

Various Thoughts,
Moral and Diverting.

Written *October* the 1st. 1706

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[1] WE have just enough Religion to make us hate, but not enough to make us love one another.

[2] REFLECT on Things past, as Wars, Negotiations, Factions, &c. We enter so little into those Interests, that we wonder how Men could possibly be so busy and concerned for things so Transitory; look on the present Times, we find the same Humor, yet wonder not at all.

[3] A Wise Man endeavours by considering all Circumstances to make Conjectures, and form Conclusions, but the smallest Accident intervening (and in the Course of Affairs it is impossible to foresee all) does often produce such Turns and Changes, that at last he is just as much in doubt of Events, as the most ignorant and unexperienced Person.

[4] POSITIVENESS is a good Quality for Preachers and Orators, because he that would obtrude his Thoughts and Reasons upon a Multitude, will convince others the more as he appears convinced himself.

title *Various Thoughts, Moral and Diverting*] THOUGHTS ON Various Subjects
1727+ Written *October* the 1st. 1706] Written *October* 1. 1706 1713; om. 1727+
1 just enough Religion] just Religion enough 1735 3 &c.] and the like; 1735
8 Conclusions, but] Conclusions: But 1735 14 he that] whoever 1735

The present text is taken from David Woolley's copy of *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse* (London: John Morphew, 1711), pp. 235-45, now at the Ehrenpreis Centre (EC 8142) (TEERINK AND SCOUTEN 2 [1b]). It has been collated with *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse*, 2nd ed. (London: John Morphew, 1713), pp. 233-43 (TEERINK AND SCOUTEN 2 [2]); *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse: The First Volume* (London: Benjamin Motte, 1727), pp. 388-98 (TEERINK AND SCOUTEN 25 [1a]); *The Works of J.S. D.D. D.S.P.D.: In Four Volumes* (Dublin: George Faulkner, 1735), I, 297-303 (TEERINK AND SCOUTEN 49); *The Works of Dr. Jonathan Swift, Dean of St. Patrick's, Dublin*, ed. John Hawkesworth, large 8vo, 12 vols (London: C. Bathurst, 1754), III, 393-401 (TEERINK AND SCOUTEN 88). There are no manuscript corrections in Swift's own copy of *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse: The First Volume* (London: Benjamin Motte, 1727) (now THE ROTHSCHILD LIBRARY, I, 366, 368 [1421, 1422]).

[5] HOW is it possible to expect that Mankind will take Advice, when they will not so much as take Warning.

[6] I forget whether Advice be among the lost Things which *Ariosto* says are to be found in the Moon; That and Time ought to have been there.

[7] NO Preacher is listned to but Time, which gives us the same Train and Turn of Thought that elder People have tried in vain to put into our Heads before. 5

[8] WHEN we desire or solicit any Thing, our Minds run wholly on the good side or Circumstances of it; when 'tis obtained, our Minds run only on the bad ones. 10

[9] IN a *Glass-House*, the Workmen often fling in a small quantity of fresh Coals, which seems to disturb the Fire, but very much enlivens it. This may allude to a gentle stirring of the Passions that the Mind may not languish.

[10] RELIGION seems to have grown an Infant with Age, and requires miracles to nurse it, as it had in its Infancy. 15

[11] ALL Fits of Pleasure are ballanced by an equal degree of Pain or Languor, 'tis like Spending this Year, part of the next Year's Revenue.

[12] THE latter Part of a Wise Man's Life is taken up in curing the Follies, Prejudices and false Opinions he had contracted in the former.

[13] WOULD a Writer know how to behave himself with relation to Posterity, let him consider in old Books, what he finds that he is glad to know, and what Omissions he most laments. 20

[14] WHATEVER the Poets pretend, 'tis plain they give Immortality to none but themselves; 'Tis *Homer* and *Virgil* we reverence and admire, not *Achilles* or *Eneas*. With Historians it is quite the Contrary, our Thoughts are taken up with the Actions, Persons, and Events we Read, and we little regard the Authors. 25

[15] WHEN a true Genius appears in the World, you may know him by this infallible Sign, that the Dunces are all in Confederacy against him.

[16] MEN who possess all the Advantages of Life, are in a State where there are many Accidents to disorder, and discompose, but few to please them. 30

[17] 'TIS unwise to punish Cowards with Ignominy, for if they had regarded that, they would not have been Cowards: Death is their proper Punishment, because they fear it most. 35

2 Warning.]Warning? 1713+ 4 Moon; That] 1713, 1727, 1754; Moon, that 1711; Moon: That 1735 9 it; when] 1713+; it, when 1711 13 may] 1735; seems to 1711+ 17 Year's] 1727+; Years 1711, 1713 18 Wise Man's] 1727+; Wise Mans 1711; Wise-man's 1713 20 WOULD a Writer know] If a Writer would know 1735 29 this infallible Sign] 1735; this Sign 1711+

[18] THE greatest Inventions were produced in the Times of Ignorance, as the Use of the *Compass*, *Gunpowder* and *Printing*, and by the dullest Nation, as the *Germans*.

5 [19] ONE Argument to prove that the common Relations of *Ghosts* and *Spectres* are generally False, may be drawn from the Opinion held that Spirits are never seen by more than one Person at a time, that is to say, it seldom happens to above one Person in a Company to be possest with any high degree of Spleen or Melancholly.

10 [20] I am apt to think, that in the Day of Judgment, there will be small Allowance given to the Wise for their want of Morals, nor to the Ignorant for their want of Faith, because both are without Excuse. This renders the Advantages equal of Ignorance and Knowledge. But, some Scruples in the Wise, and some Vices in the Ignorant will perhaps be forgiven upon the strength of Temptation to each.

15 [21] THE Value of several Circumstances in History lessens very much by distance of Time, tho' some minute Circumstances are very valuable, and it requires great Judgment in a Writer to distinguish.

[22] 'TIS grown a Word of Course for Writers to say, This Critical Age, as Divines say, This Sinful Age.

20 [23] 'TIS pleasant to observe how free the Present Age is in laying Taxes on the Next. *Future Ages shall talk of this; This shall be famous to all Posterity*; whereas their Time and Thoughts will be taken up about present Things, as ours are now.

25 [24] THE *Camelion* who is said to Feed upon nothing but Air, hath of all Animals the nimblest Tongue.

[25] WHEN a Man is made a Spiritual Peer, he loses his Surname; when a Temporal his Christian Name.

30 [26] IT is in Disputes as in Armies, where the weaker side sets up false Lights, and makes a great Noise to make the Enemy believe them more Numerous and Strong than they really are.

[27] SOME Men under the Notions of weeding out Prejudices, Eradicate Virtue, Honesty and Religion.

[28] IN all well instituted Commonwealths, care has been taken to limit Men's Possessions; which is done for many Reasons, and among the

6 time, that] Time: That 1735; time; that 1754 7 to be possest] 1713, 1727, 1754;
is possest 1711, 1735 10 nor] or 1735; and 1754 15 History] 1735; Story 1711+
29 to make the Enemy believe them] that the Enemy may believe them to be 1735
32 Virtue, Honesty and Religion] Religion, Virtue, and common Honesty 1735
34 Men's] Mens 1713+

rest, for one which perhaps is not often considered; That when Bounds are set to Men's desires, after they have acquired as much as the Laws will permit them, their private Interest is at an end, and they have nothing to do but to take Care of the Publick.

[29] THERE are but Three ways for a Man to revenge himself of a censorious World: To despise it, to return the like, or to endeavour to Live so as to avoid it. The First of these is usually pretended, the Last is almost impossible, the universal Practice is for the Second. 5

[30] HERODOTUS tells us, that in Cold Countries Beasts very seldom have Horns, but in Hot they have very large ones. This might bear a pleasant Application. 10

[31] I never heard a finer Piece of Satyr against Lawyers, than that of Astrologers, when they pretend by Rules of Art to foretell in what Time a Suit will end, and whether to the Advantage of the Plaintiff or Defendant: thus making the Matter depend entirely upon the Influence of the Stars, without the least Regard to the Merits of the Cause. 15

[32] THE Expression in Apocrypha about Tobit and his Dog following him, I have often heard ridiculed; yet Homer has the same Words of Telemachus more than once, and Virgil says something like it of Evander. And I take the Book of Tobit to be partly Poetical. 20

[33] I have known some Men possessed of good Qualities, which were very Serviceable to others, but useless to themselves; like a Sundial on the Front of a House, to inform the Neighbours and Passengers, but not the Owner within.

[34] IF a Man would register all his Opinions upon Love, Politicks, Religion, Learning, &c. beginning from his Youth, and so go on to Old Age, what a Bundle of Inconsistences and Contradictions would appear at last. 25

[35] WHAT they do in Heaven, we are ignorant of; what they do not, we are told expressly, That they neither Marry, nor are given in Marriage. 30

[36] WHEN a Man observes the Choice of Ladies now a-days in the dispensing of their Favours, can he forbear paying some Veneration to the Memory of those Mares mentioned by Xenophon, who while their Mains *De re equestri.*

I one which] one that 1735 1 That when] Because when 1735 2 Men's] Mens
1713+ 5-6 of a censorious World: To] 1735; of the Censure of the World, to
1711, 1713; of the Censure of the Word; to 1727, 1754 13 to foretell in what
Time] 1735; to tell when 1711+ 14 whether] 1713+; whither 1711 17 THE]
THAT 1735 26 &c.] and the like; 1735 27 Age, what] Age: What 1735 28 last.]
last? 1713+ 29 ignorant of] 1713+; ignorant 1711

were on, that is, while they were in their Beauty, would never admit the Embraces of an Ass.

[37] 'TIS a miserable thing to live in Suspence, it is the Life of a Spider. *Vive quidem, pende tamen, improba dixit*. Ovid. Metam.

5 [38] THE Stoical Scheme of Supplying our Wants by lopping off our Desires, is like cutting off our Feet when we want Shoes.

[39] PHYSICIANS ought not to give their Judgment of Religion, for the same Reason that Butchers are not admitted to be Jurors upon Life and Death.

10 [40] THE Reason why so few Marriages are Happy, is because Young Ladies spend their Time in making Nets, not in making Cages.

[41] IF a Man will observe as he walks the Streets, I believe he will find the Merriest Countenances in Mourning Coaches.

15 [42] NOTHING more unqualifies a Man to act with Prudence, than a Misfortune that is attended with Shame and Guilt.

[43] THE Power of Fortune is confest only by the Miserable; for the Happy impute all their Success to Prudence or Merit.

[44] AMBITION often puts Men upon doing the meanest Offices; so Climbing is performed in the same Posture with Creeping.

20 [45] ILL Company is like a Dog, who Dirts those most whom he Loves best.

[46] CENSURE is the Tax a Man pays to the Publick for being eminent.

F I N I S.

4 Ovid. Metam.] *om.* 1735 11 not] and not 1735
20 Dirts] fouls 1735 24 *FINIS.*] *om.* 1727+