

young Lover living so exact in the Care of his Person. One who asked why he was so long washing his Mouth, and so delicate in the Choice and Wearing of his Linen, was answered, Because there was a Woman of Merit obliged to receive me kindly, and I think it incumbent upon me to make her Inclination go along with her Duty.

If a Man would give himself leave to think, he would not be so unreasonable as to expect Debauchery and Innocence could live in Commerce together; or hope that Flesh and Blood is capable of so strict an Allegiance, as that a fine Woman must go on to improve herself 'till she is as good and impassive as an Angel, only to preserve a Fidelity to a Brute and a Satyr. The Lady who desires me for her Sake to end one of my Papers with the following Letter, I am persuaded, thinks such a Perseverance very impracticable.

Husband,

‘**S**TAY more at home. I know where you visited at Seven of the Clock on Thursday Evening. The Colonel, whom you charged me to see no more, is in Town.

T

Martha Housewife.



N^o 179. Tuesday, September 25.

*Centuriæ seniorum agitant expertia frugis:
Celsi prætereunt austera Poemata Rhamnes.
Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci,
Lectorem delectando, pariterque monendo.*

Hor.

IMAY cast my Readers under two general Divisions, the *Mercurial* and the *Saturnine*. The first are the gay Part of my Disciples, who require Speculations of Wit and Humour; the others are those of a more solemn and sober Turn, who find no Pleasure but in Papers

pers of Morality and sound Sense. The former call every thing that is Serious, Stupid; the latter look upon every thing as Impertinent that is Ludicrous. Were I always Grave, one half of my Readers would fall off from me: Were I always Merry, I should lose the other. I make it therefore my Endeavour to find out Entertainments of both Kinds, and by that means perhaps consult the Good of both, more than I should do, did I always write to the particular Taste of either. As they neither of them know what I proceed upon, the sprightly Reader, who takes up my Paper in order to be diverted, very often finds himself engaged unawares in a serious and profitable Course of Thinking; as on the contrary, the thoughtful Man, who perhaps may hope to find something Solid, and full of deep Reflexion, is very often insensibly betrayed into a fit of Mirth. In a word, the Reader sits down to my Entertainment without knowing his Bill of Fare, and has therefore at least the Pleasure of hoping there may be a Dish to his Palate.

I must confess, were I left to my self, I should rather aim at Instructing than Diverting; but if we will be useful to the World, we must take it as we find it. Authors of professed Severity discourage the looser Part of Mankind from having any thing to do with their Writings. A Man must have Virtue in him, before he will enter upon the Reading of a *Seneca* or an *Epictetus*. The very Title of a Moral Treatise has something in it austere and shocking to the Careless and Inconsiderate.

FOR this Reason several unthinking Persons fall in my way, who would give no Attention to Lectures delivered with a Religious Seriousness or a Philosophick Gravity. They are ensnared into Sentiments of Wisdom and Virtue when they do not think of it; and if by that means they arrive only at such a Degree of Consideration as may dispose them to listen to more studied and elaborate Discourses, I shall not think my Speculations useless. I might likewise observe, that the Gloominess in which sometimes the Minds of the best Men are involved, very often stands in need of such little Incitements to Mirth and Laughter, as are apt to disperse Melancholy, and put our Faculties in good Humour. To which some will add, that the *British* Climate, more than

than any other, makes Entertainments of this Nature in a manner necessary.

IF what I have here said does not recommend, it will at least excuse the Variety of my Speculations. I would not willingly Laugh but in order to instruct, or if I sometimes fail in this Point, when my Mirth ceases to be Instructive, it shall never cease to be Innocent. A scrupulous Conduct in this Particular, has, perhaps, more Merit in it than the Generality of Readers imagine; did they know how many Thoughts occur in a Point of Humour, which a discreet Author in Modesty suppresses; how many Strokes of Rallery present themselves, which could not fail to please the ordinary Taste of Mankind, but are stifled in their Birth by reason of some remote Tendency which they carry in them to corrupt the Minds of those who read them; did they know how many Glances of Ill-nature are industriously avoided for fear of doing Injury to the Reputation of another, they would be apt to think kindly of those Writers who endeavour to make themselves Diverting without being Immoral. One may apply to these Authors that Passage in *Waller*,

*Poets lose half the Praise they would have got,
Were it but known what they discreetly blot.*

As nothing is more easy than to be a Wit, with all the above mentioned Liberties, it requires some Genius and Invention to appear such without them.

WHAT I have here said is not only in regard to the Publick, but with an Eye to my particular Correspondent who has sent me the following Letter, which I have castrated in some Places upon these Considerations.

S I R,

HAVING lately seen your Discourse upon a Match of Grinning, I cannot forbear giving you an Account of a Whistling Match, which, with many others, I was entertained with about three Years since at the Bath. The Prize was a Guinea, to be conferred upon the ablest Whistler, that is on him who could whistle clearest, and go through his Tune without Laughing,

to which at the same time he was provoked by the antick Postures of a *Merry Andrew*, who was to stand upon the Stage and play his Tricks in the Eye of the Performer. There were three Competitors for the Ring. The first was a Plough-man of a very promising Aspect; his Features were steady, and his Muscles composed in so inflexible a Stupidity, that upon his first Appearance every one gave the Guinea for lost. The Pickled Herring however found the Way to shake him, for upon his Whistling a Country Jig, this unlucky Wag danced to it with such Variety of Distortions and Grimaces that the Country-man could not forbear smiling upon him, and by that means spoiled his Whistle and lost the Prize.

THE next that mounted the Stage was an Under-Citizen of the *Bath*, a Person remarkable among the inferior People of that Place for his great Wisdom and his Broad Band. He contracted his Mouth with much Gravity, and, that he might dispose his Mind to be more serious than ordinary, begun the the Tune of *the Children in the Wood*, and went through part of it with good Success; when on a sudden the Wit at his Elbow, who had appeared wonderfully grave and attentive for some time, gave him a Touch upon the left Shoulder, and stared him in the Face with so bewitching a Grin, that the Whistler relaxed his Fibres into a Kind of Simper, and at length burst out into an open Laugh. The third who entered the Lists was a Footman, who in Defiance of the *Merry Andrew*, and all his Arts, whistled a *Scotch* Tune and an *Italian* Sonata, with so settled a Countenance, that he bore away the Prize, to the great Admiration of some Hundreds of Persons, who, as well as my self, were present at this Trial of Skill. Now, Sir, I humbly conceive, whatever you have determined of the Grinners, the Whistlers ought to be encouraged, not only as their Art is practised without Distortion, but as it improves Country Musick, promotes Gravity, and teaches ordinary People to keep their Countenances, if they see any thing ridiculous in their Betters; besides that, it seems an Entertainment very particularly adapted to the *Bath*, as it is usual for a Rider to whistle to his Horse when he would make his Waters pass.

I am, Sir, &c.