

‘ count of it; for which Reason, I hope you will pardon me that I so abruptly subscribe my self,

S I R,

*Your most obedient*

*humble Servant,*

T. B.

‘ I forgot to tell you, that *Albina*, who has six Voluntaries in this Club, is one of your Readers.



N<sup>o</sup> 31. *Thursday, April 5.*

*Sit mihi fas audita loqui? —*

Virg.

**L**AST Night, upon my going into a Coffee-house not far from the *Hay-Market* Theatre, I diverted my self for above half an Hour with over-hearing the Discourse of one, who, by the Shabbiness of his Dress, the Extravagance of his Conceptions, and the Hurry of his Speech, I discovered to be of that Species who are generally distinguished by the Title of Projectors. This Gentleman, for I found he was treated as such by his Audience, was entertaining a whole Table of Listners with the Project of an Opera, which he told us had not cost him above two or three Mornings in the Contrivance, and which he was ready to put in Execution, provided he might find his Account in it. He said, that he had observed the great Trouble and Inconvenience which Ladies were at, in travelling up and down to the several Shows that are exhibited in different Quarters of the Town. The dancing Monkies are in one Place; the Puppet-show in another; the Opera in a third; not to mention the Lions, that are almost a whole Day's Journey from the Politer Part of the Town. By this means People of Figure are forced to lose half the Winter after their coming to Town, before they have

seen all the strange Sights about it. In order to remedy this great Inconvenience, our Projector drew out of his Pocket the Scheme of an Opera, Entitled, *The Expedition of Alexander the Great*; in which he had disposed all the remarkable Shows about Town, among the Scenes and Decorations of his Piece. The Thought, he confessed, was not originally his own, but that he had taken the Hint of it from several Performances which he had seen upon our Stage: in one of which there was a Rary-Show; in another, a Ladder-Dance; and in others a Posture-Man, a Moving-Picture, with many Curiosities of the like Nature.

THIS *Expedition of Alexander* opens with his consulting the Oracle at *Delphos*, in which the dumb Conjuror, who has been visited by so many Persons of Quality of late Years, is to be introduced as telling him his Fortune: At the same time *Clench of Barnet* is represented in another Corner of the Temple, as ringing the Bells of *Delphos*, for joy of his Arrival. The Tent of *Darius* is to be Peopled by the Ingenious Mrs. *Salmon*, where *Alexander* is to fall in Love with a Piece of Wax-work, that represents the beautiful *Statira*. When *Alexander* comes into that Country, in which *Quintus Curtius* tells us the Dogs were so exceeding fierce that they would not lose their Hold, tho' they were cut to pieces Limb by Limb, and that they would hang upon their Prey by their Teeth when they had nothing but a Mouth left, there is to be a Scene of *Hockley in the Hole*, in which is to be represented all the Diversions of that Place, the Bull-baiting only excepted, which cannot possibly be exhibited in the Theatre, by reason of the Lowness of the Roof. The several Woods in *Asia*, which *Alexander* must be supposed to pass through, will give the Audience a Sight of Monkeys dancing upon Ropes, with many other Pleasantries of that ludicrous Species. At the same time, if there chance to be any Strange Animals in Town, whether Birds or Beasts, they may be either let loose among the Woods, or driven across the Stage by some of the Country People of *Asia*. In the last great Battle, *Pinkethman* is to personate King *Porus* upon an Elephant, and is to be encountered by *Powell*, representing *Alexander the Great*, upon a Dromedary, which nevertheless

less Mr. *Powell* is desired to call by the Name of *Bucephalus*. Upon the Close of this great decisive Battle, when the two Kings are thoroughly reconciled, to shew the mutual Friendship and good Correspondence that reigns between them, they both of them go together to a Puppet-Show, in which the ingenious Mr. *Powell, Junior*, may have an Opportunity of displaying his whole Art of Machinery, for the Diversion of the two Monarchs. Some at the Table urged, that a Puppet-Show was not a suitable Entertainment for *Alexander* the Great; and that it might be introduced more properly, if we suppose the Conqueror touched upon that Part of *India* which is said to be inhabited by the Pigmies. But this Objection was looked upon as frivolous, and the Proposal immediately over-ruled. Our Projector further added, that after the Reconciliation of these two Kings they might invite one another to Dinner, and either of them entertain his Guest with the *German* Artist, Mr. *Pinkethman's* Heathen Gods, or any of the like Diversions, which shall then chance to be in vogue.

THIS Project was received with very great Applause by the whole Table. Upon which the Undertaker told us, that he had not yet communicated to us above half his Design; for that *Alexander* being a *Greek*, it was his Intention that the whole Opera should be acted in that Language, which was a Tongue he was sure would wonderfully please the Ladies, especially when it was a little raised and rounded by the *Ionick* Dialect; and could not but be acceptable to the whole Audience, because there are fewer of them who understand *Greek* than *Italian*. The only Difficulty that remained, was how to get Performers, unless we could persuade some Gentlemen of the Universities to learn to Sing, in order to qualify themselves for the Stage; but this Objection soon vanished, when the Projector informed us that the *Greeks* were at present the only Musicians in the *Turkish* Empire, and that it would be very easy for our Factory at *Smyrna* to furnish us every Year with a Colony of Musicians, by the Opportunity of the *Turkey* Fleet; besides, says he, if we want any single Voice for any lower Part in the Opera, *Lawrence* can learn to speak *Greek*, as well as he does *Italian*, in a Fortnight's time.

THE Projector having thus settled Matters, to the good liking of all that heard him, he left his Seat at the Table, and planted himself before the Fire, where I had unluckily taken my Stand for the Convenience of over-hearing what he said. Whether he had observed me to be more attentive than ordinary, I cannot tell, but he had not stood by me above a quarter of a Minute, but he turned short upon me on a sudden, and catching me by a Button of my Coat, attacked me very abruptly after the following manner: Besides, Sir, I have heard of a very extraordinary Genius for Musick that lives in *Switzerland*, who has so strong a Spring in his Fingers, that he can make the Board of an Organ sound like a Drum, and if I could but procure a Subscription of about Ten thousand Pound every Winter, I would undertake to fetch him over, and oblige him by Articles to set every thing that should be sung upon the *English* Stage. After this he looked full in my Face, expecting I would make an Answer; when by good Luck, a Gentleman that had entered the Coffee-house since the Projector applied himself to me, hearing him talk of his *Swiss* Compositions, cry'd out with a kind of Laugh, Is our Musick then to receive farther Improvements from *Switzerland*! This alarmed the Projector, who immediately let go my Button, and turned about to answer him. I took the Opportunity of the Diversion, which seemed to be made in favour of me, and laying down my Penny upon the Bar, retired with some Precipitation. C



N<sup>o</sup> 32. *Friday, April 6.*

*Nil illi larvâ aut tragicis opus esse Cothurnis.* Hor.

THE late Discourse concerning the Statutes of the *Ugly Club*, having been so well received at *Oxford*, that, contrary to the strict Rules of the Society, they have been so partial as to take my own Testimonial, and admit me into that select Body; I could not restrain  
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