
THE EPISTLE TO THE READER.

Reader,

I Here put into thy Hands, what has been the diversion of some of my idle and heavy Hours: If it has the good luck to prove so of any of thine, and thou hast but half so much Pleasure in reading, as I had in writing it, thou wilt as little think thy Money, as I do my Pains ill bestowed. Mistake not this, for a Commendation of my Work; nor conclude, because I was pleased with the doing of it, that therefore I am fondly taken with it now it is done. He that hawks at Larks and Sparrows, has no less Sport, though a much less considerable Quarry, than he that flies at nobler Game: And he is little acquainted with the Subject of this Treatise, the UNDERSTANDING, who does not know, that as it is the most elevated Faculty of the Soul, so it is employed with a greater, and more constant Delight than any of the other. Its searches after Truth, are a sort of Hawking and Hunting, wherein the very pursuit makes a great part of the Pleasure. Every step the Mind takes in its Progress towards Knowledge, makes Discovery, which is not only new, but the best too, for the time at least. For the Understanding, like the Eye, judging of Objects, only by its own Sight, cannot but be pleased with what it discovers, having less regret for what has scaped it, because it is unknown. Thus he who has raised himself above the Alms-Basket, and not content to live lazily on scraps of begg'd Opinions, sets his own Thoughts on work, to find and follow Truth, will (whatever he lights on) not miss the Hunter's Satisfaction; every moment of his Pursuit, will reward his Pains with some Delight; and he will have Reason to think his time not ill spent, even when he cannot much boast of any great Acquisition.

This, Reader, is the Entertainment of those, who let loose their own Thoughts, and follow them in writing; which thou oughtest
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