

MORAL TALES,

AFTER THE

EASTERN MANNER;

BY

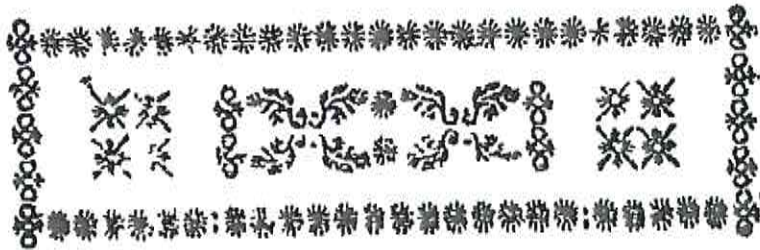
MR. SEALY.

V O L. II.


LOVELY ARE THE TALES OF FORMER TIMES,

L O N D O N :

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CORISMAN THE PEASANT.


 CORISMAN, the son of a poor peasant in the neighbourhood of the city of Bagdad, applied himself from his early youth, to the study of the book of Glory,—which was dictated by an angel to Mahomet the Prophet of the Most

Most High. Its divine precepts took possession of all his faculties, and he passed his days in retirement, entirely occupied in fervent prayer, and meditating upon the Khoran.

Corisman's fame for his sanctity of life spread far and wide. — Many flocked every day to ask his advice, or to intreat him to offer up his prayer in their behalf. Corisman was even reported, that he had often performed miracles.

Corisman was totally disinterested, and frequently refused the presents that were offered him, taking no more than what was just requisite to procure the necessaries

necessaries of life. *Asmong*, the angel of discord, had no power over his heart, as all his passions were subdued by devotion; and his firm expectation of enjoying a lasting happiness, in the Paradise promised by Mahomet to the faithful, banished from his breast every desire of earthly felicity.

The Caliph Haroun Al-Raschid happening one day to pass by the dwelling of Corisman, he stopped to repose himself for a while, and having proposed some questions to the sage, was struck so much with his answers, that he entered into a further conversation with him; in which Corisman acquitted himself in such a manner, as greatly increased

increased the high opinion, which the Caliph had conceived of his great abilities.

When the Commander of the Faithful had retired, he expressed himself in the following terms to Giafer, his Vizier and confidant :

“ What a pity it is, Giafer, that
“ the extraordinary abilities of such a
“ man, should be buried in a remote
“ corner of this wilderness. He ap-
“ pears to have a perfect power over
“ all the emotions of his own mind,
“ and must of consequence have been
“ born to command those of others.
“ Though my authority surpasses that
“ of

“ of all my predecessors, I look upon
 “ this recluse sage, more powerful
 “ than myself My breast is liable
 “ to be torn by anxious cares:—and
 “ whilst obsequious crowds fall prof-
 “ trate before me, upon examining
 “ my heart, I often find myself an
 “ abject slave to passion.

“ Giafer, I am determined to carry
 “ this learned Dervise to my court,
 “ and employ him in affairs of im-
 “ portance. I doubt not, said the
 “ Caliph, but he will shortly show
 “ himself able to ease us of part of the
 “ burden of public business.”

Giafer, who laid it down as a maxim,
 to shew an unbounded compliance to
 all,

all the caprices of his royal master, seemed to approve of the hint; and the Dervise, though he at first modestly excused himself, thought it his duty to obey the commands of his sovereign, and accompanied him to the magnificent capital of Bagdad.

Corisman upon his arrival was not in the least dazzled by its splendour—nor did the brilliancy of a polite court make any impression upon his senses. He had been habituated to thoughts of a more sublime nature. All the pageantry and pomp of life appeared to him as transitory as the meteors with which the eastern hemisphere blazes, by momentary and interrupted flashes.

Corisman's

Corisman's integrity preserved him amidst all the corruptions of a Court: and though in the prime of life, appeared altogether insensible to the allurements of beauty. He displayed talents that surpassed every one, and yet did not appear sensible of his being possessed of superior abilities. He distinguished himself in several places of trust, and the Vizier Giafer, who was advanced in years, and grown weary of the burden of the public affairs, was highly pleased to have such an assistant, and represented his diligence and zeal in the most favourable light to his master.

Giafer being some years after called upon by the angel of death, the Caliph
upon

upon his recommendation invested Corisman with that important office. Although no minister had ever been more attached to his master, or ever given greater, and more general satisfaction than Giafer, Corisman in the exalted station to which he was raised, acquitted himself so well, that Haroun Al-Raschid soon ceased to regret in him the Vizier, though he had long lamented the loss of his confidant and friend.

Ambition, however, took at last possession of the heart of Corisman.— But this change in the state of his mind he was not for a long time aware of; for men of the greatest penetration are

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often ignorant of the motives upon which they act. He still thought all his actions inspired by devotion, though his soul, naturally elevated, could not resist the influence of ambition, yet was he superior to all the temptations of luxury and voluptuousness. This passion impelled him to endeavour secretly to depress many of the chief personages of the court, and this caused a faction to be formed against him, to the machinations of which he had like to have fallen a prey.

A war, about that time, broke out between the Caliph and the Sultan of Damascus, and the army of the former being routed in the first engagement,
the

the enemies of Corifman found means to cast the odium upon him, as he had the direction of public affairs. The enemies of Corifman even went so far as to insinuate, that he had betrayed his trust, and basely fold the army to the enemies of his country.

Corifman, conscious of his innocence, flew to the Caliph, and prostrated himself at his feet, begged that he might be indulged to command in person in the second expedition. To this the Caliph agreed, but assured him, that his head should answer for the success.

The Vizier set out directly, and having defeated the enemy in a bloody battle, returned in triumph, bringing their General prisoner to Bagdad.

The Sultan of Damascus was glad to sue for a peace, and the Vizier, having fully vindicated his conduct, resigned his employment. Having served his country faithfully, he begged leave to retire, in order to dedicate his few remaining days to the service of *Alla* and his holy Prophet Mahomet.

Corisman obtained his request, and notwithstanding his retreat was rendered every way commodious by the bounty of his master; his heart, which had
once

once given way to ambition, soon became restless; and solitude, which he once delighted in, became burdensome and tedious.

Corisman had almost formed a design to return to Bagdad, when happening to walk one evening in his garden, revolving on this strange project with the utmost agitation of mind, he sat down in an harbour, and was soon after oppressed with a sound sleep. An angel appeared to him, beautiful as the youths, who present a delicious goblet to the faithful upon their arrival into Paradise, and addressed him as follows :

D 3 " Corisman,

“ Corisiman, though born in a low
 “ condition, you once aspired to the
 “ highest things. During your resi-
 “ dence at a court, you have listened to
 “ the suggestions of ambition, and
 “ your mind has contracted a *littleness*
 “ when you thought yourself in the
 “ most exalted sphere. I compassion-
 “ ate your disquietude, and will dispel
 “ the mist which has so long darkened
 “ your eyes, by displaying to you ob-
 “ jects which transcend all human
 “ grandeur.”

This said, he flew with Corisiman to
 Paradise, where having taken one view
 of the glories of that place, awaked,
 with

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with a full conviction of the vanity of worldly greatness.

The pious Corilman passed the remainder of his life in constant meditation and prayer, 'till greatly advanced in age, when he was called to immortality by the angel of death.



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ZAMIR