

tempered candle with a great snuff, that in going out smells ill ; an angel abroad, a devil at home ; and worse when an angel than when a devil."

THE BUSY-BODY.

" His estate is too narrow for his mind ; and therefore, he is fain to make himself room in others' affairs, yet ever in pretence of love. No news can stir but by his door ; neither can he know that which he must not tell. What every man ventures in a Guiana voyage, and what they gained, he knows to a hair. Whether Holland will have peace, he knows ; and on what conditions, and with what success, is familiar to him ere it be concluded. No post can pass him without a question ; and, rather than he will lose the news, he rides back with him to question him of tidings ; and then to the next man he meets he supplies the wants of his hasty intelligence, and makes up a perfect tale : wherewith he so haunteth the patient auditor, that, after many excuses, he is fain to endure rather the censures of his manners in running away, than the tediousness of an impertinent discourse. His speech is oft broken off with a succession of long parentheses, which he ever vows to fill up ere the conclusion ; and perhaps would effect it if the other's ear were as unwearable as his own tongue. If he see but two men talk, and read a letter in the street, he runs to them and asks if he may not be partners of that secret relation ; and if they deny it, he offers to tell,—since he may not hear—wonders ; and then falls upon the report of the Scottish mine, or of the great fish taken up at Lynn, or of the freezing of the Thames : and, after many thanks and dismissions, is hardly entreated silence.

He undertakes as much, as he performs little. This man will thrust himself forward to be the guide of the way he knows not : and calls at his neighbor's window, and asks why his servants are not at work. The market hath no commodity which he prizeth not, and which the next table shall not hear recited. His tongue, like the tail of Samson's foxes, carries firebrands, and is enough to set the whole field of the world on a flame. Himself begins table-talk of his neighbor at another's board, to whom he bears the first news, and adjures him to conceal the reporter : whose choleric answer he returns to his first host, enlarged with a second edition : so, as it used to be done in the fight of unwilling mastiffs, he claps each on the side apart, and provokes them to an eager conflict. There can be no act pass without his comment ; which is ever far-fetched, rash, suspicious, dilatory. His ears are long, and his eyes quick, but most of all too imperfections ; which, as he easily sees, so he increases with intermeddling. He labours without thanks, talks without credit, lives without love, dies without tears, without pity—save that some say : " It was a pity he died no sooner."