



N^o 392. Friday, May 30.

*Per Ambages & Ministeria Deorum
Præcipitandus est liber Spiritus.*

Pet.

To the SPECTATOR.

The Transformation of Fidelio into a Looking-Glass.

I Was lately at a Tea-Table, where some young Ladies entertained the Company with a Relation of a Coquette in the Neighbourhood, who had been discovered practising before her Glass. To turn the Discourse, which from being witty grew to be malicious, the Matron of the Family took occasion, from the Subject, to wish that there were to be found amongst Men such faithful Monitors to dress the Mind by, as we consult to adorn the Body. She added, that if a sincere Friend were miraculously changed into a Looking-Glass, she should not be ashamed to ask its Advice very often. This whimsical Thought worked so much upon my Fancy the whole Evening, that it produced a very odd Dream.

METHOUGHT, that as I stood before my Glass, the Image of a Youth, of an open ingenious Aspect, appeared in it; who with a small shrill Voice spoke in the following manner.

THE Looking-Glass, you see, was heretofore a Man, even I the unfortunate *Fidelio*. I had two Brothers, whose Deformity in Shape was made out by the Clearness of their Understanding: It must be owned however, that (as it generally happens) they had each a Perverseness of Humour suitable to their Distortion of Body. The eldest, whose Belly sunk in monstrously, was a great Coward; and tho' his splenetick contracted Temper made him take fire immediately, he made Objects that beset him appear greater than they were. The second, whose Breast swelled into a bold Relievo, on the contrary,

trary, took great Pleasure in lessening every thing, and was perfectly the Reverse of his Brother. These Oddnesses pleased Company once or twice, but disgusted when often seen ; for which reason the young Gentlemen were sent from Court to study Mathematicks at the University.

I need not acquaint you, that I was very well made, and reckoned a bright polite Gentleman. I was the Confident and Darling of all the Fair ; and if the Old and Ugly spoke ill of me, all the World knew it was because I scorned to flatter them. No Ball, no Assembly was attended till I had been consulted. *Flavia* coloured her Hair before me, *Celia* shew'd me her Teeth, *Panthea* heaved her Bosom. *Cleora* brandished her Diamonds ; I have seen *Cloe's* Foot, and tied artificially the Garters of *Rhodope*.

'TIS a general Maxim, that those who doat upon themselves, can have no violent Affection for another : But on the contrary, I found that the Womens Passion for me rose in proportion to the Love they bore to themselves. This was verifys'd in my Amour with *Narcissa*, who was so constant to me, that it was pleasantly said, had I been little enough, she would have hung me at her Girdle. The most dangerous Rival I had, was a gay empty Fellow, who by the Strength of a long Intercourse with *Narcissa*, joined to his natural Endowments, had formed himself into a perfect Resemblance with her. I had been discarded, had she not observed that he frequently asked my Opinion about Matters of the last Consequence : This made me still more considerable in her Eye.

'THO' I was eternally caressed by the Ladies, such was their Opinion of my Honour, that I was never envys'd by the Men. A jealous Lover of *Narcissa* one day thought he had caught her in an Amorous Conversation ; for tho' he was at such a distance that he could hear nothing, he imagined strange things from her Airs and Gestures. Sometimes with a serene Look she stepped back in a listning Posture, and brightened into an innocent Smile. Quickly after she swelled into an Air of Majesty and Disdain, then kept her Eyes half shut after a languishing manner, then covered her Blushes with her Hand.

‘ Hand, breathed a Sigh, and seem’d ready to sink down.
 ‘ In rushed the furious Lover; but how great was his Sur-
 ‘ prise to see no one there but the innocent *Fidelio*, with
 ‘ his Back against the Wall betwixt two Windows?

‘ IT were endless to recount all my Adventures. Let
 ‘ me hasten to that which cost me my Life, and *Narcissa*
 ‘ her Happiness.

‘ SHE had the misfortune to have the Small-Pox, upon
 ‘ which I was expressly forbid her Sight, it being appre-
 ‘ hended that it would increase her Distemper, and that I
 ‘ should infallibly catch it at the first Look. As soon as
 ‘ she was suffered to leave her Bed, she stole out of her
 ‘ Chamber, and found me all alone in an adjoining Apart-
 ‘ ment. She ran with Transport to her Darling, and
 ‘ without Mixture of Fear, lest I should dislike her. But
 ‘ oh me! what was her Fury when she heard me say, I
 ‘ was afraid and shock’d at so loathsome a Spectacle. She
 ‘ stepped back, swollen with Rage, to see if I had the
 ‘ Insolence to repeat it. I did, with this Addition, that her
 ‘ ill-timed Passion had increased her Uglinefs. Enraged,
 ‘ inflamed, distracted, she snatched a Bodkin, and with all
 ‘ her Force stabbed me to the Heart. Dying, I preserv’d
 ‘ my Sincerity, and expressed the Truth, tho’ in broken
 ‘ Words; and by reproachful Grimaces to the last I mi-
 ‘ mick’d the Deformity of my Murderers.

‘ *CUPID*, who always attends the Fair, and pity’d
 ‘ the Fate of so useful a Servant as I was, obtained of the
 ‘ *Destinies*, that my Body should be made incorruptible,
 ‘ and retain the Qualities my Mind had possessed. I im-
 ‘ mediately lost the Figure of a Man, and became smooth,
 ‘ polished, and bright, and to this day am the first Fa-
 ‘ vourite of the Ladies.



Saturday,