

MISCELLANY.

Various; that the mind
of desultory man, studious of change,
And pleased with novelty may be indulged,
LEISURE HOURS,
NO. V.

The Character of a Loving Wife.

GENTLEMEN,

Hard is the lot of that man who is plagued with a wanton wife, a jealous wife, a drunken wife, or a scolding wife; but it is better to have a wanton, jealous, drunken, or scolding wife, nay, I may say, all together, than to be yoked to a loving wife. The wanton wife will let the poor man wear his horns on his head with peace and quiet, if he'll give her no interruption in planting them there. The jealous wife will cease upbraiding, while her deary is fixed to her apron string, the drunken wife is at least sober when she wakes in the morning; and the scolding wife, we may suppose, is silent when she is asleep. But the loving wife torments her unfortunate help-mate morning, noon, and night.

When my dear partner, who, I may say, is the most loving of her sex, first wakes in the morning, if she finds me asleep, she seldom fails of letting me know that she thinks I have had rest enough, and that to sleep much is not good for me. If I happen to be awake when she first opens her eyes, she will not suffer me to get up, insisting that I must take another nap, for she is sure I have had but an indifferent night. When we get to breakfast, if I choose toast, it is ten to one but she finds it gave me the heart burn the day before, and then I must eat bread and butter; if I choose the latter, it is the same odds but I am obliged to eat Yorkshire muffin, because she well knew I was fond of it. Sometimes she turns down my cup herself, after the first dish, because she fancies my hand shakes, and tea is nervous.

At other times, I am swilled with half-pint after half-pint, as she conceives I ate too much supper over night, and tea is good for digestion. One time I am poisoned with brandy in my dish; at another, with saffron, though she knows I detest them both;—but it is good for me, she says.

If I happen to come home any short time before dinner, I am obliged to swallow down a large dish of chocolate, and to eat a saucer of dry toast, though perhaps I was just come from the Coffee-house, to keep the wind off my stomach; and I am in great luck that a pint bason of pease soup, in which a spoon will stand upright, is not set before me, by way of whet to my appetite. Though my loving tormentor may have thus crammed me like a turkey, till the dinner makes its appearance on the table, I am obliged to eat whatever she puts upon my plate, or she is otherwise the most miserable creature alive, and is sure I am not well; which never fails of introducing the apothecary into the house, almost as soon as the cloth is taken away. And I have more than once, on such an occasion, suffered myself to be drenched with gallons of camomile-tea, because no remonstrance could satisfy her but my stomach was out of order. If I presume to help myself at table, my female Sancho Pansa physician is ready with her interdict to restrain me. If I call for small beer, perhaps my sweet loving wife thinks water better for me; and, should this have been my choice, it is great odds but she orders wine to be mixed with it, as it is too cold for my sto-

mach alone. Do I go to hob or nob in white wine, I am probably told red is better for my nerves; and, should I mention red, she would insist white is better for my cold. When the dessert appears, tho' I am in general fond of fruit and sweetmeats, I almost tremble at the sight of it; for as the dear loving soul is fond of these things herself, she thinks she cannot give a stronger proof of her regard for me, than in making me eat what she likes best. Accordingly, if she takes a peach that appears to her remarkably good, I am forced to finish what she has half-eat, though I prefer a nectarine. And, however wishfully I may cast my eye upon any glass or saucer of sweetmeats, I am forced to resist the temptation, well knowing my loving taster will supply me abundantly. I am fond of liquors of those things ^{she is sure} she is fond of. I cannot help smiling, when she loads my plate with jellies, I dare not refuse my love's kindness, if she declares they are admirable, and she is certain I shall like them.

Her anxiety about my health, and her earnestness to please me, acts so vehemently upon her mind, that she is never cool enough to judge what is the best for my constitution, or most agreeable to my taste. She is too intent upon the end, to consult well about the means. Hence my female physician often proves the reverse of the smoker's adage of tobacco hic; for if I am well, she'll make me sick; if I am sick, she don't make me well. And, when she is most industrious to prove her love for me, I am frequently inclined to prefer envy, hatred and malice, and all uncharitableness, to such loving kindness, and could heartily cry out with Captain Flash to the dear mischief, 'Oh! damn your love,' though I am convinced of the sincerity of it. My great coat, which I number among my best friends, by her means deserves a place among my false ones. In distress, either from rain or frost, my good friend does me no service, for my wife often hates a great coat, I am so apt to take cold when I leave it off; and then I must weather every inclemency, and stand every shower of rain without it. When I am in no want of it, my good friend is ready with its kind office; and if my love should take it into her head that I have at any time suffered for want of my great coat, I am forced to groan under the weight of it, even in the hot month of July. Her desire to have me pleased will not let me see the play I admire, or visit the friends whom I love. Should I presume to engage for myself, I shall find myself perhaps one of an agreeable party with whom she knew before I should be happy, in another place. And, if I should settle to see Garrick the next time he played Lear, I am certainly engaged by her to the new opera; and she has procured tickets herself, to be an agreeable surprise to me. As to the play-houses indeed, I am afraid I shall never be suffered to enter their doors again, she is so terrified by the modern Mohawks, the Society for the reformation of manne's and the theatres, that she would as soon trust me to a campaign in Flanders, or among the Catawaws and Cherokees in North America, as at Drury Lane or Covent garden.

What adds to my misfortune, is, that there is no hope of an alteration for the better. You may be sure I have taken much pains to convince her, that, though she is the best of women, she is the worst of wives; that I would rather feel the severest effects of hate, than her love. If she was a termagent, I could make her a silent woman, and I could undertake to tame a shrew; but my dear tormentor is so meek, that she weeps without complaining, and pines in private with grief, if I oppose the most trifling circumstance which she judges for my good, or has conceived would please me; she imagines I have no love for her, if she thinks I slight any instance of her's to me. After having suffered her to waste herself almost to a skeleton, I have been reduced to the cruel necessity of giving way to her disposition, and submitting a second time to the go-cart and leading-string. And though I am the jest of all my friends, and the sport of both sexes, though I can neither eat, drink, sleep, or wake as I please; though I must appear merry when I am hipt, and well when I am ill; keep company I don't like, and scarce ever see my old acquaintance and friends; though I am to be purged, sweated and blistered in perfect health, I cannot fly from my persecuter, as my love is at least equal to her's, and I am content to bear the weakness of her mind, as I am so sensible of the strength of her affection. Therefore, Sirs, when you see a monkey play with a kitten, a boy with a puppy and Miss with her goldfinch, pray remember

Yours, &c.

TRUE-LOVE.

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