

*I follow'd her : She what was Honour knew,
And with obsequious Majesty approved
My pleaded Reason. To the nuptial Bower
I led her blushing like the Morn —————*

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N^o 90. Wednesday, June 13.

————— *Magnus sine viribus Ignis*
Incaustum furit —————

Virg.

THERE is not in my Opinion, a Consideration more effectual to extinguish inordinate Desires in the Soul of Man, than the Notions of *Plato* and his Followers upon that Subject. They tell us, that every Passion which has been contracted by the Soul during her Residence in the Body, remains with her in a separate State; and that the Soul in the Body, or out of the Body, differs no more than the Man does from himself when he is in his House, or in open Air. When therefore the obscene Passions in particular have once taken Root, and spread themselves in the Soul, they cleave to her inseparably, and remain in her for ever, after the Body is cast off and thrown aside. As an Argument to confirm this their Doctrine they observe, that a lewd Youth who goes on in a continued Course of Voluptuousness, advances by Degrees into a libidinous old Man; and that the Passion survives in the Mind when it is altogether dead in the Body; nay, that the Desire grows more violent, and (like all other Habits) gathers Strength by Age, at the same time that it has no Power of executing its own Purposes. If, say they, the Soul is the most subject to these Passions at a Time when it has the least Instigations from the Body, we may well suppose she will still retain them when she is intirely divested of it. The very Substance of the Soul is fester'd with them, the Gangrene is gone too far to be ever cured; the Inflammation will rage to all Eternity.

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IN this therefore (say the *Platonists*) consists the Punishment of a voluptuous Man after Death: He is tormented with Desires which it is impossible for him to gratify, solicited by a Passion that has neither Objects nor Organs adapted to it: He lives in a State of invincible Desire and Impotence, and always burns in the Pursuit of what he always despairs to possess. It is for this Reason (says *Plato*) that the Souls of the Dead appear frequently in Cœmiteries, and hover about the Places where their Bodies are buried, as still hankering after their old brutal Pleasures, and desiring again to enter the Body that gave them an Opportunity of fulfilling them.

SOME of our most eminent Divines have made use of this *Platonick* Notion, so far as it regards the Subsistence of our Passions after Death, with great Beauty and Strength of Reason. *Plato* indeed carries the Thought very far, when he grafts upon it his Opinion of Ghosts appearing in Places of Burial. Though, I must confess, if one did believe that the departed Souls of Men and Women wandered up and down these lower Regions, and entertained themselves with the Sight of their Species, one could not devise a more proper Hell for an impure Spirit than that which *Plato* has touched upon.

THE Ancients seem to have drawn such a State of Torments in the Description of *Tantalus*, who was punished with the Rage of an eternal Thirst, and set up to the Chin in Water that fled from his Lips whenever he attempted to drink it.

VIRGIL, who has cast the whole System of *Platonick* Philosophy, so far as it relates to the Soul of Man, into beautiful Allegories, in the sixth Book of his *Æneid* gives us the Punishment of a Voluptuary after Death, not unlike that which we are here speaking of.

— *Lucent genialibus altis*
Aurea fulcra toris, epulæque ante ora paratæ
Regifico luxu: Furiarum maxima juxta
Accubat, & manibus prohibet contingere mensas;
Exurgitque facem attollens, atque intonat ore.

They lie below on Golden Beds display'd,
And genial Feasts with regal Pomp are made,

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*The Queen of Furies by their Side is set,
And snatches from their Mouths th' untasted Meat;
Which if they touch, her hissing Snakes she rears,
Tossing her Torch, and thund'ring in their Ears.* Dryd.

THAT I may a little alleviate the Severity of this my Speculation (which otherwise may lose me several of my polite Readers) I shall translate a Story that has been quoted upon another Occasion by one of the most learned Men of the present Age, as I find it in the Original. The Reader will see it is not foreign to my present Subject, and I dare say will think it a lively Representation of a Person lying under the Torments of such a kind of Tantalism, or *Platonick Hell*, as that which we have now under Consideration. Monsieur *Pontignan*, speaking of a Love-Adventure that happened to him in the Country, gives the following Account of it.

‘ WHEN I was in the Country last Summer, I was
‘ often in Company with a Couple of charming Women,
‘ who had all the Wit and Beauty one could desire in
‘ Female Companions, with a Dash of Coquetry, that
‘ from time to time gave me a great many agreeable
‘ Torments. I was, after my Way, in Love with both
‘ of them, and had such frequent Opportunities of
‘ pleading my Passion to them when they were asunder,
‘ that I had Reason to hope for particular Favours from
‘ each of them. As I was walking one Evening in
‘ my Chamber with nothing about me but my Night-
‘ Gown, they both came into my Room and told me,
‘ They had a very pleasant Trick to put upon a Gen-
‘ tleman that was in the same House, provided I would
‘ bear a Part in it. Upon this they told me such a
‘ plausible Story, that I laughed at their Contrivance,
‘ and agreed to do whatever they should require of
‘ me. They immediately began to swaddle me up in
‘ my Night-Gown with long Pieces of Linen, which
‘ they folded about me till they had wrapt me in
‘ above an hundred Yards of Swathe: My Arms were
‘ pressed to my Sides, and my Legs closed together by
‘ so many Wrappers one over another, that I looked
‘ like an *Egyptian Mummy*. As I stood bolt upright
‘ upon one End in this antique Figure, one of the La-
‘ die,

dies burst out a laughing. " And now *Pontignan*, says
 " she, we intend to perform the Promise that we find
 " you have extorted from each of us. You have often
 " asked the Favour of us, and I dare say you are a bet-
 " ter bred Cavalier than to refuse to go to Bed to two
 " Ladies that desire it of you. ' After having stood a Fit
 ' of Laughter, I begged them to uncase me, and do with
 ' me what they pleased. No, no, say they, we like
 ' you very well as you are; and upon that ordered me
 ' to be carried to one of their Houses, and put to Bed
 ' in all my Swaddles. The Room was lighted up on all
 ' Sides: and I was laid very decently between a Pair of
 ' Sheets, with my Head (which was indeed the only
 ' Part I could move) upon a very high Pillow: This
 ' was no sooner done, but my two Female Friends came
 ' into Bed to me in their finest Night-Clothes. You
 ' may easily guess at the Condition of a Man that saw
 ' a Couple of the most beautiful Women in the World
 ' undrest and abed with him, without being able to
 ' stir Hand or Foot. I begged them to release me, and
 ' struggled all I could to get loose, which I did with so
 ' much Violence, that about Midnight they both leaped
 ' out of the Bed, crying out they were undone. But
 ' seeing me safe, they took their Posts again, and re-
 ' newed their Rallery. Finding all my Prayers and
 ' Endeavours were lost, I composed my self as well as
 ' I could; and told them, that if they would not unbind
 ' me, I would fall asleep between them and by that
 ' means disgrace them for ever: But alas! this was im-
 ' possible; could I have been disposed to it, they would
 ' have prevented me by several little ill-natured Ca-
 ' resses and Endearments which they bestowed upon me.
 ' As much devoted as I am to Womankind, I would not
 ' pass such another Night to be Master of the whole
 ' Sex. My Reader will doubtless be curious to know
 ' what became of me the next Morning: Why truly
 ' my Bed-fellows left me about an Hour before Day,
 ' and told me, if I would be good and lie still, they
 ' would send some Body to take me up as soon as it was
 ' time for me to rise: Accordingly about Nine o' Clock
 ' in the Morning an Old Woman came to unswathe me.
 ' I bore all this very patiently, being resolved to take my
 ' Revenge

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