

Mr. SPECTATOR,

I Am Wife to a Clergyman, and cannot help thinking that in your Tenth or Tithe Character of Woman-kind you meant my self, therefore I have no Quarrel against you for the other Nine Characters.

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Your Humble Servant, A. B.

N^o 218. *Friday, November 9.*

Quid de quoque viro, & cui dicas, sepe caveto. Hor.

I Happened the other Day, as my Way is, to strolè in to a little Coffee-house beyond *Aldgate*; and as I sat there, two or three very plain sensible Men were talking of the *SPECTATOR*. One said, he had that Morning drawn the great Benefit Ticket; another wished he had; but a third shook his Head and said, It was pity that the Writer of that Paper was such a sort of Man, that it was no great Matter whether he had it or no. He is, it seems, said the good Man, the most extravagant Creature in the World; has run through vast Sums, and yet been in continual Want; a Man, for all he talks so well of Oeconomy unfit for any of the Offices of Life by reason of his Profuseness. It would be an unhappy Thing to be his Wife, his Child, or his Friend; and yet he talks as well of those Duties of Life as any one. Much Reflexion has brought me to so easy a Contempt for every thing which is false, that this heavy Accusation gave me no manner of Uneasiness; but at the same Time it threw me into deep Thought upon the Subject of Fame in general; and I could not but pity such as were so weak, as to value what the common People say out of their own talkative Temper to the Advantage or Diminution of those whom they mention, without being moved either by Malice or Good-will. It will be too long to expatiate upon the Sense all Mankind have of Fame, and
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the inexpressible Pleasure which there is in the Approbation of worthy Men, to all who are capable of worthy Actions; but methinks one may divide the general Word Fame into three different Species, as it regards the different Orders of Mankind who have any Thing to do with it. Fame therefore may be divided into Glory, which respects the Hero; Reputation, which is preserved by every Gentleman; and Credit which must be supported by every Tradesman. These Possessions in Fame are dearer than Life to these Characters of Men, or rather are the Life of those Characters. Glory, while the Hero pursues great and noble Enterprizes, is impregnable; and all the Assailants of his Renown do but shew their Pain and Impatience of its Brightness, without throwing the least Shade upon it. If the Foundation of an high Name be Virtue and Service, all that is offered against it is but Rumour, which is too short-liv'd to stand up in Competition with Glory, which is everlasting.

X REPUTATION, which is the Portion of every Man who would live with the elegant and knowing Part of Mankind, is as stable as Glory, if it be as well founded; and the common Cause of human Society, is thought concerned when we hear a Man of good Behaviour calumniated: Besides which, according to a prevailing Custom amongst us, every Man has his Defence in his own Arm: and Reproach is soon checked, put out of Countenance, and overtaken by Disgrace.

THE most unhappy of all Men, and the most exposed to the Malignity or Wantonness of the common Voice, is the Trader. Credit is undone in Whispers. The Tradesman's Wound is received from one who is more private and more cruel than the Russian with the Lanthorn and Dagger. The Manner of repeating a Man's Name, *As Mr. Cash, Oh! do you leave your Money at his Shop? Why, do you know Mr. Searoom? He is indeed a general Merchant.* I say, I have seen, from the Iteration of a Man's Name, hiding one Thought of him, and explaining what you hide, by saying something to his Advantage when you speak, a Merchant hurt in his Credit; and him who, every Day he lived, literally added to the Value of his Native Country, undone by one who was only a Burden and a Blemish to it. Since every Body who knows the
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World is sensible of this great Evil, how careful ought a Man to be in his Language of a Merchant? It may possibly be in the Power of a very shallow Creature to lay the Ruin of the best Family in the most opulent City; and the more so, the more highly he deserves of his Country; that is to say, the farther he places his Wealth out of his Hands, to draw home that of another Climate.

IN this Case an ill Word may change Plenty into Want, and by a rash Sentence a free and generous Fortune may in a few Days be reduced to Beggary. How little does a giddy Prater imagine, that an idle Phrase to the Disfavour of a Merchant, may be as pernicious in the Consequence, as the Forgery of a Deed to bar an Inheritance would be to a Gentleman? Land stands where it did before a Gentleman was calumniated, and the State of a great Action is just as it was before Calumny was offered to diminish it, and there is Time, Place and Occasion, expected to unravel all that is contrived against those Characters; but the Trader who is ready only for probable Demands upon him, can have no Armour against the Inquisitive, the Malicious, and the Envious, who are prepared to fill the Cry to his Dishonour. Fire and Sword are slow Engines of Destruction, in Comparison of the Babblers in the Case of the Merchant.

FOR this Reason I thought it an imitable Piece of Humanity of a Gentleman of my Acquaintance, who had great Variety of Affairs, and used to talk with Warmth enough against Gentlemen by whom he thought himself ill dealt with; but he would never let any thing be urged against a Merchant (with whom he had any Difference) except in a Court of Justice. He used to say, that to speak ill of a Merchant, was to begin his Suit with Judgment and Execution. One cannot, I think, say more on this Occasion, than to repeat, That the Merit of the Merchant is above that of all other Subjects; for while he is untouched in his Credit, his Hand-writing is a more portable Coin for the Service of his Fellow-Citizens, and his Word the Gold of *Ophir* to the Country wherein he resides.

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