

‘ said this is awful, and necessary for the Dignity of the  
 ‘ State, yet the wisest of them have been remarkable, be-  
 ‘ fore they arrived at their present Stations, for being  
 ‘ *very well dressed Persons*. As to my own part, I am  
 ‘ near Thirty; and since I left School have not been  
 ‘ idle, which is a modern Phrase for having studied hard.  
 ‘ I brought off a clean System of Moral Philosophy, and  
 ‘ a tolerable Jargon of Metaphysics from the University;  
 ‘ since that, I have been engaged in the clearing part of  
 ‘ the perplex’d Stile and Matter of the Law, which so  
 ‘ hereditarily descends to all its Professors: To all which  
 ‘ severe Studies I have thrown in, at proper Interims, the  
 ‘ pretty Learning of the Classics. Notwithstanding  
 ‘ which, I am what *Shakespeare* calls *A Fellow of no Mark*  
 ‘ *or Likelihood*; which makes me understand the more  
 ‘ fully, that since the regular Methods of making Friends  
 ‘ and a Fortune by the mere Force of a Profession is so  
 ‘ very slow and uncertain, a Man should take all reason-  
 ‘ able Opportunities, by enlarging a good Acquaintance,  
 ‘ to court that Time and Chance which is said to happen  
 ‘ to every Man. T



N<sup>o</sup> 361. *Thursday, April 24.*

*Tartaream intendit vocem, quæ protinus omnis  
 Contremuit domus* ————— Virg.

I Have lately received the following Letter from a  
 Country Gentleman.

Mr. SPECTATOR,

‘ T HE Night before I left London I went to see a  
 ‘ Play, called *The Humorous Lieutenant*. Upon  
 ‘ the Rising of the Curtain I was very much sur-  
 ‘ prised with the great Comfort of Cat-calls which was ex-  
 ‘ hibited that Evening, and began to think with myself that  
 ‘ I had made a Mistake, and gone to a Musick-Meeting,  
 ‘ instead of the Play-house. It appeared indeed a little  
 ‘ odd

‘ odd to me to see so many Persons of Quality of both  
 ‘ Sexes assembled together at a kind of Catterwawling;  
 ‘ for I cannot look upon that Performance to have been  
 ‘ any thing better, whatever the Musicians themselves  
 ‘ might think of it. As I had no Acquaintance in the  
 ‘ House to ask Questions of, and was forced to go out  
 ‘ of Town early the next Morning, I could not learn the  
 ‘ Secret of this Matter. What I would therefore desire of  
 ‘ you, is, to give some Account of this strange Instru-  
 ‘ ment which I found the Company called a Cat-call; and  
 ‘ particular to let me know whether it be a piece of Mu-  
 ‘ sicks lately come from *Italy*. For my own part, to be  
 ‘ free with you, I would rather hear an *English* Fiddle:  
 ‘ though I durst not shew my Dislike whilst I was in the  
 ‘ Play-house, it being my Chance to sit the very next Man  
 ‘ to one of the Performers.

*I am, S I R,*

*Your most affectionate Friend and Servant,*

John Shallow, *Esq;*

IN compliance with Squire Shallow's Request, I design this Paper as a Dissertation upon the Cat-call. In order to make my self a Master of the Subject, I purchased one the Beginning of last Week, though not without great difficulty, being inform'd at two or three Toyshops that the Players had lately bought them all up. I have since consulted many learned Antiquaries in relation to its Original, and find them very much divided among themselves upon that Particular. A Fellow of the Royal Society, who is my good Friend, and a great Proficient in the Mathematical Part of Musick, concludes from the Simplicity of its Make, and the Uniformity of its Sound, that the Cat-call is older than any of the Inventions of *Jubal*. He observes very well, that Musical Instruments took their first Rise from the Notes of Birds, and other melodious Animals; and what, says he, was more natural than for the first Ages of Mankind to imitate the Voice of a Cat that lived under the same Roof with them? He added, that the Cat had contributed more to Harmony than any other Animal; as we are not only beholden to her for this Wind-Instrument, but for our String-Musick in general.

A NO-



ANOTHER Virtuoso of my Acquaintance will not allow the Cat-call to be older than *Thespis*, and is apt to think it appeared in the World soon after the ancient Comedy; for which reason it has still a place in our Dramatick Entertainments: Nor must I here omit what a very curious Gentleman, who is lately return'd from his Travels, has more than once assured me, namely, that there was lately dug up at *Rome* the Statue of a *Momus*, who holds an Instrument in his Right-Hand very much resembling our modern Cat-call.

THERE are others who ascribe this Invention to *Orpheus*, and look upon the Cat-call to be one of those Instruments which that famous Musician made use of to draw the Beasts about him. It is certain, that the Roosting of a Cat does not call together a greater Audience of that Species than this Instrument, if dexterously play'd upon in proper Time and Place.

BUT notwithstanding these various and learned Conjectures, I cannot forbear thinking that the Cat-call is originally a Piece of *English* Musick. Its Resemblance to the Voice of some of our *British* Songsters, as well as the Use of it, which is peculiar to our Nation, confirms me in this Opinion. It has at least received great Improvements among us, whether we consider the Instrument it self, or those several Quavers and Graces which are thrown into the playing of it. Every one might be sensible of this, who heard that remarkable over-grown Cat-call which was placed in the Center of the Pit, and presided over all the rest at the celebrated Performance lately exhibited in *Drury-Lane*.

HAVING said thus much concerning the Original of the Cat-call, we are in the next place to consider the Use of it. The Cat-call exerts it self to most advantage in the *British* Theatre: It very much improves the Sound of Nonsense, and often goes along with the Voice of the Actor who pronounces it, as the Violin or Harpsicord accompanies the *Italian* Recitativo.

IT has often supplied the Place of the ancient *Chorus*, in the Words of Mr. \*\*\* In short, a bad Poet has as great an Antipathy to a Cat-call, as many People have to a real Cat.

Mr.

Mr. Collier, in his ingenious Essay upon Musick, has the following Passage:

*I believe 'tis possible to invent an Instrument that shall have a quite contrary Effect to those Martial ones now in use: An Instrument that shall sink the Spirits, and shake the Nerves, and curdle the Blood, and inspire Despair, and Cowardise and Consternation, at a surprising rate. 'Tis probable the Roaring of Lions, the Warbling of Cats and Scritch-Owls, together with a Mixture of the Howling of Dogs, judiciously imitated and compounded, might go a great way in this Invention. Whether such Anti-Musick as this might not be of Service in a Camp, I shall leave to the Military Men to consider.*

WHAT this learned Gentleman supposes in Speculation, I have known actually verified in Practice. The Cat-call has struck a Damp into Generals, and frighted Heroes off the Stage. At the first Sound of it I have seen a Crowned Head tremble, and a Princess fall into Fits. The Humorous Lieutenant himself could not stand it; nay, I am told that even Almanzor looked like a Moufe, and trembled at the Voice of this terrifying Instrument.

AS it is of a Dramatick Nature, and peculiarly appropriated to the Stage, I can by no means approve the Thought of that angry Lover, who, after an unsuccessful Pursuit of some Years, took leave of his Mistress in a Serenade of Cat-calls.

I must conclude this Paper with the Account I have lately received of an ingenious Artist, who has long studied this Instrument, and is very well versed in all the Rules of the Drama. He teaches to play on it by Book, and to express by it the whole Art of Criticism. He has his Base and his Treble Cat-call; the former for Tragedy, the latter for Comedy; only in Tragi-Comedies they may both play together in Consort. He has a particular Squeak to denote the Violation of each of the Unities, and has different Sounds to shew whether he aims at the Poet or the Player. In short, he teaches the Smut-note, the Fustian-note, the Stupid-note, and has composed a kind of Air that may serve as an Act-tune to an incorrigible Play, and which takes in the whole Compass of the Cat-call.      L

*Friday,*