

*Superior, nor of Violence fear'd ought;
And, with retorted Scorn, his Back he turn'd
On those proud Tow'rs to swift Destruction doom'd.* L



N^o 328. Monday, March 17.

Nullum in ætate labore reclinat otium.

Hor.

Mr. SPECTATOR,

AS I believe this is the first Complaint that ever was made to you of this nature, so you are the first Person I ever could prevail upon my self to lay it before. When I tell you I have a healthy vigorous Constitution, a plentiful Estate, no inordinate Desires, and am married to a virtuous lovely Woman, who neither wants Wit nor Good-nature, and by whom I have a numerous Offspring to perpetuate my Family, you will naturally conclude me a happy Man. But, notwithstanding these promising Appearances, I am so far from it, that the Prospect of being ruin'd and undone, by a sort of Extravagance which of late Years is in a less degree crept into every fashionable Family, deprives me of all the Comforts of my Life, and renders me the most anxious miserable Man on Earth. My Wife, who was the only Child and darling Care of an indulgent Mother, employ'd her early Years in learning all those Accomplishments we generally understand by Good-breeding and polite Education. She sings, dances, plays on the Lute and Harpsicord, paints prettily, is a perfect Mistress of the *French* Tongue, and has made a considerable Progress in *Italian*. She is besides excellently skill'd in all domestick Sciences, as Preserving, Pickling, Pastry, making Wines of Fruits of our own Growth, Embroidering, and Needleworks of every Kind. Hitherto you will be apt to think there is very little Cause of Complaint; but suspend your Opinion till I have further explain'd my self, and then I make no question you will come over to mine. You are not to imagine I find fault that she either possesses or takes
delight

‘ delight in the Exercise of those Qualifications I just
‘ now mention’d; ’tis the immoderate Fondness she has
‘ to them that I lament, and that what is only design’d
‘ for the innocent Amusement and Recreation of Life,
‘ is become the whole Business and Study of hers. The
‘ six Months we are in Town (for the Year is equally
‘ divided between that and the Country) from almost
‘ Break of Day till Noon, the whole Morning is laid out
‘ in practising with her several Masters; and to make up
‘ the Losses occasion’d by her Absence in Summer, every
‘ Day in the Week their Attendance is requir’d; and as
‘ they are all People eminent in their Professions, their
‘ Skill and Time must be recompens’d accordingly: So
‘ how far these Articles extend, I leave you to judge.
‘ Limning, one would think, is no expensive Diversion,
‘ but as she manages the Matter, ’tis a very considerable
‘ Addition to her Disbursements; which you will easily
‘ believe, when you know she paints Fans for all her
‘ Female Acquaintance, and draws all her Relations
‘ Pictures in Miniature; the first must be mounted by
‘ no body but *Colmar*, and the other set by no body but
‘ *Charles Mather*. What follows, is still much worse than
‘ the former; for as I told you, she is a great Artist at
‘ her Needle, ’tis incredible what Sums she expends in
‘ Embroidery; For besides, what is appropriated to her
‘ personal Use, as Mantua’s, Petticoats, Stomachers, Hand-
‘ kerchiefs, Purse, Pin-cushions, and Working-Aprons,
‘ she keeps four *French* Protestants continually employ’d
‘ in making divers Pieces of superfluous Furniture, as
‘ Quilts, Toilets, Hangings for Closets, Beds, Window-
‘ Curtains, Easy-Chairs, and Tabourets: Nor have I any
‘ hopes of ever reclaiming her from this Extravagance,
‘ while she obstinately persists in thinking it a notable
‘ piece of good Housewifery, because they are made at
‘ home, and she has had some share in the Performance.
‘ There would be no end of relating to you the Parti-
‘ culars of the annual Charge, in furnishing her Store-
‘ Room with a Profusion of Pickles and Preserves; for
‘ she is not contented with having every thing, unless it
‘ be done every way, in which she consults an Heredi-
‘ tary Book of Receipts; for her female Ancestors have
‘ been always fam’d for good Housewifery, one of whom

is made immortal, by giving her Name to an Eye-Water and two sorts of Puddings. I cannot undertake to recite all her medicinal Preparations, as Salves, Cerecloths, Powders, Confects, Cordials, Ratafia, Perfico, Orange-flower, and Cherry-brandy, together with innumerable sorts of Simple Waters. But there is nothing I lay so much to heart, as that detestable Catalogue of counterfeit Wines, which derive their Names from the Fruits, Herbs, or Trees of whose Juices they are chiefly compounded: They are loathsome to the Taste, and pernicious to the Health; and as they seldom survive the Year, and then are thrown away, under a false Pretence of Frugality, I may affirm they stand me in more than if I entertain'd all our Visitors with the best Burgundy and Champaign. Coffee, Chocolate, Green, Imperial, Peco, and Bohea-Tea seem to be Trifles; but when the proper Appurtenances of the Tea-table are added, they swell the Account higher than one would imagine. I cannot conclude without doing her Justice in one Article; where her Frugality is so remarkable, I must not deny her the Merit of it, and that is in relation to her Children, who are all confin'd, both Boys and Girls, to one large Room in the remotest Part of the House, with Bolts on the Doors and Bars to the Windows, under the Care and Tuition of an old Woman, who had been dry Nurse to her Grandmother. This is their Residence all the Year round; and as they are never allowed to appear, she prudently thinks it needless to be at any Expence in Apparel or Learning. Her eldest Daughter to this day would have neither read nor writ, if it had not been for the Butler, who being the Son of a Country Attorney, has taught her such a Hand as is generally used for engrossing Bills in *Chancery*. By this time I have sufficiently tired your Patience with my domestick Grievances; which I hope you will agree could not well be contained in a narrower Compass, when you consider what a Paradox I undertook to maintain in the Beginning of my Epistle, and which manifestly appears to be but too melancholy a Truth. And now I heartily wish the Relation I have given of my Misfortunes may be of Use and Benefit to the Publick. By the Example I have