

and which by the Expression. I have likewise endeavoured to shew how the Genius of the Poet shines by a happy Invention, a distant Allusion, or a judicious Imitation; how he has copied or improved *Homer* or *Virgil*, and raises his own Imaginations by the Use which he has made of several Poetical Passages in Scripture. I might have inserted also several Passages in *Tasso*, which our Author has imitated; but as I do not look upon *Tasso* to be a sufficient Voucher, I would not perplex my Reader with such Quotations, as might do more Honour to the *Italian* than the *English* Poet. In short, I have endeavoured to particularize those innumerable kinds of Beauty, which it would be tedious to recapitulate, but which are essential to Poetry, and which may be met with in the Works of this great Author. Had I thought, at my first engaging in this Design, that it would have led me to so great a length, I believe I should never have entered upon it; but the kind Reception which it has met with among those whose Judgments I have a value for, as well as the uncommon Demands which my Bookseller tells me have been made for these particular Discourses, give me no reason to repent of the Pains I have been at in composing them. L.



N^o 370. *Monday, May 5.*

Totus Mundus agit Histrionem.

MANY of my fair Readers, as well as very gay and well-received Persons of the other Sex, are extremely perplexed at the *Latin* Sentences at the Head of my Speculations; I do not know whether I ought not to indulge them with Translations of each of them: However, I have to day taken down from the Top of the Stage in *Drury-Lane* a bit of *Latin* which often stands in their View, and signifies that *the whole World acts the Player*. It is certain that if we look all round us, and behold the different Employments of Mankind, you hardly see
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one who is not, as the Player is, in an assum'd Character. The Lawyer, who is vehement and loud in a Cause wherein he knows he has not the Truth of the Question on his side, is a Player as to the personated Part, but incomparably meaner than he as to the Prostitution of himself for hire; because the Pleader's Falshood introduces Injustice, the Player feigns for no other end but to divert or instruct you. The Divine, whose Passions transport him to say any thing with any View but promoting the Interests of true Piety and Religion, is a Player with a still greater Imputation of Guilt, in proportion to his depreciating a Character more sacred. Consider all the different Pursuits and Employments of Men, and you will find half their Actions tend to nothing else but Disguise and Imposture; and all that is done which proceeds not from a Man's very self is the Action of a Player. For this reason it is that I make so frequent mention of the Stage: It is, with me, a Matter of the highest Consideration what Parts are well or ill performed, what Passions or Sentiments are indulged or cultivated, and consequently what Manners and Customs are transfused from the Stage to the World, which reciprocally imitate each other. As the Writers of Epick Poems introduce shadowy Persons, and represent Vices and Virtues under the Characters of Men and Women; so I, who am a SPECTATOR in the World, may perhaps sometimes make use of the Names of the Actors on the Stage, to represent or admonish those who transact Affairs in the World. When I am commending *Wilks* for representing the Tenderness of a Husband and a Father in *Macbeth*, the Contrition of a reformed Prodigal in *Harry the Fourth*, the winning Emptiness of a young Man of Good-nature and Wealth in *the Trip to the Jubilee*, the Officiousness of an artful Servant in the *Fox*: when thus I celebrate *Wilks*, I talk to all the World who are engaged in any of those Circumstances. If I were to speak of Merit neglected, misapplied or misunderstood, might not I say *Eastcourt* has a great Capacity? But it is not the Interest of others who bear a Figure on the Stage that his Talents were understood; it is their Business to impose upon him what cannot become him, or keep out of his hands any thing in which he would shine. Were one to raise a Suspicion

Suspicion of himself in a Man who passes upon the World for a fine Thing, in order to alarm him, one might say, if Lord *Foppington* were not on the Stage, (*Cibber* acts the false Pretensions to a genteel Behaviour so very justly) he would have in the generality of Mankind more that would admire than deride him. When we come to Characters directly Comical, it is not to be imagin'd what Effect a well-regulated Stage would have upon Mens Manners. The Craft of an Usurer, the Absurdity of a rich Fool, the awkward Roughness of a Fellow of half Courage, the ungraceful Mirth of a Creature of half Wit, might be for ever put out of Countenance by proper Parts for *Dogget*. *Johnson* by acting *Corbaccio* the other Night, must have given all who saw him a thorough Detestation of aged Avarice. The Petulancy of a peevish old Fellow, who loves and hates he knows not why, is very excellently performed by the ingenious Mr. *William Penkethman* in the *Fop's Fortune*; where, in the Character of *Don Cholerick Snap Shorto de Testy*, he answers no Questions but to those whom he likes, and wants no account of any thing from those he approves. Mr. *Penkethman* is also Master of as many Faces in the Dumb-Scene, as can be expected from a Man in the Circumstances of being ready to perish out of Fear and Hunger: He wonders throughout the whole Scene very matterly, without neglecting his Victuals. If it be, as I have heard it sometimes mentioned, a great Qualification for the World to follow Business and Pleasure too, what is it in the Ingenious Mr. *Penkethman* to represent a Sense of Pleasure and Pain at the same time; as you may see him do this Evening?

AS it is certain that a Stage ought to be wholly suppressed, or judiciously encouraged, while there is one in the Nation, Men turn'd for regular Pleasure cannot employ their Thoughts more usefully, for the Diversion of Mankind, than by convincing them that it is in themselves to raise this Entertainment to the greatest Height. It would be a great Improvement, as well as Embellishment to the Theatre, if Dancing were more regarded, and taught to all the Actors. One who has the Advantage of such an agreeable girlish Person as Mrs. *Bicknell*, joined with her Capacity of Imitation, could in proper
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