

*Celum, non animam mutant, qui trans mare
currunt.*

HOR.

To the NORTH BRITON.

SIR,

THERE is nothing, I am persuaded, that has a greater tendency to ruin the character of a nation, and to bring it into contempt with foreign states, than the vices or follies of those who go abroad, either in a private or a public capacity. By the ancient laws of *Russia*, all travelling was forbid; at least, no man was permitted to leave the country, without an express order from the Sovereign. Such a law, I know, is inconsistent with the spirit of a free government, and still more with that of a commercial nation, where every man must be indulged in the unrestrained liberty of his person and his property, so far as it does not interfere with the laws of the land, or the good of the public.

But, notwithstanding this circumstance, I have frequently thought, that it would be equally conducive to the honour and the interest of the nation, if we had some law to prevent our rich fools and knaves from making, what they call, the Tour of Europe, and exhibiting, in every city on the continent, their vicious or ridiculous characters, to their own disgrace, and the disgrace of their country.

Were such a law as this in force, we should not hear, as we now do, of the public defaulter of unaccounted millions travelling through Europe, with all the magnificence of a sovereign prince, and displaying to the eyes of astonished foreigners, the fruits of his villany, and his triumph over the laws of England.

Nor should we hear of an odious favourite visiting and revisiting the continent, on the false pretence of his want of health; but, in reality, the better to carry on the designs he has formed against the interests of his King, and the liberties of his country; designs which, he imagines, he may the more successfully prosecute, while the people, thrown off their guard by his absence from the kingdom, little suspect he is the author of those measures, which have been lately pursued by a despotic administration.

Neither should we hear of the foreign debaucheries of a profligate Lord B——, who while at the court of *Constantinople*, in the course of his former peregrinations, made so violent an attack upon the virtue of a Turkish lady, that he narrowly escaped hanging; and after having, upon his return to his native country, committed a crime of a similar nature, that well deserved hanging, is now in consequence of his future irregularities, in confinement, which the laws seem to have decreed for him: for he, they say, that is born to be hanged, will never be drowned.

And, least of all, should we hear of the travels of such an infamous wretch, as the noted *Jemmy Twitcheb*, who was lately seen in several towns of *Holland* and *Flanders*,—not in his senatorial capacity, or as a ministerial agent, diving into the secrets of the various states he pass thro';—nor as a pious reformer of the vices of the people, by dissecting another *Essay on Woman*;—no, the character he assumed, was of a very different nature. He was accompanied by his own son, and two ladies of pleasure; which gave occasion to a certain wag to remark, that his Lordship travelled thus, the better to teach his son natural and experimental philosophy.

Had this scene been acted at *Bath*, at *Bristol*, at *Tunbridge*, or *Newmarket*, no body would have regarded it, as being so common and familiar a sight. But abroad! when a passport is obtained of any governor;—and in certain places passports must be obtained,—and in your own name, stile, and title too.—What must our great senate be thought of? What opinion can the people of the continent have of our Peerage, when men of this stamp wander through different countries, and are introduced to different courts, in characters so incompatible with those they ought to appear in?

But how much soever the national character may be disgraced by the vices or follies of those who go abroad in a private capacity, it is still more disgraced by the vices or follies of such as are sent abroad in a public capacity; I mean Ambassadors, Envoys, Ministers Plenipotentiary, &c. There is nothing, indeed, which requires greater care than the proper choice of an Ambassador, or upon which the character of the Prince and his people with foreign states more essentially depends. As he is appointed to represent the person of the Sovereign, and is supposed to be chosen from among the most able and accomplished of his subjects, the nation, to which he is sent, will be apt to form their opinion of that from which he comes, by the character and conduct of the Ambassador; so that they shall pass for wise or foolish, virtuous or vicious, learned or ignorant, polite or unpolished, just as the Ambassador possesses or discovers any of these qualities.

What opinion, then, can some foreign nations entertain of the English, who, though they have Ambassadors of virtue and abilities at several foreign courts, yet have persons in that high station at some other courts, who, by the profligacy of their character, would be a disgrace to any court, or any nation?

This is particularly the case of *George Cressener*, Esq; our worthy Ambassador to the Electors of *Mentz*, *Triers*, and *Cologn*, and the circle of *Westphalia*. When I see this excellency of a Minister, parading it as the representative of so great and good a monarch; talking of expenses, couriers, cabinets, and what not, and know him, at the same time, to be a bankrupt and a felon, as having never surrendered to his commission; I can only say, with one of the Sovereigns, to whom he is appointed, "Cannot Great Britain, so extended in her dominions, so fertile in inhabitants, find out a gentleman, though ever so poor, to send to me, but I must be elbowed thus at my own table by a bankrupt and a felon?"

'Tis hard to say, whether the appointment of this fellow, to a public embassy, be a greater disgrace to the Prince who appoints him, or the Princes to whom he is appointed; for, I believe, our most amiable Sovereign, though one of the wisest Princes of the age, will scarce think himself intitled to make use of the apology, which was used by *Cromwell* upon a similar occasion, when having sent a fool or a knave, no matter which, to a certain monarch, and being asked why he did so, replied, Such a King, such an Ambassador. Most of the Kings in Europe indeed were, at that time, fools in comparison of *Cromwell*; but, I am afraid, there is no Sovereign in Europe at present, to whom the same compliment can be paid.

It ought likewise to be observed, that there is one particular which renders the affront offered to these German Princes, by the appointment of such an Ambassador to them, the more provoking and insufferable; and that is, that his two predecessors were men of rank and character: the one, *Mr. Stanhope*, nearly allied to the Earl of *Chesham*; the other, a son of the late Countess of *Yarmouth*.

But, perhaps, it will be said, that however exceptionable *Mr. Cressener's* character may be in *England*, this is a circumstance totally unknown in *Germany*. Unfortunately, however, for his Excellency, this is not the case. The English newspapers are read at all the courts, where he alternately resides; and in these papers, in the course of a few months last summer, his name was several times to be seen as a bankrupt and an outlaw. How much must not these German Princes, upon seeing such an article, have thought themselves obliged to the English ministry, for sending such a man to represent their interests?

Like the idle minister at *Brussels*, whose case was particularly described by one of your correspondents in a former paper, this same gentleman had lost his estate among your *Jemmy Twitcheb's* at *Almack's* and *Arthur's*; and it was surely but just, that those who had picked his pocket, should replenish it, not indeed out of their own coffers, which perhaps, by their extravagance, were already exhausted, but out of the public treasury, which, they seem to think, is altogether inexhaustible. I have somewhere read of a certain wit, who called the public revenue an excellent hospital for decayed gentlemen, broken tradesmen, and bankrupt merchants; and the provision made for *Mr. Cressener* is, I think, a sufficient proof of the propriety of the expression.

To the appointment of such Ambassadors as this may partly be ascribed the little respect, or rather the great contempt, that is sometimes shewn to Englishmen at foreign courts; and it was probably owing to some such cause, that the learned, ingenious, and upright *Mr. Dunning*, was several days at the court of *Berlin* lately, without being able to be introduced to the King. For though his Majesty might be told what title he bore, yet not being personally acquainted with him or his virtues, he might have replied thus: Why, merely as to his office, I remember that dirty fellow, *Sir F—— N——*, held the same, and I would punish even a drum, much more a private soldier, if ever he kept him company; supposing it possible the fellow could so disguise himself as to enter my dominions. Nor could his Majesty be much blamed for giving such an answer, as he might probably be afraid, that if such a wretch were to get footing in his kingdom, even the pettyfogging attorneys of *Berlin* would become more expert in the practice of quirks and quibbles, by the example of so great a master in the art of tricking.

I shall not, at present, enter into an examination of the merits of our other Ambassadors, though, perhaps, I may hereafter shew, that those who, by their virtues and abilities, their family and fortune, are best qualified for such employments, are impolitically kept at home; while, contrary to all the rules of merchandise, our very worst samples are sent

to market, and even that market overstocked with gamesters, debauchees, bankrupts, outlaws, and felons, of our growth and manufacture.

Sir Henry Watton somewhere says, "that an Ambassador is a man sent abroad to lye for the good of his country:" but, I am afraid, we may say, with too much truth, of many of our Ambassadors, and still more of our travellers, that they whore, game, and drink, for the disgrace of their country.

Were not *Mr. Cressener* so totally destitute of the very first principles of probity and honour, I would beg leave to examine his character according to those qualifications, which the celebrated *Monsieur de Wiquetfort*, in his treatise upon an Ambassador, has represented as indispensably necessary to fit a man for that important office.

And first, he says, that if an Ambassador hath not a true foundation of honour within himself, he ought at least to counterfeit an honest principle in his exterior, that he may not scandalize his character and his master. Upon which he tells us a story of the Count *de Cantecroix*, who being the Emperor's Ambassador at *Venice*, in the year 1606, made his house a bawdy-house, and committed several other irregularities; which gave so great offence to the Senate, that they complained of it to the Emperor, and caused him to be recalled. Notwithstanding which, they dismissed him honourably, and made him the usual present; but the Count, being apprehensive of danger, from his infamous behaviour, stole out of *Venice*, and left it in the night, without taking leave of any body. I will not say that *Mr. Cressener* keeps a bawdy-house at any of the courts where he resides. I should suspect however, that *Jemmy Twitcheb* kept a bawdy-house when he resided as Ambassador at foreign courts; and every one, I believe, will have the same suspicion, who knows, that he has long kept, and still keeps a bawdy-house at home.

Monsieur de Wiquetfort adds, that no Ambassador can be useful to his Prince, nor even considered at the court where he resides, if he is not in that which employs him: for, what esteem, says he, can strangers have of him, who is not esteemed in his own country? And what credit can be given to the words and assurances of the Ambassador, who is not confided in by his master? Now, will any one pretend to say, that *Mr. Cressener* is esteemed in his own country, or that he hath the confidence of his Sovereign? That he is not esteemed in his own country, is universally allowed; and to say, that he hath the confidence of his Sovereign, is such an affront to Majesty, as no wise subject will dare, and no good subject would chuse to offer.

Let me, therefore, conclude with wishing, that our ministers, from a regard to the honour of their country, would be a little less disposed to favour the pretensions of our Ambassadors; and that our nobility and gentry, from the same generous principle, would carefully examine the disposition of their children, before they send them on their travels; and that, in most cases, they would adopt the sentiments of *Sir John Barnard*, who being once asked by a near relation of his own, to let him travel and see the world, replied, that he should be happy if the young gentleman could see the world, without the world seeing him.

I am, Sir,
Your's, &c.
REGULUS.

To the PRINTER.

SIR,

AS the public papers lately gave an anecdote of a certain unpopular D——e, suffer me to add another testimony to this part of his character, with this general remark, that a good action may be occasioned by accident or circumstance, whilst a bad or mean one scarcely ever arises but from principle.

When his Grace was V——y of a neighbouring kingdom, there was, at that time, a gentleman there who excelled in the knowledge of music, and was universally admired by connoisseurs. His general character soon recommended him to the notice of the D——e, and Lady C——e R——ll (now D——c—s of M——h) became his pupil. He attended in this station near four months, beside often assisting at private concerts. A little time before his G——e's departure from that kingdom, as the gentleman was leaving the castle one evening, he addressed him in the following manner: "Sir, you have attended my daughter for some time, and I am to thank you for your attention; you'll therefore please to accept of this for your trouble;" and at the same time put the considerable sum of five guineas into his hand. The gentleman replied, "That the honour of attending Lady C——e R——ll was fully sufficient," and politely declined it. His Grace set sail in a few days after, and the gentleman has ever since subsisted on the honour of his noble pupil.

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