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Edited by A. R. Waller

Excerpt

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A MODERN POLITICIAN

MAKES new Discoveries in Politics, but they are, like those that *Columbus* made of the new World, very rich but barbarous. He endeavours to restore Mankind to the original Condition, it fell from, by forgetting to discern between Good and Evil; and reduces all Prudence back again to its first Author the Serpent, that taught *Adam* Wisdom; for he was really his Tutor, and not *Samboscor*, as the *Rabbins* write. He finds the World has been mistaken in all Ages, and that Religion and Morality are but vulgar Errors, that pass among the Ignorant, and are but mere Words to the Wise. He despises all learning as a Pedantic little Thing; and believes Books to be the Business of Children, and not of Men. He wonders how the Distinction of Virtue and Vice came into the World's Head; and believes them to be more ridiculous than any Foppery of the Schools. He holds it his Duty to betray any Man, that shall take him for so much a Fool as one fit to be trusted. He stedfastly believes, that all Men are born in the State of War, and that the civil Life is but a Cessation, and no Peace, nor Accommodation: And though all open Acts of Hostility are forborn by Consent, the Enmity continues, and all Advantages by Treachery or Breach of Faith are very lawful—That there is no Difference between Virtue and Fraud among Friends, as well as Enemies; nor any thing unjust, that a Man can do without Damage to his own Safety or Interest—That Oaths are but Springes to catch Woodcocks withal; and bind none but those, that are too weak and feeble to break them, when they become ever so small an Impediment to their Advantages—That Conscience is the effect of Ignorance, and the same with that foolish Fear, which some Men apprehend, when they are in the dark and alone—That Honour is but the

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Word, which a Prince gives a Man to pass his Guards withal, and save him from being stopped by Law and Justice the Sentinels of Governments, when he has not Wit nor Credit enough to pass of himself—That to shew Respect to Worth in any Person is to appear a Stranger to it, and not so familiarly acquainted with it as those are, who use no Ceremony ; because it is no new Thing to them, as it would appear if they should take Notice of it—That the easiest Way to purchase a Reputation of Wisdom and Knowledge is to slight and under-value it ; as the readiest Way to buy cheap is to bring down the Price : for the World will be apt to believe a Man well provided with any necessary or useful Commodity, which he sets a small Value upon—That to oblige a Friend is but a kind of casting him in Prison, after the old *Roman* Way, or modern *Chinese*, that chains the Keeper and Prisoner together : for he that binds another Man to himself, binds himself as much to him, and lays a restraint upon both. For as Men commonly never forgive those that forgive them, and always hate those that purchase their Estates (tho' they pay dear and more than any Man else would give) so they never willingly endure those, that have laid any Engagement upon them, or at what rate soever purchased the least Part of their Freedom.—And as Partners for the most Part cheat or suspect one another ; so no Man deals fairly with another, that goes the least Share in his Freedom.

To propose any Measure to Wealth or Power is to be ignorant of the Nature of both : for as no Man can ever have too much of either ; so it is impossible to determine what is enough ; and he, that limits his Desires by proposing to himself the Enjoyment of any other Pleasure, but that of gaining more, shews he has but a dull Inclination, that will not hold out to his Journey's End. And therefore he believes that a Courtier deserves to be beg'd himself, that is ever satisfied with begging : for Fruition without Desire is but a dull Entertainment ; and that Pleasure only real and substantial, that provokes and improves the Appetite, and increases in the Enjoyment. And all the greatest Masters in the several Arts of thriving concur unanimously, that the plain downright Pleasure of Gaining is greater and deserves to be preferred far

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before all the various Delights of Spending, which the Curiosity, Wit, or Luxury of Mankind in all Ages could ever find out.

He believes, there is no Way of thriving so easy and certain as to grow rich by defrauding the Public: for public Thievery is more safe and less prosecuted than private, like Robberies committed between Sun and Sun, which the County pays, and no one is greatly concerned in. And as the Monster of many Heads has less Wit in them all than any one reasonable Person: so the Monster of many Purses is easier cheated than any one indifferent crafty Fool. For all the Difficulty lies in being trusted; and when he has obtained that, the Business does itself; and if he should happen to be questioned and called to an Accompt, a Baudy Pardon is as cheap as a Paymaster's Fee, not above fourteen Pence in the Pound.

He thinks, that when a Man comes to Wealth or Preferment, and is to put on a new Person, his first Business is to put off all his old Friendships and Acquaintances as Things below him, and no Way consistent with his present Condition; especially such as may have Occasion to make use of him, or have Reason to expect any civil Returns from him: for requiting of Obligations received in a Man's Necessity is the same Thing with paying of Debts contracted in his Minority, when he was under Age, for which he is not accountable by the Laws of the Land. These he is to forget as fast as he can, and by little Neglects remove them to that Distance, that they may at length by his Example learn to forget him: for Men, who travel together in Company, when their Occasions lye several Ways, ought to take leave and part. It is a hard Matter for a Man that comes to Preferment not to forget himself; and therefore he may very well be allowed to take the Freedom to forget others: for Advancement, like the Conversion of a Sinner, gives a Man new Values of Things and Persons, so different from those he had before, that that, which was wont to be most dear to him, does commonly after become the most disagreeable. And as it is accounted noble to forget and pass over little Injuries; so it is to forget little Friendships, that are no better than Injuries when they become Disparagements, and can only be importune and troublesome, instead of being useful, as they were before. All Acts of

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Oblivion have, of late Times, been found to extend, rather to loyal and faithful Services done, than Rebellion and Treasons committed. For Benefits are like Flowers, sweet only and fresh when they are newly gathered, but stink when they grow stale and wither ; and he only is ungrateful, who makes returns of Obligations ; for he does it merely to free himself from owing so much as Thanks. Fair Words are all the Civility and Humanity, that one Man owes to another ; for they are obliging enough of themselves, and need not the Assistance of Deeds to make them good : for he that does not believe them has already received too much, and he that does, ought to expect no more. And therefore promises ought to oblige those only to whom they are made, not those who make them ; for he that expects a Man should bind himself is worse than a Thief, who does that Service for him, after he has robbed him on the High-way—Promises are but Words, and Words Air, which no Man can claim a Propriety in, but is equally free to all, and incapable of being confined ; and if it were not, yet he who pays Debts, which he can possibly avoid, does but part with his Money for nothing, and pays more for the mere Reputation of Honesty and Conscience than it is worth.

He prefers the Way of applying to the Vices and Humours of great Persons before all other Methods of getting into Favour : for he that can be admitted into these Offices of Privacy and Trust seldom fails to arrive at greater ; and with greater Ease and Certainty than those, who take the dull Way of plain Fidelity and Merit. For Vices, like Beasts, are fond of none but those that feed them ; and where they once prevail, all other Considerations go for nothing. They are his own Flesh and Blood, born and bred out of him ; and he has a stronger natural Affection for them than all other Relations whatsoever—And he, that has an Interest in these, has a greater Power over him than all other Obligations in the World. For though they are but his Imperfections and Infirmities, he is the more tender of them ; as a lame Member, or diseased Limb is more carefully cherished than all the rest, that are sound and in perfect Vigour. All Offices of this kind are the greatest Endearments, being real Flatteries enforced by Deeds and Actions, and therefore far more prevalent than

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those, that are performed but by Words and Fawning; though very great Advantages are daily obtained that Way—And therefore he esteems Flattery as the next most sure and successful Way of improving his Interests. For Flattery is but a kind of civil Idolatry, that makes Images it self of Virtue, Worth, and Honour in some Person, that is utterly void of all, and then falls down, and worships them. And the more dull and absurd these Applications are, the better they are always received: for Men delight more to be presented with those Things they want, than such as they have no need nor use of. And though they condemn the Realities of those Honours and Renowns, that are falsely imputed to them, they are wonderfully affected with their false Pretences. For Dreams work more upon Men's Passions, than any waking Thoughts of the same Kind; and many, out of an ignorant Superstition, give more Credit to them, than the most rational of all their vigilant Conjectures, how false soever they prove in the Event—No wonder then if those, who apply to Men's Fancies and Humours, have a stronger Influence upon them than those, that seek to prevail upon their Reason and Understandings, especially in things so delightful to them as their own Praises, no Matter how false and apparently incredible: for great Persons may wear counterfeit Jewels of any Caract, with more Confidence and Security from being discovered, than those of meaner Quality; in whose Hands the Greatness of their Value (if they were true) is more apt to render them suspected. A Flatterer is like *Mahomet's* Pigeon, that picks his Food out of his Master's Ear, who is willing to have it believed, that he whispers Oracles into it; and accordingly sets a high Esteem upon the Service he does him, though the Impostor only designs his own Utilities—For Men are for the most Part better pleased with other Men's Opinions, though false, of their Happiness, than their own Experiences; and find more Pleasure in the dullest Flattery of others than all the vast Imaginations they can have of themselves, as no Man is apt to be tickled with his own fingers; because the Applauses of others are more agreeable to those high Conceits, they have of themselves, which they are glad to find confirmed, and are the only Music, that sets them a dancing, like those that are bitten with a Tarantula.

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He accounts it an Argument of great Discretion, and as great Temper, to take no Notice of Affronts and Indignities put upon him by great Persons. For he that is insensible of Injuries of this Nature can receive none; and if he lose no Confidence by them, can lose nothing else; for it is greater to be above Injuries, than either to do, or revenge them; and he, that will be deterred by those Discouragements from prosecuting his Designs, will never obtain what he proposes to himself. When a Man is once known to be able to endure Insolencies easier than others can impose them, they will raise the Siege, and leave him as impregnable; and therefore he resolves never to omit the least Opportunity of pressing his Affairs, for Fear of being baffled and affronted; for if he can at any Rate render himself Master of his Purposes, he would not wish an easier, nor a cheaper Way, as he knows how to repay himself, and make others receive those Insolencies of him for good and current Payment, which he was glad to take before—And he esteems it no mean Glory to shew his Temper of such a Compass, as is able to reach from the highest Arrogance to the meanest, and most dejected Submissions. A Man, that has endured all Sorts of Affronts, may be allowed, like an Apprentice that has served out his Time, to set up for himself, and put them off upon others; and if the most common and approved Way of growing rich is to gain by the Ruin and loss of those, who are in necessity, why should not a Man be allowed as well to make himself appear great by debasing those, that are below him? For Insolence is no inconsiderable Way of improving Greatness and Authority in the Opinion of the World. If all Men are born equally fit to govern, as some late Philosophers affirm, he only has the Advantage of all others, who has the best Opinion of his own Abilities, how mean soever they really are; and, therefore, he stedfastly believes, that Pride is the only great, wise, and happy Virtue that a Man is capable of, and the most compendious and easy Way to Felicity—For he, that is able to persuade himself impregnable, that he is some great and excellent Person, how far short soever he falls of it, finds more Delight in that Dream than if he were really so; and the less he is of what he fancies himself to be, the better he is pleased, as Men covet those things, that are forbidden and denied them, more greedily than

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those, that are in their Power to obtain; and he, that can enjoy all the best Rewards of Worth and Merit without the Pains and Trouble that attend it, has a better Bargain than he, who pays as much for it as it is worth. This he performs by an obstinate implicit believing as well as he can of himself, and as meanly of all other Men; for he holds it a kind of Self-Preservation to maintain a good Estimation of himself: And as no Man is bound to love his Neighbour better than himself; so he ought not to think better of him than he does of himself; and he, that will not afford himself a very high Esteem, will never spare another Man any at all. He who has made so absolute a Conquest over himself (which Philosophers say is the greatest of all Victories) as to be received for a Prince within himself, is greater and more arbitrary within his own Dominions, than he that depends upon the uncertain Loves or Fears of other Men without him.—And since the Opinion of the World is vain, and for the most Part false, he believes it is not to be attempted but by Ways as false and vain as it self; and therefore to appear and seem is much better and wiser, than really to be, whatsoever is well esteemed in the general Value of the World.

Next Pride he believes Ambition to be the only generous and heroical Virtue in the World, that Mankind is capable of. For as Nature gave Man an erect Figure, to raise him above the groveling Condition of his fellow Creatures the Beasts: so he, that endeavours to improve that, and raise himself higher, seems best to comply with the Design and Intention of Nature. Though the Stature of Man is confined to a certain Height, yet his Mind is unlimited, and capable of growing up to Heaven: And as those, who endeavour to arrive at that Perfection, are adored and revered by all; so he, that endeavours to advance himself as high as possibly he can in this World, comes nearest to the Condition of those holy and divine Aspirers. All the purest Parts of Nature always tend upwards, and the more dull and heavy downwards: so in the little World the noblest Faculties of Man, his Reason and Understanding, that give him a Prerogative above all other earthly Creatures, mount upwards—And therefore he, who takes that Course and still aspires in all his Undertakings and Designs, does but

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conform to that which Nature dictates—Are not the Reason and the Will, the two commanding Faculties of the Soul, still striving which shall be uppermost? Men honour none but those that are above them, contest with Equals, and disdain Inferiors. The first Thing that God gave Man, was Dominion over the rest of his inferior Creatures; but he, that can extend that over Man, improves his Talent to the best Advantage. How are Angels distinguished but by *Dominions, Powers, Thrones, and Principalities*? Then he, who still aspires to purchase those, comes nearest to the Nature of those heavenly Ministers, and in all Probability is most like to go to Heaven—No Matter what Destruction he makes in his Way, if he does but attain his End: for nothing is a Crime, that is too great to be punished; and when it is once arrived at that Perfection, the most horrid Actions in the World become the most admired and renowned. Birds, that build highest are most safe; and he, that can advance himself above the Envy or Reach of his Inferiors, is secure against the Malice and Assaults of Fortune. All Religions have ever been persecuted in their primitive Ages, when they were weak and impotent; but, when they propagated and grew great, have been received with Reverence and Adoration by those, who otherwise had proved their cruellest Enemies; and those, that afterwards opposed them, have suffered as severely as those, that first profest them. So Thieves, that rob in small Parties, and break Houses, when they are taken are hanged: but, when they multiply and grow up into Armies, and are able to take Towns, the same things are called heroic Actions, and acknowledged for such by all the World. *Courts of Justice*, for the most Part, commit greater Crimes than they punish, and do those that sue in them more Injuries than they can possibly receive from one another; and yet they are venerable, and must not be told so, because they have Authority and Power to justify what they do, and the Law (that is, whatsoever they please to call so) ready to give Judgment for them. Who knows, when a *Physician* cures or kills? and yet he is equally rewarded for both, and the Profession esteemed never the less worshipful—And therefore he accounts it a ridiculous Vanity in any Man to consider, whether he does right or wrong in any Thing he attempts; since the Success is only able to determine, and satisfy the Opinion of the World,

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which is the one, and which the other. As for those Characters and Marks of Distinction, which *Religion, Law, and Morality* fix upon both, they are only significant and valid, when their Authority is able to command Obedience and Submission; but when the greatness, Numbers, or Interest of those, who are concerned, out-grows that, they change their Natures; and that, which was Injury before, becomes Justice, and Justice Injury. It is with Crimes, as with Inventions in the Mechanics, that will frequently hold true to all Purposes of the Design, while they are tried in little; but, when the Experiment is made in great, prove false in all Particulars, to what is promised in the Model: So Iniquities and Vices may be punished and corrected, like Children while they are little and impotent; but when they are great and sturdy, they become incorrigible, and Proof against all the Power of Justice and Authority.

Among all his Virtues there is none, which he sets so high an Esteem upon as Impudence, which he finds more useful and necessary than a Vizard is to a Highwayman. For he, that has but a competent Stock of this natural Endowment, has an Interest in any Man he pleases, and is able to manage it with greater Advantages than those, who have all the real Pretences imaginable, but want that dextrous Way of solliciting, by which, if the worst fall out, he is sure to lose Nothing, if he does not win. He that is impudent is shot-free, and if he be ever so much overpowered can receive no hurt; for his Forehead is impenetrable and of so excellent a Temper, that nothing is able to touch it, but turns Edge and is blunted. His Face holds no Correspondence with his Mind, and therefore whatsoever inward Sense or Conviction he feels, there is no outward Appearance of it in his Looks, to give Evidence against him; and in any Difficulty, that can befall him, Impudence is the most infallible Expedient to fetch him off, that is always ready, like his Angel Guardian, to relieve and rescue him in his greatest Extremities; and no outward Impression, nor inward neither (though his own Conscience take Part against him) is able to beat him from his Guards. Though Innocence and a good Conscience be said to be a *brazen Wall*, a *brazen Confidence* is more impregnable, and longer able to hold out; for it is a greater Affliction to an innocent Man to be suspected,

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than it is to one, that is guilty and impudent, to be openly convicted of an apparent Crime. And in all the Affairs of Mankind, a brisk Confidence, though utterly void of Sense, is able to go through Matters of Difficulty with greater Ease, than all the Strength of Reason less boldly enforced; as the *Turks* are said by a small slight handling of their Bows, to make an Arrow without a Head pierce deeper into hard Bodies, than Guns of greater Force are able to do a Bullet of Steel. And though it be but a Cheat and Imposture, that has neither Truth nor Reason to support it, yet it thrives better in the World than Things of greater Solidity; as Thorns and Thistles flourish on barren Grounds, where nobler Plants would starve: And he, that can improve his barren Parts by this excellent and most compendious Method, deserves much better, in his Judgment, than those, who endeavour to do the same thing by the more studious and difficult Way of downright Industry and Drudging. For Impudence does not only supply all Defects, but gives them a greater Grace than if they had needed no Art; as all other Ornaments are commonly nothing else, but the Remedies, or Disguises of Imperfections—And therefore he thinks him very weak, that is unprovided of this excellent and most useful Quality, without which the best natural or acquired Parts are of no more use, than the *Guanches* Darts, which, the *Virtuosos* say, are headed with Butter hardned in the Sun. It serves him to innumerable Purposes, to press on and understand no Repulse, how smart or harsh soever; for he, that can sail nearest the Wind, has much the Advantage of all others; and such is the Weakness or Vanity of some Men, that they will grant that to obstinate Importunity, which they would never have done upon all the most just Reasons and Considerations imaginable; as those, that watch Witches, will make them confess that, which they would never have done upon any other Account.

He believes a Man's Words and his Meaning should never agree together: For he, that says what he thinks, lays himself open to be expounded by the most ignorant; and he, who does not make his Words rather serve to conceal, than discover the Sense of his Heart, deserves to have it pulled out, like a Traytor's, and shewn publicly to the Rabble. For as a King, they say,