Familiar Letters of
Love, Gallantry,
And several Occasions,
By the Wits of the last and present Age.

Viz.

Mr. Butler, Author of
Hudibrass.
Mr. Flatman.
Mr. Dryden.
Mr. Congreve.
Mr. Wycherley.
Mr. Dennis.
Mr. Farquhar.
Mr. Edw. Ward.
Mr. Moyle.
Mr. Otway.
Mrs. Behn.

[Names of Wits]

From their ORIGINALS.
With their EFFIGIES Curiously Engraved by the Best Masters.
Together with

Mr. T. Brown’s Remains;

Being Letters and Dialogues on the Times, not Printed in his Works.

The whole in Two Volumes, Compleat.

TO THE
Nobility and Gentry
OF
BRITAIN.

Right Honourable, &c.

This Work should have been inscrib'd to the Lovers of Learning, and the Encouragers of Wit: But when I reflect, first, that Such are all truly Honourable; and then, That our Nobility and Gentry are generally Such, I omitted it in meer Aversion to Tautology.

It is to do Justice to the present Age, and not to flatter any, I shall take the Freedom to say, That tho' the last produc'd a glorious Number of Men of Genius and Performance, yet the present exceeds all that ever went before it, especially in the true Taste of Reading; and therefore it may be said, That tho' we
The Dedication.

we do not flourish in Brighter Authors than they did, yet those we have, meet with greater Encouragement.

It is the just Character of the Nobility and Gentry of this Island at the Time, that they know how to relish value, and reward, Men of Merit, at another Rate than their Fathers; and if we have no such, or so many Exquisite Writers as before, we have now more Exquisite Judges of Wit and Learning than they had. And this is the Reason why we see Men of Polite Parts snatch'd up from the Pen-Ink Labour to the greatest Employment in the Government, made Parliament Men, Commissioners, Secretaries of State, &c.

It is this glorious Genius that this Collection is brought to shew, and which the last Age knew not how to value, and therefore recommended itself now to a Generation of better Taste; and without question the Treatment they shall meet with from this generous Polite Age, will differ so much from the Usage they had from our unfinish'd Forefathers, that Letters could really be written from the Dead to the Living, I make no Doubt.

but Tom Brown, the best humour'd Man of Wit that ever liv'd, would let us hear from him in Acknowledgment of the good Treatment he met with.

Had the rough Days of K. Charles II. newly recover'd from the Confusion of a Civil War, or the tempestuous Time of King James the Second, had the same Sense of Wit as our Gentlemen now appear to have, the first Impressions of Milton's Paradise lost, had never been sold for waste Paper; the Inimitable Hudibras had never suffered the Miseries of a Neglected Cavalier; Tom Brown, the merriest and most diverting'st Man, had never expir'd so neglected: Mr. Dryden's Religion would never have lost him his Pension; or Mrs. Behn ever had but two Lines upon her Grave-stone; Sir Roger L'Estrange would have been made a Commissioner of Enquiry, or some such valuable thing: Instead of an empty Knight-hood, Sir John Denham would have been sent as an Ambassador rather than a Beggar into Poland; and the Incomparable Waller would have been a Secretary of State as well as Mr. Addison.

But the Times understood not the
The Dedication.
Value of those Men; the Gentry knew not how to shine, and therefore entertain’d no Notion of those that did.

Thank the Stars, that guide the Brain of Men, the Case is alter’d now, the Nation’s Genius is now alter’d, and polished by the Exercise of Books, the Names and Works of Men of Wit revive, and their Memory becomes truly immortal.

This happy Change has encourag’d this Work, and we daily receive new Additions to our Design, by the Favours of some Gentlemen who send us Valuable Piece of the Performance of the Politest Men, which the Unkindness of the Age they liv’d in, justly provok’d them to suppress in their Lives, as Sir Walter Raleigh did his second Volume of the History of the World.

We bespeak the Gentlemen, as a Token of their Acceptance of this Work that if they have any Remains left of like Kind, they would communicate them in order to another Volume, affording them such acceptable Things shall be gratefully acknowledg’d to the Giver all possible Justice be done to the Author’s by

Your most Obedient Servant,
SAM. BRISCOE
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A Letter by Mr. Congreve

Yet I to You my Love and Verse submit,
Without your Smile, That Hope, and These wane Vt.
For, as some hold, no Colours are indeed,
But from Reflection of the Light proceed;
So as You shine, my Verse and I must live,
You can Salvation and Damnation give.

J. Denham

To Mrs. Hunt at Epsom.

By Mr. Congreve.

Angel, Windsor, July 26, 1694.

There can be no stronger Motive to bring me to Epsom, or to the North of Scotland, or to Paradise, than your being in any of those Places; for you make every Place alike Heavenly wherever you are. And I believe if anything could cure me of a natural Infirmitie, seeing and hearing you would be the surest Remedy; at least, I should forget that I had any thing to complain of, while I had so much more Reason to rejoice. I should certainly (had I been at my own Disposal) have immediately taken Post for Epsom upon Receipt of your Letter: But I have a Nurse here, who has Dominion over me, a most unmerciful


She-Ass. Balaam was allow'd an Angel to his Ass, I'll pray, if that will do any good, for the same Grace. I would have set out upon my Ass to have waited upon you, but I was afraid I should have been a tedious while in coming, having great Experience of the Slowness of that Beast: For you must know, I am making my Journey towards Health upon that Animal, and I find I make such slow Advances, that I despair of arriving at you, or any great Blessing, till I am capable of using some more expeditious means. I could tell you of a great Indulgence to bring you to this Place, but I am sworn to secrecy; however, if you were here, I would entice to make you of the Party. I'll expect you, as a good Christian may every thing that he devoutly prays for. I am

Your everlasting Adorer,

W. Congreve

A Letter to Walter Moyle, Esq.

Dear Moyle, blest Youth, whole forward Wit pursues
The noble Pleasures Reason bids thee choose:
Reason, which ruling by the Laws of Sense,
Deer a just, equal Government dispenses;

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Quitting
A Satyr against Poetry.

Dekan, whose Wit and Reason each Man loves,
Charm us like Beauty, and like Books improves.
Eton, whom Vice becomes, of Vigour full,
For in the Godly, Covetous and Dull.
This, while in Town, so early you postcss
Whater perfects Life and Happines,
And in their Turns do all the Pleasures know,
Which Learning, Beauty, Friendship can bestow;
In this Retreat I'm pleas'd, in following you
In a wild Maze of Thoughts: And so, dear Friend,

Adieu.

A Satyr against Poetry, in a Letter to the Right Honourable the Earl of Dorset.

I ET my Endeavours, as my Hopes, depend
On you, the Orphan's Trust, the Muse's Friend:
The great good Man, whose kind Resolves declare
Virtue and Vice the Object of your Care,
When hungry Poets now abdicate their Rhimes,
For some more darling Folly of the Times.

Duncan.