



N^o 358. Monday, April 21.

Despere in loco.

Hor.

CHARLES Lilly attended me the other Day, and made me a Present of a large Sheet of Paper, on which is delineated a Pavement in Mosaick Work, lately discovered at *Stunsfield* near *Woodstock*. A Person who has so much the Gift of Speech as Mr. Lilly, and can carry on a Discourse without Reply, had great Opportunity on that Occasion to expatiate upon so fine a Piece of Antiquity. Among other things, I remember, he gave me his Opinion, which he drew from the Ornaments of the Work, That this was the Floor of a Room dedicated to Mirth and Concord. Viewing this Work, made my Fancy run over the many gay Expressions I have read in ancient Authors, which contained Invitations to lay aside Care and Anxiety, and give a Loose to that pleasing Forgetfulness wherein Men put off their Characters of Business, and enjoy their very Selves. These Hours were generally passed in Rooms adorned for that purpose, and set out in such a manner, as the Objects all around the Company gladdened their Hearts; which, joined to the chearful Looks of well-chosen and agreeable Friends, gave new Vigour to the Airy, produced the latent Fire of the Modest, and gave Grace to the slow Humour of the Reserved. A judicious Mixture of such Company, crowned with Chaplets of Flowers, and the whole Apartment glittering with gay Lights, chear'd with a Profusion of Roses, artificial Falls of Water, and Intervals of soft Notes to Songs of Love and Wine, suspended the Cares of human Life, and made a Festival of mutual Kindness. Such Parties of Pleasure as these, and the Reports of the agreeable Passages in their Jollities, have in all Ages awakened the dull Part of Mankind to pretend to Mirth and Good-Humour, without Capacity for such Entertainments; for if I may be allowed to say so, there are an hundred Men fit
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for any Employment, to one who is capable of passing a Night in the Company of the first Taste, without shocking any Member of the Society, over-rating his own Part of the Conversation, but equally receiving and contributing to the Pleasure of the whole Company. When one considers such Collections of Companions in past Times, and such as one might name in the present Age, with how much Spleen must a Man needs reflect upon the awkward Gaiety of those who affect the Frolick with an ill Grace? I have a Letter from a Correspondent of mine, who desires me to admonish all loud mischievous, airy dull Companions, that they are mistaken in what they call a Frolick. Irregularity in it self is not what creates Pleasure and Mirth; but to see a Man who knows what Rule and Decency are, descend from them agreeably in our Company, is what denominates him a pleasant Companion. Instead of that, you find many whose Mirth consists only in doing Things which do not become them, with a secret Consciousness that all the World know they know better: To this is always added something mischievous to themselves or others. I have heard of some very merry Fellows among whom the Frolick was started, and passed by a great Majority, that every Man should immediately draw a Tooth; after which they have gone in a Body and smoked a Cobler. The same Company, at another Night, has each Man burned his Cravat; and one perhaps, whose Estate would bear it, has thrown a long Wig and laced Hat into the same Fire. Thus they have jested themselves stark naked, and ran into the Streets, and frightened Women very successfully. There is no Inhabitant of any standing in *Covent-Garden*, but can tell you a hundred good Humours, where People have come off with little Bloodshed, and yet scowered all the witty Hours of the Night. I know a Gentleman that has several Wounds in the Head by Watch-Poles, and has been thrice run through the Body to carry on a good Jest: He is very old for a Man of so much Good-Humour; but to this day he is seldom merry, but he has Occasion to be valiant at the same time. But by the Favour of these Gentlemen, I am humbly of Opinion, that a Man may be a very witty Man, and never offend one Statute of this Kingdom, not excepting even that of Stabbing.

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THE Writers of Plays have what they call Unity of Time and Place to give a Justness to their Representation; and it would not be amiss if all who pretend to be Companions, would confine their Action to the Place of meeting: For a Frolick carried farther may be better performed by other Animals than Men. It is not to rid much Ground, or do much Mischief, that should denominate a pleasant Fellow; but that is truly Frolick which is the Play of the Mind, and consists of various and unforced Sallies of Imagination. Festivity of Spirit is a very uncommon Talent, and must proceed from an Assemblage of agreeable Qualities in the same Person: There are some few whom I think peculiarly happy in it; but it is a Talent one cannot name in a Man, especially when one considers that it is never very graceful but where it is regarded by him who possesses it in the second Place. The best Man that I know of for heightening the Revel-Gaiety of a Company, is *Eastcourt*, whose Jovial Humour diffuses it self from the highest Person at an Entertainment to the meanest Waiter. Merry Tales accompanied with apt Gestures and lively Representations of Circumstances and Persons beguile the gravest Mind into a Consent to be as humorous as himself. Add to this, that when a Man is in his good Graces, he has a Mimickry that does not debase the Person he represents; but which, taking from the Gravity of the Character, adds to the Agreeableness of it. This pleasant Fellow gives one some Idea of the ancient *Pantomime*, who is said to have given the Audience, in *Dumbshow*, an exact Idea of any Character or Passion, or an intelligible Relation of any publick Occurrence, with no other Expression than that of his Looks and Gestures. If all who have been obliged to these Talents in *Eastcourt*, will be at *Love for Love* to-morrow Night, they will but pay him what they owe him, at so easy a Rate as being present at a Play which no body would omit seeing, that had, or had not ever seen it before.



Tuesday,