

A modern dissertation on a certain necessary piece of household furniture.

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Masters Dissertation



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1877

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A
Modern Dissertation

ON A
Certain necessary Piece
OF
HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE.



Entered in the Hall-Book of the Company of
STATIONERS.

L O N D O N,

Printed and sold by H. KENT, at the Printing-Office
in *Finch-Lane*, near the *Royal-Exchange*. 1752.

[Price Six-pence.]

Advertisement.

IT is hoped this little Piece will meet with a candid Reception from the Publick, as it aspires after a learned and polite Taste, peculiar to the Writings of the present Age; which have not only, the Sweetness and Elegance of the Mother-Tongue, but are enriched by the Sentiments of various Authors, quoted in their own Language, and faithfully inserted in the Text, or alluded to by References in the Margin. The Author confesses himself unable to go so far as some very great Men have done by *Greek*, nay *Hebrew* Quotations, but hopes that those he produces, which are such as occurred to him from the Course of his Studies, will be looked upon as tolerably well applied. If he should be so happy as to succeed in this his first Attempt, it will be an Encouragement to him to present the World with more Productions of this Kind, embellished by the Opinions and Expressions of Men of deep Erudition and happy Turn of Genius.



A

Modern Dissertation.

IT would greatly conduce to the Happiness of Mankind, if they would be persuaded to lay aside their Anxiety after Things which are out of the Power of the Generality to obtain, and to fix their Thoughts more firmly on what they do really enjoy. They would thus sensibly and apparently lessen their Sorrows and encrease their Joys.

A 2

But

But whilst every one is panting after that which he has not, and makes no Account of those Things which are actually in his Possession, the Consequence must be, that such Sollicitude must be productive of Uneasiness, and that Uneasiness must end in Misery.

I hope I am sufficiently understood, for I would by no means affect to be abstruse: But lest I should not be clear enough, I will endeavour to explain, by an Instance, what my Meaning is: And I will go no farther for an Illustration than the Subject of this Essay, which is an Instrument of so much Relief and Convenience to every Person of both Sexes, and of all Ages, that its Utility is tacitly confessed, by the Consent and Practice of most Countries in the known World.

Now

Now when a Money-getting Tradesman is by daily Application *in* his Shop, and continual Meanness *out* of it, labouring to raise to himself the inconceivable Happiness of One Hundred Thousand Pounds: Or, when a well-brush'd Divine is sweating, from Levee to Levee, and bows, nods, shrugs, whispers, and smiles after Preferment: Or, when a noble Lord is selling himself, and his Friends, and his Interest, and his Reputation, in order to obtain superior Rank, or a different-coloured Ribbon: It is certain, that these several busy Persons never reflect upon the exceeding Privilege they enjoy, in common with others, of the free and almost hourly Use of the convenient Utensil now under Consideration.

On the other hand, suppose they were to be deprived of that
Con-

Convenience, and were to seek Relief, as often as they wanted it, according to the Exigence of Time and Place, or as their own Fancies might suggest to them the Means, would it not damp their Spirits, and check their Eagerness in their respective Pursuits? Would it not humble their Thoughts, and teach them that the common Necessaries of Life administer the truest Enjoyment?

Let us imagine the first of the afore-mentioned Persons, after his Dose of Tavern-Port-Wine; or the second, after his Quantity of Punch; or the third, after his three Bottles of Burgundy, waking in the Night, and finding himself, by the Carelesness of the Maid-Servant, deprived of that comfortable Vessel which was intended to bring him the Ease he desires, Who can describe

scribe the Deepness of such Misery? What shall he do? Where shall he go? The Night is cold and dark; the Windows are Casements and too high, or Sashes and strongly barred; the Chimney has a Flower-pot in it, or a bright Steel Grate; the Cups on the Mantle-piece are too small; nothing of Capacity enough to afford any Degree of Relief, except the Slippers, which are also equally ineffectual, unless they could afterward be fixed upright upon the Toe: What a miserable Wretch is a Man in these dreadful Circumstances! and what is Money, Preferment, or Honour, when he would be glad to exchange them all for a little Six-penny *Pot de Chambre!*

Having now introduced my Subject, I shall endeavour to handle it in the best Manner I am able, and
to

to adorn it with Quotations from celebrated Authors, who, though they have not written professedly upon the Subject, must certainly have had it in their View ; as will appear by the Extracts I have made from them which I can assure the Reader are honestly transcribed.

The general Utility of these little Pieces of Furniture has already been hinted at ; they have been observed to be calculated for the Service of both Sexes ; they are equally the Property of the Men,

Propria quæ maribus,

as they are also claimed by the Women,

Fœmineo generi tribuuntur.

And we farther remark that *All* Persons of both Sexes, do receive and acknowledge the Benefit of them ;
for

for they are so admirably contrived
as to suit all Capacities of Men,
both those Gentlemen of slender
Parts,

Nomen non crescens genitivo,

as well as those of more prodigious
Qualifications,

Nomen crescentis penultima si genitivi.

The other Sex too are universally
sensible of the Ease and Convenience
of these necessary Appurtenances ;
whether they be of the exalted Part
of the Sex, such as the Countess of
—— or the Dutchess of ——

————— *sive Dearum*

Sunt ut Juno, Venus ;

or of a less and more ordinary
Quality, as *Nanny K----* or *Lucy*
C--r,

— *Mulierum ceu Anna, Philotis.*

But it is observed, that the Clergy
are, of all Persons, of either Sex,

B

most

most indebted to, as indeed they do make a most plentiful Use of, the Jordan ; for besides the usual Nightly Convenience of it, it always attends the Back-Gammon Table, and never fails of being used before and after Sermon ;

——— *Sic senio, ternio, sermo.*

As to the Make of these useful Implements, they vary in the several Parts of the Kingdom. In some Counties they are larger and deeper (for what Reason I know not) than they are observed to be in and about the Metropolis. In others, where the Name of Broad-bottom is hateful, they affect a more narrow Pedestal, tending rather to the Fashion of a Pipkin ;

— *Quasi luxuriant varias imitantia formas.*

I am

I am naturally prepossessed in Favour of the Place of my Nativity, and therefore I think, that *London*, which is one of the most glorious Cities in the World, ought herein to give the Example, as it does in other great and important Articles, such as Hats, Caps, Perukes, and Hoop-petticoats ; and many other such Things which I have not Time to write down now ;

Cum multis aliis quæ nunc perscribere longum est.

I propose then, as Unanimity in all Communities is to be wished, that the whole Kingdom be obliged to follow our Standard ; and if any Persons should dare to differ from it in Shape or Size, let them be looked upon as Enemies to their Country ;

*Quæ genus aut flexum variant quæcunque
novato
Ritu deficiunt, superantve, Heteroclitia sunt.*

As to the Materials of which these useful Appendages are composed, they also vary as well as the Form: However, with this certain Rule, that you may find out their Nature and Composition by the State and Condition of their respective Proprietors. The most costly Sort are those that are cast in Silver, and used by Persons of the first Rank,

Ut satrapas, satrapa.

Those that are esteemed the neatest and chiefly intended for the Use of the Fair Sex, are wrought in China, adorned with Trees,

— — *Arborum erunt muliebria ut alnus,
Cupressus, cedrus.*

or set off with the Variety of Birds,
Beasts, and Fishes ;

*Sunt etiam volucrum ceu passer, hirundo,
ferarum
Ut tigris, vulpes, et piscium, ut ostrea, cetus.*

Those which are composed of
white Earth, and neatly glazed are
what are generally used by the mid-
dling Sort of People ;

Communis generis sunt ista ——

The most inferior Sort are those
which carry the ordinary Colours
of Green and Brown on their Out-
side, which the common People
claim as their sole Property, and
are promiscuously used, and not
used by the Males and Females of
every Family ;

—— Neutrum modo mas modo Vulgus.

We

We shall seldom find any remarkable Deviation from these Principles and Practice ; the Quality of the Person generally determining the Quality of his Conveniency ;

Tantundem dat tantidem.

It can hardly be imagined of what signal Benefit these Family-Reservoirs are to a very valuable Part of Mankind; I mean Those who are entrusted with the Health and Sanity of the People. For these Vessels, by faithfully preserving their Contents, discover to the sapient Inspector the true Habit of the Patient's Body ;

————— *Consulit exta*
Augur.

But, beyond Expression, have they given Joy to Thousands of rueful
ful

ful Mortals tortured almost to Death by severe Pains in their Bowels. No Monarch on his Throne can be greater than a Man so comfortably seated: He may truly be said at that Instant to be perfectly happy;

As in presenti Perfectum format.

Many excellent Pieces of Instruction may be drawn from the Comfort, Convenience, and Advantage of these handy Utensils. But as it would be an Affront to the learned Reader to point them out, I shall leave them to his own Observation; premising only, that he cannot fail to be rightly informed in those Particulars if he consults the Authors that are quoted in this little Work;

———*Quæ lectio justa docebit.*

I have taken up a Subject, which, at first Sight, I confess, does seem
more

more peculiarly to belong to a Set of effeminate Males whose Life is chiefly spent in the Chamber, and whose Knowledge, in its fullest Extent, reaches no farther than sorting and fancying Furniture. In my own Defence I reply, that though they may probably be well acquainted with the Subject, yet it is impossible that they should treat it with any Degree of Merit, as they are wholly unacquainted with those great Writers to whom I have so copiously referred. I may provoke them, but at the same time I laugh at them, and look upon them in every light as mere *Nothings*,

Est neutrale genus signans rem non animatam.

F I N I S.



more probable to be a part
of the same story - which I do not
think were in the original, and
which I do not think as false as
said, and I do not think that fortune
and the world are to be in my own
hands. I do not think that they
may be made to be what is said
with the subject, yet it is not impos-
sible that they should want it with
any Degree of Merit, as they are
wholly unproven, and I do not
know of any one who has been
sufficiently happy. I may provoke
them, but at the same time I laugh
at them, and look upon them as
every body else does, &c.

