

N^o 364. Monday, April 28.

————— *Navibus atque*
Quadrigis petimus bene vivere.

Hor.

Mr. SPECTATOR,

A Lady of my Acquaintance, for whom I have too much Respect to be easy while she is doing an indiscreet Action, has given occasion to this Trouble: She is a Widow, to whom the Indulgence of a tender Husband has intrusted the Management of a very great Fortune, and a Son about sixteen, both which she is extremely fond of. The Boy has Parts of the middle size, neither shining nor despicable, and has passed the common Exercises of his Years with tolerable Advantage, but is withal what you would call a forward Youth: By the Help of this last Qualification, which serves as a Varnish to all the rest, he is enabled to make the best Use of his Learning, and display it at full length upon all Occasions. Last Summer he distinguished himself two or three times very remarkably, by puzzling the Vicar before an Assembly of most of the Ladies in the Neighbourhood; and from such weighty Considerations as these, as it too often unfortunately falls out, the Mother is become invincibly persuaded that her Son is a great Scholar; and that to chain him down to the ordinary Methods of Education with others of his Age, would be to cramp his Faculties, and do an irreparable Injury to his wonderful Capacity.

I happened to visit at the House last Week, and missing the young Gentleman at the Tea-Table, where he seldom fails to officiate, could not upon so extraordinary a Circumstance avoid inquiring after him. My Lady told me, he was gone out with her Woman, in order to make some Preparations for their Equipage; for that she intended very speedily to carry him to travel. The Oddness of the Expression shock'd me a little;

tle; however, I soon recovered my self enough to let her know, that all I was willing to understand by it was, that she design'd this Summer to shew her Son his Estate in a distant County, in which he has never yet been. But she soon took care to rob me of that agreeable Mistake, and let me into the whole Affair. She enlarged upon young Master's prodigious Improvements, and his comprehensive Knowledge of all Book-Learning; concluding, that it was now high time he should be made acquainted with Men and Things; that she had resolv'd he should make the Tour of *France* and *Italy*, but could not bear to have him out of her Sight, and therefore intended to go along with him.

I was going to rally her for so extravagant a Resolution, but found my self not in a fit Humour to meddle with a Subject that demanded the most soft and delicate Touch imaginable. I was afraid of dropping something that might seem to bear hard either upon the Son's Abilities, or the Mother's Discretion; being sensible that in both these Cases, tho' supported with all the Powers of Reason, I should instead of gaining her Ladyship over to my Opinion, only expose my self to her Disesteem: I therefore immediately determin'd to refer the whole Matter to the SPECTATOR.

WHEN I came to reflect at Night, as my Custom is, upon the Occurrences of the Day, I could not but believe that this Humour of carrying a Boy to travel in his Mother's Lap, and that upon pretence of learning Men and Things, is a Case of an extraordinary Nature, and carries on it a particular Stamp of Folly. I did not remember to have met with its Parallel within the Compass of my Observation, tho' I could call to mind some not extremely unlike it: From hence my Thoughts took occasion to ramble into the general Notion of travelling, as it is now made a Part of Education. Nothing is more frequent than to take a Lad from Grammar and Taw, and under the Tuition of some poor Scholar, who is willing to be banish'd for thirty Pounds a Year, and a little Victuals, send him crying and sniveling into foreign Countries. Thus he spends his time as Children do at Puppet-Shows, and with much the same Advantage, in staring and gaping at an amazing Variety
of

‘ of strange things; strange indeed to one who is not prepared to comprehend the Reasons and Meaning of them; whilst he should be laying the solid Foundations of Knowledge in his Mind, and furnishing it with just Rules to direct his future Progress in Life under some skilful Master of the Art of Instruction.

‘ CAN there be a more astonishing Thought in Nature, than to consider how Men should fall into so palpable a Mistake? It is a large Field, and may very well exercise a sprightly Genius; but I don’t remember you have yet taken a turn in it. I wish, Sir, you would make People understand, that *Travel* is really the last Step to be taken in the Institution of Youth; and to set out with it, is to begin where they should end.

‘ CERTAINLY the true End of visiting Foreign Parts, is to look into their Customs and Policies, and observe in what Particulars they excel or come short of our own; to unlearn some odd Peculiarities in our Manners, and wear off such awkward Stiffnesses and Affectations in our Behaviour, as may possibly have been contracted from constantly associating with one Nation of Men, by a more free, general, and mixed Conversation. But how can any of these Advantages be attained by one who is a mere Stranger to the Customs and Policies of his native Country, and has not yet fixed in his Mind the first Principles of Manners and Behaviour? To endeavour it, is to build a gaudy Structure without any Foundation; or, if I may be allow’d the Expression, to work a rich Embroidery upon a Cobweb.

‘ ANOTHER End of travelling which deserves to be consider’d, is the Improving our Taste of the best Authors of Antiquity, by seeing the Places where they lived, and of which they wrote; to compare the natural Face of the Country with the Descriptions they have given us, and observe how well the Picture agrees with the Original. This must certainly be a most charming Exercise to the Mind that is rightly turn’d for it; besides that it may in a good measure be made subservient to Morality, if the Person is capable of drawing just Conclusions concerning the Uncertainty of human things, from the ruinous Alterations Time and Barbarity have brought

brought upon so many Palaces, Cities and whole Countries, which make the most illustrious Figures in History. And this Hint may be not a little improved by examining every Spot of Ground that we find celebrated as the Scene of some famous Action, or retaining any Footsteps of a *Cato*, *Cicero* or *Brutus*, or some such great virtuous Man. A nearer View of any such Particular, tho' really little and trifling in it self, may serve the more powerfully to warm a generous Mind to an Emulation of their Virtues, and a greater Ardency of Ambition to imitate their bright Examples, if it comes duly temper'd and prepared for the Impression. But this I believe you'll hardly think those to be, who are so far from entering into the Sense and Spirit of the Ancients, that they don't yet understand their Language with any Exactness.

BUT I have wander'd from my Purpose, which was only to desire you to save, if possible, a fond *English* Mother, and Mother's own Son, from being shewn a ridiculous Spectacle thro' the most polite Part of *Europe*. Pray tell them, that though to be Sea-sick, or jumbled in an outlandish Stage-Coach, may perhaps be healthful for the Constitution of the Body, yet it is apt to cause such a Dizziness in young empty Heads, as too often lasts their Life-time.

I am, S I R,

Your most Humble Servant,

Philip Homebred.

S I R,

Birchin-Lane.

I Was marry'd on *Sunday* last, and went peaceably to bed; but to my Surprise, was awakened the next Morning by the Thunder of a Set of Drums. These warlike Sounds (methinks) are very improper in a Marriage-Consort, and give great Offence; they seem to insinuate, that the Joys of this State are short, and that Jars and Discord soon ensue. I fear they have been ominous to many Matches, and sometimes proved a Prelude to a Battle in the Honey-Moon. A Nod from you may hush them; therefore pray, Sir, let them be silenced, that for the future none but soft *Airs* may usher

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