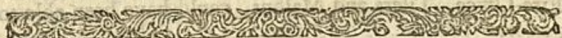


‘ Flattery, I acknowledge I do not like some of your Papers; but even there I am readier to call in question my own shallow Understanding than Mr. SPECTATOR’S profound Judgment.

I am, Sir, your already (and in hopes of being more your) obliged Servant,

PARTHENIA.

This last Letter is written with so urgent and serious an Air, that I cannot but think it incumbent upon me to comply with her Commands, which I shall do very suddenly. T



N^o 141. Saturday, August 11.

————— *Migravit ab Aure voluptas*
Omnis —————

Hor.

IN the present Emptiness of the Town, I have several Applications from the lower Part of the Players, to admit Suffering to pass for Acting. They in very obliging Terms desire me to let a Fall on the Ground, a Stumble, or a good Slap on the Back, be reckoned a Jest. These Gambols I shall tolerate for a Season, because I hope the Evil cannot continue longer than till the People of Condition and Taste return to Town. The Method, some time ago, was to entertain that Part of the Audience who have no Faculty above Eyesight, with Rope-Dancers and Tumblers; which was a way discreet enough, because it prevented Confusion, and distinguished such as could shew all the Postures which the Body is capable of, from those who were to represent all the Passions to which the Mind is subject. But tho’ this was prudently settled, Corporeal and Intellectual Actors ought to be kept at a still wider Distance than to appear on the same Stage at all: For which Reason I must propose some Methods for the Improvement of the Bear-Garden, by dismissing all Bodily Actors to that Quarter.

IN Cases of greater moment, where Men appear in Publick, the Consequence and Importance of the thing

K 2

can

can bear them out. And tho' a Pleader or Preacher is Hoarse or Aukward, the weight of their Matter commands Respect and Attention; but in Theatrical Speaking, if the Performer is not exactly proper and graceful, he is utterly ridiculous. In Cases where there is little else expected, but the Pleasure of the Ears and Eyes, the least Diminution of that Pleasure is the highest Offence. In acting, barely to perform the Part is not commendable, but to be the least out is contemptible. To avoid these Difficulties and Delicacies, I am informed, that while I was out of Town, the Actors have flown in the Air, and play'd such Pranks, and run such Hazards, that none but the Servants of the Fire-Office, Tilers and Masons, could have been able to perform the like. The Author of the following Letter, it seems, has been of the Audience at one of these Entertainments, and has accordingly complain'd to me upon it; but I think he has been to the utmost degree severe against what is exceptionable in the Play he mentions, without dwelling so much as he might have done on the Author's most excellent Talent of Humour. The pleasant Pictures he has drawn of Life, should have been more kindly mentioned, at the same time that he banishes his Witches, who are too dull Devils to be attack'd with so much Warmth.

Mr. SPECTATOR,

UPON a Report that *Moll White* had followed you to Town, and was to act a Part in the *Lancashire-Witches*, I went last Week to see that Play. It was my Fortune to sit next to a Country Justice of the Peace, a Neighbour (as he said) of Sir ROGER's, who pretended to shew her to us in one of the Dances. There was Witchcraft enough in the Entertainment almost to incline me to believe him; *Ben. Johnson* was almost lamed; young *Bullock* narrowly saved his Neck; the Audience was astonished, and an old Acquaintance of mine, a person of Worth, whom I would have bowed to in the Pit, at two Yards distance did not know me.

IF you were what the Country People reported you, a white Witch, I could have wished you had been there to have exercised that Rebel of Broomsticks, with which we were haunted for above three Hours. I could have

allowed

‘ allowed them to set *Clod* in the Tree, to have scared the
 ‘ Sportsmen, plagued the Justice, and employed honest
 ‘ *Teague* with his holy Water. This was the proper Use
 ‘ of them in Comedy, if the Author had stopped here; but
 ‘ I cannot conceive what Relation the Sacrifice of the
 ‘ Black Lamb, and the Ceremonies of their Worship to
 ‘ the Devil, have to the Business of Mirth and Humour.

‘ THE Gentleman who writ this Play, and has drawn
 ‘ some Characters in it very justly, appears to have been
 ‘ misled in his Witchcraft by an unwary following the in-
 ‘ imitable *Shakespear*. The Incantations in *Mackoeth* have
 ‘ a Solemnity admirably adapted to the Occasion of that
 ‘ Tragedy, and fill the Mind with a suitable Horror; be-
 ‘ sides, that the Witches are a part of the Story it self, as
 ‘ we find it very particularly related in *Heſtor Boetius*, from
 ‘ whom he seems to have taken it. This therefore is a
 ‘ proper Machine where the Business is dark, horrid, and
 ‘ bloody; but is extremely foreign from the Affair of Co-
 ‘ medy. Subjects of this Kind, which are in themselves
 ‘ disagreeable, can at no time become entertaining, but
 ‘ by passing thro’ an Imagination like *Shakespear*’s to form
 ‘ them; for which Reason Mr. *Dryden* would not allow
 ‘ even *Racourus* and *Fletcher* capable of imitating him.

*But Shakespear’s Magick cou’d not copy’d be,
 Within that Circle none durst walk but He.*

‘ I should not, however, have troubled you with these
 ‘ Remarks, if there were not something else in this Co-
 ‘ medy, which wants to be exorcised more than the
 ‘ Witches: I mean the Freedom of some Passages, which
 ‘ I should have overlooked, if I had not observed that those
 ‘ Jestes can raise the loudest Mirth, though they are painful
 ‘ to right Sense, and an Outrage upon Modesty.

‘ WE must attribute such Liberties to the Taste of that
 ‘ Age, but indeed by such Representations a Poet sacri-
 ‘ fices the best Part of his Audience to the worst; and, as
 ‘ one would think, neglects the Boxes, to write to the
 ‘ Orange-Wench.

‘ I must not conclude till I have taken notice of the
 ‘ Moral with which this Comedy ends. The two young
 ‘ Ladies have given a notable Example of outwitting
 ‘ those who had a Right in the Disposal of them, and mar-