

# The T A T L E R.

By Isaac Bickerstaff Esq;

— *Ex humili summa ad Fastigia Rerum  
Extollit, quoties voluit Fortuna jocari. Juv.*

From Saturday January 21. to Tuesday January 24. 1709.

*From my own Apartment, January 23.*

I Went on Saturday last to make a Visit in the City; and as I passed through *Cheapside*, I saw Crowds of People turning down towards the *Bank*, and struggling who should first get their Money into the new erected Lottery. It gave me a great Notion of the Credit of our present Government and Administration, to find People press as eagerly to pay Money, as they would to receive it; and at the same Time a due Respect for that Body of Men who have found out so pleasing an Expedient for carrying on the Common Cause, that they have turned a Tax into a Diversion. The Cheerfulness of Spirit, and the Hopes of Success, which this Project has occasioned in this great City, lightens the Burden of the War, and puts me in Mind of some Games which they say were invented by wise Men who were Lovers of their Country, to make their Fellow Citizens undergo the Tediousness and Fatigues of a long Siege. I think there is a kind of Homage due to Fortune, (if I may call it so) and that I should be wanting to my self, if I did not lay in my Pretences to her Favour, and pay my Compliments to her by recommending a Ticket to her Disposal. For this Reason, upon my Return to my Lodgings, I sold off a Couple of Globes and a Telescope; which, with the Cash I had by me, raised the Sum that was requisite for that Purpose. I find by my Calculations, that it is but an Hundred and Fifty Thousand to One against my being worth a Thousand Pounds *per Annum* for Thirty Two Years: And if any Plumb in the City will lay me an Hundred and Fifty Thousand Pounds to Twenty Shillings, (which is an even Bett) that I am not this fortunate Man, I will take the Wager, and shall look upon him as a Man of singular Courage and fair Dealing, having given Orders to Mr. *Morphen* to subscribe such a Policy in my Behalf, if any Person accepts of the Offer. I must confess, I have had such private Intimations from the Twinklings of a certain Star in some of my Astronomical Observations, that I should be unwilling to take Fifty Pounds a Year for my Chance, unless it were to oblige a particular Friend. My chief Business at present is, to prepare my Mind for this Change of Fortune: For as *Seneca*, who was a greater Moralist, and a much richer Man than I shall be, with this Addition to my present Income, says, *Munera ista Fortune putatis? Insidia sunt.* What we look upon as Gifts and Presents of Fortune, are Traps and Snares which she lays for the Unwary. I am arming my self against Her Favours with all my Philosophy; and that I may not lose my self in such a Redundance of unnecessary and superfluous Wealth, I have determined to settle an Annual Pension

out of it upon a Family of *Palatines*, and by that Means give these unhappy Strangers a Taste of *British* Property. At the same Time, as I have an excellent Servant Maid, whose Diligence in attending me has increased in Proportion to my Infirmities, I shall settle upon her the Revenue arising out of the Ten Pounds, and amounting to Fourteen Shillings *per Annum*, with which she may retire into *Wales*, where she was born a Gentlewoman, and pass the remaining Part of her Days in a Condition suitable to her Birth and Quality. It was impossible for me to make an Inspection into my own Fortune on this Occasion, without seeing at the same Time the Fate of others, who are embarked in the same Adventure: And indeed it was a great Pleasure to me to observe, That the War, which generally impoverishes those who furnish out the Expence of it, will by this Means give Estates to some, without making others the poorer for it. I have lately seen several in Liveries, who will give as good of their own very suddenly; and took a particular Satisfaction in the Sight of a young Country Wench, whom I this Morning passed by as she was whirling a Mop, with her Petticoats tucked up very agreeably; who, if there is any Truth in my Art, is within Ten Months of being the handsomest great Fortune in Town. I must confess, I was so struck with the Foresight of what she is to be, that I treated her accordingly; and said to her, Pray, young Lady, permit me to pass by. I would for this Reason advise all Masters and Mistresses to carry it with great Moderation and Condescension towards their Servants till next *Michaelmas*, lest the Superiority at that Time should be inverted. I must likewise admonish all my Brethren and Fellow Adventurers, to fill their Minds with proper Arguments for their Support and Consolation in case of ill Success. It so happens in this Particular, that tho' the Gainers will have Reason to rejoice, the Losers will have no Reason to complain. I remember, the Day after the Thousand Pound Prize was drawn in the Penny Lottery, I went to visit a Splenetic Acquaintance of mine, who was under much Dejection, and seemed to me to have suffered some great Disappointment. Upon Enquiry, I found he had put Twopence for himself and his Son into the Lottery, and that neither of them had drawn the Thousand Pound. Hereupon this unlucky Person took Occasion to enumerate the Misfortunes of his Life, and concluded with telling me, That he never was successful in any of his Undertakings. I was forced to comfort him with the common Reflection upon such Occasions, That Men of the greatest Merit, are not always Men of the greatest Success; and that Persons of his Character must not expect to be as happy as Fools. I shall proceed in the like Manner with my Rivals and Competitors for the Thousand Pounds a Year which

which we are now in Pursuit of; and that I may give general Content to the whole Body of Candidates, I shall allow all that draw Prizes to be fortunate, and all that miss them to be wise.

I must not here omit to acknowledge, that I have received several Letters upon this Subject, but find one common Error running through them all; which is, That the Writers of them believe their Fate in these Cases depends upon the Astrologer, and not upon the Stars; as in the following Letter from one, who, I fear, flatters himself with Hopes of Success, which are altogether groundless, since he does not seem to me so great a Fool as he takes himself to be.

S I R,

Coming to Town, and finding my Friend Mr. Partridge dead and buried, and you the only Conjuror in Repute, I am under a Necessity of applying my self to you for a Favour, which nevertheless I confess it would better become a Friend to ask, than one who is, as I am altogether, a Stranger to you: But Poverty you know is impudent; and as that gives me the Occasion, so that alone could give me the Confidence to be thus importunate.

I am, Sir, very poor, and very desirous to be otherwise. I have got Ten Pounds, which I design to venture in the Lottery now on foot. What I desire of you is, That by your Art, you will chuse such a Ticket for me as shall arise a Benefit sufficient to maintain me. I must beg Leave to inform you, That I am good for nothing, and must therefore insist upon a larger Lot than would satisfy those who are capable by their own Abilities of adding something to what you should assign them; whereas I must expect an absolute independent Maintenance, because, as I said, I can do nothing. 'Tis possible, after this free Confession of mine, you may think I don't deserve to be rich; but I hope you will likewise observe, I can ill afford to be poor. My own Opinion is, I am well qualified for an Estate, and have a good Title to Luck in a Lottery: But I resign my self wholly to your Mercy, not without Hopes that you will consider, the less I deserve, the greater the Generosity in you. If you reject me, I have agreed with an Acquaintance of mine to bury me for my Ten Pounds. I once more recommend my self to your Favour, and bid you *Adieu*.

I cannot forbear publishing another Letter which I have received, because it redounds to my own Credit, as well as to that of a very honest Footman.

Mr. Bickerstaff, Jan. 23. 1728.

I Am bound in Justice to acquaint you, That I put an Advertisement into your last Paper about a Watch which was lost, and was brought to me on the very Day your Paper came out by a Footman, who told me, That he would have brought it, if he had not read your Discourse of that Day against Avarice; but that since he had read it, he scorn'd to take a Reward for doing what in Justice he ought to do, I am,

S I R,

Your most humble Servant,

John Hamond.

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