

THE
CHARACTER
OF
A Coffee-House, &c.

A Coffee-House is a *Lay-Conventicle*, Good-fellowship turn'd *Puritan*, Ill-husbandry in *Masquerade*, whither people come, after *Topping* all day, to purchase, at the expence of their last penny, the repute of *sober Companions*; a *Rota-Room* that (like *Noahs Ark*) receives Animals of every sort, from the precise *diminutive Bandy* to the *He Hectoring Cravat* and Cuffs in *Folio*; a *Nursery* for training up the smaller Fry of *Virtuosi* in confident Tattling, or a *Cabal of Kittling Criticks* that have only learn't to *Spit and Mew*; a *Mint of Intelligence*, that to make each man his *peny-worth*, draws out into petty parcels, what the Merchant receives in *Bullion*; He that comes often saves *two pence* a week in *Gazets*, and has his *News* and his *Coffee* for the same charge, as at a *three peny Ordinary* they give in *Broth* to your *Chop of Mutton*; 'tis an *Exchange* where *Haberdashers of Political small wares* meet, and mutually abuse each other, and the *Publique*, with bottomless stories, and headless notions; the *Rendezvous of idle Pamphlets*, and persons more idly imployd to read them; a *High Court of Justice*, where' every little Fellow in a *Chamlet-Cloak* takes upon him to transpose Affairs both in Church and State, to shew reasons against Acts of Parliament, and condemn the Decrees of *General Councils*; 'Tis impossible to describe it better than the most ingenious of the *Latine Poets* has done it to our hand, and that so excellently, we cannot but transcribe it:

"Unde quod est usquam quamvis Regionibus absit
"Inspicitur, penetratque cavas vox omnis ad Aures;
"Nocte Diéque patet. Tota est ex Ære sonanti,
"Tota Fremit, Vocésque refert, Iteratque quod Audīt.
"Nulla Quies intus, nullâque silentia parte,
"Nec tamen est Clamor, sed parvæ Murmura Vocis:
"Qualia de Pelagi (si quis procul audiat) undâ
"Esse solent, qualemve sonum cum Jupiter atras
"Increpuit nubes. Extrema Tonitruareddunt;
"Atria Turba tenet, veniunt Leve vulgus, Euntque,
"Mistâque cum veris passim Commenta vagantur,
"Millia Rumorum, confusâque verba volutant;
"E quibus His vacuas Implent sermonibus Aures,
"Hinarrata ferunt aliò, Mensurâque sicti
"Crescit, & Auditis aliquid novus Adjicit Author;
"Illic Credulitas, Illic temerartus Error
"Vanâque Lætitia est, Consternatiquè Timores
"Seditiôque recens, dubiôque Authore Susurri
"Ipsa quid in Cælo Rerum, Pelagóque geratur
"Et Tellure videt, Totûmque Inquiri in Orbem.

Thus strictly English't.

Here all that's done, though far remote, appears,
And in close whispers penetrates our ears;
As built of *Brass*, the *House* throughout resounds,
Reports things heard, and every word rebounds.
No rest within, nor *silence*, yet the noise
Not loud, but like a hallow murmuring voice;
Such as from far by *Rowling Waves* is sent,
Or like *Joves fainting Thunder* almost spent:
Hither the *idle vulgar* come and go,
Carrying a thousand *Rumours* to and fro;
With *stale reports* some listening ears do fill,
Some *coyn fresh tales*, in words that vary still;
Lies mixt with *Truth*, all in the telling grows,
And each *Relator* adds to what he knows:

Here dwells rash error, light credulity,
Sad panick fears, joys built-on vanity;
New rais'd sedition, secret whisperings,
Of unknown Authors, and of doubtful things:
All Acts of Heav'n and Earth it boldly views,
And through the spacious World enquires for *News*.

The Room stinks of *Tobacco* worse than Hell of *Brimstone*, and is as full of *snoak* as their Heads that frequent it, whose humours are as various as those of *Bedlam*, and their discourse oft-times as *Heathenish* and *dull* as their Liquor; that Liquor, which by its looks and taste, you may reasonably guess to be *Pluto's Diet-drink*; that Witches tipple out of *dead mens Skulls*, when they ratifie to *Belzebub* their Sacramental Vows.

This *Stygian-Puddle-seller*, was formerly notorious for his ill-favour'd *Cap*, that Ap'd a *Turbant*, and in Conjunction with his *Antichristian face*, made him appear perfect *Turk*: But of late his *Wife* being grown acquainted with Gallants, and the provocative virtue of *Chocolet*, he finds a *Broad-brim'd Hat* more necessary: When he comes to fill you a Dish, you may take him for *Guy Faux* with a *dark Lanthorn* in's hand, for no sooner can you taste it, but it scalds your throat, as if you had swallowed the *Gunpowder-Treason*: though he seem never so demure, you cannot properly call him *Pharisee*, for he never washes either out or inside of his *pots* or *dishes*, till they be as black as an Usurers Conscience; and then only scraping off the contracted *Soot*, makes use of it, in the way of his Trade, insteaa of *Coffee-powder*; their taste and virtue being so near of Kin, he dares defie the veriest *Coffee-Critick* to distinguish them: Though he be no great *Traveller*, yet he is in continual *motion*, but 'tis only from the fire side to the Table, and his *tongue* goes infinitely faster than his *feet*, his grand study being readily to eccho an answer ro that thredbare question, *what News have you Master?* Then with a grave whisper (yet such as all the Room may hear it) he discovers some mysterious *Intrigue* of State told

him last night by *one* that is *Bather to the Taylor of a mighty great Courtiers man*, relating this with no less formality than a young *Preacher* delivers his *first Sermon*, a sudden *Hickup* surprizes him, and he is forced twenty times to break the thread of his Tale with such necessary Parenthesis's, *Wife, sweep up those loose Corns of Tobacco, and see the Liquor bod not over:* He holds it as part of his Creed, that the *Great Turk* is a very good Christian, and of the Reformed Church, because he drinks Coffee, and swears that *Pointings* for celebrating its virtues a *doggerel* deserves to be *Poet Laureat*: yet is it not only this hot *Hell-broth* that he sells, for never was Mountebank furnisht with more variety of poysonous *drugs*, then he of *liquors, Tea and Aromatique* for the sweettooth'd Gentleman, *Betony and Resade* for the *addle-headed Customer*, *Back-recruiting Chocalet* for the Consumptive Gallant, *Herefordshare Redstreak* made of rotten apples at the *three Cranes*, true *Brunswick-Mum* brew'd at *S. Katherines*, and *Ale* in peny *Mugs*, not so big; as a *Taylor's Thimble*.

As you have a *hodge-podge* of Drinks, such too is your Company, for each man seems a *Leveller*, and ranks and files himself as he lists, without regard to degrees or order; so that oft you may see a silly *Fop*, and a worshipful *Justice*, a griping *Rock*, and a grave *Citizen*, a worthy *Lawyer*, and an errant *Pickpocket*, a Reverend *Nonconformist* and a Canting *Mountebank*; all blended together, to compose an *Oglio* of Impertinence.

If any *Pragmatick*, to shew himself witty or eloquent begin to talk high, presently the further *Tables* are abandoned, and all the rest flock round (like smaller birds to admire the gravity of *Madge-Howlet*) They listen to him a while with their *months*, and let their *Pipes* go out, and *Coffee* grow cold, for pure zeal of attention, but o'th' sudden fall all a yelping at once with more noise, but not half so much harmony as a *Pack of Beagles* on the full Cry, to still this bawling, *Upstarts*

Captain *All-man-sir*, the man of mouth, with a face as blustering as that of *Eolus* and his four Sons in Painting, and a voice louder than, the speaking *Trumpet*, he-begins you the story of a Sea-fight; and though he never were further by water than the *Bear-garden*, or *Cuckolds-Haven*, yet having pyrared the names of Snips and Captains, he perswades you himself was present, and performed Miracles; that he waded *Knee-deep* in blood on the upper Deck, and never thought *serenade* to his Mistress, so pleasant as the *Bullets whistling*; how he stopt a *Vice-Admiral* of the Enemies under full sail, till the was boarded, with his *single arm* instead of *Grapling Irons*, *and puft out with his breath a *Fire-ship* that fell foul on them. All this he relates sitting in a *Cloud* of Smoak, and belching so many common *Oaths* to vouch it, you can scarce guess whether the real Engagement, or his Romancing account of it, be the more *dreadful*: However, he concludes with railing at the Conduct of some *Eminent Officers*, (that perhaps he never saw) and protests, had they taken *his advice* at the Council of War, not a *Sail* had escap'd us.

He is no sooner out of breach, but another begins a Lecture on the *Gazet*, where finding several *Prizes* taken, he gravely observes, if this Trade hold, we shall quickly rout the Dutch *Horse and Foot by Sea*: He nick-names the *Polish Gentlemen* where ever he meets them, and enquires? whether *Gayland* and *Taffalettake Lutherans* or *Calvinists: Stilo Novo* he interprets, a vast new *Stile* or *Turn-pike* erected by his Electoral Highness on the borders of *Westphalia* to keep Mounsieur *Turennes Cavalray* from falling on his retreating to keep Mounsieur *Turennes Cavalray* from falling on his retreating Troops; He takes words by the sound without examining their sense: *Meren* he believes to be the Country of the *Moors*, and *Hungary* a place where famine always keeps her Court, not is there any thing more certain, than that he made a whole Roomful of Fops, as wise as himself, spend above two hours in searching the *Map* for *Aristocracy and Democracy*, not doubting but to have found them there, as well as *Dalmatia and Croatia*

Next Seigniour *Poll* takes up the Cudgels, that speaks nothing but *Designs, Projects, Intrigues, and Experiments*, One of those in the old *Comedian, Plautus, Scikunt id quod in Aurem Rex Reginae dixerit, Quod Juno confabulata est cum Jove, Sciunt quae neque futar a neque facta sunt, tamen illisciunt, &c.* All the Councils of the *German Dyet*, the *Romish Conclave*, and *Turkish Divan*, are as well known to him as his *Landresses Smock*. He kens all the Cabals of the Court to a hairs breadth, and (more then an hundred of us do,) which Lady is not painted; you would take his mouth for a *Limbeck*, it distills his words so niggardly, as if he was loath to enrich you with lies, of which he has yet more plenty than *Fox, Stowe, and Hollingshead* bound up together; He tels you of a Plot to let the *Lyons* loose in the Tower, and then blow it up with *white-powder*; of five hundred and fifty *Jesuits* all mounted on *Dromedaries* seen by Moonshine on *Hampsteadheath*, and a terrible design hatch'd by the Colledge of *Doway*, to drain the narrow Seas and bring Popery over *dry shod*, besides he has a thousand inventions dancing in his brain-pain; an *Advice-boat* on the Stocks, that shall go to the East-Indies, and come back again in a *Fortnight*, a trick to march *under water*, and bore holes through the *Dutch-ships Keele* with *Augurs*, and *sinde* them, as they ride at Anhor, and a most excellent *pursuit to catch Sumbearms*, for making the Ladies new fashioned *Towrs*, that *Poets* may no more be damn'd for telling lies about their *Curls and Tresses*.

But these are puny *Pugs*, the *Arch-Devil*, wherewith this *Smikey-hole* is haunted, is die *Town-wit*, one that playes *Rex* where ever he comes, and makes as much hurry as *Robin Goodfellow* of old amongst our *Granams Milk-bouls*; He is a kind of a *Squib* on a Rope, a *meteor* compos'd of Self-conceit and noise, that by *blazing and crackling* engages the wonder of the ignorant, till on a sudden he vaniuiues and leaves a *stench*, if not *infection* behind him; he is too often the *stain* of a good Family, and by his debaucht life blots the noble *Coat* of his Ancestors, A *wilde unback'd d'Colt*, whose *brains* are not half *codled*, indebted for his *cloaths* to his Tailor, and for his Wit (such as it is) to his Company: The School had no sooner *dued* him with a few superficial besprinklings, but his *Mothers induigence* posted him to Town for *Genteeler breeding*, where three or four wilde *Companions*, half a dozen bottles of *Burgundy*, two leaves of *Leviathan*, a brisk encounter with his *Landlords Glasswindowes*, the charms of a little *Miss*, and the sight of a hew *Play* dub'd him at once both a *Wit* and a *Hero*,

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ever since he values himself mainly for *understanding the Town*, indeed *knows* most things in it, that are not *worth knowing*. The two *Poles* whereon all his discourses turn are *Atheism* and *Bawdry*; Bat him from being prophane obscene, and you *cramp* his Ingenuity, which forth with *Flags* and becomes *useless*, as a meet *Common Lawyer* when he has crofs'd the *Channel*.

He is so refractory to *Divinity* that *Moraliry* it self cannot hold him, he affirms

humane Nature knows no such things as *principles* of Good and evil, and will swear *all women are whores*, though his *Mother* and *sister* both stand by: VWhatever is sacred or serious he seeks to render Ridiculous, and thinks Government and Religion fit objects for his *idle* and fantastick *Buffoonry*, his *humor* is proud and assuming, as if he would palliate his ignorance by *Scoffing* at what he understands not, and therefore with a *pert* and *pragmatique* scorn depreciates all things of nobler moment, but most passionately affects *pretty a-lamode* words, And is as covetous of a *New Song* or *Ayre*, as an Antiquary of *Cato's Statue* with ne'r au arm, and but half a nose, These keep him alwaies imployd, and fill up the *Grotesco's* of his conversation, whilst with a stately Gallantry once in every half hour he *Combes out his Wig*, *Carreens* his breeches, and new marshalls his *Garniture*, to the Tune of *Methinks the poor Town has been troubled too long*.

His mind used to *whistle* up and down in the levities of Fancy, and effeminated by the childish *Toying*s of a rampant imagination finds it self indisposed for all solid employment, especially the serious exercises of *Piety* and *Virtue*, which begets an aversion to those *Lovely Beauties*, and that prompts him on all occasions to expose them as ridiculous and vain: Hence by degrees he comes to abuse *Sacred Scripture*, makes a mock of eternal Flames, Joque on the venerable Mysteries of Religion, and in fine, scoffe at that *All Glorious and Tremendous Majesty* before whom his brother *Wits below* tremble; Tis true he will not confess himself *Atheist*, yet in his heart the Fool hath said it, and boasts aloud that he holds his *Gospel* from the *Apostle of Malmsbury*, though it more than probable he ne'r read, at least understood *ten* leaves of that *unlucky Author*; Talk of *Witches* and you Tickle him, speak of *Spirits* and he tels you he knowes none better than those of VVine, name but *Immaterial Essence*, and he shall flout at you as a dull Fop incapable of sense, and unfit for Conversation; Nor is he ever better pleas'd than when he can here hedge in some young *raw Divine* to *Bulbait* with scurrility and all kind of profaneness.

By means of some small *scraps of learning* matcht with a far greater stock of Confidence, a voluble Tongue, and bold delivery, he has the ill-luck to be celebrated by the vulgar; for a man of *Parts*, which opinion gains credit to his Insolences, and sets him on further extravagances to maintain his Title of a *Wit* by continuing his practice of *Fooling*, whereas all his mighty parts are sum'd up in this Inventory. "Imprimis, A *pedling way* of Fancy, a *Lucky hit* at *Quibbling*, "now and then an *odd metaphar*, a *conceited Irony*, a ridiculous *Simile*, a *wilde "fetch*, an unexpected *Inference*, a *Minisk Gesture*, a pleasing *knack* in humouring "aTale, and lastly an irresistible Resolution to speak *last*, and never be "dash't out of Countenance:

By these *Arts* dexterously manag'd he engrosse a veste *Repute*, The grave Citizen calls, him shrewd man, and notable *Headpiece*, The *Ladies* (we mean the things so called of his acquaintance) vote him a most *accomplisht Gentleman*, and the *Blades* swear he is a *Walking Comedy*, the only *Merry Andrew* of the Age, that scatters *Wit* wherever he comes, as *Beggars do Lice*, or *Muscats perfumes*, and that *nothing in Nature and all* that can compare with him.

You would think he had got the *Lullian Art*, for he speaks *Extempore* on all subjects, and ventures his words without the Relief of *Sense* to second them, his thoughts start from his *imagination* and he never troubles himself to Examine their decency, or solidity by Judgement. To discourse him seriously is to read the *Ethicks to a Mankey*, or make an Oration to *Cal gala's Horse*, whence you can only expect a *weehee* or *Jadish spurn*; after the most convircing Arguments, if he can but muster up one plausible *foque* you are routed, For he that understood not your *Logick*, apprehends his droll, and though *Syllogysmes* may be answered, yet *Jests* and loud *laughter* can never be confuted, but have more sway to degrade things with the *unthinking croud*, than *demonstrations*; There being a Root of envy in too many Men, that invites them to applaud that which Exposes and villifies what they cannot comprehend, He pretends great skill in curing the *Tettere* and *Ring-worms* of State, but blowes in the sores till they Rankle with his poisonous breath, neshoots *libels* with his forked tongue at his Superiors and anusest his denrest *Friends*, chusing to forfeit his neck to the *Gibbet*, or his shoulders to the *Bataan* rather than lose the driest of his idle *Quibbles*; In brief he is the *Jack-pedaing of Society*, a *sleering Buffoon*, a better kind of *Ape* in the judgement of all *Wisemen*, but an incomparable *Wit* in his own.

Thus have we led you from *Board to Board*, like the fellow in the Tower, to shew you *strange Beasts* wherewith this place is sometimes frequented. To take now a *sarewel view* of the House will be difficult, since tis a1 ways shifting Scenes and like *O Brazile* (the Incharnted Island) soldome appears twice in a posture; The *wax Candles* burning, and low devout whispers sometimes strike a kind of Religious Awe, whilst the modish Gallant swears so oft by *Iesu*, an Ignorant Catholick would take it for a Chappel, and think he were saying our Ladies Psalter; In some places the *Organs* speak it a Musick Room, at others a pair of *Tables and draught beard*, a smal gaming house; on a sudden it turns *Exchange*, or a Warehouse for all sorts of *Commedities*, where fools are drawn in by inch of Candle, as we betray and carch *Larks* with a *Glass*; The *Bully-Rook* makes it his *Bubbling pond*, where he angles for *Fops*, singles out his man, insinuates an *acquaintance*, offers the wine, and at next Tavern sets upon him with *high Fullums*, and *plucks* him: The *Ingeniesi* use it for an after *Rehearsal*, where they bring *Plays* to Repetition, sift each *Scene* examine every *uncorrected Line*, and *damn* beyond die fury of the *Rota*, whilst the *incognito Poet* out of an overweening affection to his *Infant Wit*, steals in *muffled* up in his Cloake, and sliely *Evesdrops* like a *mendicant Mother* to praise the *prettyness* of the *Babe* she has newly pawm'd on the Parish.

But 'tis time to be *gone*, who knows what *Magick* may be a working, For, behold! the *Coffee-Powder* settles at the bottoome of our dish in form of a most terrable *Saracens Head*. For a parting blow then give us leave to *unbend* a little, and say,

A *Coffee-House* is'a *Phamtique Theatre*, a *Hot-Hause* to flux in for a *clapt understanding*, a *Sympathetical Cure* for the *Gonorrhoea* of the Tongue, or a *resin'd Baudy-House*, where *Illegitimate Peports* are got in close *Adultery* between *Lyinglips* and *Itching Ears*.

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Si quid nouisti rectias Candidus Imperti

FINIS.