

defensive Arts of PHILOSOPHICAL DOUBTING; and discover such uncommon Acuteness and Penetration in unravelling the wily Frauds and Stratagems of those they have to deal with, as is but faintly imitated by the *Subtlest* Reasoners of the SCHOLASTICK TRIBE. Every Adventure in TRADE is computed with the *exactest* Skill; Every Step in POLITICKS is taken with the *coolest* Determination: In Concerns of these Kind, no Care is wanting that can secure us from ERROR; neither are we, upon such Occasions so *refined* in our PRUDENCE as to distrust *our own Eyes*, and to judge it *unsafe* to see for our Selves. But in these Affairs All Men desire to be *rightly* informed: They are so far from being *offended* at any FREEDOM of Enquiry, that, on the contrary, They are *pleas'd* with it; being sensible, they cannot by any other Method, hope for any Improvement in those Arts and Sciences, which they know to be so useful and advantageous to them.

THUS do both the LEARNED and ILLITERATE Part of Mankind perfectly agree in the true Way to KNOWLEDGE, when they are thoroughly in Earnest in their Pursuit after it: And must therefore be *self-condemned*, if they deviate from it upon those Occasions wherein it would be most *fatal* to them to be *miffed*.

THE Points which are ranged under my LAST General Head, are Those, in which we are most *averse* to TRUTH, and *preposterously skilful* to contrive our own DECEPTION: and it is observable, that FREEDOM OF THOUGHT (which is confessed to be so *friendly* to TRUTH on all other Occasions) is only looked upon to be of *dangerous* Consequence to RELIGION.

AS TO MORALITY, the very Man at Liberty FREELY to reason in the *sublimest* Degrees of it. It is in the great Concern, that Men have been always found to *cramp* their Enquiries, and *confer* themselves. There is therefore just Reason to apprehend that *Tenderness* of DOUBTING, which is so *religious* SUBJECTS, is *insensibly* a *secret* PROPENSITY TO ERROR with *Tenderness* inseparably accompanied, and to *can* only be subservient.

TRUTH is like a *Real Object*, which will bear being viewed on every Side and in every Light: While ERROR resembles an *imaginary* Scene, formed by *Paint* and *Perspective*, which can only be viewed from a *single Point*, and *varies* as the *Lights* and *Shades* are varied.

THE *Aversion* to that Light which detects the latent Disorders of the Mind, is experienced to be so strong, that we ought to be aware of it and well armed against it: And we may very *justly* apprehend our selves to be influenced by this *Aversion*, when such a *sound* Method of Enquiry, as we judge necessary to carry us through the *Maze* of SCIENCES, and the *Intricacy* of BUSINESS, is laid aside, as *unfit* to conduct us to the much *plainer* and more *interesting* Truths of RELIGION.

SINCE therefore there is in our Minds such a *Propensity* to, and *Connivance* at ERROR, with a *Reluctancy* to TRUTH, and even a *Dread* of Information; it is highly un-

reasonable and very insidious to deter Men yet more from a fair Enquiry (which they are so little inclinable to make) by *grave* Representations of the *Danger* of it; thus furnishing an Excuse for *contented* Ignorance and *Presumption*, strengthening thereby the *Treachery* of our PREJUDICE with a false Colour of SANCTITY and ZEAL.

I shall not enlarge upon this Sketch to the PLAIN-DEALER who I hope will treat his Subjects with an *unprejudiced* of Reasoning. If you think it worthy your Pains, place what I have said in a more *clear* and *familiar* Light. I doubt not but your Readers will be *sufficiently* warned against this *Weakness* of the Mind, which renders it unable to bear the Lustre of TRUTH: After which, you will find it difficult to inspire them with a Resolution to *conquer* it. It may then be hoped, that (instead of the *mischievous* *Calumnies* they conceive of those who would incite Them to a *manly* FREEDOM of THOUGHT, under such *Limitations* as you recommend) they will turn their *Contempt* and *Resentment* against the *ignoble* Artifices, and *Sentiments* of the Persons, who discountenance PLAIN DEALING in others, because they are STRANGE to it Themselves.

I am,

Your very humble Servant,

N<sup>o</sup>. 9.

Annapolis, Jan. 21. We hear from Somerset County, of a Woman, (who was born in Virginia) dy'd lately in that County, aged 109 Years. And she has a Sister still living there, who is 101 Years of Age.

The Week before last, a Negroe-Man, belonging to William Robinson, of Patuxent, had the Impudence to insult and strike Mr. John Smith, the Carpenter, on some slight Provocation about their Dogs fighting: On which he was carried before Mr. Vachel Denton, one of the City Magistrates, who caus'd one of his Ears to be cropp'd, pursuant to the Law in such Cases. This being the first Instance we have heard of executing that Law, we thought it not improper to publish it, as an Example to those kind of Gentry, many of whom have of late been guilty of very great Misdemeanors.

The Negroe Stephen, belonging to Charles Carroll, Esq; who was lately advertis'd in this Paper, for a Run-away, was brought to Town last Night, and carried before the Hon. E. Tasker, Esq; who committed him to Prison. He has confessed several Villanies which he has been guilty of. It seems he has been for some Time harbour'd at the Plantation of the Hon. Charles Calvert, Esq; in Prince George's County, with the Negroes there, and the Overseer (who is a Negroe) was also brought to Town, and has been punished with a severe Whipping.

We hear from Cecil County, That the House of Mr. John Baldwin, High Sheriff of that County was lately burnt.

We hear from Patuxent, That a Ship from Mr. John Peelle, Merchant of London, is arriv'd at the Mouth of the River, with a large Cargo of Goods, consign'd to Mr. Robert Crabb, of Prince George's County. We must refer our Readers to our next, for the News she brings.

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