



N^o 468. *Wednesday, August 27.*

Erat Homo ingeniosus, acutus, acer, & qui plurimum & salis haberet & fellis, nec candoris minus. Plin. Epist.

MY Paper is in a kind a Letter of News, but it regards rather what passes in the World of Conversation than that of Business. I am very sorry that I have at present a Circumstance before me, which is of very great Importance to all who have a Relish for Gaiety, Wit, Mirth, or Humour; I mean the Death of poor *Dick Eastcourt*. I have been oblig'd to him for so many Hours of Jollity, that it is but a small Recompence, tho' all I can give him, to pass a Moment or two in Sadness for the Loss of so agreeable a Man. Poor *Eastcourt*! the last Time I saw him, we were plotting to shew the Town his great Capacity for acting in its full Light, by introducing him as dictating to a Set of young Players, in what manner to speak this Sentence, and utter t'other Passion — He had so exquisite a Discerning of what was defective in any Object before him, that in an Instant he could shew you the ridiculous Side of what would pass for beautiful and just, even to Men of no ill Judgment, before he had pointed at the Failure. He was no less skilful in the Knowledge of Beauty; and, I dare say, there is no one who knew him well, but can repeat more well-turn'd Compliments, as well as smart Repartees of Mr. *Eastcourt*'s, than of any other Man in *England*. This was easily to be observed in his inimitable Faculty of telling a Story, in which he would throw in natural and unexpected Incidents to make his Court to one Part, and rally the other Part of the Company: Then he would vary the Usage he gave them, according as he saw them bear kind or sharp Language. He had the Knack to raise up a pensive Temper, and mortify an impertinently gay one, with the most agreeable Skill imaginable. There are a thousand things which crowd into my Memory, which make me too much concerned to tell

tell on about him. *Hamlet* holding up the Skull which the Grave-digger threw to him, with an Account that it was the Head of the King's Jester, falls into very pleasing Reflexions, and cries out to his Companion,

Alas, poor Yorick ! I knew him, Horatio, a Fellow of infinite Jest, of most excellent Fancy ; he hath borne me on his Back a thousand times : And how abhorred my Imagination is now, my Gorge rises at it. Here hung those Lips that I have kiss'd I know not how oft. Where be your Gibes now, your Gambols, your Songs, your Flashes of Merriment, that were wont to set the Table on a Roar : No one now to mock your own Jeerings, quite Chop-fallen. Now get you to my Lady's Chamber, and tell her, Let her paint an Inch-thick, to this Favour she must come. Make her laugh at that.

IT is an Insolence natural to the Wealthy, to asfix, as much as in them lies, the Character of a Man to his Circumstances. Thus it is ordinary with them to praise faintly the good Qualities of those below them, and say, It is very extraordinary in such a Man as he is, or the like, when they are forced to acknowledge the Value of him whose Lowness upbraids their Exaltation. It is to this Humour only, that it is to be ascribed, that a quick Wit in Conversation, a nice Judgment upon any Emergency that could arise, and a most blameless inoffensive Behaviour, could not raise this Man above being received only upon the Foot of contributing to Mirth and Diversion. But he was as easy under that Condition, as a Man of so excellent Talents was capable ; and since they would have it, that to divert was his Business, he did it with all the seeming Alacrity imaginable, tho' it stung him to the Heart that it was his Business. Men of Sense, who could taste his Excellencies, were well satisfied to let him lead the Way in Conversation, and play after his own Manner ; but Fools who provoked him to Mimickry, found he had the Indignation to let it be at their Expence, who called for it, and he would shew the Form of conceited heavy Fellows as Jest to the Company at their own Request, in Revenge for interrupting him from being a Companion to put on the Character of a Jester.

WHAT was peculiarly excellent in this memorable Companion, was that in the Accounts he gave of Persons and Sentiments, he did not only hit the Figure of
theirs

their Faces, and Manner of their Gestures, but he would in his Narration fall into their very Way of Thinking, and this when he recounted Passages, wherein Men of the best Wit were concerned, as well as such wherein were represented Men of the lowest Rank of Understanding. It is certainly as great an Instance of Self-love to a Weakness, to be impatient of being mimick'd, as any can be imagined. There were none but the Vain, the Formal, the Proud, or those who were incapable of amending their Faults, that dreaded him; to others he was in the highest Degree pleasing; and I do not know any Satisfaction of any indifferent kind I ever tasted so much, as having got over an Impatience of seeing my self in the Air he could put me when I have displeased him. It is indeed to his exquisite Talent this way, more than any Philosophy I could read on the Subject, that my Person is very little of my Care; and it is indifferent to me what is said of my Shape, my Air, my Manner, my Speech, or my Address. It is to poor *Eastcourt* I chiefly owe that I am arrived at the Happiness of thinking nothing a Diminution to me, but what argues a Depravity of my Will.

IT has as much surpris'd me as any thing in Nature, to have it frequently said, That he was not a good Player: But that must be owing to a Partiality for former Actors in the Parts in which he succeeded them, and judging by Comparison of what was liked before, rather than by the Nature of the Thing. When a Man of his Wit and Smartness could put on an utter Absence of common Sense in his Face, as he did in the Character of *Bulfinch* in the *Northern Lass*, and an Air of insipid Cunning and Vivacity in the Character of *Pounce* in the *Tender Husband*, it is Folly to dispute his Capacity and Success, as he was an Actor.

POOR *Eastcourt*! let the Vain and Proud be at Rest; they will no more disturb their Admiration of their dear selves, and thou art no longer to drudge in raising the Mirth of Stupids, who know nothing of thy Merit, for thy Maintenance.

IT is natural for the Generality of Mankind to run into Reflexions upon our Mortality, when Disturbers of the World are laid at Rest, but to take no notice when they who can please and divert are pulled from us: But for my part, I cannot but think the Loss of such Talents