

Perſian Letters.

BY

M. De MONTESQUIEU.

Translated from the FRENCH,

By Mr. FLOYD.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

The FOURTH EDITION.

With ſeveral new LETTERS and NOTES.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. and R. TONSON, in the Strand.
MDCCLXII.

17 SEP 1963

T H E

Translator's Advertisement.

THE alterations in several parts of this work, and the addition of several new letters, by M. de Montesquieu, in the late quarto edition of his works, together with some inaccuracies of Mr. Ozell, in his translation; as the misplacing of some of the letters, making additions of his own, and the badness of his language in many parts, make it necessary give a new translation of these elegant, and entertaining Letters: How

iv Translator's Advertisement.

I have succeeded, is submitted to the candid reader; but this he may be assured of, that he hath a faithful translation, without any alteration, or addition.

PRELI-

PRELIMINARY REFLECTIONS

ON THE

PERSIAN LETTERS.

By M. De MONTESQUIEU.

Prefixed to the Quarto Edition,

THERE is nothing in the PERSIAN LETTERS that has given readers so general a satisfaction, as to find in them a sort of romance, without having expected it. It is easy to discern in them the beginning, the progress, and the conclusion of it: the several different persons introduced, are connected together by a sort of a chain. The longer they reside in Europe, the less marvellous and extraordinary the manners of that part of the world begin to appear to them: and they are more or less struck with the marvellous and extraordinary, according to their different characters. Add to this, that the Asiatic seraglio grows disorderly in proportion to the time of Usbek's absence;

vi Preliminary Reflections, &c.

sence ; that is to say, according as phrenzy increases in it, and love abates. There is another reason why these romances, generally speaking, succeed, and that is, because the persons introduced give themselves an account of what happens to them, which causes the passions to be felt more sensibly than any narrative made by another could do. This is likewise one of the causes of the success of some admirable works which have appeared since the PERSIAN LETTERS. To conclude, in common romances digressions can never be admitted, except when they themselves constitute another romance. Reasoning cannot be intermixed with the story, because the personages not being brought together to reason, that would be repugnant to the design and nature of the work. But in the form of letters, wherein personages are introduced at random, and the subjects treated of do not depend upon any design, or plan, already formed, the author has the advantage of being able to blend philosophy, politics and morality with romance, and to connect the whole by a secret, and, as it were, undiscoverable chain. So great a call was there for the
PER-

PERSIAN LETTERS, upon their first publication, that the booksellers exerted their utmost efforts to procure continuations of them. They pulled every author they met by the sleeve, and said, Sir, I must beg the favour of you to write me a collection of PERSIAN LETTERS. But what has been said, is sufficient to convince the reader, that they do not admit of a continuation, and still less of any mixture with letters wrote by another hand, how ingenious soever. There are in them some strokes, which many have looked upon as too bold. But these are requested to take the nature of the work into consideration. The Persians, who were to play so considerable a part in it, were all on a sudden transplanted to Europe, that is, removed to another world, as it were. At a certain time therefore it was necessary to represent them as full of ignorance and prejudices. The author's chief design was to display the formation and progress of their ideas. Their first thoughts could not but have a dash of singularity in them: it was apprehended that there was nothing to be done but to give them that sort of singularity which is not incompat-

viii Preliminary Reflections, &c.

tible with understanding. It was only to represent their situation of mind at seeing any thing that appeared extraordinary to them. The author, far from having a design to strike at any principle of our religion, thought himself even free from the imputation of indiscretion. These strokes appear always connected with a manifestation of surprize, or astonishment, and not with the idea of inquiry, much less with that of criticism. In speaking of our religion, these Persians should not appear better informed than when they talk of our manners and customs. And if they sometimes seem to look upon the tenets of our religion as singular, the singularity they discover in them fully shews their ignorance of their connexion with the other truths thereof. The author justifies himself in this manner, as well on account of his attachment to these important truths, as through respect for the human species, which he certainly could not have had an intention to wound in the tenderest part. The reader is therefore requested not to cease one moment to consider these strokes as the effects of surprize in persons who ought to be surprized,

prized, or as the paradoxes of men who spoke of what they did not understand. He is likewise requested to consider that the whole beauty of the invention consisted in the constant contrast between the real state of things and the singular, or whimsical, manner in which they were contemplated. Certain it is, that the nature and design of the PERSIAN LETTERS are so apparent and obvious, that none can mistake them, but such as have a mind to impose upon themselves.

INTRODUCTION

TO THE

First FRENCH EDITION.

I Shall neither write a dedicatory epistle, nor solicit protection for this work ; if it is good, it will be read, if bad, I am not anxious that it should be read by any. I have adventured the first of these letters to try the public taste ; I have a great number more, which I may hereafter give. But this depends upon my not being known, for from the moment that happens, I am silent. I know a lady who walks very well, but limps if observed. There are faults enough in the work for the critics, without subjecting myself to them. If I was known, it would be said, his book is his true character ; he might have engaged himself to a better purpose ; it is unworthy of a grave

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grave man. The critics are never deficient in these kinds of reflections, because little wit is necessary to make them.

The Persians, who wrote these letters, lodged with me, and we passed our time together; as they regarded me as one of another world, they hid nothing from me. In fact, persons removed to such a considerable distance, could have no secrets. They communicated to me most of their letters, which I copied, others I took which they were desirous not to intrust me with, as they exposed the vanity and jealousy of the Persian. I am no more than a translator: my whole care has been to suit this work to our manners. I have relieved the reader, as much as I could, from the Asiatic stile, and have exonerated him from the trouble of an infinite number of sublime and elevated expressions. But this is not all the service I have rendered him; I have retrenched those long compliments, of which the Orientals are not less profuse than ourselves, and have passed over a great many particulars too trifling to be made public, and which ought only to live from friend to friend. If this had been observed by most of those who have
pub-

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published epistolary collections, many of their works would have disappeared. There is one circumstance which has often excited my admiration ; that these Persians were frequently as well instructed as myself in the manners and customs of our nation, even to a knowledge of the most minute particulars, taking notice of some things which I am sure have escaped many of the Germans who have visited France. This I attribute to the long stay they made here, without considering that it is less difficult to an Asiatic to inform himself of the manners of the French in one year, than it would be to a Frenchman to acquire a knowledge of those of Asia in four years ; because the one are as open as the other are reserved. Translators have been indulged by custom, even the most barbarous commentators, to decorate the head of their version, or glossary, with a panegyric on the original, and to expatiate on the usefulness, merit, and excellency of it ; but this I have not done. - The reasons are obvious ; one of the best is, that it would be tedious, in a part of a work already too much so ; I would say, in a preface.

C O N-

C O N T E N T S

O F

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E R R A T A.

- Page 40, line 16, for *smac*, read *same*.
— 46, line 1, for *Iwan*, read *Iman*.
— 57, line 19, for *revential*, read *reverential*.
— 73, line 12, for *you*, read *your*.
— 103, line 20, for *ye*, read *yea*.
— 177, line 7, for *me*, read *we*.
— 264, line 1, for *Trimetta*, read *Irimetta*.

Persian Letters.

L E T T E R I.

USBEK to his Friend RUSTAN,
at ISPAHAN.

AT Com we remained only one day, when, having paid our devotions at the tomb of the virgin who brought forth twelve prophets, we renewed our journey, and yesterday, the twenty-fifth since we left Ispahan, came to Tauris. Probably Rica and I are the first among the Persians, whose thirst after knowledge made them leave their own country, and renounce the pleasures of a life of ease, for the laborious search of wisdom.

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B

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dom. Though born in a flourishing kingdom, we did not think that its boundaries were those of knowledge, and that the oriental light could only enlighten us. Inform me what is said of our journey, without flattery; I do not expect that it will be generally approved. Address your letter to me at Erzeron, where I shall rest some time. Farewel, my dear Rustan; be assured that in whatever part of the world I may be, thou hast there a faithful friend.

Tauris, the 15th of the
moon Saphar, 1711.

L E T T E R II.

USBEK to the First Black Eunuch, at his
Seraglio in ISPAHAN.

THOU art the trusty keeper of the finest women in Persia; I have confided in thee, what I have in the world most dear: thou holdest in thy hands the keys of the fatal doors, which are never unlocked but for me. Whilst thou watchest over this precious deposit
of

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of my heart, it reposes itself, and enjoys a perfect security. Thou keepst watch in the silence of the night, as well as in the hurry of the day. Thy unwearied cares sustain thy virtue when it wavers. If the women whom thou guardest, would swerve from their duty, thou destroyest the very hope of it. Thou art the scourge of vice, and the pillar of faithfulness. Thou commandest them, and thou obeyest them; thou implicitly fulfilllest all their desires, and thou makest them conform to the laws of the seraglio with the same obedience; thou takest a pride in rendering them the meanest services; thou submittest to their just commands with an awful respect; thou servest them as though thou wert the slave of their slaves. But again thou resumest thy power, commandest like a master as myself, when thou fearest the relaxation of the laws of chastity and modesty. Ever remember the obscurity from which I took thee, when thou wast the meanest of my slaves, to put thee in that place, and intrusted to thee the delights of my heart; observe then the deepest humility, toward

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those who share my love; yet, at the same time, make them sensible of their very dependent state. Procure them every innocent pleasure; beguile their uneasiness, entertain them with music, dancing, and the most delicious liquors: induce them to meet together frequently. If they have a mind to go into the country, you may carry them thither; but destroy any man who attempts to come into their sight. Exhort them to observe that cleanliness, which is an emblem of the soul's purity; talk to them sometimes of me. I wish to see them again, in that charming place which they adorn. Farewel.

Tauris, the 18th of the
moon Saphar, 1711.

L E T T E R III.

ZACHI to USBEK, at TAURIS.

WE commanded the chief of the eunuchs to remove us into the country; he will inform you that no accident happened. When we were to leave.

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leave our litters, to pass the river, two slaves, as usual, bore us on their shoulders, and we were so hid as not to be at all observed. How can I be able to live in thy seraglio at Ispahan? which incessantly reminds me of my past happiness; which every day renews my desires with fresh violence? I range from apartment to apartment, ever in search of thee, and never find thee, but through the whole meet with an afflictive remembrance of my past happiness. I sometimes behold myself in the place where I the first time received thee to my arms; again I view thee on that spot where thou didst decide that famous quarrel amongst thy wives; each of us pretending to the superiority of beauty; we presented ourselves before thee, after having exerted our imaginations to the utmost to provide ourselves with every advantageous ornament; thou contemplatedst with pleasure, the prodigies of our art; you admired to what a height we had carried our desires to please thee. But thou soon madest these borrowed charms give place to those of nature; thou destroyedst all our labours, we were obliged to despoil ourselves of

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all those ornaments, which were become incommodious to thee; we were obliged to appear to thy view in the simplicity of nature. I thought nothing of modesty, glory was my only thought. Happy Usbek! What charms were then exposed to thy eyes! We beheld thee a long time, roving from enchantment to enchantment; long thy wavering soul remained unfixed; each new grace demanded a tribute from thee; we were in a manner covered, all over, with thy kisses; thou carriedst thy curious looks to the most secret places; thou madest us change, in a moment, to a thousand various attitudes; thy commands were always new, and so was our obedience. I confess to thee, Usbek, a more lively passion than ambition made me hope to please thee. I saw myself insensibly become the mistress of thy heart; thou tookest me; thou quittedst me; thou tookest me again; and I knew how to retain thee; the triumph was all my own, and despair my rivals: it seemed, to us, as if we only were in the world, and all around us unworthy of our attention. Would to
hea-

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heaven that my rivals had had the courage to have remained to have been witnesses of all those proofs of love that I received from thee! Had they well observed my transports, they would have been sensible of the disparity between their love and mine: they would have found that though they might dispute with me for charms, they could not sensibility.—But where am I? Where does this vain recital lead me? Not to have been beloved is a misfortune; but to be so no more, an affront. Thou abandonedst us, Usbek, to wander through barbarous climes. But why dost thou esteem the advantage of being beloved as nothing? Alas! thou dost not know thyself what thou lovest. I utter sighs which are never heard; my tears flow, and thou dost not enjoy them: it seems that love breathes in this seraglio, and thy insensibility hath removed thee from it. Ah! my dear Usbek, if thou knewest how to be happy!

From the seraglio at Fatme,
the 21st of the moon
Maharram, 1711.

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L E T T E R IV.

ZEPHIS to USBEK, at ERZERON.

AT length the black monster has determined to make me despair. He would, forcibly, deprive me of Zelida, my slave, who served me with so much affection, and who is so handy at every graceful ornament. He was not satisfied that this separation should be grievous, he would have it also dishonourable. The traitor would treat as criminal the motives of my confidence; and because he was weary of waiting behind the door, where I always placed him, he dared to imagine, that he heard, or saw, things, which I cannot even conceive. I am very unhappy! Neither my retreat, nor my virtue, can secure me from unreasonable suspicions: a vile slave assaults me even in thy heart, and it is there I must justify myself. No; I have too much regard to myself to descend to a justification; I will have no other guardian of my conduct but thyself;

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self; thy love and mine, and, if I must tell thee so, dear Usbek, my tears.

From the seraglio at Fatme,
the 29th of the moon
Maharram, 1711.

L E T T E R V.

RUSTAN to USBEK, at ERZERON.

THE whole conversation of Isphahan turns upon thee, thy departure is the only thing about which people talk. Some ascribe it to levity of mind, others to some disgust; thy friends only justify thee, but they persuade no one. They cannot conceive that thou canst forsake thy wives, thy relations, thy friends, and thy country, to explore climes unknown to the Persians. The mother of Rica is not to be comforted; she demands her son of thee, whom she saith thou hast carried away. As to me, dear Usbek, I am naturally led to approve of all thy proceedings, yet I know not how to pardon thy absence, and whatever reasons thou mayest offer to me, my heart

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will

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will never relish them. Farewel. Love me always.

Ispahan, the 28th of the
moon Rebiab, 1711.

L E T T E R VI.

USBEK to his Friend NESSIR, at ISPAHAN.

AT the distance of one day's journey from Erivan we quitted Persia, and entered those territories subject to the Turks. Twelve days after we reached Erzeron, where we continued three or four months. I must confess to thee, Nessir, I suffered a secret concern when I lost sight of Persia, and found myself surrounded by faithless Osmanlins; and, as I advance into the country of the profane, I think I become such myself: my country, my family, my friends present themselves to my mind, my tenderness is revived; a certain uneasiness hath completed my sorrow, and makes me sensible that I have ventured too much for my quiet. But my wives are my chief affliction; I cannot think of them, but I
am

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am swallowed up in grief. It is not, Neffir, that I love them; with respect to that, I am in a state of insensibility which leaves me no desires. The number of women I saw in the seraglio hath prevented love, and I have defeated him by himself, but this coldness itself is a kind of secret jealousy that devours me. I behold a number of women trusted almost to themselves; for I have none but some base spirited wretches to answer for their conduct. I should scarcely think myself secure, though my slaves were faithful; how would it be then if they should not be so? What distressing accounts may I receive in the distant countries through which I am to pass! It is a malady for which my friends can afford no remedy; the causes of my disorder arise from a place, the melancholy secrets of which they ought to be ignorant of; and, if they could discern them, what could they do? Had not I a thousand times better let them die with silence and impunity, than make them public by correction? In thy heart, my dear Neffir, I confide all my griefs, which is the
only

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only consolation that remains to me in my present state.

Erzeron, the 10th of the moon
of the 2d Rebiab, 1711.

L E T T E R VII.

FATME TO USBEK, at ERZERON.

THOU hast been gone two months, my dear Usbek, and, in the trouble that I am in, I cannot yet persuade myself that it is so. I run all over the seraglio, as if thou wert there, nor is my fancy disabused. What wouldest thou have become of a woman who loves thee? Who hath been accustomed to hold thee in these arms; whose only concern was to give thee fresh proofs of her affection; free by the advantage of her birth, but by the violence of her love a slave. When I married thee, my eyes had never seen the face of man, thou yet art the only one they have ever been permitted to see*; for I do not place in the

* The Persian women are much more closely kept than those among the Turks and Indians.

order

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order of men these hideous eunuchs, whose least imperfection is to have nothing of man. When I compare the beauty of thy countenance with their deformity, I cannot forbear esteeming myself happy. My imagination cannot supply me with a more ravishing idea, than the enchanting charms of thy person. I swear to thee, Usbek, that if I should be permitted to quit this place, where I am shut up from the necessity of my condition; could I escape from the guard that surrounds me; if I was allowed to choose from among all men who live in this capital of nations, Usbek, I swear to thee, I should choose none but thee. Think not that thy absence has made me neglect a beauty dear to thee. Though I must not be seen by any person, and though the ornaments with which I deck myself do not contribute to thy happiness, yet I endeavour to amuse myself by a habit of pleasing; I never go to rest till I am perfumed with the most agreeable essences. I recal to my mind the happy time, when you came to my arms; a flattering dream deceives me, shows me the dear object of my love; my imagination loses
itself

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itself in its desires, as it flatters itself in its hopes. I sometimes think, that disgusted at a toilsome journey, thou wilt return to us; the night wears away in these kind of dreams, which are not verified either waking, or asleep; I seek for thee at my side, and it seems to me that thou fliest from me; at length the fire itself, which burns me, disperses these delusions, and recalls my spirits; I then find myself re-animated.—Thou wilt not believe it, Usbek, it is impossible to live in this condition; the fire burns in my veins. Why cannot I express to thee, what I so sensibly feel? and how can I so sensibly feel what I cannot express? In these moments, Usbek, I would give the empire of the world for one of thy kisses. How unhappy is the woman, who has such strong desires, when she is deprived of him who only can satisfy them, who left to herself, has nothing that can divert her; she must live in a course of sighs, and in the fury of an irritated passion; who, far from being happy, has not the privilege of promoting the felicity of another, an useless ornament of a seraglio,
kept

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kept for the honour, and not the happiness of her husband. You men are very cruel! you are delighted that we have passions that we cannot gratify, yet you treat us as if we were insensible, and would be sorry if we were so; you think that our desires, though a long time mortified, will be quickened at the sight of you. It is very difficult to make one's self be beloved; it is the best way to obtain by doubting of our understanding, what you dare not expect from your own merit. Farewel, my dear Usbek, farewel; be assured that I live only to adore thee, my soul is full of thee, and thy absence, far from making me forget thee, would quicken my love, if it was capable of becoming more vehement.

From the seraglio at Ispahan, the 12th of the moon of the 1st Rebiab, 1711.

L E T-

LETTER VIII.

USBEK to his Friend RUSTAN, at ISPAHAN.

TH Y letter was delivered to me at Erzeron, where I now am: I thought indeed my departure would make a noise, but it gives me no trouble. What wouldest thou have me follow? what my enemies think prudent, or what I myself think to be so? I appeared at court when I was very young. I may say, my heart was not at all corrupted there; I formed to myself a vast design; I dared to be virtuous there. When I knew vice, I kept at a distance from it; but I afterwards approached it to pluck off its mask. I carried truth to the foot of the throne, I spoke a language till then unknown; I disconcerted flattery, and astonished at the same time, the worshipers and the idol. But when I saw my sincerity had created me enemies; that I had attracted the jealousy of the ministers, without obtaining the favour of the prince; I resolved to retire, since my feeble vir-
tue

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tue could no longer support me in a corrupt court. I feigned a strong attachment to the sciences, and in consequence of that pretence became really so. I no longer engaged myself in any affairs, but retired to a house in the country; but even this retreat had its inconveniences, I was continually exposed to the malice of my enemies, and was almost deprived of the means of safety. Some secret advice disposed me to think more seriously of myself; I resolved to banish myself from my country, and my retreat from court provided me with a plausible pretence. I waited on the king, and acquainted him with my desire to inform myself of the sciences in the west; I insinuated to him that he might be benefitted by my travels; I found favour with him; I departed, and stole a victim from my enemies; see, Rustan, the true motive of my travelling. Let Ispahan talk, defend me only to those who love me; leave with my enemies their malicious interpretations; I should be too happy if that was the only hurt that they can do to me; they talk of me at present, probably I shall be too much forgotten hereafter, and my friends—No,
Rustan,

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Rustan, I will not resign myself to these melancholy suspicions, I shall always be dear to them, I reckon upon their fidelity, as on thine.

Erzeron the 20th of the moon
of the 2d Gemmadi, 1711.

L E T T E R. IX.

The Chief Eunuch to IBBI, at ERZERON.

THOU attendest thy ancient master in his travels, thou passest through provinces and kingdoms, no chagrin affects thee, each moment presents thee with fresh objects, every thing thou seest amusest thee, and makes thee pass away thy time imperceptibly. It is otherwise with me, who am shut up in a horrible confinement, surrounded continually by the same objects, and perplexed with the same cares. I groan beneath the burden of fifty years of cares and pains; and through the period of a long life, I cannot say I have seen a day's ease or a moment's quiet. When my first master formed the cruel design of confining me to the care of his wives, and
induced

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induced me by promises, enforced by a thousand threats, to part with myself for ever, tired of being employed in a most most toilsome service, I reckoned upon sacrificing my passions to ease and plenty. Unhappy that I was! my mind was prepossessed with the evils I should escape, but not with the loss I should sustain: I expected that an incapacity to gratify the attacks of love would secure me from it. Alas! the gratification of the passions is extinguished, but the foundation of them remained, and far from being freed from them, I found myself encompassed by objects which continually excited them. I entered the seraglio, where every thing filled me with regret for what I had lost; I felt myself provoked to love each instant, a thousand natural beauties seemed to show themselves to my view only to torment me, and to complete my misfortune, I had always before me the happy master of these beauties. During this unhappy time, I never led a woman to my master's bed, I never undrest one, but I returned back enraged in my heart at myself, and my soul filled with a horrible despair. See how miserably I passed
my

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my youth, I had no confident but myself, loaded with grief and care I must needs be destroyed; and those women, whom I was tempted to regard with the most tender looks, I could only behold with the most stern attention. I was ruined had they penetrated my thoughts; what advantages would they not have taken? I remember once as I put a lady into a bath, I felt myself so ravished, that I entirely lost my reason, and ventured to clap my hand upon a most formidable part. On the first reflection I thought that day would be my last, I was so happy however to escape the thousand deaths I feared; but the beauty whom I had made witness of my weakness, made me buy her silence very dear, I lost entirely my power over her, and she forced me from that time, to compliances, which, a thousand times exposed me to hazard the loss of my life. At length the fire of youth is extinguished; I am old, and I find myself with respect to these things, in an easy condition; I regard women with indifference, and I reward them well for their contempt, and all the torments which
they

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they made me feel. I always remember that I was born to govern them; and it seems to me as if I recovered my manhood, on every occasion that I have yet to command them. Since I can behold them with coldness, and my reason permits me to see all their foibles, I hate them; though it is for another I watch them, the pleasure of being obeyed, affords me a secret joy, and it is as if I did it for myself, and it always gives me an indirect happiness, when I can deprive them of their pleasures. I am in the seraglio as in a little empire, and my ambition, my only remaining passion, receives some satisfaction; I see with pleasure that all depends upon me, and that I am necessary on every occasion, I charge myself willingly, with the hatred of all these women, which establishes me the more firmly in my post. So they do not find me in any affair an ungrateful man, I always prevent them in their most innocent pleasures; I ever present myself to them as a fixed barrier, they form schemes, and I suddenly frustrate them. I am armed with refusals, full of scruples, I never open my mouth but with lectures
of

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of duty, virtue, chastity and modesty. By continually talking to them of the weakness of their sex, and of the authority of my master, I drive them to despair; afterwards I complain of the necessity I am under to be thus severe, and seem as though I would have them suppose, their proper interest, and a strong attachment to them, to be my only motives. Not but that in my turn I suffer a number of disagreeable things from these vindictive women, who, daily endeavour to repay me the evils I heap on them; there is between us a kind of interchange of empire and obedience, they are always imposing upon me the most humiliating offices; they affect an unexemplary contempt, and regardless of my age, make me rise ten times in a night, on the most trifling occasion. I am continually tired with orders, commands, employments and caprices; it looks as if they alternately relieved each other to weary me with a succession of whimsies. They take a pleasure sometimes, in making me redouble my attention, they pretend to make me their confident; at one time they run to tell me, that a young
man

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man is seen about the walls; another time that a noise is heard, or a letter delivered, and delight themselves with laughing at the trouble, and torment, these things give me. Sometimes they fix me behind a door, and make me continue there night and day; they well know how to feign sickness, swoonings, or frights, and never want a pretence to gain their will of me. On these occasions, I am forced to yield an implicit obedience, and boundless complaisance, for a refusal from such a man as me, would be an unheard of thing, and if I was to hesitate about obeying them, they would take a right to correct me. I had much rather, my dear Ibbi, lose life than submit to such a mortifying state; but this is not the whole, my master's favour is not sure to me for a moment; I have too many enemies in his heart, who are all watching to ruin me, they enjoy certain seasons when I cannot be heard, seasons in which he can refuse them nothing, times in which I am ever in the wrong. I conduct women enraged to my master's bed, can you imagine they will serve me?

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me? or that my interest will be the strongest? From their tears, their sighs, their embraces, and from their very pleasures, I have every thing to fear. It is then they triumph, and that their charms become terrible to me; their present services, in an instant efface all my past ones, and to a master no longer himself, by me nothing can be answered. How frequently has it happened to me to sleep in favour, and awake to disgrace! The day I was so disgracefully whipt round the seraglio, what had I done? I had left in my master's arms, a woman who, when she saw he was inflamed, burst into a flood of tears; she lamented, and so successfully managed her complaints, that they arose with the love she excited in him; in so critical a moment, how was I able to support myself? I was ruined when I least expected, I was the victim of an amorous intrigue, and a treaty made by sighs. See, dear Ibbi, the wretched state in which I have ever lived; how happy art thou, thy cares are confined to the person of Usbek only. It is easy to please him, and to support

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port thyself in his favour to thy latest day.

From the seraglio at Ispahan,
the last of the moon Saphar,
1711.

L E T T E R X.

MIRZA to his Friend USBEK, at ER-
ZERON.

IT is thou only who could recompence to me the absence of Rica, and there is no person but Rica who could console me for thine. We want thee, Usbek, thou wert the soul of our society; how difficult is it to dissolve the engagements which friendship and reason have formed! We have here many disputations; which turn commonly on morality. The question yesterday was, whether the happiness of mankind consists in pleasure, and sensual gratifications, or in the exercise of virtue? I have frequently heard you maintain, that virtue is the end for which we were born, and that

VOL. I. C justice

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justice is a quality as necessary to us as existence ; explain to me, pray, what you mean by this. I have conversed with the Mollaks, who distract me with their quotations from the Koran ; for I speak no otherwise to them than as a man, a citizen, and a father of a family, and not as a believer. Farewel.

Ispahan, the last day of the
moon Saphar, 1711.

L E T T E R X I.

USBEK TO MIRZA, at ISPAHAN.

THOU renoucest thy own reason to try mine ; thou condescendest even to consult me ; thou thinkest me capable of instructing thee. My dear Mirza, there is one thing which flatters me more than the good opinion thou hast conceived of me ; it is what has procured it me ; thy friendship. I do not think that there is need to use very abstracted reasons, to fulfil the task thou hast prescribed to me. There are some
certain

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certain truths, of which it is not sufficient to be persuaded, but men must be made even to feel them; moral truths are of this kind. Probably this historical piece may affect thee more than a philosophical subtlety. In Arabia there were a few people, named Troglodites, descendants of the ancient Troglodites, who, if we can believe our historians, resembled beasts rather than men. They were not so deformed; they were not hairy like bears; they did not hiss; they had two eyes; yet they were so wicked and brutish, that they were strangers to the principles of justice and equity. A foreign king, who reigned over them, willing to correct their natural wickedness, treated them with severity; but they conspired against him, murdered him, and exterminated all the royal family. Having struck this blow, they met to choose a government, and, after much dissention, appointed magistrates, but they were scarce elected but they became intolerable, and were massacred. The people, freed from this new yoke, consulted only their own savageness. Every one agreed to submit

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to no person ; that each should follow his own interest without any attention to that of others. This general resolution was extremely pleasing to all.—They reasoned thus ; why should I destroy myself in labouring for those who do not concern me ? I will take care for myself only ; I shall live happily ; what is it to me how others live ? I shall provide for my own wants ; and, if they are satisfied, what care I, if all the rest of the Troglodites are miserable.—This was seed-time ; each man said, I will only manure as much land as will supply corn sufficient for myself ; a greater quantity would be useless to me ; I shall not take the trouble to work in vain. The lands of this little kingdom were not all alike ; some parts were dry and mountainous ; others, in the low grounds, were well watered by rivulets. This year there was a great drought, infomuch that the upper grounds failed greatly, whilst those which were watered proved very fertile ; the consequence was, that almost all the people who lived in the mountains perished by famine, through
the

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the hard-heartedness of those who refused to share their harvest with them. The following year was very rainy; the higher grounds proved extraordinary fruitful, whilst the lower grounds were drowned. Now the other half of the people complained of famine; but these miserable people found the mountaineers as hard-hearted as they themselves had been. One of the chief inhabitants had a very handsome wife, of whom his neighbour became in love, and forced her from him; this occasioned a strong contest, and, after many blows and outrages, they consented to submit the decision to a Troglodite, who, whilst the republic subsisted, had been in some esteem. They came to him, and were going to plead their cause before him.—What does it concern me, said the umpire, whose wife she is, yours, or yours; I have my land to till; I cannot spend my time in determining your quarrels, nor busy myself in your affairs, to the neglect of my own; pray let me be quiet, and do not trouble me with your disputes.—Having so said, he left them, and went

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to work on his land. The ravisher, who was the stronger man, swore he would sooner die than restore the woman; whilst the husband, penetrated with the injustice of his neighbour, and the hardness of his judge, returned home in despair; when meeting in his way a handsome young woman, returning from a fountain, and having now no wife of his own, and being pleased with her, and much more so, when he learnt she was the wife of him whom he had chosen for his judge, and who had been so little sensible of his affliction; he seized on her, and forced her to go to his house. There was another man who possessed a fruitful field, which he had cultivated with great labour; two of his neighbours united together, forced him out of his house, and took possession of his field; they formed a compact to defend themselves against all those who should endeavour to take it from them, and did really support themselves several months. But one of them, tired of sharing what he might possess alone, murdered the other, and became sole master of the field; his reign was not long;

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long; two other Troglodites attacked him; and he was massacred, being too weak to defend himself. Another Troglodite, who was almost naked, asked the price of some Cloth, which he saw, and wanted to buy; the draper reasoned thus with himself: I indeed ought not to expect more money for my cloth than will buy two measures of wheat; but I will sell it for four times that advantage, that I may purchase eight measures.— The man must needs have the cloth, and pay the price demanded; I am very well contented, said the draper, I now shall have some wheat. What is it you say, replied the buyer, do you want wheat? I have some to sell, however the price perhaps may surprise you; for you know wheat is extremely dear, and that the famine is extended almost every where; but return me my money, and you shall have a measure of wheat, and though you should perish by the famine, you should not have it otherwise. In the mean time the country was ravaged by a mortal distemper; a skilful physician arrived from a neighbouring country, who administered his medicines to

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properly, that he cured all who put themselves under his care. When the distemper ceased, he went to those whom he had cured, to demand his pay, but refusals were all he received. He returned to his own country, tired with the fatigue of so long a journey. But a short time after he heard, that the same distemper had returned again, and more grievously afflicted those ungrateful people. They did not now wait for his coming, but went to him themselves. Unjust men, said he, go ; you have in your souls a more deadly poison than that of which you desire to be cured ; you are unworthy to enjoy a place upon earth, for you are void of humanity, and the laws of equity are unknown to you. I should think it an offence against the gods, who punish you, should I oppose their just anger.

Erzeron, the 3d of the moon
of the 2d Gemmadi, 1711.

L E T.

L E T T E R XII.

USBEK to the Same, at ISPAHAN.

THOU hast seen, my dear Mirza, how the Troglodites were destroyed by their own wickedness, and fell the victims of their own injustice. Of so many families, two only remained, who escaped the miseries of this people. There were in this country two very extraordinary men; they possessed humanity, were acquainted with justice, and loved virtue. They were as much united by the uprightnes of their hearts, as by the corruption of those of others; they saw the general desolation, and only shewed their sense of it by their pity; this was a new motive to union. A common solitude, and a common interest, engaged their labours; there was no difference between them but what owed its birth to a sweet and tender friendship. In a retired part of the country, separate from their unworthy countrymen, they led a life of peace and happiness; cultivated by their virtuous

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hands,

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hands, the earth seemed to yield its fruits spontaneously. They loved their wives, and were affectionately beloved by them. The training up their children to virtue engaged their utmost care. They continually represented to them the miseries of their countrymen, and placed their melancholly example before their eyes. They especially inculcated upon their minds, that the interests of individuals was always to be found in that of the community, and that to attempt to seek it separately was to destroy it; that virtue is by no means a thing that ought to be burdensome to us, nor the practice of it considered as painful; that doing justice to others is acting charitably to ourselves. They soon enjoyed the consolation of virtuous parents, which consists in having children like themselves. These young people, who grew up under their care, were increased by happy marriages, and their number augmented; the same union continued, and virtue, far from being weakened by the multitude, was, on the contrary, strengthened by a greater number of examples. Who is able to represent the happiness
of

of the Troglodites at this period ! A people so just could not but be dear to the gods. They learned to reverence them as soon as they had a knowledge of them, and religion improved their morals, and softened their natural roughness. In honour of the gods, they instituted feasts. The young women dressed with flowers, and the youths, danced to the sound of rural music : then followed banquets, which were not less joyful than frugal. In these assemblies pure nature spoke ; it was here they learned to give and receive hearts ; it was here that virgin modesty, blushing, confessed its alarms ; but its wishes were soon established by the consent of fathers ; and here affectionate mothers delighted themselves with the foresight of a loving and faithful union. They went to the temple to ask the favour of the gods ; it was not for riches, or a burdensome superfluity ; such kind of wishes were unworthy to be desired by the happy Troglodites, except only for their fellow countrymen. They only bowed before the altars to pray for the health of their parents, the unity of
their

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their brethren, the affection of their wives, and the love and obedience of their children. Maidens came there to offer up the tender sacrifice of their hearts, and that they might make a Troglodite happy was the only favour they asked. When the flocks at evening left the fields, and the weary oxen returned home with the plough, then these happy people met together, and, during a frugal repast, sung the crimes of the first Troglodites, and their punishment; and the revival of virtue with a new race. They also sung the power of the gods, their favour, ever present to those who worship them, and their inevitable displeasure at those who fear them not: they afterwards described the pleasures of a rural life, and the happiness with which innocence is always adorned. They soon after resigned themselves to a repose never interrupted by any cares or uneasiness. Nature equally provided for their cares and their pleasures. In this happy country, covetousness was unknown; they made presents to each other, and the donor always supposed he had the advantage.

The

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The Troglodites ever considered themselves as one family ; their flocks were mingled together, and the only trouble they excused themselves was that of separating them.

Erzeron, the 16th of the
moon of the 2d Gem-
madi, 1711.

L E T T E R XIII.

USBEK to the Same.

THE virtue of the Troglodites is what I cannot speak to thee enough of. One of them once said: My father to-morrow should labour in the field, I will rise two hours before him, and when he comes into the field he shall find all his work done.—Another said to himself; My sister seems to like a young Troglodite, a relation of ours, I must speak to my father, that he may terminate it by a marriage.—Another being told, that some robbers had carried off his flock, I am very sorry, said he, for there was a white heifer

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heifer, which I intended to have offered up to the gods.—Another was once heard saying; I must go to the temple to return the gods thanks, that my brother, who is so greatly beloved by my father, and who is so dear to me, has recovered his health.—Or else: Adjoining to a field of my father's there is another, and those who work in it are continually exposed to the heat of the sun; I must plant some trees there, that those poor men may sometimes rest themselves under the shadow of them.—One time several Troglodites being together, an elderly man reproached a younger, whom he suspected of having committed a base action; we do not think he has done such an action, said the others, but if he has, may his death happen the last of his family!—A Troglodite being informed, that some stranger had pillaged and carried every thing off, replied, I could wish the gods would give them a longer use of them than I have had, were they not unjust men.—Such great prosperity was not regarded without envy. The neighbouring people gathered together, and, under a frivolous

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lous pretence, determined to take away their flocks. As soon as this resolution was known, the Troglodites sent ambassadors to them, who addressed them to this purpose: What have the Troglodites done to you? Have they taken away your wives, stole your cattle, or ravaged your country? No; we are just, and fear the gods. What then do you demand of us? Would you have wool to make you clothes? Would you have milk for your flocks, or the fruits of our lands? Lay down your arms, come among us, and we will give you all these; but we swear, by that which is most sacred, that if you enter our lands as enemies, we will treat you as wild beasts.—This address was treated with contempt, and the savage people entered armed into the country of the Troglodites, who, they supposed, had no other defence besides their innocence. But they were well prepared for a defence; they had placed their wives and children in the midst of them, and were surpris'd at the injustice, but not dismayed at the numbers of their enemies. Their hearts were seized with a fresh ardour; one
would

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would lose his life for his father, another for his wife and children ; this for his brethren, and that for his friends, and all of them for their country. The place of him who was killed was instantly taken by another, who besides the common cause had also a private death to revenge. Such was the combat between injustice and virtue. These base people, who fought nothing but the spoil, were not ashamed to fly, and submit to the virtue of the Troglodites, and even without being touched with a sense of it.

Erzeron, the 9th of the
moon of the 2d Gem-
madi, 1711.

L E T T E R XIV.

USBEK to the Same.

AS these people, the Troglodites, every day grew more numerous, they thought it necessary to elect a king; they determined to offer the crown to him who was the most just; and cast their
their

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their eyes on one venerable for his age, and a long course of virtue; but he would not attend the assembly, and retired to his own house, with a heart oppressed with grief. They then sent deputies to him, to acquaint him of the choice they had made of him. The gods forbid, said he, that I should so wrong the Troglodites, as that they should believe that there is not a more just person among them than myself. You offer me the crown, and if you will absolutely have it to be so, I must accept it; but be assured, I shall die of grief, at having seen the Troglodites born free, now to see them become subject.— At these words he lamented with a torrent of tears. Miserable day, said he, why have I lived so long?—Then cried he, in a severer accent, I very well perceive what is the cause, O ye Troglodites; your virtue begins to be too heavy for you. In the state you are, without a head, you are constrained to be virtuous in spite of yourselves, or you cannot subsist, but must sink into the miseries of your ancestors. But this seems too hard a yoke for you; you like better
to

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to be subject to a king, and to obey his laws, less rigid than your morals. You know, that then you may gratify your ambition, gain riches, and languish in slothful luxury, and, provided you avoid falling into great crimes, you will have no want of virtue.—He ceased a little, and his tears flowed more than ever.—And what do you expect me to do? How can it be that I should command a Troglodite any thing? Would you have him act virtuously because I command him, which he would do wholly of himself without me, and purely from a natural inclination? Oh Troglodites, I am at the end of my days, my blood is frozen in my veins, I shall soon go to revisit your holy ancestors; why would you have me afflict them, and why must I be obliged to inform them that I left you under any other yoke than that of virtue?

Erzeron, the 10th of the
moon of the 2d Gem-
madi, 1711.

L E T.

L E T T E R X V.

The First Eunuch to JARON, the Black Eunuch, at Erzeron.

I Pray to heaven that it may bring thee back to these parts, and defend thee from all danger. Though I have scarce ever been sensible of that engagement which is called friendship, and am entirely swallowed up in myself, yet thou hast however made me feel that I have a heart, and at the same time that I was as brass to the rest of the slaves who lived under my command, I saw with pleasure thy infancy grow up. The time when my master cast his eyes on thee approached. Nature had not then inspired thee with its dictates, when the iron separated thee from what is natural. I will not confess whether I bewailed thee, or whether I was sensible of the pleasure of seeing thee brought into the same condition with myself. I appeased thy tears, and thy cries. I imagined I saw thee undergo a second birth,

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birth, and passing from a state of servitude, in which thou must always have obeyed, to engage in one in which thou oughtest always to command. I took upon myself the care of thy education. That severity, which is ever inseparable from instruction, kept thee long ignorant that thou wast dear to me. However, thou wast so to me; and I assure thee that I loved thee as a father loves his son, if the words, father and son, are compatible with our condition. Thou art to pass through countries inhabited by Christians, who have never believed: it is impossible but that thou must there contract some impurities. How can the prophet behold thee in the midst of so many millions of his enemies? I wish my master, on his return, would undertake a pilgrimage to Mecca; you would be purified in that land of angels.

From the seraglio the 10th
of the moon Gemmadi,
1711.

L E T-

L E T T E R XVI.

USBEK TO MOLLAK MEHEMET ALI,
Guardian of the Three Tombs, at
Com.

WHY dost thou live, divine Mollak, in the tombs? Thou art better made for the abode of the stars. Thou doubtless hidest thyself through fear of obscuring the sun; thou hast no spots like that star, yet like him thou art covered with clouds. Thy knowledge is an abyss deeper than the ocean; thy wit more piercing than Zufager, the sword of Hali, which had two points; thou art acquainted with what passes in the nine choirs of the celestial powers. Thou readest the Koran on the breast of our holy prophet, and when thou findest any obscure passage, an angel, at his command, spreads his rapid wings, to descend from the throne, to reveal to thee the secret. I may, by thy means, have an intimate correspondence with the seraphins, for, in short, thou thirteenth

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teenth Iwan, art thou not the center where heaven and earth meet, the point of communication between the abyſs and the empyreal heaven? I am in the middle of a profane people; permit that I may purify myſelf with thee; ſuffer me turn my face towards the holy place where thou dwelleſt. Distinguish me from the wicked, as the white thread is diſtinguiſhed from the black; at the riſing of Aurora; aid me with thy counſels; take care of my ſoul; make it to drink of the ſpirit of the prophets; feed it with the ſcience of Paradife, and permit that I diſplay its wounds at thy feet. Addreſs thy holy letters to me at Erzeron; where I ſhall continue ſome months.

Erzeron the 11th of the
moon of the 2d Gem-
madi, 1711.

L E T.

L E T T E R. XVII.

USBEK to the Same.

I Cannot, divine Mollak, quiet my impatience ; I know not how to wait for thy sublime answer : I have doubts which must be satisfied ; I perceive that my reason wanders ; restore it to the right path ; enlighten me, thou source of light ; drive away, with thy divine pen, the difficulties I am now going to propose to thee ; make me commiserate myself, and even blush at the questions I am about to ask. Why does our legislator restrain us from swine's flesh, and from all those meats which he calls unclean ? Why are we forbidden to touch a corps ? And why for the purification of our souls are we commanded continually to wash our bodies ? These things appear to me to be, in themselves, neither pure nor impure ; for that they should be rendered such by any inherent quality in them I cannot
con-

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conceive. Dirt appears filthy to us, only because it is offensive to our sight, or to some other of our senses, yet in itself it is no more so than gold or diamonds. The idea of filthiness contracted by touching a dead body arises only from a certain repugnance which we have to it. If the bodies of those who do not wash themselves, neither offend our smell nor sight, how could we imagine them to be impure? Therefore the senses, divine Mollak, ought to be the only judges of the purity or impurity of things; yet as the same objects do not effect all men in the same manner, as that which yields an agreeable sensation to some, affords an unpleasant one to others, it follows that the evidence of our senses cannot in this case serve as a rule, unless we allow that each person may, according to his own fancy, determine the point, and distinguish, for what relates to himself, what things are pure or impure. But would not this, divine Mollak, overturn all the distinctions established by our holy prophet, and the fundamental points of
that

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that law which was written by the fingers of angels.

Erzeron, the 20th of the
moon of the 2d Gem-
madi, 1711.

L E T T E R XVIII.

MOLLAK MEHEMET ALI TO USBEK, at
ERZERON.

THOU art always offering questions which have a thousand times been proposed to our holy prophet. Why dost thou not read the traditions of the doctors? Why dost thou not go to that pure fountain of all intelligence? Thou wouldest there find all thy doubts resolved. Unhappy man! who art continually embarrassed with worldly things; having never fixed thy attention on the things of heaven; and who reverencest the order of the Mollaks, without daring to embrace, or follow it! Profane beings! who never enter into the secrets of the Eternal; your lights resemble the darkness of the abyss, and the reasonings of your mind are as

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the

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the dust, which your feet throw up when the sun reaches the meridian in the scorching month of Chahban. Nor does the zenith of your understandings reach to the nadir of the meanest Imaum. Your vain philosophy is that lightning which foretells tempests and darkness; thou art in the midst of the storm, and carried to and from with every gust of wind. The solution of your difficulty is very easy; nothing more is necessary but to relate to you what one day happened to our holy prophet, when being tempted by the Christians, and tried by the Jews, he equally confounded each of them. Abdias Ibesalon*, the Jew, asked the prophet why God had prohibited the eating of swine's flesh: not without reason replied Mahomet, it is an unclean animal, and that it is so, I will instantly convince you. He moulded some dirt in his hand into the figure of a man, threw it upon the ground, and cried, arise thou: immediately a man arose, and said, I am Japhet, the son of Noah.

To

* A Mahometan tradition.

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To whom the holy prophet said, Was thy hair as white at the time of thy death? No, replied he; but when thou didst awake me, I thought the day of judgment was come, and I felt so great a terror, that my hair was changed to white in a moment. Now relate to me, said the Sent of God, the entire history of what happened in Noah's ark. Japhet obeyed, and gave an exact account of the events of the first months, and then continued as follows: * All the dung of the beasts we cast to one side of the ark, which made it lean so much, that we were all terribly frightened, especially our wives, who made an horrible lamentation. Our father Noah, having taken counsel of God, he ordered him to remove the elephant to that part, and to turn his head toward the side which leaned. This huge animal made such plentiful evacuations that a hog was produced from them. Dost thou not believe, Usbek, that from this time we have abstained from this animal, and regarded it as unclean?

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But

* This is likewise a Mahometan tradition.

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But as this hog wallowed daily in the dung, he raised such a stench in the ark, that he himself could not help sneezing, and a rat fell from his nose, which immediately gnawed every thing he met with, and thereby he became so intolerable to Noah, that he once more thought it necessary to consult God. He ordered him to strike the lion a great blow on his forehead, who also sneezed, and from his nose leaped a cat. Dost thou not believe these animals also to be unclean? How does it appear to you? Therefore when thou dost not comprehend the reason why certain things are unclean, it is because thou art ignorant of many other things, and have not a knowledge of what has passed between God, the angels, and men. Thou knowest not the history of eternity; thou hast not read the books which were written in heaven; that which hath been revealed to thee is only a small portion of the divine library, even those who, like us, have approached much nearer, so as to be in this kind of life, are nevertheless in obscurity
and

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and darkness. Farewell. May Mahomet be in thy heart.

Com, the last day of the
moon Chahban, 1711.

L E T T E R XIX.

USBEK to his Friend RUSTAN, at
ISPAHAN.

AT Tocat we continued but eight days ; after a journey of five and thirty days, we reached Smyrna. Between Tocat and Smyrna we saw only one city, which merited that name. I was surpris'd to see the weak state of the Osmanlin empire. This distemper'd body does not support itself by a mild and temperate government, but by such violent remedies as incessantly exhaust, and destroy, it. The bashaws, who procure their employments only by the power of money, enter those provinces in a ruined condition, and ravage them as conquered countries. An insolent militia, subject only to its own caprice ; the towns dismantled, the cities desert-

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ed, the country desolated, the culture of the land and commerce entirely neglected. Under this severe government impunity reigns; the Christians, who cultivate the lands, and the Jews, who collect the tribute, are exposed to a thousand outrages. The property of the lands is uncertain, and consequently the desire of increasing their value diminished; as neither title nor possession are a sufficient security against the caprice of those who have the government. These barbarians have so far abandoned the arts, that they have even neglected the military art. Whilst all Europe grows daily more refined, they remain in their ancient ignorance, and rarely think of improving by their new inventions; till they have been a thousand times employed against them. They have gained no experience at sea; no skill in naval affairs; a mere handful of Christians, the possessors of a barren rock*, are a terror to the Ottoman race, and distress their whole empire. It is with anxiety they suffer the
Christians,

* These are probably the knights of Malta.

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Christians, always laborious, and enterprizing, to carry on for them that commerce for which themselves are unfit; they imagine they are granting a favour when they permit these foreigners to enrich themselves. Through this vast extent of country that I have passed, Smyrna is the only rich and powerful city that I have observed; it is the Europeans who have rendered it such, and it is no fault of the Turks that it is not in the same miserable condition with the others. See, dear Rustan, a just representation of this empire, which in less than two centuries will be the theatre of triumph to some new conqueror.

Smyrna, the 2d of the
moon of Rahmazan,
1711.

L E T T E R XX.

USBK to ZACHI, his Wife, at the
Seraglio at ISPAHAN.

THOU hast offended me, Zachi,
I feel emotions in my heart, at
which you ought to tremble, if the di-
D 4 stance

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stance I am at did not afford thee time to alter thy conduct, and allay the excessive jealousy with which I am tormented. I am informed, that you was caught alone with Nadir, the white eunuch, whose head shall pay for his infidelity and treachery. How could you forget yourself so far as not to be sensible, that it is not allowed you to receive a white eunuch into your chamber, whilst you have black ones appointed to serve you? You may say what you will to me; that these eunuchs are not men; and that your virtue raises you above all thoughts that an imperfect likeness might give birth to. This is not sufficient either for you, or for me; not for you, because you have done what the laws of the seraglio forbid; nor for me, in that you rob me of my honour, in exposing yourself to the looks; to the looks did I say? May be to the attempts of a traitor, who may have defiled you by his crimes, and yet more by the repinings of his despair, and of his impotence. Perhaps you will say, that you have always continued faithful. How had
had

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had you a power to be otherwise? How could you deceive the vigilance of those black eunuchs, who are astonished at the life you lead? How could you break through those bolts and doors with which you are locked up? You glory in a virtue which is not free, and perhaps your impure desires have robbed you a thousand times of the merit and value of that fidelity of which you so much boast. I will admit that you have not done all that I might reasonably suspect; that this traitor has not laid his sacrilegious hands upon you; that you have refused to indulge him with a sight of the delights of his master; that, covered with your habit, you let that weak barrier between you and him remain; that, struck with a reverential awe, he cast his eyes to the ground; that failing in his courage, he trembled at the chastisement he was preparing for himself. Though all this should be true, it is nevertheless so, that you have acted contrary to your duty. And if you have broke through your duty for nothing, without fulfilling your irregular desires, what would you have done to gratify

them? What would you do, if you could leave that sacred place, which seems to you a melancholly prison, though it is an happy asylum to your companions against the attacks of vice; an holy temple, where your sex loses its weakness, and finds itself invincible, in opposition to all the disadvantages of nature. What would you do, if, abandoned to yourself, you had no other defence but your love to me, which is so grievously injured, and your own duty, which you have so basely acted against? How sacred are the manners of the country in which you live, which secure you from the attempts of the meanest slaves! You ought to thank me for the restraint I make you live under, since it is by that only that you even merit to live. The chief of the eunuchs is intolerable to you, because he is always attentive to your conduct, and affords you his sage advice. You cannot look at him, you say, without uneasiness, because he is so extremely ugly, as if the handsomest objects should be appointed to such kind of posts as his. The not having in his place the white eunuch, who dis-

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dishonours you, is what afflicts you. But what has your chief slave done to you. She has told you that the familiarities you take with young Zelida are not decent; this is the cause of your aversion. I ought, Zachi, to be a severe judge, but I am a kind husband, who desires to find you innocent. The love I bear to Roxana, my new spouse, has not deprived me of that tenderness which I ought to entertain for you, who are not less beautiful. I divide my love between you two, and Roxana hath no other advantage but what beauty receives from the addition of virtue.

Smyrna, the 12th of the
moon Zilcade, 1711.

L E T T E R XXI.

USBEK to the Chief White Eunuch.

WHEN you open this letter you ought to tremble; or rather you ought to have done so when you permitted the treachery of Nadir. You who, in a cold languishing old age, may not guiltless raise

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raise your eyes to the dreadful objects of my love ; you, to whom it is never allowed to put your sacrilegious foot over the threshold of the tremendous place, which conceals them from the view of every human eye ; you suffer those whose conduct is intrusted to your care to do what you have not boldness enough to do yourself ; and are you not sensible of the thunder just ready to break on you and them ? And what are you but vile instruments which I can destroy according to my humour, who exist only as long as you obey ; who were born only to live under my laws, or to die at my pleasure ; who do not breathe longer than my happiness, my love, and even my jealousy, have need of your servility ; in short, who have no other portion but submission, no other will but my pleasure, and no hope but my happiness. Some of my wives, I know, bear with impatience the strict laws of duty ; the continual presence of a black eunuch disgusts them ; they are tired with those frightful objects which are appointed to confine their affections to their
hus-

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husband; all this I know. But you, who have taken part in this irregularity, you shall be punished in such a manner as to make all those who have abused my confidence tremble. By all the prophets in heaven, and by Hali, the greatest of them all, I swear, that if you swerve from your duty, I will regard your life but as the life of those insects which I crush under my feet.

Smyrna, the 2d of the
moon Zilcade, 1711.

L E T T E R XXII.

JARON to the First Eunuch.

USBEK, in proportion as he removes further from his seraglio, turns his mind towards those women, who are devoted to him: he sighs; he sheds tears; his grief augments; his suspicions gain strength. He wants to encrease the number of their guardians. He is going to send me back again, with all the blacks who attend him.
His

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His fears are not for himself, but for what is dearer to him a thousand times than himself. I return then to live under thy laws, and to divide thy cares. Alas ! how many things are necessary to the happiness of one man ! At the same instant that nature placed women in a dependent state, it seemed to deliver them from it ; disorder arose between the two sexes, because their rights were mutual. The plan of harmony we have engaged in is new : we have put hatred between the women and us, love between the men and women. My brow is becoming stern, I shall contract a gloomy air, joy shall fly from my lips. I shall outwardly appear calm, and my mind disturbed. I shall not wait for the wrinkles of old age to shew its peevishness. I should have taken pleasure in attending my master to the West, but my will is his property. He will have me guard his women ; I will watch them faithfully. I know how I ought to carry myself with the sex, which, when not allowed to be vain, becomes proud ; and which it is more easy to
destroy

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destroy than to humble. I prostrate myself in thy presence.

Smyrna, the 12th of the
moon Zilkade, 1711.

L E T T E R XXIII.

USBEK to his Friend IBBEN, at SMYRNA.

AFTER a sail of forty days, we have reached Leghorn. It is a new city, a proof of the great genius of the dukes of Tuscany, who have raised the most flourishing city in Italy from a marshy village. Here the women are greatly indulged: they may look at men through certain windows, called *jealousies*; they may go out every day, accompanied only by some old women; they wear only a single veil*. Their brothers-in-law, uncles, and nephews may visit them; at which the husband is scarcely ever offended. The first view of a Christian city is a great sight to a Mahometan. I do not mean such things as at first view strike every spec-

* The Persian women wear four.

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spectator, as the difference of buildings, dress, and principal customs; there is, even to the minutest things, a singularity which I know not how to describe, though I can feel it. We set out for Marseilles to-morrow; our continuance there will be short; for Rica and I design to go immediately to Paris, which is the seat of the European empire. Great cities are always the desired objects of travellers; for they are a kind of common country to all strangers. Farewell; be assured I shall always love you.

Leghorn, the 12th of the
moon Saphar, 1712.

L E T T E R XXIV.

RICA TO IBSEN, at SMYRNA.

WE have been this month at Paris, and all the while in a continual motion. There is a good deal to be done before one can be settled, meet with all the persons one has business with, and procure every thing necessary, all which are wanted at once. Paris is
as

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as large as Ispahan. One would imagine the houses were only inhabited by astrologers, they are so lofty. Thou wilt easily judge, that a city built in the air, which has six or seven houses one on another, must be extremely populous, and that, when all this world of people are come down into the streets, there must be a fine bustle. Thou wilt not, perhaps, believe, that during the month I have been here, I have not yet seen one person a walking. There is no people in the world who make better use of their machine than the French; they run; they fly; the slow carriages of Asia, the regular pace of our camels, would make them fall asleep. As for my own part, who am not made for such expedition, and who often go on foot, without altering my pace, I am sometimes as mad as a Christian; for passing over the splashing me from head to foot, I cannot pardon the punches of elbows, which I receive regularly and periodically. A man comes behind me, and passes me, turns me half round, and another who crosses me on the other side, in an instant returns me back again
into

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into my first place ; and I am more bruised before I have walked a hundred paces than if I had travelled ten leagues. Thou must not expect that I can as yet give thee a perfect account of the European manners and customs ; I have myself only a faint idea of them, and have scarcely had more than time to wonder. The king of France is the most puissant prince in Europe. He has not, like his neighbour the king of Spain, mines of gold ; but his riches are greater than his ; for he supplies them from the vanity of his subjects, more inexhaustible than those mines. He has engaged in, and supported, great wars without any other fund than the sale of titles of honour, and his troops have been paid, his towns fortified, and his fleets fitted out, by a prodigy of human pride. This prince is, besides, a great magician ; he exercises his empire even over the minds of his subjects, and makes them think as he pleases. If he has but only a thousand crowns in his treasury, and has occasion for two, he needs only tell them that one crown is worth two, and they believe it. If he

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he has a difficult war to maintain, and has no money, he has only to put it into their heads that a piece of paper is money, and they are presently convinced of the truth of it. He even goes so far as to make them believe that he can cure them of all kinds of evils by touching them; so great is the power and influence which he has over their minds. Thou needest not be astonished at what I tell thee of this prince; there is another magician more powerful than him, who is no less master of his mind than he is of those of others. This magician is called the Pope: sometimes he makes him believe, that the bread which he eats is not bread, or that the wine which he drinks is not wine, and a thousand other things of the same nature. And, to keep him always in breath, and that he may not lose the habit of believing, he gives him, from time to time, to exercise him, certain articles of faith. It is two years since he sent him a large scroll, which he called, *constitution*, and would needs oblige, under great penalties, this prince and all his subjects, to believe every thing
it

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it contained. He succeeded with the king, who instantly submitted, and set an example to his subjects; but some among them revolted, and declared they would believe nothing of all that was contained in the scroll. The women are the movers of this rebellion, which divides the whole court, all the kingdom, and every family in it. This *constitution* prohibits the women reading a book, which all the Christians say was brought down from heaven; which is properly their Koran. The women, enraged at this affront offered to their sex, raise all their force against the *constitution*; they have gained the men to their party, who, on this occasion, will not receive their privilege. The Muf-ti, it must be owned, does not reason amiss; and, by the great Hali, it must be, that he has been instructed in the principles of our holy faith; for, since the women are an inferior creation to ours, and that our prophets inform us, that they will not enter into Paradise, for what end should they concern themselves in reading a book, which is only designed to teach the way to Paradise?

Some

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Some miraculous things, I have heard related of the king, which I doubt not but you will hesitate to believe. It is said, that whilst he made war against his neighbours, who were all leagued against him, he had, in his kingdom, an infinite number of enemies, who surrounded him. They add, that he searched for them, above thirty years, and that, notwithstanding the unwearied pains of some dervises, who have his confidence, he could never discover one. They live with him; are in his court, in his capital, in his troops, in his tribunals; yet it is said, he will have the mortification to die without finding one of them. They may be said to have a general existence, and to have nothing of individuality; it is a body, but without members. Doubtless it is heaven, that would punish this prince, for not having been sufficiently moderate towards his conquered enemies, since it hath raised up against him invisible ones, whose genius and appointment are superior to his own. I shall continue to write to you, and to acquaint you with things extremely remote from the character and genius of
the

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the Persians. It is indeed the same earth that bears us both ; yet the men of the country in which I live, and those of that which thou inhabitest, are very different kinds of men.

Paris, the 4th of the
moon of the 2d Rebiab,
1712.

L E T T E R XXV.

USBEK to IBBEN, at SMYRNA:

I Have received a letter from thy nephew Rhedi, who acquaints me with his design to see Italy, and that the sole view of his voyage is to improve himself, and thereby to render himself more worthy of thee. I congratulate thee, on having a nephew who will one day be the comfort of thy old age. Rica writes thee a long letter ; he tells me that he gives thee a large account of this country. The quickness of his understanding makes him apprehend every thing with ease ; as to me, who conceive more slowly, I cannot at present inform

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inform thee of any thing. Thou art the subject of our most tender conversations: we can never talk enough of the kind reception you afforded us at Smyrna; nor of the friendship thou renderest us. Mayest thou, generous Ibben, find every where friends, as grateful and as faithful as us! May I soon see thee again, and once more enjoy with thee those happy days, which pass so sweetly between two friends! Farewell.

Paris, the 4th of the
moon of the 2d Rebiab,
1712.

L E T T E R XXVI.

USBEK to ROXANA, at the Seraglio
at ISPAHAN.

HOW happy art thou, Roxana, to be in the delightful country of Persia, and not in these poison'd climes, where neither virtue nor modesty are known! How happy art thou! Thou livest in my seraglio, as in the abode of innocence, secure from the attempts of
all

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all mankind; you, with pleasure, experience a happy inability to go astray; never did man pollute you with his lascivious looks; during the freedom of festivities even your father-in-law never saw your fine mouth; you never neglected to cover it with a holy veil. Happy Roxana! whenever you have gone into the country, you have always had eunuchs to march before, to punish with death the temerity of those who did not fly from your sight. Even I myself, to whom heaven gave you to make me happy, how much trouble have I had to render myself master of that treasure, which with so much constancy you defended! How distressing to me, during the first days of our marriage, not to see you! And how impatient when I had beheld you! Yet you would not satisfy it; on the contrary you increased it, by the obstinate refusals of your bashful alarms; you did not distinguish me from all other men, from whom you are always concealed. Do you recollect the day I lost you among your slaves, who betrayed me, and hid you from my searches? Do you remember another time, when find-
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ing your tears insufficient, you engaged the authority of your mother, to stop the eagerness of my love? Do you remember, when every other resource failed you, those you found in your own courage? You took a dagger, and threatened to sacrifice a husband, who loved you, if he persisted in requiring of you what you prized more than your husband himself. Two months passed in the struggle between love and modesty. You carried you modest scruples too far; you did not even submit after you were conquered. You defended to the last moment a dying virginity; you regarded me as an enemy who had done you a wrong, not as a husband who had loved you; you was above three months before you could look at me without a blush; your bashful looks seemed to reproach me with the advantage I had taken. I did not enjoy even a quiet possession; you deprived me of all those charms and graces that you could; and without having obtained the least favours, I was ravished with the greatest. If your education had been in this country, here, you would not have been so

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troublesome. The women here have lost all modesty ; they present themselves before the men with their faces uncovered, as though they would demand of them their defeat ; they watch for their looks ; they see them in their mosques, their public walks, and even by themselves ; the service of eunuchs is unknown to them. - In the room of that noble simplicity, and that amiable modesty which reigns amongst you, a brutal impudence prevails, to which it is impossible to be accustomed. Yes, if thou wert here, Roxana, you would be enraged at the wretched shamefulnes to which your sex is degenerated ; you would fly these polluted places, and sigh for that sweet retreat, where you find innocence, and yourself secure, and where no dangers terrify you : in a word, where you can love me without fear of ever losing that love for me which is my due. When you heighten your beautiful complexion with the finest colours ; when you perfume your whole body with the most precious essences, when you deck yourself with the richest dresses, when you endeavour to distinguish

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tinguish yourself from your companions by your graceful motions in dancing, and when, by the sweetness of your voice, you pleasingly dispute with them charms, affability, and gaiety, I cannot imagine you have any other object to please but myself; and, when I see your modest blush, that your eyes seek mine, that you insinuate yourself into my heart by your soft alluring speeches, I cannot, Roxana, suspect your love. But what can I think of the European women? The art which forms their complexion, the ornaments they use in dress, the pains which they take with their persons, the constant desire to please that possesses them, are blemishes in their virtue and affronts to their husbands. It is not, Roxana, that I suspect they carry their incroachments upon virtue to such a length as their conduct might lead one to believe; or that they carry their defection to such a horrid excess, that makes one tremble, as really to violate the conjugal vow. There are few women abandoned enough to go this length; they all bear in their hearts, a certain impression of virtue, naturally engraved on

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them,

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them, which though their education may weaken, it cannot destroy. Though they may decline the external duties which modesty exacts ; yet, when about to take the last step, nature returns to their help. Thus when we shut you up closely, when we make you be guarded by so many slaves, when we so strongly restrain your desires, when they would range too far ; it is not that we fear the least infidelity ; but because we know that purity cannot be too great, and that by the least stain it may be polluted. I pity you, Roxana ; your chastity, so long tried, merited a husband who would never have left you, and who might himself have satisfied those desires which can be subdued by your virtue alone.

Paris, the 7th day of the
moon Regeb, 1712.

L E T.

LETTER XXVII.

USBEK TO NISSIR, at ISPAHAN.

WE are at present at Paris, that proud rival of the city of the sun*. I engaged my friend Ibben, when I left Smyrna, to send a box to thee, containing some presents for thee; by the same means thou wilt receive this letter. Though removed at so great a distance from him, as five or six hundred leagues, I send my letters to him, and receive his, with as much facility as if he was at Ispahan, and myself at Com. My letters I send to Marseilles, from whence there are vessels going, continually, to Smyrna; from thence, those intended for Persia, he sends by the Armenian Caravans, which are constantly departing for Ispahan. Rica enjoys perfect health; his strong constitution, youth, and natural chearfulness, render him superior to every affliction. But for my own part I am not well; my body and mind are both depressed; I give myself

E. 3

up

* Ispahan.

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up to reflexions which every day become more melancholly; my health which is impaired, turns my mind towards my own country, and renders this country still more foreign to me. But I conjure thee, dear Nessir, take care that my wives may be ignorant of the condition I am in; for if they love me, I would spare their fears; and if they love me not, I would not increase their boldness. If my eunuchs believed me in danger, if they could hope their base compliance would pass unpunished; they would soon cease to be deaf to the flattering voice of that sex, which can melt rocks, and move things inanimate. Farewell, Nessir, it is a happiness to me to afford thee proofs of my confidence.

Paris, the 5th day of the
moon of Chahban,
1712.

L E T T E R XXVIII.

RICA to ***.

Yesterday I saw a very extraordinary thing, though it happens every day at Paris. After dinner, towards evening,
all

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all the people assemble to act a kind of mimickry, which I heard called a play. The performance is in a place called a theatre, on each side are little nooks, called boxes, in which the men and women act together dumb scenes; something like those in use in Persia. Here you see a languishing love sick lady; another more animated eagerly ogling her lover, whose returns are as ardent; all the passions are painted in their faces, and expressed by an eloquence which though dumb is not the less lively. Here, the actresses expose but half their bodies, and commonly, out of modesty, wear a muff to conceal their arms. In the lower part of the theatre, is a troop of people standing, who ridicule those who are above, and they, in their turn, laugh at those below. But those who put themselves to the greatest trouble, are some who take the advantage of their youth to support the fatigue of it. They are forced to be every where, they go through passages known only to themselves, they mount, with extraordinary activity, from story to story; they are above, below, and in every box; they dive, if I may so speak;

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they

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they are lost this moment, and appear again the next ; they often leave the place of the scene, and go to play in another. Now there are others, though such a prodigy is not to be expected, seeing they use crutches, who walk and move about like the others. You come, at length, to some rooms where they act a private comedy. This commences with low bows, continued by embraces ; the slightest acquaintance, they say, gives a man a right to squeeze another to death. This place seems to inspire tenderness ; in fact, they say, that the princesses who reign here are not cruel, and excepting two, or three, hours a day, in which they are hard hearted enough, one must allow that they are very tractable, and that the other humour is a kind of drunkenness which they easily quit. All that I have been relating to you, is pretty nearly transacted in another place, called the Opera house ; all the difference is, that they speak at the one, and sing at the other. A friend of mine, the other day, took me into a room where one of the principal actresses was undressing ; we became so intimate, that the next day

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I received, from her, the following epistle.

SIR,

“ I am the most unhappy woman in
“ in the world. I have been always the
“ most virtuous woman in the whole
“ opera. Seven, or eight, months ago,
“ as I was dressing myself for a priestess
“ of Diana, in the same room you saw
“ me in yesterday, a young abbot came
“ in, and regardless of my white habit,
“ my veil, or my frontlet, deprived me
“ of my innocence. I have in vain re-
“ monstrated to him the sacrifice I made
“ to him, he only laughs, and main-
“ tains he found me a very profane wo-
“ man. In the mean time I dare not
“ come upon the stage I am so big ; for
“ I am, with respect to honour, incon-
“ ceivably delicate, and I always insist,
“ that to a woman well born it is more
“ easy to lose her virtue than her mo-
“ desty. With this delicacy, you may
“ readily judge, that the young abbot
“ had never succeeded, if he had not
“ made to me a promise of marriage ;

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“ such

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“ such a lawful motive induced me to
“ pass over those little usual formalities,
“ and to begin where I ought to have
“ concluded. But since his infidelity
“ has dishonoured me, I will no longer
“ continue at the opera, where, between
“ you and me, they scarcely give me
“ sufficient for my support ; for, at pre-
“ sent, that I advance in years, and lose
“ the advantage of charms, my salary,
“ though the same, seems to diminish
“ daily. I have learned from one of
“ your attendants, that in your country
“ a good dancer is highly esteemed, and
“ that if I was at Ispahan, my fortune
“ would be quickly made. If you
“ would take me under your protection,
“ you would have the praise of doing
“ good to a woman, who by her virtue
“ and prudent conduct, would not render
“ herself unworthy of your generosity.
I am, &c.

From Paris, the 2d of
the moon of Chalval,
1712.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXIX.

RICA TO IBBEN, at SMYRNA.

THE pope is the head of the Christians; an old idol whom they reverence through custom. He was heretofore terrible even to princes themselves; for he deposed them as easily as our magnificent sultans do the kings of Iremetta and Georgia; but he is no longer feared. He says he is the successor of one of the first Christians, named Saint Peter; and it is certainly a rich succession, for he hath immense treasures, and a large country under his dominion. The bishops are the men of the law, who are subject to him, and have, under his authority, two very different functions. Articles of faith are constituted by them as well as by himself, when they are assembled together. When they are separated, the business of their function is no other, than to dispense with the fulfilment of the law. For the Christian religion, thou must know, is loaded with a vast number of very difficult practices, and as it is judged less easy

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to fulfil those obligations, than to have bishops to dispense with them, they have, for the public benefit, taken the latter method, in such a manner, that if they are not willing to observe the fast of **Rahmazan** *, if unwill to subject themselves to the formalities of marriage, if they would break their vows, if they would marry contrary to the appointment of the law; nay, sometimes if they are desirous not to abide by their oath, they go to the bishop, or pope, who presently grants a dispensation. The bishops do not make articles of faith of their own proper accord. There is a prodigious number of doctors, for the most part dervises, who raise among themselves new questions in religion, which are left in dispute a long time, and the contention subsists until a decision comes to terminate it. I can also affirm to thee that there never was a kingdom where there has been so many civil wars as in that of Christ. Those who publish any new proposition are, at once, called heretics; each heresy has its own name, which is used in ridicule to those who engage in it. But

no

* Lent.

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no man need to be an heretic unless he will; he has only to divide the difference in the middle, and admit a distinction to those who charge him with heresy, and provided there be a distinction, intelligible or not, he purifies himself as white as snow, and may make himself esteemed orthodox. What I tell you does very well in France and Germany; but I have heard that in Spain and Portugal the dervises do not relish jesting, and will burn a man as readily as they would straw. When a man comes into the hands of these people there, it is happy for him if he has always prayed to God with little wooden balls in his hands, that he has carried about with him pieces of cloth fastened to two ribbons, and that he has been sometimes in the province of Galicia; otherwise the poor devil is terribly embarrassed. Though he should swear like a pagan that he is orthodox, it is possible they may not admit his plea, and may burn him for an heretic; it is to no purpose for him to make distinctions, away with distinctions, he shall be in ashes before they even think of hearing him. The judges here commonly

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monly presume upon the innocence of the accused; there they always suppose the party culpable. If in doubt, it is their custom to determine on the side of severity; probably because they think badly of mankind; but the others conceive so well of them that they never judge them capable of a lie, for they receive the testimony of mortal enemies, of loose women, of such who follow an infamous calling. The others in their sentence pay a slight compliment to those whom they dress up in a shirt painted with flames of fire; and assure them that they are extremely concerned to see them so badly habited; that their own disposition is to mercy; that they abhor blood, and that they are grieved at having condemned them. But for their own consolation, they confiscate to their own emolument all the effects of the miserable sufferers. Happy the land which is possessed by the children of the prophets! There these melancholly spectacles are unknown*. The holy religion brought

* The Persians are of a more tolerating spirit than the other Mahometans.

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brought there by angels, maintains its power by truth itself; it needs no cruel means for its support.

Paris, the 4th of the
moon Chalval, 1712.

L E T T E R XXX.

RICA to the Same, at SMYRNA.

THE people of Paris are curious to an extravagant degree. When I came here I was stared at as if I had been sent from heaven; old and young, men, women and children, all must have a peep at me. If I went out, every body was at their windows; if I walked in the Thuilleries, I was presently surrounded by a circle; the women formed a rainbow about me, variegated with a thousand colours; if I attended the public shows, my strange figure attracted a hundred spying glasses; in short, never was a man so much looked at as myself. I smiled sometimes at hearing persons, who but scarcely ever stirred from their chamber, whispering to each other; it
must

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must be allowed he has much of the air of a Persian. But what is very wonderful, I met with my own picture every where, saw myself multiplied in every shop, upon every chimney-piece; so fearful were they of not seeing me sufficiently. All these honours however are only burdensome; I did not imagine I was so curious, or so extraordinary, a person; and though I think very well of myself, I never imagined I should have disturbed the quiet of a great city where I was wholly unknown. This determined me to quit my Persian dress, and put on that of an European, to try if my physiognomy would yet retain any of the wonderful. This experiment convinced me of what I really was; divested of these foreign ornaments I found myself properly rated. I had occasion enough to be displeas'd with my taylor for making me lose all public regard and attention, for I at once sunk into a contemptible nothingness. I was sometimes an hour in company without being the least noticed, and without any body's giving me occasion to speak. But if by chance any one informed the company
that

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that I was a Persian, there was a buz around me; ha! ha! the gentleman a Persian, very strange! that any one should be a Persian!

Paris, the 6th of the
moon Chalval, 1712.

L E T T E R. XXXI.

RHEDI TO USBEK, at PARIS.

I Am at present, my dear Usbek, at Venice. After seeing all the cities in the world, a person may be surpris'd on his arrival at Venice; it will always excite wonder to see a city whose spires, and mosques, rise out of the water, and to meet with an innumerable people in a place where naturally fishes ought only to be found. But this profane city wants the most precious treasure in the world, that is pure water; it is impossible here to perform a single legal ablution. This city is an abomination to our holy prophet, who never beholds it, from the height of heaven, but with indignation. Was it not for this, my dear Usbek, I should

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should be delighted to spend my life here, where my understanding is every day improved. I gain a knowledge of commercial secrets, the interests of princes, their method of government ; nor do I even despise the European superstitions ; I apply to medicines, physics, astronomy ; I study the arts ; in short, I get out of the clouds in which I was enveloped in my native country.

Venice, the 16th of the
moon Chalval, 1712.

L E T T E R XXXII.

RICA to ***.

THE other day I went to see a house where a mean provision is made for about three hundred persons. I had soon done, for the church and the buildings are not worth regarding. The inhabitants of this house are very chearful, many of them play together at cards, or at other games that I do not understand. As I was coming away, one of these men was going out also,
and

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and hearing me inquire the way to Murais, which is the most extreme quarter of all Paris, I am going there, said he to me, and I will conduct you there; follow me. He guided me admirably, cleared me from crowds, and saved me very dexterously from coaches and carriages. Our walk was pretty near at an end when my curiosity prompted me: my good friend, said I to him, may not I know who you are? I am, Sir, replied he, a blind man. How! said I to him, are you blind? And why did you not desire the honest man you was playing at cards with to conduct us. He is blind also, replied he; there hath been for this four hundred years, three hundred blind persons in the house where you met with me; but I must leave you, there is the street you asked for; I must join the crowd to go into that church, where I dare swear I shall be a greater obstruction to others than they to me.

Paris, the 17th of the
moon Chalval, 1712.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXXIII.

USBEK TO RHEDI, at VENICE.

AT Paris wine is so extremely dear, on account of the duties laid on it, that it seems as if it was designed to fulfil the commands of the divine Koran, which prohibits the drinking of it. When I think upon the melancholly, fatal effects of this liquor, I cannot avoid considering it as the most dreadful present that nature hath made to mankind. If any thing ever disgraced the lives and characters of our monarchs, it hath been their intemperance; it hath been the most empoisoned spring from whence have issued all their injustice and cruelty. I must needs say to the disgrace of these men, the law prohibits our Princes the use of wine, and yet they drink it to an excess that degrades them of humanity; this custom on the contrary is indulged to the Christian princes, and never observed to lead them into any crime. The mind of man is a contradiction to itself. During a licentious debauch they transgress

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gress the precepts, and the law made to render us just, serves only to render us more culpable. Yet when I disapprove of the use of this liquor which destroys our reason, I do not at the same time condemn those beverages which exhilerate the mind. The Orientals are so wise as to inquire after remedies against melancholly, with the same sollicitude as for more dangerous disorders. When any misfortune happens to an European, he hath no other resource but to read a philosopher called Seneca: but the Asiatics, more sensible than them, and in this case better naturalists, drink a liquor capable of chearing the heart, and of charming away the remembrance of its sufferings. There is nothing so distressing as the consolations drawn from the necessity of evil, the inefficacy of medicines, the irreversibleness of fatality, the decrees of providence *, and the miserable condition of humanity. It is mockery to attempt to soften evils by the
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* This may be true according to the absurd ideas of them which Mahometism teaches; but by no means so with respect to that idea which the Christian revelation gives of them.

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consideration, that it is the consequence of our being born; it is much better to divert the mind from its reflexions, and to treat man as a being susceptible of sensation, rather than reason. The soul united to a body is continually under its tyrannical power. If the blood moves too slowly, if the spirits are not sufficiently pure, if they are not enough in quantity, we become dejected and melancholly; but if we make use of such liquors that can change the disposition of our bodies, our soul again becomes capable of receiving pleasing ideas, and is sensible of a secret pleasure in perceiving its machine recover, as it were its life and motion.

Paris, the 25th of the
moon Zilcade, 1713.

L E T T E R XXXIV.

USBEK TO IBBEN, at SMYRNA.

THE women of Persia are finer than those of France; but those of this country are prettier. It is difficult

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ficult not to love the first, and not to be pleased with the latter; the one are more delicate and modest, and the others more gay and airy. What in Persia renders the blood so pure, is the regular life the women observe, they neither game nor sit up late, they drink no wine, and do not expose themselves to the open air. It must be allowed that the seraglio is better adapted for health than for pleasure; it is a dull uniform kind of life, where every thing turns upon subjection and duty; their very pleasures are grave, and their pastimes solemn, and they seldom taste them but as so many tokens of authority and dependance. The men themselves in Persia are not so gay as the French; there is not that freedom of mind and that appearance of content which I meet with here in persons of all estates and ranks. It is still worse in Turkey, where there are families in which from father to son, not one of them ever laughed from the foundation of the monarchy. The gravity of the Asiatics arises from the little conversation there is among them, who never see each other but when obliged by ceremony.

Friendship

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Friendship, that sweet engagement of the heart, which constitutes here the pleasure of life, is there almost unknown. They retire within their own house, where they constantly find the same company; inso-much that each family may be considered as living in an island detached from all others. Discourging one time on this subject with a person of this country, he said to me, that which gives me most offence among all your customs is the necessity you are under of living with slaves, whose minds and inclinations always favour of the meanness of their condition. Those sentiments of virtue which you have in you from nature are enfeebled and destroyed by these base wretches who surround you from your infancy. For, in short, divest yourself of prejudice, and what can you expect from an education received from such a wretch, who places his whole merit in being a jailer to the wives of another man, and takes a pride in the vilest employment in society? who is despicable for that very fidelity which is his only virtue, to which he is prompted by envy, jealousy, and despair? who inflamed with a desire of revenging himself
on

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on both sexes, of which he is an out-cast, submitting to the tyranny of the stronger sex, provided he may distress the weaker; a wretch who, deriving from his imperfection, ugliness and deformity, the whole lustre of his condition, is valued only because he is unworthy to be so; who, in short, rivetted for ever to the gate where he is placed, and harder than the hinges and bolts which secure it, boasts of having spent a life of fifty years in so ignoble a situation, where, commissioned by his master's jealousy, he exercises all his cruelties.

Paris, the 14th of the
moon Zilhade, 1713.

L E T T E R XXXV.

U_SBEK to GIMCHID, his cousin, Dervise
of the shining Monastery of Tauris.

WHAT dost thou think, sublime
dervise, of the Christians? Dost
thou believe, that at the day of judgment
it will be with them as with the unbelieving
Turks, who will serve the Jews for asses,

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and

and to carry them in a high trot to hell? I well know that their abode will not be with the prophets, and that the great Haly is not come for their sakes. But dost thou believe they will be sentenced to eternal punishment, because they have been so unhappy as to find no mosques in their country? and that God will punish them for not practising a religion that he never made known to them? I can assure thee I have frequently examined these Christians; I have questioned them, to see if they had any idea of the great Haly, who was the most excellent of mankind, and have found that they have never so much as heard him mentioned. They are not like those infidels whom our holy prophet put to the sword, for refusing to believe in the miracles of heaven; but rather like those unhappy people who lived under the darkness of idolatry, before the divine light illuminated the face of our great prophet. Again, if you search their religion closely, you will find some seeds of our doctrines. I have often admired the secret dispositions of providence, which seems thereby willing to prepare them for a general conversion. I have heard speak of a book of their doctors,

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tors, called *Polygamy Triumphant*, in which is proved, that polygamy is enjoined to Christians. Their baptism is an emblem of our legal washings; and the Christians only mistake in the efficacy that they ascribe to this primary ablution, which they believe sufficient for every other. Their priests and monks, like us, pray seven times in a day. They hope to enjoy a paradise, where they shall taste a thousand delights, by the means of the resurrection of their bodies. They have, as well as we, set fasts, and mortifications, by which they hope to incline the divine mercy. They worship good angels, and fear the evil. They pay a holy credulity to the miracles which God works by the ministry of his servants. They acknowledge, as we do, the insufficiency of their own merits, and the need they have of an intercessor with God. I see Mahometism throughout the whole, though I do not there find Mahomet. Do all we can, truth will prevail and shine through the cloud that surrounds it. A day will come, when the eternal will see none upon the earth but true believers. Time, which consumes all things, will destroy even er-

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rors themselves. All mankind will be astonished to find themselves under the same standard. All things, even to the law itself, shall be done away; the divine exemplars will be taken up from the earth, and carried to the celestial archives.

Paris, the 20th of the
moon Zilhage, 1713.

L E T T E R XXXVI.

USBEK TO RHEDI, at VENICE.

C O F F E E is very much used at Paris; here are a great many public houses where they sell it. In some of these houses they talk of news, in others they play at draughts. There is one where they prepare the coffee in such a manner, that it inspires the drinkers of it with wit; at least, of all those who frequent it, there is not one person in four who does not think he has more wit after he has entered that house. But what offends me in these wits is, that they do not make themselves useful to their country, and that they trifle away their
their

their talents on childish things. For instance, at my arrival in Paris, I found them very warm about the most trifling controversy imaginable; they were disputing about the character of an old Greek poet, of whose country, and the time of his death, they have been ignorant these two thousand years. Both parties allowed he was an excellent poet; the question was only whether he had more or less merit, ascribed to him than he deserved. Each was for settling the value, but amidst these distributors of reputation, some made better weight than others; such was the quarrel. It has been very fierce, for they so heartily abused each other, and were so bitter in their raillery, that I did not less admire the manner of their dispute, than the subject of it. If any one, said I to myself, should be giddy-headed enough in the company of these defenders of this Greek poet, to attack the reputation of an honest citizen, he would be but badly received! and surely this zeal, so delicate for the reputation of the dead, would be inflamed in defence of that of the living! But however that may be, added I, may I ever be defended from the censurs of this poet, whose abode of

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two thousand years in the grave, has not defended him from so implacable an hatred! They now do but beat the air, but how would it be, if their fury was animated by the presence of an enemy? These I have been speaking of, dispute in the vulgar tongue, and must be distinguished from another kind of disputants, who make use of a barbarous language, which seems to augment the fury and obstinacy of the combatants. There are particular quarters of the town where these people engage as in a battle, night and day; they, as it were, feed themselves with distinctions, and live upon obscure reasonings, and false consequences. This trade, by which it should seem no bread could be got, yet does not fail answering. A whole nation, expelled their own country, hath been seen to pass the seas, to settle in France, bringing nothing with them to ward off the necessities of life, but a formidable talent for disputation. Farewell.

Paris, the last day of the
moon of Zilhage, 1713.



L E T.

LETTER XXXVII.

USBK TO IBBEN, at SMYRNA.

THE king of France is old ; we have not one instance in our history, of a monarch who reigned so long. He is said to possess to a very degree, the art of making himself obeyed ; he governs with the same spirit, his family, his court, and his kingdom ; he hath often been heard to say, that of all the governments in the world, that of the Turks, or of our august Sultan, pleased him best ; so highly does he esteem the politics of the East ! I have studied his character, and have discovered in it contradictions impossible for me to solve : for example, he hath a minister who is not above eighteen years old, and a mistress turned of fourscore ; he loves his religion, and yet cannot bear those who say it ought to be rigorously observed ; though he avoids the tumult of cities, and is little communicative, ye he is busy from morning to evening, what he may do to be talked of ; he is very fond of trophies and victo-

ries, but he fears as much to see a good general at the head of his troops, as he would have cause to do one at the head of his enemy's troops. It never happened, I believe, but to himself, to be at the same time loaded with more riches than a prince could wish to be, and to be oppressed with a poverty that a private person could not be able to sustain. He loves to reward those who serve him; but he rewards as liberally the assiduity, or rather the idleness, of his courtiers, as the laborious campaigns of his generals. He oftentimes prefers a man who undresses him, or who gives him a napkin when he sits down to table, preferable to another who takes cities, or gains battles for him; he does not think that the grandeur of a sovereign ought to be restrained in the distribution of favours, and without examining whether the man he loads with his favours hath real merit, he thinks his choice capable of rendering him such; accordingly he hath been known to bestow a small pension on a man who run away two leagues from the enemy, and a good government to another who run twice that length. He is magnificent above all in his buildings; he has more statues

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tues in his palace gardens, than there are inhabitants in a great city. His guard is as strong as that of the prince, before whom all other thrones are debased ; his armies are equally numerous, his resources as many, and his finances as inexhaustible.

Paris, the 7th of the moon
Maharran, 1713.

L E T T E R XXXVIII.

RICA TO IB BEN, at SMYRNA.

WHether it is better to deprive women of their liberty, or to permit it them, is a great question among men ; it appears to me that there are good reasons for and against this practice. If the Europeans urge that there is a want of generosity in rendering those persons miserable whom we love ; our Asiatics answer, that it is meanness in men to renounce the empire which nature has given them over women. If they are told that a great number of women shut up, are troublesome, they reply, that ten women in subjection are less troublesome

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than

than one who is refractory. But they object in their turn, that the Europeans cannot be happy with women who are faithless to them; they reply, that this fidelity of which they boast so much, does not hinder that disgust, which always follows the gratification of the passions; that our women are too much ours; that a possession so easily obtained, leaves nothing to be wished, or feared; that a little coquetry provokes desire, and prevents disgust. Perhaps a man wiser than myself would be puzzled to decide this question; for if the Asiatics do very well to find out proper means to calm their uneasiness, the Europeans also do as well to have uneasiness. After all, say they, though we should be unhappy as husbands, we should always find means to recompence ourselves as lovers. For that a man might have reason to complain of the infidelity of his wife, it must be, that there should be but three persons in the world, they will always be at even-hands when there are four. Another question among the learned is, whether the law of nature subjects the women to the men? No, said a gallant philosopher to me the other day, nature never dictated such a law.

law. The empire we have over them is real tyranny, which they only suffer us to assume, because they have more good nature than we, and in consequence more humanity and reason. These advantages, which ought to have given them the superiority, had we acted reasonably, have made them lose it, because we have not the same advantages. But, if it is true that the power we have over the women is only tyrannical, it is no less so that they have over us a natural empire; that of beauty, which nothing can resist. Our power extends not to all countries, but that of beauty is universal. Wherefore then do we hear of this privilege? Is it because we are the strongest? But this is really injustice. We employ every kind of means to reduce their spirits. Their abilities would be equal with ours, if their education was the same. Let us examine them in those talents which education hath not enfeebled, and we shall see if ours are as great. It must be acknowledged, though it is contrary to our custom, that among the most polite people, the women have always had the authority over their husbands; it was established among the Egyptians, in honour
of

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of Isis, and among the Babylonians, in honour of Semiramis. It is said of the Romans, that they commanded all nations, but obeyed their wives. I say nothing of the Sauromates, who were in perfect slavery to the sex, they were too barbarous to be brought for an example. Thou seest, my dear Ibben, that I have contracted the fashion of this country, where they are fond of defending extraordinary opinions, and reducing every thing to a paradox. The prophet hath determined the question, and settled the rights of each sex; the women, says he, must honour their husbands, and the men their wives; but the husbands are allowed one degree of honour more.

Paris, 26th of the moon of the
2d Gemmadi, 1713.

LET-

L E T T E R XXXIX.

HAGI * IBBI, to the Jew BEN-JOSHUA,
a Mahometan Profelyte, at SMYRNA.

IT appears to me, Ben Joshua, that there are always some amazing prodigies preparative to the birth of extraordinary persons, as if nature suffered a kind of crisis, and the celestial power could not bring forth without a struggle. There is nothing of this kind so marvellous as the birth of Mahomet. God, who had determined by the decrees of his providence from the beginning, to send to mankind this great prophet, to chain up Satan, created a light four thousand years before Adam, which descending from elect to elect, from ancestor to ancestor of Mahomet, descended at length to him, as an authentic testimony of his descent from the patriarchs. For the sake of this very prophet it was, that God decreed that no child should

* Hagi signifies one who hath been on pilgrimage to Mecca.

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should be conceived, but the woman should cease to be unclean, and the man should be circumcised. He was born circumcised, and joy smiled on his face from his birth; thrice the earth trembled as if she herself had brought forth; all the idols prostrated themselves, and the thrones of kings were overturned; Lucifer was cast down into the bottom of the sea, and it was not till after forty days that he immersed from the abyss, and fled to mount Cabes, from whence, with a terrible voice, he called upon the angels. This same night God fixed a bound between the man and woman, which neither of them can pass. The art of the magicians and necromancers failed; a voice was heard from heaven speaking these words: I have sent into the world my faithful friend. According to the testimony of Isben Aben, an Arabian historian, the generation of birds, clouds, winds, and all the host of angels met together to bring up this child, and disputed the preference. The birds, in their warblings, said they were best fitted to educate him, because they could more easily collect together the several fruits from different parts. The winds murmured, and said,
it

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it is rather us, because we can convey to him from all places the most delightful odours. No, no, said the clouds, no; it is to us the care of him ought to be consigned, for we will continually bear to him the coolness of the waters. From above the angels indignant, cried out, what will there remain for us to do? But a voice from heaven was heard, which determined all disputes; he shall not be removed out of the hands of mortals, because happy are the breasts that shall give him suck, the hands that shall hold him, and the bed on which he shall rest! After so many striking evidences, my dear Joshua, the heart of man must be steeled not to believe his holy law. What could heaven do more to authorize his divine mission, unless nature itself had been overturned, and all mankind had been destroyed whose conviction it designed?

Paris, the 20th of the
moon Rhegeb, 1713.

LET-

L E T T E R XL.

USBEK to IBBEN, at SMYRNA.

ON the death of a great man they assemble in a mosque to pronounce his funeral oration, which is a discourse in praise of him ; from which it is very difficult to determine justly the merit of the deceased. I would abolish these funeral pomps. The birth, not the death, of men should be mourned. To what end do these ceremonies serve, and all their mournful show to a dying man in his last moments ; even the tears of his family, and the grief of his friends do but exaggerate to him the loss he is about to sustain ? We are so blind, that we know not how to time our sorrow, nor our joy ; we have scarcely ever any but false joys and false sorrows. When I see the Mogul, who every year goes to weigh himself in a balance, to be weighed like an ox ; when I see the people rejoice that their prince is become more gross, that is less fit to govern them, I have pity, Ibben, on human extravagance.

Paris, the 20th of the
moon Rhegeb, 1713.

I. E T.

L E T T E R XLI.

The Chief black Eunuch to USBEK.

I SMAEL, one of thy black eunuchs, magnificent lord, is just dead, and I was unwilling to neglect filling up his place; but as eunuchs are extremely scarce at present, I intended making use of a black slave that thou hast in the country; but I have not as yet been able to bring him to submit to be initiated into this office. As I considered that this was really for his good, I was willing the other day to use a little violence, and with the assistance of the intendant of thy gardens, I ordered, against his will, that he should be put into a state capable of rendering thee those services most pleasing to thy heart, and to live as I do, within this formidable palace, which he dares not even to look at: but he fell a roaring, as if he was going to be skinned, and struggled so that he got out of our hands, and escaped the fatal knife. I have just now been informed that he intends writing to thee, to ask thy favour, affirming that

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that I formed this design only from an insatiable desire to be revenged for some sharp railleries of his against me. However I swear to thee by the hundred thousand prophets, that I acted only for the good of thy service, the only thing dear to me, and beyond which there is nothing that I regard. I prostrate myself at thy feet.

From the seraglio at Fatme, the 7th
of the moon Maharran, 1713.

L E T T E R XLII.

PHARAN to USBEK, his sovereign Lord.

IF thou wert here, magnificent lord, I should appear before thee covered all over with white paper, and that would not be sufficient to write all the abuses which thy chief black eunuch, the wickedest of all men, hath exercised towards me since thy departure. On account of some jokes, which he pretends I made on his miserable condition, he hath incensed the cruel intendant of thy gardens against me, who, since thy departure hath imposed upon me the most intolerable labours, under which
I have

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I have a thousand times thought I should lose my life, without abating for a moment of my zeal for thy service. How many times have I said to myself, I have a master full of goodness, and yet am I the most unhappy slave upon earth ! I confess to thee, magnificent lord, I did not believe myself destined to greater miseries, but this traitor of an eunuch was willing to fill up the measure of his wickedness. Some days ago, of his own authority, he determined that I should guard thy sacred women, that is, that I should suffer an execution, which to me would be a thousand times more severe than death. Those who have had the unhappiness to suffer such kind of treatment from their cruel parents, at their birth, have this to comfort them, that they never knew a different state ; but for me to be degraded and deprived of manhood, I should die with grief, if I did not of the barbarity itself. I embrace thy feet, sublime lord, in the most profound humility. Grant that I may experience the effects of thy virtue, so highly respected, and that it may not be said, there is upon earth one unhappy man the more by thy order.

From the gardens of Fatme, the 7th
of the moon Maharran, 1713.

LET-

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L E T T E R XLIII.

USBEK TO PHARAN, at the Gardens of
FATME.

LET thy heart receive joy, and reverence these sacred characters; let the chief eunuch, and the intendant of my gardens kiss them. I forbid their attempting any thing against thee; tell them to buy the eunuch I want. Do you discharge your duty, as though I was always present with thee; for know that the greater my kindness is, if thou abusest it, the greater shall be thy punishment.

Paris, the 25th of the moon
Rhegeb, 1713.

L E T T E R XLIV.

USBEK TO RHEDI, at VENICE.

IN France there are three kinds of professions; the church, the sword, and the long robe. Each hath a sovereign contempt

tempt for the other two : for example, a man who ought to be despised only for being a fool, is often so because he is a lawyer. There are none, even to the meanest mechanic, who does not contend for the excellency of the trade they have chosen ; each values himself above him who is of a different profession, according to the idea he has formed to himself of the superiority of his own. These men are, more, or less, like that woman in the province of Erivan, who having received a favour from one of our monarchs, wished a thousand times, in the blessings she bestowed upon him, that heaven would make him governor of Erivan. I have read, that a French ship putting in upon the coast of Guinea, some of the crew went on shore to buy sheep. They were carried to the king, who administered justice to his subjects under a tree. He was seated on a throne, that is to say, a piece of timber, as stately as though he had sat upon the throne of the great Mogul, attended by three, or four guards armed with hedge-stakes ; an umbrella in the form of a canopy, secured him from the heat of the sun ; his whole regalia, and that of the queen

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queen his wife, consisted in their black skins, and some rings. This prince, yet more vain than miserable, asked these strangers if he was not much talked of in France. He imagined that his name could not but have reached from pole to pole; and different from that conqueror of whom it is said, that he had silenced the whole earth, he fancied that the whole world must talk of him. When the Cham of Tartary hath dined, a herald proclaims, that all the princes of the earth may go to dinner, if they please: and this barbarian, who feeds only upon milk, who hath no house to dwell in, and who lives only by murder and robbery, regards all the potentates in the world as his slaves, and formally insults them twice a day.

Paris, the 28th of the
moon Rhegeb, 1713.

LET-

L E T T E R. XLV.

RICA to USBEK, at ***.

AS I was in bed, yesterday morning, I heard a violent rapping at my door, which was soon opened, or rather forced open, by a man with whom I had made some acquaintance, and who seemed to me to be beside himself. His dress was far from being decent, his peruke, all awry, had not been so much as combed; he had not had leisure to get his black waistcoat mended; and, for this time, had neglected those wise precautions with which he was used to conceal the tattered condition of his dress. Get up, says he to me, I have business with you all day; I have a thousand implements to buy, and should be glad to have you with me. We must go, first to the street St. Honoré, to speak to a notary, who is commissioned to sell an estate of five hundred thousand livres, and I am willing he should give me the preference. As I came here, I stopt a moment in the suburbs of St. Germain, where
I have

I have hired a house for two thousand crowns, and hope to execute the contract to-day. As soon as I was dressed, or pretty near so, my gentleman made me hastily go out with him. Let us, said he; first buy a coach, and settle our equipage. Indeed we bought not only the coach, but also an hundred thousand livres worth of goods, in less than an hour; all this was done presently, for my gentleman haggled about nothing, paid no money, nor was he ever out of his way. I reflected upon all this, and when I examined my gentleman, I found in him so strange a mixture of riches and poverty, that I knew not what to think. But at last I broke silence, and taking him on one side, I said to him, sir, who is to pay for all these things? Myself, says he; come to my chamber, I will show you immense treasures, and riches that might excite the envy of the greatest monarchs, but not yours, who shall always share them with me. I followed him; we clambered up to his fifth floor, and by a ladder, hoisted ourselves to the sixth, which was a closet, open to the four winds, in which there was nothing but two or three dozen of earthen basons, filled with different

ferent liquors. I got up early, says he, and as I have done these five and twenty years, went immediately to visit my work; I saw that the great day was come, which was to render me the richest man upon earth. Do you see this fine red liquor? It hath now all those qualities which the philosophers require to make a transmutation of metals. I have gathered these grains which you see, which are true gold by their colour, though a little imperfect as to their weight. This secret, which Nicholas Flammel found out, but Raymond Lully, and a million of others, have been always seeking after, is at length come to me, and I this day find myself an happy adept. May heaven grant that I may never make use of the treasures it hath bestowed upon me, but to its glory! I left him, and came, or rather tumbled, down the ladder, transported with anger, and left this very rich man in his hospital — Farewell, my dear Uibek, I will come and see you to-morrow, and if you please, we will return together to Paris.

Paris, the last day of the
moon Rhegeb, 1713.

L E T T E R XLVI.

USBEK TO RHEDI, at VENICE.

I Meet here with people who are continually disputing about religion ; but it seems as if they contended at the same time, who should least observe it. But they are neither better christians, nor even better citizens ; and this is what hurts me : for whatever religion we profess, the observation of the laws, the love of mankind, duty to our parents, are ever the principal duties of it. And indeed, ought not the first object of a religious man to be, to please the deity who hath established the religion he professes ? But the surest way to do so is, without doubt, to obey the laws of society, and to discharge the duties of humanity ; for whatever religion a man professes, the moment any religion is supposed, it must also necessarily be supposed, that God loves mankind, since he establishes a religion to render them happy : that if he loves men, we are certain of pleasing him in loving them also ; that is, in exercising
toward

toward them all the duties of charity and humanity, and not breaking the laws under which they live. By these means we are much surer of pleasing God, than by observing such and such a ceremony; for ceremonies in themselves have no degree of goodness, they are only relatively good, and upon a supposition that God hath commanded the observance of them. But this is a nice point to discuss, about which we may easily be deceived; for the ceremonies of one religion must be chose from among those of two thousand. A certain man daily offered up to God this prayer: — Lord, I understand none of those disputes which are continually made concerning thee: I would serve thee according to thy will, but every person I consult would have me do so according to his will. When I would pray to thee, I know not what language I should use; nor do I know in what posture I ought to put myself; one says I ought to pray standing, another that I should sit, and a third requires me to kneel. This is not all: there are those who pretend, that I ought to wash myself every morning with cold water: others maintain that thou wilt regard me with abhor-

ance, if I do not cut off a small piece of my flesh. The other day I happened to eat, at a caravansary, a rabbit : three men who were present made me tremble ; they all three maintained that I had grievously offended thee : one *, because this was an unclean animal ; the other †, because it was strangled, and the third §, because it was not fish. A Brachman who was passing by, whom I desired to judge between us, says to me ; they are all wrong, for certainly you yourself did not kill the creature ; but I did, said I : Ah ! then you have committed an abominable action, and God will never forgive you, says he to me in a severe tone ; how do you know that the soul of your father hath not passed into this animal ? All these things, Lord, greatly embarrass me ; I cannot move my head that I am not threatened with having offended thee : though all the while I desire to please thee, and to that end to employ the life I hold from thee. I know not whether I deceive myself ; but I believe the best way to please thee, is to be a good citizen in the community thou hast made me

* A Turk. † A Jew. § An Armenian.

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me to live in, and a good father of the family which thou hast given to me.

Paris, the 8^h of the
moon Chahban, 1713.

L E T T E R XLVII.

ZACHI TO USBEK, at PARIS.

I Have great news to communicate to you ; I am reconciled to Zephis ; the seraglio that was divided between us, is reunited. There is nothing wanting in this place, where peace reigns, but thee : come then, my dear Usbek, return, and make love triumph here. I gave Zephis a grand entertainment, to which thy mother, wives, and principal concubines were invited ; there were also thy aunts, and several of thy she-cousins ; they came on horseback, covered with the dark cloud of their veils and habits. The next day we set out for the country, where we hoped to be more at liberty : we mounted our camels, and went four and four under a covering. As it was a party suddenly made, we had not time

to send round the neighbourhood to publish the Courouc * : but the chief eunuch, ever attentive to his duty, took another precaution, for he added to the cloth which covered us, so thick a curtain, that we could really see nobody. When we arrived at the river, which we were to cross, we each of us, according to custom, placed ourselves in a box, for we were informed there were a great many people on the river. One more curious than the rest, who approached too near to where we were shut up, received a mortal blow, which for ever deprived him of the light of the day ; another who was bathing himself quite naked near the shore, suffered the same fate ; and thy faithful eunuchs sacrificed to thine and our honour, these two unhappy creatures. But attend to the rest of our adventures ; we had scarcely reached the middle of the river, when so violent a wind arose, and so frightful a cloud covered the sky, that the sailors began to despair. Affrightened at this danger, we
almost

* An order which they publish in Persia, when women of quality are removed, to forbid any man's being in the way.

almost all of us swooned away. I remember I heard our eunuchs talking and disputing, some of whom said we ought to be acquainted with our danger, and released from our confinement; but their chief constantly maintained that he would rather perish than let his master be so dishonoured, and that he would force a dagger into his breast who should make such a bold proposal. One of my slaves, out of her wits, came running to my assistance, all undrest; but a black eunuch brutishly forced her back to the place she came from. I then swooned away, and did not come to myself until the danger was over. How dangerous are journies to women! men are exposed to no dangers but such as threaten their lives; but we are every instant in fear of losing our lives, or our virtue. Adieu, my dear Usbek; I shall adore thee always.

From the seraglio at Fatme,
the 2d of the moon Rhamazan, 1713.

L E T T E R XLVIII.

USBEK * to RHEDI, at VENICE.

THEY who love to inform themselves, are never idle. Though I have no business of consequence to take care of, I am nevertheless continually employed. I spend my life in examining things : I write down in the evening whatever I have remarked, what I have seen, and what I have heard in the day : every thing engages my attention, and every thing excites my wonder : I am like an infant, whose organs, as yet tender, are strongly affected by the slightest objects. Perhaps you will not believe we are agreeably received into all companies, and into all kinds of societies. I believe much of this is owing to the sprightliness and natural gaiety of Rica, which leads him to search through the whole world, and makes him equally searched after. Our foreign air no longer

* M. de Montesquieu speaks of himself here in the person of Usbek.

longer offends any body ; we even take pleasure at the surprize our politeness occasions ; for the French do not imagine that our climate produces men, yet it must be confessed, they are worthy the trouble of convincing them. I have passed some days at a country house near Paris, with a man of some consequence, who delighted in having company with him. He hath a very lovely wife, who hath, joined to a great share of modesty, a liveliness which the constant retired life of our Persian ladies deprives them of. As I was a stranger I had nothing better to employ me, than to observe the company, who were continually coming there, and always affording me something new. I observed at first a man, whose simplicity pleased me, I attached myself to him, and he to me, inso-much that we were continually together. As we were one day conversing together, amidst a large circle, leaving the general conversation to themselves : you find perhaps in me, said I to him, more curiosity than politeness, but pray allow me to ask you some questions ; for I am tired with doing nothing, and of living among people, among whom I cannot mix. My mind

hath been at work above these two days : there is not one of these men here, who hath not put me to the torture above two hundred times ; and I should not be able to comprehend these people in a thousand years ; they are more invisible to me than the wives of our great monarch. You have only to ask, said he to me, and I will acquaint you with all you wish to know, and the more willingly, because I believe you are a discreet man, and that you will not abuse my confidence. Who is that man, said I to him, who talks so much to us of the great entertainments he has given to great men, who is so familiar with your dukes, and who converses so frequently with your ministers, who I am informed are difficult of access ? He certainly must be a man of quality ; but his aspect is so mean, that he does not much honour to men of that rank ; and besides I do not find he has any education. I am a foreigner, but it seems to me, that there is in general a certain politeness common to every nation ; I find none of this in him : is it that your men of quality are worse educated than other men ? This man, answered he laughing, is a farmer of the
king's

king's revenues, he is as much above others in riches, as he is below all the world in birth. He would have the best table in Paris, could he persuade himself never to dine at home; he is very impertinent, as you see, but he excels in a cook, nor is he very ungrateful, for you have heard how he has praised him all day. And who is that big man in black, said I to him, who the lady hath placed next herself? How comes he to wear so grave a dress, with so gay an air, and so florid a countenance? He smiles graciously at every thing said to him, his apparel is more modest, but more formal, than that of your women. He is a preacher, and what is worse, a director. Notwithstanding his looks, he knows more than the husbands; he knows the weakside of the women, and they know also that he hath his weak side too. How, says I, he is always talking of something which he calls grace? No not always, replied he; at the ear of a pretty woman he talks more freely of the fall of man; he thunders in public, but in private he is as gentle as a lamb. It seems to me, says I, that he is greatly distinguished, and highly respected. How comes it that he is so distinguished?

He

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He is a necessary man; he sweetens a retired life, petty councils, officious cares, set visits; he removes the head-ach better than any man in the world; he is excellent. But if I am not too troublesome to you, tell me who is that man over against us, so badly dressed, who makes so many faces, and speaks a language different from the rest, who hath not wit enough to talk, but talks that he may have wit? He is a poet, replied he, a grotesque figure of the human kind. These kind of creatures, they say, are born what they are; it is true, and no less so that they will continue the same all their lives, that is to say, for the general part, the most ridiculous of mankind; accordingly no-body spares them; contempt is liberally poured on them by all. Hunger hath driven him to this house, and he is here well received by both the master and mistress of the house, whose good-nature and politeness do not permit them to descend to personal prejudices. He wrote an epithalamium when they were married, it is the best thing he ever did; for the marriage hath proved as happy as he predicted it would be. You will perhaps not believe, added he, possessed as
you

PERSIAN LETTERS. 133

you are of oriental prejudices, that there are among us happy marriages, and women whose virtue is their strict guard. The couple we are talking of, enjoy an uninterrupted peace ; they are beloved and esteemed by all the world. There is but one thing amiss ; their good-nature makes them admit all kinds of people, which occasions their having bad company. Not that I dislike them ; we must live with people as we find them ; those who are called good company, are often such whose vices are more refined ; and perhaps it is as with poisons, of which the most subtle are the most dangerous. And who is this old man, said I to him softly, who looks so morose ? I took him at first for a foreigner ; for besides that he is dressed different from the rest, he censures every thing done in France, and disapproves of your government. He is an old warrior, said he, who makes himself memorable to all his auditors, by the tedious relation of his exploits. He will not allow France hath gained any battle at which he was not present, or that any siege should be boasted of where he did not mount the trenches. He fancies himself of so much importance

tance to our history, that he imagines it ended where he concluded his actions ; he looks upon some wounds he received, as he would upon the dissolution of the monarchy ; and different to those philosophers, who say that we enjoy only the present time, and that the past is nothing, he, on the contrary, enjoys only the past, and exists not but in the campaigns he hath made : he breathes in the times that are passed away, as heroes ought to live in those which are to come. But why, said I, did he quit the service ? He did not quit it, replied he, but it quitted him ; he is employed in a little garrison, where he will recount his adventures the remainder of his life, but he will get no further ; the road of honour is shut up from him. And why ? said I : We have a maxim in France, replied he, never to promote officers whose patience hath languished in subaltern offices ; we regard them as persons whose understandings are straitened by a narrow sphere of action ; and who, accustomed to little things, are become incapable of greater. We think that a man who at thirty hath not the qualifications of a general, will never have them ; that he who has not
that

that cast of eye, as to show him at once a tract of several leagues in all its various situations, that presence of mind which enables him to improve all the advantages of a victory, and, in a defeat, to help himself by every possible resource, will never acquire these talents. Therefore we have high employments for great and elevated persons, to whom heaven has not only given the heart, but also the genius, of heroism; and inferior stations for those whose talents are also inferior. Of this class are those who are grown old in an obscure warfare: at best they succeed only in doing what they have done all their lives; and we ought not to begin loading them at a time when they begin to be enfeebled. A moment afterwards the spirit of curiosity re-seized me, and I said to him, I promise to ask no further questions, if you will allow of this one more. Who is that big young man in his own hair, with so little wit, and so much impertinence? How comes he to talk louder than the rest, and seem so pleased that he is alive? He is a man of good fortune, replied he.—As he said this, some company came in, others went away, and all got up; somebody
came

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came to speak to my companion, and I remained as ignorant as before. But a moment afterwards this young man happened to sit by me, and began talking to me: it is fine weather, fir, will you take a turn in the garden; I answered him as civilly as possible, and we went out together. I am come into the country to please the mistress of this house; with whom I am upon no bad terms. There is a certain woman in the world who will not be in the best humour; but what can be done? I visit the handsomest women in Paris; but I do not confine myself to one, and they have need to look sharp after me; for, between you and I, I am a sad fellow. Probably then, fir, said I, you have some post, or employment, that prevents you from attending them more constantly. No, fir, I have nothing else to do but to provoke an husband, or drive a father to despair: I love to alarm a woman who thinks she is secure of me, and reduce her within a finger's breadth of losing me. Here is a set of us young fellows, who in this manner divide all Paris, and make it take notice of the least step we take. By what I learn from you, said I, you make a greater
noise

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noise than the most valiant warrior, and are more observed than a grave magistrate. You would not enjoy all these advantages if you were in *Persia*; you would be thought fitter to guard our women than to give them pleasure. I began to grow warm, and I believe if I had talked a little more, I could not have helped affronting him.— What sayest thou of a country where these kind of wretches are tolerated, and where they suffer a man to live who employs himself in such a manner? Where infidelity, treason, rapes, perfidy and injustice, conduce to render a man considerable. Where a man shall be esteemed because he has stole away a man's daughter, or a wife from her husband, and troubled the happiest and most sacred societies? Happy the children of Heli, who protect their families from infamy and debauchery! The light of the day is not more pure than the fire which warms the hearts of our women: our daughters think not without trembling, of the day that is to deprive them of that virtue which renders them like angels and incorporeal powers. O my dear native country, whom the sun honours with his first regards, thou art unfulfilled by those
horrible

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horrible crimes, which obliges this luminary to hide himself as soon as he approaches the black west!

Paris, the 5th of the moon
Rhamazan, 1713.

L E T T E R XLIX.

RICA to USBEK, at * * *.

AS I was in my chamber the other day, in came a dervise very strangely dressed. His beard reached quite down to his hempen girdle; he was barefooted, his habit grey, coarse, and in some parts folded into points. The whole of him appeared so odd to me, that I thought at first of sending for a painter to draw a sketch of him. He addressed me with a long compliment, in which he acquainted me, that he was a person of merit, and also a capuchin. I am informed, sir, added he, that you are to return shortly to the court of Persia, where you possess a distinguished rank. I come to ask your protection, and to desire you to obtain for us a small settlement

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tlement near Cashin, for two or three religious. My father, said I, will you go then to Persia? I, sir! cried he; I shall take better care of myself; I am provincial here, and would not change my condition for that of all the capuchins in the world. What in the name of wonder then do you want of me? Why, replied he, if we had this settlement, our fathers of Italy would send thither two or three monks. You then certainly know these monks, said I. No, sir, I do not know them. My stars! what then will their going into Persia signify to you? It is a wonderful fine project indeed, for two capuchins to breathe the air of Cashin! it will be of extreme advantage to Europe, and to Asia! and highly necessary to interest monarchs about it! indeed they are what are called noble colonies! Begone; you and your fellows are not made for transplantation; and you will do much better to remain crawling about the places where ye were first engendered.

Paris, the 15th of the moon
of Rhamazan, 1713.

L E T-

L E T T E R L.

RICA TO * * *.

I Have known some people to whom virtue was so natural, that they themselves were scarcely sensible of it. They have applied themselves to their duty without any constraint, and been carried to it as by instinct; far from raising in their conversation, an opinion of their own great qualities; it is as if they themselves were insensible of them. Such are the men I love, not those virtuous persons who themselves seem so surpris'd at their being so, and who consider a good action as a prodigy, the report of which ought to astonish every body. If modesty is a virtue necessary to those whom heaven hath endowed with the greatest talents, what must be said of those insects who dare to show a pride capable of dishonouring the greatest men? I every where meet with people whose conversation is continually about themselves; their discourse is a mirror which always presents their own impertinent figure; they will talk

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talk of the most trifling things which have happened to themselves, and think their interest in them must make them of consequence in your sight; they have done every thing, seen every thing, thought every thing; they are an universal model; an inexhaustible subject of comparison, a spring of examples never to be dried up. Oh how despicable is praise, when it bounds back from whence it comes! A man of this character, some days ago, overwhelmed us for two hours, with himself, his merit, and his talents; but as there is no perpetual motion in the world, he stopt at last. The conversation then came to us, and we took possession of it. One who seemed to be a little splenetic, began by complaining of the wearisomeness some people occasioned in conversation. What! fools for ever, who give their own characters, and bring every thing home to themselves! Your observation is just, replied our talker, abruptly, there is nobody acts as I do; I never praise myself; I have riches, and am well born; I spend freely; my friends say I have some wit; but I never talk of all this; if I have some good qualities, that which I make the most account of, is my modesty.

I greatly

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I greatly wondered at this impertinent; and while he was talking very loud, I said very low: happy the man who hath vanity enough never to speak well of himself; who is in awe of those who hear him; and never opposes his merit to the pride of others!

Paris, the 20th of the moon
Khamazan, 1713.

L E T T E R L I.

NARGUM, the PERSIAN ENVOY, residing
at MUSCOVY, to USBEK, at PARIS.

THEY write to me, from Ispahan, that thou hast quitted Persia, and art now actually at Paris. Why must I learn news of thee from others, and not from thyself? The command of the king of kings hath detained me in this country these five years, where I have concluded several important commissions. Thou knowest that the Czar is the only Christian prince whose interests are mingled with those of Persia, because he is an enemy to the Turks

as well as we. His empire is greater than that of ours ; for it is computed to be a thousand leagues from Moscow to the utmost limits of his territories, on the side of China. He is absolute master of the lives and effects of his subjects, who are all slaves, four families excepted. The lieutenant of the prophets, the king of kings, does not use his power more dreadfully. To see the horrible climate of Muscovy, none would ever think it a punishment to be exiled ; nevertheless when a great man is disgraced, he is banished to Siberia. As the law of our prophet forbids us to drink wine, that of this prince prohibits the Muscovites the use of it. They have a custom of receiving their guests, which has nothing at all of Persian in it. On the entrance of a stranger into the house, the husband presents him to his wife, and the stranger kisses her, and this passes as a compliment to the husband. Though the fathers in the marriage contract of their daughters, generally covenant that their husbands shall not beat them ; yet it is not to be believed how much the Muscovite women love to be beaten* ; they cannot

con-

* These customs are altered.

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conceive that they possess their husband's heart if he does not beat them. A contrary treatment from him, is a mark of indifference not to be forgiven. See a letter which one of these wives lately wrote to her mother :

‘ My dear Mother,

‘ I am the most unhappy woman in the
‘ world, there is nothing that I have not
‘ done to make my husband love me, but
‘ I cannot obtain it. Yesterday I had a
‘ thousand household affairs to do ; I went
‘ out, and staid abroad all day ; I ex-
‘ pected at my return, that he would beat
‘ me severely ; but he did not say one
‘ word to me about it. My sifter is much
‘ otherwife treated, her husband beats her
‘ every day ; she cannot look at a man
‘ but he knocks her down in a moment ;
‘ they love one another very dearly, and
‘ there is the best understanding in the
‘ world between them. This it is that
‘ makes her so proud ; but I will not long
‘ give her occasion to despise me. I am
‘ determined to procure my husband's
‘ love,

' love, let it cost what it will; I will so
 ' provoke him, that he must needs give
 ' me some proofs of his love. It shall
 ' never be said, that I was never beat, and
 ' that I lived in the house without ever
 ' being thought of: The least slap he gives
 ' me, I will cry out with all my might,
 ' that the neighbourhood may imagine that
 ' all goes well, and I believe that if any
 ' of them should come to my assistance, I
 ' should strangle them. I beseech you,
 ' my dear mother, that you would repre-
 ' sent to my husband, that he treats me in
 ' an unworthy manner. My father, who
 ' was a good man, did not carry himself
 ' so; and I remember, when I was a little
 ' girl, I thought he sometimes loved you
 ' too much. I embrace you, my dear
 ' mother.'

The Muscovites must not leave the
 kingdom, even to travel. Thus, sepa-
 rated by the laws of their country from all
 other nations, they have retained their an-
 cient customs with so much the more con-
 stancy, as they did not think it was possi-
 ble to have any others. But the now
 reigning prince was resolved to change the

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whole; he had a great struggle with them about their beards; the clergy and the monks did not contend less in favour of their ignorance. He employs himself in making the arts flourish, and neglects nothing to spread the glory of his nation throughout Europe and Asia, not observed hitherto, and scarcely known to any but themselves. Restless, and continually busied, he wanders through his extensive dominions, leaving behind him in every place marks of his natural ferocity. As if not sufficient to contain him, he quits them, to explore in Europe other provinces and new kingdoms. I embrace thee, my dear Usbek, I beg I may hear of thee.

Moscow, the 2d of the
moon Chaval, 1713.

L E T T E R LII.

RICA TO USBEK, at * * *.

THE other day I was in some company, where I was very well diverted. There were women of every age, one of fourscore

fourſcore years, one of ſixty, one of forty, who had a niece between twenty and two and twenty. A certain inſtinct led me to go near the laſt, who whiſpered in my ear: what do you ſay to my aunt, who at her years is deſirous of having lovers, and ſtill endeavours to be thought handſome? She is in the wrong, ſaid I, it is a deſign only ſuitable to you. A moment afterwards I happened to be near her aunt, who ſays to me; what do you ſay to that woman, who, at leaſt is threſcore, and yet ſpent an hour to-day at her dreſſing-table? It was time loſt, ſaid I, and ſhe ought to have had your beauty to excuſe her. I went to this unhappy threſcore, and pitied her in my heart, when ſhe whiſpered me: is there any thing ſo ridiculous? look at that woman of fourſcore, who yet wears flame-coloured ribbons; ſhe would fain make herſelf young, and indeed ſhe has ſucceeded, for this borders upon infancy. Oh heavens! ſaid I to myſelf, ſhall we never be ſenſible but of the folly of others? It is perhaps a happineſs, ſaid I, afterwards, that we can reap comfort from the weakneſſes of another. However, being in a humour to be merry, come, ſaid I, we

have mounted high enough, let us now go downward, and begin with the old lady who is at the top. Madam you are so very like the lady I just now left to speak to you, that it seems as if you were sisters; I fancy you are both of the same age. Truly, sir, said she, when one dies of age, the other will quake for fear; I do not believe there is two days difference between us. When I had quitted my decrepid lady, I went to her of sixty. Madam, said I, you must decide a wager I have laid; I have ventured a wager that you and this lady are of an age, showing her the lady of forty. Truly, said she, I believe there is not above six months difference. Good, so far; let us go on. I still descend, and go to the lady of forty. Madam, do me the favour to inform me if it is not in jest, when you call the lady, who is at the other end of the table, your neice? You are as young as she is; besides she has something of a decay in her face, which you certainly have not; and the lively colours in your cheeks.—No, hear me, said she, I am her aunt; but her mother was at least five and twenty years older than myself; we were not by the same venter;
I have

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I have heard my late sister say, that her daughter and myself were both born in the same year. I then said right, madam, and was not wrong in being surpris'd. — My dear Usbek, when the women find themselves near their end by the loss of their charms; they would willingly steal back again towards youth. How should they but endeavour to cheat others, who make every effort to deceive themselves, and to dispossess their minds of the most afflicting of all thoughts?

Paris, the 3d of the moon
Chalval, 1713.

L E T T E R L I I I .

ZELIS TO USBEK, at PARIS.

NEVER was there a more strong and lively passion than that of Cosrou, the white eunuch, for my slave Zelida, he hath so earnestly desired her in marriage, that I am not able to deny him. And why should I make any opposition, when her mother does not, and that even Zelida
H 3 herself

herself appears satisfied with the idea of this mock marriage, and this empty shadow with which she is presented? What will she do with this unhappy creature, who will have nothing of a husband besides his jealousy; who can only exchange his coldness for an unavailing despair; who will always be calling to mind what he hath been, to put her in mind of what he now no longer is; who, always ready to enjoy, and never enjoying, will always be cheating himself, and cheating her, and make her continually sensible of the wretchedness of her condition? And then! to be always in dreams and fancies! to live only in imagination! to find one's self ever near, but never tasting, pleasure! languishing in the arms of an unhappy wretch; instead of answering to his sighs, to answer only to his repinings! What a contempt must such a kind of man inspire, formed only to guard, and never to possess? I seek for love, and I find it not!—I speak freely to thee, because thou lovest my frankness and disposition for pleasure, more than the affected reserve of my companions. I have heard thee say a thousand times, that eunuchs taste a kind of pleasure with women
that

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that is unknown to us ; that makes up their loss ; that nature hath resources which repair the disadvantage of their condition ; that they may indeed lose their manhood, but not their sensibility ; and that in this state, they enjoy a kind of third sense ; so that they only change, as one may say, one pleasure for another. If it be so, I shall think Zelida less to be pitied. It is some consolation to live with people less unhappy. Give me thy orders on this affair, and let me know if thou wilt have this marriage consummated in thy seraglio. Farewel.

From the seraglio at Ispahan,
the 5th of the moon Chal-
val, 1713.

L E T T E R L I V .

RICA to USBEK, at * * * .

THIS morning as I was in my chamber, which, as thou knowest, is only divided from the next by a slight partition, and full of cracks, so that one may hear every thing that is said in the
H 4 adjoining

adjoining room. A man, walking hastily up and down it, said to another, I know not how it is, but every thing goes against me. It is above three days since I have said any thing that hath done me honour, and I have been confounded indiscriminately in the general conversation, without the least attention, or being spoken to twice. I had prepared some witty expressions to embellish my discourse, but they would not let me introduce them. I had a good story, but every time I endeavoured to tell it, they avoided it as though they had done it on purpose. I was provided with some clever jests, which for these four days, have lain like old lumber in my head, without the least occasion to use them. If this continues, I shall be a fool at last; it seems that my stars will have it so, and drive me to despair. Yesterday I had hopes of shining among three or four old ladies, who certainly had no design to impose upon me, and I had some mighty pretty things to say; I was above a quarter of an hour labouring to turn the conversation, but they would not follow, but, like the fatal sisters, cut off the thread of my discourse. Shall I tell you? It is very difficult

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ficult to support the character of a wit. I do not know how you have managed to obtain it.—I have a thought, replied the other, let us jointly endeavour to support each other's wit, let us make a partnership. We will every day tell each other what we will say, and support each other so well, that let what will happen, our thoughts shall never be interrupted; we will draw every body to us, and if they will not come over freely, we will force them. We will agree when to approve, when to smile, and when to burst out a laughing. You shall find we will give a turn to all conversations, and nothing shall be admired but the quickness of our wit, and the good things we say; we will protect each other upon a nod. You shall shine to-day, to-morrow you shall second me. I will go into a house with you, and cry out, as I introduce you, I must tell you a witty reply this gentleman made just now, to one we met in the street; and then, turning to you, he did not expect any such thing; he was quite confounded. I will repeat some of my verses, and you must say, I was present when he made them, it was at supper, he did not study a moment for

them. Nay, you and I will sometimes railly each other; and people will say; observe how they attack one another, how they defend themselves; they do not spare each other; let's see how he will get off that; wonderful! what presence of mind! a downright battle indeed!—But they cannot tell we had been skirmishing beforehand. We must get some works full of jests, composed for the use of those who have no wit, and are willing to counterfeit it; but all depends upon copying from originals. I see that in less than six months we shall be able to maintain a conversation of an hour long, all composed of witticisms. But we must be very careful, to support our good fortune; it is not enough to say a good thing, it must be spread abroad, and dispersed every where, or else it will be lost; and I must confess that there is nothing so mortifying as to have said a smart thing, and to have it expire in the ear of the fool who heard it. It is true this is sometimes compensated, by having a good many foolish things we say passed over in silence; and this is the only thing that can console us on such an occasion. See, my dear friend, the scheme we must pursue.

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purſue. Act as I have directed you, and I promiſe you, in leſs than ſix months, you will have a ſeat in the academy; this is to let you know your labour will be ſoon over; for thou mayſt then give up thine art; for you will then be a man of wit, in ſpite of yourſelf. It is obſerved in France, that when a man enters himſelf of any ſociety, he inſtantly catches what is called the ſpirit of the body; you will experience this; and I am in no fear for you, but for the applauſes you will be loaded with.

Paris, the 6th of the
moon Zilcade, 1714.

L E T T E R L V.

RICA TO IB BEN, at SMYRNA.

THE firſt quarter of an hour after marriage, among the Europeans, ſmooths every difficulty; the laſt favours are always of the ſame date with the nuptial bleſſing: the women here do not behave like ours in Perſia, who ſometimes diſpute the ground for whole months:
there

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there is nothing so indulging; if they lose nothing, it is because they have nothing to lose: but you may always know, O shameful! the moment of their defeat; and without consulting the stars, the birth of their children may be predicted to the very hour. The French seldom, or ever, speak of their wives; it is for fear of talking of them before people who know them better than themselves. There is a set of very miserable creatures among them, whom nobody comforts; these are jealous husbands; there are some whom all the world hates; jealous husbands; these are some whom every body despises; these are the same jealous husbands. Therefore there is no country where there are so few of them as among the French. Their tranquility is not placed upon the confidence they have in their wives, it is on the contrary upon the bad opinion they entertain of them. All the wise precautions of the Asiatics, the veils that cover them, the prisons that secure them, the vigilance of eunuchs, appear to them more likely means to put the sex upon contriving, than to weary it out. Here, the husbands bear their part with a good grace, and consider the
the

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the infidelity of their wives as an inevitable stroke of fatality. An husband who would keep his wife to himself, would be regarded as a disturber of the public peace, and as a madman, who would enjoy the light of the sun, to the exclusion of every body else. Here an husband who loves his wife, is considered as a man who hath not merit enough to make himself beloved by any other woman ; and as one who makes a bad use of the necessity of the law, to supply the perfections he wants ; who makes use of his rights to the prejudice of the whole community ; who appropriates that to himself, which was only lent to him ; and who endeavours, as much as is in him, to break that tacit compact, which constitutes the happiness of both sexes. The report of being married to a very handsome woman, which in Asia is concealed with so much care, is borne here without uneasiness : they find themselves able to divert themselves every where. A prince comforts himself upon the loss of one place, by the taking of another. At the time the Turks took Bagdad from us, were not we taking from the Mogul the fortress of Candahar ? In general, a man who

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who bears with the infidelity of his wife, is not disapproved of ; on the contrary, he is praised for his prudence : there are only some particular cares which are dishonourable. It is not that there are no virtuous women here ; it may be said they are distinguished ; my conductor hath constantly made me take notice of them : but they were all so ugly, that a man must be a saint not to hate such virtue. After what I have told thee of the manners of this country, thou wilt easily imagine, that the French do not pique themselves much on their constancy. They think it is as ridiculous to swear to a woman, that they will love her always, as to maintain that they will always continue in good health, or, that they will always be happy. When they promise a woman that they will always love her, they suppose that she on her part, engages to be always amiable ; and if she breaks her word, they think themselves no longer bound to their word.

Paris, the 7th of the moon
Zilcade, 1714.

LET-

L E T T E R LVI.

USBEK TO IBSEN, at SMYRNA.

IN Europe gaming is much used; to be a gamester is sufficient to hold the place of birth, riches, or honesty, and, without examination, admits him to the rank of a gentleman; though there is nobody who does not know, that in judging in this manner, they are often deceived; but they have agreed to be incorrigible. The women, above all, are greatly given to it. It is true, they do not practise it much in their youth, to favour a dearer passion; but as they advance in years, their passion for play revives, and seems to supply the vacancy of the rest. They are determined to ruin their husbands, and to that end, they have means suited to every stage of life, from the tenderest youth to the most decrepid old age; the destruction commences with dress and equipage, galantry continues it, and it is finished with gaming. I have often seen nine or ten women, or rather nine or ten centuries, set
round

round a table ; I have watched them in their hopes, their fears, their joys, especially in their transports of anger : you would swear they could never have time to appease themselves, and that their lives would end before their rage ; thou wouldst have been in doubt, whether those they paid were their creditors, or their legatees. It seems that our holy prophet principally intended to restrain us from every thing that might disturb our reason : He forbid us the use of wine, which, as it were, buries our reason : he hath, by an exprefs command, prohibited all games of chance ; and where it was impossible to take away the cause of our passions, he hath deadened them. Love amongst us, brings no trouble, no fury ; it is a languid passion, which leaves our soul in peace : a plurality of wives, save us from their dominion ; and moderates the violence of our appetites.

Paris, the 10th of the moon
Zilhage, 1714.

LET-

L E T T E R LVII.

USBEK TO RHEDI, at VENICE.

A Prodigious number of women of pleasure are maintained here by the libertines, and an innumerable quantity of dervises by the bigots. The dervises take three oaths, of obedience, poverty, and chastity. The first is said to be observed best of all; as to the second, I can assure you it is not regarded; I leave thee to judge of the third. But as rich as these dervises are, they will never quit the character of poverty; our glorious sultan would sooner resign his sublime and noble titles: they are in the right, for this pretence to poverty prevents them from being so. The physicians, and some of these dervises, called confessors, are here always too much esteemed, or too much despised: yet it is said the heirs are better reconciled to the physicians than to the confessors. The other day I was in a convent of dervises, one of them, venerable for his grey hairs, received me very courteously;

teously ; having shown me all the house, we went into the garden, and fell into discourse. My father, said I to him, what is your employment in the community ? Sir, replied he, with an air of pleasantry at my question, I am a casuist. Casuist ! replied I ; from the time of my being in France, I have never heard of this employment. How ! do you not know what a casuist is ? Attend ; I will give you an idea of it that shall thoroughly inform you. There are two kinds of sins, mortal sins, which absolutely exclude from paradise, and venial sins, which though indeed offensive to God, do not so provoke him, as to deprive us of beatitude. Now our whole art consists in rightly distinguishing these two kinds of sin ; for, except some libertines, all Christians are willing to obtain paradise ; but there is scarce any person, who would not willingly gain it upon as easy terms as possible. When they are well acquainted what sins are mortal, they take care not to commit them, and their business is done. These are persons who do not aspire to a great degree of perfection, and as they have no ambition, are not solicitous for the first places ; so as they can but get into paradise, they

they desire no more ; provided they are there, that's enough for them. These are those who take heaven by violence, rather than not obtain it, and who say to God, Lord, I have rigorously fulfilled the conditions, thou canst not refuse to keep thy promise ; as I have done no more than what thou didst demand of me, I do not expect thou shouldst grant me more than thou hast promised. We are therefore, sir, a very necessary kind of people. This however is not all ; you shall hear something further. It is not the act that constitutes the sin, it is the knowledge of him who commits it ; he who doth evil, if he can believe that it is not an evil, his conscience is safe : and there are a vast number of actions of a doubtful nature, a casuist can give them a degree of goodness that they have not, and pronounce them good ; and provided he can persuade the man to believe they are harmless, he entirely takes away all their evil. I have here told you the secret of a trade I am grown old in : I have made you sensible of the nicety of it : there is a turn to be given to every thing, even to things which appear the least capable of it. My father, said I

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to him, all this is very well, but how do you yourself settle matters with heaven? If the grand sopher had in his court a man who was to act with respect to him, as you do towards your God, who should put a distinction between his orders, and should teach his subjects in what case they ought to obey them, and in what case they might violate them, he would instantly impale him.— I bowed to my dervise, and left him without waiting for his reply.

Paris, 23d of the moon
Maharram, 1714.

L E T T E R LVIII.

RICA to RHEDI, at VENICE.

THERE are a great many trades, my dear Rhedi at Paris. A man there will be so obliging, as to offer you, for a little silver, the secret of making gold. Another promises that you shall lie with the spirits of the air, providing you will only abstain from women thirty years. You may also meet with able diviners, who
will

will tell you your whole life, if they have had but one quarter of an hour's conversation with your servants. There are some ingenious women, who make virginity a flower which dies and revives every day, and is gathered the hundredth time with more pain than the first. There are others, who, by the power of their art, repair all the injuries of time; who know how to re-establish the fading beauty of a complexion, and even to bring back a woman from the extremity of old age, to return again to the tenderest youth. All these people live, or endeavour to do so, in a city which is the mother of invention. The revenues of the citizens cannot possibly be farmed: they consist only in ingenuity and industry; each person hath his talent, which he renders as profitable as he can. Whoever would number the men of the law, who seek after the revenue of some mosque, might as soon count the sands of the sea, and the slaves of our monarch. A vast number of masters of languages, arts, and sciences, teach what they themselves are ignorant of; and this is a very extraordinary talent, for a great understanding is not necessary to teach what one knows, but
a person

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a person must have a very great understanding to teach another what he himself is ignorant of. Nobody can die here, except suddenly; death hath no other way to exercise his power: for there are here, in every corner, people who have infallible remedies against every imaginable distemper. All the shops are spread with invisible nets, in which they catch their customers. However a good bargain is sometimes made: a young female dealer will wheedle a man for a whole hour, to make him buy a packet of tooth-pickers. There are none but who leave this city more cautious than when they entered it, by having squandered away part of their subsistence amongst others, they learn how to take care of the remainder; the only benefit which strangers gain in this enchanting city.

Paris, the 10th of the
moon Saphar, 1714.

LET-

LETTER LIX.

RICA TO USBEK, at A * * *.

THE other day I was in a house where there was a circle of all sorts of people: I found the conversation engrossed by two old ladies, who had laboured in vain, all the morning to make themselves young again. It must be allowed, said one of them, that the men of these times are very different from those whom we saw in our youth; they were polite, well-bred, complaisant, but now they are intolerably brutish. Every thing is changed, said a man who appeared crippled with the gout; times are not as they were; forty years ago, all the world behaved well, they walked, were gay, they desired nothing but to dance and sing, but now all the world is insupportably dull. Soon after the conversation turned to politics.—Said an old lord, the state is no longer governed; point me out, now, such a minister as monsieur Colbert; he was one of my friends, he always ordered the pay of my pension before it was due:

in

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in what good order did he keep the finances! every body was at ease, but now I am ruined. Sir, said an ecclesiastic, you are speaking of the most wonderful times of our invincible monarch; was there any thing so great as what he then did to extirpate heresy? And do you reckon for nothing his putting an end to duels? said another, with an air of satisfaction, who had not spoke a word before. That remark is very judicious, said another, in a whisper to me, this man is charmed with the edict, and he observes it so strictly, that six months ago he suffered himself to be heartily caned, rather than violate it. It appears to me, Usbek, that we never judge of things but with a private view to ourselves. I do not wonder that the Negroes paint the devil in the most glaring whiteness, and their gods as black as a coal; that the Venus of some nations should be represented with breasts pendent to her thighs; nor indeed that all idolaters have made their gods of human figures, and have ascribed to them all their own passions. My dear Usbek, when I see men, who creep upon an atom, the earth, which is but as a point to the universe, propose themselves

as

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as the immediate models of providence, I know not how to reconcile so much presumption with so much insufficiency.

Paris, the 14th of the
moon Saphar, 1714.

L E T T E R L X.

USBEK TO IBBEN, at SMYRNA.

THOU askest me if there are any Jews in France? Know that throughout the world, wherever there is money, there are Jews. Thou inquirest what they do here? The very same they do in Persia: nothing more resembles a Jew in Asia, than a Jew in Europe. They show among the Christians, as among us, an invincible obstinacy for their religion, which they carry to the height of folly. The religion of the Jews is an old trunk which hath produced two branches, which have covered all the earth, I mean Christianity and Mahometism: or rather, it is a mother who hath brought forth two daughters, who have covered her with a thousand wounds: for

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I

with

with respect to religion, its nearest friends are its greatest enemies. But as ill as she hath been treated by these, she doth not cease to glory in having produced them; she serves herself of both to encompass the whole world, whilst on her own part, her venerable age embraces all ages. The Jews consider themselves as the source of all holiness, and the origin of all religion: they, on the other hand, look upon us as heretics, who have changed the law, or rather as rebellious Jews. If the change had been gradually effected, they think they might have been easily seduced; but as it was suddenly changed, and in a violent manner, as they can point out the day and the hour of the birth of the one and the other, they are offended at finding us reckoning our religion by ages, and therefore adhere firmly to a religion, not preceded in antiquity, by even the world itself. They never enjoyed in Europe a calm equal to the present. Christians begin to lay aside that intolerating spirit which formerly influenced them. Spain hath experienced the bad consequence of having expelled the Jews, and France of having worried the Christians, whose faith differed a little from
that

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that of the prince. They are now sensible that a zeal for the progress of religion is different from that attachment which ought to be preserved towards her; and that, in order to love and obey her, it is not necessary to hate and persecute those who do not regard her. It is to be wished that our Mussulmans would think as rationally upon this subject as the Christians, that we might, in good earnest, make peace between Hali and Abubeker, and leave to God the care of deciding the pretensions of these holy prophets. I would have them honoured by acts of veneration and respect, and not by vain preferences, and to endeavour to merit their favour, whatever place God may have assigned them, whether at his right hand, or quite under the foot-stool of his throne.

Paris, the 18th of the moon
Saphar, 1714.

L E T T E R L X I .

USBEK TO RHEDI, at VENICE.

TH E other day I went into a famous church, called Notre-dame ; whilst I was admiring this superb edifice, I had an opportunity of conversing with a churchman, whom, as well as myself, curiosity had drawn thither. Our conversation fell upon the ease enjoyed in his profession. The generality of people, said he, envy the happiness of our condition, and with reason. However it hath its uneasinesses : we are not so divided from the world, as not to be called into it upon a thousand occasions, and there it is very difficult to support our part. The people of the world are surprizing, they can neither bear our approbation, nor our censures : if we attempt to reprove them, we are ridiculous ; if we approve their conduct, we are considered as acting beneath our character. There is nothing so humbling, as the thought of having given scandal even to the impious. We are therefore obliged to
 use

use a doubtful kind of conduct, and deal with libertines, not in a decisive way, but by the uncertainty in which we leave them to judge of the manner in which we received their conversation. There must be a good deal of ingenuity to this purpose; this neutral state is very difficult: the men of the world, who hazard every thing, who indulge all their flights, and who, according to their success, pursue or drop them, succeed much better. This is not all. This state, so happy and so quiet, so much boasted of, is not to be kept up in the world. As, on our appearance there, we are forced to dispute: we are obliged to undertake, for example, to prove the efficacy of prayer, to a man who does not believe in God; the necessity of fasting, to another, who all his life-time hath denied the immortality of the soul; the enterprize is difficult, and the laughers are not with us. Further, a strong desire to draw others to our opinion, perpetually torments us, and is, as I may say, fixed to our profession. This is as ridiculous, as it would be for the Europeans to labour, for the honour of human nature, to wash the Africans white. We trouble the state,

we torment even ourselves, to make men receive the non-essential points of religion ; and we are like that conqueror of China, who forced his subjects into a general revolt, because he wanted to oblige them to cut their hair and their nails. That zeal even which we have, to make those who are under our immediate care, fulfil the duties of our holy religion, is often dangerous, and cannot be attended with too much prudence. Theodosius, the emperor, put to the sword all the inhabitants of a certain city, even the women and children ; afterwards offering to go into a church, Ambrose, a bishop, shut the doors against him, as a sacriligious murderer ; and in this he did a noble action : This emperor, having afterwards submitted to the penance such a crime required, being admitted into the church, going to place himself among the priests, the same bishop turned him out ; and in this he acted like a fanatic ; so true it is that we ought to be diffident of our zeal. What did it import to religion, or the state, whether this prince had, or had not, a place among the priests ?

Paris, the 1st of the moon of
the first Rebiab, 1714.

LET-

L E T T E R LXII.

ZELIS TO USBEK, at PARIS.

TH Y daughter having attained to her seventh year, I thought it was time to remove her into the inner apartments of the seraglio, and not to wait till she should be ten years old, to entrust her to the care of the black eunuchs. We cannot too soon deprive a young person of the liberties of childhood, and bestow on her an holy education, within the sacred walls where modesty dwells. For I cannot be of the opinion of those mothers, who do not shut their daughters up, till they are upon the point of marrying them, who rather condemn them to a seraglio, than consecrate them in it; making them embrace by violence, a kind of life they ought to have inspired them with the love of. Is all to be expected from the force of reason, and nothing from the sweetness of custom? It is in vain to talk of the state of subjection in which nature hath placed us: this is not sufficient to make us sensible of it; we

must be made to practise it, that it may support us at the critical time when the passions shoot forth, and provoke us to independence. If by our duty only we were attached to you, we might sometimes forget it; if drawn only by our inclination, perhaps a stronger might weaken it. But when the laws have devoted us to one man, they deprive us of all others, place us as distant from them, as if we were an hundred thousand leagues off. Nature, industriously favourable to men, hath not bounded itself in giving desires to men, she was willing that we should have them too, and that we should be the animated instruments of their felicity: she hath put in us the flame of the passions, to make them live easy: if they ever quit their insensibility, she hath destined us to make them return to it again, without our ever being able to taste that happy state in which we place them. Yet, Usbek, do not imagine that thy situation is happier than mine: I have tasted here a thousand pleasures unknown to you. My imagination hath incessantly laboured to make me sensible of their value: I have lived, and you have only languished. In the very prison where thou
hast

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hast confined me, I am more free than thou. Thou only knowest how to redouble thy cautions, to have me guarded, yet I shall enjoy thy fears, and thy suspicions, thy jealousy and thy uneasiness are so many marks of thy dependence. Continue, dear Usbek : have we watched night and day ; nay do not trust to common precautions : augment my happiness, by securing thy own ; and know, that I dread nothing but thy indifference.

From the seraglio at Ispahan,
the 2d of the moon of the
1st Rebiab, 1714.

L E T T E R LXIII.

RICA to USBEK, at ***.

THOU intendest, I think, to pass thy life in the country. I was not to have lost thee at first, for more than three, or four, days, and here are fifteen gone, and I have not seen thee. It is true, thou art in a delightful house, where you find company suitable to your taste, and can
I 5 reason.

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reason at thy ease: there is nothing more necessary to make thee forget the whole universe. I, for my part, lead my life pretty nearly in the same manner, as when you saw me. I launch into the world, and endeavour to know it. My mind insensibly loses all that remained of the Asiatic, and easily conforms to European manners. I am no longer surpris'd at the sight of five or six women in one house, with as many men; and I begin to think it is not improper. I may say I knew nothing of women till I came here: I have learned more of them here in a month, than I should have done in thirty years in a seraglio. With us there is an uniformity of character, as it is all forced: we do not see people as they are, but as they are obliged to appear: in this state of slavery, both of body and mind, it is their fears only that speak, which have but one language, and that not of nature, which expresses herself so differently, and which appears under so many forms. Dissimulation, an art among us universally practis'd, and so necessary, is unknown here: they speak every thing, see every thing, and hear every thing: the heart, like the
face,

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face, is visible: in their manners, in their virtue, even in their vices, there is always something genuine and native to be perceived. To please the women here, a certain talent is necessary, different from that which contributes more to their pleasure: it consists in a kind of witty playing of the fool, that amuses them, as it seems to promise them every minute what they can only hope to enjoy at too long intervals. This playing of the fool, naturally adapted to the toilet, seems to constitute the general character of this nation; they thus play the fool in the council, at the head of an army, and do the same with ambassadors. No profession appears ridiculous but in proportion to the gravity mixed with it: a physician would not be so ridiculous, if his dress was less affectedly grave, and if he killed his patients with more pleasantry.

Paris, the 10th of the
moon of the first Re-
biab, 1714.

LET.

L E T T E R LXIV.

The Chief of the black Eunuchs to USBEK,
at PARIS.

I Know not how, magnificent lord, to express the perplexity I am in; the seraglio is in terrible confusion and disorder: war reigns among thy wives: thy eunuchs are divided: nothing is heard but complaints, murmurings, and reproaches: my remonstrances are despised, every thing seems allowable in their licentious moments, and I bear no more than an empty title in the seraglio. There is not one of thy wives who does not judge herself superior to the rest for her birth, beauty, riches, wit, or thy love; and who does not make one of these pretences a sufficient ground to claim the whole respect. I at this instant lose my long continued patience, with which I have always had the misfortune to make them displeas'd at me: my prudence, even my complaisance, a virtue so rare and uncommon in the post I hold, have been ineffectual. Shall I discover to thee, magnificent

nificent lord, the source of all this disorder? It is wholly in thy heart, and in the tender regard thou hast for them. If thou didst not restrain my hand; if, instead of the liberty of remonstrating, thou wouldst allow me that of chastising: if, instead of suffering thyself to be softened by their complaints and tears, thou wouldst send them to weep before me, which should never soften me, I would soon fashion them to the yoke they ought to bear, and I should weary out their imperious and independent humour. Being stole away at the age of fifteen years, from the remotest part of Africa, my native country, I was at first sold to a master, who had above twenty wives, or concubines, who judged from my gravity and taciturnity, that I was fit for a seraglio; he ordered I should be made so, and made me submit to an operation painful at first, but which afterwards made me happy, as it brought me to the ear and confidence of my masters. I entered the seraglio, which was a new world to me. The chief eunuch, a man the most severe I ever saw, governed there with an absolute power. There was no talk heard there of divisions, or quarrels; a profound silence reigned

reigned throughout; all the women retired to rest at the same hour, from one end of the year to another, and arose again always at a certain hour: they entered the baths by turns, and came out at the least signal we made: they were shut up in their chambers almost the rest of their time. He had one rule, which was to make them observe the greatest neatness, and it is impossible to express his care for this purpose, he punished without mercy the least refusal of his orders. I am, said he, a slave, but it is to a man who is your master as well as mine; and I only use the power he hath given me over you; it is he who corrects you, and not I, who do no more than lend my hand. These women never entered my master's chamber, unless they were called; they received this favour with joy, and saw themselves deprived of it without murmuring. In short, I, who was the meanest black in this peaceful seraglio, was a thousand times more respected than I am in thine, where I command every body. As soon as this chief eunuch understood my genius, he regarded me; spoke of me to my master, as a man fit to pursue his methods, and to succeed him in the post
he

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he filled: he was not prejudiced at my youthfulness; he thought my attention would supply the want of experience. Shall I tell thee? I grew so much into his confidence, that he made no difficulty to put into my hands the keys of those tremendous places, which he for so long a time had guarded. It was under this able master that I learned the difficult art of commanding, and formed to myself the maxims of an inflexible government; I studied, under him, the hearts of women; he taught me to take advantage of their weaknesses, and not to be confounded by their haughtiness. Often did he please himself with seeing me force them to the utmost virge of obedience; he then made them return again by degrees, and made me seem myself to give way for a time. You should have seen him in those moments, when they were driven almost to despair, between intreaties and reproaches; he bore their tears without being moved himself, and experienced a pleasure in this kind of triumph. See, said he, with an air of complacency, how women must be governed; their number does not incommode me; I could govern in the same manner,

manner, all those of our great monarch. How can a man captivate their hearts, if their trusty eunuchs did not first break their spirits. He was not only possessed of a firm resolution, but also of as great penetration. He read their thoughts, and saw through their dissimulations: their studied looks, their fictitious countenances, concealed nothing from him. He gained a knowledge of all their most private actions, and their most secret words. He made use of some to gain intelligence of others, and delighted to reward the least confidence placed in him. As they never approached their husbands but when they had notice, the eunuch introduced whom he pleased, and directed his master's regards according to his own views; and this distinction was the reward of some secret intelligence. He had persuaded his master that it was necessary to leave this choice to him, in order to preserve good order, and to make his authority the greater. Such was the government, magnificent lord, in a seraglio, which was I believe, better regulated than any other in Persia. Leave my hands at liberty, permit me to make myself obeyed; one week shall put this confusion into order:

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der : this is what thy honour demands,
and what thy security requires.

From the seraglio at Ispahan,
the 9th of the moon of the
1st Rebiab, 1714.

L E T T E R L X V .

USBEK to his WIVES, at the Seraglio at
ISPAHAN.

I Understand that the seraglio is in disorder, and that it is filled with quarrels and intestine divisions. What did I recommend at my departure, but peace and good understanding? You promised me this, was it to deceive me? It is you who would be deceived, if I was willing to follow the advice given me by the chief eunuch ; if I would use my authority to make you live as my exhortations required you to do. I know not how to make use of such violent methods, until I have tried every other. Do then, in consideration of yourselves, what you would not be willing to do for my sake. The chief eunuch hath
great

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great occasion to complain: he says you have no respect for him. How can you reconcile this conduct with the modesty of your condition? Is it not to him, that, during my absence, your virtue is intrusted? This is a sacred treasure, of which he is the depository. But the contempt you show him, makes it appear, that those who have the care of making you live according to the law of honour, are burthenfome. Change therefore your conduct, I desire you, that I may yet reject the proposals made to me against your liberty and repose. For I would make you to forget that I am your master, and that you may only remember that I am your husband.

Paris, the 5th of the moon
Chahban, 1714.

L E T.

L E T T E R LXVI.

RICA to * * *

THE sciences are here very much studied; but I know not if those who study them are very learned. He who doubts of every thing as a philosopher, dares to deny nothing as a divine; this contradictory man is always satisfied with himself, provided qualities are agreed to. The passion of most of the French is to be taken for wits, and the passion of those who would be thought wits, is to write books. And yet there is nothing so badly imagined: nature seems to have provided, that the follies of men should be transient, but they by writing books, render them permanent. A fool ought to content himself with having wearied those who lived with him: but he is for tormenting future generations; he is desirous that his folly should triumph over oblivion, which he ought to have enjoyed as well as his grave; he is desirous that posterity should be informed that he lived, and that it should

should be known for ever that he was a fool. Of all kind of authors, there are none I despise more than compilers, who search every where for shreds of other men's works, which they join to their own, like so many pieces of green turf in a garden: they are not at all superior to compositors in a printing-house, who range the types, which, collected together, make a book, towards which they contribute nothing but the labours of the hand. I would have original writers respected, and it seems to me, a kind of profanation to take those pieces from the sanctuary in which they reside, and to expose them to a contempt they do not deserve. When a man hath nothing new to say, why does not he hold his tongue? What business have we with this double employment? But I will give a new order. You are an ingenious man! You come into my library, and you remove those books which were at top to the bottom, and put those which were lowermost at top; this is a masterly work indeed! I write to thee on this subject, * * *, because I am angry at a book I have just left, which is so large, that it seems to contain universal science,
but

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but it hath almost split my head, without teaching me any thing. Farewel.

Paris, the 8th day of the
moon Chahban, 1714.

L E T T E R LXVII.

IBBEN TO USBEK, at PARIS.

TH E R E are three ships arrived here, without bringing me any news of thee. Art thou sick? or dost thou take a pleasure in making me uneasy? If thou dost not love me in a country where thou art tied to nothing, what wouldst thou do in the middle of Persia, and in the bosom of thy family! But may be I deceive myself: thou art amiable enough to find friends every where; the heart is a citizen of every country; how can a well formed mind hinder itself from entering into engagements? I confess to thee, I respect old friendships, but I am not displeas'd at making new ones every where. In whatever country I have been, I have lived as though I was to pass my life there: I have
had

had the same warm affection for virtuous people, the same compassion, or rather the same tenderness for the unhappy ; the same regard for those whom prosperity hath not blinded. This is my disposition, Ustek : wherever I shall meet with men, I shall choose friends. There is a certain Guebre here, who, I think, after thee, enjoys the first place in my heart : he is probity itself. Some particular reasons have obliged him to retire to this city, where he lives at ease, with his wife, whom he loves, on the product of an honest traffic. His whole life is remarkable for generous actions ; and though he seeks to be private, he hath more heroism in his soul, than in that of the greatest monarchs. I have talked a thousand times to him of thee, I show him all thy letters ; I observe they give him pleasure, and I already perceive that thou hast a friend who is unknown to thee. Thou wilt find here his chief adventures, though he wrote them with reluctance, he could refuse nothing to my friendship, and I intrust them to thine.



The

The History of APHERIDON, and
ASTARTE.

I WAS born among the Guebres *, of a religion, which is, may-be, the most ancient in the world. I was so unhappy, that love came to me before reason. I was scarce six years of age, when I could not live without my sister : my eyes were always fixed on her ; and if she left me but a moment, she found them at her return bathed in tears : every day did not add more to my age than to my love. My father, astonished at so strong a sympathy, wished indeed to marry us together, according to the ancient custom of the Guebres, introduced by Cambyfes, but the fear of the Mahometans, whose yoke we live under, restrains those of our nation from thinking of such holy alliances, which our religion rather commands than forbids,

* A sect of fire-worshippers among the Persians. The curious reader may see a further account of them in Prideaux's Connection, and Calmet's Dictionary.

forbids, and which resemble so much the natural union constituted by nature. My father, seeing it would be dangerous to follow his inclination and mine, determined to extinguish a flame, which he thought in its infancy, but which was at its height; he pretended to make a voyage, and took me with him, leaving my sister in the hands of one of his relations, for my mother had been dead two years. I will not tell you what my despair was at this separation: I embraced my sister, all bathed in tears, but I shed none; for grief had rendered me insensible. We arrived at Tefflis, and my father, having intrusted my education to one of our relations, left me there, and returned home. Some time after I learned, that, by the interest of one of his friends, he had got my sister into the king's seraglio, where she attended a sultana. If I had been informed of her death, I could not have been more affected; for, besides that I had no hopes of seeing her again, her entering into the seraglio had made her a Mahometan; and she could no more, according to the prejudice of that religion, regard me but with horror. However, not being able to live longer at Tefflis,
weary

weary of myself and of life, I returned to Ispahan. My first words to my father were bitter; I reproached him with having put his daughter in a place, into which none can enter without changing their religion. You have brought upon your family, said I to him, the wrath of heaven, and of the sun that lights you: you have done worse than if you had sullied the elements, since you have defiled the soul of your daughter, which is not less pure: I shall die of grief and love: but may my death be the only punishment that God may make you feel! At these words, I went out; and during two years, I past my life in looking at the walls of the seraglio, and considering the part where my sister might be; exposing myself a thousand times every day to be killed by the eunuchs, who keep their round about these dreadful apartments. At last my father died; and the sultana, whom my sister waited on, observing her beauty increased every day, became jealous of her, and married her to an eunuch, who passionately wished for her. By this means, my sister left the seraglio, and took, with her eunuch, an house at Ispahan. I was above

three months without an opportunity of speaking to her; the eunuch, the most jealous of all men, always putting me off with frivolous excuses. At last, I entered this seraglio, and was obliged to talk through a latticed window. The eyes of a lynx could not have discovered her, so hid was she with her dress and veils; and I only knew her by her voice. What was my emotion, when I saw myself so near her, and so far from her! I restrained myself, for I was observed. As to her, it seemed to me that she shed some tears. Her husband offered to make some trifling excuses, but I treated him as the most contemptible of slaves. He was quite confounded, when he found I talked to my sister in a language unknown to him, this was the ancient Persian, which is our sacred language. What, my sister, said I, is it true that you have renounced the religion of your fathers? I know that on entering the seraglio, you must have made profession of Mahometism, but tell me, hath your heart consented like your mouth, to quit the religion which permits me to love you? And for whom have you quitted that religion which ought to be so dear to us?

us? For a wretch yet marked with the chains he wore; who, if he was a man, would be the last of mankind. My brother, said she, this man, of whom you speak, is my husband: I must honour him, all unworthy as he appears to you; and I should also be the last of women, if—— Ah, my sister! interrupted I, you are a Guebre; he is not your husband, nor can he be; if you was a believer like your forefathers, you could not but regard him as a monster. Alas, said she, at what a distance does that religion show itself to me! Scarce had I known its precepts, when I was obliged to renounce it. You must observe, that the language I speak, is not very familiar to me, and that I take the utmost pains to express myself: but be assured, that the remembrance of our childhood always gives me pleasure; but, since that time, I have known only false joys; that there hath not passed a day of my life, in which I have not thought of you; that you have a greater share in my marriage than you can believe; and that it had not been concluded, but from a hope of seeing you again. But this day, which hath cost me so much,

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will yet cost me more ! I see you are quite beside yourself ; my husband foams with rage and jealousy : I shall see you no more ; I, without doubt, speak to you for the last time of my life : if so, my brother, it will not be long. At these words she wept ; and finding herself incapable of talking, she left me, the most disconsolate of all men. Three or four days after, I desired to see my sister ; the barbarous eunuch would indeed have hindered me ; but, besides that these kind of husbands have not the same authority over their wives as others, he loved my sister so passionately, that he knew not how to refuse her any thing. I saw her again in the same place, and with the same viels, attended by two slaves, which made me have recourse to our own language. My sister, said I, how comes it that I cannot see you, without finding myself in this terrible situation ? These walls which keep you shut up, these bolts and iron grates, these miserable attendants who watch you, put me in a rage. How have you lost that sweet liberty which your ancestors enjoyed ! Your mother, who was so chaste, did not give herself to her husband to guard her virtue, but

but her virtue itself was her guard : they both lived happy together in mutual confidence ; and the simplicity of their manners was to them a treasure a thousand times more precious than that false splendor which you seem to enjoy in this sumptuous house. In losing your religion you have lost your liberty, your happiness, and that precious equality, which constitutes the honour of your sex. But what is yet worse, is that you are not the wife, for that you cannot be, but a slave to a slave, who hath been degraded of manhood. Ah, my brother ! said she, respect my husband, respect the religion I have embraced ; according to which religion, I cannot hear you, nor speak to you, without guilt. What, my sister ! cried I, quite in a transport, do you then believe this religion to be true ? Ah, said she, how well would it be for me if it was not ! I have made too great a sacrifice to it, not to believe in it ; and, if my doubts — At these words she was silent. Yes, your doubts, my sister, are well founded, whatever they are. What can you expect from a religion which renders you unhappy here in this world, and leaves you no hope of another ? Con-

sider our religion is the most ancient in the whole world ; that it hath always flourished in Persia, and hath no other origin but with that empire, whose beginning is not known ; it was nothing but chance which introduced Mahometism there ; that sect was established there, not by the power of persuasion, but by that of conquest. If our natural princes had not been weak, you would have seen the worship of the ancient Magi flourishing yet. Review those ages which are passed, every thing informs you of Magism, and nothing of the Mahometan sect, which, many thousand of years after, was but then in its infancy. But, said she, though my religion should be of a more modern date than yours, it is at least more pure, since it adores none but God ; whereas you also adore the sun, the stars, fire, and even the elements. I see, my sister, that you have learned among the Mussulmans, to calumniate our holy religion. We worship neither the stars nor the elements, and our fathers never worshipped them : they never raised temples to them, they never offered sacrifices to them. They only paid them a religious worship of an inferior kind, as to the works
and

and manifestations of the divinity. But my sister, in the name of him who enlightens us, receive this sacred book which I have brought you ; it is a book of our legislator Zoroaster, peruse it without prejudice ; receive in your heart the rays of light, which will enlighten you as you read it ; remember your fathers, who for so long a time honoured the Sun in the city of the holy Balk ; and lastly, do thou remember me, who hope neither for ease, happiness, nor life, but from your change. There, quite transported, I quitted her, and left her alone to determine the most important affair that I could have in my life. I came there again two days after ; I said nothing to her, waiting with silence the sentence of my life, or of my death. Thou art beloved, my brother, said she to me, and by a Guebre. I have struggled a long time ; but, Gods ! what difficulties doth love remove ! How relieved am I ! I fear nothing now but loving you too much ; I can fix no bounds to my love : but the excess is lawful. Ah, how well does this suit the state of my heart ! But you who have known how to break the chains which my mind itself had forged, how will you break

those that tie my hands? From this moment I give myself to thee; show by the readiness with which you receive me, how dear this present is to you. My brother, the first time that I embrace you, I believe I shall die in your arms. I can never fully express the joy I felt at these words: I did believe, and actually saw myself, in a moment, the most happy of all mankind: I saw all the wishes which I had been five and twenty years of my life in forming, nearly accomplished, and all those uneasinesses vanished, which had rendered my life so burthensome. But when I had a little enjoyed these delightful thoughts, I found that I was not so near my happiness, as I had so hastily imagined within myself, though I had surmounted the greatest of all obstacles. The vigilance of her guardians was to be deceived: I did not dare to confide this secret of my life with any body; I had nobody but my sister, and she nobody but me, to consult: if my scheme failed, I ran the risque of being imprisoned; but I saw no pain more tormenting than that of miscarrying. We agreed that she should send to me for a clock that her father had left her, and that I should

I should put a file into it, to saw the lattice of her window, which opened to the street, and a rope ladder to descend by, and after that not to visit her; but that I should walk every night under the window, to wait till she could execute her design. I passed fifteen whole nights without seeing any body, because she had not found a favourable opportunity. At length, the sixteenth night, I heard a saw at work: from time to time the work was discontinued, and in those intervals my fear was inexpressible. After an hour's labour, I saw her fasten the cord, she then put herself on it, and slid down into my arms. I thought no more of danger, and staid some time without moving from thence; I then conducted her out of the city, where I had a horse ready; I placed her behind me, and rode with all the haste possible, from a place which might have been very fatal to us. We reached, before day, the house of a Guebre, in a desert place, where he lived retired by the labour of his hands. Not thinking it proper to stay with him, by his advice, we entered into a thick forest, and hid ourselves in the hollow of an old oak tree, till the noise of our flight should

be over. We lived both together in this place, without being seen, continually repeating how we would always love one another, waiting an opportunity when some Guebre priest should perform the ceremony of our marriage, ordered by our sacred books. My sister, said I to her, how holy is this union! Nature hath united us, our holy law will again unite us. At length a priest came to satisfy our impatient love; he performed, in the house of a peasant, the whole marriage ceremony: he blessed us, and wished us a thousand times all the vigour of Gustaspe, and the sanctity of Hohoraspe. Soon after we quitted Persia, where we were not in safety, and retired to Georgia. We lived there a year, every day more delighted with each other. But as my money was near expended, and as I feared the distress of my sister, more than of myself, I left her, to seek some assistance from our relations. Never was there a parting so tender. But my journey was not only unprofitable, but fatal: for finding on one hand our whole estate confiscated, on the other my relations in a manner incapable of assisting me, I brought away no more money than was sufficient for
my

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my journey back. But what was my despair, at not finding my sister. Some days before my arrival, the Tartars had made an incursion into the town where she was; and, as they found she was beautiful, they took her, and sold her to some Jews who were going into Turkey, and left only a little girl, of whom she had been delivered a few months before. I followed these Jews, and got up to them three leagues off: my prayers, my tears were in vain; they demanded of me thirty tomans for her, and would not abate one. After I had asked every body, implored the help of both Christian and Turkish priests, I applied to an Armenian merchant; sold both my daughter and myself to him, for five and thirty tomans. I went to the Jews, paid them thirty tomans, and carried the other five to my sister, who I had not yet seen. Thou art at liberty, my sister, said I to her, and I may embrace you; here are five tomans, which I bring you; I am sorry the sale of myself would fetch no more. What! cried she, are you sold? Yes, replied I. Ah, unhappy man, what hast thou done? Was I not miserable enough, without your endeavouring to
make

make me more so? Your liberty consoled me, and your slavery will send me to the grave. Ah, my brother! how cruel is your love! and where is my daughter? I have not seen her. I have sold her also, said I. We both melted into tears, and were no more able to talk. I went afterwards to wait upon my master, and my sister got there almost as soon as myself: she fell down upon her knees before my master; I ask slavery of you, said she, as others do liberty; take me, you may sell me at a higher price than my husband. This then occasioned a struggle between us, which drew tears from my master. Unhappy man! said she, did you think I would accept of my liberty at the expence of thine? Sir, behold here two unfortunate persons, who must die, if you separate us. I offer myself to you, pay me, perhaps that money, and my services, may one day obtain from you, what I dare not ask of you. It is your interest not to separate us; be assured that his life is at my disposal. The Armenian, who was a good tempered man, was touched with our misfortunes. Both of you serve me, said he, with fidelity and zeal, I promise you, that
in

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in a year you shall have your liberty. I see that neither of you merit the misfortunes of your condition. If, when at liberty, you should be as happy as you deserve to be, if fortune should smile upon you, I am certain you will recompence me for the loss I shall sustain. We both embraced his knees and went the voyage with him. We mutually assisted each other in the labours of servitude, and I was always delighted when I had done that work which belonged to my sister. The end of the year at length arrived; our master kept his word, and gave us our liberty. We returned to Tefflis; there I found an old friend of my father, who practised physic in that city with success. He lent me some money, with which I trafficked. Some affairs afterwards called me to Smyrna, where I settled. I have lived here six years, and I enjoy here the most delightful, and most agreeable society in the world: unity reigns in my family, and I would not change my condition for that of all the kings in the world. I have been so happy as to find out the Armenian merchant, to whom I owe every thing,
and

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and I have rendered him some considerable services.

Smyrna, the 27th of the
moon of the 1st Ger-
mandi, 1714.

L E T T E R LXVIII.

RICA to USBEK, at * * *.

THE other day I went to dine with a man of the long robe, by whom I had been often invited. After we had talked upon a variety of subjects, I said to him, sir, your profession appears to me to be very troublesome. Not so much as you imagine, answered he, in the manner we conduct it, it is no more than an amusement. But how? Have not you your head always filled with the affairs of another? Are not you perpetually busied with affairs that do not concern you? You are right, those affairs do not give us any concern, because we do not interest ourselves the least in them; and this is the reason that the profession is not so fatiguing as you supposed it to be. When I saw he
treated

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treated the matter with so much ease, I added, sir, I have not yet seen your study. I believe not, for I have none at all. When I took this office, I wanted money to pay for it; I sold my library; and the book-seller, who purchased it, out of the great number of volumes it contained, left me only my account-book. But this gives me no concern: we judges do not puff ourselves up with useless knowledge. What business have we with so many volumes of law? Almost all cases are hypothetical, and out of the general rule. But may not that be, sir, said I, because you put them out of the general rule? For in short, why have all people in the world laws, if they do not make use of them? And how can they be used if they do not know them? If you was but acquainted with the courts of justice, answered the magistrate, you would not talk in this manner: we have living books, who are the counsellors, they study for us, and take upon themselves our instruction. And do not they sometimes take upon themselves to deceive you, replied I? You would do well to guard yourselves against their arts. They have arms, with which they attack your equity,
it

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it would be well you had some to defend it; and not to suffer yourselves to be placed in the middle of a battle, slightly armed, among men dressed in armour to the very chin.

Paris, the 13th of the moon
Chahban, 1714.

L E T T E R L X I X .

U S B E K to R H E D I, at V E N I C E .

THOU couldst never have imagined that I should become a greater metaphysician than I was; however so it is, and you will be convinced of it, when you have indured this inundation of my philosophy. The most sensible philosophers, who have reflected upon the nature of God, have declared him to be a being most absolutely perfect; but they have very greatly abused this idea. They have enumerated all the different perfections that man is capable of possessing, or imagining; and with these they load this idea of the divinity, not considering that these attributes are frequently

quently opposite to one another, and that they cannot subsist in the same subject without destroying themselves. The poets of the west say, that a painter, desirous to make a portrait of the goddess of beauty, assembled the handsomest Grecian women, and selected from each what was most agreeable, of which several beauties he composed one whole, to resemble the most beautiful of all the goddesses. If a man from hence should conclude that she was fair and brown, that she had black eyes and gray, and that her countenance was mild and fierce, he would pass for a fool. God often wants a perfection which would render him very imperfect: but he is never limited but by himself; he is his own necessity. Thus, though God is all powerful, he cannot break his promises, nor deceive man. Very often too, the inability is not in him, but in relative things; and this is the reason why he cannot change the essence of things. So that it is not a matter of wonder, that some of our divines have dared to deny the infinite foreknowledge of God; upon this foundation, that it is incompatible with his justice. As bold as this opinion may be, there is in metaphysics

physics, what favours it greatly. According to the principles of that, it is not possible, that God can foresee what depends upon the determination of free agents ; because what hath not existed, is not in being, and consequently can not be known, which having no properties, cannot be perceived : God cannot read in the will what is not in it, or see in the soul a thing which is not yet existing in it : for, till she hath determined, the action which she determines upon is not in her. The soul is the maker of her own determination : but there are some circumstances, in which she is so irresolute, that she knows not on which side to determine. Sometimes she may even do it, only to make use of her liberty ; in such manner, that God cannot see this determination beforehand, neither in the action of the soul, nor in the actions which the objects make upon her. How then can God foresee those things which depend upon the determination of free agents ? He could foresee them but in two ways ; by conjecture, which is irreconcilable with infinite foreknowledge ; or otherwise he must see them as necessary effects, which infallibly follow a cause
which

which produces them as infallibly ; for the soul must be free upon this supposition ; and yet in the act, she would be no more so, than one billiard ball is free to lie still when it is pushed by another. However, do not think I would set bounds to the knowledge of God. As he makes his creature act according to his own mind, he knows all that he wills to know. But, though he can see every thing, he does not always make use of that power ; he commonly leaves the creature at liberty to act, or not to act, that he may leave him a power to merit, or demerit : it is for this end then, that he renounces his right which he hath to act upon her, and to determine her actions. But when he wills to know any thing, he always knows it ; because that he needs only to will that it happen as he sees it, and to determine his creatures according to his will. Thus it is, that he brings forth what shall happen, from a number of things merely possible, by fixing by his decrees, the future determinations of the minds of his creatures, and depriving them of that power which he hath given them to act, or not to act. If the comparison may be used, with respect to
what

what is above all comparison, a monarch is ignorant of what his ambassador will do in a certain important affair; if he would know it, he need only order him to act in such a manner; and he may be assured the thing will happen as he directs. The Koran, and the books of the Jews, constantly oppose this doctrine of absolute foreknowledge. God appears there throughout, ignorant of the future determination of human minds; and it seems that this was the first truth Moses taught mankind. God places Adam in a terrestrial paradise, upon condition that he should not eat of a certain fruit: an absurd command from a being who knew the future determination of the soul: for in short, could such a being make that the condition of his favour, without rendering it ridiculous? It is as if a man, who knew of the taking of Bagdad, should say to another; I will give you an hundred tomans, if Bagdad is not taken. Would not this be a very bad jest? My dear Rhedi, why so much philosophy? God is above, whom we cannot perceive, even in the clouds. Indeed we have no knowledge of him, but in his precepts. He is immense, spiritual, infinite. What
his

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his greatness is, we may conclude from our
our own weakness. Always to humble our-
selves, is always to adore him.

Paris, the last day of the
moon Chahban, 1714.

L E T T E R LXX.

ZELIS TO USBEK, at PARIS.

SOLIMAN, whom thou lovest, is
driven to despair, by an affront he hath
just received. A giddy-headed young man,
called Suphis, hath been seeking these three
months, to marry his daughter: he seemed
pleased with her figure, from the report
and description that he had of her from the
women who had seen her from her infancy;
the portion was agreed on, and every thing
passed without any difficulty. Yesterday,
after the first ceremonies, the maid went on
horseback, attended by her eunuch, and
covered, according to custom, from head
to foot. But, when she was arrived at the
house of her intended husband, he shut the
the door, and swore he would never re-
ceive

ceive her, unless her fortune was augmented. Her relations run there from all parts, to accommodate the matter; and after a good deal of disputing, Soliman agreed to make his son-in-law a small present. The ceremonies of the marriage were finished, they conducted the young woman to bed, with a good deal of violence; but an hour after, this giddy-headed young man got up in a fury, cut her face in several places, and asserting that she was not a virgin, sent her back to her father. Nobody can be more confounded than he is at this injury. There are many persons who maintain, that his daughter is innocent. Fathers are very unhappy to be exposed to such affronts! If my daughter should receive such treatment, I believe I should die of grief. Farewel.

From the seraglio at Fatme,
the 9th of the moon of the
1st Gemmadi, 1714.

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L E T T E R LXXI.

USBEK TO ZELIS.

I Am sorry for Soliman, and the more, because this distress is without remedy, and his son-in-law hath done no more than taking advantage of the power of the law. I think this law is very hard, thus to expose the honour of a family to the caprice of a madman. It is easy to say there are certain signs to know the truth by: it is an old error which we have now quitted; and our physicians have given invincible reasons of the uncertainty of these proofs. There are none even among the Christians, who do not regard them as chimerical, though they are plainly established in their sacred books, and though their ancient legislator hath made the innocence, or condemnation of all their daughters to depend upon them. I hear, with pleasure, the care thou takest of the education of thine. May her husband find her as beautiful, and as pure, as Fatima: may she have ten eunuchs to watch her: may she be the honour

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honour and ornament of the seraglio for which she is decreed : may she always have gilded cielings over her head, and never walk but upon rich tapestry ! And, to fill up my wishes, may my eyes see her in all her glory !

Paris, the 5th of the
moon Chalval, 1714.

L E T T E R LXXII.

RICA to IBBEN, at * * *.

THE other day I was in company, where I saw a man who was highly pleased with himself. He had decided, in a quarter of an hour, three questions in morality, four historical problems, and five points in natural philosophy. I never saw to universal a decider ; his mind was never suspended by the least doubt. We left the sciences ; talked of the news of the times : he decided the news of the times. I was willing to catch him, and said to myself ; I must get into my strong fort ; I will take refuge in my own country ; I talked to him
of

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of Persia : but I had scarce spoke four words to him, but he contradicted me twice, upon the authority of Tavernier and Chardin. Hah! said I to myself, what a man is this here? He will presently know all the streets in Ispahan, better than myself; I soon determined what part to take: I was silent, I left him to talk; and he yet decides.

Paris, the 8th of the moon.
Zilcade, 1715.

L E T T E R LXXIII.

RICA to * * *.

I Have heard much talk of a kind of tribunal, called the French academy*. There is not in the whole world a tribunal less respected: for as soon as it makes a decision, the people break its decrees, and impose on it laws which it is obliged to

* This letter is not only a satire on the French academy, but on all others, who pretend to fix the standard of a living, and, consequently, a fluctuating language.

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follow.

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follow. Some time since, in order to fix their authority, they published a code* of their decisions. This babe of so many fathers, was nearly in its old age when born; and, though legitimate, a bastard †, who had got into the world before him, was very near stifling him in the birth. Those who compose this tribunal, have no other employment but to be continually a prating; panegyric, of its own accord, takes place in their incessant babbling; and, as soon as they are initiated into their mysteries, this fury of panegyric seizes them, and never more leaves them. This body hath forty heads, all filled with figures of metaphors and antitheses: so that their mouths hardly ever open but with an exclamation: their ears always expect to be struck with cadence and harmony. As to their eyes, they are out of the question: these people seem as if they were made to talk, and not to see. It does not yet stand firm upon its feet; for time, which is its scourge,

* The author means the great French dictionary, published by that academy.

† The dictionary of Mr. Furetiere, which he stole from the academy, and published before theirs came out; for which base action they expelled him.

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scourge, shakes it every moment, and destroys every thing it doth. Its hands were said, formerly to have been griping* ; I shall say nothing of this, but leave it to be decided by those who know more of it than myself. Such vagaries, * * *, are not to be found in our country. Our genius does not bend us to such odd singularities ; we always seek after nature in our plain customs, and native manners.

Paris, the 27th of the moon
Zilhage, 1715.

L E T T E R LXXIV.

USBEK TO RICA, at * * *.

Some time ago, a man of my acquaintance said to me, I promised to bring you to the best houses in Paris ; I will take you now to a great lord, who supports his dignity better than any man in the king-

* This is supposed to allude to Mr. Granier, another member of the academy, who defrauded an orphan of a large sum of money ; for which they likewise expelled him.

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dom. What do you mean, fir? is it that his behaviour is more polite, more affable, than that of others? No, said he. Oh! I understand: he takes all opportunities to make every body who comes near him, sensible of his superiority: if it be so, I have no business to go there: I allow him his whole demand, and acquiesce in the inferiority he condemns me to. Yet I must go there, and I saw a little man, so lofty; he took a pinch of snuff with so much dignity; he blowed his nose so unmercifully; he spit with so much flegm, and caressed his dogs in a manner so offensive to the company, that I could not but wonder at him. Ah, said I, to myself, if, when I was at the court of Persia, I behaved so, I behaved like a great fool! We must, Rica, have been naturally very bad, to have practised a hundred little insults towards those people who came every day to show their good-will to us. They knew very well our superiority over them; and, if they had been ignorant of it, the favours we every day conferred on them, must have convinced them of it. Having no necessity to do any thing to make ourselves respected, we did all to render ourselves beloved:

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beloved : we were accessible to the meanest : amidst those honours, which commonly harden the heart, they experienced the sensibility of ours ; they found only our souls superior to them ; we descended to their wants. But, when it was necessary to support the dignity of our prince in public ceremonies, when it was proper to make our nation respectable to strangers ; or lastly, when in cases of danger, it was necessary to animate our soldiers, we ascended a hundred times higher than we had before descended ; recalled all our dignity into our looks ; and it was found that we sometimes properly represented ourselves.

Paris, the 10th of the
moon Saphar, 1715.

L E T T E R LXXV.

I Must needs confess to thee, I have not observed among the Christians, that lively persuasion of their religion, that is to be found among the Mussulmans. There

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is hence among them, a great difference between profession and belief, between belief and practice. Religion is less a matter of holiness than of dispute, in which every body is concerned. Courtiers, soldiers, even the women, oppose themselves against it to the clergy, demanding from them a proof of what they are determined not to believe. It is not because they would be determined by reason, and that they have taken the pains to examine the truth or falsehood of the religion which they reject: they are rebels who have felt the yoke, and have shook it off before they knew what it was. Nor are they better fixed in their incredulity, than in their faith: they live in a fluctuating state, which leads them continually from one opinion to another. One of them once said to me, I believe the immortality of the soul six months together; my opinions absolutely depend upon the temperature of my body; as I have more, or less, animal spirits, as my digestion good or bad, as I breathe a finer or grosser air, as my food is light, or solid, I am a Spinofist, a Socinian, a catholic, an athiest, or a bigot. When the physician is at my bedside,

side, the confessor always finds me at his disposal. I know very well how to hinder religion from distressing me, when I am in health, but I allow it to comfort me when I am sick : when I have no longer any thing to hope for from another quarter, religion offers herself to me, and gains me by her promises : I am very willing to resign myself to her, and to die on the hopeful side. It is a long time since the Christian princes set free all the slaves in their kingdoms ; because, say they, Christianity makes all men equal. It is true, this act of religion hath been very serviceable to them. They destroyed, by this means, the power of the nobility, by which they kept the people in subjection to themselves. They afterwards made conquests in countries, where they found it was to their advantage to have slaves ; they allowed of buying and selling them ; forgetting those principles of religion, which had so much touched them. What shall we call this ? Truth at one time, error at another. Why do not we act like Christians ? We are very foolish to refuse settlements, and easy conquests, in happy climates, because the water is not

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pure enough to wash us *, according to the principles of the holy koran. I render thanks to the most high, who hath sent Haly, his great prophet, from whence it is that I profess a religion which renders itself preferred to all worldly interest, and which is pure as the heavens, from which it descended.

Paris, the 13th of the
moon Saphar, 1715.

L E T T E R LXXVI.

USBEK to his Friend IBEN, at SMYRNA.

IN Europe, the laws are very severe against self-murderers. They put them to death, if I may so say, a second time; they are ignominiously dragged through the streets, marked with infamy, and their effects confiscated. It seems to me, Iben, that these are very unjust laws. When I am loaded with grief, misery, and contempt,

* The Mahometans have no desire to take Venice, because they would not have water there proper for their purifications.

tempt, why should I be restrained from putting an end to my pains, and be cruelly deprived of a remedy that I have in my power? Why would they have me labour for a society of which I consent no longer to be a member? Why to hold, in spite of myself, a compact made without my agreement? Society is founded upon mutual advantage; but when it becomes burthensome to me, what should hinder me from quitting it? Life was given to me as a favour; I may then return it, when it is no more so: the cause ceasing, the effect then ought also to cease. Would a prince desire that I should be his subject, when I reap none of the advantages of subjection? Can my fellow-citizens ask this unequal division of their benefit, and my despair? Will God, contrary to all other benefactors, condemn me to accept of favours which oppress me? I am obliged to obey the laws, whilst I live under the laws, but when I no longer live under them, can they still bind me? But, 'tis said, you disturb the order of providence. God hath united your soul to your body, and you separate them: you then oppose his designs, and you resist his will. What would

they say by this? Do I disturb the order of providence, when I alter the modifications of matter, and render square a bowl, which the first laws of motion, that is to say, the laws of creation and preservation, have made round? No, without doubt: I do but use the right which hath been given me: and, in this sense, I may disturb, according to my fancy, all nature, without its being said, that I oppose myself to providence. When my soul shall be separated from my body, will there be less order, and less regularity in the universe? Do you believe that this new combination would be less perfect, and less dependent upon the general laws? That the world can thereby lose any thing? that the works of God would be less great? or rather less immense? Do you think that my body, when become a blade of grass, a worm, a green turf, would be changed into a work of nature less worthy of her? and that my soul, disengaged from all its earthy part, would become less pure? These ideas, my dear Ibben, have no other source but our pride. We are not at all sensible of our littleness; and however it may be, we are willing to be reckoned of consequence in the universe,
and

and to be there an object of importance. We imagine, that the annihilation of such a perfect being as ourselves, would degrade all nature ; and we do not conceive, that one man more, or less, in the world ; what did I say one ? all mankind together, a hundred millions of heads such as ours, are but one small minute atom, whom God perceives not but from the immensity of his knowledge.

Paris, the 15th of the
moon Saphar, 1715.

L E T T E R * LXXVII.

IBBEN TO USBEK, at PARIS.

IT appears to me, my dear Usbek, that to a true Mussulman, misfortunes are not so much chastisements as warnings. Those are valuable days indeed, which lead us to expiate our offences. It is the time of prosperity, which ought to be shortened.

* This letter, not in the former editions, seems to be added by the author, in answer to the former, in which he appears as a defender of suicide.

To

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To what end does all our impatience serve; but to make us see that we would be happy, independently of him who bestows happiness, because he is happiness itself. If a being is composed of two parts, and that the necessity of preserving their union is the greatest mark of submission to the decrees of the creator, this then may be made a religious law : if this necessity of preserving that union, is a better security of human actions, it may be made a civil law.

Smyrna, the last day of the
moon Saphar, 1715.

L E T T E R LXXVIII.

RICA to USBEK, at * * *.

I Send thee a copy of a letter, which a Frenchman, who is in Spain, wrote to his friend here : I believe you will be pleased to see it.—I have, in six months time, run through Spain and Portugal; and I have lived among a people, who despising all others, do the French alone
the

the honour of hating them. Gravity is the shining character of these two nations, it shows itself chiefly there two ways, by spectacles, and mustachios. The spectacles demonstratively show, that he who wears them, is a man consummate in the sciences, and buried in profound reading, to such a degree, as to have impaired his sight: and every nose, that is thus ornamented, or loaded, may pass, without contradiction, for the nose of a learned man. As to the mustachio, it is respectable in itself, and independently of any consequences; though great benefits have been sometimes drawn from it, for the service of the king, and the honour of the nation, as hath been made appear by a famous Portugueze general * in the East-Indies; for, being in want of money, he cut off one of his mustachios, and sent to demand of the inhabitants of Goa twenty thousand pistoles upon this pledge: they very readily accepted it, and he afterwards honourably redeemed his mustachio. It is easily conceived, that such grave and flegmatic people as these, may be proud; and
so

* Juan de Castro.

so they are. They commonly found it upon these two considerable points. Those who live upon the continent of Spain and Portugal, find their hearts greatly elated, if they are those who are called the old Christians; that is to say, not originally descended from those, who, in the latter centuries, were forced by the inquisition, to embrace Christianity. They who live in the Indies, are no less elated, when they consider that they have the sublime merit to be, as they say, men with white skins. There never was in the seraglio of the grand signior, a sultana so proud of her beauty, as the oldest, great ugly cur born, is of his olive-white complexion, when in the town of Mexico, sitting at his door, with his legs crossed. A man of such consequence, so complete a creature, would not work for all the treasures in the world, nor ever persuade himself, by a vile mechanic industry, to venture the honour and dignity of his skin. For you must know, that when a man hath a certain merit in Spain, as for example, when he can add to the qualities I have been speaking of, that of being the proprietor of a long sword, or hath learned of his father the
art

art of making a wretched noise on an ill-tuned guitarre, he works no more: his his honour is interested in the repose of his limbs. He who sits still ten hours a day, acquires exactly one moiety more of respect, than one who rests but five; because honour is here to be acquired upon a chair. But though these invincible enemies to labour, make a show of a philosophical tranquility, they have yet none in their heart; for they are always in love. They are the first men in the world to die languishing under the window of their mistresses; and every Spaniard who hath not a cold, cannot pass for a gallant. They are in the first place bigots, in the next jealous. They take great care not to venture their wives to the attacks of a soldier disabled with wounds, or to a decrepid magistrate: but they will shut them up with a fervent novice, who meekly casts his eyes down to the earth, or a robust Franciscan, who as devoutly turns them upwards. They allow their wives to appear with their bosoms naked; but they will not let their heel be seen, lest they should be caught by the foot. The rigours of love are universally admitted to be great; they are much more so to the
Spa-

Spaniards. The women relieve their pains, but they only do so to change them; and frequently a long and troublesome remembrance of an extinguished passion continues with them. They observe little pieces of politeness, which in France would appear oddly applied: for example, a captain never corrects his soldier, without first asking his leave; and the inquisition never burns a Jew, without making an apology to him. The Spaniards who are not burned, appear so fond of the inquisition, that it would be ill-natured to deprive them of it. I would only have another erected, not for heretics, but for heresiarchs, who attribute to some little monkish tricks, the same efficacy as to the seven sacraments, who worship every thing which they should only reverence; and who are so extremely devout, that they are hardly Christians. You may meet with wit and good sense among the Spaniards, but look for neither in their books. View but one of their libraries, romances on this side, and school divines on the other; you would say, that they had been made, and collected together, by some secret enemy to human reason. The only good one of all their books,
is

is that which was wrote to show the ridiculousness of all the others. In the new world they have made immense discoveries, and as yet know not their own continent: they have not yet discovered there what they have upon their rivers and in their mountains, nations * unknown to them. They say that the sun rises and sets in their country: but it may also be said, that in passing his course, he reckons only ruined countries, and deserted lands.—I should not be sorry, Usbek, to see a letter written at Madrid, by a Spaniard, who had travelled in France; I believe he might thoroughly revenge himself on this nation. What a vast field for a flegmatic pensive man! I imagine he would commence the description of Paris, in this manner: Here is a house in which mad folks are put: it might at first thought be expected larger than the whole city; no: the remedy is insufficient for the malady. Doubtless the French, extremely despised by their neighbours, shut up some madmen in this house, that it may be thought that those who are
at

* Las Batuecas.

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at liberty, are not such.—There I leave my Spaniard. Farewel, my dear Usbek.

Paris, the 17th of the
moon Saphar, 1715.

L E T T E R LXXIX.

The Chief black Eunuch to USBEK, at
PARIS.

SOME Armenians, yesterday, brought to the seraglio a young Circassian slave, whom they desired to sell. I made her enter the private apartments, there I undressed her, I examined her with the eyes of a judge, and the more I observed her, the more beauties I discovered. A virgin modesty seemed to conceal them from my view ; I saw how much it cost her to submit ; she blushed at seeing herself naked, even before me, who, exempt from those passions which might alarm her modesty, am unmoved under the empire of that sex ; and who, the minister of modesty, in the freest actions, bring only chaste looks, and can inspire nothing but innocence. From
the

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the moment I judged her worthy of thee, I bent my eyes downwards; I threw a scarlet mantle over her; I put upon her finger a ring of gold; I prostrated myself at her feet; I adored her as the queen of thy heart. I payed the Armenians; I shut her up from every eye. Happy Usbek, thou possessest greater beauties than are enclosed in all the palaces of the east. What pleasure to thee, to find at thy return, all that Persia hath most delightful! and to see in thy seraglio, all the graces re-born, as fast as time and possession labour their destruction.

From the seraglio of Fatme,
the 1st of the moon of the
1st Rebiab, 1715.

L E T T E R LXXX.

USBEK TO RHEDI, at VENICE.

SINCE I have been in Europe, Rhedi, I have seen a variety of governments. It is not here as in Asia, where the rules of policy are every where found the same. I
have

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have often inquired which government is most conformable to reason. It appears to me, that the most perfect is that which arrives at its ends with the least difficulty ; of this kind, that which leads men in a way which best suits their disposition, is the most perfect. If, under a mild government, the subjects are as obedient as under a severe one ; the first is preferable, because it is most conformable to reason, and because severity is a foreign motive. Be assured, Rhedi, that in a state, punishments, more, or less cruel, do not procure greater obedience to the laws. In a country where chastisements are moderate, they are as much dreaded as in those where they are tyrannical and dreadful. Let the government be mild, let it be cruel, the punishment is always gradual ; the punishment inflicted is greater or less, as the crime is greater or less. The imagination conforms itself to the manners of the country in which we live : eight days imprisonment, or a lighter punishment, affects the mind of an European, brought up under a mild government, as much as the loss of an arm intimidates an Asiatic. Men affix a certain degree of fear to a certain degree of punishment,

nishment, and each makes the distribution in his own way : a Frenchman shall be driven to despair at the infamy of a punishment to which he is condemned, which would not deprive a Turk of his sleep for one quarter of an hour. Besides, I do not observe that policy, justice, and equity, are better observed in Turkey, Persia, or under the Mogul, than in the republics of Holland, Venice, and even in England : I do not find that less crimes are committed in the former countries, or that men, intimidated by severe punishments, are more submissive to the laws. I have, on the contrary, remarked, a foundation for injustice and distress in the midst of the very same states. I have even found the prince, who is himself the law, less master than in any other state. I observe, that these times of rigour have always been attended with tumultuous commotions, in which nobody is chief ; and that, when once a violent authority is despised, there remains no longer sufficient power with any person to restore it. That the very despair of impunity strengthens the disturbance, and renders it greater. That, in such states, they never make a slight revolt ; and that there never
is

is any interval between murmurings and insurrections. That there is no necessity that great events should there be prepared for by great causes : on the contrary, a great revolution hath been produced by the least accident, often also as unforeseen by those who effected it, as by those who suffered from it. When Osman, emperor of the Turks, was deposed, each of those concerned in that attempt, thought nothing of what they effected : they demanded only, in a supplicant manner, that they might have justice done with regard to a particular grievance : a voice, that none had ever known, from among the multitude, pronounced, by accident, the name of Mustapha, and immediately Mustapha was emperor.

Paris, the 2d of the moon of
the first Rebiab, 1715.



L E T-

L E T T E R LXXXI.

NARGUM, Envoy from PERSIA in MUSCOVY, to USBEK, at PARIS.

OF all the nations in the world, Usbek, there is not one that hath exceeded the Tartars, in glory, or in the greatness of their conquests. This nation is truly the lord of the universe: all others seem made to serve it: it is alike the founder and destroyer of empires: in all ages it afforded the world marks of its power; in all ages it hath been the scourge of nations. The Tartars have twice conquered China, and to this time keep it in subjection to them. They rule those vast countries which form the empire of the Mogul. Master of Persia, they sit upon the throne of Cyrus and Gustaspes. They have subdued Muscovy. Under the name of Turks, they have made immense conquests in Europe, Asia, and Africa, and they reign over these three parts of the universe. And, to speak of more remote times, it was from them that issued forth some of those people who
over-

overturned the Roman empire. What are the conquests of Alexander, in comparison to those of Genghisca? This victorious nation hath only wanted historians, to celebrate the memory of its marvellous achievements. What immortal actions have been buried in oblivion! What empires founded by them, of whose original we are ignorant! This warlike nation, wholly taken up with her present glory, sure of conquest at all times, never thought of signalizing herself in time to come, by the remembrance of her past conquests.

L E T T E R LXXXII.

RICA TO IBBEN, at SMYRNA.

THOUGH the French talk much, there is yet among them a kind of mute dervises, called Carthusians. It is said, that they cut out their tongues at their admittance into the convent; and it is much to be wished, that all the other dervises would retrench in the same manner, every thing that their profession renders useless to them. Now I am mentioning these

these silent people, there are some much more remarkable than them, and who have a very extraordinary talent: These are such as know how to talk without saying any thing; and who support a conversation two hours together, without its being possible to discover their meaning, to retale what they say, nay to retain one word of what they have been talking. These kind of people are adored by the women; but not so much as some others, who have received from nature the amiable talent of smiling at proper times, that is, every moment, and who assume the grace of a pleasing approbation for every thing that comes from the ladies. But these are high-accomplished wits, who can discover a fine thought in every thing, and find out a thousand little ingenious strokes in the most common discourse. I know others, who are so happy as to introduce into their conversation things inanimate, and to make their embroidered coat, their white peruke, their snuff-box, their cane, and their gloves, speak for them. It is a good way to begin in the street to make one's self heard by the rattling of a coach, or by a loud thunder of a knocker at a door: this prologue gives

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a prepossession in favour of the rest of the discourse: and when the introduction is good, it renders all the folly that follows afterwards supportable, but which, by good fortune, arrives too late. I can assure thee that these little talents, which are made of no value with us, are of great use here to those who are so happy to possess them; and a man of good sense shines not at all among such people.

Paris, the 6th of the
moon of the 2d Re-
biab, 1715.

L E T T E R LXXXIII.

USBEK TO RHEDI, at VENICE.

IF there be a God, Rhedi, he must necessarily be just; if he was not such, he would be the worst and most imperfect of all beings. Justice is a relation of congruity, which really subsists between two things: this relation is always the same, whatever being considers it, whether it be God, or an angel, or lastly a man. It is true,

true, men do not always see these relations : often indeed, when they do see them, they deviate from them ; and their interest is always what they see best. Justice raises her voice, but it is with difficulty she makes herself heard amidst the tumult of the passions. Men may do injustice, because it is their interest to commit it, and because they prefer their own private satisfaction to that of others. It is always with a view to themselves that they act : nobody is wicked for nothing : he must have some reason that determines him ; and this reason is always a reason of interest. But it is impossible that God should ever commit any injustice : from the instant that we suppose he sees justice, it must necessarily be that he follows it : for, as he hath no want of any thing, and is all-sufficient in himself, he would be the most wicked of all beings, because he would be such without gaining any thing. Thus though there was no God, we ought always to love justice ; that is, we should endeavour to resemble that being, of whom we have so amiable an idea, and who, if he exists, must necessarily be just. Though we should be free from the yoke of religion, we ought

not to be so from that of equity. This it is, Rhedi, that makes me believe that justice is eternal, and depends not upon human compacts. And, if it was dependent upon them, it would be a terrible truth, which should be concealed even from ourselves. We are surrounded by men stronger than we are; they can injure us in a thousand different ways; three times in four, they might do it with impunity. What a satisfaction to us, to know that there is in them, in the heart of all these men, an inward principle which fights in our favour, and secures us from their attempts? If it was not for this, we should be in continual fear; we should pass by men as by lions, and we should not be assured one moment of our goods, honour, and life. All these considerations make me angry at those doctors, who represent God as a being who exercises his power with tyranny; who make him act in a manner that we ourselves would not, for fear of offending him; who charge him with all those imperfections that he punishes in us, and, by their contradictory opinions, represent him as an evil being, by and by as a being who hates evil, and
punishes

PERSIAN LETTERS. 245

punishes it. When a man searcheth himself, what a satisfaction is it to him to find that he hath a just heart. This pleasure, as severe as it is, must delight him: he beholds himself a being as much above those who have not such a consciousness, as he sees himself superior to tygers and bears. Yes, Rhedi, if I was sure always to pursue, inviolably, that equity that I have before my eyes, I should think myself the first of mankind.

Paris, the 1st of the moon
of the 1st Gemmadi,
1715.

L E T T E R LXXXIV:

RICA to * * *.

YESTERDAY I was at the hospital of the Invalids: I had rather have founded that establishment, if I was a prince, than have gained three battles. In every part of it there appears the hand of a great monarch. I think that it is the most respectable place in the world. What

M 3

a fight!

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a sight! to see assembled in one place, all the victims of their country, who only breathed for its defence; and who, still finding the same heart, but not the same power, only bewail themselves for the inability they are under, of sacrificing themselves again for their country. What can be more pleasing, than to see these disabled warriors, observing in this retreat, as exact a discipline, as if they were in fear of the presence of an enemy, taking their last satisfaction in this picture of the war, and dividing their hearts and minds between the duties of religion, and those of the military art! I would have the names of those who die for their country preserved in temples, and written in registers, that should be, as it were, the foundation of glory and nobility.

Paris, the 15th of the moon
of the first Gemmadi,
1715.

LET-

L E T T E R LXXXV.

USBK TO MIRZA, at ISPAHAN.

THOU knowest, Mirza, that some of the ministers of Cha-Soliman, had formed a design to oblige all the Armenians in Persia to quit the kingdom, or to embrace Mahometanism, from a conceit that our empire would be always defiled as long as she protected these infidels in her bosom. This had finished the Persian greatness, if, on this occasion, blind devotion had been listened to. It is unknown how this affair failed. Neither those who made the proposal, nor those who rejected it, were sensible of the consequences: chance did the office of reason and policy, and saved the empire from a greater danger than it would have gone through from the loss of a battle, and of two cities. By banishing the Armenians, it is supposed, they would have rooted out, at once, all the traders, and very near all the artificers in the kingdom. I am certain, that the

great Cha-Abas, would rather have cut off both his arms, than have signed such an order; and he would have been of opinion, that by thus sending to the Mogul, and the other kings of the Indies, the most industrious of his subjects, he had given them half his dominions. The persecutions which our Mahometan zealots exercised against the Guebres, obliged them to remove in multitudes into the Indies; and deprived Persia of that people, so much given to tillage, and who alone, by their industry, were in a way to get the better of the sterility of our lands. There remained but one thing more for bigotry to do, that was, to destroy industry; and then the empire had fallen of itself, and with it, as a necessary consequence, that very religion it wanted to render so flourishing. If we could reason without prejudice, I know not, Mirza, but it may be good for a state, that there should be several religions in it. It is observable, that the members of the tolerated religions commonly make themselves more useful to their country, than those of the established religion; because being excluded from all honours, they can only render themselves

con-

considerable by their opulence ; they are led to acquire it by their industry, and to embrace the most toilsome employments in the society. Besides, as all religions contain precepts useful to society, it is good that they should be observed with zeal. Now, what is there more capable of animating this zeal, than a multiplicity of religions? They are rivals who never forgive any thing. This jealousy descends to individuals ; each keeps upon his guard, and is cautious of doing any thing that may dishonour his party, and expose it to the contempt and unforgiving censures of the opposite party. Accordingly, it hath always been observed, that a new sect, introduced into the state, hath been the most certain means of reforming all the abuses of the old one. It signifies nothing to say, that it is not the prince's interest to permit several religions in his kingdom. Though all the sects in the world were to get together in it, it would not be any prejudice to it ; for there is not one which doth not enjoin obedience, and that doth not preach up submission. I acknowledge, that history is full of religious wars : but we must take care to observe, it was not the multiplicity

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of religions that produced these wars, it was the intolerating spirit which animated that which thought she had the power of governing. It was the spirit of profelytism, which the Jews contracted from the Egyptians, and which, from them, hath passed like an epidemic and popular disease, to Mahometans and Christians. It is in short, the spirit of enthusiasm, the progress of which can be considered only as a total eclipse of human reason. For indeed, if there was nothing of inhumanity in forcing the conscience of another, though there did not arise from it any of those bad effects which spring from it by thousands, it would be folly to advise it. He who would have me change my religion, no doubt, desires me to do so, because he would not change his own if he was forced to it: he yet thinks it strange, that I will not do a thing which he himself would not do, perhaps, for the empire of the world.

Paris, the 26th of the moon
of the first Gemadi,
1715.

LET.

L E T T E R LXXXVI.

RICA to * * *.

IT seems as if every family here governed itself separately. The husband hath only the shadow of an authority over his wife, the father over his children, and the master over his slaves. The law interferes in all differences, and you may be sure, that it is always against a jealous husband, a peevish father, or an ill-tempered master. The other day I went to the court where justice is administered. Before I could arrive there, I was obliged to suffer the attacks of a prodigious number of young shop-women, who invite you with a deceitful voice. This sight at first is diverting enough, but it becomes melancholy, when you enter the great halls, where you see none but persons whose dress is even more solemn than their countenances. At length you come into the sacred place, where all the secrets of families are revealed, and where the most private transactions are brought into open light. Here
a modest

a modest girl comes to confess the torments of a virginity too long preserved, her struggles, and her sorrowful resistance: she is so little proud of her victory, that threatened every moment with an approaching defeat; and that her father may be no longer ignorant of her wants, she exposes them to every body. Next comes an impudent wife, to publish the insults she hath committed against her husband, as a reason to be separated from him. Another, with equal modesty, says she is weary of bearing the title of wife, without the enjoyments of one; she reveals the hidden mysteries of the marriage night: she desires to be put under the inspection of the most able artists, and by a decree to be re-established in all the rights of virginity. There are even some who dare defy their husbands, and challenge them to a public trial, which witnesses render so difficult: a trial as disgraceful to the wife who stands to it, as to the husband who is cast by it. A vast number of girls, ravished, or debauched, represent mankind much worse than they are. This court echoes with love, there no talk is heard but of enraged fathers, abused daughters, faithless lovers,
and

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and discontented husbands. By the law observed here, every child born in wedlock, is counted the husband's: he may have good reasons to believe it is not his; the law believes it for him, and frees him from his scruples and examination. In this tribunal they follow the majority of voices: but they say it hath been found by experience, that it would be the surer way to determine by the minority: and this is natural enough; for there are very few just reasoners, and all the world agrees that there is a very great number of false ones.

Paris, the 1st of the moon
of the 2d Gemmadi,
1715.

L E T T E R LXXXVII.

RICA to * * *.

MAN, they say, is a sociable animal. In this respect, the French appear to me to be more men than others: they may be called men by way of excellence; for they seem to be only made for society.
But

But I have observed among them, persons who are not only sociable, but who are themselves an universal society. They multiply themselves in every corner; they people, in an instant, the four quarters of the town: a hundred men of this sort, make a greater show than two thousand citizens. They might repair, in the eyes of a stranger, the devastation made by a plague or famine. It is a question in the schools, whether the same body can be at one instant in several places: these men are a proof of what the philosophers propose as a doubt. These men are always in haste, as they have upon their hands the important business of asking every body they meet——where they are going——and where they have been. You can never put it out of their heads, but that it is a part of good breeding to visit the public every day, separately, exclusive of the visits they make in general, at places where every body meet: but as this is too short a way, it is reckoned as nothing in the rules of their ceremonial. They injure the doors more with knocking at them, than the winds and storms. If all the porters visiting lists were to be examined, their
names

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names would be found every day mangled a thousand ways in Swiss * scrawls. They pass their lives in attending funerals, compliments of condolance, or in matrimonial congratulations. The king never confers a favour on any of his subjects, that it does not put them to the expence of a carriage to go and wish the party joy. At last they return home, vastly fatigued, to rest themselves, that they may be able the next day to resume their tiresome employment. The other day one of them died of weariness, and this epitaph was put upon his tomb.—Here is a man at rest, who never rested before. He walked at five hundred and thirty burials. He made himself merry at the birth of two thousand six hundred and fourscore children. The pensions on which he congratulated his friends, always in different terms, amounted to two millions six hundred thousand livres; the ground he walked in town, to nine thousand six hundred furlongs; his walks in the country to thirty-six. His conversation was pleasing; he had a fund ready made,

* The porters at the noblemens houses in France being generally Swiss.

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made, of three hundred sixty-five stories : he possessed besides, from his youth, an hundred and eighteen apothegms collected from the ancients, which he made use of upon extraordinary occasions. He at last died, in the sixtieth year of his age. I hold my tongue, passenger, for when should I finish telling thee every thing that he said, and every thing that he saw ?

Paris, the 3d of the moon
of the 2d Gemmadi,
1715.

L E T T E R LXXXVIII.

USBK TO RHEDI, at VENICE.

AT Paris, liberty and equality reign. Birth, virtue, nor even military service, how great soever it may be, do not distinguish a man from the croud in which he is confounded. Jealousy about rank is unknown here. They say the first person in Paris, is he who hath the best horses to his chariot. A great man is he who sees the king, who talks with the ministers,
hath

hath ancestors, debts and pensions. If he can, with all this, hide his idleness by an air of business, or a feigned attachment to his pleasures, he esteems himself the happiest of all mankind. In Persia, no person is reckoned great, but such on whom the monarch confers some part of his government. Here, there are persons who are great by their birth, but without interest. Kings act like those able artificers, who, to execute their works, always make use of the plainest tools. Favour is the great divinity of the French; the minister is the high priest, who offers her many victims: those who attend upon her are not dressed in white; sometimes the sacrificers, and sometimes the sacrifices, devote even themselves to their idol, with the whole nation.

Paris, the 9th of the moon
of the 2d Gemmadi,
175.

LET-

L E T T E R LXXXIX.

USBEK TO IBBEN, at SMYRNA.

A Thirst after glory is not different from instinct, which every creature hath for its own preservation. We seem to extend our existence, when we can make it to be remembered by others; this is a new life which we acquire, and which becomes as precious to us as that which we received from heaven. But as all men are not equally fond of life, neither are they equally sensible to glory. This noble passion is indeed always engraved upon their hearts; but imagination and education mould it a thousand ways. This difference, which is founded between man and man, is more perceivable between nation and nation. It may be laid down as a maxim, that, in every state, the desire of glory increases with the liberty of the subjects, and diminishes with it: glory is never the companion of slavery. A sensible man said to me, the other day; we are in France, in many respects, more free than you are in Persia;

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Persia ; and therefore here there is a greater love of glory. This happy delusion makes a Frenchman do with pleasure and inclination, what your sultan obtains only from his slaves, by continually setting before their eyes rewards and punishments. Therefore among us, the prince is jealous for the honour of the meanest of his subjects. There are, for the support of it, the most respectable tribunals ; this is the sacred treasure of the nation, and the only one of which the sovereign is not master ; for he could not be so without acting against his own interest. So that when a subject finds himself injured in his honour by his prince, either by an unjust preference, or by the smallest mark of contempt, he quits, immediately, his court, his employment, and his service, and retires to his estate. The difference between the French troops and yours, is, that the one, composed of slaves, naturally cowards, only surmount the fear of death by that of punishment ; which raises in the soul a new kind of terror, which renders them insensible : instead of which the others present themselves to dangers with delight, and banish fear, by a satisfaction which is superior to it. But the
sanctuary

sanctuary of honour, reputation, and virtue, seems to be seated in republics, and in those states where the word *country* may be pronounced. At Rome, at Athens, at Lacædemon, honour was the only payment for the most signal services. A crown of oak, or laurel, a statue, or an inscription, was an immense recompense for a battle won or a city taken. There a man who had performed a brave action, found himself sufficiently recompensed by the action itself. He could not behold one of his countrymen, without being sensible of the pleasure of having been his benefactor: he reckoned the number of his services, by that of his fellow-citizens. Every man is capable of doing good to another; but it is being like to God, to contribute to the happiness of a whole society. But must not this noble emulation be wholly extinct in the heart of your Persians, among whom employments and honours are only derived from the caprice of the sovereign? Reputation and virtue are there only considered as imaginary, if not accompanied by the favour of the prince, with which alone they spring up, and die. A man who enjoys the public esteem, is never sure that
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he shall not be dishonoured the next day. You see him to day the general of an army; it may be the next the prince makes him his cook, and leaves him no other praise to hope for, but that of having made a good ragout.

L E T T E R X C.

USBEK to the Same, at SMYRNA.

FROM this general passion which the French nation have for glory, there is sprung up in the minds of the people, a certain—I know not what, which they call a point of honour: this is properly the character of every profession, but more remarkable in the men of the sword; and among them it is the point of honour by way of excellence. It will be very difficult to me to make thee understand what this is, because we have not a right idea of it. The French, formerly, especially the nobility, followed scarcely any other laws than those of this point of honour: they regulated the whole conduct of their lives; and they were so strict, that they
could

could not, without suffering what was worse than death, I do not say infringe, but not even elude, the least punctilio of them. When they had occasion to settle any difference, they seldom prescribed more than one method to decide it, that was by duel, which cut off all difficulties. But, what was the worst part of it was, that frequently the trial was made between other parties, besides those who were interested in the affair. How little soever a person might know another, he was obliged to enter into the dispute, and to expose his person in the same manner as if he himself was in anger. Such a one always thought himself honoured by the choice, and so flattering a distinction: one, who would not have been willing to give four pistoles to a man to save him and all his family from the gibbet, would make no difficulty to run the risque of his life for him a thousand times. This manner of decision was badly enough contrived; for if one was more dextrous, or stronger than another, it does not follow that he had more reason on his side. Therefore the kings have forbidden it under very severe penalties; but this is in vain; honour, which will always

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ways reign, rebels, and will acknowledge no laws. So that the French are in a great state of violence : for these laws of honour oblige a well bred man to revenge himself when he hath been affronted ; but, on the other hand, justice punishes him with the severest penalties when he hath done so. If men follow the laws of honour, they die upon a scaffold ; if those of justice, they are banished for ever from the society of men : there is then only this cruel alternative, either to die, or to be unworthy to live.

Paris, the 18th of the moon
of the 2d Gemmadi,
1715.

L E T T E R XCI.

USBK TO RUSTAN, at ISPAHAN.

A Person hath appeared here who hath travestied the character of an ambassador from Persia ; who insolently ridicules the two greatest kings in the world. He brings to the French monarch presents which ours would not offer to a king of
Trimetta

Trimetta, or Georgia : and by his base avarice, he hath disgraced two empires. He hath made himself contemptible before a people who pretend to be the politest in Europe : and hath given occasion to have it said in the West, that the king of kings reigns over none but barbarians. He hath received honours which he seemed to wish had been denied him : and, as if the court of France had had the Persian grandeur more at heart than himself, she hath made him appear with dignity before a people whose contempt he is. Do not tell this at Ispahan ; spare the head of an unhappy wretch. I am not willing that our ministers should punish him for their own imprudence, and the unworthy choice which they have made.

Paris, the last day of the
moon of the 2d Gem-
madi, 17:5.

L E T-

L E T T E R XCII.

USBEK to RHEDI, at VENICE.

THE monarch who reigned so long, is no more *. He made many people talk of him during his life; all the world is silent at his death. Firm and courageous to the last moment, he seemed to submit only to destiny. Thus died the great Cha-Abas, after having filled the whole earth with his name. Do not imagine that this great event hath only given occasion to moral reflections. Every one thought of his own affairs, and to take his advantage of this change. The king, great grandson to the deceased monarch, being but five years old, a prince his uncle, hath been declared regent of the kingdom. The late king made a will, which limited the power of the regent. This wise prince went to the parliament; and, there laying before them all the prerogatives of his birth, he made them break the regulations

* Lewis XIV. who died September 1, 1715.

of the monarch, who, desirous to survive himself, seemed to have claimed the power of governing, even after his death. The parliaments resemble those ruins which we tread under foot, but which always recal to our mind the idea of some temple famous for the ancient religion of the people. They seldom now interfere in any thing more than in affairs of justice; and their authority will continually decline, unless that some unforeseen event should arrive, to restore life and strength to it. These great bodies have followed the common course of human affairs: they yielded to time, which destroys every thing, to the corruption of manners, which hath weakened every thing, to the supreme power, which hath overturned all things. But the regent, who wished to render himself agreeable to the people, seemed at first to respect this shadow of public liberty; and, as if he had an intention to raise from the ground the temple and the idol, he was willing that they should regard it as the support of monarchy, and the foundation of all legal authority.

Paris, the 4th of the moon
Rhegeb, 1715.

L E T-

L E T T E R X C I I I .

U S B E K to his brother, * Santon in the
monastery of C A S B I N .

I Humble myself before thee, sacred
Santon, and prostrate myself upon the
earth: I regard the prints of thy footsteps,
as the apple of my eye. Thy sanctity is
so great, that it seemeth as if thou hadst
the heart of our holy prophet: thy auste-
rities astonish even heaven itself: the angels
have beheld thee from the summit of glory,
and have cried out, how can he yet be
upon earth, when his spirit is with us, and
flies about the throne which is supported by
the clouds? How then can I but honour
thee; I who have learned from our doctors,
that the dervises, even the infidel ones, have
always a sacred character, which renders
them respectable to true believers; and that
God hath chosen to himself, out of every
part of the earth, some souls more pure
than others, whom he hath separated from

* A kind of Mahometan monk.

the wicked world, to the end that their mortifications and fervent prayers may suspend his wrath, ready to fall upon so many rebellious people? The Christians tell wonders of their first Santons, who took sanctuary, by thousands, in the frightful deserts of Thebais, and had for their chiefs, Paul, Anthony, and Pacomus. If what they say of them be true, their lives were as full of prodigies, as those of our most sacred Imaums. They sometimes passed ten entire years without seeing a single person: but they dwelt night and day with dæmons: they were continually tormented by these evil spirits: they found them in their beds, at their tables, they never had any place of security from them. If all this be true, venerable Santon, it must be acknowledged that no person ever lived in worse company. The more sensible Christians regard all these accounts only as a natural allegory, which serves to make us sensible of the miserable state of humanity. In vain do we seek, in deserts, for a state of ease; temptations follow us every where; our passions, represented by the dæmons, never wholly quit us: these monsters of the heart, these illusions of the

the

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the mind, these vain fancies of error and falsehood, appear continually to us, to mislead us, and attack us even in our fasts and hair-cloths, that is, even in our greatest strength. For my part, venerable Santon, I know that the messenger of God hath chained satan, and precipitated him into the abyss: he hath purified the earth, formerly filled with his power, and hath rendered it worthy of the abode of his angels and prophets.

Paris, the 9th of the moon
Chahban, 1715.

L E T T E R XCIV.

USBEK TO RHEDI, at VENICE.

I Never heard any body talk of the law of nations, but he carefully begun with inquiring into the origin of society; which appears ridiculous to me. If men did not form themselves into societies, if they avoided, and fled from each other, it would be right to ask the reason, and to inquire why they kept themselves separate: but they

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are

are born all united to one another; a son is born near his father, and there he continues, here is society, and the cause of it. The law of nations is better understood in Europe than in Asia, yet it must be acknowledged, that the passions of princes, the patience of nations, the flattery of authors, have corrupted all the principles of it. This law, as it is at present, is a science which teaches princes to what degree they may violate justice, without hurting their own interest. What a knavish distinction this! Rhedi, to harden their consciences, by reducing iniquity to a science, by giving rules for it, by settling the principles of it, and drawing consequences from them! The unlimited power of our sublime sultans, which hath no rule but itself, doth not produce more monsters, than this base art, which can make justice bend, all inflexible as it is. It seems, Rhedi, there are two kinds of justice entirely different, one which regulates the affairs of private persons, which reigns in the civil law; another which regulates the differences that arise between people and people, which tyrannizes in the law of nations: as if the law of nations was not a civil law, not indeed of a particular

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ticular country, but of the world. I shall in another letter, explain my thoughts further to thee upon this subject.

Paris, the 1st of the moon
Zilhage, 1716.

L E T T E R X C V .

U S B E K to the Same.

TH E magistrates ought to administer justice between citizen and citizen, every nation ought to do the same between themselves and another nation. In this second distribution of justice, no other maxims ought to be employed but those in the first. For nation and nation there is seldom need of a third to judge between them, because the subjects of their disputes are for the most part always plain and easy to be determined. The interests of the two nations are generally so separate, that nothing more is necessary but a love of justice to find it out; they can scarcely mistake the proper cause. It is not the same with the differences that happen between private
N 4 persons.

persons. As they live in society, their interests are so mixed and so confounded, and there are so many different kinds of them, that it is necessary for a third person to clear up what the covetousness of the parties endeavour to obscure. There are but two kinds of just wars: one which is waged to repulse the attack of an enemy, the other to succour an ally who is attacked. It would not be justice to enter into a war upon the private quarrel of a prince; unless the case was so heinous, as to merit the death of the prince, or the people, who committed it. Thus, a prince should not engage in a war because he hath been refused an honour which was his right, or for any unsuitable demeanour towards his ambassadors, and such similar cases: no more than a private person ought to kill him who refuses him precedency. The reason is this, as a declaration of war ought to be an act of justice, wherein the punishment should always be in proportion to the fault, it should be inquired whether the party against whom war is declared, merits death. For to make war against any person, is to be willing to punish him with death. In the law of nations, the severest act of
justice

justice is war, since the effect of it is the destruction of society. Reprisals are of the second degree. To proportion the punishment to the offence, is a law which no tribunals could ever avoid observing. The third act of justice, is to deprive a prince of the advantages that he might derive from us, always proportioning the punishment to the offence. The fourth act of justice, which ought to be the most frequent, is the renunciation of the alliance of a people against whom we have reason to complain. This punishment answers to that of banishment, appointed by courts of justice, to cut off delinquents from the community. Thus a prince, whose alliance we renounce, is cut off, from our society, and is no longer one of its members. A greater affront cannot be done to a prince, than to renounce his alliance, nor a greater honour than to contract one with him. There is nothing among men, that can be more honourable, or more useful to mankind, than to be always attentive to their preservation. But that the alliance may be binding, it must be just; so that an alliance concluded between two nations to oppress a third, is not lawful, and may be broke

without a fault. It is not suitable to the honour and dignity of a prince, to ally himself to a tyrant. An Egyptian monarch, once remonstrated to a king of Samos, upon his cruelty and tyranny, and called upon him to amend: as he did not, he sent him word that he renounced his friendship and alliance. Conquest of itself gives no right. When a society subsists, it is a security for peace and for reparation of injuries; and if it is destroyed, or dispersed, it is a monument of tyranny. Treaties of peace are so sacred among men, that they seem as if they were the dictates of nature, which reclaims its rights. They are always lawful, when the conditions of them are such, that both parties may preserve themselves: without which, that of the two societies which would perish, deprived of its natural defence by peace, may seek it by war. For nature, which hath established different degrees of strength and weakness among men, hath yet often made weakness equal to strength, by despair. This, Rhedi, is what I call the civil law; the law of nations, or rather the law of reason.

Paris, the 4th of the
moon Zilhage, 1716.

LET-

L E T T E R X C V I.

The chief Eunuch to USBEK, at PARIS.

THERE are a great many yellow women arrived here, from the kingdom of Visapour: I have bought one for thy brother, the governor of Mazenderan, who, about a month ago, sent me his sublime commands, and a hundred tomans. I understand women the better, because they do not surprisè me, and my eyes are not troubled by the motions of the heart. I have never seen so regular and perfect a beauty: her sparkling eyes enliven her face, and heighten the lustre of a complexion, capable of eclipsing all the beauties of Circassia. The chief eunuch of a merchant of Ispahan treated with me for her; but she disdainfully avoided his sight, and seem'd to court mine, as if she would have told me, that a mean merchant was unworthy of her, and that she was destined for a more illustrious husband. I confess to thee, I feel a secret joy within myself, when I think of the charms of this beautiful

tiful person : I fancy I see her entering into the seraglio of thy brother : I please myself with a foresight of the astonishment of all his wives : the haughty grief of some ; the silent, yet more mournful, distress of others ; the malicious pleasure of those who have nothing further to hope for, and the enraged ambition of those who yet have hope. I am travelling from one end of the kingdom to another, entirely to change the face of the seraglio : what passions am I going to provoke ! what fears and troubles am I preparing ! Yet, notwithstanding all this inward distress, there shall not be less outward tranquility : great revolutions shall be hid in the bottom of the heart : they shall be consumed with grief, and their joys restrained : their obedience shall be not the less exact, nor the government less severe ; that mild behaviour they are always obliged to show, shall spring up from the depth of their very despair. We have observed, the more women we have under our care, the less trouble they give us. A greater necessity of pleasing, less convenience for caballing, more examples of submission ; all these form their chains. Each of them continually watches the steps
of

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of the others ; it seems as if, in consort with us, they strived to render themselves more dependent : they do part of our work for us, and open our eyes when we shut them. What shall I say ? They continually stir up their master against their rivals, and see not how near they themselves are to be punished next. But all this, magnificent lord, all this is nothing without the master's presence. What can we do with this vain phantom of authority, which can never be entirely communicated ? We do but faintly represent the half of thyself : we can only show them an hateful severity. Thou temperest fear with hopes ; more absolute when thou carestest, than when thou only threatenest. Return thou, magnificent lord, return to these mansions, and carry through the whole of them thy empire. Come and assuage their despairing passions : come and remove every pretext to stray : come and appease murmuring love, and make even duty itself amiable ; come, lastly, and relieve thy faithful eunuchs from a burthen which every day grows more heavy.

From the seraglio at Ispahan,
the 8th of the moon Zil-
hage, 1716.

LET-

L E T T E R XCVII.

USBEK to HASSEIN, Dervise of the
Mountain of JARON.

O Thou, sage dervise, whose curious mind is resplendent with such a variety of knowledge, hearken to what I am going to say to thee. There are philosophers here, who, indeed, have not arrived at the pinnacle of oriental wisdom: they have not indeed been caught up to the throne of light: they have not heard the ineffable words echo from the consorts of angels, nor felt the awful impressions of a divine fury: but left to themselves, deprived of these holy assistances, they follow, in silence, the traces of human reason. Thou canst not believe how far this guide hath led them. They have dispersed the chaos, and have explained, by a simple mechanism, the order of the divine architecture. The author of nature hath given motion to matter; there was nothing more wanting to produce that prodigious variety of effects which we see in the universe. The laws which common legislators offer to us to regulate human society, are subject to alteration, like the minds of those who
form.

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form them, and the people who observe them: these men here talk nothing but of laws general, immutable, eternal, which are observed without any exception, with order, regularity, and an infinite readiness, in the great immensity of space. And what dost thou think, divine man, that these laws are? Thou imaginest, may be, that penetrating into the councils of the Eternal, thou shalt be astonish'd with the sublimity of deep mysteries: thou renouncest before hand, the power of comprehending; thou promisest thyself only admiration. But thou wilt soon change thy thoughts: they do not dazzle us with a false parade: the plainness of them have made them long misunderstood; and it was not till after much reflection, that all their fruitfulness and extensiveness were discovered. The first law is, that all bodies tend to form right lines, unless they meet with some obstacle which turns them out of them; and the second, which is no more than a consequence of the former, is that all bodies which move round a center, have a tendence to fly from it; because that the further it is removed, the more the line which it moves in, approaches to a right line. See, divine dervise, the key of nature

ture: here are the fruitful principles, from which they draw consequences which extend beyond our sight. The knowlege of five, or six, truths hath filled their philosophy full of wonders; and hath enabled them to effect more marvellous miracles than all those which are related to us of our holy prophets. For in short, I am persuaded that there is none of our doctors who would not have been embarrassed, if he had been asked to weigh in a balance, all the air which surrounds the earth, or to measure all the water which falls every year upon the surface of it; and who must not have thought more than once, before he could have told how many leagues sound travels in an hour? What time a ray of light takes up in its journey from the sun to us? How many fathoms it is from hence to Saturn? What is the curve according to which a ship should be cut, to make the best sailer that can possibly be? Perhaps if some divine man had embellished the works of these philosophers with lofty and sublime expressions; if he had mixed bold figures and mysterious allegories, he would have composed a noble work, which would have been inferior to none except the holy Alkoran. However, if it be necessary to tell thee what
I think,

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I think, I rarely give into the figurative style. Our Alkoran abounds with trifles, which to me always appear as such, altho' they rise with strength and liveliness of expression. At first it seems as if these inspired writings are only the divine ideas cloathed in the language of men. On the contrary we often meet in the Koran, the language of God, and the ideas of men, as if, by a marvellous caprice, the supreme being had dictated the words, and man had furnished the sentiments. Perhaps thou wilt reply, I talk too freely of things which are deemed most holy among us; this thou wilt believe is the fruit of that liberty, which distinguisheth the people of this country. No; heaven be praised, my head hath not corrupted my heart; and, while I breathe, Hali shall be my prophet.

Paris, the 15th of the moon
Chahban, 1716.

L E T T E R XCVIII.

USBK TO IBEN, at SMYRNA.

THERE is no country in the world where fortune is so inconstant as in this. A revolution of ten years shall precipitate the rich man into misery, and exalt
the

the poor man with rapid wings to the summit of affluence. The new made rich man admires the wisdom of providence, the poor man the blind disposal of fate. Those who collect the taxes, swim in the midst of treasures: there are among them few Tantaluses. Yet they come into this employment from extreme wretchedness. They are despised like dirt whilst they are poor, when they are rich, they are well enough esteemed; as they neglect nothing to acquire respect. At present they are in a terrible situation. They are going to erect a chamber of justice, called so, because it is to strip them of all their riches. They cannot transfer their effects, nor conceal them; for they are obliged to render a just account, upon pain of death; so that they are compelled to pass a very narrow straight, as I may say, between their lives and their money. To fill up their misfortune, there is a minister, remarkable for his wit, who honours them with his jokes, and is very merry upon all the deliberations of the council. They will not always find ministers disposed to make the people laugh; and they ought to take it kindly of him, for behaving so. The body of foot-men is more respectable in France than any where else:

else: it is a seminary of great lords; they fill up the vacancies in the other states. Those who compose it take place of the unfortunate great, of ruined magistrates, of gentlemen killed by the fury of war; and when they cannot supply them from among themselves, they raise up all the great families by the help of their daughters, who are a kind of dung, by which mountainous and barren lands are fattened. I find, providence, Ibben, wonderful in her manner of distributing wealth. If she granted it only to good men, it would not have been sufficiently distinguished from virtue, and men would never have been sensible of the insignificancy of riches. But when we examine who are the people most loaded with them, by despising of the rich, we shall come at last to contemn riches themselves.

Paris, the 26th of the moon
Maharran, 1717.

L E T T E R XCIX.

RICA TO RHEDI, at VENICE.

TH E caprices of fashion among the French are astonishing; they have forgot how they were dressed in the summer:

mer: they are even more ignorant how they shall dress this winter: but, above all, it is not to be believed how much it costs a husband to put his wife in the fashion. What should I get by giving thee a full account of their dress and ornaments? A new fashion would destroy all my labour, as it does that of their works; and before thou hadst received my letter, the whole would be changed. A woman who quits Paris, to go and pass six months in the country, is as antiquated at her return, as if she had been forgotten thirty years. The son does not know the portrait of his mother; so strange does the dress she was drawn in appear to him: he imagines it is some American who is there represented, or that the painter had a mind to express some fancy of his own. Sometimes the head dresses mount up gradually to a great height, and a sudden revolution makes them descend again at once. There was a time when the immense loftiness of them left the face of a woman in the middle of her body: another time, the feet occupied the same situation; the heels formed a kind of pedestals, which raised the women into the air. Who will credit this? The architects have often been obliged to raise,
lower,

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lower, and enlarge the doors, as the dress of the women required these changes ; and the rules of their art have been subjected to their caprice. You shall sometimes see, upon one face, a prodigious quantity of patches, and next day they all disappear again. The women formerly had shapes and teeth, at present they are not regarded. In this changeable nation, whatever an unlucky joker may say to the contrary, the daughters are differently formed from their mothers. It is the same in their behaviour and manner of life, as with their fashions : the French change their customs, according to the age of their king. The monarch might even be able to render this nation grave, if he would undertake it. The prince communicates his own sentiments to the court, the court to the city, the city to the provinces. The soul of the sovereign is a mold in which all the rest are formed.

Paris, the 8th of the
moon Saphar, 1717.

LET-

LETTER C.

RICA to the Same.

THE other day I wrote to thee about the great inconstancy of the French, in their fashions. Yet it is inconceivable to what a degree they are infatuated with them; they determine every thing by them: they are the rules by which they judge of the transactions of other nations: whatever is foreign, appears to them ridiculous. I confess to thee, I know not how to reconcile this madness for their customs, with the inconstancy with which they are daily changing them. When I tell thee that they despise every thing that is foreign, I speak only of trifles; for, upon important occasions, they seem to be diffident even of themselves, to their own degradation. They are very ready to allow other nations are wiser, provided they will allow that they are better dressed: they are quite willing to submit themselves to the laws of a rival nation, provided French peruke-makers may decide, like legislators, the shape of foreign perukes. To them nothing appears so glorious, as to see the taste of their cooks reign from north to
south,

south, and the ordonnances of their tire-women extended through all the toilettes of Europe. With these noble advantages, what does it signify to them if their good sense comes to them from abroad, and that they have taken from their neighbours every thing that relates to their government, political and civil? Who would think, that a kingdom, the most ancient, and the most powerful in Europe, should have been governed, above ten ages, by laws which were not made for them? If the French had been conquered, it would not be difficult to comprehend this: but they are the conquerors. They have abandoned the ancient laws, made by their first kings, in the general assemblies of the nation; and, what is more extraordinary, the Roman laws, which they have taken instead of them, were partly made, and partly digested by the emperors cotemporary with their legislators. And, that the theft might be complete, and that all their good sense might be derived from others, they have adopted all the constitutions of the popes, and made them a new part of their law; a new kind of slavery. In these latter times, they have, it is true, digested in writing, some statutes of cities and provinces;

vinces ; but they are almost all taken from the Roman law. This multitude of adopted, and, if I may say, naturalized, laws, is so great, that it oppresses equally justice and the judge. But these volumes of laws are nothing in comparison to that terrible army of glossers, commentators, and compilers ; a set of men as weak, as to the justness of their understanding, as they are strong from their number. This is not all : these foreign laws have introduced formalities, whose excess is a disgrace to human reason. It would be very difficult to determine whether formality hath been more hurtful, when it got into the law, or when it took place in physic : whether it hath ravaged more under the robe of the lawyer, than under the large hat of the physician ; and whether, in the one, it hath ruined more people, than it hath killed under the other.

Paris, the 17th of the
moon Saphar, 1717.



END of VOL. I.

