

OBSERVATOR.

The Observator has Many Enemies; and the Messenger of the Press has Some Friends. His way of Proceeding.

Saturday, October 4. 1684.

TRIM. IF there were either Profit, or Pleasure, or Reputation, or Quiet to be got by't: Nay though there were nothing more in't, then meer Humour, Vanity, and Caprice; If you had but any Hopes yet of Carrying-it at Last; a body might finde out some Lame Excuse, or Other, for ye; Or at Least, give the World the Why, and the Wherefore of the Business. But to spend all your Days in an Unprofitable Brawl: To make your Life, Uneasy; to Bar your self the Ordinary Comforts of Friends, and Conversation; to Expose your Credit, and break your Sleep; only to Gratify a Canker'd Itch of Contention; This is, Certainly, one of the most Unaccountable Freaks; that ever was heard of. First, as to your Papers; If you had the Pen of an Angell, they shall never turn to Account, either to your Self, or to the Publick, so long as the Messenger of the Press is none of your Friend. 2ly, The Employment that you have taken-up, has as good as Chain'd ye to an Oar; and you have, Effectually, Condemn'd your self to a Gally in't. 3ly, What Credit can you Expect to get, by a Contest, so Scandalous, that a man would be e'en Asham'd to have the Better on't? And then I cannot give you an Apter Embleme of your Condition, in the point of Rest, or Quiet; then That of a Dog in a Wheel: He takes a great deal of Pains to Ross Meat for Other People; the Devill a Bit he gets on't Himself; and you find him at Last, just where he Set-out. Now if you are so Besotted, as to Drudge-on at This Rate: Make your self the Common Mark of every Street-Paper: To stand the Shock of a Thousand Enemies; and take your Labour for your Pains, in the Concession; Much Good may' do ye with your Bargain.

OBSERVATOR. This smells of a Wheedle, Trimmer, toward a Composition: But I have taken-up the Resolution of Magnanimous Ores, in his Epistle to the Late Noble Peer. [I have Vow'd (says he) to make War against the Whore, and Dragon of Rome, and All her Votaries, as long as I have a day to Live.] 'Tis but turning Rome, into Geneva, and That's my Detestation too. But One Word, I prethee, to the Messenger of the Press. Is Robin Stephens My Enemy, sayst?

Trim. Ay Ay. Why this Squabble with Mr Smythies, is enough to make Every Sober Man your Enemy. Well! I don't love to Carry Stories: But I'me afraid there's a Storm a coming: For Mr Stephens was saying t'other day, (as I was told by One that heard it) That [He has not done with you, yet: He'll have Another Bout with ye.]

Obs. Very Good! And when he, Has had Another Bout with me, what d'ye think he'll make on't at last?

Trim. Oh faith! He's a Great Man with the Sober Party; and then He's in a Place of Trust too, that gives him Mighty Advantages, by the Credit of his Office. I need not tell ye that he has Powerfull Friends: For you have been heaving at him; I know not how Long, and how Often: And to as much purpose, as

if you should have put your Shoulder to Gads-Hill to have Show'd it to the Lands-End.

Obs. He has not One Friend in the World, upon Any Other Account then That of an Enmity to Me. Briefly: He's a Necessary Instrument to the Fashion; And a Knave has a kind of a Privilege, when he's once Crept into the King's Chamber.

Trim. Come prethee let's have no Ripping up of Old-Done Deeds; But if you have any thing that's Fresh, and Worth the Hearing, let it come and Well-come.

Obs. I shall only tell ye, in short; That he is a Betrayer of his Trust; And a Falsifyer in his Majesties Service, to All the purposes that ever I say'd he was; And to let That serve for what's Past. But you were Hinting what Advantages he has over Other People, by Virtue of his Office. Prethee wilt thou Open a little upon That Matter: And do it as a Friend too.

Trim. Why then under the Rose, betwixt you & Me; First, You cannot but know, that he has All the Mercuries, Hawkers, Common Dispersers of Papers; And All Your Hedge-Printers, over and above, under his Girdle: And to them, his Name is no longer ROBIN, but PETER. The Keys ate Committed to his Charge, and the Power of Binding, or Loosing, is in the Messenger of the Press. I need not tell ye, in the Second Place, That These People are All, Sinners; and that Robin Commutes with them sometimes, to make 'em Expiate for One Fault, by Committing Another.

Obs. Yes Yes. 'Tis a Common Thing with him, to Forgive a Less Libell, for Publishing a Greater; And I have it upon Oath; Where, under the Colour of Suppressing Scandalous, and Lying Papers, he has Bespoken 'em; and against Me, in Particular, and then Dispers'd 'em Himself.

Trim. Nay for Downright Matter of Fact; That lies Open to Every body. But the Mystery is yet in the Dark. Do not you find with what Zeal, and Industry Some Papers are Publish'd, and Others Stiffled? A Word to the Wise!

Obs. By my troth thou sayst Right, Trimmer. And it Holds, both in Town, and Country. If any thing comes out, in the Vindication and Defence of the Government; 'tis Carry'd in Huggermugger; And not One Book, or Paper Dispers'd, more then upon the Absolute Necessity of Serving a Customer: But when Any thing comes out on the T'other hand, there's a Bawling with it, enough to put the Whole Town in an Upror. This is so Palpable a Confederacy, and Practice, that a man must be Blind, not to Discern it; And it is a Liberty of so Pernicious an Influence upon the Church, and State, That no man will Venture to be Honest; but He that Resolves to Sacrifice his Peace, His Reputation, and All that's Flesh and Blood about him, to his Duty. But This is too much said, of so Coult; so False, and so Scandalous a Fellow.

Trim. Supposing him now, to be what you Pronounce him, The Coult; and the more Scandalous

he is, in *Himself*; The *Meaner*, and the more *Dis-honourable*, is your *Competition* with him.

Obs. Prethee, where the *King's Service* is the *Question*; (As it is in This *Case*) the *Character* of a *Prostitute Wretch* must not *Discharge* Mee, from the *Obligation* of a *Subject*: Beside, that the *Common Cause* of *Every Honest man* lies at Stake upon't. For I do really look upon *This Wretch* as a *Dormant-Evidence* that lies upon the *Catch*, to Joyn with some *Other Rascall*, and *Swear* me out of *My Life*.

Trim. These are *Dangerous Words*, I can assure ye; And you had need be very well *Prepar'd* to *Justify* what you say.

Obs. Why then you shall see how the *Matter* *Stands*. You cannot but remember, when *Otes* brought Me before the *King*, and *Council*; about *Suborning Tonge*, to *Invalidate His Evidence*. (That time when the *Silver-Button-Merchant* was to have made a *Papist* of me; in *October*. 1680.) What a *Buzz*, there was about the *Town*, of *Stephens'es* *Undertaking* to Lend an *Oath*, upon That *Occasion*, that should give Mee a *List*: While the *Cause* was in hand, *Otes* calls for his *Trusty* *Sesond*, *Stephens*, into the *Council-Chamber*, Having told the *Board*, before-hand, What he would *Swear* to: Which was [That *L'Estrange* had *Convey'd* away *Certain Bulls*, and *Popish Books* that were *Seiz'd*, and *Lock'd* up, with a *Padlock* on the *Door*, by the *Messenger* and the *Constable*; (One *Mr Smith*, *Living* just over against *L'Estranges* *House*;) *Urging*, That when they came afterwards to look for what they had *Seiz'd*, the *Padlock* was *taken off*, & the *Books* gone.] Hereupon, *Stephens*, was *Sworn* and *Interrogated* upon the *Matter*; But being put to't, he could not say that I had *Any thing* to do, *Directly*, or *Indirectly* with the *Taking-off* the *Padlock*, or the *Conveying* away of the *Books*; Nor that I was so much as *Pris'd* to *Any thing* concerning the *Books* *Themselves*, *One way* or *Other*. The *Truth* of it is, *My Case* was so *Clear*, that *Poor Stephens* had no *Encouragement* in the *World* to Put his *Conscience* upon the *Stretch* That *Bout*: But it was a *Godly Resolution* however, that would keep *Cold*, it seems; and so the *Messenger* of the *Press* lay'd it up in *Lavender*, for a *Fairer Opportunity*.

Trim. You see he *Swore* *Nothing* against ye; And yet you'd bear the world in hand, that he came *Thither* with an *Intent* to do it: *Nay*, and to *Swear* himself too into the *Bargain*. And *All This* is *Nothing* yet, but *Old Stuff* that we have had over and over, *Twenty Times* before.

Obs. Ay but *Now* comes the *Cream* of the *Fest*. This was about the *16th* of *October*. 1680. (a day, or *Two* over or under perhaps) And presently after, (you must know) the *Wind* *Chopt* into *Evidence-Corner*: As *Appears* by a *Paper*, *Lodg'd* before the *Lords-Committees* bearing *This Endorsement*.

October. 26. 1680. [A *Paper* of *What Stephens*, and *Curtis* *Could say* against *L'Estrange*.] *Stephens'es* *Part* being *Verbatim*, as hereunder follows.

Robert Stephens, *One* of the *Kings Messengers* did *Declare*, that upon his *Late Examination* before his *Majesty* and his most *Honourable Privy-Councill* against *Roger L'Estrange*, He did not then deliver and set forth *All* the *Truth* that he knew in reference to the said *L'Estrange*, *Because* (He said) he was afraid of his *Master* and *losing* of his *Place*; and added further that He was then *Sworn*, not to speak the *Truth*, and the *Whole Truth*, but only *True Answer* to make to

London, Printed for *Charles Brome*,

all such *Questions* as should be demanded of him; and that if He had been further *Interrogated*, He *Would*, and *Can* *Testify* much more against the said *Mr L'Estrange*; and has besides *Desired* to be *Examined* in *particular*, about *L'Estranges* *Conduct*, in order to the *Prosecution* against *Turner*, the *Popish Bookseller*: and that *One Smith*, a *Pastry-Cook* living in *Holborn* over against *L'Estrange*, heretofore *Constable*, when the *Popish Books* were *Seiz'd* in *Holborn*, and *Convey'd* away, can speak very *Waterfall* *Things*, touching *Mr L'Estranges* managing that *Affair*.

Take This *Paper* to *Pieces* now; And tell me, if either *Prance*, *Otes*, or *Bedloe* could have *Out-done* This *Messenger* of the *Press*. Here's first, an *Affront* upon the *King*, and *Council*; in *Shamming* the *Oath* he took there, with an *Impudent*, and a *Ridiculous Evasion*. [Not the *Whole Truth*.] Though Probably he *Swore* to That too. 2ly, He durst not speak *All* for fear of his *Master*, and of his *Place*: As if the *King* would have *Turn'd* him out for *Speaking Truth*: But instead of being *Turn'd* out by his *Master*, He was for *Turning* out his *Master* himself. 3ly, He *DESIR'D* to be *Examined* against Me; Which shews his *Zeal* in the *Cause*. And then comes the *Bus'ness* of *Turner*, a *Popish Bookseller*, too: I *Defy* him to give any *Colour* to That *Accusation*. And for *Mr Smith*, the *Pastry-Cook*, You shall have his *Affidavit* here, to give him the *Lye* in the very *Teeth* of him.

The *Enformation* of *Thomas Smith*, &c.

This *Enformant* saith, upon *Oath*; That being *Head-borough* in the *Tear* 1678. *Mr Robert Stephens* the *Messenger* of the *Press*, came to this *Enformant* in his *Majesties* *Name*, to require his *Assistance* for the *Searching* of a *House* in *Gregories Alley*, Where there were a *Great many* *Heaps* of *Books*, which the said *Stephens* *Seized* as *Popish Books*, *Taking* some away with him; and *Directing* This *Enformant* to *Clap* a *Padlock* on the *Door*, for the *Securing* of the rest.

And saith further; That This *Enformant* being told by *Roger L'Estrange Esq.* That the said *Stephens* *Reported* That He This *Enformant* could speak very *Material* *Things* *Touching* *Mr L'Estranges* *managing* of the *Affair* *Concerning* the *Popish Books*, *Seized* as a-*bovesaid*, and *Conveying* the said *Books* away, He This *Enformant* doth *Declare* and *Affirm*, That he never said *Anything* of *Mr L'Estranges* being *Concern'd* in that *Matter*: But on the *Contrary*, He This *Enformant* saith, That upon *Stephens'es* telling This *Enformant* after the *Books* were gone, That *Mr L'Estrange*, and This *Enformant* must have had some *Hand* in the doing of it, or to That *Effect*, This *Enformant* *Answered* him to This *Purpose*; You are *Mistaken* in *Mr L'Estrange*, for on my *Conscience* he knows *nothing* of it.

And This *Enformant* finally saith, That he never had, *Either* *Directly*, or *Indirectly*, any *Discourse* with *Mr L'Estrange*, *Touching* That *Matter*.

Jurat. Oct. 2. 1684.

Coram me
Edw. Guise.

Thomas Smith.

Now take it altogether; And *Judge*, if *Any Government*, or *Any Person*, can be *Safe*, under the *License* of These *Practices*. Here's *STEPHENS*, the *Supporter* of the *Cause*; And the *Lord* be *Mercyfull* to the *Supporters* of *Stephens*: *My* *Trusty*, and *Well Beloved* *Friends*, the *Trimmers*.

at the *Gun* in *St. Pauls Church-yard*.