



T H E
R A M B L E R.

NUMB. 15.

Price 2 d.

To be continued on TUESDAYS and SATURDAYS.

TUESDAY, May 8, 1750.

*Et quando uberior Vitiorum Copia? Quando
Major Avaritiæ patuit Sinus? Alea quando
Hos Animos?*

Juv.



HERE is no Grievance, publick or private, of which, since I took upon me the Office of a periodical Monitor, I have received so many, or so earnest Complaints, as of the Predominance of Play; of a fatal Passion for Cards and Dice, which seems to have overturned, not only the Ambition of Excellence, but the Desire of Pleasure, to have extinguished the Flames of the Lover, as well as of the Patriot; and threatens, in its further Progress, to destroy all Distinctions, both of Rank and Sex, to crush all Emulation, but that of Fraud, to corrupt all those Classes of our People, whose Ancestors have by their Virtue, their Industry, or their Parsimony, given them the Power of living in Extravagance, Idleness, and Vice, and to leave them without Knowledge, but of the modish Games, and without Wishes, but for lucky Hands.

I HAVE found, by long Experience, that there are few Enterprises so hopeless as Contests with the Fashion, in which the Opponents are not only made confident by their Numbers, and strong by their Union, but are hardened by Contempt of their Antagonist, whom they always look upon as a Wretch of low Notions, contracted Views, mean Conversation, and narrow Fortune, who envies the Elevations which he cannot reach, who would gladly im-bitter the Happiness which his Obscurity, his Inelegance or his Indigence deny him to partake, and who has no other End in his Advice, than to revenge his own Mortifica-

*Can ought so rich a Group of Vices yield;
Can ought to an 'em so fair a Field;
As Wretched wot of play?*

tions, to hinder those, whom their Birth and Taste have set above them, from the Enjoyment of their Superiority, and to bring them down to a Level with himself.

THOUGH I have never found myself much affected by this formidable Censure, which I have incurred often enough to be acquainted with its full Force, yet I shall, in some Measure, obviate it on this Occasion, by offering very little in my own Name, either of Argument, or Intreaty, since those who suffer by this general Infatuation may be supposed best able to relate its Effects.

S I R,

THERE seems to be so little Knowledge left in the World, and so little of that Reflexion practis'd, by which Knowledge is to be gained, that I am in doubt, whether I shall be understood, when I complain of want of Opportunity for Thinking; or whether a Condemnation, which at present seems irreversible, to perpetual Ignorance will raise any Compassion, either in you, or your Readers: yet I will venture to lay my State before you, because, I believe, it is natural to most Minds, to take some Pleasure in complaining of Evils, of which they have no Reason to be ashamed.

I AM the Daughter of a Man of great Fortune, whose Diffidence of Mankind, and, perhaps, the Pleasure of continual Accumulation incline him to reside upon his own Estate, and to educate his Children in his own House, where I was bred, if not with the most brilliant Examples of Virtue before my Eyes, at least remote enough from any Incitements to Vice; and, wanting neither Leisure, nor Books, nor the Acquaintance of some Persons of Learning in the Neighbourhood, I endeavour'd to acquire such Knowledge as might most recommend me to Esteem, and thought myself able to support a Conversation upon most of the Subjects, which my Sex, and my Condition, made it proper for me to understand.

I HAD, besides my Knowledge, as my Mamma and my Maid told me, a very fine Face, and elegant Shape, and with all these Advantages had been seventeen Months the reigning Toast for twelve Miles round, and never came to the monthly Assembly, but I heard the old Ladies that

sat by, wishing that *it might end well*, and their Daughters criticising my Air, my Features, or my Dress.

YOU know, Mr *Rambler*, that Ambition is natural to Youth, and Curiosity to Understanding, and, therefore, will hear, without Wonder, that I was desirous to extend my Victories over those, who might give more Honour to the Conqueror; and that I found in a Country Life a continual Repetition of the same Pleasures, which was not sufficient to fill up the Mind for the Present, or raise any Expectations of the Future; and, therefore, I will confess to you, that I was impatient for a Sight of the Town, and, filled my Thoughts with the Discoveries which I should make, the Triumphs that I should obtain, and the Praises that I should receive.

AT last the Time came. My Aunt, whose Husband has a Seat in Parliament, and a Place at Court, buried her only Child, and sent for me to supply the Loss. The Hope that I should so far insinuate myself into their Favour, as to obtain a considerable Augmentation of my Fortune, procured me every Convenience for my Departure, with great Expedition; and I could not, amidst all my Transports, forbear some Indignation to see with what Readiness the natural Guardians of my Virtue sold me to a State, which they thought more hazardous than it really was, as soon as a new Accession of Fortune glittered in their Eyes.

THREE Days I was upon the Road, and on the fourth Morning my Heart danced at the Sight of *London*. I was set down at my Aunt's, and entered upon the Scene of Action. I expected now, from the Age and Experience of my Aunt, some Lessons of prudential Conduct; but, after the first Civilities, and first Tears were over, was told, what Pity it was to have kept so fine a Girl so long in the Country; for that People, who did not begin Young, seldom dealt their Cards handsomely, or played them tolerably.

YOUNG Persons are commonly inclined to slight the Remarks, and Counsels, of their Elders. I smiled, perhaps, with too much Contempt, and was upon the Point of telling her, that my Time had not been past in such trivial Attainments. But I soon found that Things are to be estimated, not by the Importance of their Effects, but the Frequency of their Use.

A FEW Days after, my Aunt gave me notice, that some Company, which she had been six Weeks in collecting, was to meet that Evening, and she expected a finer Assembly than had been seen all the Winter. She expressed this in the Jargon of a Gamester, and, when I asked an Explication of her Terms of Art, wondered where I had lived. I had already found my Aunt so incapable of any rational Conclusion, and so ignorant of every Thing, whether great or little, that I had lost all Regard to her Opinion, and dressed myself with great Expectations of an Opportunity to display my Charms among Rivals, whose Competition would not dishonour me. The Company came in, and after the customary Compliments of Salutation, alike easy to the lowest as the highest Understanding, what was the Result? The Cards were broke open, the Parties were formed, the whole Night passed in a Game, upon which the Young and Old were equally employed; nor was I able to attract an Eye, or gain an Ear, but being compelled to play without Skill, I perpetually embarrassed my Partner, and soon perceived the Contempt of the whole Table gathering upon me.

I CANNOT but suspect, Sir, that this odious Fashion is produced by a Conspiracy of the Old, the Ugly, and the Ignorant, against the Young and Beautiful, the Witty and Gay, as a Contrivance to level all Distinctions of Nature and of Art, to confound the World in a Chaos of Folly, to take from those, who could outline them, all the Advantages of Mind and Body, to withhold Youth from its natural Pleasures, deprive Wit of its Influence, and Beauty of its Charms, to fix those Hearts upon Money, to which we have hitherto been entitled, to sink Life into a tedious Uniformity, and to allow it no other Hopes, or Fears, but those of robbing, and being robbed.

BE pleased, Sir, to inform those of my Sex, who have Minds capable of nobler Sentiments, that, if they will unite in Vindication of their Pleasures and their Prerogatives, they may fix a Time, at which Cards shall cease to be in Fashion, or be left only to those, who have neither Beauty to be loved, nor Spirit to be feared; neither Knowledge to teach, nor Modesty to learn, and who, having passed their Youth in Vice, are justly condemned to spend their Age in Folly.

I am, SIR, &c. CLEORA.

S I R,

VEXATION will burst my Heart, if I do not give it vent. As you publish a Paper, I insist upon it, that you insert this in your next, as ever you hope for the Kindness and Encouragement of any Women of Taste, Spirit, and Virtue. I would have it published to the World, how deserving Wives are used by imperious Coxcombs, that henceforth no Woman may marry, who has not the Patience of *Grizzel*. Nay, if even *Grizzel* had been married to a Gamester, her Temper would never have held out. A Wretch that loses his good Humour and Humanity along with his Money, and will not allow enough from his own Extravagances to support a Woman of Fashion in the necessary Amusements of Life.—Why does not he employ his wife Head to make a Figure in Parliament, raise an Estate, and get a Title? That would be fitter for the Master of a Family, than rattling a noisy Dice Box; and then he might indulge his Wife in a few slight Expences and elegant Diversions.

WHAT if I was unfortunate at *Brog*?—Should he not have stayed to see how Luck would turn another Time? Instead of that, what does he do, but picks a Quarrel, upbraids me with loss of Beauty, abuses my Acquaintance, ridicules my Play, and insults my Understanding; says, forsooth, that Women have not Heads enough to play with any Thing but Dolls, and that they should be employed in Things proportionable to their Understanding, keep at Home, and mind family Affairs.

I DO stay at Home, Sir, and all the Town knows I am at Home every *Sunday*. I have had six Routs this Winter, and sent out ten Packs of Cards in Invitations to private Parties. As for Management, I am sure he cannot call me extravagant, or say I do not mind my Family. The Children are out at Nurse in Villages as cheap as any two little Brats can be kept, nor have I ever seen them since; so he has no Trouble about them. The Servants

live

live all at Board Wages. My own Dinners come from the *Thatch'd House*; and I have never paid a Penny for any Thing I have bought since I was married. As for Play, I do think I may, indeed, indulge in that, now I am my own Mistress. Papa made me drudge at Whist 'till I was tired of it; and far from wanting a Head, Mr *Hoyle*, when he had not given me above forty Lessons, said, I was one of his best Scholars. I thought then with myself, that, if once I was at Liberty, I would leave Play, and take to reading Romances, Things so forbidden at our House, and so railed at, that it was impossible not to fancy them very charming. Most fortunately, to save me from absolute Undutifulness, just as I was married came dear *Brag* into Fashion, and ever since it has been the Joy of my Life; so easy, so chearful and careless, so void of Thought, and so genteel! Who can help loving it? Yet the perfidious Thing has used me very ill of late, and to-morrow I should have changed it for *Faro*. But, Oh! this detestable to-morrow, a Thing always expected, and never found.—Within this few Hours must I be dragged into the Country. The Wretch, Sir, left me in 'a Fit, which his Threatnings had occasioned, and unmercifully ordered a Post-Chaise. Stay I cannot, for Money I have none, and Credit I cannot get—But I will make the Monkey play with me at Picquet upon the Road for all I want. I am almost sure to beat him, and his Debts of Honour I know he will pay. Then who can tell but I may still come back and conquer Lady *Packer*. Sir, you need not print this last Scheme, and, upon second Thoughts, you may — — Oh Distraction! the Post-Chaise is at the Door. Sir, publish what you will, only let it be printed without a Name.

L O N D O N :

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