

‘ Starers. By this means you will relieve the Innocent
 ‘ from an Insult which there is no Law to punish, tho’ it
 ‘ is a greater Offence than many which are within the
 ‘ Cognizance of Justice. I am,

S I R, Your most humble Servant,
 Abraham Spy.

Q



N^o 251. Tuesday, December 18.

— *Linguae centum sunt, oraque centum,* Virg.
Ferrea Vox. —

THERE is nothing which more astonishes a Foreign-
 er, and frights a Country Squire, than the *Cries of*
London. My good Friend Sir ROGER often de-
 clares, that he cannot get them out of his Head, or go to
 Sleep for them, the first Week that he is in Town. On
 the contrary, WILL. HONEYCOMB calls them the
Ramage de la Ville, and prefers them to the Sounds of
 Larks and Nightingales, with all the Musick of the Fields
 and Woods. I have lately received a Letter from some ve-
 ry odd Fellow upon this Subject, which I shall leave with
 my Reader, without saying any thing further of it.

S I R,

‘ I Am a Man out of all Business, and would willingly
 ‘ turn my Head to any thing for an honest Livelihood.
 ‘ I have invented several Projects for raising many Mil-
 ‘ lions of Money without burdening the Subject, but I
 ‘ cannot get the Parliament to listen to me, who look
 ‘ upon me forsooth, as a Crack, and a Projector; so that
 ‘ despairing to enrich either my self or my Country by
 ‘ this Publick-spiritedness, I would make some Proposals
 ‘ to you relating to a Design which I have very much at
 ‘ Heart, and which may procure me a handsom Sub-
 ‘ sistence, if you will be pleased to recommend it to the
 ‘ Cities of *London* and *Westminster*.

‘ THE Post I would aim at, is to be Comptroller-
 ‘ General of the *London Cries*, which are at present un-
 ‘ der no manner of Rules or Discipline. I think I am
 ‘ pretty well qualified for this Place, as being a Man of
 ‘ very

very strong Lungs, of great Insight into all the Branches of our *British* Trades and Manufactures, and of a competent Skill in Musick.

THE Cries of *London* may be divided into Vocal and Instrumental. As for the latter they are at present under a very great Disorder. A Freeman of *London* has the Privilege of disturbing a whole Street for an Hour together, with the Twanking of a Brass-Kettle or a Frying-Pan. The Watchman's Thump at Midnight startles us in our Beds, as much as the Breaking in of a Thief. The Sowgelder's Horn has indeed something musical in it, but this is seldom heard within the Liberties. I would therefore propose, that no Instrument of this Nature should be made use of, which I have not tuned and licensed, after having carefully examined in what manner it may affect the Ears of her Majesty's liege Subjects.

VOCAL Cries are of a much larger Extent and indeed so full of Incongruities and Barbarisms, that we appear a distracted City to Foreigners, who do not comprehend the Meaning of such enormous Outcries. Milk is generally sold in a Note above *E la*, and in Sounds so exceeding shrill, that it often sets our Teeth on Edge. The Chimney-sweeper is confined to no certain Pitch; he sometimes utters himself in the deepest Base, and sometimes in the sharpest Treble; sometimes in the highest, and sometimes in the lowest Note of the Gamut. The same Observation might be made on the Retailers of Small-coal not to mention broken Glasses or Brick-dust. In these therefore, and the like Cases, it should be my Care to sweeten and mellow the Voices of these itinerant Tradesmen, before they make their Appearance in our Streets, as also to accommodate their Cries to their respective Wares; and to take care in particular, that those may not make the most Noise who have the least to sell, which is very observable in the Venders of Card-matches, to whom I cannot but apply that old Proverb of *Much Cry but little Wool*.

SOME of these last mentioned Musicians are so very loud in the Sale of these trifling Manufactures, that an honest splenetick Gentleman of my Acquaintance bargained with one of them never to come into the Street where he lived: But what was the Effect of this

Con-

Contract? Why, the whole Tribe of Card-match-makers which frequent that Quarter, passed by his Door the very next Day, in Hopes of being bought off after the same manner.

IT is another great Imperfection in our *London Cries*, that there is no just Time nor Measure observed in them. Our News should indeed be published in a very quick Time, because it is a Commodity that will not keep cold. It should not, however, be cried with the same Precipitation as *Fire*: Yet this is generally the Case: A Bloody Battle alarms the Town from one End to another in an Instant. Every Motion of the *French* is published in so great a Hurry, that one would think the Enemy were at our Gates. This likewise I would take upon me to regulate in such a manner, that there should be some Distinction made between the spreading of a Victory, a March, or an Incampment, a *Dutch*, a *Portugul*, or a *Spanish* Mail. Nor must I omit under this Head those excessive Alarms with which several boisterous Rusticks infest our Streets in Turnip-Season; and which are more inexcusable, because these are Wares which are in no Danger of cooling upon their Hands.

THERE are others who affect a very slow Time, and are, in my Opinion, much more tunable than the former; the Cooper in particular swells his last Note in an hollow Voice, that is not without its Harmony; nor can I forbear being inspired with a most agreeable Melancholy, when I hear that sad and solemn Air with which the Publick are very often asked, if they have any Chairs to mend? Your own Memory may suggest to you many other lamentable Ditties of the same Nature, in which the Musick is wonderfully languishing and melodious.

I am always pleased with that particular Time of the Year which is proper for the pickling of Dill and Cucumbers; but alas, this Cry, like the Song of the Nightingale, is not heard above two Months. It would therefore be worth while to consider, whether the same Air might not in some Cases be adapted to other Words.

IT might likewise deserve our most serious Consideration, how far in a well regulated City, those Humourists are to be tolerated, who, not contented with

the traditional Cries of their Forefathers, have invented particular Songs and Tunes of their own : Such as was not many Years since, the Paltry-man, commonly known by the Name of the Colly-Molly-Puff; and such as is at this Day the Vender of Powder and Wash-balls, who, if I am rightly informed, goes under the Name of *Powder-Watt*.

I must not here omit one particular Absurdity which runs through this whole vociferous Generation, and which renders their Cries very often not only incommodious, but altogether uselefs to the Publick; I mean, that idle Accomplishment which they all of them aim at, of crying so as not to be understood. Whether or no they have learned this from several of our affected Singers, I will not take upon me to say; but most certain it is, that People know the Wares they deal in rather by their Tunes than by their Words; insomuch that I have sometimes seen a Country Boy run out to buy Apples of a Bellows-mender, and Ginger-bread from a Grinder of Knives and Scissars. Nay so strangely infatuated are some very eminent Artists of this particular Grace in a Cry, that none but their Acquaintance are able to guess at their Profession; for who else can know, that *Work if I had it*, should be the Signification of a Corn-cutter?

FORASMUCH therefore as Persons of this Rank are seldom Men of Genius or Capacity, I think it would be very proper, that some Man of good Sense and sound Judgment should preside over these publick Cries, who should permit none to lift up their Voices in our Streets, that have not tuneable Throats, and are not only able to overcome the Noise of the Croud, and the Rattling of Coaches, but also to vend their respective Merchandises in apt Phrases, and in the most distinct and agreeable Sounds. I do therefore humbly recommend my self as a Person rightly qualified for this Post; and if I meet with fitting Encouragement, shall communicate some other Projects which I have by me, that may no less conduce to the Emolument of the Publick.

I am S I R, &c.

Ralph Crotchett.

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