent the People from falling together bythe Ears; And that, if they have permitted Femule Regencies, it was in confideration, that the Mothers (who alwayes extreamly love their Children) would take a more particular Care of their States during their Misnority.

So that, now the Women being no other-wayes imployed, but in their Hufwivery, and finding therein bufiness enough; let us not think it firange, that they have not invented

any of these Sciences; whereof the greatest part (at first have been but the work, and task of some idle Loyteres.

The Agyptian Priests (who had not much to do) bufied themselves in chatting together, concerning the Effects of Nature, which feemed most to touch them: And after much talking and reasoning, began to make Observations; the noise of which, stirred up the Curiofity of some Men to come in fearch of them: But Sciences being but then in the Cradle, did not allure the Women out of Doors. Besides, that the Jealousie which already imbroyled the Husbands would have filled them with Suspition, that their Wives had gone to vifit the Priests tarather for Love to their Persons, than Learning which they had obtained.

After that feveral Men had received fome tincture of this new Learning, they began to affemble themselves in certain Places, to discourse thereof more at leisure; where every one speaking his Thoughts, Knowledge ripened, and Colledges and Accademies

were appointed, where the Women were not admitted; but in the fame manner were excluded from Learning, as they had been from all the reft.

Notwitsanding, the Restraint wherein they were kept, hindred not, but that some of them procured the Conversation, and Writings of the Learned; whereby (in a short time) they equalled the progress of the most Ingenious: But Custome having already enjoyned an impertinent Decorum, that Men durst not come to their Houses, nor other Women visit them for sear of giving some umbrage, they made no Disciples, nor founded Sects; but all the Light which they had attained use-lessy, dyed with themsselves.

If we observe how Modes and Fafhions creep into use, and how they
are dayly imbelished; we may judge,
That (in the beginning of the World)
People rook no great care of their
Dress: All was then simple and plain,
nothing minded but necessity. Men
flea'd Beasts; and fastening their Skins
together, framed to themselves Habits. But afterwards, Commodious-

ness began to be devised; and every one accowtering themselves according to their fancy, the Fashions that were most decent were presently followed; and they that were under the same Prince; strove to conform themselves to his Mode.

It happened not so with Modes and Fashions, as with Governments and Sciences; the Women here had their Share with Men: who perceiving them by their dress more lovely, took no care to rob them thereof. And both the one, and the other, finding that some fort of Apparel set of more gracefully, and rendred more amiable the Person, both strove to find out the Knack: But the Employments of Men being greater, and more important, hindered them from the more eager Purson.

The Women herein shewed their Prudence, and Skill; For, observing that new Ornaments made them more agreeable, and dear to Men, and thereby their Condition more supportable; they neglected nothing which they thought might serve to render themfelves Charming, and Lovely. To that end.

end, they employed Gold, Silver, and Precious Stones, as foon as they grew in Vogue: And feeing that Men had deprived them of Means, to make themselves Conspicuous by their Parts, they applyed themselves solely to find out that which might render them amiable, and pleasing. In this they have very well succeeded: For, their Beauty, and Attire, have advanced them to greater Esteem in the Eyes of Men, than all the Books and Learning of the World could ever have done. This Custom hath been too well Established, to admit of any future Change; the Practice thereof, hath continued to our times; and it feems to be a Tradition too antient to be now contradicted, or oppofed.

It appears clearly (from this Historical Conjecture), That, according to the manner of dealing familiar to all Men, it is only by Force and Empire that they have referved to themselves these Extrinseral Advantages; from which, the Female Sex is debarred. For, to warrant them to say, That it hath been grounded on Reason, they must

must never have communicated them amongst themselves, but to those who have been most capable; Alwayes made the Choice of such with exact Scrutiny, and Discretion: Never have admitted to sudy, but such as they knew disposed for Letters: Never raised to Charges, but those that were fittest for Employment; and excluded all others. And, in short, Never have fet any Man, on any thing, but what was suitable to his Inclinations.

We fee the contrary daily put in Practice; For, there is nothing but Chance, Necessity, or Interest, which engageth Men in the different Conditions and States of Civil Society. The Children learn their Father's Trade, because that it hath alwayes been mentioned to them. One is forced to the Gown, who would have been better pleased with the Sword, had it been at his own choice: and the ablest Man in the World shall never enter into Employment, if he want Money to buy his Place.

How many are there groveling in the dust, who would have made themselves famous, had they been but in the way? and how many Clowns are there, that might have become great Doctors had they been fent to School? We have but little ground to pretend that the present Virtuosi are only such of the times, who have had the best Genius for the things wherein they excell; and that, amongst fo many Perfons buryed in Ignorance, there are none who, with the same means which they have had, could have rendered themselves more capable.

Why is it then, that we affure our felves, that Women are less fit for such things than our felves? fore it is not Chance, but Unavoidable necessity that hinders them from playing their parts. I urge not, that all Women are capable of all Sciences and Employments; that any one is capable of all: No Man pretends to fo much; but I only defire, that, confidering the Sex in general, we may acknowledge an aptitude in the

one as well as the other.

Let us but glance a little upon that, which we fee dayly in the play and

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fmaller divertisements of Children. The Girles show therein a more gentile air, more of Wit, and greater dexterity: And when fear or shame does not stifle their Humours, their Discourse, is more ingenious, and pleafant; and their conversation more lively, brisk, and free: They Learn fooner what they are taught, if they be equally plyed: They are more industrious, more painfull, more submiss, more modest, and more referved; In a word, we may remarke in them in a more eminent degree, all those excellent qualities, which being found in young Men, make them esteemed fitter for high matters, than those who are otherwife their equalls.

Notwithhanding that, that which appeares, in the two Sexes, whillt they are as yet in the cradle, is sufficient to make us conclude, that the more lovely gives also the fairest hopes; yet men take no notice thereof; Masters and Teaching are onely for the Men: Particular care is taken to instruct them in all which is thought proper, to form and improve the mind; whilst in the mean time, the Women are let lan-

guish in Idleness, Softness, and Ignorance: Or, otherwise grovel in low,

and base imployments.

But for all this, we need but two eyes to perceive, that the cafe of the two Sexes is just like that of two Brothers, in the same samily; Where the younger, notwithstanding of the neglect of his breeding, makes often appear, that the elder has no advantage over him, but the start in coming into the World.

For what end ferves commonly the Education which is given to Men? It is useless to a great many for the proposed end: Nor does it hinder, but that many fall into vice, and diffolution: And that others remain fill ignorant, and even many times become greater Fops than they were before. If they had before any thing of breeding, of briskness or civility, they lose it by their fludy. All goes against them, and they against all things; So that one would fay, that they had spent their youth in traveling in Forraign Countreys where they had only frequented the Society of Salvages; fo much Clownishness, and rudeness of manners they bring

bring home with them. All that they have Learned is like goods of Coutreband, which they either cannot or dare not vend: And if they have a mind to venture into the World again, and therein appear as they ought, they are obliged to go to School ro the Ladyes, there to learn garb and complainance; and all that out-fide which now adayes compleats a Gen-

If we come nearer, and consider this: Instead of undervaluing the Women, because they have no great Stock of Learning, we should the rather esteem them happy: Since that if on the one hand they are thereby destitute of the means to fet off the parts, and advantages which are the peculiar on the other hand, they have not the occasion to spoile or lose them: Who, notwithstanding that defect, advance in Vertue, VVir, and good Grace as fast as they grow in Years. So that, should we without prejudice, or a byaffed Judgement, compare young men when they come new off of the press, with the VVomen of their own age; and not know how either the one or

the other had been bred, we could not but believe, their education to

have been quite contrary.

The out fide alone, the air of the face, the looks, the gate, the countenance, and the geffures, in VVomen, fpeak fomewhat posed, grave, and discreet, which sufficiently diffinguisheit them from men; none can be more reserved than they, words of double meaning never escape their lips, the smallest equivocation wounds their ears, nor can they endure the sight of any thing that choaks modelty.

The Conduct of most men is of a quite different stamp. Their March is often rash, and precipitant; their gestures odd and Antick, their eyes Rambling and un-settled: And are never more pleased than when they are entertained and fed with things which ought elastic than the conduction of the conductio

ther be kept filent or hid.

Let us but converse a little with VVomen, and that which the world call the Learned, either in company together, or a part by themselves, and we shall see the difference that is between the one and other. One would say that the men had stuffed their heads

with

with fludy, that they might Clogg, and confound their VVits. Nothing comes clearly from them, and the pain that they put themfelves to, to pump for the words, quite spoils the reliss of that which they might have said to purpose; So that unless the natural Wit be good, or they in company with men of their one Gang, hardly can they entertain an houres-Dif-course.

Women on the contrary, express neatly, and in order, what they conceive: Their words cost them nothing; they begin, and go on at their pleasure, and when they have their liberty, their fancy supplies them alwayes with inexhautible liberality. They have the gift of proposing their thoughts, with a sweetness, and complacency that infinuates as strongly as Reason: When mea on the other hand, do it in a manner rough and dry.

Let any Questions be started in prefence of Women of clearer Wit, they have presently the point that is drove at; They consider it under more appearances: What is said to purpose, finds sooner acceptance in their minds; And

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when that we are a little known to them, and that they have no suspition of us, we find their prejudices not so strong as those of men; nor they thereby so armed against the truth proposed. They are altogether averse from contradiction, and dispute, to which the learned are so addicted: they nibble not vainly at words, nor make use of those Scientifick, and Mysterious terms which are so proper to cover Ignorance; but all what they say is sense and intelligible.

I have taken delight to entertain my felf with Women, of all the different conditions that I could meet-with, both in the Town, and Countrey; to the end, that I might difcover the best, and worst; and I have found amongst those of them whom necessity, and labour, had not rendred stupid, more sound judgement than in the most part of the workes, which pass with great credit among the vulgarly learned of the age.

In fpeaking concerning God, it never entered into one of their heads to tell me, that she conceived Himpounder the shape of a venerable old-man:

On the contrary, they faid, that the y would not imagine, (that is) reprefers him to themselves, under any appearance like to men: That they conceived there was a God, because they could not comprehend that they themselves, or that all other things which did environ them, could be the work of chance, or of any creature: and that the conduct of their affairs being no effect of their prudence, because that the success thereof rarely answered the wayes, and methods, which they had raken; it must needs be the effect of Divine Providence.

When I asked them, What they thought of their Souls; they never made me answer: That it is a very subtile, and thin slame, or a disposition of the Organs of sheir Bodyes; nor that it was capable of extension, or contraction. On the contrary, they answered, that they perceived very well, that it was distinct from their bodyes; And that the greatest certainty that they could say thereof, was that they believed it altogether unlike any of those things, which they perceived by Sense; but that if they had

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been Book-learned, they should have

known to a Hair what it was.

It never entereth into the Head of a Nurse, to say as Physitians do, that their Sick began to be better, because the Concoctive Faculty performs (laudably) its Functions: And when they fee a great Quantity of Blood stream from a Vein, they laugh at those who deny a Communication of the others there-with by Circulation.

When I would know of them, Why it was that they believed, that the Stones exposed to the Sun, and Southern - Showers, did fooner wear, than those that lay to the North? There was none simple enough to Anfwer me, That it comes to pass by reason that the Moon gnawes them. with sharp Teeth, as some Philosophers pleafantly fancy; but that (they being dryed by the Heat of the Sun) the following Showers made them the more eafily moulder.

I have demanded (at least) of twenty for the nonce, If they believed not that God (by an Obediential, or Extraordinary Power) could elevate a Stone to the Beatifick Vision? But

could

could never draw from them any other Answer, but that they thought, I jested with them by such a kind of Question.

The greatest Fruit that we can expect from Learning, is a just Difcerning, and exactitude in Distinguishing of that which is true and evident, from what is false and obscure; thereby to avoid falling into Errour, or Mistake. People are easily inclined to believe, that Men (at least fuch as pass for Knowing) have in this the better of the Women, Neverthelefs, if we have but a little of that Discerning and Exactitude of which I spake, we shall find that it is one of the Qualities they want most; For, they are not only obscure, and confused in their Discourses, (by which good Quality they often fway, and attract the Belief of simple and credulous Perfons); but they even re-ject that which is evident, and fcoff at those who speak in a manner clear and intelligible, as too easie and common: They fall first upon any Obfcurity proposed to them, as being the most Mysterious of the rest. To

Convince --

Convince them of this, we need do no more but hear them with a little Patience; and afterward, oblige them

to explain themselves.

The Women are of an Humour very far from this. VVe may observe, that fuch as have a little feen the World, cannot endure that even their own Children should speak Latin in their Presence; they midrust others that do so; and often say, That they are afraid lest some Impertinency be hid under such strange Attires.

We never hear them meddle with the facred Terms of Arts, as Men call them; Nay, they cannot be made fo much as get them by Heart, though their Memories be very good, and that they have heard them often repeated. And when we fpeak to them in obfeure and hard Words, they frankly confess, that they want Wit and Understanding to reach our Meaning; or other wife, they well perceive, that fuch as Cant after that manner, want Knowledge and Learning to speak other-wife.

In fine, if we confider the feveral wayes and methods, whereby the Men, and the Women, bring forth what they know; we must judge, that the one are like to Labourers that work in Quarries, who (with great Pain) win from thence rude and shapeless Stones; And that the Women (like skillful Architects, and Masons) polish, and fitly place in Work, what they have put into their Hands.

VVe find an infinite number of Women, who not only Judge of things with as much Exactness, as if they had had the most exquisite Education; without either Prejudices, or confused Notions (the ordinary stumbling-Block of the Learned); but also, fee many, that (with a Judgement cleer and just) can Discourse of the Objects of the most Refined Sciences, as if they had alwayes studied

They express their Minds with a Grace; and have the Knack by hitting on the best Terms in use, to speak more with one word than Men can do with many. If we Discourse with

them

gether.

Eloquence is a Talent fo natural, and peculiar to them, that no Body can dispute it: They perswade what they please; and can Indite and Defend without the help of Laws: So that, there are but few Judges, who have not proved them the most prevalent Proctors. Can there be any thing more weighty, or Elegant, than the Letters of several Ladies upon all the Subjects that fall under ordinary Conversation, and principally upon the Passions? The Movements of which, make up all the beauty and fecret of Rhetorick. They handle them with fo delicate a Touch, and express them fo Naturally, that we are obliged to confess, that we feel them to be such as they speak them; and that all the Oratory of the World is not able to

give to Men, that which costs nothing to Women. The Flights of Eloquence, Poesie, Harangues, Sermons, and Discourfes, soar not at all above their reach; And nothing is wanting to their Criticks, but the Rules, and a few Terms of Arr

I am not ignorant, that this Treatife it felf, will not escape their Censure; and that there are many who will find sault with it: Some will condenn it, as not at all proportionate to the Grandeur, and Dignity of the Subject: That the Strain of it is not so Gallant, the Stile so Noble, not the Expression of Losty and Elevated as was fit: That there are several Passages slightly handled, where many Important Remarks might have been imployed: But I hope my Good-will, and the Designe which I proposed, to speak no-

Hands.

They have (moreover) this Advantage. That the Eloquence of Action is in them much more lively that in Men: There, Men alone lets us fee, that

thing but Truth, and to avoid the forced Expressions which favour of Romance, will plead Excuse for me at their that they intend fo to speak, as to gain the Point.

Their Air is noble and great, their Port free and Majestuous, their Carriage decent, their Gestures naturall. their Stile engaging, their Words cafie, and their Voice sweet and melting. The Beauty and Grace of their Discourse (when it enters once the Mind), opens to them the Door of the Heart. If they reason of Good and Evil, on their Countenance appears that Character of Integrity, which renders the Perswasion more prevalent: And when they would excite Love for Vertue, their Heart is feen on their Lips; and the Image which they give thereof (decked with the Ornaments of Discourse and Graces, which are fo peculiar to them) appears a hundred times more Lovely.

It is pretty to hear a Woman, that fets herfelf to plead; how clearly she explains, and unties all the Knots and Labyrinths of Affairs; precifely states her own, and Parties Pretensions: Discovers what hath given ground to the Suit, and the manner how she has

managed

managed it; what Engines she hath fet a work in all her Proceedings; and how (in all things) she shewes a certain Capacity in Business, which is wanting to the most part of Men.

It is this which makes me think, that if they made it their business to study Law, they would succeed in it (at least) as well as we; But we fee, that Peace and Justice is their study; With Grief they hear of Differences, and with Joy endeavour to take them up friendly: Their Care in that, makes them find out Turns, and fingular Expedients, for the Reconciling of Minds; And, upon the Conduct of their own, or their Neighbours Families, they naturally make these Reflections of Equity; upon which, all the knowledge of Law and Justice is founded.

In the Rehearfals of those who are Witty, there is alwayes fome pleafingness with order, which is not to be found in ours: They difcern what is proper, or impertinent to the Subject; decide the interests; describe the perfons, with their true and natural Cha-

racters;

racters; unfold the intrigues, and trace the greatest as well as the least, when they set thereon. This is evidently to be seen in the Histories, and Romances of ingenious Ladyes who are still alive.

How many are there that learn as much at Sermons, in Discourse, and forme little books of Piety, as many Dostors with Thomas Aguinas in their studyes, or upon their deskes? and speak with that solidity, and depthabout the highest Mysteries of all the Christian Morality; that they might often pass for great Divines, if they did but wear a hat, or could Lugg into

play Latin fentences.

VVomen feem born to practife Phylick, and to restore the sick to health; for the neatness and complying humour easeth one half of the distemper; and they are not only proper to apply remedyes, but likewise to invent: They find out an infinite number, which are commonly called Small, because they cost less than those of Galen or Hippocrates, and are not prescribed by Receit, but which are by so much the more easy, and secure, as they

they are fimple and natural. In fine, they make their observations in their practises, with so much exactness, and discourse thereof with so good reason; That they often render useless all the Places of the Schools.

Amongst the countrey Women, those that labour in the fields, are wonderfully skilfull in the odd, and unconstant Freaks of Seafons; and their Almanacks are a great deal more certain than those, which are printed from the hands of Aftrologers. They explain naturally the fertility and barrenness of years, from the Winds, Rains, and what elfe is produced by the change of VVeather; so that no body can hear them discourse thereof, without pity and compaffion of the Learned, who charge all these Effects or Aspects, Conjunctions, Ascendencies of Planets and the like; which makes me think, that if Women had been taught, that, the alterations to which the body of man is subject, might come upon him by reason of his particular constitution, his exercise, the climate wherein he lives, his food, education, and different occurrences of Life; they had never let it enter in their heads

Heads, to have referred these Various Inclinations and Changes to the Influencies of Starrs; Bodies at fo many Thousand Miles distant from

I confess, there are some Sciences, of which Women are not at all heard fpeak; because they are not the Sciences of ordinary Vent, nor Society. Alegebra, Geometry, and the Opticks, never (or rarely) leave Studies, and Learned Academies, to come into the Croud. And, as their greatest use is, to give just Measures to our Thoughts, they ought not to appear in ordinary Converse: but fecretly, like hidden Springs that move, and make great Machins Play: my Mouning is, that we should make such Application of them in the Subjects of Converse and Entertainment, as to think and fpeak truly, and Geometrically, without making great shew of our Art.

All these Observations on the Qualities of the Mind, may be easily gathered amongst VVomen of a middle Condition; But if we advance as far as the Court, and be admitted into the Entertainments of Ladies, there

is quite another thing to be Remarked. It feems that their Genius is Naturally fuited to their Quality; their Quaintness, and polite Discerning, speaks a frame of Spirit, delicate, fine, and easie; and some-what Great and Noble, which is their own. We may fay, that Objects (like Men) approach them with Respect; they alwayes fee them in their best Dresse, and speak of them with an Air beyond the Common. In a word, flow a Man that has a taste, two Letters of Ladies of a different Rank, and he shall eafily know which of them is Highest in Quality.

How many Ladies have there been, and how many are there fiill, who ought to be placed amongh the number of the Learned, if we affigne them not a Higher Sphear? The Age where in we live hath produced more of these, than all the past. And as they have in all things run parallel with Aeen, upon some Particular Reasons, they ought more to be escened than they: For, it behoved them to surmount the Sostness wherein their Sex is bred, renounce the Pleasures and Idleness

nefs, to which Custom had condemned them, overcome certain publick Impediments that removed them from fludy, and to get above those disadvantagious Notions, which the Vulgar conceive of the Learned; besides, those of their own Sex in general: All this they have performed. And whether it be, that these Difficulties have rendred their Wit more quick and penetrating, or that these Qualities are the peculiar of their Nature, they have (proportionably) made Progress and Advancements beyond Men.

It may be faid nevertheless (without diminishing the Sentiments which are due to such famous Ladies), that it is occasion, and External means, which hath advanced them to this State, as well as the more Learned amongst us; and that there are infinite numbers of Women, which could have done no less, had their Advantages been

Equal.

And, feeing it is great Injuftice to believe, that all Women are Indifereet, because we know five or fix to be so; we ought also to be so equitable, as so judge their Sex capable of Scien-

ces, fince we fee many that have raifed themselves to a perfection therein.

It is commonly believed amongst us, that Turks, Barbarians, and wild Savages, are not fo proper for learning as the people of Europe; though it be certain, that if we found five or fix of them here, that had the capacity or title of Doctor (which is not at all im. possible) they would correct our opinion; and confess, that these being men like to our felves, they are capable of the same things; and that if they had been taught, they would not have yeilded to us in the least. The Women, with whom we live, deferve furely as much as Barbarians, and Savages, to oblige us to entertain thoughts no less reafonable or advantagious for them.

But if the head-firong vulgar (notwithflanding these observations) will fill stand upon it, that the VVomen are not so fit for Atts, and Sciences as we are; they ought at least to acknowledge, that they have less need of them. For it is for two ends that we apply our selves to Learning; The one, that we may attain to a true knowledge of the objects of our Sciences; and the other, that by such knowledge, we may rise to virtue: So that in this our short life, Knowledge being but the hand Maid to Vertue; and the Women in possession of this: we may conclude, that by a particular happiness, they have gained the principal advantages of Sciences, without having ever taken the pains to study them.

What we fee daily, is fufficient to convince us, that they are no lefs Christians than men; They receive the Gospell with Simplicity and Humility; and in following the Rules and Maxims thereof, are exemplary: Their reverence towards Religion, hath alwayes appeared fo great, that they are esteemed without contradiction more devout and pious than we : or, though it be true, that their worship fometimes goes too, far ; yet therein I cannot find them fo culpable; fince the ignorance wherein they have been bred, is the necessary cause of that excess. If their Zeale be-undiscreet, their Perswasion is at least true; And we may affirm, that if they had a clearer fight of Vertue, they would embrace it after another manner; finee they cleave to it fo fast, even through obscurity and darkness it self.

It feems, that mercy and compassion which is the Vertue of the Gospel is in love with their Sex The calamity of their Neighbour no fooner touches their mind, but it pierces their heart, and brings teares in their eyes. Is it not their hands that in publick afflictions distribute the larget Charity? And is it not at this day, the Ladys that take the particular care of the poor and fick in the parishes, visit them in prisons, and ferve them in the Hospitals? Is it not these Religious Nuns, dispersed in every quarter, who have the charge at certain hours of the day. to carry to fuch their food, and necesfary remedies; and have thereby deferved the name of that Charity, which they have so worthily practised.

In fine; If there were no other Women in the world that discharged this Vertue towar's their Neighbours, but those who attend the sick in that great Hospital, the L'Hotel-Dieu of Paris; a cannot think that with Justice, men could pretend to the advantage above

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their Sex therein. These are properly the Virgins, with whom the Galleries of the Illustrious, and Noble Women, ought to be enriched: Of their life it is that we should fing the highest Elogies, and honour their death, with the most excellent Panegyricks: Since here it is that we may fee the Christian Religion, that is to fay, truly Heroicke Vertue, practifed up to the rigour, both in it's precepts, and counfels; by young Virgins, who Rencuncing the World and themselves, embrace a perpetual Chastity, and Poverty, take their Cross, and that the most heavy Cross of the world, and render themselves for the rest of their dayes, under the Yoak of Jesus Christ: VVho Consecrate themfelves to an Hospital, where the inffirm of all forts, of all countreys and Religions are indifferent'y received, there to ferve all without diffinction, and to change themselves (according to the example of their Lord and Husband) with all the infirmities of mankind: without being discouraged by having their eyes Continually smitten with the most horrid of Spectacles, their eares with the reproaches and cries of the fick, and their

their finelling with all the infectious feents of Humane putrifaction: and who, for a marke of that Spirit which does guid them, carry in their armes from bed to bed, and comfort the poor wretches, not in vain words; but by the effectual, and perfonal Example of patience, and invincible Charity.

Is there any thing amongs Christians to be conceived greater than this? And yet, Other Women are no less inclined to assist, and comfort their neighbours; they want nothing but opportunity, when other business does not divert them there-from. And I think it no less unworthy to imagine from thence, (as the vulgar commonly do) that Women are naturally servants to men; than to pretend that they, who have received talents, and particular endowments from God, are servants, and slaves to

those, for whose good they employthem. The conduct of Women, in what kind of life soever they embrace, hath alwayes somewhat remarkable. It seems that such who live single, and yet keep their freedome in the world, remain only there to be a pattern, and give example to others. Christian modesty

appears in their countenance and attire, and Vertue makes their chiefest Ornament. They wholly separate themselves from worldly Conversation and passimes; and their application the works of Piety, and Religion, gives clear proof, that they have only refused the cares, and trouble of Marriage, that they might enjoy a greater liberty of mind, and be obliged to nothing else but to please God.

There are as many Monasteries under the government of Women as of Men, and their lives therein no less exemplary. There, the recourse is greater, the discipline no less Austere; and the Abbosses of no less worth than the Abboss. They fetle Rules with so admirable Wisdome, and Govern their Nuns with such predence, that seldome amongst them happens any discorder: and, in short, the same of Religious houses, and the great Rents which they possess, are the fruits of the good order of their Superiours.

Marriage is a state of life, the most natural, and ordinary to men; when once they are ingaged therein, it is Death that must discharge them, and

there

there they spend these periods of age, where reason ought to be the chief guid, over the different accidents of Nature and Fortune (to which this Condition of Life is liable) exercising them who live therein more than others, & gives them occasion thereby to give greater tryal of their Parts.

A little Experience is sufficient to inform us, That the VVomen here are more fit and useful than we; For, young Maids are capable to order a House, at that Age, when Men stand still in need of a Master. And the most proper Expedient to reclaim a young Man, and restore him to the Right Way, is, to give him a VVise; who may reclaim him by her Example, moderate his Extravagancies, and win him from his Debauches.

What Complyance does not Wives use, that they may live peaceably with their Husbands? They submit to their Husbands? They submit to their Husbands? do nothing without their Advice, lay confraint upon themselves in many things for fear to displease them, and even deprive themselves of honest and lawful Recreations, to free them from Suspition.

It is well enough known, which of the two Sexes is the most faithful to the other, beares more patiently the Misfortunes that happen in Marriage; and thereby make appear greater Wif-

dom, and Diferetion.

All the Families (for the most part) are Ruled by the Wives, to whom their Husbands religne the Government: And the Care that therein they take of the Education of their Children, is more confiderable to Families, and more important to the Common-Wealth, than that which they take of the Estate; they bequeath themfelves wholly to their Good, and Wellfare: The Fear which they are in, left any hurt should befall them, is often fo great, that (many times) it robs them of their Rest: They deprive themselves often of their most necesfary Enjoyments, to the end that they may want nothing: They cannot fee them suffer in the least, without suffering themselves to the bottom of their Souls. And we may fay, That it is their greatest pain, that they can-not ease them, by charging themselves with their Troubles.

Who can be ignorant, how earnestly they labour to instruct them in the ways of Vertue, as much as their tender Age is capable of? They endeavour to make them know and fear God, and teach them to Worship him in a manner fuitable, and proportionate, to their Years: They take care to place them in the hands of Masters, as soon as they are fit; and choose such (with all imaginable Caution) who may improve them in their Breeding: And, which is most to be esteemed, they alwayes joyne good Example to their Instructi-

If we should descend into an intire Catalogue, and Retail of all the Occurrencies of Life, and of all the Vertues which Women practife therein, and thereof examine the most Important Circumstances; we might have Subject enough to enlarge into a most ample Panegyrick. We might reprefent how far their Sobriety in Eating, and Drinking, does go; their Patience in Trouble; their Courage, and Fortitude, in supporting Affliction. Fatigues, Watchings, and Fastings; their Moderation in Pleasures, and

Paffions ; D 4

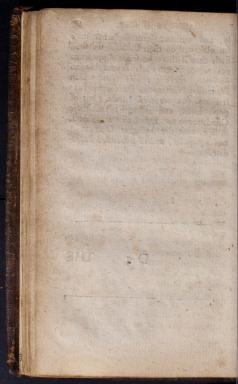
Paffions; their Inclination to do good; their Prudence in Affairs; their Integrity in all their Actions. And, in a word, we might make appear, that there is no kind of Vertue, which is not common to them with us; But, on the other hand, that there are a great many considerable Faults, which are peculiar to Men.

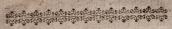
These are the general and ordinary Observations, upon what concernes Women in reference to the Qualities of the Mind; the Use and Practice of which, is the onely thing that ought to put a Distinction amongst

Men.

Now, fince there is not any Rancounter, where Men may not discover the Inclination, the Genius, the Vice, the Vertue, and the Capacity of Perfons; those (who would undeceive themselves concerning this Subject of VVomen) have alwayes occafion to do fo in Publick, or in Private; at the Court, and at the Convent; in Recreations, and Exercises; with the Poor, as well as the Rich; in whatfoever Condition, or Quality they be. And, if we confider fincerely, and without Interest, what may be observed on their behalf, we shall find, that if there be some Appearances which feem less favourable to VVomen, there are also more which are most advantagious for them; that it is not for want of Merit (but of good Luck, and Strength) that their Condition is not Equal to ours: And, in fine, that the common Opinion is. but a popular, and ill-grounded Prejust dice.

> THE DS





THE

WOMAN as Good as the MAN,

OR, THE

Equality of the two Sexes.

The Second Part

Wherein is made appear, That the Reafons which may be adduced against the Opinion of The Equality of the two Sexes, from Poets, Oratours, Historians, Lawyers, and Philopphers; are all Idle, and Fruitless.

Hat which confirms the Vulgar in the thought which they have of VVomen, is, That they find it propt, and supported, by the Sentiment of the Learned: So that, the Publick Voice

of those who Rule by Credit, agreeing in certain general Appearances, to the Disadvantage of VVomen; it is not to be wondered at, to see them so ill entertained in the Minds of the Ignorant, and Simple. And, it happens in this as in a great many other things, that Men confirm themselves in one Mistake, by another, Prejudice.

The Notion of Truth being Naturally pinn'd to that of Knowledge, Men fail not to take that for true, which is proposed to them by those who have the Reputation of being Learned: And, as the number of those which are such only by name, is sar greater than of these who are so indeed; the generality of Men (who only count Heads) do rank themselves amongst the former; and do so much the more willingly embrace their Opinions, as they find them conformable to such as they have already entertained.

Wherefore, seeing that Poets, Orators, Historians and Philosophers, proclaim (likewise) VVomen to be Inseriour, le's Noble, and Persect, than Men, they perfwade themselves thereof the more, because they are ignorant, that their Knowledg is the same Prejudice with their own (though of fome-what greater extent, and more specious); and that they do no more, but joyne, to the Impression of Custom the Sentiments of the Antients; upon the Authority of whom, all their Certainty is grounded. And I find, that (in respect of their Sex) they that have fludied, and they that have no Reading, fall commonly into the fame Mistake; which is, To judge, that whatfoever they (whom they esteem) do fay, is true; because, they are already perswaded, that they say well; instead of forbearing to think that they fay well, till that they are affured, that they speak nothing but what is true.

Poets and Orators, having no other Defigne but to pleafe and perfwade; Probability, and appearance of Truth, ferves them to deal with the most part of Men: So that, Exaggerations and Hyperbolies, being most proper to that purpose, in Magnifying and Raifing their Notions, according as they have

have need, they render Good or Evil, Small or Great, at their Pleasure: And, by a very ordinary fetch, they attribute to all VVomen in general, that which they find but'in some of them in particular. It is enough to them, to have known some VVomen Hypocrites, to make them fay, That the whole Sex is Guilty of that Failing. The Ornaments with which they fet off their Discourse, do wonderfully contribute to gain them the Credit of fuch, as are not upon their Guard: They speak smoothly, and with Grace; and imploy some certain, pretty, taking (and not common) Formes of Speech: whereby they dazle the Mind, and hinder the difcerning of Truth.

Men fee agreat many peeces (in appearance) very strong against Women, and yeild thereunto; because they know not what it is, that makes up the Force and Verity thereof; that it is only the Figures of Eloquence; Metaphors, Proverbs, Descriptions, Similitudes, Emblems, and other Flowers of Rhetorick: And, because that there is ordinarily a good deal of Wit and Art in such kind of Works,

they imagine (likewise) that there is as

much of Truth.

One perswades himself, that VVomen love to hear Tales told them; because he hath (perhaps) read the Sonnet of Sarrazin, upon the Fall of the first Woman; whom he feignes only to have flipt, for lending her Ear to the Flourifhes of the Devil. It is true, the Fancy is pleafing, the Cast pretty, the Application proper enough to his Defigne, and the Fall most Ingenious: But, if we examine the Piece to the bottom, and turn it into Profe, we shall find, that there can be nothing more false or faint.

There are fome People filly enough to imagine, that VVomen are more inclined to Fury than Men; because they have read, that the Poets have represented the Furies under the shape of VVomen; without confidering, that this is only a Poetical Fancy: And that Painters, who paint the Harpyes with the face of a VVoman, paint likewife the Devil under the Appearance of a Man, and make the day

Thave known, fome undertake toprove Women Inconstant, from this, That a famous Latin Poet hath faid, That they are subject to a continual Change; and that another French Poet hath. pleafantly compared them to a Weather Cock, which turns with the Wind; Not minding, that all these manners of fpeaking are onely fit to tickle, but not instruct, the Mind.

Vulgar Eloquence is a speaking Optick, which represents Objects under what shape and colour Men please; and there is not any Vertue, which may not be made appear Vice, by the Means which Eloquence

affords-

There is nothing more ordinary, than to find among the Authors, that VVomen are not so noble or perfect as Men; but, for Reasons, we see none: So that, there is great likely hood, that they have taken their Perswasions as the Vulgar do.

Women have no share with us in External Advantages, as Sciences and Authority, wherein Men commonly place Perfection; and therefore, they are not fo perfect as we.

But.

But, to be feriously convinced of this, it eught to be proved, That they are not thereto admitted, because they are not at all proper; but that is not so easie as Men conceive: Nor shall it be difficult (in the Sequel) to make the contrary appear; and that the Errour ariseth from this, That Men have but a confused Notion of Perfection and Nobility.

All the Arguments of those who maintain, That the lovely Sex is neither so Noble, nor Excellent as ours, are sounded on this, That Men being the Masters, they believe that all is their own: And I am affured, that they would more strongly believe the contrary, I mean, that the Men are only cut out for the VVonen) if they had all the Authority in their Hands, as in the Em-

pire of the Amazons.

It is true, that here amongst us they discharge no Offices, but what are esteemed the Lowest: And, it is also true, that (upon that account) neither Religion, nor Reason, values them the less. There is nothing base and low but Vice, nor great but Vertue: And, VVomen shewing greater Vertue.

Vertue than Men (in their leffer Imployments), deserve likewise to be more esteemed. And yet, I know not, whether (in regard of their ordinary Charge, which is to Nurfe and Bringup their Children) they are not worthy of the first Place in Civil Society.

Were we free, and without Common-Wealth, we would not affemble our felves together; but for the better Preservation of Life, in the peaceable Enjoyment of those things which are necessary thereto; and would have greater Esteem for those who should hereunto contribute in greatest

meafure.

It is by reason of this, that we are accustomed to look on our Prince, as the chief Person of the State; because his Care and Fore fight is the most general, and of greatest Extent; and, by Proportion, we Respect those that are under him. Most part of Men preferr Souldiers to Judges, because they directly oppose themselves to those who (in most terrible manner) attack our Lives; and every one fets a Value upon Persons, as they judge them

them more or less useful. So that, Women seem to be the most Estimable, since their Service (which they render to the Publick) is incomparably greater than that of all others whosever.

Men might absolutely dispense with Princes, Souldiers, and Merchants, as they did in the beginning of the World; and as Savages do still, even to this Day: But, in our Infancy, we cannot be without Wamen. In States that are well pacified, the most part of those who have Authority, are as Men dead and useless; but Women never cease to be necessary to us. The Ministers of Justice are only proper to preserve Goods and Estates, to those who possess them; but Women, to preserve Life. Souldiers are employed for Men, grown up, and capable to defend themselves; but Women labour for Men, when as yet they know not what they are, if they have Enemies, or Friends; and at that time, when they have no other Arms but Tears, against such as attack them. Masters, Magistrates, and Princes, do not often times bestir them-

themselves, but for Glory, and particular Intereft; when Women do nothing but for the good of the Children, whom they breed. In short The Pains, the Cares, the Troubles, and Affiduities, to which they expose themfelves, can in no wife be matched in any other state (of Civil Society) whatfoever.

There is nothing (then) but Fancy, which renders them less Valuable. Men would largely Reward him who had tamed a Tyger: Such who have the Skill to train Horses, Apes, and Elephants, are well confidered of; and we speak, with Elogy, of a Man that hath composed a small Work, which hath cost him but little time and pains; And shall we negled Women, that spend many Years in breeding and forming of Children? If we enquire into the Reason thereof, we shall find, it is, Because the one is (onely) more ordinary than the other.

What Historians fay to the Prejudice of Women, makes deeper Impression on the Minds of Men, than the Discourses of Orators; For, as

they feem to put forth nothing of their own Heads, fo is their Testimony less fuspected: Besides, that it is suitable to that whereof Men are already perswaded, when they report Women to have been in former times, the fame which they are believed to be at prefent. But all the Authority which they have upon the spirits of Men, is nothing but a very common Prejudice, in regard of Antiquity; which Men represent to themselves, under the Image of a Venerable Old Man, who (having much Wisdom and Experience) is uncapable of being de-ceived, or of speaking any thing but Truth.

Whil'ft, in the mean time, the Antients are no less Men than we are, and as much subject to Errour; and we ought no more at present to assent to their Opinions, than we would have done in their own times. Men heretofore considered Women as now they do, and with as little Reason: So, whatfoever Men fay concerning that, ought to be suspected; seeing they are both Judge and Party. And when any one brings against them the

Sentiments of a thousand Authors, that History is only to be considered, as a Tradition of Prejudices and Mistakes. There is, also, as little Fidelity and Exactitude in Antient Hiftories, as there is in Familiar Rehearfals; wherein we fufficiently know, that there is (almost) none at all. They that have wrote Them, have there-with mingled their Passions and Interest; and the most part (having but had confused Notions of Vice and Vertue) have often miltaken the one for the other. And those, who likewife Read Them (with the ordinary Pre-occupation) fail not to run into the fame Fault

In the Prejudice wherein they have been engaged, they have made it their business, to exaggerate and raise the Vertues, and Advantages, of their own Sex; and to debase and weaken the Merit of V Vomen, by a contrary Interest: This is so easie to be discovered, that I need not adduce Instances

Notwithstanding, if we can but a little rip-up what is past, we may find enough to prove, that Women have not in

any thing yielded to men; and that the Vertue which they have made appear, hath been more excellent: if we fincerely consider all the Circumstances thereof, we may observe, that they have giv'n as great markes of Wit, and Capacity, upon all occasions; That there have been fome who have governed great States and Empires with Wifdom, and moderation, that cannot be parallel'd: others who have rendred Justice with an integrity equal to that of the Athenian Areopagites; Many, who by their prudence, and counsells, have restablished peace, and tranquillity to Kingdomes, and a throne to their Husbands. Some have been feen at the head of Armies, or with a courage more than Heroical defending themselves upon the walls of Townes. How many have there been, whose Chastity could receive no blemish, neither by the terrible threats, nor splendid promises which men made to them, and who with a Generous, and aftonishing Gallantry, have endured the most horrible torments, for the cause of Religion ! How many have there been, who have rende red themselves as compleat as men in all forts of Sciences! who have dived into the most Curious Scorets of Nature, the most quaint of Policy, the most folid of Morality, and who have Elevated themselves to the highest Pitch of Christian Divinity! So that History, which the prejudiced abuse against that Sex to abase it, may ferve to those who look thereon with the eyes of equity, to prove that it is in all respects as noble as our own.

The Authority of Laws has a great Weight upon many men, as to that which concerns the Women, because they make particular profession of rendering to every one their right. They place the Wives under the Juridiction of their Husbands, as children under the power of their fathers; and alledge, that it is Nature that hath affigned them the smaller sunctions of Society, and placed them at distance from publick Authority.

Men think themselves sufficiently grounded to say the same after them: but I hope it is lawfull without wounding the Respect which is their due, to differ from them in Judgment. We should strangely puzzle them, If we obliged

them

them to explain themfelves intelligibly about that which they call Nature in this cafe, and make us understand in what manner she hath distinguished the two Sexes, as they pretend.

We must consider that they who have made or compiled the Law, bebeing men, have favoured their own Sex, as VVomen possibly might have done had they been in their place: And Laws being made fince the Conftitution of Societies in the same manner in respect of Women as they are at prefent; the Lawyers who had likewife their prejudice, have attributed to Nature a distinction, which is only drawen from Custome, besides that it was not at all necessary to change the order which they found ferled, for obtaining the end that they proposed, which was the good government of a State by the administration of justice. To be short, if they should be headstrong, to hold, that Women are naturally in a condition of dependance upon men, we might fight them with their own weapons, fince they themfelves acknowledge dependance, and fervitude, to be contrary to the order of Nature, which renders all mankind equal. E Dependence

Dependence being a meer Corporal, and Civil Relation, ought not to be confidered but as an effect of chance, force, or custome; except in the case of Children to those who have given them life. And yet neither does that pass a certain age, wherein men being Supposed to have reason, and experience enough to guide themselves, are freed by the Lawes, from the authori-

tv of an other.

Amongst persons of an equal or not much different age, there ought only to be a reasonable subordination, according to which those who have less understanding, willingly fubmit themfelves to fuch as have more. And if we remove the Civil Priviledges, which the Laws have bestowed on men, and which establish them heads of the family; we cannot find betwixt them, and their wives, any other fubmission but that of Experience, and Knowledge: toth one, and other freely engage themfelves at the same time, when the VVives have afmuch, and often more id ludgment than the Husbands. Their Promifes and Covenants of Marriage are reciprocal; and the power equal upon

one and others Body; And if the Lawes give the Husband more Authority over the estate, Nature allowes the Wife more power, and right, over the Children. And as the will of the one is not the Rule of the other; if the wife be obliged to do what the Husband minds her of, he is no less bound to follow the advertisements of the Wife, when she tells him his duty : And, except it be in matters just, and reasonable, the Wife is not to be constrained to submit her self to the pleasure of her Husband, unless you'l fay that he is stronger; which is the dealing of a Turk with a Moore, and not of Men of reason.

We shall not need much trouble to rid our selves of the opinion of the Learned, of whom I have spoken: because we may easily be satisfied that their profession does not engage them to so exact an enquiry into the nature of things; Appearances, and probabilities, are sufficient for Poets and Orators; The Testimony of Antiquity to Historians; And Custome and Practice to Lawyers, to bring them to their intended end: But as to the Sentiment of E 2 Philosophers,

Philosophers, we must not so easily pass it; seeing that they seem to be above all the preceding considerations, as indeed they ought to be; and that they are thought to try matters more strictly; which gaines them the common credit, and makes it believed unquestionable what they affert, especially when they contradict not the received

opinions.

So the common People confirm themfelves in the opinion, that there is inequality betwixt the two Sexes, because they fee those whose Judgements they regard as the measures of their own, and the fame opinion; not knowing that the most part of Philosophers walk by no other Rule than that of the Vulgar, and that it is not by Vertue of Science or Knowledge, that they often dictate especially concerning the matter in hand. They have carryed their prejudices even to the Schools, where they have learned nothing that might ferve to disengage them there-from : On the contrary, all their Science is founded upon the Judgements that they have made from their Cradle; And with them it is a crime or Errour rour to call in question that which they believed before the years of difcretion. They are not taught to know Man by the body, nor by the foul: And that which they teach, commonly may very well ferve to prove, that betwixt us, and heafts, there is no other difference, but that of Leffer and Greater in the Same kind. They hear not a word of Sexes: They are supposed to know them sufficiently al. ready; Very far from Examining the Capacity, and real and natural difference, betwixt them; which is one of the most curious, and probably also the most important Question of all natural or Moral Philosophy. They fpend whole years, and fome all their lives, at Trifles, and Entia Rationis, being no where to be found without their own Brains; and to plod and find-out, whether or not, there be beyond the world imaginary Spaces; and whether the atoms or fmall dust which appeares in the Beams of the Sun, may be fliced out into infinite parts. What folid ground can we lay upon, what the learned of this kind fay, when we are to treat of ferious, and iniportant matters? E 3 Men

78

Men may think, nevertheless, that (though they be fo ill taught themfelves, yet) their Principles (probably) are sufficient to discover, which of the two Sexes have (naturally) the advantage of the other; But none can think fo, but fuch who either know them not, or are pre-possessed thereby. The Knowledge of our felves, is abfolutely necessary to enable us, for the handling of that Question aright; and especially, the knowledge of our Body, which is the Organ of Sciences; after the same manner, as for to know how Telescopes, and Glasses of Approach, magnifie the Objects: we must know the Fashion of them. They touch not this but in passing, no more than they do Truth, and Science; I mean, the Method of acquiring true and certain Knowledges; without which, it is impossible to examine, Whether or not VVomen be as capable thereof, as our felves? And, without amufing my felf to repeat the Notions that they give us thereon, I shall declare (in general) what my Thoughts are thereof.

All Man-kind being made alike, have the same Sentiments, and Notions, of Natural things; for example, of Light, Heat, and Hardness; And all the Knowledge which we labour to gain there-from, is reduced to this, That we may truly find out what is the Disposition (internal and external) of every Object, which produceth in us the thoughts, and conceits, which we have of them. All that Masters can do, to guide us to this Knowledge, is but, So to apply our Minds to what we remark, that we may examine the Appearances and Effects thereof, without Precipitation or Prejudice; and to shew us the Order, which we are to observe in the ranking of our Thoughts, for to find what we look for.

For instance, If an Illiterate Person should desire me to explain to him, Wherein consists the Liquidity of Water; I would not affert any thing, but only ask him, What he had observed thereof? How, that if Water be not contained in a Vessel, it sheds? that is to say, that all the Parts thereof separate and disfunite of themselves.

without the Intermixtion of any other Body; that we may thrust there into our Fingers without trouble, and without finding Resistance as from harder Bodies? And that, in putting therein, Sugar or Salt, we perceive, that these two Bodies disolve piece and piece; and that all the Parcels thereof are dispersed through the feve-

ral parts of the Liquor,

Hitherto, I should teach him no new thing; And if (after the same mannei) I had told him, What it is to be in Repose, or in Motion; I thould have brought him to acknowledge, that the Nature of Liquors confift in this, That their insensible Particles are in perpetual Motion; which requires them to be enclosed in a Veffel, and disposes them to give eafie Entry to hard Bodies: And that the Particles of Water, which are little, glib, and pointed, (infinuating themselves into the Pores of the Sugar) shake and divide the Parts thereof, by their Jufling; and, moving themselves every way, transport with them into all the Quarters of the Vessel, that which they have separated.

This Notion of Liquors (which is a Part, taken from the Body of Natural Phitosophy) would appear a great deal more clear, if we faw it in its proper Place and Order: and it hath nothing, which the meanest fort of VVomen are not able to understand. The rest of all our Knowledges (being proposed in Order and Method) have no greater Difficulty: And if we confider attentively, we shall find, that every Science of Reasoning, requires but less wit and time, than is necessary to learn to make Point or Tapiftry.

In effect, the Notions of Natural things are necessary, and we form them alwayes after the same man-ner: Adam had them as we have; Children have them as Old Men, and VVomen as Men: And these Idea's are renewed, confirmed, and entertained, by the continual use of Sense. The Mind is alwayes in Action; and he that knows well how it proceeds in one thing, discovers (without trouble) how it works in all others. There is nothing 'but More and Less') betwixt the Impression made by the Sun, and that ! that of a Spark of Fire: And, to think well thereon, there is neither need of great Skill, nor Exercise of

Body.

It is not fo, in the Works of which I have spoken. There is need of greater Application of Spirit; the Idea's thereof being Arbitrary, are harder to be learned, and retained: which is the cause, that so much time is necessary for to Learn (well) a Trade, because it depends on long Exercise. There is Skill required, rightly to observe the Proportions on a Canvas; to Distribute equally the Silk or the Wool; to mingle with Exactness the Colours; neither to joyne too close, nor keep too open, the Points; to place no more in one Rank, than in another; to make the little Knots imperceptible. In a word, One must, know to make and vary, in a thoufand different Wayes the Works of Art, to be skillful therein; when, as in Sciences, there is no more required, but an orderly viewing of Works already made, and alwayes Uniform: and, all the difficulty of Success therein, proceeds more from the Incapacity of Masters, than from the Objects, or Disposition of the Body.

We must not then (any more) wonder to see Men, and VVonen, (without Study) entertain themselves, about things which concern Sciences; fince the Method of Teaching of them, ferves only to certific our Judgements, which are consounded by Precipitation,

Custom, and Use.

The Notion which we have given of Knowledge (in general) might suffice to persuade unprejudiced Persons. That Men and VVamen are equally capable thereof; But, because the contrary Opinion is most deeply rooted, we must (for the intire plucking of it up) Fight it by Principles; to the end, that (joyning the Appearances, agreeing to the Beautiful Sex, which have been presented in the First Part, with the Natural Reasons which we shall here-after adduce) Men may fully be convinced, in savour of it.

That Women (considered according to the Principles of Sound Philo-fophy) are as capable as Men, of all Sorts of Sciences.

TT is case to be Remarked, That I the Difference of Sexes, regards only the Body: there being no other, but that Part (properly) which ferves for the Production of Men: And, the Spirit concurring no other way but by its Confent (which it lends to all af ter the same manner) we may conclude, That in it there is no Sex at all.

If we confider it in our felves, we find it equal, and of the same Nature in all Men, and capable of all forces of Thoughts; The finallest busie it as well as the greatest; and there is no lessrequired to the right knowing of a Gnat, than of an Elephant : Whofoever knows wherein confifts the Light (and Fire) of a Sparkle, knows also, the Light of the Sun. When we are accustomed to reflect on things which only concern the Spirit, we perceive therein all (at least) as clearly, as in the

the most material things which are differned by the fenfes. I can diffeover no greater difference between the Spirit of a dull, and ignorant man, and of that one who is delicate, and ingenious, than betwixt the Spirit of the fame man confidered at the age of ten years, and at the age of Fourty: And fince there appeareth no more betwixt that of the two Sexes, we may affirm, that their difference is not on that fide, the constitution of the body; But particularly the Education, Exercise, and the impressions that come from all that does furround us, being every where the Natural, and Senfible causes of fo many diversities as are observed therein.

It is God who unites the Soul to the body of a Woman, as to that of a Man, and who joynes them by the fame Lawes. The fentiments, the paffions, and inclinations, make and entertain that Union; And the Spirit operating after the fame manner in the one as well as the other, is there equally capable of the fame things.

This is yet more clear, when we sonfider onely the Head, the fole or-

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gane of Sciences, and where the foul exercifeth all its functions; the most exact Anatomy remarks to us no difference in this part between Men, and Women, their brain is altogether like to ours: The impressions of sense are received, and multer themselves there in the fame fashion, and are no otherwife preferved for Imagination, and Memory. Women hear, as we do, by the ears; they fee by the eyes; and they talk with the Tongue; And there is nothing peculiar in the disposition of these Organs, but that the Women have them ordinarily more delicate, which is an advantage. So that the outward objects affects them after the the fame manner, Light by the eyes, and Sound by the eares. Who can hinder them then to apply themselves to the confideration of themselves? To Examine in what confifts the nature of the foul; how many kinds of thoughts there are, and how they are excited by occasion of certain corporeal Motions; to confult afterwards the natural Notions, which they have of God; and to begin with things Spiritual to dispose in order their thoughts, and to frame

frame to themselves that Science which

we call, the Metaphysicks?

Since they have also eyes, and hands, may they not make themselves, or see others perform, the diffection of an humane body? consider the Symmetry, and structure thereof; observe the diversity, difference, and relation of its parts: their figures, their motion, and functions; the Alterations to which they are Subject? and to conclude, on the means to preserve them in good disposition, and to restore it to them, when it is changed.

They need no more for this, but to know the nature of Extrinsical bodies, which have any reference to their own, difcover their Properties, and all that renders them capable of making any impression good or bad thereon; this is known by the aid of the Senses, and by the various Experiments that

are made upon them: And Women being equally capable of the one as well

as the other, might learn as well as we, Physick and Medicine.

Is there need of fo much underftanding, to know, that Breathing is abfolutely necessary for the preservation of life; and that it is performed by the means of the Air, which entering by the pipe of the nofe and mouth, is infinuated into the lungs, for the cooling of the blood which paffeth that way in Circulation, and there caufeth different Alterations, according as it is more or lefs Grofs by the Mixture of Vapours, and Exhortations, with which we fee it fometimes blended.

Is it a matter fo difficult to different manter, that the taft of Food confifts on the part of thebody (in the different manner how it is allayed on the tongue'y by the Spitle? There is no Perfon, but finds after meals, that the Victuals which then are put into the mouth, being divided quite otherways than those with which we are Nourished, cause there a Sensation less pleasing. That which remains to be known of the Functions of Mans body; being considered in order, have nothing more of difficulty

The Paffions are certainly that which is most Curious in this matter: We may therein observe two things, the Motions of the body, with the thoughts and stirrings of the Soul, which con-

curr in them. Women may know this, as casily as we do And as to the causes which excite Passions, we know how they do it. When we have once by the study of Natural Philosophy comprehended their manner, how Gireumambient things affect and touch us; And by experience, and use, how we thereto apply, or separate, our wills

and inclinations.

In making regular Meditations upon the objects of the three Sciences lattly floken of, a Woman may observe, that the order of her thoughts ought to sollow that of Nature; that then they are exact when they are conform thereto; that there is nothing but half, and precipitation in our Judgements, which hinders that exactitude. And marking consequentially the Occonomy which she hath observed to attain thereto, she may make R. slections, which may serve her as a Rule for the suture, and form to her-felf there-from a Logick.

If it be objected notwithstanding of this, That Women by themselves could never acquire these knowledges, (which is but said); at least we cannot deny, but that with the help of Masters

Mafters, and Books, they might; As the ablest men in all ages have done.

It is enough to alledge the acknowledged property of the Sex, to prove it capable of understanding the pro-portions of the Mathematicks: And we should contradict our selves to doubt, that if it applyed it felf to the making of Engines, it would succeed as well therein as our own; fince we our selves allow it more invention and artifice.

There is need but of eyes, and a little attention, in observing the Appearances of nature, To make us remark that the Sun, and all the Luminous bodyes of the Heavens, are real Fires, fince they heat, and light us, in the fame manner as the Fires here below; that they appear'd fuccessively to answer to feveral parts of the earth, and fo be able to judge of their Motion and Courfe: And whofoever can roul in his head great defigns, and fet to work the Movements thereof, may there likewise with exactness turn the whole Machin of the World, if he have but once well observed the diverse Appearances of the same.

We have already found in Women, all the Dispositions which render Men proper for the ciences, which concern them (separately) in themselves: And, if we continue to consider them within distance, we shall also find in them those which are necessary for the Sciences, which regard them, as tyed altogether with their like in Civil Society.

It is a Fault in Vulgar Philosophy, to place amongst Sciences so great a Distinction; that, following that peculiar Method of it, we cannot acknowledge any Tye or Coherence amongst them: which is the cause, that we restrain so much the Extent of Humane Understanding; imagining to our selves, that the same Man is never (almost) capable of many Sciences; that, to be sit for Natural Phylosophy or Medicine, one is not thereby proper for Rhetorick or Divinity: and that there ought to be as many different Capacities, as there are Sciences, in the World.

This Thought proceeds on the one hand, from this, That Men confound (ordinarily) Nature with Custome; in taking the Disposition of certain Persons to one Science, rather than another, for an Effect of their Natural Constitution; when indeed, it is often but a Cafual Inclination, coming from Necessity, Education, or Habit: And, on the other hand, for want of having Remarked, that there is (properly) but one Science in the World, which is the Knowledge of our felves; and, that all others are onely particular Applications thereof.

In effect, the Difficulty which we find at this day to learn the Tongues, Meral Philosophy, and the reft; conflicts only in this, That we know not how to referr them to this general Science: From whence, it may have arrived, That all those who have believed Women capable of Natural Philosophy and Medicine, may not have therefore judged them capable of the Sciences that we are to speak of. However, the Difficulty is the same on both sides: It is the business in All.

to think aright: And this we do, by applying feriously our Minds, to the Objects which represent themselves to us; that we may raife from them clear and distinct Notions; that we may eye them in all their different Faces and Relations; and that we may pass no Judgement thereon, but upon what appears manifestly true. With this we need no more, but to difpose our Thoughts in a Natural Order, for the obtaining of a perfect Science: And here, there is nothing too High for Women; For, fuch of them who may be (by this way) instructed in Natural Philosophy and Medicine, may likewise (by the fame) become capable of all others.

Wherefore, might they not perceive, that the necessify of living in Society, obliging us to Communicate our Thoughts by fome External Signes; the most expedient of all others, is Speech; which consists in the use of Words, agreed on amongst Men, That we ought to have as many of them, as we have Notions of things? That they ought to have some Relations

tion of Sound and Signification one with another, to make us learn and retain them with more ease, and that we should not be forced to multiply them infinitely? That they must be Marshalled in the Order most natural, and suitable, to our Thoughts; and that we should not employ more in Discourse, than what may be enough to make us be understood?

These Reflexions might put a Woman in Condition, to labour (like a Virtuosi) for the perfecting of her Mother - Tongue; by reforming, and cutting off the bad Words, introducing of New, Regulating Custom by Reason, and the true Notions which we have of Languages: And the Method, by which she might have Learned the Language of her Country, would wonderfully help her to the attaining of that of Strangers, to difcover the Delicacies thereof, to read Authors, and to become most exact in Grammar, and that which is called Humanity.

Women (as well as Men) Discourse of things, to make them be under-

stood,

stood, in the same manner, as they know them; and to dispose others to do as they would have them, which is called Perswading: In this they Naturally succeed better than we. And yet, to perform it still with Art, they have no more to do, but to study to represent things, as they present themfelves to them; or as they would represent them to themselves, if they were in the Place of those whom they

would affect.

All Men (being made after the fame manner) are (almost) alwayes moved in like manner by Objects; And, if there be any Difference, it proceeds from their Inclinations, their Habits, or their Quality; which a VVoman might know with a little Reflexion, and Cuffor : And, being able to dispose her Thoughts in the manner most convenient, express them neatly, and with Grace; adding thereto, the Gestures, the Air of the Countenance, and the Voice, the might become Mistress of the most perfect Eloouence.

It is not credible, that V.Vomen can fo highly practife Vertue, without being

able to penetrate into the Fundamental Maxims thereof: In effect, a VVo. man already fo instructed as we above represented her, might discover of her felf the Measures of her Conduct, by discovering the three kinds of Duties which comprehend all Morality; of which, the first regards God, the fecond our Selves, and the third our Neighbour. The clear and difinct Notions, which the may have formed of her Spirit, and the Union thereof with the Body, must (infallibly) lead her to acknowledge, That there is another Spirit Infinite, the Author of all Nature; and to entertain of Him the Sentiments, upon which Religion is founded. And after, having (by Natural Phil fophy) learned wherein it is, that Senfual Pleafure does confift and in what manner. External Things contribute to the Perfection of the Mind, and the Prefervation of the Body; she cannot fail to conclude, That we must be great Enemies to our selves, if we use them not with great Moderation. And, if she come, in Sequel, to consider her Self, as engaged in Civil Society, with others

others of the fame Nature, subject to the same Passions, and to the necessities (which can not be satisfied without mutual affishance); she must without mutual affishance); she must wind trouble fall upon this thought upon which depends all our Justice. That we ought to do to others as we would be done to; and, that we ought to bridle those defires, whereof the exorbitancy which is called Lusting or Covetousness, occasions all the trouble, and all

the unhappiness of life.

She might the more still confirm her felf in the perswasion of the last of these duties, if she advanced, and carried on her thoughts, to the point of discovering the ground of Policy, and of Law and Juffice. And, as both the one and other, only regard the duties of men amongst themselves, the would judge, that, Fully to comprehend to what it is that they are obliged in civil Society, we must understand what it is that hath inclined men to establish it. She would then confi ler them as out of any fuch Society, and find them all intirely free, and equal, with the defire only to preserve themselves, and a right alike to all upon every

thing that might be necessary thereto. But the finding that this equality engageth men in warr, or continual miltrust (a thing contrary to their end) the light of nature would dictate, that they could not live in peace, without that every one yeelded fome what of his right, and came to covenants, and contracts: And that to render these Actions valid, and stop all Jealoufiy, it would be necessary to have recourse to a third person, who taking upon him Authority, might force every one to perform what they had promifed to others; That he being chosen only for the good of his subjects, ought to have no other defigne; And that to obtain the end of this inflitution, it is necessary he should be the Master of Lives, and Estates; of Peace and of Warr.

In Examining this matter, and the depth, what would hinder a Woman that the thould not difcover, What natural equity is; What are Contract, Authority, and Obedience; what is the nature of Law, the use of Penalties; wherein conflit the civil Law, and that of Nations; what are the duties of Princes.

Princes, and of Subjects: And in a word, by her proper Reflexions, and by Books, the might learn all that is necessary to make a Lawyer and a States-man.

After that, the may have obtained a perfect knowledge of her-felf, and be folidly instructed in the general rules of the conduct of Men, Probably the would become curious to inform her felf also how it is that men live in strange Countreys. And as she had observed, that the changes of weather, of feafons, of place, of age, of dyet, company, and exercises, had occasioned in her, alterations and different paffions, the needed not much trouble to find that these diversities produce the same effect in regard of whole nations : That they have Inclinations, Customs, Manners, and Laws different according as they are more near, or diftant from Seas, the South or North, according as their countrey is plain or mountainous, watered with Rivers. and Woody, the foil more or less fruitfull, the particular kind of Food which it bringeth forth; And according to Commerce, and the affairs which they have with other Neighbouring or Fa remote

remote people: shee might study all these things, and so learn what are the Manners, the Riches, the Religon, the Government, and the Interests of twenty or thirty different Nations, as easily as of so many private samiles. For what concernes the Situation of Kingdomes, how Seas to Lands, lifes to the Continent do answer; there is no more difficulty to learn it in a Mappy, than to know the several quarters and streets of a Town; or the highwayes of the countrey, where one liveth.

The Knowledge of the present, might breed in her defire also to know what is past: And that which she may have retained of Geography, would afford her great assistance in this Designe, enabling her better to understand affairs. as Warrs, Voyages, and Negoations) marking to her the places where they have hapned; the Passages, Roads, and the boundings of States. But the skill which the may have obtained of the Transactions of men in general, by the reflections which the may have made upon her felf, would bring her into the Mystery of Policy, Interest and Passions; and help her to discover the

moving

moving wheele, and fpring, of enterprizes, the fountain and fource of revolutions, and to supply in great Undertakings the leffer things which have made them prosper, and which have escaped Histories: And following their true Notions, which she hath of Vice, and Vertue; she may observe the flattery, passion, and ignorance of Authors; and to guard her felf from the Corruption, which infect men in reading of Histories, where these faults are commonly mingled. As the ancient poliey, was not fo refined as the modern, and the interest of Princes less conjoyned in former times than at present, and commerce of less extent; there is more Judgement required to understand, and disentangle our Gazets, than Lives of Quintus Curtius.

There are a great many persons that find the Ecclesiassick History more pleaning and solid, than civil or prophane: because, there they find the effects of Reason, and Vertue, farther pursued, and that passions, and prejudices covered with a pretext of Religion, sets the mind upon a method, altor gether particular in its condust.

Woman would apply her felf thereto with fo much more affection, as the judged it more important. She might convince her felf, that the books of Scripture, are as authentick, as all the others which we have; that they containe the true Religion, and all the Maxims whereon it is founded; that the New Testament where the History of Christianity properly begins, is no more difficult to be understood, than Greek and Latin Authors; that they that read it with the simplicity of Children, feeking only the Kingdome of God, discover the truth, and meaning thereof with more ease and pleasure, than that of ridles, emblems, and fables; And after having regulated her mind by the Morality of Jesus Christ, she may find her felf in condition to direct others; remove their scruples, and to refolve Cases of conscience, with more folidity than if the had filled her head with all the Casuists in the world.

I fee nothing that could hinder, but that in the progress of her fludies, she might observe as well as a man, How it is that the Gospel hath passed from hand to hand, from Kingdom to King-

dom,

dom, from age to age, even to her own times, but that the might gain, by reading of the Fathers, the Notion of true Theology, and find out that it only conflits in the Knowledge of the Hiftory of Christians; and the Particular Sentiments of those that have written thereon. So, the might render her self able to compose Works of Religion, Preach the Truth, and batter down Novelties, by thewing what hath been alwayes Believed through the whole Church, about the Matters in Controverse.

If a Woman be capable to inform her felf from History, of the Nature of all Publick Societies, how they have been formed, and how they are preserved by virtue of a fixed and constant Authority, exercised by Magifirates and Officers, subordinate to one another; she is no less, to Learn the Application of that Authority, by Laws, Ordinations, and Constitutions, for the Conduct of those who are submitted thereunto, as well to the Relation of Perfons I according to their feveral Conditions) as for the Poffession and Enjoyment of Goods. Is it a thing fo difficult, to know the Relation FA

Relation between a Husband and his Wife, between a Father and his Children, the Mafter and his Servants, the Land-Lord and his Tennants: betwixt those who are Allied in Affinity, betwixt a Guardian and his Pupil? Is it so great a Mystery, to understand what it is to possess by Purchase, Exchange, Donation, Legacy, Testament, Prescription, and Ususfruit? and what are the necessary Conditions to render Use and Possessing and Possessing Programment, Prescription, and Ususfruit?

There appears to be no more Undecktanding requifite to know (aright) the fipirit of Christian Society, than shat of the Civil; to frame a right Notion of the Authority which is peculiar thereto, and upon which is founded all its Conduct; and to diftinguish (precisely) betwirt that which Fesus Christia hath left to His Church, and the Dominion which onely belongs to Temporal Powers.

After having made that Distinction absolutely necessary to the right Understanding of the Canon Law, a Woman might study, and observe how the Church is Governed in the State;

unjuit,

and how the Spiritual Jurisdiction is mingled with the Secular; wherein the Hierarchy confifts; what are the Offices of Prelates, the Power of Councels, Popes, Bishops, and Paftors; what is the meaning of Difcipline, what are the Rules and Changes thereof; what mean Canons, Priviledges, and Exemptions; how Benefices are Established, and what is the Right and Possession thereof. In a word, What are the Customs and . Ordinances of the Church, and the Duties of all those that Compose it. There is (therein) nothing at all, whereof a. Woman is not most capable; and fo, the might become most Skilful in the Canon-Law

These are some general Notions of the Highest Knowledges, where with Men serve themselves, to signalize their Parts, and raise their Fortune; and of which, to the Prejudice of Women, they have been so long in Posselon. And, although they have as greatight thereto as themselves, Men (notwithstanding) entertain such Thoughts, and carry with a Conduct towards them, by so much the more

in the use of the Goods of the Body.

It hath been judged expedient,

It hath been judged expedient, that, for the Peace and fecurity of Families, Prescription should take place: my Meaning is, That a Man, who (with a good Conscience, and without trouble or molestation) might have enjoyed the Goods of another for a certain space of time, should remain Possessour thereof, without the After - claims and Pretentions of any whofoever. But, it hath never entered into the minds of Men, to believe, That fuch who had fallen from their Possessions by Neglect or otherwise, should be incapable by some manner or other, to retrive them; and their Incapacity hath never been confidered as Natural, but onely Civill.

On the contrary, Men have not onely contented themselves not to call. Women to a share in Sciences, and Offices, after a long Prescription against them; but have proceeded farther, to fancy, that their Exclusion therefrom, is sounded on a natural Indisposition on their Part.

In the mean-while, there is nothing in the World more Fantastical than that Imagination: For, whether that we confider the Sciences in themselves, or that we regard the Organs, which ferves to acquire them; we shall find, that both Sexes are thereto equally disposed. There is but one only way to infinuate Truth into the Mind (whereof it is the Food), as there is but one to convey Nourishment into all forts of Stomacks, for the' Subfistance of the Body : And, as to what concerns the different Dispositions of that Organ, which renders us more or less fit for Sciences; if we would fairly and honeftly acknowledge, Who have the better. we must confess it to be the Wemen.

We cannot difagree; but, among the Men, fuch as are grofs and material, are commonly flupid; and, on the other hand, the more Delicate, alwayes most Sprightly. I find the Experience of this too universal and constant, to stand in need (in this place) of the Support of Reasons: So, the lovely Sex, being of a Temperature more Fine and Delicate than ours, would

ours, if it applyed it felf to Study.

I well fore-fee, that this Opinion will not be relished by many; who will find it a little strange: I cannot help that. Men think that it concernes the Honour of our Sex to take the Place in All; And I believe it to be Justice, to render to every one that which is

their right.

In effect, we All (both Men and Women) have the same Right to Truth, fince the Mind in all of us is alike capable to know it; and that we are (All) affected in the same manner, by the Objects that make Impression upon the Body. This Title to Knowledges (which Nature bestows on All) springs from this, That we have All need of them, the one as well as the other. There is no Perfon that feeks not to be happy.; It is to that, that all our Actions tend; and no Body can be folidly fo, but by clear and diffinct Knowledges: For, it is in that, that Jesus Christ. himfelf, and St. Paul, make us believe; will confit the Happiness of the other Life

Life. A Covetous Man never effecems himfelf happy, but when he knows that he poffelfes great Riches: An Ambitious Person, when he perceives that he is above others. In a word, All the Happines of Men (Real or Imaginary) is only placed in Knowledge; that is to say, In the Thought which they have, that they possess that the possess that they possess that the possess that the possess that they possess they possess that they possess that they possess they possess that they possess they possess that they possess they possess

they defire.

It is this which makes me believe, that there is nothing but the Notions of Truth (which we procure by Study, and which are fixt and independant from the Possession or Want of things), that can make up the true Happiness of this Life. For, that which makes that a Covetous Man cannot be happy in the simple Knowledge of Riches, is; Because that, that Knowledge which renders him happy, ought to be joyned with the Enjoyment, or the Imagination of poff fling of them for the present: And; when his Imagination prefents them to him as distant from him, and out of his Power, he cannot reflect thereon without being afflicted.

It is altogether otherwise with the Knowledge which we have of our Selves, and of all those which depend thereon; but, particularly, of those which enter into the Society of Life. Since then, that both Sexes are capable of the same Felicity, they have Equall Right to all that which conduceth to the obtaining thereof.

When we fay, That Happiness confifts (chiefly) in the Knowledge of Truth, we exclude not Vertue; On the contrary, we think that it maketh up the most Esfential Part thereof: Yet, a Man is not happy by Vertue, but in fo much as he knoweth that he enjoyes it, or that he endeavours fo to do; that is to fay, That although it be sufficient to make a Man esteemed happy, that we see him pra-Ctife Vertue (though he know it not perfectly); and also, that such a Practice (with a confused and imperfect Knowledge) may contribute to purchafe the Happiness of the other Life): yet, it is certain, that he cannot efteem himfelf folidly happy, without he be Confeious to himfelf that

he does good; as he would not at all believe himself Rich, without he pos-

feffed Wealth.

The Reason why there are so few that have a Relish of, or Love for, true Vertue, is, Because they know it not; and, not at all minding when they practife it, they feel not that Satisfaction which it produceth, and which makes up that Felicity of which we fpeak. That arifeth from this, That Vertue is not a simple Speculation of Good, to which we are obliged; but an Effective Defire, which springs from the Perswasion that we have thereof: And we cannot practife it with Delight, without the Resentment of some Emotion; because it happens with it, as with the most Excellent Liquors, that feem some-time bitter, or without Sweetness; if, when they are upon the Tongue, the Mind be other-wife taken up, and does not apply it felf to the Alterations which there they cause.

The two Sexes have not only need of Light, to find their Happiness in the Practise of Vertue; but likewise, need thereof to practise aright. It is

Periwa-

fion that fets us at work; and we are fo much the more perfwaded of our Duty, as the more perfectly we know it.

That little which we have faid here concerning Morality, fufficeth to infinuate, that the Knowledge of our felves, is most important to strengthen the Perswasion of the Duties, to which we are obliged. And it would not be difficult to shew, how all others contribute thereto; nor to make appear, that the Reason why so many Persons practice Vertue so ill, or fall into Looseness, is only the Ignorance of themselves, and what they are.

The Reason why People commonly believe, That Men need not be knowing for to become Vertuous, is, Because we see many vitious Persons, that otherwise pass for Intelligent; from whence, they imagine, that Knowledge is not only unprofitable for Vertue, but even that it is many times defirustive thereto. And, this Errour readers the most part of those who have the Reputation of being more Witty than others, suspect to weak udginents;

ments; and, at the same time, makes them flight, and be averse, from the

Highest Knowledges.

Men take no notice, that there is nothing but false Lights, which cast and leave Men in Diforder; because that the confused Notions (which false Philosophy gives us of our Selves, and of that which makes up the Body of our Actions), so bemists the Mind, that not knowing it felf, nor the Nature of the things which furround it, nor the Relation which they have to its felf; and not being able to bear the weight of Difficulties which prefent themselves in that obscurity: it must necessarily succumb, and abandon it felf to its Passions; Reason being too weak to stop it.

It is (then) but a Panick Fear, which hath given occasion to the Capricious Imagination of the Vulgar, That Study and Learning would render Women more Wicked and Proud: There is nothing but falle Knowledge, capable to produce so bad an Effect. A Woman cannot Learn true Knowledge, without becoming thereby more Humble and Vertuous: And there is nothing

thing more proper to depress the Vapours, and to convince her of her Weakness, than to consider all the Movements of her Engine, the Delicateness of her Organs, the (almost) infinite number of Alterations, and painful Failings, to which she is subject.

There is not any Meditation more capable to inspire Humility; Moderation, and Mildness, into a Man (whatever he may be), than feriously to mind (by the Study of Natural Philosophy) the Union and Tye of his Soul with the Body; and to observe, that he is obnoxious to fo many Veeds, that the Dependance in which he is (on the most ticklish and delicate Parts of the Body, in his Functions), keep him constantly exposed to a thousand forts of Troubles, and irkfome Agitations; that, what Knowledge soever he may have entertained, the least thing in the World is enough (entirely) to confound it; that a little Choler, or Blood, more Hot or Cold than ordinary, may cast himself into Extravagance, Folly, and Madness; and

Bood as the Man. 115

When such Reflexions should find Acceptance in the Mind of a Woman, as well as of a Man, they would chase thence Pride, far from letting of it in. And, if after having filled her Mind with the best of Knowledges, she should call again to her Memory all her by past Conduct, to see how she had arrived to the happy state, wherein she might find her self very far from elevating of her felf above others; fhe would fee enough to humble her the more; fince that, fhe would necessarily observe by that review, that (hereto-fore) she had had an infinite number of Prejudices, which the could not Conquer (but by Strength) against the Impressions of Custom, Example, and Passions; which, in spight of her, engaged her to them: That all the Effects which the had made to discover Truth, had been almost unprofitable: That it hath been, as by Chance, that it hath presented it self to her; and at that time, when the the least dreamt thereof; and in fuch Occurrencies, which happen

pen but once in ones Life, and but to very few Perfons: From whence, the would infallibly conclude, That it is unjust, and ridiculous, to flight and despise those who have less Knowledge than our felves, or who embrace contrary Opinions; and that we ought the rather to have Complacency and Compassion for them; because, if they discerne not Truth as we do, it is not their Fault; but, because that it hath not prefented it felf to them, when they have been in fearch thereof: and that there is still some Veil on their Part or ours, that hinders it to appear to their mind, in its full Light. And, considering that she might have held for true, that which she had believed false before, she would judge without doubt, That it might still happen in the Sequel, that the might make new Discoveries; by the which, she might believe false or erroneous, that which had appeared to her most true, and certain.

If there have been fome VVomen, who (affected with their Knowledge) have become difdainfull; there are likewise a great many. Men that dayly fall

into the same vice; And that ought not to be considered as an effect of the Sciences, which they have possessed, but because men have looked, on them as a Mystery to the Sex: And as, on the one hand, such knowledges are ordinarily very confused; and on the other, they that have them, propose to themselves thereby a particular advantage; it is not to be thought frange that they take occasion from thence to fwell, and it is almost unavoidably necessary that in this condition, it should not be with them, as with those who from a low birth, and fortune, have with difficulty raifed themselves to honour, and fame: who feeing themselves advanced to a pitch, to which, few of their quality have been accustomed to mount, are seized with a giddiness, which presents to them, objects quite other-wayes than in themselves they are. At least, it is most probable, that feeing the pretended vanity of the learned VVomen, is nothing in comparison of that of the learned men, who arrogate to themselves, the title of Masters and Sages: VVomen would be less Subject thereunto, if their Sex were admitted into equal share with ours, of the advantages which occasion it.

It is then a vulgar Errour to fancy, that Learning is uscless to VVomen, because sayes one, they have no share in Offices, for the which, men apply themselves thereto. It is as necessary to them as Felicity, and Vertue; because without that, we cannot perfectly possess either the one or other. It is fo for the purchasing, of Exactnessin our thoughts, and Justice in our actions : it is fo, for the right Knowledge of our Selves, and what is about us, that we may make the right and lawfull use thereof; and that we may regulate our passions by Moderating of our defires. To become capable of places. and dignities, is one of the uses of Learning; and to be fit to be a Judge or Bishop, we should strive to acquire, as much as is possible, because without it the functions of fuch Offices cannot be well discharged, but not precifely for that end, and for to become more happy by the possession of the honours, and advantages which they afford: That would be to abuse learning by a fordid and base end. and ad

So that there is nothing but weakness, or a fecret and blind interest which can make men fay, that VVomen ought to remain thut out from Learning, for this reason, that they have never been publickly admitted to any share therein. It fareth not with the goods of the mind, as with the goods of the body; against them there is no prescription: and how long soever, we have been deprived thereof, we have alwayes the right of Reversion. But it being impossible that the fame goods of the body, could at the fame time, be possessed by several persons, without domination on each fide; men have had reason for the safety of families, to maintain the possessours, with good conscience, in prejudice of the ancient proprietaries.

But, as concerning the advantages of the mind, it goes quite otherwayes. Every one hath a right to all that is intelligible, and good fenfe. The Spring of reason is not limited; it hath in all men an equal jurisdiction; we are all born Judges of what touches and affects us; And if we cannot dispose of the same with equal power, we may

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at least, all know them with a like right. And as all men employ the use of the light and air, without prejudice to any person, by that communication, all may likewife poffess the Knowledge of truth without hurting one another. For the more that it is known, the more it appears splendid, and lovely: The greater are the number of those that fearch after it, and the fooner they find it: And if both Sexes, had equally busied themselves therein, it had still the fooner been discovered. In so much then, that Truth and Knowledge are goods which admit of no prescription; And fuch that have been deprived thereof, may make a Re-entry, without doing injury to those who are already Masters of the same; There can be none, but fuch as would ru'e mens minds by belief, and credit, that, have reason to apprehend this Reverfion, for fear, that if Sciences should become fo common, glory might also; and that the Fame to which they afpire, should be lessened by partnership.

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VV omen are as Capable of Officers and Employments in civil Society as Men are.

T Here is therefore no inconvenience, if Women apply themselves to Stuy and Learning as well as we. They re able to make a very good use of hem, and to draw from thence the wo Advantages which we expect thererom; the one, to have clear and ditinct Knowledges, which we naturally lefire, and whereof the defire is often tifled, and annihilated by the confuion of thoughts, and the cares, and acitations of life: And the other, To embloy these Knowledges, for the partirular conduct of themselves, and for hat of others in the different condiions of Society, of which they make part. This agrees not atall with the common Opinion. There are indeed maay that will believe, that Women may earn what is to be attained by the Physicks or Natural Sciences; but will not admit, that they are as fit as Men for those which may be called Civil, as Ethicks, Laws, and Politicks; and that if they should be able by the Maximes of these Last, to conduct themselves, they could not therefore be capable of

guiding of others.

Men entertain this thought, because, they consider not, that the mind in all it's actions, hath need of no more but Discerning, and Exactitude, and whosoever hath once thefe two qualities in one thing, may as eafily, and by the fame means have them in all the rest. The being Moral or Givil, changeth not the nature of our actions: They continue to be still Natural: Because that Morality is nothing elfe, but to know the manner, how men regard the actions of others, with Relation to the Notions which they have of good or evil, of vice and vertue, of justice and injustice; And as that, when we have once rightly conceived the Rules of Motion, in Natural Philosophy, we may apply them to all the changes, and varieties which are remarked in Nature : So likewise knowing once the true principles of civil Sciences, there remains no more difficulty to make application thereof to the new, and incident Emergents which occurr. a vall

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They that are in places have not alwayes more wit, though they have better Luck than others: And indeed it is not necessary, that they should have more, than the common; though it be to be wished, that none were admitted to employments but the most worthy, We act still after the same manner, and by the fame Rules, in what estate foever, we find our felves; unless it be that the more our conditions are raised, the more our cares and views are extended, because we have the more to do. And all the change which happens to men who are placed above others, is like to that of a person who being mounted to the top of a Tower, caryes his prospect farther, and discovers more different objects, than they who stay on the ground below: It is their favors, if VVomen be as capable as we are to guid themselves, they are likewife to conduct others, and to have place in charges and dignities of Civil Society.

The most Simple, and natural use that we can make of Sciences which we have well learned, is to teach them to others: And if PVomen had studyed

in the Universities with men, or in others appointed for them in particular, they might have entred into Degrees, and taken the title of Master of Arts, Doctor of Divinity, Medicine, Civil, and Cannon Law: And their genius so advantagiously fitting them to learn, would dispose them likewise to teach with fuccess. They would find methods, and infinuating biaffefs, to instill their Doctrine; they would discover the strength and weakness of their Schollars, to proportion themselves to their reach, and the facility which they have to express themselves; and, which is one of the most excellent talents of a good Master, would compleat and render them admirable Mistresfcs.

The employment which approacheth most to a School-Master, is that of Pastour or Minister in the Church, and there can be nothing else but custome shewn, which remove VVomen there from. They have a Spirit as well as we, capable of the Knowledge and love of God, and thereby able to incline others to know, and love him. Faith is common to them with us:

And the Gospel with the Promises thereof, are likewise addressed to them. Charity also comprehends them in its duties; and, if they know how to put in practice the actions thereof, may not they likewife publickly teach its Maxims? Whofoever can preach by Example, from stronger reason can do so by Words: And a VV oman that should joyn her Natural Eloquence with the Morality of Fesus Christ, should be as capable as another, to Exhort, Direct Correct, admit into Christian Society those who deserved. And cut off such who after having submitted themselves thereto, should refuse to observe the Rules thereof. And if men were accustomed to see VVomen in a Pulpir, they would be no more flartled thereat, than the VVoman are at the fight of men.

We are not affembled into Society, but that we may live in peace, and find, in a Mutual affiltance, all that is necessary for the Body, and Soul. This we could not enjoy without trouble, if there were no authority; that is to say, that for that end, there ought to be some persons who have power to make Laws, and to inflict punish-

ment upon the breakers of them. And to make the right use of that authority, we must know to what it obligeth and be perswaded that those who possess it, ought to have no other design in the discharge thereof, but to procure the welfare and advantange of their inferiours. Women being no less susceptible of this perswasion than men, may not we then submit our selves to them, and consent not only not to resist their Orders, but even contribute as much as we can to oblige to obedience such as make any difficulty therein?

So that nothing needed to hinder, but that a Woman might fit upon a Throne, and that for the government of her people, She might study their humour, the interests, their Lawes, their cuftomes, and their practices: That she might place in Offices of the Gown and Sword, only able and deserving persons; and, in the Dignities of the Church, men of understanding, and Example. Is it a thing so difficult, that a Woman could not perform it, to instruct her-self of the strength, and weakness of a State, and of those that lay round it; to entertain amongst stranges and the state of the strength and weakness of a State, and of those that lay round it; to entertain amongst stranges.

gers fecret Intelligences for to discover their designes, and disappoint their measures, and to have faithfull Spies, and Emissaries in all Suspected places; to be exactly informed of all that paffeth there, wherein she might have interest? Is there needfull for the conduct of a Kingdome more vigilance, and application than Women have for their families, or the Religious for their Convents? They would prove no less refined in publick. N gotiations, than they are in private affairs. And as piety and mildness is natural to their Sex, their government would prove less Rigorous than that of many Princes, and we should wish for under their Reign, that which is often feared under that of many others, that Subjects would regulate themselves according to the Example of their Governours.

We may eafily conclude, that if Woman are capable to possesses all publick authority, they are still more to be subordinate Officers and Ministers: As Vice-Queens, Governants, Secretaries, Counsellors of State, and

Treasurers.

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For my part, I should be no more furprized to see a VVoman with a helmen on her head, than to fee her with a Crown; prefide in a Council of warr, as well as in a Council of State: To fee her train, and exercife her Souldiers, drawing them up in Battell-array, and divide them in several Bodyes, and Squadrons, with as much ease as she would pleafe her felf to fee it done. The military Art hath, nothing beyond others, whereof VVomen are not capable, unless it be that it is somewhat more rude, caufeth greater noise, and does more mischief. The Eyes are fufficient to learn from a Mapp, that is fomewhat exact, all the High-wayes of a countrey, the good and bade paffages, and the places that are most propper for furprizes, and encampings, There is hardly a Souldier that is not ready to know that a General ought first to gain all the Passes before he venture there his forces, regulate all his enterprizes according to the advice of good Scouts; And even deceive his Army by Wiles, and counter marches the better to cover his defign. A VVo. man can do all this, and can invent StraStratagems to furprife the enemy, put the wind and dust in his teeth, and the Sun in his face: And Charging him on one side, Flank him on the other; Give him false allarms, draw him into an ambush by a seigned slight; give battel, and be the sirst that mounts a breach to encourage the Souldiers; Perfwasion, and passion does all: And Women testise no less heat, and resolution when their honour is concerned, than is requisite to attack or defend a Place.

What can be reasonably objected, why a VVoman of found Judgement and Understanding, might not take the chaire in a court of Justice, and prefide in all other companies. There are a great many, able men who would learn the Lawes and Customes of a. state with less trouble, than some Games. at Cards, which VVomen understand for well: And it is as easy to remember, them, as an intire Romance; is it not. as easily to fee into the heart of an affair, as to trace an intrigue upon the Stage, and make as, faithfull report of a Law fuite, as of a Comedy? All these things are alike easy, to thosein G5

those who equally apply themselves

Now feeing there is neither office, nor imployment in fociety which is not comprehended in these whereof we have spoken, nor where there is greater need of knowledge or parts: it must be consest, that Women are proper for all.

Besides, the Natural dispositions of the body, and the Notions which men have of the function and duties of their places, there is still somewhat neecffary that renders them more or less capable to acquit themselves worthy thereof. The true perswasion of what a man is obliged to do, the confideration of Religion, and interest, emulation betwixt equals, defire of winning glory, and Honour, and of making, preserving, or increasing ones fortitude, According as a man is more or lefs touched with thefe things, his management is altogether different : And Women being no less sensible thereof than men, in regard of employments, they want nothing to render them their 'equals.

We may (then) with Affurance, exhort Ladies to apply themselves to Study; without having Respect to the little Rafons of those who would undertake to divert them there-from. Since they have a Mind (as well as we) capable of knowing of Truth (which is the only Subject, on which they can employ their Pains worthily), they ought to put themselves in condition of avoyding the Reproach, of having stifled a Talent, which they might put to use; and of having detained Truth in Idleness and Pleafure. There is no other way for them to Guard themselves against Errour, and the Surprize to which they are exposed (who Learn nothing but by the manner of Gazets; that is to fay, upon the bare word of another), nor to render themselves happy in this Life, by practifing Vertue with Difcretion.

What Advantage foever they propose to themselves besides this, they would meet with it in Study. If their Parlours were turned into Academies, their Entertainments would be Greater, more Solid, and more Pleasing.

And every one may judge, of the Satisfaction fhe should have to Dif-course of Losty Matters, by the Content that she hash to hear others speak thereof. How slight soever might be the Subjects of their Conversation, they would have the Pleasure to treat them more wittily than the Vulgar: And the delicate Manners, which are so peculiar to their Sex (being fortside by folid Reasons and Arguments) would far more sensibly affect the Hearers,

They who only defire to pleafe, would there (to Admiration) find their Defigne; For, the Splendour of the Beauty of Body, being heighthened by that of the Mind, would thereby become a hundred times more Brisk and Lively. And, as VVomen (but of ordinary Beauty) are alwayes well regarded when they are Witty, the Advantages of the Mind, Cultivated by Study, would give them Means abun. dantly to fupply what Nature or Fortune might have denyed them. They would be admitted into the Entertainments of the Learned, and reigne amongst them upon a double Respect :

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They would enter into the Management of Affairs: Their Husbands would not refuse to abandon to them the Condust of their Families, and to take their Advice in all things. And, feeing that Matters are in such a state, that they cannot (now) be admitted into Charges, (at least) they might be able to know the Nature of Functions; and judge if they be deser-

vingly bestowed.

The Difficulty of arriving to this Pitch, ought not to scare them: It is not fo great as Men have made it. That which is the cause, why Men think there is need of fo much Trouble, for to gain a few Knowledges, is, Because they teach (for that end) a great many things, which are most unprofitable for those that aspire thereto. All Knowledge (even to this prefent) confifting only in possessing of 2 History of the Sentiments of those that are gone before us; and Men, having too much reposed on Custom, and the Credit of their Malters, very few have had the good Luck to find the Natural Method. Herein we might labour, and make appear, That Men Men may render themselves qualified, in far less time, and with a great deal more Pleasure, than is ordinarily imagined.

That Women have an Advantagious Disposition for Sciences; and that the true Notions of Perfection, Nobility, and Honesty, suit with them as well as Men.

Hitherto, we have confidered nothing in Women, but the Head; and, it hath appeared, that that Part (taken in general) hath in them as much Proportion for all the Sciences (whereof it is the Organ), as in Men. Nevertheles, because that this Organ is not altogether alike, even amongst all Men themselves; and that there are a great many, in whom it is more proper for some things than for others: we must descend a little lower into the Particular, to see if there be mothing

nothing in Women, that renders them less fit for Learning, than our felves.

We may observe, that they have a Countenance more stately and happy than we: They have the Fore-Head high, lofty, and large; which is the usual Mark of Witty and Imaginative Persons. And, we find in effect, that Women have much Vivacity, Fancy, and Memory; which denotes a Brain fo disposed, that it eafily receives the Impressions of Objects, even of the most Slight and Inconfiderable, which escape such, as are of another Disposition; and that it retains them without trouble, and presents them to the Mind in the instant that it stands in need thereof.

When this Disposition is accompanied with Heat, it renders the Mind more ready and quick to be affected by the Objects; to fasten on, and penetrate, into them the more; and to extend the Images, and Impressions thereof, at pleasure: From whence, it happens, that they who have good Imaginations (considering things on

more fides, and in lefs time), are very Ingenious, and Inventive; and difference with one only Glance, than many others after much Attention. They are fit to reprefent things, with an infinuating and pleafing firain, and to find, on the Spot, Turns and proper Expedients: They express themselves with Facility and Grace; and fet off their Thoughts with the great

test Aadvantage.

All this is Remarkable in Women; and, I can fee nothing in this Dispofition, which is inconfiftent with a good Wit. Judgment, and Exactness, make the Natural Character thereof; to acquire which two good Qualities, we must become a little Sedentary, and dwell on Objects; to the end, that we may avoid the Errour and Mistake, wherein Men fall by skipping. It is true, that the multitude of Thoughts, in brisk Persons, hurries (many times) the Imagination; But, it is likewise true, That, by Exercise, it may be fixed. We have the Experience of this, in the greatest Men of this Age; who, for the most part, are all very imaginative. another gan

It may be affirmed, That this Temper is the fittest for Society; and that Men, not being made to remain alwayes alone, and shut up in a Closet; we ought (in some measure) the more to esteem those who have the best Disposition, pleasingly and prositably to Communicate their Thoughts. And Women, who have naturally Wit, (because they have Fancy, Memory, and a sparkling Livelines,) may with a little Application, acquire the Qualities of a good Judgment.

This is sufficient to prove, That, in Respect of the Head alone, the Two Sexes are Equal. There are Observations upon the rest of the Body, which are most Curious; but of which, we must only speak in pas-

fing.

Men have alwayes had this common ill-Luck, to spill and shead (if we may so say) their Passions on all the Works of Nature: There is not any Notion, which they have not blended with some touch of Love or Harred, of Esteem or Contempt: And these which concern the Distinction of the Two Sexes, are so material, and so

befogg'd with the Sentiments of Imperfection, Baseness, Undecency, and other Trifles; that, seeing they cannot be touched without moving of some Passion, and stirring up the Flesh against the Spirit; it is often Prudence to let them alone.

And yet, it is upon that odd Medley, of alwayes confused Notions,
that the Opinions disadvantagrous to
Women, are founded; and which the
small Wits (ridiculously) use to mortiste them. The justest Mean and
Temper, that can be betwixt the necessity of explaining ones Self, and
the Difficulty of doing it Innocently,
is, To observe what we ought (Rationally) to understand by Perfection
and Imperfection, by Nobility and
Basenes, and by Decency and Undecency.

When I conceive that there is a God, I easily conceive, that all things depend on Him: And if, after having confidered the Natural and Intrinsical State of Creatures, which confils (if they be Bodies) in the Disposition of their Parts, with a Reference to one another; and the Extrinsical, which

is the Relation that they stand in, to act or fuffer with other Beings that environ them: If (I fay) I enquire into the Reason of these two Conditions, I can find, none other but the Will and Pleasure of Him who is the Author of them. I observe further, that Bodies have (ordinarily) a certain Disposition, which renders them capable to produce and receive certain Effects; For example, that Man can understand by the help of his Ears, the Thoughts of others, and by the Inftruments of Voice, express to them his own. And I Remark, that Bodies are uncapable of fuch Effects, when they are otherwise disposed: From whence, I inform my felf of two Notions; whereof, the one Represents to me, the First State of Things, with all their necessary Confequences; and that I call the State of Perfection: And the other, the Condition contrary; which I name Imperfestion.

So, a Man (in my Esteem) is Perfect, when he hath all that he needeth (according to Divine Institution), for the producing and receiving the Effects to which he is appointed: And, he is imperfed, when he hath more or fewer Parts, than are necessary; or any Indisposition that removes him from this end.

Wherefore, he being formed in such manner, that he hath need of Aliment for Subsistence, I look not upon that Necessity, as an Imperfection; no more, than the Need which is coupled with the use of Food; that, what is Supersituous, must be avoided out of the Body. I find also, that all Creatures are equally Perfect, as long as they continue in their natural and ordinary State.

We must not confound Persection with Nobility: These are two things very different. Two Creatures may be Equal in Persection, and in Nobility

Unequal.

When I make Reflexion upon my Self, it feems to me, that my Spirit (being only capable of Knowledge) ought to be preferred to my Body, and be confidered as the most Noble: And, when I consider Bodies, without

any Respect to my Self; that is to fay, without reflecting, that they may be profitable or hurtful to me, pleafing or displeasing; I cannot perswade my felf, that one is more Noble than another, being All but made of matter diverfly Figured. Yet, when I medle with Bodies (confidering the Good or Hurt that they do to me), I come to esteem them differently. Although that my Head (regarded without Intereit) affects me no more, than the other Parts; nevertheless, I prefer it to all the rest, when I come to think, that it is of greater importance to me, in the Union of the Spirit with the Body.

For the fame Reason it is, that, although all the Places of the Body be equally perfect, we have (nevertheles) different Esteems for them: The very Parts themselves (whereof the Use is most necessary) being many times considered with some sort of Contempt and Aversion; because that the Use is less pleasing, or otherwise. It is so with all that surround and affects us; For, that which makes that

one thing pleafeth one Man, and displeafeth another, is, that it hath made impression upon them different-

ly.

It is the Engagement of Men in Society, that produceth in them the Notion of Decency: So that, although it be neither Imperfection nor Bafeness, to ease and comfort the Body; and that it is even a Necessity, and Indispensable Consequence of its Natural Disposition; and that all the wayes of doing thereof, are Equal; there are some notwithstanding, that are considered less Decent; because they are more offensive to the Persons, in whose Presence they are personned.

As all Creatures, and all their Actions, being confidered in themselves, and without any reference to Custom or Esteem that is made thereof, are as Perfect, and as Noble, the one as the other; they are likewise equally Decent, being considered in the same manner. Wherefore, we may say, that the Regards of Decency and Undecency are almost all, in their Ori-

ginal,

ginal, nothing else but the Effects of Imagination, and the Capriciousness of Men. This appears by that, That one thing which is Decent in one Countrey, is not all fo in another; and that, in the same Kingdome, but in divers places, or (in the fame time) but amongst Persons of different Condition, Quality, and Humour; the same Action is sometime conforme, fometime contrary to Decency. So that, Decency is nothing but the manner of uling of Natural Things, according to the Esteem which Men pals upon them; and to which, it is Prudence to Conform.

We are all possessed with this Notion; although we make no Reflexion thereon, That all Persons (whether they be our Beloved, or the Witty and Judicious; who in Publick, and according to the ordinary Costsom, subject themselves to the Rites of Decency) discharge themselves thereof in Private, as of Burdens

troublesome and foolish.

The Case is the same with Nobility. In some Countries of the Indies, the Labourers have the same Rank, as the Nobles with us: In some Countries, Sword-Men are preferred to the Gown-Men; And in others, the quite contrary is Practifed: Every one, according as his Inclinations leads him to favour such States, or that he esteems them most Important.

Comparing these Notions, with the Opinions that the Vulgar have of VVomen; we shall (without trouble) discover wherein consistent the Errour.

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From whence is derived, the Distinction of Sexes; How far it extends it felf: And that it places no Difference betwixt Men and Women, with Relation to Vice and Vertue: And that the Temperament, and Constitution in general, in it felf, is nither good nor · bad.

GOD willing to produce Men in Dependence, one upon another, by the Concourse of two Persons; for that end, framed two Bodies, which were different : Each was perfect in its kind; and they ought both to be disposed, as they are at present: And all that depends on their particular Constitution, ought to be confidered, as making a part of their Perfection.

It is then without Reason, that some imagine, That Women are not fo per-

fect as Men; and that they look upon that (in them) as a Defect, which is an Essential Portion of their Sex; without the which, it would be use-less for the end, for which it hath been formed; which begins and ceafes with Fecundity, and which is destin'd for the most excellent use of the World; that is, to frame and nourish us

in their Bellies.

The Two Sexes (together) are neceffary to beget the like: And if we knew, how it is that ours contribute thereto, we should find enough to be faid against our selves. It is hard to be understood, upon what they ground themselves, who maintain, That Men are more Noble than Women, in regard of Children; fince it is properly the Women who Conceive us, Form us, and give us Life, Birth, and Breeding. It is true, they pay dearer for it than we; But their Pain and Trouble ought not to be Prejudicial to them, and draw upon them Contempt, in place of Esteem, which they thereby deferve.

Who would fay, That Fathers and Mothers (who labour to bring up

their Children, good Princes to Govern their Subjects, and Magistrates to render them Justice,) are less Estimable than they whose Aid and Assistance they use, for to discharge themselves of their Duties?

There are fome Physicians, who have mightily enlarged themselves upon the Temperament of Sexes, to the Disadvantage of Women; and have pursued their Discourses out of sight; to shew, That their Sex ought to have a Conditution altogether discrete from ours, which renders it inferiour in all things. But their Reasons are only light Conjectures; which come into the Heads of such, as judge of things only by Prejudice, and upon simple Appearances.

When they perceive the Two Sewes more diffinguished, by that which regards the civil, than particular, Functions; they fancy to themselves, that so they ought to be; And, not differning exactly enough, betwixt that which proceeds from Custom and Education, and that which comes from Nature; they have attributed to one and the same Cause.

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all which they fee in Society; imagining, that when God Created Man and Woman, he disposed them in fuch a manner, as ought to produce all the Distinction which we obferve betwixt them.

This is to carry too far the Difference of Sexes: It ought to be bounded by the Defigne, which God hath had to form Men, by the Concourfe of two Persons; and no more to be admitted, but what is necessary for

that Effect.

We fee, that Men and Women are alike (almost) in all, as to the inward and outward Constitution of the Body; and that the Natural Functions (on which depends our Conservation) are performed in both, after the fame manner. It is then enough to the end, that they may give Birth to a Third; that there be some Organs in the one, which are not in the other : And yet, it is not necessary in respect of that, (as Men imagine) that Women have less Strength and Vigour than Men. And, as there is nothing but Experience, that can enable us to judge aright of that Diflinction; do not we find, that Women are mixed, as we are? There are fome both Strong and Weak in both Sexes. Men brought up in Softness and Ease, are worse than Women; and fink at first under Labour: But when (by Necessity, or otherwise), they are hardened, they become Equal, and sometimes Superiour to others.

It is just fo with Women: They that are taken up and employed in painful Exercises, are stronger than Ladies, who only handle the Neccle. And this may encline us to think, that if both Sexes were equally Exercised, the one might acquire as much Vigour as the other; which, in former times, have been seen in a Common-Wealth; where Wrestling, and other Exercises, were common to both: The same is Reported of the Amazones, in the South Part of America.

We ought not (then) to lay any ground on certain ordinary Expressions, drawn from the present State of the Two Sexes. When we would (mockingly) blame a Man, as having little Courage, Resolution, and

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Constancy, we call him Effeminate; as if we would fay, That he is as Low, and Cow-hearted, as a Woman. On the other hand, to praise a Woman that is above the Ordinary, because of her Courage, Strength, or Wit; we fay, She is a Man. Thefe Expressions (so advantagious to Men) do not a little Contribute, to entertain the high Notion that we have of them; Because we consider not, that they are but Likely hoods; and that their Verity indifferently supposes Nature, or Custom; and so, are purely Contingent, and Arbitrary. Vertue, Mildness, and Integrity, being so peculiar to Women (if their Sex had not been so little esteemed); when we would have fignified, with Elogy, that a Man had all these Qualities in an Eminent Degree; we would have faid, He is a VVoman, if it had so pleased Men, to Establish this form of Speech.

What-ever the Matter be, it is not the Strength of Body, that ought to diffinguish Man-kind; otherwise, Beasts would have the advantage of them.

them; and, amongst our Selves, the Strongelt. Notwithstanding, we know by Experience, that fuch who have fo great Strength, are proper for nothing but Matterial Works: And that these, on the other hand, who have lefs, have commonly more Brains. The ablest Philosophers, and the greatest Princes, have been Delicate enough; and the greatest Generals, would not have (perhaps) been willing to Wrestle with the meanest of their Souldiers. Go but to a Court of Justice, and you shall fee, whether the greatest Judge match alwayes (in Strength) the lowest of their Officers.

It is then useless, to lean so much upon the Constitution of the Body for to render Reason of the Difference which is feen betwixt the Two

Sexes, in Relation to the Spirit. The Temperament does not confile

in an indivisible Point: For, as we cannot find two Perfons in whom it is altogether alike; neither can we any more determine, precifely, where-in it is that they differ. There are many forts of Cholericks, Sanguines, and .. H 4

and Melancholicks; and all these Diversities hinder not, but that they may be often as capable the one, as the other; and that there may be excellent Men, of all forts of Constitutions: And even supposing, that that of the Two Sexes be as different, as it is pretended to be; there is still found greater Difference amongst many Men, who are (notwithstanding) believed capable of the same things. The More, and the Lefs, being so little considerable, there is nothing, but a spirit of Wrangling, that can make it be regarded.

It is propable, that that which engroffeth fo much (into Notion) the Distinction whereof we speak, is, That Men examine not precisely enough, all that which is Remarkable in Women: And that Defect makes us fall into the Errour of those, who (having the Mind confused) distinguish not aright, what (feverally) belongs to things; and attribute to one, that which only pertains to another; because they find them together in the fame Subject. Wherefore, finding fo great Difference in Women, as to the

manner of Actions, and Functions: Men have transferred it to the Tenperament, for want of Knowledge of

the true Caufe.

However it be, if we would examine, which is the most Excellent of the Two Sexes, by the comparing of Bodies; Women might pretend to the Advantage, and without infilting on the Internal Fabrick of their Bodies; and that it is in them, that the thing in the World (the most Curious to be known) passeth; to wit, How that Man (the most Beautiful and Wonderful of all Creatures) is produced: Who can hinder them to fay, That that which appeareth in the out-fide, ought to give them the better? That Comeliness, and Beauty, are natural and peculiar to them; and that it is this, that produceth Effects as fenfible, as ordinary: And that, if what they can peforme by the infide of the Head, renders them (at least) Mens Equals; the Out-fide feldome ever failes, to render them absolutely their Mistreffes.

Beauty being as real an Advantage, as Strength and Health, Reason forbiddeth pressions of Beauty.

It would not at all be necessary, to speak any more concerning the Temperament of VVomen; if an Author (no less Famous than Polite) had not thought fit to consider it, as the force of the Defects which Men commonly charge them with; which helps much to confirm People in the Opinion, That they are less to be valued than we. Without relating his Opinion, I fay, that for the right examining of the Temperament of the Two Sexes. (with a Reference to Vice and Vertue), it must be considered in a State indifferent; when, as yet, neither Vice nor Vertue were in Nature: And then we shall find, that that which in

one time is called Vertue, may in another, pass for Vice (according to the use that Men make thereof); So that, in that case, all Temperaments are alike.

For the better Understanding of this Opinion, we must observe, that there is nothing but our Soul capable of Vertue; which, in general, confifts in a firm and constant Resolution, of doing that which we judge, the best; according to the divers Occurrencies that we meet with. The Body (properly) is nothing but the Organ, and Instrument of that Resolution (as a Sword in ones hand), both for Offence and Defence: And all the different Dispositions (which renders it more or less fit for that use), ought not to be called good or bad; but as their Effects are more ordinary, and important, for Good and Evil: For example, The Disposition to Flight, for avoyding the Evils which threaten us, is Indifferent; because there are some, which cannot otherwise be shunned; and then, it is Wisdom to flye: When, on the other hand, it is culpable Cowardife, for one to betake himfelf to his Heels, when the Danger is fupe_

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fuperable, by a generous Resistance; which produceth more Good than Hurt.

But the Mind is no less capable in VVomen, than in Azen, of that firm Refolution, which makes up Vertue; nor of knowing the Ran-counters, when it is to be put in Practice. They can Regulate their Passions, as well as we; and are not more enclined to Vice, than to Vertue. We might even make the Ballance turn to their Favour on this fide; fince that the Af. fection towards Children (without comparison, stronger in VVomen, than in Men), is naturally linked to Compaffion; which we may call, the Vertue and Bond of Civil Society: It being impossible to conceive, That Society is rationally Established for other end; than to supply the common Wants and Necessities of one another. And if we nearly observe, How Passions are formed in us; we shall find, that after the manner that VVomen contribute to the Production and Education of Men, it is as a Natural Consequence, that they should treat them in their Affl ctions, in some fort as their Children.

The Difference which is obserwed, between Men and Women, in regard of Manners, proceeds from the Education which is given Them.

T is so much the more important to Remark, That the Dispositions, which we bring with us into the World, are neither (in their Nature) good or bad; that otherwise, we cannot avoyd an Errour very ordinary; whereby Men often refer to Nature, that which (onely) springs from Custom.

Men torture their Minds, to fearch for a Reafon. Why we are subject to certain Faults, and have particular Customs; for want of having observed, that which may be produced in us, by Habit, Exercife, Education, and outward Condition; that is to say, The Relation of Sex, Age, Fortune, and Employment, wherein we are placed in Society: It being certain, that

all these different Views diversifying, in an infinite number of wayes, the thoughts, and paffions, answerably dispose the minds quite other-wayes, to look on the truths prefented to them. It is for that Reason, that the same Maxime, proposed at the fame time to Citizens, Souldiers, to Judges, and Princes, affects them, and makes them Aft fo differently : Because, that Men caring for nothing but the out-fide; Look on it as the Rule, and measure of their Sentiments: Whence happens, that the one lets pass as useless, that which very much takes up others; That Sword-men are Choaked with that which flatters Gown-men . And that Persons of the same Constitution take fometimes certain things in a contrary Senfe; Which enter by one and the fame biass into the minds of Perfons of different temperament; but who have fame the fortune, or education.

It is not that we pretend, that all usen bring into the World the fame bodily conflitution. That would be indeed, an ill-grounded pretence: There

are some that are quick, and some flow: but it appeareth not, that that diversity any way hinders the minds to receive the same instruction: all that, it does, is, that fome receive it more readily and happily than others. So that what temperament foever Woman have, they are no less capable than we, of truth and studies. And if we find at present, in some of them fome defect, or impediment; or even that all of them, do not look into folid matters, as men do; to which notwithstanding experience is contrary, that ought folely to be rejected upon the outward condition of their Sex. and on the education, which is given them, which comprehends the ignorance wherein they are left, the Prejudices or Errours, which are instilled in them, the Example which they have of others their like. And all the wayes to which Decorum, restraint, reserve, fubjection, and fears, reduceth them.

In effect, nothing is omitted, on their account which may ferve to perfuade them, that this great difference, which they fee betwixt their Sex, and ours, is a work of Reason, or divine infitution.

The apparel, education, and exercises, cannot be more different. A Maid is not in fecurity but under the wings of her Mother; or under the eyes of a Governant that never leaves her: They Frighten her with every thing: Threaten her with Spirits, and Hobgoblines, in all the corners of the house, where the may be alone: Even in the streets. and Churches, there is fomething to be feared, if the have not her guards. The great care which is taken to drefs her, takes up all her mind: So many lookes as are glanced at her, and fo many discourses, which she heares of beauty, imployes all her thoughts; And the complements, which she receives on this Subject, makes her therein place allher happiness. As they never speak to her of any thing elfe, with that she limits all her defigns, and carryes no higher her prospects. Dancing, writing, and reading, are the greatest exercifes of Women; all their library confifts in a few little Bookes of Devotion, with that which is in the little cabinet.

All their Science is reduced to work with a Needle. The Looking Glass

is the great Master and Oracle which they consult Balls, Playes, and the Modes, make the subject of their Entertainments: They consider their meetings as, famous Accademies, whether they go to inform themselves of all the news of their Sex. And if it happen, that some one or other distinguish themselves from the common, by the reading of certain Bookes, which they had trouble enough to catch, thereby to unlock their minds, they are often obliged to hide themselves: The greatest part of their companions, out of Jealouse or other respects, never failing to accuse them of intending to play the rare things.

As to Maids of meaner condition, forced to gain their lively hood by their labour; their parts are still more use-lefs. Care is taken to make them learn a trade convenient to their Sex, as soon as they are fit thereto, and their necessity of imploying themselves continually therein, hinders them from thinking of any thing essentially therein, birders and when both one, and others of them, bred in this manner have attained to the age of marriage, they are engaged therein,

or otherwayes confin'd to a Cloyster, where they go on to live as they have begun.

In all that which is taught to Women, do we see any thing that tends to solid instruction? It feems on the contrary, that men have agreed on this fort of education, of purpose to abase their courage, darken their mind, and to fill it only with vanity, and fopperies; there to stiffe all the feeds of Vertue, and Knowledge, to render useless all the dispositions which they might have to great things, and to take from them the defire of perfecting themfelves, as well as we by depriving them of the means.

When I feriously think on the manner, how men look upon that which they think to fee faulty, in VVomen, I find that fuch a carriage hath in it fomewhat beneath persons endowed with reason. If there be equal occasion of finding of fault in both Sexes, that which accuseth the other, offends against Natural equity; if there be more evill in ours, and that we fee it not, we are rash to speak of the faults of others; if we see it, and conceal it,

we are unjust to blame the other who hath less. If there be more good in Women, than in Men; Men ought to be accused of ignorance, or envy, not to acknowledge it, when in a Woman there is more Vertue than Vice, the one should serve to excuse the other; and when the defects that she hath are infurpassable, or that the means to rid her felf, thereof or guard therefrom, are wanting, as to Woman they are, fuch a one deferves compassion, not contempt. In fine, if these defects be but flight, or onely apparent, it is imprudence or Malice to infift on them; And it is not hard to prove, that men commonly carry fo in respect of VVomen.

It is commonly faid, that they are timerous, and uncapable of defence; that they are afraid of their shadow, that the cry a child allarmes them, and the whistling of the Wind makes them tremble. That is not Universal. There are a great many VVomen as bold as men, and it is known that the most fearfull make often of necessity a Vertue; timerousness, is almost inseparable from vertue, and all vertuous persons

have it: As they would not do hurt to any, and that they are not ignorant how much wickedness is amongst men; a fmall matter is enough to fill them with fear. It is a Natural paffion, from which no body is exempt: all men fear death, and the troubles of life; the most powerfull Princes apprehend. the Rebellion of their Subjects, and the invasion of enemies, and the most valiant Generals to be surprized unawares.

Fear is great, proportionably, to the force which men think they have to refift; and it is not blameable, but infuch in who are strong enough to repell the evil which threatens them : And we should be as unreasonable to accuse a Judge, or a man that had never minded any thing but his Book, of baseness, for refusing to fight a duel; as to blame a Souldier who had alwayes carryed arms, for not daring to enter into dispute against a learned Philosopher.

VVomen are bred in a manner that gives them ground to apprehend, and fear every thing; they have not light enough to avoid furprizes in matters of

Understanding.

Understanding. They have no share in the exercises which give strength and dexterity for attacking, and defending; They see themselves exposed helpselly to suffer the outragiousness of a Sex; so subject to Transports, which regards them with contempt, and that often treats its like with more rage, and cruelty, than Wolves do one another.

Wherefore timerousness in VVomen ought not to pass for a defect, but rather for a Rational passion, to which they owe modesty, which is so peculiar to them; and the two great advantages of life, which are the inclination to Vertue; and the aversion from Vice, which the greatest part of men with all the education and light which are given them, can hardly acquire.

Fear of want is the ordinary cause of Avarice, Men are no less subject thereunto than VVonen; And if we came to an account, I know not if the number of the first should not be found greater, and their covetousness more blame worthy; Since the midle Vertue is not far dislant from the two Viees, the Extreams, men often mislake

the one for the other, and confound avarice with laudable frugality.

As the same action may be good in one, and bad another, it often happens that that which is evill in us, is not at all so in VVomen: They are destitute of all means to make their fortune by their parts, the door of Sciences, and Employments, being shut against them; And so being in worse condition to guard themselves against the misortunes, and inconveniences of lifes they ought more to be concerned. It is no wonder then, that herewith they seeing what a great trouble it is to purchase a small estate, they take care to keep it.

If they receive fo eafily that which is told them, it is an effect of their candour, and ingenuity, that will not fuffer them to think, that these who have authority over them, are ignorant, or interested; and we offend Justice, to accuse them of credulity, since there is yet more amongst us. The abless men fuffer themselves to be too much allured by a false appearance; And all their Knowledge is often times, but a

mean credulity, but of fomewhat greater extent than that of Women: I mean, that they are not more knowing than others; but because they have more Lightly given their consent, to a greater number of things, of which they have retained the Notions, right or wrong, by having fo often run them over.

That which causeth timerousness in Women, produceth likewife fuperfition, which the learned themselves impute to them: But in this, the learned appear like those, who being most in the wrong, perswade themselves that they are in the right, because they make a Lowder Noise than others. They fancy that they themselves, are clear from superstition, because they find it in some ignorant Women, whilst in the mean time, themselves are therein miserably plunged up to the eares.

Though all men were the true wor-shipers of God, in Spirit, and in Truth, and that Women rendered him only Superstitious adoration, in this they would be excusable. They are not at all taught to know God by themselves : they know nothing of him, but what is told them: And, as the most part of Men speak of him in a manner, so unworthy of what he is, and diffinguish him not from his Creatures, but only by the attribute of Creator; it is no wonder, that Women only knowing him upon their report, Worship him by Religion, with the same Sentiments that they have for men, whom they fear and reverence.

There are fome men, that think they can fufficiently Mortifie the VVomen, by telling of them, that they are nothing elfe all of them but tatlers. They have reason to be vexed, at so impertinent a calumny. Their body is fo happily disposed by the temperament which is propper to them, that they distinctly retain the impressions of Objects, which once they have received: They represent them to themfelves without Trouble, and express them with wonderful Facility: That is the Reason, that the Notions which they have, awakening on the least occasion, they begin and continue their Conversation at their Pleasure: And the Quickness of their Spirit (giving them Means to perceive, eafily, the Relation of things among themselves, they) pass without trouble from one Subject to another; and, by that means, can speak a long time, without letting

the Discourse flag or dye.

The Benefit of Speech, is naturally accompanied with a great defire of ufing of it, when occasion offers: It is
the only Bond of Men in Society;
and many find, that there is no greater Pleasure in the World, nor more
becoming the Mind, than to Communicate their Thoughts to others.
Wherefore, Women being able to
speak with Ease, and being bred and
brought up with others; they were
to be blamed, if they fasted to entertain themselves.

They ought not, then, to pass for Tatlers, but when they speak out of purpose; and of things, which they understand not, without defire of In-

ftruction.

We must not imagine, that People never tatle, but when they talk of Cloths and Fashions. The Tatle of News-Mongers, is often more ridiculous: And that, store of Words, heaped one upon another (and which

fignific nothing at all, in the most part of Works), make a Chat far more simple, than that of the filliest of Women. At least, we may fay, That the Discourses of these, are real and intelligible; and that, they are not vain enough, to imagine (as the greatest part of the Learned do), That they are Wifer than their Neighbours; because they utter more Words, and less Sense. If Men had a Tongue as free, it would be impossible to make them hold their Peace. Every one entertains himfelf with what he knows: Merchants about their Bufiness, Philo-Cophers with their Studies, and Women about that which they have been able to Learn; And they may fay, That they would have entertained themselves better, and with greater Solidity, if there had been as great Care for Instruction taken with them

It choaks a great many, that Women, in their Conversation, testifie a great defire to know every thing. I know not what can be the Palat of these Men, that cannot relish, that VVomen should be so Curious: For any part, I am well pleased, that People should be curious; and I only advise them, to manage it so, that they be

not troublesome there-with.

I look upon the Conversations of VVonnen, as upon those of Philosophers; where it is equally permitted to all, to entertain themselves about things, of which they have no Knowledge; and there are cross Times in the one, as well as the other.

It is ordinary with many Men, to treat the Curious, like Beggars. When they are in an Humour of bestowing. they take it not ill to be asked; and when they have a mind to discover what they know, they are glad to be entreated; If not, they fail not to fay, Ye are a little too Curious. Because Men have forged to themselves, that Women ought not to Study; they stand upon their Points, when Women demand to be informed of that which is Learned by Books. I esteem them Curious things; and regret, they have not the means to fatisfie themfelves therein; being often (only) hindered by a just Fear, to address themfelves for that end, to touchy and foolish Heads; by whom they would

find themselves jeer'd, instead of receiving Instruction. It seems to me, that Curiolity is one of the most certain Signes of a good Wit; that is, more capable of Learning. It is a Knowledge begun, which sets us forward, and makes us proceed farther in the way of Truth. When two Perfons are touched by the fame thing, and that the one looks upon it with Indifferency, and the other draws nearer, with deligne to see it better; it is a mark, that this hath the Eyes more open. The Mind in both Sexes, is Equally fit for Sciences; and the Defire, which it may have of them, is no more to be blamed in the one, than in the other. When the Mind finds it fell affected with a thing, which it fees but obscurely, it feems to be by a Natural Right, that it would be cleared therein: Ignorance being the most irksome Slavery (wherein it can be), it is as unreasonable to condemn a Person, who strives to get out of it; asa Wretch, who should endeavour to escape out of a Prison, where he were thut up.

Amongst all the Faults that Women are charged with, the Inconstant and Fickle Humour, is that which makes the maniest discontented. In the mean-time, they themselves are not less subject thereto; But because, they see themselves Masters, they think that every thing is lawful to them: And that Women, being once engaged to them, the knot ought to be indissoluble (onely) on their part; although that they be both Equal, and that every one is obliged for their own share.

They would not fo often (Mutually) accuse one another of Levity, if they observed, that it is Natural to Men; and that, he that sayes Mortal, sayes Inconstant; and that, it is an Indispensible necessity of being, in the manner which we are made. We judge not of Objects, we love, or hate them not; but upon Appearances, which depend not on us. The same things appear to us diversly; sometime, because they have suffered some Alteration; some time, because we our selves are changed. The same Meat, more or less Seasoned, (Hot

or Cold) caufeth in us quite different Sensations: And, remaining still the fame, we are otherwise affected therewith in Sickness, than in Health. In our Infancy, we are indifferent, as to Things; which, ten Years after, we look upon with Passion, because the Bo-

dy is Changed.

If a VV oman loves us, it is. Because the thinks us Lovely; and, if another hate us, it is, Because we appear to her Hateful. In one time we esteem those, whom we have slighted before; because they have not alwayes appeared to us the same; whether it be They, or We, who are Changed. And such an Object, being presented to the Heart, liath found the Door open; which, a Quarter of an Hour sooner or later, had been barr'd against it.

The Hovering, wherein we many times find our Selves betwixt two different Inclinations, which one and the same Object causeth in us, convinceth us in spight of our Teeth, that the Passions are not free; and that we are unjust to complain, That we are otherwise considered of, than we would. As a small Matter is enough to kindle Love;

fo, a little thing can extinguish it: and that Passion depends no more upon us in its Progress, than in its Birth. Of ten Women, that aspire to be Loved, it salls out ordinarily, That she who hath least Merit, least of Birth and Beauty, shall carry it over the rest; because that she may have had a Bristeer Air, or some-what more in Mode, or suitable to our Gusto, in the Humour that then we find our selves in.

It is fo far from doing wrong to Women, to accuse them of being more Cunning and Artificious than Men, that Men speak for them, if they know what they say; since, by so faying, they acknowledge them to be more Witty and Prudent. Artifice is a fecret way of attaining an End proposed, without being diverted: There is need of Wit, to find out that way: and Dexterity, to manage it: And we cannot find fault, that a Woman imployes Artifice, to avoyd being deceived. Craft is far more Pernicious, and more ordinary amongst Men: That hath alwayes been the common Road, to enter into the Places and Employments, where they may do greatest Mischief. 14

And, instead of that, That Men (who have a mind to Cheat), employ their Goods, their Understanding, and their Power, from which we are rarely secure: VVowen have nothing to use, but Carestes and Eloquence, which are natural Means; against which, we may more easily guard our Selves, when there is any reason of Mistrust.

For the Summary of Accufation and Defect, it is faid, That VVomen are more malitious and wicked than Men: And all the Evil, with which Men can charge them, is thut up in this Opinion. I do not believe, that those who entertain this Thought, do pretend, That there are more VVomen than Men, who do Mischief: That would be a manifest Falshood; For, they have no part in Employments, and Charges; the abuse of which, is the cause of all publick Calamities; and their Vertue is too Exemplary; and the Disorders of Men too well known to call them in question.

When Men (then) fay, That Women have more Malice; it fignifies no more, but that, when they fet themfelves to do Evil, they do it more dextroully, and drive it farther than Men. Let it be fo. This marks in them a most folid Advantage: For, one cannot be capable of doing much Mifchief, without having good Judgment; and without being also (by Consequence) capable of doing much Good. So that, VVomen ought not to look upon this Reproach, more Injurious, than that which might be made to Rich and Powerful Men; that they are more wicked than the Poor, because they have more Opportunies of hurting: And VV men might answer, as they; That, if they can do Hort, they can also do Good; and that, if the Ignorance wherein they are left be the cause, Why they are worse than we; Knowledge, on the contrary, would render them much better.

This short Discussion, of the most signal Descents (which Men conceive peculiar, and natural, to the lovely Sex) proves two things; the one, That they are not so considerable, as the Vulgar Imagine; and the other, That they may be Rejected, upon the little

Education which VVomen have; and what-ever they are, they may be amended by Instruction; of which, VVomen are no less capable than our Selves.

If the Philosophers had followed this Rule, in judging of all that concerns VVomen, they would have spoken more foundly; and had not (in Respect of them) fallen into Ridiculous Abfurdities. But the most part, both of Antient and Modern, having only built their Philosophy upon popular Prejudices; and, having been in great Ignorance of themselves, it is no wonder, that they have fo far mistaken others. Without giving our felves any trouble to medle with the Antients; we may fay of the Modern, That the manner how they are Taught (making them believe, though falfly, That they cannot become more knowing, than those that have gone before them), renders them Slaves to Antiquity, and enclines them, to embrace (blindly) all that they find therein, as Constant and Universal Truths. And because, that all that they say against VVomen, is principally founded upon what they

they have Read in the Antients; it will not here be unprofitable, to relate fome of the most curious Conceits on this Subject; which have been left to us, by these Illustrious Dead, whose very Ashes, and Rottenness, are at this Day, held in so great Veneration.

Plato (the Father of Antient Philasophy) thanked the Gods for three Favours, which they had bestowed on him; but chiefly, for that he was Born a Man, and not a VVoman. If he had in his Eye their present Condition, I should easily be of his Mind: But that which makes me think, that he had fome-what elfe in his Thoughts, is. The Doubt which he is faid to have. been often in, If Women ought to be placed in the Category of Bealts. That may be fufficient to Rational Men, to make him Condemn him elf of Ignorance, or Brutishness; and totally to degrade him from the Title of Divine, which he enjoyes no more, but among Pedants.

His Scholar Ariffetle (to whom the Schools still continue the Name of the Glorious Genious of Nature; upon a Mistake, that he hath known her, better than any other *Philosopher*) pretends, that *VVomen* are but Montlers. Who would not believe it, upon the Authority of so Renowned a Personage? To say, It is an Impertinence; would be, to choak his Supposition too open-

If a VVoman (how Learned foever the might be), had wrote as much of Men, the would have lost all her Credit; and Men would have imagined it sufficient, to have refuted such a Foppery; by answering, That it must be a VVoman, or a Fool, that had faid for In the mean-while, the would have had no less Reason, than this Phitofopher. VVomenare as Antient as Men; We fee them in as great Number; and no Man is furprized to meet them in his Way. To be a Monster faccording to the Opinion, it felf, of that Man) there must be something Extraordinary, and Surprizing. VVomen have nothing of all that: They have been alwayes made after the same Fashion; alwayes Pretty and Witty. And, if they be not made like Aristotle,

they may fay, That Arifforle was not

The

made like them.

The Disciples of this Author (who lived in the time of Philo), fell into a Conceit, no less old Fashioned, in regard of V Vomen; fancying to themfelves (according to the Relation of that Historian), That they were Half-Men, or Imperfect Males. It is, without doubt, because they have not the Chin hung with a long beard; unless it be that, I can apprehend nothing. The Two Sexes (to be Perfect) ought to be, as we fee them. If the one were altogether like the other, it would be neither of the Two. If Men be the Fathers of Women, Women are the Mothers of Men; which, at least, renders them Equal: And we might have as much Reason, as these Philosophers, to fay, That Men are Imperfect VVomen

Socrates (who was the Morality and Oracle of Antiquity) fpeaking of the Beauty of that Sex; was accustomed to compare it to a Temple of a Fair Show, but built upon a lakes.

If this Conceit do not turn our Stomacks, we must only Laugh at it. It is propable, that he judged of the Bodies of others, by his own, or by his Wives; who was a She-Devil, which made him deteft her; and, that he spake of her Sex, to bring her down: And, that he himself was mad to the very soul, because he was ugly as a

Maggot.

Diogenes, Sir-named The Dog, because he was good at nothing but Biteing; feeing one day (in passing) two VVomen, who Discoursed together; told the Company, That there was two Serpents, an Aspe and a Viper, who Communicated to one another their Poison. That Saying is worthy of an Honest Man; and I wonder not, that it is Ranked among the goodly Philosophical Sentences. If the Wife Men of Gottam had lived in his time, it is certain, we should have found their Ran-counters more sprightly. The good Man was a little wounded: and they that knew him a little, judged, that (at that time) he had nothing elfe to fav.

For the admirable and pleasant Democritus; as he loved to be merry and laugh a little, we must not take

every thing litterally which came from his Mouth. He was a very tall Man; and his Wife, one of the leaft: Being one day asked, Why he had fo ill matched himfelf? He answered (according to his ordinary Rallery), That when we are obliged to choose, and when there is nothing that is good to be taken, the Least is alwayes the Best. If the same Question had been put to his Wife, she might have repartied with as much Reason; That a little and a big Husband, being both alike, the one as bad as the other, the had taken her's hap Hazzard; for fear, that if she had chosen, she might have done worfe.

Cato (the Sage and Severe Critick) prayed often, That the Gods would pardon him, if he had been fo Imprudent, as to trust the least Secret to a VVoman. There stuck in the good Mans Mind, a Famous Passage in the Roman History; which Antiquaries use as a great Argument, to prove the little Secrefie of VVomen: A Child of twelve Years of Age, being pressed by his Mother, to tell her the Resolution of he Senate (where he had been Affiliant), invented to baffle her; that it had been decreed, That every Hufband should have several Wives. Immediately, she went and told her Neighbours, to consult about her Measures with them; So that, in the space of half an Hour, it was all the Town over. I would gladly know, what a poor Husband would do, if in a State, where Vionen were the Mistresses (as in that of the Amazones); one should come and tell him, that it had been resolved in Gounsel, That every Husband must have an Helper: without doubt, he would not open his Mouth.

These are some of the great and sublime Conceits, which they (whom the Learned study as Oracles) have entertained, concerning the Beautiful SEX: And that which is pleafant, and odd, both together, is, That Grave Men seriously make use of that, which these Famous Antients have often but said in Drollery: So true it is, that Prejudices, judices, and Pre-Occupation, do make Men themselves mistake the Mark, who pass for the most Rational, Judicious, and Wise.

FINIS.

An

An Advertisement

HE frongest Objections that can be made against us, are drawn from the Authority of great Men, and Holy Scripture: As to the former, VVe think to have sufficiently satisfied Them; by telling them, That we acknowledge no other Authority here, but that of Reason and the satisfied the satisfied the satisfied the satisfied the satisfied the satisfied that the satisfied the satisfi

Son, and good Sense.

As to the Scripture; it is not at all contrary to the Intent of this Treatile, if me understand (well) both the one and the other. Here we pretend, That there is an intire Equality betwirt the Two Sexes, being considered Independent of of Custom; which placeth often those of most Merit and Parts, in a Dependence on others. The Scripture speaketh not a word of Inequality: And, as the end of it is only to serve Men for a Rule

An Advertisement.

Rule in their Conduct, (according to the Notions which it gives of Justice); So, it leaves to every one the Liberty, to judge as well as he can of the natural (and true) state of Things. And, if we mind it, all the Objections which are drawn there-from, are but Sophisms of Prejudice; whereby sometimes, Men understand (of all Women) Passages, which only agree to some sew in Particular: Sometime they refer to Nature, that which only slowes from Education or Custom, and that which sacred Authors have spoken with Relation to their own Times.

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