

THERE is no Charm in the Female Sex, that can supply the place of Virtue. Without Innocence, Beauty is unlovely, and Quality contemptible, Good-breeding degenerates into Wantonness, and Wit into Impudence. It is observed, that all the Virtues are represented by both Painters and Statuaries under Female Shapes, but if any one of them has a more particular Title to that Sex, it is Modesty. I shall leave it to the Divines to guard them against the opposite Vice, as they may be overpower'd by Temptations; It is sufficient for me to have warned them against it, as they may be led astray by Instinct.

I desire this Paper may be read with more than ordinary Attention, at all Tea-Tables within the Cities of London and Westminster. X



N^o 396. Wednesday, June 4.

Barbara, Celarent, Darii, Ferio, Baralipton.

HAVING a great deal of Business upon my Hands at present, I shall beg the Reader's Leave to present him with a Letter that I received about half a Year ago from a Gentleman of Cambridge, who styles himself *Peter de Quir*. I have kept it by me some Months, and though I did not know at first what to make of it, upon my reading it over very frequently I have at last discovered several Conceits in it: I would not therefore have my Reader discouraged if he does not take them at the first Perusal.

To Mr. SPECTATOR.

SIR, From St. John's College Cambridge, Feb. 3. 1712.

THE Monopoly of Puns in this University has been an immemorial Privilege of the *Johnians*; and we can't help resenting the late Invasion of our ancient

ancient Right as to that Particular, by a little Pretender to Clenching in a neighbouring College, who in an Application to you by way of Letter, a while ago, stiled himself *Philobrunne*. Dear Sir, as you are by Character a profest Well-wisher to Speculation, you will excuse a Remark which this Gentleman's Passion for the *Brunette* has suggested to a Brother Theorist: 'tis an Offer towards a mechanical Account of his Lapse to Punning, for he belongs to a Set of Mortals who value themselves upon an uncommon Mastery in the more humane and polite Part of Letters. A Conquest by one of this Species of Females gives a very odd Turn to the Intellectuals of the captivated Person, and very different from that way of thinking which a Triumph from the Eyes of another more emphatically of the fair Sex, does generally occasion. It fills the Imagination with an Assemblage of such Ideas and Pictures as are hardly any thing but Shade, such as Night, the Devil, &c. These Portraits very near overpower the Light of the Understanding, almost benight the Faculties, and give that melancholy Tincture to the most sanguine Complexion, which this Gentleman calls an Inclination to be in a Brown-study, and is usually attended with worse Consequences, in case of a Repulse. During this Twilight of Intellects, the Patient is extremely apt, as Love is the most witty Passion in Nature, to offer at some pert Sallies now and then, by way of Flourish, upon the amiable Enchantress, and unfortunately stumbles upon that Mungrel miscreated (to speak in *Miltonic*) kind of Wit, vulgarly termed the Punn. It would not be much amiss to consult Dr. T— W— (who is certainly a very able Projector, and whose System of Divinity and spiritual Mechanicks obtains very much among the better Part of our Under-Graduates) whether a general Inter-marriage, enjoined by Parliament, between this Sister-hood of the Olive Beauties, and the Fraternity of the People call'd Quakers, would not be a very serviceable Expedient, and abate that Overflow of Light which shines within them so powerfully, that it dazzles their Eyes, and dances them into a thousand Vagaries of Error and Enthusiasm. These Reflexions

may

may impart some Light towards a Discovery of the Origin of Punning among us, and the Foundation of its prevailing so long in this famous Body. 'Tis notorious from the Instance under Consideration, that it must be owing chiefly to the use of brown Juggs, muddy Belch, and the Fumes of a certain memorable Place of Rendezvous with us at Meals, known by the Name of *Staincoat Hole*: For the Atmosphere of the Kitchen, like the Tail of a Comet, predominates least about the Fire, but resides behind and fills the fragrant Receptacle above-mentioned. Besides, 'tis farther observable, that the delicate Spirits among us, who declare against these nauseous Proceedings, sip Tea, and put up for Critic and Amour, profess likewise an equal Abhorrence for Punning, the ancient innocent Diversion of this Society. After all, Sir, tho' it may appear something absurd, that I seem to approach you with the Air of an Advocate for Punning, (you who have justified your Censures of the Practice in a set Dissertation upon that Subject;) yet, I'm confident, you'll think it abundantly atoned for by observing, that this humbler Exercise may be as instrumental in diverting us from any innovating Schemes and Hypothesis in Wit, as dwelling upon honest Orthodox Logic would be in securing us from Heresy in Religion. Had Mr. *W*——n's Researches been confined within the Bounds of *Ramus* or *Crackenthorp*, that learned News-monger might have acquiesced in what the holy Oracles pronounce upon the Deluge, like other Christians; and had the surprising Mr. *L*——y been content with the Employment of refining upon *Shakespear's* Points and Quibbles, (for which he must be allowed to have a superlative Genius) and now and then penning a Catch or a Ditty, instead of inditing Odes, and Sonnets, the Gentlemen of the *Bon Gout* in the Pit would never have been put to all that Grimace in damning the Frillery of State, the Poverty and Langour of Thought, the unnatural Wit, and artificial Structure of his Dramas.

I am, S I R,

Your very humble Servant,
Peter de Quir.
Thursday,