

The Spectator

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—fas est et ab hoste doceri— Virg.

I PRESUME I need not inform the Polite Part of my Readers, that before our Correspondence with *France* was unhappily interrupted by the War, our Ladies had all their Fashions from thence; which the Milliners took care to furnish them with by means of a Jointed Baby, that came regularly over, once a Month, habited after the manner of the most Eminent Toasts in *Paris*.

I am credibly informed, that even in the hottest time of the War, the Sex made several Efforts, and raised large Contributions towards the Importation of this Wooden *Mademoiselle*.

Whether the Vessel they set out was lost or taken, or whether its Cargo was seized on by the Officers of the Custom-house, as a piece of Contraband Goods, I have not yet been able to learn; it is, however, certain their first Attempts were without Success, to the no small Disappointment of our whole Female World; but as their Constancy and Application, in a matter of so great Importance, can never be sufficiently commended, I am glad to find that in Spight of all Opposition, they have at length carried their Point, of which I received Advice by the two following Letters.

Mr. SPECTATOR,

„I am so great a Lover of whatever is *French*, that I lately discarded an humble Admirer, because he neither spoke that Tongue, nor drank Claret. I have long bewailed, in secret, the Calamities of my Sex during the War, in all which time we have laboured under the insupportable Inventions of *English* Tire-Women, who, tho' they sometimes copy indifferently well, can never compose with that *Goût* they do in *France*.

I was almost in Despair of ever more seeing a Model from that dear Country, when last Sunday I over-heard a Lady, in the next Pew to me, whisper another, that at the *Seven Stars* in *King-street Covent-garden*, there was a *Mademoiselle* compleatly dressed just come from *Paris*.

I was in the utmost Impatience during the remaining part of the Service, and as soon as ever it was over, having learnt the Millener's *Adresse*, I went directly to her House in *King-street*, but was told that the *French* Lady was at a Person of Quality's in *Pall-mall*, and would not be back again 'till very late that Night. I was therefore obliged to renew my Visit very early this Morning, and had then a full View of the dear Moppet from Head to Foot.

You cannot imagine, worthy Sir, how ridiculously I find we have all been trussed up during the War, and how infinitely the *French* Dress excels ours.

The Mantua has no Leads in the Sleeves, and I hope we are not lighter than the *French Ladies*, so as to want that kind of Ballast; the Petticoat has no Whalebone; but fits with an Air altogether galant and *degagé*: the *Coiffeure* is inexpressibly pretty, and in short, the whole Dress has a thousand Beauties in it, which I would not have as yet made too publick. I thought fit, however, to give this Notice, that you may not be surprized at my appearing *à la mode de Paris* on the next Birth-Night.

I am, SIR,
Your humble Servant,
Teraminta.

Within an Hour after I had read this Letter, I received another from the Owner of the Puppet.

SIR,

On *Saturday* last, being the 12th Instant, there arrived at my House in *King-street, Covent-Garden*, a *French Baby* for the Year 1712. I have taken the utmost Care to have her dressed by the most celebrated Tyre-women and Mantua-makers in *Paris*, and do not find that I have any Reason to be sorry for the Expence I have been at in her Cloaths and Importation: However, as I know no Person who is so good a Judge of Dress as your self, if you please to call at my House in your Way to the City, and take a View of her, I promise to amend whatever you shall disapprove in your next Paper, before I exhibit her as a Pattern to the Publick.

I am, SIR,
Your mast humble Admirer,
and most obedient Servant,
Betty Cross-stitch.

As I am willing to do any thing in reason for the Service of my Country-women, and had much rather prevent Faults than find them, I went last Night to the House of the above-mentioned Mrs. *Cross-stitch*. As soon as I enter'd, the Maid of the Shop, who, I suppose, was prepared for my coming, without asking me any Questions, introduced me to the little Damsel, and ran away to call her Mistress.

The Puppet was dressed in a Cherry-coloured Gown and Petticoat, with a short working Apron over it, which discovered her Shape to the most Advantage. Her Hair was cut and divided very prettily, with several Ribbons stuck up and down in it. The Millener assured me, that her Complexion was such as was worn by all the Ladies of the best Fashion in *Paris*. Her Head was extreamly high, on which Subject having long since declared my Sentiments, I shall say nothing more to it at present. I was also offended at a small Patch she wore on her Breast, which I cannot suppose is placed there with any good Design.

Her Necklace was of an immoderate Length, being tied before in such a manner that the two Ends hung down to her Girdle; but whether these supply the Place of Kissing-Strings in our Enemy's Country, and whether our *British Ladies* have any occasion for them, I shall leave to their serious Consideration.

After having observed the Particulars of her Dress, as I was taking a view of it altogether, the Shop-maid, who is a pert Wench, told me that *Mademoiselle* had something very Curious in the tying of her Garters; but as I pay a due Respect even to a pair of Sticks when they are in Petticoats, I did not examine into that Particular.

Upon the whole I was well enough pleased with the Appearance of this gay Lady, and the more so because she was not Talkative, a Quality very rarely to be met with in the rest of her Countrywomen.

As I was taking my leave, the Millener farther informed me, that with the Assistance of a Watchmaker, who was her Neighbour, and the ingenious Mr. *Powell*, she had also contrived another Puppet, which by the help of several little Springs to be wound up within it, could move all its Limbs, and that she had sent it over to her Correspondent in *Paris* to be taught the various Leanings and Bendings of the Head, the Risings of the Bosom, the Curtesy and Recovery, the genteel Trip, and the agreeable Jet, as they are now practised in the Court of *France*.

She added that she hoped she might depend upon having my Encouragement as soon as it arrived; but as this was a Petition of too great Importance to be answered *extempore*, I left her without a Reply, and made the best of my way to WILL. HONEYCOMB'S Lodgings, without whose Advice I never communicate any thing to the Publick of this Nature.

X.