

‘ little Blemishes wear off very soon; but when they disappear in one Part of the Face, they are very apt to break out in another, insomuch that I have seen a Spot upon the Forehead in the Afternoon, which was upon the Chin in the Morning.

THE Author then proceeds to shew the Absurdity of Breeches and Petticoats, with many other curious Observations, which I shall reserve for another Occasion. I cannot however conclude this Paper without taking notice, That amidst these wild Remarks there now and then appears something very reasonable. I cannot likewise forbear observing, that we are all guilty in some measure of the same narrow way of Thinking, which we meet with in this Abstract of the *Indian Journal*; when we fancy the Customs, Dresses, and Manners of other Countries are ridiculous and extravagant, if they do not resemble those of our own. C



N<sup>o</sup> 51. Saturday, April 28.

*Torquet ab Obscenis jam nunc Sermonibus Aurem! Hor.*

Mr. SPECTATOR,

‘ MY Fortune, Quality, and Person are such as render me as conspicuous as any young Woman in Town. It is in my Power to enjoy it in all its Vanities, but I have, from a very careful Education, contracted a great Aversion to the forward Air and Fashion which is practised in all publick Places and Assemblies. I attribute this very much to the Stile and Manners of our Plays; I was last Night at the *Funeral*, where a confident Lover in the Play, speaking of his Mistress, cries out---*Oh that Harriot! to fold these Arms about the Waste of that beauteous, struggling, and at last yielding Fair!* Such an Image as this ought, by no means, to be presented to a chaste and regular Audience. I expect your Opinion of this Sentence, and recommend to

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‘ your Consideration, as a SPECTATOR, the Conduct  
 ‘ of the Stage at present with Relation to Chastity and  
 ‘ Modesty.

*I am, S I R,*

*Your constant Reader, and Well-wisher.*

THE Complaint of this young Lady is so just, that the Offence is gross enough to have displeased Persons who cannot pretend to that Delicacy and Modesty, of which she is Mistress. But there is a great deal to be said in Behalf of an Author: If the Audience would but consider the Difficulty of keeping up a sprightly Dialogue for five Acts together, they would allow a Writer, when he wants Wit, and can't please any otherwise, to help it out with a little Smuttiness. I will answer for the Poets, that no one ever writ Bawdry for any other Reason but Dearth of Invention. When the Author cannot strike out of himself any more of that which he has superior to those who make up the Bulk of his Audience, his natural Recourse is to that which he has in common with them; and a Description which gratifies a sensual Appetite will please, when the Author has nothing about him to delight a refined Imagination. It is to such a Poverty, we must impute this and all other Sentences in Plays, which are of this Kind, and which are commonly term'd Luscious Expressions.

THIS Expedient, to supply the Deficiencies of Wit, has been used, more or less, by most of the Authors who have succeeded on the Stage; tho' I know but one who has professedly writ a Play upon the Basis of the Desire of multiplying our Species, and that is the Polite Sir *George Etheridge*; if I understand what the Lady would be at, in the Play called *She would if She could*. Other Poets have, here and there, given an Intimation that there is this Design, under all the Disguises and Affectations which a Lady may put on; but no Author, except this, has made sure Work of it, and put the Imaginations of the Audience upon this one Purpose, from the Beginning to the End of the Comedy. It has always fared accordingly; for whether it be, that all who go to this Piece would if they could, or that the Innocents go to it, to guess only what *She would if She could*, the Play has always been well received.

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IT lifts an heavy empty Sentence, when there is added to it a lascivious Gesture of Body; and when it is too low to be raised even by that, a flat Meaning is enlivened by making it a double one. Writers, who want *Genius*, never fail of keeping this Secret in reserve, to create a Laugh, or raise a Clap. I, who know nothing of Women but from seeing Plays, can give great Guesſes at the whole Structure of the fair Sex, by being innocently placed in the Pit, and insulted by the Petticoats of their Dancers; the Advantages of whose pretty Persons are a great help to a dull Play. When a Poet flags in Writing lasciviously, a pretty Girl can move lasciviously, and have the same good Consequence for the Author. Dull Poets in this Case use their Audiences, as dull Parasites do their Patrons; when they cannot longer divert them with their Wit or Humour, they bait their Ears with something which is agreeable to their Temper, though below their Understanding. *Apicius* cannot resist being pleased, if you give him an Account of a delicious Meal; or *Clodius*, if you describe a wanton Beauty: Tho' at the same time, if you do not awake those Inclinations in them, no Men are better Judges of what is just and delicate in Conversation. But as I have before observed, it is easier to talk to the Man, than to the Man of Sense.

IT is remarkable, that the Writers of least Learning are best skilled in the lascivious Way. The Poetesses of the Age have done Wonders in this kind; and we are obliged to the Lady who writ *Ibrahim*, for introducing a preparatory Scene to the very Action, when the Emperor throws his Handkerchief as a Signal for his Mistress to follow him into the most retired Part of the Seraglio. It must be confessed his *Turkish* Majesty went off with a good Air, but, methought, we made but a sad Figure who waited without. This ingenious Gentlewoman, in this piece of Bawdry, refined upon an Author of the same Sex, who, in the *Rover*, makes a Country Squire strip to his Holland Drawers. For *Blunt* is disappointed, and the Emperor is understood to go on to the utmost. The Pleasantry of Stripping almost Naked has been since practised (where indeed it should have been begun) very successfully at *Bartholomew Fair*.

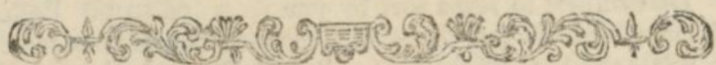
IT is not here to be omitted, that in one of the above-mentioned Female Compositions, the *Rover* is very frequently sent on the same Errand; as I take it, above once every Act. This is not wholly unnatural; for, they say, the Men-Authors draw themselves in their chief Characters, and the Women-Writers may be allowed the same Liberty. Thus, as the Male Wit gives his Hero a good Fortune, the Female gives her Heroine a good Gallant, at the end of the Play. But, indeed, there is hardly a Play one can go to, but the Hero or fine Gentleman of it struts off upon the same account, and leaves us to consider what good Office he has put us to, or to employ our selves as we please. To be plain, a Man who frequents Plays, would have a very respectful Notion of himself, were he to recollect how often he has been used as a Pimp to ravishing Tyrants, or successful Rakes. When the Actors make their *Exit* on this good Occasion, the Ladies are sure to have an examining Glance from the Pit, to see how they relish what passes; and a few lewd Fools are very ready to employ their Talents upon the Composure or Freedom of their Looks. Such Incidents as these make some Ladies wholly absent themselves from the Play-house; and others never miss the first Day of a Play, lest it should prove too luscious to admit their going with any Countenance to it on the second.

IF Men of Wit, who think fit to write for the Stage, instead of this pitiful way of giving Delight, would turn their Thoughts upon raising it from good natural Impulses as are in the Audience, but are choked up by Vice and Luxury, they would not only please, but befriend us at the same time. If a Man had a mind to be new in his way of Writing, might not he who is now represented as a fine Gentleman, tho' he betrays the Honour and Bed of his Neighbour and Friend, and lies with half the Women in the Play, and is at last rewarded with her of the best Character in it; I say, upon giving the Comedy another Cast, might not such a one divert the Audience quite as well, if at the Catastrophe he were found out for a Traitor, and met with Contempt accordingly? There is seldom a Person devoted to above one Darling Vice at a Time, so that there is room enough to catch at  
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Mens Hearts to their Good and Advantage, if the Poets will attempt it with the Honesty which becomes their Characters.

THERE is no Man who loves his Bottle or his Mistress, in a manner so very abandoned, as not to be capable of relishing an agreeable Character, that is no way a Slave to either of those Pursuits. A Man that is Temperate, Generous, Valiant, Chaste, Faithful, and Honest, may, at the same time, have Wit, Humour, Mirth, good Breeding, and Gallantry. While he exerts these latter Qualities, twenty Occasions might be invented to shew he is Master of the other noble Virtues. Such Characters would smite and reprove the Heart of a Man of Sense, when he is given up to his Pleasures. He would see he has been mistaken all this while, and be convinced that a sound Constitution and an innocent Mind are the true Ingredients for becoming and enjoying Life. All Men of true Taste would call a Man of Wit, who should turn his Ambition this way, a Friend and Benefactor to his Country; but I am at a loss what Name they would give him, who makes use of his Capacity for contrary Purposes. R



N<sup>o</sup> 52. Monday, April 30.

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*Omnes ut Tecum meritis pro Talibus annos  
Exigat, & pulchrâ faciat Te prole parentem.* Virg.

A N ingenious Correspondent, like a sprightly Wife, will always have the last Word. I did not think my last Letter to the deformed Fraternity would have occasioned any Answer, especially since I had promised them so sudden a Visit: But as they think they cannot shew too great a Veneration for my Person, they have already sent me up an Answer. As to the Proposal of a Marriage between my self and the matchless *Hecattissa*, I have but one Objection to it; which is, That all the Society will expect to be acquainted with her; and

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