

less prove no such contemptible Companions, as might not often tempt a wiser Man to mingle himself in their Diversions, and draw them into such serious Sports as might prove nothing less instructing than the gravest Lessons. I doubt not but it might be made some of their favourite Plays, to contend which of them should recite a beautiful Part of a Poem or Oration, most gracefully, or sometimes to join in acting a Scene of *Terence*, *Sophocles*, or our own *Shakespear*. The Cause of *Milo* might again be pleaded before more favourable Judges, *Cæsar* a second time be taught to tremble, and another Race of *Athenians* be afresh enraged at the Ambition of another *Philip*. Amidst these noble Amusements, we could hope to see the early Dawnings of their Imagination daily brighten into Sense, their Innocence improve into Virtue, and their unexperienced Good-nature directed to a generous Love of their Country.

T

I am, &c



N^o 231. Saturday, November 24.

O Pudor! O Pietas! —

Mart.

LOOKING over the Letters which I have lately received from my Correspondents, I met with the following one, which is written with such a Spirit of Politeness, that I could not but be very much pleased with it my self, and question not but it will be as acceptable to the Reader.

Mr. SPECTATOR,

YOU, who are no Stranger to Publick Assemblies, cannot but have observed the Awe they often strike on such as are obliged to exert any Talent before them. This is a sort of elegant Distress, to which ingenious Minds are the most liable, and may therefore deserve some Remarks in your Paper. Many a brave Fellow,

‘ Fellow, who has put his Enemy to Flight in the Field, has been in the utmost Disorder upon making a Speech before a Body of his Friends at home: One would think there was some kind of Fascination in the Eyes of a large Circle of People, when darting altogether upon one Person. I have seen a new Actor in a Tragedy so bound up by it as to be scarce able to speak or move, and have expected he would have died above three Acts before the Dagger or Cup of Poison were brought in. It would not be amiss, if such an one were at first introduced as a Ghost, or a Statue, till he recovered his Spirits, and grew fit for some living Part.

‘ AS this sudden Desertion of one’s self shews a Diffidence, which is not displeasing, it implies at the same time the greatest Respect to an Audience that can be. It is a sort of mute Eloquence, which pleads for their Favour much better than Words could do; and we find their Generosity naturally moved to support those who are in so much Perplexity to entertain them. I was extremely pleased with a late Instance of this Kind at the Opera of *Almahide*, in the Encouragement given to a young Singer, whose more than ordinary Concern on her first Appearance, recommended her no less than her agreeable Voice, and just Performance. Meer Bashfulness without Merit is awkward; and Merit without Modesty, insolent. But modest Merit has a double Claim to Acceptance, and generally meets with as many Patrons as Beholders.

I am, &c.

IT is impossible that a Person should exert himself to Advantage in an Assembly, whether it be his Part either to sing or speak, who lies under too great Oppressions of Modesty. I remember, upon talking with a Friend of mine concerning the Force of Pronunciation, our Discourse led us into the Enumeration of the several Organs of Speech which an Orator ought to have in Perfection, as the Tongue, the Teeth, the Lips, the Nose, the Palate, and the Wind-pipe. Upon which, says my Friend, you have omitted the most material Organ of them all, and that is the Forehead.

‘ BUT

BUT notwithstanding an Excess of Modesty obstructs the Tongue, and renders it unfit for its Offices, a due Proportion of it is thought so requisite to an Orator, that Rhetoricians have recommended it to their Disciples as a Particular in their Art. *Cicero* tells us that he never liked an Orator, who did not appear in some little Confusion at the Beginning of his Speech, and confesses that he himself never entered upon an Oration without Trembling and Concern. It is indeed a kind of Deference which is due to a great Assembly, and seldom fails to raise a Benevolence in the Audience towards the Person who speaks. My Correspondent has taken notice that the bravest Men often appear timorous on these Occasions, as indeed we may observe, that there is generally no Creature more impudent than a Coward.

— *Lingua melior, sed frigida bello*
Dextera —

A bold Tongue, and a feeble Arm, are the Qualifications of *Drances* in *Virgil*; as *Homer*, to express a Man both timorous and faucy, makes use of a kind of Point, which is very rarely to be met with in his Writings; namely, that he had the Eyes of a Dog, but the Heart of a Deer.

A just and reasonable Modesty does not only recommend Eloquence, but sets off every great Talent which a Man can be possessed of. It heightens all the Virtues which it accompanies; like the Shades in Paintings, it raises and rounds every Figure, and makes the Colours more beautiful, though not so glaring as they would be without it.

MODESTY is not only an Ornament, but also a Guard to Virtue. It is a kind of quick and delicate Feeling in the Soul, which makes her shrink and withdraw her self from every thing that has Danger in it. It is such an exquisite Sensibility, as warns her to shun the first Appearance of every thing which is hurtful.

I cannot at present recollect either the Place or Time of what I am going to mention; but I have read somewhere in the History of Antient Greece, that the Women of the Country were seized with an unaccountable Melancholy, which disposed several of them to make away with themselves. The Senate, after having tried many Expedients to prevent this Self-Murder, which was so frequent

quent among them, published an Edict, That if any Woman whatever should lay violent Hands upon herself, her Corps should be exposed naked in the Street, and dragged about the City in the most publick Manner. This Edict immediately put a Stop to the Practice which was before so common. We may see in this Instance the Strength of Female Modesty, which was able to overcome the Violence even of Madness and Despair. The Fear of Shame in the Fair Sex, was in those Days more prevalent than that of Death.

IF Modesty has so great an Influence over our Actions, and is in many Cases so impregnable a Fence to Virtue; what can more undermine Morality than that Politeness which reigns among the unthinking Part of Mankind, and treats as unfashionable the most ingenuous Part of our Behaviour; which recommends Impudence as Good-breeding, and keeps a Man always in Countenance, not because he is Innocent, but because he is Shameless?

S E N E C A thought Modesty so great a Check to Vice, that he prescribes to us the Practice of it in Secret, and advises us to raise it in our selves upon imaginary Occasions, when such as are real do not offer themselves; for this is the Meaning of his Precept, that when we are by our selves, and in our greatest Solitudes, we should fancy that *Cato* stands before us and sees every thing we do. In short, if you banish Modesty out of the World, she carries away with her half the Virtue that is in it.

AFTER these Reflexions on Modesty, as it is a Virtue; I must observe, that there is a vicious Modesty, which justly deserves to be ridiculed, and which those Persons very often discover, who value themselves most upon a well-bred Confidence. This happens when a Man is ashamed to act up to his Reason, and would not upon any Consideration be surpris'd in the Practice of those Duties, for the Performance of which he was sent into the World. Many an impudent Libertine would blush to be caught in a serious Discourse, and would scarce be able to shew his Head, after having disclosed a religious Thought. Decency of Behaviour, all outward Show of Virtue, and Abhorrence of Vice, are carefully avoided by this Set of Shame-faced People, as what would disparage their Gaiety of Temper, and infallibly bring them