

a Witch, and fills the whole Country with extravagant Fancies, imaginary Distempers and terrifying Dreams. In the mean time, the poor Wretch that is the innocent Occasion of so many Evils begins to be frighted at her self, and sometimes confesses secret Commerce and Familiarities that her Imagination forms in a delirious old Age. This frequently cuts off Charity from the greatest Objects of Compassion, and inspires People with a Malevolence towards those poor decrepid Parts of our Species, in whom Human Nature is defaced by Infirmary and Dotage. L



N^o 118. Monday, July 16.

————— *Haeret lateri lethalis arundo.* Virg.

THIS agreeable Seat is surrounded with so many pleasing Walks, which are struck out of a Wood, in the midst of which the House stands, that one can hardly ever be weary of rambling from one Labyrinth of Delight to another. To one used to live in a City the Charms of the Country are so exquisite, that the Mind is lost in a certain Transport which raises us above ordinary Life, and yet is not strong enough to be inconsistent with Tranquillity. This State of Mind was I in, ravished with the Murmur of Waters, the Whisper of Breezes, the Singing of Birds; and whether I looked up to the Heavens, down on the Earth, or turned to the Prospects around me, still struck with new Sense of Pleasure; when I found by the Voice of my Friend who walked by me, that we had insensibly strolled into the Grove sacred to the Widow. This Woman, says he, is of all others the most unintelligible; she either designs to marry, or she does not. What is the most perplexing of all, is, that she doth not either say to her Lovers she has any Resolution against that Condition of Life in general, or that she banishes them; but conscious of her own Merit, she permits their Addresses, without Fear of any ill Consequence, or want of Respect, from their Rage or Despair. She has that in her Aspect, against which it is impossible

impossible to offend. A Man whose Thoughts are constantly bent upon so agreeable an Object, must be excused if the ordinary Occurrences in Conversation are below his Attention. I call her indeed perverse, but, alas! why do I call her so! Because her superior Merit is such, that I cannot approach her without Awe, that my Heart is checked by too much Esteem: I am angry that her Charms are not more accessible, that I am more inclined to worship than salute her: How often have I wished her unhappy that I might have an Opportunity of serving her? and how often troubled in that very Imagination, at giving her the Pain of being obliged? Well I have led a miserable Life in secret upon her Account; but fancy she would have condescended to have some regard for me, if it had not been for that watchful Animal her Confident.

OF all Persons under the Sun (continued he, calling me by my Name) be sure to set a Mark upon Confidents: They are of all People the most impertinent. What is most pleasant to observe in them, is, that they assume to themselves the Merit of the Persons whom they have in their Custody. *Orestilla* is a great Fortune, and in wonderful Danger of Surprizes, therefore full of Suspicions of the least indifferent thing, particularly careful of new Acquaintance, and of growing too familiar with the old. *Themista*, her Favourite-Woman, is every whit as careful of whom she speaks to, and what she says. Let the Ward be a Beauty, her Confident shall treat you with an Air of Distance; let her be a Fortune, and she assumes the suspicious Behaviour of her Friend and Patronefs. Thus it is that very many of our unmarried Women of Distinction, are to all Intents and Purposes married, except the Consideration of different Sexes. They are directly under the Conduct of their Whisperer; and think they are in a State of Freedom, while they can prate with one of these Attendants of all Men in general, and still avoid the Man they most like. You do not see one Heiress in a hundred whose Fate does not turn upon this Circumstance of choosing a Confident. Thus it is that the Lady is addressed to, presented and flattered, only by Proxy, in her Woman. In my Case, how is it possible that—Sir ROGER was proceeding in his Harangue, when we heard the Voice of one speaking very importunately, and repeating

repeating these Words, 'What, not one Smile?' We followed the Sound till we came to a close Thicket, on the other Side of which we saw a young Woman sitting as it were in a personated Sullenness just over a transparent Fountain. Opposite to her stood Mr. *William*, Sir ROGER's Master of the Game. The Knight whisper'd me, 'Hift, these are Lovers.' The Huntsman looking earnestly at the Shadow of the young Maiden in the Stream, 'Oh thou dear Picture, if thou couldst remain there in the Absence of that fair Creature whom you represent in the Water, how willingly could I stand here satisfied for ever, without troubling my dear *Betty* her self with any Mention of her unfortunate *William*, whom she is angry with: But alas! when she pleases to be gone, thou wilt also vanish — Yet let me talk to thee while thou dost stay. Tell my dearest *Betty* thou dost not more depend upon her, than does her *William*: Her Absence will make away with me as well as thee. If she offers to remove thee, I'll jump into these Waves to lay hold on thee; herself, her own dear Person, I must never embrace again. — Still do you hear me without one Smile — It is too much to bear —' He had no sooner spoke these Words, but he made an Offer of throwing himself into the Water: At which his Mistress started up, and at the next Instant he jumped across the Fountain and met her in an Embrace. She half recovering from her Fright, said in the most charming Voice imaginable, and with a Tone of Complaint, "I thought how well you would drown yourself." "No, no, you won't drown your self till you have taken your leave of *Susan Holiday*." The Huntsman, with a Tenderness that spoke the most passionate Love, and with his Cheek close to hers, whisper'd the softest Vows of Fidelity in her Ear, and cried, 'Don't, my Dear, believe a Word *Kate Willow* says; she is spiteful and makes Stories, because she loves to hear me talk to herself for your Sake.' Look you there, quoth Sir ROGER, do you see there, all Mischief comes from Confidants! But let us not interrupt them; the Maid is honest, and the Man dares not be otherwise, for he knows I loved her Father: I will interpose in this Matter, and hasten the Wedding. *Kate Willow* is a witty mischievous Wench

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in the Neighbourhood, who was a Beauty; and makes me hope I shall see the perverse Widow in her Condition. She was so flippant with her Answers to all the honest Fellows that came near her, and so very vain of her Beauty, that she has valued herself upon her Charms till they are ceas'd. She therefore now makes it her Business to prevent other young Women from being more Discreet than she was herself: However, the saucy thing said the other Day well enough, 'Sir ROGER and I must make a Match, for we are both despised by those we loved.' The Hussy has a great deal of Power wherever she comes, and has her Share of Cunning.

HOWEVER, when I reflect upon this Woman, I do not know whether in the main I am the worse for having loved her: Whenever she is recalled to my Imagination my Youth returns, and I feel a forgotten Warmth in my Veins. This Affliction in my Life has streaked all my Conduct with a Softness, of which I should otherwise have been incapable. It is, perhaps, to this dear Image in my Heart owing, that I am apt to relent, that I easily forgive, and that many desirable things are grown into my Temper, which I should not have arrived at by better Motives than the Thought of being one Day hers. I am pretty well satisfied such a Passion as I have had is never well cured; and between you and me, I am often apt to imagine it has had some whimsical Effect upon my Brain: For I frequently find, that in my most serious Discourse I let fall some comical Familiarity of Speech or odd Phrase that makes the Company laugh; However, I cannot but allow she is a most excellent Woman. When she is in the Country I warrant she does not run into Dairies, but reads upon the Nature of Plants; but has a Glass Hive, and comes into the Garden out of Books to see them work, and observe the Policies of their Commonwealth. She understands every thing. I'd give ten Pounds to hear her argue with my Friend Sir ANDREW FREEPORT about Trade. No, no, for all she looks so innocent as it were, take my Word for it she is no Fool.

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Tuesday,