

tures of the two? A Satire should expose nothing but what is corrigible, and make a due Discrimination between those who are, and those who are not the proper Objects of it.

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N^o 210. Wednesday, October 31.

Nescio quomodo inhæret in mentibus quasi seculorum quoddam augurium futurorum; idque in maximis ingeniis altissimisque animis & existit maximè & apparet facillimè.

Cic. Tusc. Quæst.

To the SPECTATOR.

S I R,

I Am fully persuaded that one of the best Springs of generous and worthy Actions, is the having generous and worthy Thoughts of our selves. Whoever has a mean Opinion of the Dignity of his Nature, will act in no higher a Rank than he has allotted himself in his own Estimation. If he considers his Being as circumscribed by the uncertain Term of a few Years, his Designs will be contracted into the same narrow Span he imagines is to bound his Existence. How can he exalt his Thoughts to any thing great and noble, who only believes that, after a short Turn on the Stage of this World, he is to sink into Oblivion, and to lose his Consciousness for ever?

FOR this Reason I am of Opinion, that so useful and elevated a Contemplation as that of the *Soul's Immortality* cannot be resumed too often. There is not a more improving Exercise to the human Mind, than to be frequently reviewing its own great Privileges and Endowments; nor a more effectual Means to awaken in us an Ambition raised above low Objects and little Pursuits, than to value our selves as Heirs of Eternity.

I T is a very great Satisfaction to consider the best and wisest of Mankind in all Nations and Ages, asserting, as

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‘ with one Voice, this their Birth-right, and to find it
‘ ratify’d by an exprefs Revelation. At the same time if
‘ we turn our Thoughts inward upon our selves, we may
‘ meet with a kind of secret Sense concurring with the
‘ Proofs of our own Immortality.

‘ Y O U have, in my Opinion, rais’d a good presump-
‘ tive Argument from the increasing Appetite the Mind
‘ has to Knowledge, and to the extending its own Fa-
‘ culties, which cannot be accomplished, as the more re-
‘ strained Perfection of lower Creatures may, in the Li-
‘ mits of a short Life. I think another probable Conjec-
‘ ture may be rais’d from our Appetite to Duration it
‘ self, and from a Reflexion on our Progress through the
‘ several Stages of it : *We are complaining, as you observe*
‘ *in a former Speculation, of the Shortness of Life, and yet*
‘ *are perpetually hurrying over the Parts of it, to arrive*
‘ *at certain little Settlements, or imaginary Points of*
‘ *Rest, which are dispersed up and down in it.*

‘ N O W let us consider what happens to us when
‘ we arrive at these *imaginary Points of Rest* : Do we
‘ stop our Motion, and sit down satisfied in the Settle-
‘ ment we have gain’d? or are we not removing the
‘ Boundary, and marking out new Points of Rest, to
‘ which we press forward with the like Eagerness, and
‘ which cease to be such as fast as we attain them? Our
‘ Case is like that of a Traveller upon the *Alps*, who
‘ should fancy that the Top of the next Hill must end
‘ his Journey, because it terminates his Prospect; but
‘ he no sooner arrives at it, than he sees new Ground and
‘ other Hills beyond it, and continues to travel on as
‘ before.

‘ T H I S is so plainly every Man’s Condition in Life,
‘ that there is no one who has observed any thing, but
‘ may observe, that as fast as his Time wears away, his
‘ Appetite to something future remains. The Use there-
‘ fore I would make of it is this, That since Nature (as
‘ some love to express it) does nothing in vain, or, to
‘ speak properly, since the Author of our Being has
‘ planted no wandering Passion in it, no Desire which
‘ has not its Object, Futurity is the proper Object of the
‘ Passion so constantly exercis’d about it; and this Rest-
‘ lessness in the present, this assigning our selves over to
‘ farther

farther Stages of Duration, this successive grasping at somewhat still to come, appears to me (whatever it may to others) as a kind of Instinct or natural Symptom which the Mind of Man has of its own Immortality.

I take it at the same time for granted, that the Immortality of the Soul is sufficiently established by other Arguments: And if so, this Appetite, which otherwise would be very unaccountable and absurd, seems very reasonable, and adds Strength to the Conclusion. But I am amazed when I consider there are Creatures capable of Thought, who, in spite of every Argument, can form to themselves a fullen Satisfaction in thinking otherwise. There is something so pitifully mean in the inverted Ambition of that Man who can hope for Annihilation, and please himself to think that his whole Fabrick shall one Day crumble into Dust, and mix with the Mass of inanimate Beings, that it equally deserves our Admiration and Pity. The Mastery of such Mens Unbelief is not hard to be penetrated; and indeed amounts to nothing more than a sordid Hope that they shall not be immortal, because they dare not be so.

THIS brings me back to my first Observation, and gives me Occasion to say further, That as worthy Actions spring from worthy Thoughts, so worthy Thoughts are likewise the Consequence of worthy Actions: But the Wretch who has degraded himself below the Character of Immortality, is very willing to resign his Pretensions to it, and to substitute in its Room a dark negative Happiness in the Extinction of his Being.

THE admirable *Shakespeare* has given us a strong Image of the unsupported Condition of such a Person in his last Minutes in the second Part of *King Henry* the Sixth, where Cardinal *Beaufort*, who had been concerned in the Murder of the good Duke *Humphrey*, is represented on his Death-bed. After some short confused Speeches which shew an Imagination disturbed with Guilt, just as he was expiring, *King Henry* standing by him full of Compassion, says,

*Lord Cardinal! if thou think'st on Heaven's Bliss,
Hold up thy Hand, make Signal of that Hope!
He dies, and makes no Sign! —*

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