

‘ should hold up his Wand on these Occasions, and keep
 ‘ the Decency of the Place as a Magistrate does the Peace
 ‘ in a Tumult elsewhere ?

Mr. SPECTATOR,

‘ I Am a Woman’s Man, and read with a very fine
 ‘ Lady your Paper, wherein you fall upon us whom
 ‘ you envy : What do you think I did ? you must know
 ‘ she was dressing, I read the *Spectator* to her, and she
 ‘ laughed at the Places where she thought I was touched ;
 ‘ I threw away your Moral, and taking up her Girdle
 ‘ cried out,

*Give me but what this Ribbon bound,
 Take all the rest the Sun goes round.*

‘ S H E smiled, Sir, and said you were a Pedant ; so
 ‘ say of me what you please, read *Seneca* and quote him
 ‘ against me if you think fit.

T I am, S I R, Your Humble Servant.



N^o 159. Saturday, September 1.

————— *Omnem, quæ nunc obducta tuenti
 Mortales habet at visus tibi, & humida circum
 Caligat, nubem eripiam* —————

Virg.

W H E N I was at *Grand Cairo* I picked up several
 Oriental Manuscripts, which I have still by me.
 Among others I met with one entitled, *The
 Visions of Mirza*, which I have read over with great
 Pleasure. I intend to give it to the Publick when I have
 no other Entertainment for them ; and shall begin with
 the first Vision, which I have translated Word for Word
 as follows.

‘ O N the fifth Day of the Moon, which according to
 ‘ the Custom of my Forefathers I always keep
 ‘ holy, after having washed my self, and offered up my
 ‘ Morning

‘ Morning Devotions, I ascended the high Hills of *Bagdat*, in order to pass the rest of the Day in Meditation and Prayer. As I was here airing my self on the Tops of the Mountains, I fell into a profound Contemplation on the Vanity of human Life; and passing from one Thought to another, Surely, said I, Man is but a Shadow and Life a Dream. Whilst I was thus musing, I cast my Eyes towards the Summit of a Rock that was not far from me, where I discovered one in the Habit of a Shepherd, with a little musical Instrument in his Hand. As I looked upon him he applied it to his Lips, and began to play upon it. The Sound of it was exceeding sweet, and wrought into a Variety of Tunes that were inexpressibly melodious, and altogether different from any thing I had ever heard: They put me in mind of those heavenly Airs that are played to the departed Souls of good Men upon their first Arrival in Paradise, to wear out the Impressions of the last Agonies, and qualify them for the Pleasures of that happy Place. My Heart melted away in secret Raptures.

‘ I had been often told that the Rock before me was the Haunt of a Genius; and that several had been entertained with Musick who had passed by it, but never heard that the Musician had before made himself visible. When he had raised my Thoughts by those transporting Airs which he played, to taste the Pleasures of his Conversation, as I looked upon him like one astonished, he beckoned to me, and by the waving of his Hand directed me to approach the Place where he sat. I drew near with that Reverence which is due to a superior Nature; and as my Heart was intirely subdued by the captivating Strains I had heard, I fell down at his Feet and wept. The Genius smiled upon me with a Look of Compassion and Affability that familiarized him to my Imagination, and at once dispelled all the Fears and Apprehensions with which I approached him. He lifted me from the Ground, and taking me by the Hand, *Mirzab*, said he, I have heard thee in thy Soliloquies; follow me.

‘ HE then led me to the highest Pinacle of the Rock, and placing me on the Top of it, Cast thy Eyes Eastward, said he, and tell me what thou seest. I see, said I,

‘ I, a huge Valley and a prodigious Tide of Water rolling thro’ it. The Valley that thou seest, said he, is the Vale of Misery, and the Tide of Water that thou seest is part of the great Tide of Eternity. What is the Reason, said I, that the Tide I see rises out of a thick Mist at one End, and again loses it self in a thick Mist at the other? What thou seest, said he, is that Portion of Eternity which is called Time, measured out by the Sun, and reaching from the Beginning of the World to its Consummation. Examine now, said he, this Sea that is thus bounded with Darkness at both Ends, and tell me what thou discoverest in it. I see a Bridge, said I, standing in the Midst of the Tide. The Bridge thou seest, said he, is human Life, consider it attentively. Upon a more leisurely Survey of it, I found that it consisted of threescore and ten intire Arches, with several broken Arches, which, added to those that were intire, made up the Number about an hundred. As I was counting the Arches, the Genius told me that this Bridge consisted at first of a thousand Arches; but that a great Flood swept away the rest, and left the Bridge in the ruinous Condition I now beheld it. But tell me further, said he, what thou discoverest on it. I see Multitudes of People passing over it, said I, and a black Cloud hanging on each End of it. As I looked more attentively, I saw several of the Passengers dropping thro’ the Bridge, into the great Tide that flowed underneath it; and upon farther Examination, perceived there were innumerable Trap-doors that lay concealed in the Bridge, which the Passengers no sooner trod upon, but they fell thro’ them into the Tide and immediately disappeared. These hidden Pit-falls were set very thick at the Entrance of the Bridge, so that Throngs of People no sooner broke through the Cloud, but many of them fell into them. They grew thinner towards the Middle, but multiplied and lay closer together towards the End of the Arches that were intire.

‘ THERE were indeed some Persons, but their Number was very small, that continued a kind of hobbling March on the broken Arches, but fell through one after another, being quite tired and spent with so long a Walk.

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‘ I passed some Time in the Contemplation of this wonderful Structure, and the great Variety of Objects which it presented. My Heart was filled with a deep Melancholy to see several dropping unexpectedly in the midst of Mirth and Jollity, and catching at every thing that stood by them to save themselves. Some were looking up towards the Heavens in a thoughtful Posture, and in the midst of a Speculation stumbled and fell out of Sight. Multitudes were very busy in the Pursuit of Bubbles that glittered in their Eyes and danced before them, but often when they thought themselves within the reach of them their Footing failed and down they sunk. In this Confusion of Objects, I observed some with Scimetars in their Hands, and others with Urinals, who ran to and fro upon the Bridge, thrusting several Persons on Trap-doors which did not seem to lie in their Way, and which they might have escaped had they not been thus forced upon them.

‘ THE Genius seeing me indulge my self in this melancholy Prospect, told me I had dwelt long enough upon it: Take thine Eyes off the Bridge, said he, and tell me if thou yet seest any thing thou dost not comprehend. Upon looking up, What mean, said I, those great Flights of Birds that are perpetually hovering about the Bridge, and settling upon it from time to time? I see Vultures, Harpies, Ravens, Cormorants, and among many other feathered Creatures several little winged Boys, that perch in great Numbers upon the middle Arches. These, said the Genius, are Envy, Avarice, Superstition, Despair, Love, with the like Cares and Passions that infest human Life.

‘ I here fetched a deep Sigh, Alas, said I, Man was made in vain! How is he given away to Misery and Mortality! tortured in Life, and swallowed up in Death! The Genius being moved with Compassion towards me, bid me quit so uncomfortable a Prospect. Look no more, said he, on Man in the first Stage of his Existence, in his setting out for Eternity; but cast thine Eye on that thick Mist into which the Tide bears the several Generations of Mortals that fall into it. I directed my Sight as I was ordered, and (whether or no

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the good Genius strengthened it with any supernatural Force, or dissipated Part of the Mist that was before too thick for the Eye to penetrate) I saw the Valley opening at the farther End, and spreading forth into an immense Ocean, that had a huge Rock of Adamant running through the midst of it, and dividing it into two equal Parts. The Clouds still rested on one Half of it, insomuch that I could discover nothing in it: But the other appeared to me a vast Ocean planted with innumerable Islands, that were covered with Fruits and Flowers, and interwoven with a thousand little shining Seas that ran among them. I could see Persons dressed in glorious Habits with Garlands upon their Heads, passing among the Trees, lying down by the Sides of Fountains, or resting on Beds of Flowers; and could hear a confused Harmony of singing Birds, falling Waters, human Voices, and musical Instruments. Gladness grew in me upon the Discovery of so delightful a Scene. I wished for the Wings of an Eagle, that I might fly away to those happy Seats; but the Genius told me there was no Passage to them, except through the Gates of Death that I saw opening every Moment upon the Bridge. The Islands, said he, that lie so fresh and green before thee, and with which the whole Face of the Ocean appears spotted as far as thou canst see, are more in Number than the Sands on the Sea-shore; there are Myriads of Islands behind those which thou herediscoverest, reaching further than thine Eye or even thine Imagination can extend it self. These are the Mansions of good Men after Death, who according to the Degree and Kinds of Virtue in which they excelled, are distributed among these several Islands, which abound with Pleasures of different Kinds and Degrees, suitable to the Relishes and Perfections of those who are settled in them; every Island is a Paradise accommodated to its respective Inhabitants. Are not these, O *Mirza*, Habitations worth contending for? Does Life appear miserable, that gives thee Opportunities of earning such a Reward? Is Death to be feared, that will convey thee to so happy an Existence? Think not Man was made in vain, who has such an Eternity reserved for him. I gazed with

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