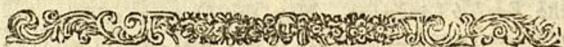


much addicted to Musick and Ceremony, has moulded all their Words and Phrases to those particular Uses. The Stateliness and Gravity of the *Spaniards* shews it self to Perfection in the Solemnity of their Language, and the blunt honest Humour of the *Germans* sounds better in the Roughness of the *High-Dutch*, than it would in a politer Tongue.

C



N^o 136. Monday, August 6.

— Parthis mendacior —

Hor.

ACCORDING to the Request of this strange Fellow, I shall print the following Letter.

Mr. SPECTATOR,

I Shall without any manner of Preface or Apology acquaint you, that I am, and ever have been from my Youth upward, one of the greatest Liars this Island has produced. I have read all the Moralists upon the Subject, but could never find any Effect their Discourses had upon me, but to add to my Misfortune by new Thoughts and Ideas, and making memore ready in my Language, and capable of sometimes mixing seeming Truths with my Improbabilities. With this strong Passion towards Falshood in this kind, there does not live an honefter Man or a sincerer Friend; but my Imagination runs away with me, and whatever is started I have such a Scene of Adventures appears in an Instant before me, that I cannot help uttering them, tho' to my immediate Confusion, I cannot but know I am liable to be detected by the first Man I meet.

UPON Occasion of the mention of the Battle of *Pultowa*, I could not forbear giving an Account of a Kinsman of mine, a young Merchant who was bred at *Moscow*, that had too much Mettle to attend Books of Entries and Accounts, when there was so active a Scene in the Country where he resided, and followed the Czar as a Volunteer: This warm Youth, born at the Instant the thing was spoke of, was the Man who unhorsed the *Swedish* General,

General, he was the Occasion that the *Moscovites* kept their Fire in so Soldier-like a manner, and brought up those Troops which were covered from the Enemy at the beginning of the Day; besides this, he had at last the good Fortune to be the Man who took Count *Piper*. With all this Fire I knew my Cousin to be the civilest Creature in the World. He never made any impertinent Show of his Valour, and then he had an excellent Genius for the World in every other kind. I had Letters from him (here I felt in my Pockets) that exactly spoke the Czar's Character, which I knew perfectly well; and I could not forbear concluding, that I lay with his Imperial Majesty twice or thrice a Week all the while he lodged at *Deptford*. What is worse than all this, it is impossible to speak to me, but you give me some occasion of coming out with one Lye or other, that has neither Wit, Humour, Prospect of Interest, or any other Motive that I can think of in Nature. The other Day, when one was commending an Eminent and Learned Divine, what occasion in the World had I to say, Methinks he would look more Venerable if he were not so fair a Man? I remember the Company smiled. I have seen the Gentleman since, and he is Cole Black. I have Intimations every Day in my Life that no Body believes me, yet I am never the better. I was saying something the other Day to an old Friend at *Will's* Coffee-house, and he made me no manner of Answer; but told me, that an Acquaintance of *Tully* the Orator having two or three times together said to him, without receiving any Answer, That upon his Honour he was but that very Month forty Years of Age; *Tully* answer'd, Surely you think me the most incredulous Man in the World, if I don't believe what you have told me every Day this ten Years. The Mischief of it is, I find my self wonderfully inclin'd to have been present at every Occurrence that is spoken of before me; this has led me into many Inconveniencies; but indeed they have been the fewer, because I am no ill-natur'd Man, and never speak Things to any Man's Disadvantage. I never directly defame, but I do what is as bad in the Consequence, for I have often made a Man say such and such a lively Expression, who was born a mere elder Brother. When one has said in my

' Hearing, Such a one is no wiser than he should be, I immediately have reply'd, Now 'faith I can't see that, he said a very good Thing to my Lord such a one, upon such an Occasion, and the like. Such an honest Dolt as this has been watch'd in every Expression he uttered, upon my Recommendation of him, and consequently been subject to the more Ridicule. I once endeavour'd to cure my self of this impertinent Quality, and resolv'd to hold my Tongue for seven Days together; I did so, but then I had so many Winks and unnecessary Distortions of my Face upon what any Body else said, that I found I only forbore the Expression, and that I still lyed in my Heart to every Man I met with. You are to know one Thing (which I believe you'll say is a pity, considering the Use I should have made of it) I never travelled in my Life; but I do not know whether I could have spoken of any foreign Country with more Familiarity than I do at present, in Company who are Strangers to me. I have curst the Inns in *Germany*; commended the Brothels at *Venice*; the Freedom of Conversation in *France*; and tho' I never was out of this dear Town, and fifty Miles about it, have been three Nights together dogged by Bravoes for an Intrigue with a Cardinal's Mistress at *Rome*.

' I T were endless to give you Particulars of this kind, but I can assure you, Mr. SPECTATOR, there are about Twenty or Thirty of us in this Town, I mean by this Town the Cities of *London* and *Westminster*; I say there are in Town a sufficient Number of us to make a Society among our selves; and since we cannot be believed any longer, I beg of you to print this my Letter, that we may meet together, and be under such Regulation as there may be no Occasion for Belief or Confidence among us. If you think fit we might be called *The Historians*, for *Liar* is become a very harsh Word. And that a Member of the Society may not hereafter be ill received by the rest of the World, I desire you would explain a little this sort of Men, and not let us *Historians* be ranked, as we are in the Imaginations of ordinary People, among common Liars, Make-bates, Impostors and Incendiaries. For your Instruction herein, you are to know that an *Historian* in Conversation is only a Person of so pregnant a Fancy, that he cannot be contented with ordinary

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Occurrences. I know a man of Quality of our Order, who is of the wrong Side of Forty-three, and has been of that Age, according to *Tully's* Jest, for some Years since, whose Vein is upon the Romantick. Give him the least Occasion, and he will tell you something so very particular that happen'd in such a Year, and in such Company, where by the by was present such a one, who was afterwards made such a thing. Out of all these Circumstances, in the best Language in the World, he will join together with such probable Incidents an Account that shews a Person of the deepest Penetration, the honestest Mind, and withal something so humble when he speaks of himself, that you would admire. Dear Sir, why should this be Lying! There is nothing so instructive. He has withal the gravest Aspect; something so very venerable and great! Another of these Historians is a Young Man whom he would take in, tho' he extremely wants Parts; as People send Children (before they can learn any thing) to School to keep them out of Harm's way. He tells things which have nothing at all in them, and can neither please nor displease, but merely take up your Time to no manner of Purpose, no manner of Delight; but he is good-natured, and does it because he loves to be saying something to you, and entertain you.

I could name you a Soldier that hath done very great things without Slaughter; he is prodigiously dull and slow of Head, but what he can say is for ever false, so that we must have him.

GIVE me leave to tell you of one more who is a Lover, he is the most afflicted Creature in the World, lest what happened between him and a great Beauty should ever be known. Yet again he comforts himself, *Hang the Jade her Woman. If Money can keep the Slut trusty I will do it, tho' I mortgage every Acre; Anthony and Cleopatra for that; All for Love and the World well lost.*

THEN, Sir, there is my little Merchant, honest *Indigo* of the *Change*, there's my Man for Loss and Gain; there's Tare and Tret, there's lying all round the Globe; he has such a prodigious Intelligence he knows all the *French* are doing, or what we intend or ought to intend, and has it from such Hands. But alas whither am I running! While I complain, while I remonstrate to you,