

NUMB. 55. TUESDAY, Sept. 25. 1750.

Maturo propior desine funeri

Inter ludere virgines,

Et stellis maculam spargere candidis:

Non siquid Pholoen satis

Ee te, Chlora, decet.—

HOR.

To the RAMBLER.

SIR,

THOUGH I have been but a little time conversant in the world, yet I have already had frequent opportunities of observing the little efficacy of remonstrance and complaint, which, however extorted by oppression, or supported by reason, are detested by one part of the world as rebellion, censured by another as peevishness, by another heard with an appearance of compassion, only to betray any of those fallies of vehemence and resentment, which are apt to break out upon encouragement, and by others passed over with indifference and neglect, as matters in which they have no concern, and which, if they should endeavour to examine or regulate, they might draw mischief upon themselves.

YET

YET since it is no less natural for those who think themselves injured to complain, than for others to neglect their complaints, I shall venture to lay my case before you, in hopes that you will enforce my opinion, if you think it just, or endeavour to rectify my sentiments, if I am mistaken. I expect, at least, that you will divest yourself of partiality, and that whatever your age or solemnity may be, you will not, with the dotard's insolence, pronounce me ignorant and foolish, perverse and refractory, only because you perceive that I am young.

MY father dying when I was but ten years old, left me, and a brother two years younger than myself, to the care of my mother, a woman of birth and education, whose prudence or virtue he had no reason to distrust. She felt, for some time, all the sorrow which nature calls forth, upon the final separation of persons dear to one another; and as her grief was exhausted by its own violence, it subsided into tenderness for me and my brother, and the year of mourning was spent in caresses, consolations, and instruction, in celebration of my father's virtues, in professions of perpetual regard to his memory, and hourly instances

stances of such fondness as gratitude will not easily suffer me to forget.

BUT when the term of this mournful felicity was expired, and my mother appeared again without the ensigns of sorrow, the ladies of her acquaintance began to tell her, upon whatever motives, that it was time to live like the rest of the world; a powerful argument which is seldom used to a woman without effect. Lady Giddy was incessantly relating the occurrences of the town, and Mrs Gravely told her privately, with great tenderness, that it began to be publicly observed how much she over-acted her part, and that most of her acquaintance suspected her hope of procuring another husband to be the true ground of all that appearance of tenderness and piety.

ALL the officiousness of kindness and folly was busied to change her conduct. She was at one time alarmed with censure, and at another fired with praise. She was told of balls, where others shone only because she was absent; of new comedies to which all the town was crowding; and of many ingenious ironies, by which domestick diligence was made contemptible.

IT is difficult for virtue to stand alone against fear on one side, and pleasure on the other; especially when no actual crime is proposed, and prudence itself can suggest many reasons for relaxation and indulgence. My mamma was at last persuaded to accompany Miss Giddy to a play. She was received with a boundless profusion of compliment, and attended home by a very fine gentleman. Next day she was with less difficulty prevailed on to play at Mrs Gravely's, and came home gay and lively; for the distinctions that had been paid her awakened her vanity, and good luck had kept her principles of frugality from giving her disturbance. She now made her second entrance into the world, and her friends were sufficiently industrious to prevent any return to her former life; every morning brought messages of invitation, and every evening was passed in places of diversion, from which she for some time complained that she had rather be absent. In a short time she began to feel the happiness of acting without controul, of being unaccountable for her hours, her expences, and her company; and learned, by degrees, to drop an expression of contempt, or pity, at the mention of ladies whose husbands were suspected of restraining their pleasures, or
 their

their play, and confessed that she loved to go and come as she pleased.

I WAS still favoured with some incidental precepts and transient endearments, and was now and then fondly kissed for smiling like my papa: but most part of her morning was spent in comparing the opinion of her maid and milliner, contriving some variation in her dress, visiting shops, and sending compliments; and the rest of the day was too short for visits, cards, plays, and concerts.

SHE now began to discover that it was impossible to educate children properly at home. Parents could not have them always in their sight; the society of servants was contagious; company produced boldness and spirit; emulation excited industry; and a large school was naturally the first step into the open world. A thousand other reasons she alleged, some of little force in themselves, but so well seconded by pleasure, vanity, and idleness, that they soon overcame all the remaining principles of kindness and piety, and both I and my brother were dispatched to boarding schools.

How my mamma spent her time when she

was thus disburthened I am not able to inform you, but I have reason to believe that trifles and amusements took still faster hold of her heart. At first, she visited me at school, and afterwards wrote to me; but in a short time, both her visits and her letters were at an end, and no other notice was taken of me than to remit money for my support.

WHEN I came home, at the vacation, I found myself coldly received, with an observation, "that this girl will presently be a woman." I was, after the usual stay, sent to school again, and overheard my mother say, as I was a going, "Well, now I shall recover."

IN six months more I came again, and, with the usual childish alacrity, was running to my mother's embrace, when she stopped me with exclamations at the suddenness and enormity of my growth, having, she said, never seen any body shoot up so much at my age. She was sure no other girls spread at that rate, and she hated to have children look like women before their time. I was disconcerted, and retired without hearing any thing more than, "Nay if you are angry, madam Steeple, you may walk off."

WHEN

WHEN once the forms of civility are violated, there remains little hope of return to kindness or decency. My mamma made this appearance of resentment a reason for continuing her malignity, and poor Miss Maypole, for that was my appellation, was never mentioned or spoken to but with some expression of anger or dislike.

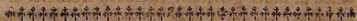
SHE had yet the pleasure of dressing me like a child, and I know not when I should have been thought fit to change my habit, had I not been rescued by a maiden sister of my father, who could not bear to see women in hanging sleeves, and therefore presented me with brocade for a gown, for which I should have thought myself under great obligations, had she not accompanied her favour with some hints that my mamma might now consider her age, and give me her ear-rings, which she had shewn long enough in publick places.

I NOW left the school and came to live with my mamma, who considered me as an usurper that had seized the rights of a woman without a just claim, and was pushing her down the precipice of age that I might reign without

a superior. While I am thus beheld with jealousy and suspicion, you will readily believe that it is difficult to please. Every word and look is an offence. I never speak, but I pretend to some qualities and excellences, which it is criminal to possess; if I am gay, she thinks it early enough to coquette; if I am grave, she hates a prude in bibs; if I venture into company, I am in haste for a husband; if I retire to my chamber, such matron-like ladies are lovers of contemplation. I am on one pretence or other generally excluded from her assemblies, nor am I ever suffered to visit at the same place with my mamma. Every one wonders why she does not bring Miss more into the world, and when she comes home in vapours I am certain that she has heard either of my beauty or my wit, and expect nothing for the ensuing week, but taunts and menaces, contradiction and reproaches.

Thus I live in a state of continual persecution, only because I was born ten years too soon, and cannot stop the course of nature or of time, but am unhappily a woman before my mother can willingly cease to be a girl. I believe you would contribute to the happiness of many families, if, by any arguments

or persuasions, you could make mothers ashamed of rivalling their children; if you could shew them, that though they may refuse to grow wise, they must inevitably grow old; and that the proper solaces of age are not musick and compliments, but wisdom and devotion; that those who are so unwilling to quit the world will soon be driven from it; and that it is therefore their interest to retire while there yet remain a few hours for nobler employments.



NUMB. 56. SATURDAY, Sept. 29, 1750.

———*Valeat res ludicra, si me*

Palma negata macrum, donata reducit opimum.

HOR.

NOTHING is more unpleasing than to find that others have received offence when none was intended, and that pain has been given to those who were not guilty of any provocation. As the great end of society is mutual beneficence, a good man is always uneasy when he finds himself acting in opposition to the purposes of life; because tho' his conscience may easily acquit him of *malice prepense*, of settled hatred or contrivances of mis-