

N^o 14. Friday, March 16.

—— *Teque his, Infelix, exue monstribus.* Ovid.

I WAS reflecting this Morning upon the Spirit and Humour of the publick Diversions Five and twenty Years ago, and those of the present Time; and lamented to my self, that, though in those Days they neglected their Morality, they kept up their Good Sense; but that the *beau Monde* at present, is only grown more childish, not more innocent, than the former. While I was in this Train of Thought, an odd Fellow, whose Face I have often seen at the Play-house, gave me the following Letter with these Words, *Sir, the Lion presents his humble Service to you, and desired me to give this into your own Hands.*

From my Den in the Hay-Market, March 15.

S I R,

I Have read all your Papers, and have stifled my Resentment against your Reflexions upon Operas, till that of this Day, wherein you plainly insinuate that Signior *Grimaldi* and my self have a Correspondence more friendly than is consistent with the Valour of his Character, or the Fierceness of mine. I desire you would for your own Sake forbear such Intimations for the future; and must say it is a great Piece of Ill-nature in you, to shew so great an Esteem for a Foreigner, and to discourage a *Lion* that is your own Countryman.

I take notice of your Fable of the Lion and Man, but am so equally concerned in that Matter, that I shall not be offended to which soever of the Animals the Superiority is given. You have misrepresented me, in saying that I am a Country-Gentleman, who act only for my Diversion; whereas, had I still the same Woods to

range

‘ range in which I once had when I was a Fox-hunter, I
 ‘ should not resign my Manhood for a Maintenance; and
 ‘ assure you, as low as my Circumstances are at present,
 ‘ I am so much a Man of Honour, that I would scorn to
 ‘ be any Beast for Bread but a Lion.

Yours, &c.

I had no sooner ended this, than one of my Landlady’s Children brought me in several others, with some of which I shall make up my present Paper, they all having a Tendency to the same Subject, *viz.* the Elegance of our present Diversions.

S I R,

Covent-Garden, March 13.

‘ I Have been for twenty Years Under-Sexton of this
 ‘ Parish of St. *Paul’s Covent-Garden*, and have not
 ‘ missed tolling in to Prayers six times in all those Years;
 ‘ which Office I have performed to my great Satisfaction,
 ‘ till this Fortnight last past, during which Time I
 ‘ find my Congregation take the Warning of my Bell,
 ‘ Morning and Evening, to go to a Puppet-Show set
 ‘ forth by one *Powell* under the *Piazzas*. By this Means
 ‘ I have not only lost my two Customers, whom I used
 ‘ to place for Six-pence apiece over-against Mrs. *Rachel*
 ‘ *Eye-bright*, but Mrs. *Rachel* her self is gone thither also.
 ‘ There now appear among us none but a few ordinary
 ‘ People, who come to Church only to say their Prayers,
 ‘ so that I have no Work worth speaking of but on *Sun-*
 ‘ *days*. I have placed my Son at the *Piazzas*, to acquaint
 ‘ the Ladies that the Bell rings for Church, and that it
 ‘ stands on the other Side of the *Garden*; but they only
 ‘ laugh at the Child.

‘ I desire you would lay this before all the World,
 ‘ that I may not be made such a Tool for the future,
 ‘ and that *Punchinello* may choose Hours less canonical.
 ‘ As things are now, Mr. *Powell* has a full Congrega-
 ‘ tion, while we have a very thin House; which if you
 ‘ can remedy, you will very much oblige,

S I R,

Yours, &c.

The following Epistle I find is from the Undertaker of the Masquerade,

S I R,

I Have observed the Rules of my Masque so carefully, (in not inquiring into Persons) that I cannot tell whether you were one of the Company or not last *Tuesday*; but if you were not, and still design to come, I desire you would, for your own Entertainment, please to admonish the Town, that all Persons indifferently are not fit for this sort of Diversion. I could wish, Sir, you could make them understand, that it is a kind of Acting to go in Masquerade, and a Man should be able to say or do things proper for the Dress, in which he appears. We have now and then Rakes in the Habit of *Roman* Senators, and grave Politicians in the Dress of Rakes. The Misfortune of the thing is, that People dress themselves in what they have a mind to be, and not what they are fit for. There is not a Girl in the Town, but let her have her Will in going to a Masque, and she shall dress as a Shepherdess. But let me beg of them to read the *Arcadia*, or some other good Romance, before they appear in any such Character at my House. The last Day we presented, every Body was so rashly habited, that when they came to speak to each other, a Nymph with a Crook had not a Word to say but in the pert Stile of the Pit Bawdry; and a Man in the Habit of a Philosopher was speechless, till an Occasion offered of expressing himself in the Refuse of the Tying-Rooms. We had a Judge that danced a Minuet, with a Quaker for his Partner, while half a dozen Harlequins stood by as Spectators: A *Turk* drank me off two Bottles of Wine, and a *Jew* eat me up half a Ham of Bacon. If I can bring my Design to bear, and make the Masquers preserve their Characters in my Assemblies, I hope you will allow there is a Foundation laid for more elegant and improving Gallantries than any the Town at present affords; and consequently, that you will give your Approbation to the Endeavours of,

S I R,

Your most obedient humble Servant.

I am very glad the following Epistle obliges me to mention Mr. *Powell* a second Time in the same Paper; for indeed there cannot be too great Encouragement given to his Skill in Motions, provided he is under proper Restrictions.

S I R;

THE Opera at the *Hay-Market*, and that under the little *Piazza* in *Covent-Garden*, being at present the two leading Diversions of the Town, and Mr. *Powell* professing in his Advertisements to set up *Whittington and his Cat* against *Rinaldo and Armida*, my Curiosity led me the Beginning of last Week to view both these Performances, and make my Observations upon them.

FIRST therefore, I cannot but observe that Mr. *Powell* wisely forbearing to give his Company a Bill of Fare beforehand, every Scene is new and unexpected; whereas it is certain, that the Undertakers of the *Hay-Market*, having raised too great an Expectation in their printed Opera, very much disappoint their Audience on the Stage.

THE King of *Jerusalem* is obliged to come from the City on foot, instead of being drawn in a triumphant Chariot by white Horses, as my Opera-Book had promised me; and thus while I expected *Armida's* Dragons should rush forward towards *Argantes*, I found the Hero was obliged to go to *Armida*, and hand her out of her Coach. We had also but a very short Allowance of Thunder and Lightning; tho' I cannot in this Place omit doing Justice to the Boy who had the Direction of the Two painted Dragons, and made them spit Fire and Smoke: He flash'd out his *Rosin* in such just Proportions and in such due Time, that I could not forbear conceiving Hopes of his being one Day a most excellent Player. I saw indeed but Two things wanting to render his whole Action complete, I mean the keeping his Head a little lower, and hiding his Candle.

I observe that Mr. *Powell* and the Undertakers had both the same Thought, and I think much about the same time, of introducing Animals on their several Stages, tho' indeed with very different Success. The
Sparrows

‘ Sparrows and Chaffinches at the *Hay-Market* fly as yet
 ‘ very irregularly over the Stage; and instead of perch-
 ‘ ing on the Trees, and performing their Parts, these
 ‘ young Actors either get into the Galleries, or put out
 ‘ the Candles, whereas Mr. *Powell* has so well disciplined
 ‘ his Pig, that in the first Scene he and Punch dance a
 ‘ Minuet together. I am informed however, that Mr.
 ‘ *Powell* resolves to excel his Adversaries in their own
 ‘ Way; and introduce Larks in his next Opera of *Susanna*,
 ‘ or *Innocence betrayed*, which will be exhibited next
 ‘ Week with a Pair of new Elders.

‘ THE Moral of Mr. *Powell*’s Drama is violated, I
 ‘ confess, by Punch’s national Reflexions on the *French*,
 ‘ and King *Harry*’s laying his Leg upon the Queen’s
 ‘ Lap in too ludicrous a manner before so great an As-
 ‘ sembly.

‘ AS to the Mechanism and Scenary, every thing in-
 ‘ deed was uniform and of a piece, and the Scenes were
 ‘ managed very dextrously; which calls on me to take
 ‘ notice, that at the *Hay-Market* the Undertakers for-
 ‘ getting to change their Side-Scenes, we were presented
 ‘ with a Prospect of the Ocean in the midst of a delight-
 ‘ ful Grove; and tho’ the Gentlemen on the Stage had
 ‘ very much contributed to the Beauty of the Grove, by
 ‘ walking up and down between the Trees, I must own
 ‘ I was not a little astonished to see a well-dressed young
 ‘ Fellow, in a full-bottomed Wig, appear in the midst
 ‘ of the Sea, and without any visible Concern taking
 ‘ Snuff.

‘ I shall only observe one thing farther, in which
 ‘ both Dramas agree; which is, that by the Squeak of
 ‘ their Voices the Heroes of each is Eunuchs; and as
 ‘ the Wit in both Pieces is equal, I must prefer the
 ‘ Performance of Mr. *Powell*, because it is in our own
 ‘ Language.

R

I am, &c.

Saturday,