

# Persian Letters.

B Y

M. De MONTESQUIEU.

Translated from the FRENCH,

By Mr. F L L O Y D.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

V O L. II.

The FOURTH EDITION.

With several new LETTERS and NOTES.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. and R. T O N S O N, in the Strand.  
M D C C L X I I.



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E R R A T A:

- Page 33, line 23, for *Trimotta*, read *Irimetta*.  
— 38, line 9, *dele hundred*.  
— 70, line 11, for *ordennance*, read *ordinance*.  
— 146, line 9, for *deftable*, read *detestable*.  
— 126, line 27, for *unuebs*, read *Eunuchs*.



## Persian Letters.

### L E T T E R C I.

USBEK to \* \* \*.

**T**HEY are always talking here of the constitution. The other day, I went into a house, where the first person I saw, was a great fat man, with a ruddy complexion, who said, with a loud voice, I have published my mandate; I shall make no further answer to what you say; but read that mandate, and you will find that I have resolved all your doubts. I sweated

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much

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much to do it, said he, wiping his forehead with his hand, I had need of all my learning; and I was obliged to read many a Latin author. I believe so, said a man who was by; for it is a curious work, and I defy even the jesuit, who comes so often to see you, to compose a better. Read it then, replied the other, and you will be better instructed in these matters in a quarter of an hour, than if I had talked to you a whole day. Thus he avoided entering into a conversation, and exposing his insufficiency. But as he saw himself pressed, he was obliged to quit his intrenchments; and began to say, with a theological energy, a great many foolish things, supported by a dervise who showed the utmost respect to what he said. When two persons who were present denied him any of his principles, he presently cried out, it is certain, we have so determined it, and we are infallible judges. And how came you, said I to him then, to be infallible judges? Do not you perceive, replied he, that the holy spirit hath enlightened us? That is happy, returned I, for from the manner of your talking to-day,

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I perceive you have great need to be enlightened.

Paris, the 18th of the moon  
Rebiab, 1717.

L E T T E R C I I .

USBEK TO IBBEN, at SMYRNA.

**T**HE most powerful states in Europe, are those of the emperor, the kings of France, Spain, and England. Italy, and a large part of Germany, are divided into a great many little states, the princes of which are, strictly speaking, the martyrs of sovereignty. Our glorious sultans have more wives than some of these petty princes have subjects. The states of Italy, which are not so united, are more to be pitied, their dominions are as much exposed as so many caravanferas, they are forced to admit the first who come: they are therefore obliged to attach themselves to some great prince, and give him a share of their fears, rather than of their assistance. The

B 2

greater

#### 4 PERSIAN LETTERS.

greater part of the governments in Europe are monarchical, or rather they are so called: for I do not know whether there ever was one truly so; at least it is difficult that they should subsist long without being corrupted. It is a state of violence that always degenerates into despotism, or into a republic. The power can never be equally divided between the people and the prince; the balance is too difficult to be preserved: the power must decrease on one side, whilst it increases on the other; but the balance is generally in favour of the prince, who is at the head of the armies. Accordingly the power of the European kings is very great, and it may be said they have as much as they please: but they do not exercise it so extensively as our sultans; first, because they are not willing to offend the manners and religion of the people; secondly, because it is not their interest to extend it so far. Nothing more reduces princes to the condition of their subjects, than the immense power they exercise over them; nothing subjects them more to the turns and caprices of fortune. The custom, in some states, of putting to death all those who offend them, upon the least signal that  
that



that they make, destroys that proportion which ought to be observed between crimes and punishments, which is in a manner the soul of a state, and the harmony of empires; and this proportion, carefully observed by the Christian princes, hath given them a very great advantage over our sultans. A Persian who hath by imprudence, or misfortune, drawn upon himself the displeasure of his prince, is sure to die: the smallest fault, or the least caprice, reduces him to this necessity. But, if he had attempted the life of his sovereign, if he had designed to give up places of importance into the hands of the enemy, he still would but lose his life: he runs no greater risque in this latter case, than in the former. So that under the least disgrace, seeing certain death before him, and nothing worse to fear, he is naturally led to disturb the state, and to conspire against his sovereign, the only resource he hath left. It is not the same with the great men in Europe, from whom their disgrace takes away only the good-will and favour of their prince. They retire from court, and think of nothing but enjoying a quiet life, and the advantages of their birth. As they seldom

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lose their lives but for high-treason, they are fearful of falling into it, from a consideration of how much they have to lose, and how little to gain : this is the reason that we see few rebellions here, and few princes perish by violent deaths. If in that unlimited power our princes have, they did not take so many precautions for the security of their lives, they would not live a day ; and if they had not in their pay a great number of troops, to tyrannize over the rest of their subjects, their empire would not subsist a month. It is not above three or four ages ago, that a king of France took guards, contrary to the custom of those times, to secure himself from some Ruffians, whom a petty prince of Asia had sent to assassinate him : till then kings lived quiet in the midst of their subjects, as fathers amidst their children. Though the kings of France cannot, of their own motion, take away the life of any of their subjects, like our sultans, they have however always the power of extending mercy to all criminals : it is sufficient that a man hath been so happy as to see the august countenance of his prince, to remove his unworthiness to live. These monarchs are  
like

PERSIAN LETTERS. 7

like the sun, who carries warmth and life every where.

Paris, the 8th of the moon  
of the 2d Rebiab, 1717.

L E T T E R CIII.

USBEK to the Same.

**T**O pursue the subject of my last letter, hear what a sensible European said to me the other day. The worst method the Asiatic princes could take, is to shut themselves up as they do. They think to render themselves more respected: but they make the royalty respected, and not the king, and attach the minds of the subjects to a certain throne, and not to a certain person. That invisible power which governs, is always the same to the people. Though ten kings, who are known only by name, have their throats cut one after another, the subjects are sensible of no difference; it is just as if they had been governed by their spirits. If the detestable parricide of the great king Henry IV.

B 4

here

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here, had given his blow to one of the Indian kings, master of the royal signet, and of a great treasure which would have seemed to have been heaped up for him, he would quietly have assumed the reins of the empire, without any person's thinking to inquire after his king, or his family and children. We wonder that there is scarcely ever any change in the governments of the Eastern princes; whence comes this, if it is not that they are tyrannical and terrible? Changes cannot be effected, but by the prince, or by the people. Now, there, the princes will take care not to make a change, because, being in so high a degree of power, they have all they can have; if they were to make any change, it could not but be to their own prejudice. As to the subjects, if any one of them forms such a design, he cannot execute it upon the state; it would be necessary he should counterbalance immediately, a power formidable and always the only one, he wants time as well as the means: but he has no more than to go to the source of this power; and he wants nothing but an arm and a moment. The murderer mounts the throne, whilst the monarch descends, falls, and expires

## PERSIAN LETTERS. 9

pires at his feet. A malecontent, in Europe, thinks of carrying on some private intelligence; to go over to the enemy; to get some strong place into his power; to excite murmurings among the subjects. A malecontent, in Asia, aims directly at the prince, surprises, strikes, and overthrows: he blots out his very memory; in an instant slave and master, in an instant usurper and lawful. Unhappy the king who hath but one head! He seems to collect all his power upon it, only to point out to the first ambitious rebel the part where he may meet with it all together.

Paris, the 17th of the moon  
of the 2d Rebiab, 1717.

### L E T T E R C I V.

U S B E K to the Same.

**A**LL the people of Europe are not equally subject to their princes; for instance, the impatient humour of the English seldom give their king time to make his power heavy. Passive obedience

B 5

and

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and non-resistance are no virtues in their esteem. They say upon this head very extraordinary things. According to them, there is but one tie that can bind men, which is that of gratitude: a husband, a wife, a father and son, are not bound to each other, but either by the love they bear to one another, or by mutual services: and these different motives of acknowledgment, are the origin of every kingdom, and of all societies. But if a prince, very far from making his subjects live happy, endeavours to oppress and ruin them, the foundation of obedience ceases; nothing ties them, nothing attaches them to him, and they return to their natural liberty. They maintain that no unlimited power can be lawful, because it never could lawfully commence. For we cannot, say they, give to another more power over us, than we have ourselves: now we have not an unlimited power over ourselves; for instance, we cannot take away our own lives, no person then upon earth, conclude they, hath a right to such a power. High treason is nothing, according to them, but a crime committed by the weaker against the stronger, by disobeying him, in whatever manner

PERSIAN LETTERS. 11

manner he does so. Accordingly, the people of England, when they found themselves strongest in opposition to one of their kings, declared it to be high treason in a king to make war upon his subjects. They have therefore good reason to say, that the precept in their Koran, which enjoins obedience to the powers, is not very difficult to be followed, as it is impossible for them not to observe it; since it is not to the most virtuous that they are obliged to submit, but to the strongest. The English say, that one of their kings having overcome, and taken prisoner, a prince who disputed the crown with him, and reproaching him with his treachery and perfidiousness: it is not above a moment, replied the unfortunate prince, since it was decided which of us two is the traitor. An usurper declares all those to be rebels, who have not like him, oppressed their country: and, believing there are no laws where he sees no judges, forces respect to the caprices of chance and fortune, as to the decrees of heaven.

Paris, the 20th of the  
moon of the 2d Rebiab,  
1716

L E T-

## LETTER CV.

RHEDI TO USBEK, at PARIS.

**T**HOU talkest much to me in one of thy letters, of the arts and sciences cultivated in the west. Thou wilt be ready to regard me as a barbarian: but I know not if the benefit derived from them hath made amends to mankind, for the bad use to which they are daily applied. I have heard say, that the single invention of bombs, hath destroyed the liberty of all the people of Europe. The princes being no longer willing to intrust the guard of towns to the citizens who would surrender them at the first bomb, made that a pretext for keeping a large body of regular troops, with which they afterwards oppressed their subjects. Thou knowest, that since the invention of gun-powder, there is no place impregnable; that is to say, Usbek, that there is not any longer an asylum upon earth against injustice and violence. I always tremble, lest they should arrive at  
last,



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last, at the discovery of some secret, which may furnish them with a shorter way to destroy mankind, and to depopulate whole nations and whole kingdoms. Thou hast read the historians; reflect seriously upon them; almost all monarchies have been founded only upon the ignorance of arts, and have only been destroyed by their being too much cultivated. The ancient empire of Persia may furnish us with a domestic example. I have not been long in Europe: but I have heard wise men talk of the ravages of chymistry. It seems to be a fourth scourge, which ruins mankind, and destroys them singly, but continually; whilst that of war, plague and famine, destroys them in large bodies, but by intervals. How have we been benefitted by the invention of the compass, and the discovery of so many nations, who have rather communicated to us their distempers, than their riches? Gold and silver have been established by a general agreement, to be the price of all merchandizes, and the measure of their value, because these metals were scarce, and unfit for other uses: what benefit was it to us then, that they should become more common? and that to mark the value of any  
com-

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commodity, we should have two or three tokens instead of one? This was only a greater inconvenience. But, on the other hand, this invention hath been very hurtful to the countries that have been discovered. Whole nations have been discovered: and those who have escaped death, have been reduced to so cruel a slavery, that the relation of it makes the Mussulmans tremble. Happy ignorance of the children of Mahomet! Amiable simplicity, so dear to our holy prophet; thou dost always recal to my mind, the plain honesty of ancient times, and that tranquillity which reigned in the hearts of our first fathers.

Venice, the 5th of the moon  
Rhamazan, 1717.

L E T T E R C V I. <sup>N</sup>

USBEK TO RHEDI, at VENICE.

**T**HOU dost not think as thou sayest, or else thy actions are better than thy thoughts. Thou hast quitted thy country to gain knowledge, and thou despisest all instruction: thou travellest to improve thyself, in a country where they cultivate the  
polite

polite arts, and lookest upon them as hurtful. Shall I tell thee, Rhedi? I agree with thee more than thou dost with thyself. Hast thou well reflected on the barbarous and unhappy condition into which we should be sunk by the loss of the arts? There is no need to imagine it, we may see it. There are yet people upon earth, among whom an ape tolerably well taught, might live with honour; he would be nearly upon a level with the rest of the inhabitants, he would not be thought an odd being, nor a whimsical character, he would pass as well as another, and would even be distinguished for his politeness. Thou sayest, that almost all the founders of empires have been ignorant of the arts. I will not deny that these barbarous people may have, like an impetuous torrent, spread themselves over the earth, and covered with their savage armies, the most polite states: but, observe, they learned the arts, or made those they conquered exercise them, otherwise, their power would have passed away like the noise of thunder and tempests. Thou sayest thou art afraid, lest they should invent some crueller method of destruction than that now used.

No :

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No: if such a fatal invention should be discovered, by the law of nations it would be prohibited, and by the unanimous consent of nations, it would be suppressed. It is not the interest of princes to conquer by such means: it is their business to gain subjects, and not lands. Thou dost complain of the invention of gun-powder and bombs; you think it is bad that no place is any longer impregnable, that is, you think it is a bad thing that wars should be sooner terminated than they were before. Thou must have observed, in reading of history, that, since the invention of gun-powder, battles are much less bloody than formerly, because armies hardly ever mix among one another. And, if an art in some particular case, should be found prejudicial, ought it, on that account, to be rejected? Thou thinkest that the arts render the people effeminate, and by that means, are the cause of the fall of empires. Thou mentionest the ruin of the ancient Persians, which was the effect of their effeminacy: but this example is far from being decisive, since the Greeks who conquered them so often, and subdued them, cultivated the arts with much greater assiduity. When they

they say the arts make men effeminate, they do not in the least speak of those people who work at them; because they are never idle, which, of all vices, is that which weakens courage most. The question then is, as to those who enjoy the fruits of them. But, as in a polite country, those who reap the benefits of one art, are obliged to cultivate another, lest they should be reduced to a shameful poverty; it follows, that idleness and luxury are incompatible with the arts. Paris is, perhaps, the most luxurious city in the world, and refines the most upon her pleasures; and yet, perhaps, no people live harder than there. That one man may live in luxury, a hundred must be continually labouring. A lady takes it into her head, that she must appear at an assembly in a certain dress; from this moment, fifty artificers have no leisure either to eat, drink, or sleep: she commands, and is more readily obeyed than our monarch, for interest is the greatest monarch upon earth. This great application to labour, this thirst to grow rich, runs through every rank, from the artificers up to the greatest men. Nobody loves to be poorer than him who is next beneath him.

him. You may see, at Paris, a man who hath sufficient to live upon to the end of the world, who continually labours, and ventures the shortening of his days, to scrape up, as he says, wherewith to live. The same spirit prevails through the whole nation, nothing is seen there but labour and industry. Where then is the effeminate people of whom you talk so much? I will suppose, Rhedi, that in some kingdom they should suffer no arts but such as are absolutely necessary for the manuring of the lands; which are nevertheless very numerous; and that they should expel all those which only administer to pleasure, or curiosity; I will maintain, that this would be one of the most miserable states that hath ever been in the world. Though the inhabitants should have resolution enough to shift without so many things as their wants require, the people would decay daily, and the state would become so weak, that there would be no state so little that could not conquer it. It would be easy to discuss this at large, and to make thee sensible that the revenues of the subjects would be almost absolutely at an end, and consequently those of the prince. There would  
hardly

hardly be any of those mutual relations between citizens of the same faculties: they would see an end to that circulation of riches, and that increase of the revenues, which arise from the dependence of the arts one upon another: every one would live upon his land, and raise no more than what would be precisely necessary to keep him from starving. But as this sometimes is not the twentieth part of the revenue of the state, the number of the inhabitants must diminish in proportion, and there would be but a twentieth part of them remaining. Consider to how much the revenue of industry arises. Land produces annually to the owner but the twentieth part of its value; but with a pistole worth of colours, a painter will draw a picture that will produce him fifty. The same may be said of goldsmiths, workers in wool and silk, and every kind of artificers: from all which, we conclude, Rhedi, that, for a prince to be powerful, it is necessary his subjects should live in affluence, it is necessary he should endeavour to procure them every kind of superfluities, with as much attention as the necessaries of life.

Paris, the 14th of the  
moon Chalval, 1717.

LET-

## L E T T E R C V I I .

RICA to IBBEN, at SMYRNA.

I Have seen the young monarch. His life is very valuable to his subjects, it is not less so to all Europe, because of the great troubles his death might occasion. But kings are like the gods; and, whilst they live, we must believe them immortal. His countenance is majestic, but pleasing: a good education concurs with a happy disposition, and already promises a great prince. They say we can never know the character of these western princes, till they have passed these two trials, their mistress and their confessor. We shall soon see the one and the other, labouring to possess the mind of this, and he on this account will be the subject of great contentions. For, under a young prince, these two powers are always rivals; but they agree and unite together under an old one. A dervise hath a difficult part to support with a young prince; the king's strength is his weakness: but the other triumphs equally  
in



in his strength and weakness. At my arrival in France, I found the late king entirely governed by women: and yet, considering his age, I believe he had less occasion for them than any monarch upon earth. I one day heard a woman say: I must do something for this young colonel, I know his valour; I must speak to the minister. Another said, it is astonishing this young abbot hath been forgot; he must be a bishop; he is a man of birth, and I can answer for his conduct. However thou must not imagine that these women who held this conversation were favourites of the prince: they had not perhaps spoke to him twice in their lives; which yet is a very easy thing to do with European princes. But there is not a person who hath any employment at court, in Paris, or in the provinces, who hath not some woman, through whose hands all the favours, and sometimes all the injustice he can do, always pass. These women are constantly connected together, and make a kind of republic, the members of which are always busy mutually to succour and serve each other: it is a new kind of state within another: and a person at the  
court,

court, at Paris, or in the provinces, who sees the ministers, magistrates, and prelates, acting in their several stations, if he knows nothing of the women who govern them, is like a man indeed who sees a machine at work, but who is unacquainted with the springs that move it. Dost thou think, Ibben, that a woman agrees to be a mistress to a minister for the pleasure of lying with him? what a strange thought this would be! It is that she may every morning present him with five, or six, petitions: and the goodness of their natural disposition appears in the zeal which they have to do good to a great number of unhappy people, who procure them a hundred thousand livres a year. They complain in Persia, that the kingdom is governed by two or three women: but it is much worse in France, where the women in general govern, and not only assume the authority in gross, but even divide it among themselves by retail.

Paris, the last of the moon  
Chalval, 1717.

LET-

## LETTER CVIII.

USBEK to \* \* \*.

THERE are a kind of books here not at all known to us in Persia, and which seem to be much in fashion here: these are the journals. Lazy people are mightily pleased with reading them: they are hugely delighted with being able to run through thirty volumes in a quarter of an hour. In most of these books, the author hath hardly paid his usual compliments, but the reader is at his last gasp: he leads him half dead into a subject drowned in the midst of an ocean of words. One man hath a mind to immortalize himself in a *duodecimo*, this in a *quarto*, another in a *folio*: it is necessary then he should extend his subject in proportion; this he does without mercy, esteeming the labour of the poor reader as nothing, who kills himself in reducing what the author took so much pains to enlarge. I cannot find, \* \* \*, what merit there is in composing such kinds of work:  
I could

I could do the same easily enough, if I had a mind to ruin my health, and a bookseller. The great fault of these journalists is, that they speak only of new books; as if truth was always novel. It seems to me, that, till a man hath read all the ancient books, he hath no reason to prefer the new ones to them. But, when they impose it as a law upon themselves, never to speak of works but such as are just hot from the forge, they likewise lay themselves under another, which is, to be very tiresome. They take care not to criticise those books from which they make their extracts, for this reason, because they are not able; and indeed, what man is bold enough to make ten or a dozen, enemies every month. The generality of authors are like the poets, who will bear a hearty caning without complaining; but who, little tender of their shoulders, are so much more so of their works, that they know not how to bear the least criticism. A person therefore must take great care how he attacks them in so sensible a part; and the journalists are well acquainted with this. They therefore do just the contrary; they begin with praising the subject treated on;  
the

PERSIAN LETTERS. 25

this is their first folly : from thence they go on to praise the author, with forced encomiums ; for they have to do with people who are always in breath, ever ready to do themselves justice, and to attack, with a stroke of their pens, a fool-hardy journalst.

Paris, the 5th of the moon  
Zilcade, 1718.

L E T T E R C I X.

RICA to \* \* \*.

**T**HE university of Paris is the eldest daughter of the kings of France ; and the eldest by much ; for she is above nine hundred years old ; so that she now and then doats ; I have been told, that she had sometimes a great quarrel with some doctors, about the letter Q\*, which she would have pronounced like a K. The dispute grew so warm, that some were stript of their estates : the parliament was obliged to determine the difference ; and

\* He means the quarrel of Ramus.

## 26 PERSIAN LETTERS.

it granted permission, by a solemn arret, to all the subjects of the king of France, to pronounce this letter according to their own fancy. It was certainly very diverting to see the two most respectable bodies in Europe, employed in deciding in so vehement a manner about a letter in the alphabet! It looks, my dear \* \* \*, as if the heads of the greatest men idiotized when they meet together; and that where there are most people, there is so much the less wisdom. Great bodies always attach themselves so strongly to little things, and foolish customs, that essentials never come to be considered till afterwards. I have heard say, that a king of Arragon, having assembled \* the states of Arragon and Catalonia, the first meetings were employed in deciding what language the deliberations should be held in: the dispute was warm, and the states would have broke up a thousand times, if they had not thought of an expedient, which was, that the questions should be put in the Catalonian language, and the answers in that of Arragon.

Paris, the 25th of the moon  
Zilhage, 1718.

\* A. D. 1610.

LET-

## L E T T E R C X.

RICA to \* \* \*.

**T**HE part a pretty woman hath to conduct, is more important than may be imagined. Nothing is more serious than what passes every morning at her toilet, amidst her servants: a general of an army does not make use of more consideration how to place his right, or his *corps de reserve*, than she does to place a patch, which may fail of its end, but of which she hopes or foresees the success. What perplexity of mind, what thought, continually to be reconciling the interests of two rivals; to appear neuter to both, while she is resigned to the one and to the other; and makes herself the mediatrix in all the causes of complaint that she gives them! How busy in settling the order, and to appoint parties of pleasure, and to prevent every accident that may interrupt them! With all this, the greatest trouble is not to be, but to appear, diverted. Be

28 PERSIAN LETTERS.

as dull as you please, they will excuse you, provided they can but be thought to have been very merry. Some days ago, I was at a supper which some ladies gave in the country. All the way thither they were continually saying, however we must make ourselves very merry. We were very ill paired, and consequently grave enough. I must confess, says one of the women, that we are very merry: there is not to day in Paris so gay a party as ours. As I grew heavy, a woman jogged me, and said, Well, are not we in a charming good humour? Yes, answered I, yawning, I believe I shall burst myself with laughing. However, gravity got the better of our resolutions; and, as to myself, from one gape to another, I sunk into a lethargic sleep, which put an end to all my mirth.

Paris, the 11th of the moon  
Maharran, 1718.

LET-



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

USBEK, to \* \* \* .

**T**HE late king's reign was so long, that the end had made the beginning to be forgot. At present the fashion is, to be taken up with nothing but with the events that happened in his minority; and no body reads any thing now but the memoirs of those times.—See a speech which one of the generals of the city of Paris, made in a council of war: though I must confess I can conceive nothing very great in it.

‘ GENTLEMEN,

‘ Though our troops have been repulsed  
 ‘ with loss, I believe it will be very easy  
 ‘ for us to repair this misfortune. I have  
 ‘ composed six couplets of a song ready  
 ‘ to be published, which, I am persuaded,  
 ‘ will restore all our affairs to an equili-  
 ‘ brium. I have made choice of some ex-  
 ‘ lent voices, which, issuing from the ca-  
 ‘ vity of certain strong breasts, will won-

C 3

‘ derfully

## 30 PERSIAN LETTERS.

' derfully move the people. They are set  
 ' to an air, which, hitherto hath had a sin-  
 ' gular effect. If this does not do, we  
 ' will publish a print of Mazarine as hanged.  
 ' Luckily for us, he does not speak good  
 ' French \*, and so murders it that it is im-  
 ' possible but that his affairs must decline.  
 ' We do not fail making the people ob-  
 ' serve, with what a ridiculous accent he  
 ' pronounces †. A few days ago we  
 ' made such a ridicule of a blunder that he  
 ' made in grammar, that it hath been made  
 ' a joke of in every street. I hope, that  
 ' before eight days, the people will make  
 ' the name of Mazarine a general word to  
 ' express all beasts of burden and carriage.  
 ' Since our defeat, our music about origi-  
 ' nal sin §, hath so vexed him, that, not to  
 ' see all his party reduced to one half, he  
 ' hath been obliged to send back all his  
 ' pages. Recover yourselves then; take  
 ' courage; and be assured that we will  
 ' make

\* Cardinal Mazarine was an Italian by birth.

† The Cardinal being to pronounce the edict of the *Union*, he called it, before the deputies of the parliament, the edict of the *Onion*, which made the public very merry.

§ The sin of his being born a foreigner.

PERSIAN LETTERS. 31

‘ make him repass the mountains by the  
‘ force of our hisses.’

Paris, the 4th of the moon  
Chahban, 1718.

L E T T E R C X I I .

RHEDI TO USBEK, at PARIS.

**D**URING my stay in Europe, I employ myself in reading the ancient and modern historians : I compare one age with another : I have the pleasure of seeing them pass, as it were before me : and my mind is particularly engaged to those great changes which have made so great a difference between times and times, and the earth so little like itself. Thou hast perhaps considered a thing which is a continual subject of wonder to me. How comes the world to be so thinly peopled, in comparison to what it was formerly ? How hath nature lost the prodigious fruitfulness of the first ages ? Is she already in her old age, and sunk into a state of feebleness ? I staid above a year in Italy, where

C 4

I saw

## 32 PERSIAN LETTERS.

I saw nothing but the wrecks of the ancient Italy, so famous in past times. Though all the inhabitants live in the cities, yet are they entire deserts, and wholly depopulated: they seem to subsist now only to show the places where those potent cities stood, so much talked of in history. Some persons here pretend that the city of Rome alone, contained formerly more people than the greatest kingdom in Europe does at this day. There were some Roman citizens, who had ten, and even twenty thousand, slaves, without counting those who worked at their country houses: and as they reckon that there were four, or five hundred thousand citizens, we cannot fix the number of its inhabitants, without shocking imagination itself. In Sicily there were formerly powerful kingdoms, and numerous nations, who have since disappeared: this island is now considerable for nothing but its volcanoes. Greece is so deserted, that it doth not contain the hundredth part of its ancient inhabitants. Spain, formerly so crowded, now shows us only uninhabited countries; and France is nothing in comparison of that ancient Gaul described by Cæsar. The Northern countries are greatly stript; they

they are now far from being obliged, as formerly, to divide themselves, and to send out, like swarms, colonies and whole nations, to seek for new habitations. Poland, and Turkey, in Europe, have hardly any people. We cannot find in America, the fiftieth part of the men who once formed there such great empires. Asia is scarcely in a better state. That Asia Minor, which contained so many powerful monarchies, and such a vast number of great cities, hath now but two, or three. As to the greater Asia, that part of it which is subject to the Turk, is not more populous : as to that under the dominion of our kings, if compared with the flourishing state it formerly enjoyed, we shall find it hath but a very small share of those numberless inhabitants which it had in the times of the Xerxes's and Darius's. As to the petty states on the borders of these great empires, they are really deserts : such are the kingdoms of Trimetta, Circassia, and that of Guriel. These princes, with vast dominions, can hardly reckon up fifty thousand subjects. Egypt is not less deficient than other countries. In fine, I survey the whole earth, and I find nothing there but ruin and de-

cay: I think I see her just emerging from the ravages of plague and famine. Africa hath always been so little known, that we cannot speak so exactly of it as of other parts of the world: but if we consider only the Mediterranean coasts, which have been always known, we shall see that it hath greatly fallen from what it was under the Carthaginians and the Romans. At present her princes are so weak, that they are the most petty potentates in the world. According to a calculation as exact as can be made in matters of this nature, I find there is hardly upon the earth the tenth part of the people that there was in ancient times. And what is very astonishing, is, that it becomes every day less populous: and, if this continues, in ten ages, it will be no other than a desert. This, Ufbek, is the most terrible catastrophe that ever happened in the world. But we have hardly perceived it, because it hath arrived by degrees, and through the course of a great number of ages, which denotes an inward defect, a secret hidden poison, a languishing disease which afflicts human nature.

Venice, the 10th of the  
moon Rhegeb, 1718.

L E T.

## L E T T E R CXIII.

USBEK TO RHEDI, at VENICE.

**T**HE world, Rhedi, is not incorruptible; the heavens themselves are not; the astronomers are eye-witnesses of their changes; which are indeed the natural effects of the universal motion of matter. The earth is subject, like the other planets, to the laws of motion: and she suffers within herself, a perpetual conflict among her own principles: the sea and land seem engaged in an eternal war; every instant produces new conjunctions. Mankind, in an abode so subject to changes, are in a state likewise uncertain: a hundred thousand causes may act, capable of destroying them, and much more of increasing, or diminishing their number. I shall not mention to thee those particular catastrophes, so frequent among historians, which have destroyed cities and whole kingdoms: there are general ones, which have often put the human species within an inch of destruction. History is full of  
those

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those universal plagues, which have, by turns, desolated the whole earth; of one, among others, that was so violent that it blasted the very roots of the plants, and infected the whole known world, to the very empire of Cathay: one degree more of corruption would perhaps in a single day, have destroyed all human nature. It is not two centuries ago that the most shameful of all distempers was felt in Europe, Asia, and Africa; it wrought in a little time prodigious effects, that would have destroyed mankind, if it had continued its progress with the same fury. Depressed with disease from their birth, incapable of sustaining the weight of the duties of society, they must miserably have perished. What if the venom had been a little more exalted? and without doubt it would have become so, if they had not been so happy as to find out so powerful a remedy as that which hath been discovered. This disease, perhaps, attacking the parts of generation, would have affected generation itself. But why talk I of the destruction which might have happened to the human nature? Hath it not in fact arrived? and did not the deluge reduce it



to one single family? There are philosophers who maintain two creations; that of things, and that of man: they cannot conceive that matter and things have been created but six thousand years; that God deferred his works during all eternity, and did not use, but yesterday, his creative power. Was it because he could, or because he would, not? But, if he could not at one time, neither could he at another. It must be then because he would not: but, as there is no succession of time in God, if we admit that he willed any thing once, he willed it always, and from the beginning\*. However all historians mention a first father: they present us with the birth of human nature. Is it not natural to think that Adam was saved from some common destruction, as Noah was from the deluge; and that these great events have been frequent upon earth since the creation? But all these destructions have not been violent. We see many parts of the earth grown  
weary,

\* The former editions had here, as follows,  
 — ‘ We must not therefore pretend to count the  
 ‘ years of the world: the number of the grains  
 ‘ of sand upon the sea-shore, is no more to be  
 ‘ compared to them than one instant.’

38 PERSIAN LETTERS.

weary, as it were of furnishing subsistence to man: how do we know if the whole earth hath not in it general causes, slow and imperceptible, of this weariness? I was willing to give thee these general ideas, before I answered more particularly to thy letter of the decrease of mankind, which hath happened within these seventeen, or eighteen, hundred centuries. I shall show thee, in a succeeding letter, that, independent of physical causes, there are moral ones by which this effect may have been produced.

Paris, the 8th of the moon  
Chahban, 1718.

L E T T E R CXIV.

USBEK to the Same.

**T**HOU inquirest from what cause the earth is less populous than it was formerly; and, if thou considerest carefully, thou wilt find that this great difference comes from that which hath happened in our manners. Since the Christian  
tian

PERSIAN LETTERS. 39

tian and Mahometan religions have divided the Roman world, things have been greatly changed: these two religions have been far from being so favourable to the propagation of our species, as that of those lords of the universe. Among the Romans, polygamy was prohibited; and by that law it had a very great advantage over the Mahometan religion: divorces were also allowed, which gave it another and no less considerable advantage over the Christian. I find nothing so contradictory as this plurality of wives permitted by the holy Koran, and the order of satisfying them commanded in the same book. Converse with your wives, says the prophet, because ye are as necessary to them as their vestments, and they are as necessary to you as your own vestments. See here a precept which renders the life of a true mussulman very laborious. He who hath the four wives fettled by law, and only as many concubines, or slaves, must not he be weighed down with so many vestments? Your wives are your tillage, saith the prophet; apply yourselves therefore to your tillage: do good for your souls, and you shall one day find your recompence. I consider a good mussul-

mussulman as a champion, destined always to be fighting; but who, soon weakened and weighed down with his first fatigues, faints in the very field of battle, and finds himself, as may be said, to be buried beneath his own triumphs. Nature ever acts slowly, and as one may say, sparingly; her operations are never violent, even in her productions she requires temperance: she constantly goes on by rule and measure: if she is precipitated, she falls into a languor; she employs all her remaining strength for her own preservation, quite losing her productive virtue and generative power. It is to this state of debility we are always reduced by so great a number of women, who are fitter to exhaust, than satisfy, us. It is very common among us, to see a man with a very great seraglio, and yet a very small number of children; these children too are generally weak and unhealthy, and feel the imbecility of their fathers. This is not all: these women, obliged to a forced continence, have need of people to guard them, who can be none but eunuchs: religion, jealousy, reason itself, will permit no others to approach them: these guardians must be  
numerous,

PERSIAN LETTERS. 41

numerous, to the end they may maintain peace within doors amidst the continual contentions of these women, and prevent attempts from without. So that a man who hath ten wives, or concubines, must have no fewer eunuchs to guard them. But what a loss to society, so great a number of men, dead as it were from their birth! What depopulation must follow! The female slaves kept in the seraglio, to wait with the eunuchs, upon this great number of women, almost always growing old in an afflicting virginity: they cannot marry while they stay there; and their mistresses when once used to them, will hardly ever dismiss them. See how many persons of both sexes, a single man employs for his pleasures; they are dead to the state, and rendered useless in the propagation of the species. Constantinople and Ispahan are the capitals of the two greatest empires in the world: it is there that every thing ought to terminate, and where every body, drawn by a thousand different ways, should come from all parts. Yet even these cities decay of themselves, and would soon be destroyed, if the sovereigns did not, almost every century, make whole nations

nations remove thither to repeople them.—I will continue this subject in another letter.

Paris, the 13th of the moon  
Chahban, 1718.

## LETTER CXV.

USBK to the Same.

**T**HE Romans had not a less number of slaves than we; they had even more: but they made a better use of them. So far from hindering by violent means, the multiplication of their slaves, they on the contrary, favoured it all in their power; they coupled them, as much as they could, by a kind of marriage, by this means, they filled their houses with servants of both sexes, of all ages, and the state with an innumerable people. These children, who made in time the riches of their master, were born around him without number: he alone had the charge of their maintenance and education: their fathers, freed from this burden, followed

lowed wholly the inclination of their nature, and multiplied, without the fear of having too numerous a family. I have observed to thee, that among us, all the slaves are employed in guarding our women, and in nothing more; that they are, with respect to the state, in a perpetual lethargy: so that the cultivation of the arts, and of the land, is necessarily confined to some freemen, and some heads of families, who apply themselves to it as little as possible. It was not the same among the Romans. The republic served itself with very great advantage, by this generation of slaves. Each of them had his *peculium* \*, which he enjoyed upon such conditions as his master imposed upon him: with this *peculium*, he laboured, and applied himself in that way to which his ingenuity led him. This made himself a banker; another applied himself to commerce by sea; one sold goods by retail: another gave himself  
to

\* *Peculium* (from *peculum*, a little flock) this was among the Romans the stock of him who was in subjection to another, as a child of the family, or a slave: it consisted of what he was able to acquire by his own industry, without any assistance from his father, or master, but with his permission only.

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to some mechanic art, or else farmed and cultivated some lands : but there was none who did not apply himself, to his utmost power, to improve his *peculium*, which procured him, at the same time comforts in his present state of servitude, and the hope of being able, in some future time, to purchase his liberty : this made a laborious people, and encouraged arts and sciences. These slaves became rich by their care and labour, bought their freedom, and became citizens. The republic was thus continually replenished, and received into her bosom new families as fast as the old ones failed. I may, perhaps, in my following letters, have an opportunity to prove to thee, that the more men there are in any state, there commerce flourishes the more ; I may also as easily prove, that the more commerce flourishes, the more the number of people increases : these two things mutually assist and favour each other. If this is so, how much must this very great number of slaves, always at work, have grown and increased ? Industry and plenty gave them birth, and they in return gave birth to plenty and industry.

Paris, the 16th of the moon

Chahban, 1718.

LET-



## LETTER CXVI.

USBEK to the Same.

**H**ITHERTO we have spoken only of the Mahometan countries, and inquired into the reason why they are less populous than those which were subject to the government of the Romans: let us now examine what hath produced this effect among the Christians. Divorces were allowed in the Pagan religion, and forbidden to the Christians. This change, which at first may appear of so little consequence, had by degrees terrible effects, and such as are not easily to be believed. This not only took away all the sweets of marriage, but struck at its very end: desirous to tie the knot faster, they loosened it; and, instead of uniting hearts, as they pretended, they separated them for ever. In so free an action, and in which the heart ought to have so great a part, they put torment necessity, and even fate itself. They reckoned for nothing disgusts, caprices, and unfociable humours: they wanted

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to fix the heart, that is to say, that which is the most variable and inconstant thing in nature : they joined together, without the hope of a change, people tired of one another, and almost always ill matched : and did by them like those tyrants who used to tie living men to dead bodies. Nothing contributed more to a mutual attachment, than the power of divorce : a husband and a wife were induced to bear patiently domestic troubles, knowing they were masters of the power of ending them ; and they often retained this power in their hand all their life time, without using it, from this single consideration, that they were at liberty to do so. It is not the same with the Christians, their present vexations drive them to despair at the apprehension of those which are to come. They see nothing in the discomforts of marriage, but their continuance, or rather their eternity : hence arise disgusts, contentions, contempt ; and this is so much loss to posterity. Three years of marriage are scarcely past, but the essential design of it is neglected : thirty years of coldness follow : private separations are formed as strong, and perhaps more hurtful, than if they had been public :  
each

each lives apart his own way: and all this to the prejudice of future generations. A man, disgusted at having a wife for ever, soon gives himself up to loose women; a commerce shameful, and contrary to nature, which, without answering the end of marriage, represents at most but the pleasures of it. If, of two persons thus linked together, one be unfit to answer the design of nature, and the propagation of the species, either from constitution, or age, that party buries the other with itself, and renders the other equally useless. We are not therefore to wonder that we see, among the Christians, so many marriages produce so small a number of citizens. Divorce is abolished: marriages ill-formed are not to be rectified: the women do not pass, as among the Romans, successively through the hands of several husbands, who for the time, make the best they can of them. I dare say, if in a free state, like that of Lacedæmon, where the citizens were continually tormented by odd and subtle laws, and in which there was but one family, that of the republic, if it had been there established that the husbands might change their wives every year, it would have produced

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duced an innumerable people. It is very difficult to comprehend the reason that led the Christians to abolish divorces. Marriage, among all the nations of the world, is a contract capable of every kind of settlement; and none ought to be excluded from it but such as would have weakened the design of it. But the Christians do not consider it in this point of view: and they are at a good deal of trouble to explain themselves upon this subject. They do not make it to consist in the pleasure of sense: on the contrary, as I have already told thee, it seems as if they were desirous to banish it as much as they can; but it is with them an image, a figure, and some mysterious thing that I cannot at all comprehend.

Paris, the 19th of the moon  
Chahban, 1718.

LET-

## LETTER CXVII.

USBEK to the Same.

**T**HE scarcity of people in the Christian countries, is not to be ascribed solely to the prohibition of divorces: the great number of eunuchs which they have among them, is not a less considerable occasion of it. I mean the priests and de-vises of both sexes, who devote themselves to perpetual continence: this is, among the Christians, a virtue of virtues; in which I cannot comprehend any virtue, not knowing how that can be a virtue, which is productive of nothing. I find their doctors plainly contradicting themselves, when they say that marriage is holy, and that celibacy, which is opposite to it, is more holy; without considering, that in a matter of precepts and dogmas, the good is always the best. The number of these people professing celibacy is prodigious. Fathers used formerly to condemn their children to it from their infancy; at present they devote themselves to it at fourteen years

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of age, which comes very near to the same point. This practice of continence hath been the loss of more men than ever have been destroyed by the plague, or the most bloody wars. We see in every religious house, an endless family, where no body is born, and who are maintained at the expence of every body else. These houses are always open, like so many pits, wherein future generations are buried alive. This is very different policy from that of the Romans, who established penal laws against those who avoided the law of marriage, and who wanted to enjoy a liberty so opposite to the public good. I have yet only spoken of Catholic countries. In the Protestant religion every body enjoys the right of propagation; it allows neither of priests nor dervises \* : and if, at the establishment of this religion, which brought back every thing to the standard of the primitive times, its founders had not been continually reproached with incontinence, it is not to be doubted but that after having rendered the practice of marriage universal, they would likewise have softened

\* I suppose he means monks and nuns.

softened the yoke, and have concluded with entirely removing the barrier which in this case, separates the Nazarene from Mahomet. But, however that might have been, it is certain that the religion of the Protestants gives them a very great advantage over the Catholics. I might venture to say, that in the present state of Europe, it is not possible the Catholic religion should subsist there five hundred years. Before the reduction of the power of Spain, the Catholics were greatly stronger than the Protestants. The latter are gradually come to an equality with them. The Protestants are grown richer and more powerful, and the Catholics weaker. The Protestant countries ought to be, and really are, better peopled than those of the Catholics; from whence it follows, first, that their public revenues are more considerable, because they are augmented in proportion to the number of those who pay them: secondly, that their lands are better cultivated: lastly, that trade flourishes better there, because there are more people who have their fortunes to make; and where there are more wants, there will be more resources to supply them. When

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there are only a sufficient number of people to cultivate the lands, trade must needs perish ; and where there are no more than necessary for carrying on of trade, the cultivation of the lands must be neglected : which is indeed to say, that both must sink together, because no person can apply himself to one, but the other must suffer. As to the Catholic countries, not only the cultivation of their lands is neglected, but even their industry is hurtful ; it consists only in learning five or six words of a dead language \*. With this attainment, a man need not trouble himself about his fortune ; he will find in a cloister a life of ease, which in the world would have cost him labour and pains. This is not all : the dervises have in their hands all the riches of the state ; they are a society of misers, who are always receiving, but never restore ; they are continually heaping up their revenues, to acquire a large capital. So much wealth, if we may be allowed the expression, falls into a dead paly ; and there is no more circulation,

no

\* I suppose he means that small portion of Latin necessary to say mass.



PERSIAN LETTERS. 53

no more trade, no more arts, no more manufactories. There is no Protestant prince who does not raise from his people much greater taxes than the pope does from his subjects: yet these latter are poor, whilst the former live in affluence. Trade gives life to every thing among the one, but monkery carries death among every thing belonging to the others.

Paris, the 26th of the  
moon Chahban, 1718.

L E T T E R CXVIII.

USB EK to the Same.

**A**S we have nothing further to say of Asia and Europe; let us pass on to Africa. But as we do not know the innermost parts of it, we can hardly say any thing of it except of the coasts. Those of Barbary, where the Mahometan religion is established, are not so well peopled, as they were in the times of the Romans, for the reasons I have already mentioned. As to the coasts of Guinea, they must

D 3 have

54 PERSIAN LETTERS.

have been terribly stript in two hundred years, that the petty kings, or heads of villages, sell their subjects to the European princes, to be transported to their colonies in America. What is very extraordinary is, that this very America, which receives every year so many new inhabitants, is itself a desert, and gains no advantage by the continual losses of Africa. The slaves who are removed into another climate, perish there by thousands; and the labour of the mines in which the natives of the country and the strangers are continually employed, the malignant vapours that arise from them; the quicksilver which they are obliged always to use, destroy them without remedy. Nothing can be more ridiculous than to destroy an innumerable number of men, to take out of the bowels of the earth gold and silver: those metals in themselves absolutely useless, which are only riches because they have been fixed upon for the marks of riches.

Paris, the last of the moon  
Chahban, 1718.

L E T-

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

U S B E K to the Same.

SOMETIMES the fruitfulness of a people depends upon the minutest circumstances in the world ; in such a manner that often nothing is necessary but a new turn in the imagination, to render them much more numerous than they were. The Jews so frequently exterminated, and always multiplying, have repaired their continual losses and destructions, by this single hope, which reigns amongst all their families, of seeing the birth of a powerful king, who shall be lord of the whole earth. The ancient kings of Persia had not had so many thousand subjects, but on account of this dogma in the religion of the Magi, that the most pleasing acts to God that men can do, are, to get a child, manure a field, and to plant a tree. If China contains such a prodigious number of people, it arises only from a certain way of thinking : for as the children regard their fathers as Gods ; whom they respect as such in

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this life, whom they honour after their deaths by sacrifices ; in that they believe that their souls, extinguished in the Tyen \*, resume a new life ; every one therefore is induced to increase a family so dutiful in this life, and so necessary in the next. On the contrary, the countries of the Mahometans every day become deserts, from an opinion, which, all holy as it is, yet is not without very hurtful consequences, when it is rooted in the mind. We should consider ourselves as travellers who ought to have all our thoughts fixed upon another country : but all useful and permanent labours, every care to secure fortunes for our children, schemes which reach beyond this short and transitory life, appear as things extravagant. Indolent to the present, and unsollicitous for what is to come, we take no trouble, to repair public buildings,

\* The original is very obscure : *anéantes dans le Tyen.* — As by *Tyen*, the Chinese not only mean the Sovereign Lord of all things, but also call the father of a family *Tyen* ; perhaps the sense of the passage is this : ‘ they believe that their parents souls extinct ‘ in the *Tyen*,’ that is, in the father, ‘ resume a new ‘ life.’ — I hazard this conjecture, and if mistaken, should be glad of better information from any intelligent reader.

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ings, to clear uncultivated lands, nor to manure those that are deserving of our cares: we live in a general state of insensibility, and leave every thing to be done by providence. It was a spirit of vanity that established among the Europeans the unjust law of primogeniture, so unfavourable to propagation, in that it directs the attention of a father to only one of his children, and turns his eyes from all the others; in that it obliges him, in order to make a solid fortune for one only, to hinder the settlement of the rest; lastly, in that it destroys the equality of citizens, which constitutes all their wealth.

Paris, the 4th of the moon  
Rhamazan, 1717.

LETTER CXX.

USBK to the Same.

COUNTRIES inhabited by savages are usually thinly peopled, from the aversion they almost always have to labour and the cultivation of lands. This un-

D 5

happy

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happy aversion is so strong, that when they would make an imprecation against one of their enemies, they wish nothing more than that he may be obliged to manure a field ; thinking no exercise noble and worthy of them, except hunting and fishing. But as there are often years in which hunting and fishing afford very little, they are desolated by frequent famines : besides that there is not any country where game and fish is so plentiful, as to afford subsistence to a numerous people, because animals always fly from places too much inhabited. Besides the hords of the savages, with two, or three, hundred inhabitants in each, seperated from one another, and having interests as different as those of two empires, can never support themselves ; because they have not the resources of great states, whose parts all unite and mutually assist each other. There is another custom among the savages, not less prejudicial than the first ; the cruel custom among the women of procuring abortions, that their bigness may not render them disagreeable to their husbands. There are terrible laws here against this crime ; they carry them even to excess. Any woman  
who

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who does not declare her pregnancy to a magistrate, is punished with death, if her fruit is lost : shame and modesty, nay accidents themselves, do not excuse them.

Paris, the 9th of the moon  
Rhamazan, 1718.

L E T T E R CXXI.

USBEK to the Same.

**T**HE ordinary effect of colonies is the weakening of the countries from which they are drawn, without peopling that to which they are removed. Men ought to remain where they are : there are disorders contracted by changing a good for a bad air ; and others which come from changing at all. The air, like plants, is charged with the particles of each country. It so acts upon us, that our constitution is fixed by it. When we are removed into another country, we grow sick. The fluids being accustomed to a certain consistency, the solids to a certain habit, and both to a certain degree of motion,

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motion, cannot admit of others ; and resist a new habit. When a country is a desert, it is a sign that there is some particular bad quality in the nature of the earth or climate : so, that when we take men from a happy climate ; to send them into such a country, we act directly contrary to the end we designed. The Romans knew this by experience ; they banished all their criminals into Sardinia, and made the Jews go there too. They were obliged to be contented with their loss ; which the contempt they had for those wretches made very easy to them. The great Cha-Abas, inclined to deprive the Turks of the means of supporting great armies upon his frontiers, transported almost all the Armenians out of their own country, and sent more than twenty-thousand families into the province of Guilan, who almost all perished in a little time. All the removals of people to Constantinople have never succeeded. The vast numbers of Negroes, whom we have already mentioned, have not filled America. From the destruction of the Jews, under Adrian, Palestine hath been uninhabited. It must then be allowed that great depopulations are scarcely to be repaired ;



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repaired ; because a people reduced to a certain degree, continue in the same state : and if, by chance, they are re-established, it must be the work of whole ages. But if, in a state of decay, the least of the circumstances, already mentioned, happens to occur, it not only can never repair itself, but decays every day, and approaches to its utter destruction. The expulsion of the Moors out of Spain is now as much felt as at the first day : so far is that vacancy from being filled up, that it becomes greater every day. Since the devastation of America, the Spaniards, who have taken place of its ancient inhabitants, have not been able to repeople it : on the contrary, by a fatality, which I might better call the divine justice, the destroyers destroy themselves, and daily consume away. Princes therefore must not think of peopling large countries by colonies. I do not say they never succeed : there are some climates so very favourable, that the inhabitants multiply there continually, witness those islands \* which were peopled by some distempered people whom  
some

\* The author perhaps means the island of Bourbon.

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some ships left there, and where they soon recovered their health. But though such colonies should always succeed, instead of increasing the power, they only divide it; unless they are but of small extent; as those are where they send some to inhabit a place for the convenience of trade. The Carthaginians, as well as the Spaniards, discovered America, at least some large islands in which they carried on a very great trade: but when they found the number of their inhabitants decreased, this wise republic forbid their subjects that trade and navigation. I may venture to say, that instead of sending Spaniards into the Indies, they ought to make all the Indians and all the Metifs remove into Spain: and if only half of those great colonies were preserved, Spain would become the most formidable power in Europe. We may compare empires to a tree, whose branches if extended too far, draw all the sap from the trunk, and serve only for a shade. Nothing is properer to cure the arduous desire in princes of making distant conquests, than the examples of the Portuguese and Spaniards. These two nations, having conquered, with inconceivable

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ble rapidity, immense kingdoms, more astonished at their own victories, than the conquered people were at their own defeat, considered of the means to preserve them, and took each for that end a different way. The Spaniards, despairing of keeping the conquered nations in subjection, determined to exterminate them, and sent thither more loyal people from Spain; never horrible design was more punctually executed. A people as numerous as all those of Europe together, were cut off from the earth, at the arrival of these Barbarians, who seemed, in discovering the Indies, to have thought only of discovering to mankind the utmost reach of cruelty. By this barbarity, they kept the country under their government. Judge by this what fatal things conquests are, since the effects are such as these: for in short this terrible expedient was the only one. How was it possible they could have kept so many millions of men in their obedience? How could they have supported a civil war at such a distance? What would have become of them, if they had given time to those people to have recovered from the consternation they were in at the arrival of these new Gods, and at the terror of  
their

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their thunder? As to the Portugueze, they took a quite contrary method; they did not make use of cruelties: therefore they were soon drove out of all the countries they had discovered. The Dutch favoured the rebellion of those nations, and profited themselves by it. What prince would envy the lot of these conquerors? Who would enjoy these conquests upon such conditions? The one were soon driven out, the others made nothing but deserts, and rendered their own countries the same. It is the fate of heroes to ruin themselves by conquering of countries which they suddenly lose again, or by subduing of nations which they themselves are obliged to destroy; like that madman who ruined himself by buying statues which he threw into the sea, and glasses which he broke as soon as he had purchased them.

Paris, the 18th of the moon  
Rhamazan, 1718.

L E T.

## L E T T E R CXXII.

U S B E K to the Same.

**T**H E propagation of mankind is vastly promoted by a mild government. All republics are certain proofs of this ; and above all others, Swisserland and Holland, which are the two worst countries in Europe, if we consider the nature of their land, and which are nevertheless the best peopled. Nothing invites strangers more than liberty and wealth which always follow the former : the first is searched after for its own sake ; and we are led by our wants into the country where the latter is to be acquired. The species increase itself in a country where the plenty of it supports the children without diminishing the substance of their fathers. The equality of citizens, which commonly produces an equality in their fortunes, brings plenty and life into every part of the body politic, and extends them through the whole. In countries subject to an arbitrary power it is not the same : the prince, the courtiers,

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courtiers, and some private persons, possess all the riches, whilst all the rest groan beneath extreme poverty. If a man is in bad circumstances, and is sensible that his children would be poorer than himself, he will not marry; or if he does marry, he will be afraid of having too great a number of children, who may complete the destruction of his fortune, and sink into the condition of their father. I own that the rustic or peasant, being once married, will people that state alike, whether he be rich or poor; this consideration does not affect him, he hath always a sure inheritance to leave to his children, which is a plough, and nothing prevents him from blindly following the instinct of nature. But what purpose, in a state, do those numbers of children answer, who languish in misery? Almost all of them perish as soon as they are born: they seldom thrive: weak and feeble they die by retail, a thousand different ways, whilst others are carried away wholesale by frequent popular distempers, which poverty and a bad diet always produce: those which escape, reach the age of manhood, without having the strength of it, and languish all the remainder of  
their

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their lives. Men are like plants, that never flourish if they are not well cultivated: among a miserable people, the species loses, and even sometimes degenerates. France can supply us with a sufficient proof of this. In the late wars, the fear all the youths were in of being enrolled in the militia, forced them to marry, and this at too tender an age, and in the bosom of poverty. From so many marriages, sprung such numbers of children, which are now looked for in vain, and whom misery, famine and sickness have destroyed. Now if in so happy a climate, in a kingdom of so much policy as France, such remarks as these may be made, what may be done in other states?

Paris, the 23d of the moon  
Rhamazan, 1718.

LET.

## L E T T E R CXXIII.

USBEK TO MOLLAK MAHOMET ALI,  
keeper of the three sepulchres, at COM.

**T**HE fastings of the Imaums, and the sack-clothes of the mollaks, what do they profit us? Twice hath the hand of God been heavy upon the children of the law: the sun is obscured with clouds, and seems to give light only to their defeats: their armies assemble, and they are dispersed like the dust. The empire of the Osmalins is shaken by two such blows as it never before received: a Christian Musti \* supports it with difficulty: the grand vizier of Germany is the scourge of God, sent to chastise the followers of Omar: he carries every where the wrath of heaven, incensed by their rebellion and perfidiousness. Sacred spirit of the Imaums, night and day thou weepest over the children

\* Cardinal Alberoni, who persuaded the king of Spain to fall upon the emperor, A. D. 1717, when he was engaged in a war with the Turks.



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children of the prophet, whom the detestable Omar hath misled: thy bowels are moved at the sight of their misfortunes; thou desirest their conversion, and not their destruction; thou wouldst willingly see them united under the banner of Hali, by the tears of the saints; and not dispersed among the mountains, and in the deserts, by the terror of the infidels.

Paris, the 1st of the  
moon Chalval, 1718.

L E T T E R CXXIV.

USBEK to RHEDI, at VENICE.

**W**HAT can be the motives of those immense liberalities which princes lavish upon their courtiers? Would they attach them to them? They have already gained them as much as they can. And, besides, if they gain some of their subjects by bribing them, they must by that very means, lose a prodigious number of others by impoverishing them. When I think on the situation of princes, always surrounded

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rounded with avaritious and insatiable men ; I cannot but pity them : and I commiserate them the more, when they have not courage enough to refuse demands always burthensome to those who ask nothing. I never hear talk of their liberality ; of the favours and pensions which they grant, without indulging myself with a thousand reflections : a crowd of ideas offer themselves to my mind : I think I hear this ordonnance published : ‘ The indefatiga-  
 ‘ ble courage of some of our subjects, in  
 ‘ asking pensions from us, having, with-  
 ‘ out ceasing, fatigued our royal magnifi-  
 ‘ cence, we have at last consented to the  
 ‘ multitude of requests presented to us,  
 ‘ which have hitherto been the greatest  
 ‘ uneasiness of the throne. They have re-  
 ‘ presented to us, that they have never failed,  
 ‘ since our accession to the throne, attend-  
 ‘ ing at our levee ; and that we have al-  
 ‘ ways seen them, as we passed along, im-  
 ‘ moveable as the boundaries of land ; and  
 ‘ that they have greatly raised themselves  
 ‘ above the shoulders of others, to behold  
 ‘ our serenity. We have even received  
 ‘ several petitions from some of the fair  
 ‘ sex, supplicating us to observe, that it  
 ‘ is

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‘ is notorious that they are of a very re-  
‘ served conversation : and some of them  
‘ who are very ancient, shaking their  
‘ heads, have intreated us to consider  
‘ that they have been the ornaments of  
‘ the courts of the kings our predeceffors ;  
‘ and that if the generals of our armies  
‘ rendered the state formidable by their  
‘ military actions, they no less rendered  
‘ the court celebrated by their intrigues.  
‘ Therefore desirous to treat these sup-  
‘ pliants graciously, and to grant them all  
‘ their petitions, we have commanded what  
‘ follows :—That every labourer, having  
‘ five children, shall daily retrench the  
‘ fifth part of the bread he gives them.  
‘ We also enjoin fathers of families to  
‘ make a diminution from each in their  
‘ house, as justly as can be made. We  
‘ expressly forbid all those who apply  
‘ themselves to improve their estates, or  
‘ who let them out in farms, to make any  
‘ repairs in them of what kind soever.  
‘ We also order, that all persons who ex-  
‘ ercise low trades and mechanics, who  
‘ have never been at the levee of our ma-  
‘ jesty, shall hereafter purchase no clothes,  
‘ for themselves, their wives, and their  
‘ children,

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‘ children, but once in every four years :  
‘ further, strictly forbidding them those  
‘ little rejoicings which they were accus-  
‘ tomed to make in their families upon  
‘ the principal festivals in the year. And,  
‘ for as much as we are informed, that  
‘ the greatest part of the citizens of our  
‘ good towns are wholly engaged in pro-  
‘ viding an establishment for their daugh-  
‘ ters, who have made themselves respec-  
‘ table in our state, only by a dull joyless  
‘ modesty ; we order that they delay mar-  
‘ rying them, till they having attained to the  
‘ age appointed by ordonnances, may have  
‘ it in their power to oblige them to it.  
‘ We charge our magistrates not to take  
‘ care of the education of their children.’

Paris, the 1st of the moon  
Chalval, 1718.

L E T.

## LETTER CXXV.

RICA to \* \* \*.

**I**N all religions men are at a great loss, when they attempt to give an account of the pleasures appointed for those who have led good lives. The wicked may be easily terrified by a long detail of pains and torments, with which they are threatened; but as for the virtuous they know not what to promise them. It seems to be the nature of pleasures to be of short duration, the imagination can hardly form to itself any others. I have read descriptions of Paradise, capable of disgusting every sensible person. The happy shades, according to the fancy of some, are continually playing on the flute, others condemn them to the punishment of eternally walking about; others in short make those above to be always raving after their mistresses here below, not thinking a hundred millions of years long enough to make them get quit of their amorous inquietudes. I remember, on this occasion,

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a story


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a story I heard told by a person who had been in the country of the Mogul ; which shows that the Indian priests are no less fruitful than others in the ideas they have of the pleasures of Paradise.—A woman who had just lost her husband, went in form to the governor of the city to ask his leave to burn herself : but as in the countries subject to the Mahometans, they abolish this cruel custom as much as they can, he absolutely refused her. When she saw her prayers were in vain, she flew into a furious passion. How tormenting, said she, is this ! A poor woman is not even permitted to burn herself when she hath a mind to it ! Was ever the like seen ? My mother, my aunt, my sisters, they all were happily burnt. And, when I come to beg leave of this cursed governor, to be permitted to burn myself, he falls into a passion, and raves like a madman. There happened to be present a young Bonze : infidel, said the governor to him, is it you who have instilled this madness into the mind of the woman ? No, replied he, I never spoke to her ; but if she will be guided by me, she shall perform her sacrifice ; she will do an action agreeable

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agreeable to the God Brama : and she shall also be well recompensed ; for she shall find in the other world, her husband, and be joined to him again by a second marriage. What do you say ? cried the woman in a fright—I shall find my husband again ? Ah ! I will never burn myself.—He was jealous, stupid, and besides so old, that, if the God Brama hath made no reformation in him, he certainly hath no need of me.—Burn myself for him !—not even the end of my finger to take him out of the bottom of hell. Two old Bonzes deceived me, who knew what kind of life I led with him, and took care not to tell me this : but, if the God Brama hath no other present to make me, I renounce this blessedness, Mr. governor, I turn Mahometan. And for you, said she, looking at the Bonze, you may, if you please, go tell my husband I find myself extremely well.

Paris, the 2d of the moon  
Chalval, 1718.



## L E T T E R CXXVI.

RICA to USBEK, at \* \* \*.

**I** Expect thee here to-morrow : mean time I send thee thy letters from Ispahan. Mine bring word that the ambassador from the great Mogul hath received orders to quit the kingdom. They add, that they have arrested the prince, uncle to the king, and who had the care of his education, that they have carried him to a castle, where he is closely guarded; and have deprived him of all his honours. I am touched with the misfortune of this prince, and pity him. I own to thee, Usbek, I never saw the tears of any person trickle down, without being moved to compassion : I have the feelings of humanity for the unhappy, as if none but they were men : and even the great, towards whom I find my heart as stone whilst they are in prosperity, I love them when they are fallen. And indeed, during their prosperity what need have they of tenderness ? It looks to much like equality. They are fonder of respect, which requires



## PERSIAN LETTERS. 77

no return. But as soon as they are fallen from their high station, nothing but our lamentations can make them recal the idea of their greatness. I think there is something very natural and very great in the speech of a prince, who, being very near falling into the hands of his enemies, seeing his courtiers round about him weeping : I find, said he to them, by your tears, that I am still your king.

Paris, the 3d of the  
moon Chalval, 1718.

## L E T T E R CXXVII.

RICA to IBBEN, at SMYRNA.

**A** Thousand times thou hast heard talk of the famous king of Sweden ; he was besieging a place, in the kingdom of Norway ; as he was visiting the trenches, with only one engineer, he received a shot in his head which killed him. They immediately arrested his prime minister \*,

\* Baron Gortz.

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the states assembled, and condemned him to lose his head. He was accused of a very great crime; namely, of calumniating the nation, and depriving them of the confidence of their king: an offence that in my opinion merits a thousand deaths. For in short it is a bad action to blacken the lowest subjects, in the mind of their king; what is it then to traduce a whole nation, and to deprive them of the goodwill of him whom providence hath made choice of to render them happy? I would have men speak to kings, as the angels spoke to our holy prophet. Thou knowest that, in the sacred banquets, where the Lord of Lords descends from the most sublime throne in the world, to communicate himself to his slaves, I made a severe law to myself, to restrain an unruly tongue. They never heard me utter a single word that might have been disagreeable to the meanest of his subjects. Though I happened to lose my sobriety, I never lost my honesty; and in that trial of our fidelity, I ventured my life, but never my virtue. I know not how it happens, but there is scarcely a king so bad, but his minister is still worse; if he  
commits

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commits a bad action, he is almost always prompted to it : insomuch, that the ambition of princes is never so dangerous, as the baseness of soul in his counsellors. But can you comprehend, that a man, who was a minister but yesterday, who may be deprived of his place to-morrow, can become in a moment an enemy to himself, his friends, his country, and to the people who are to be born of those whom he is about to oppress? A prince hath passions ; the minister works upon them : it is by their means that he directs his ministry ; he hath no other aim, nor will he observe any other. The courtiers mislead him by their flattery, and he flatters him more dangerously by his counsels, by the designs he inspires him with, and by the maxims he proposes to him.

Paris, the 25th of the moon  
Saphar, 1719.

## L E T T E R CXXVIII:

RICA to USBEK, at \* \* \*.

**T**HE other day, as I was passing over the *Pont-neuf*, with a friend of mine, he met a man of his acquaintance, who, he told me, was a geometrician; and indeed every thing in him showed him such: for he was in a deep meditation; my friend was obliged to pull him a long time by the sleeve, and to jogg him, to make him descend from his sublime speculations; he was so busied with a curve, which he had been perhaps eight days about. Great civilities passed between them, and they mutually informed each other of the literary news. This conversation led them to the door of a coffee-House, into which I went with them. I observed that our geometrician was received there with the utmost officiousness, and that the coffee-house boys paid him much more respect than to two musqueteers, who were in a corner of the room. As for him, he seemed as if he thought himself in an agreeable place:  
for

or he unwrinkled his brow a little, and laughed, as if he had not the least tincture of the geometrician in him. In the mean time he measured every thing that was said in conversation. He resembled a person in a garden, who with a sword cuts off all the heads of the flowers that rise up above the rest. A martyr to regularity, he was offended at every start of wit, as a tender eye is by too strong a light. Nothing was indifferent to him, if so be it were true; accordingly his conversation was singular. He was come that day out of the country, with a person who had been to view a noble seat and magnificent gardens; but he saw nothing but a building of sixty foot in front, by five and thirty in depth, and a wood of ten acres: he wished that the rules of perspective had been so observed, that the walks of the avenues might have appeared throughout of one and the same breadth; and he would have laid down for that end, an infallible method. He seemed very well satisfied with a dial he found there, of a very singular make, and was mighty angry at a learned man, who sat next me, who unhappily asked if the dial showed the

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Babylonian hours. A newsmonger talked of the bombardment of the castle of Fontarabbia : and he presently informed us what kind of lines the bombs described in the air ; and delighted with the knowledge of this, he was contented to remain entirely ignorant of the success of the bombardment. A gentleman complaining, that the winter before he had been ruined by an inundation : what you say pleases me much, said the geometrician, I find I am not mistaken in the observation I made, and that at least, there fell upon the earth two inches of water more than the year before. A moment after, he went out, and we followed him. As he walked very fast, and never looked before him, he run full against another man : it was a rough rencounter, and, from the percussion, each rebounded back, in proportion to his velocity and bulk. When they were a little recovered from their dizziness, the man, with his hand on his forehead, said to the geometrician, I am very glad you run against me, for I have great news to tell you : I have just now published my *Horace*. How ! replied the geometrician, *Horace* hath been published these two thousand

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thousand years. You do not understand me, says the other, it is a translation of that ancient author, which I have just now published : I have been twenty years engaged in translations. How, sir ! answered the geometrician, have you been twenty years without thinking ? You speak for others, and they think for you ? Sir, says the learned man, do not you believe that I have rendered a great service to the public, by making the reading of good authors familiar to them ? I do not say absolutely so : I esteem as much as another the sublime genius whom you have translated : but you do not at all resemble him ; for, if you should translate for ever, you will never be translated yourself. Translations are like copper money, which bear in proportion, an equal value with a piece of gold, and are even sometimes of far greater use to the people, but they are always light, and of a bad alloy. You are desirous, you say, to revive among us these illustrious dead ; and I own that you give them indeed a body : but you do not restore life to them, there is still wanting a spirit to animate them. Why do not you rather apply yourself to the  
search

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search of a thousand glorious truths, which an easy calculation discovers to us every day? After this advice, they parted, I suppose, not much pleased with each other.

Paris, the last of the moon  
Rebiab, 1719.

### L E T T E R CXXIX.

USBEK TO RHEDI, at VENICE.

**T**HE greater part of the legislators were men of confined understandings, whom chance put at the head of others, and who scarcely consulted any thing but their own prejudices and fancies. They appear not to have known the greatness and dignity of their employment: they amused themselves in forming childish institutions, by which, indeed, they conformed themselves to weaker understandings, but disgraced themselves with men of good sense. They plunged themselves into disadvantageous circumstances; and run into particular cares: which is  
the



the sign of a narrow genius, which sees things only by parts, incapable of taking a general view. Some affected to make use of a language different from the vulgar; an absurd thing in a maker of laws; for how should the people observe what they do not understand? They often abolished needlessly, those laws that were established; thereby, plunging the people into disorders inseparable from changes. It is true, that on account of a strange turn that springs rather from the head than the heart, it is sometimes necessary to change certain laws. But it is an uncommon case; and when it happens, it should be touched with a timorous hand: they ought to observe much solemnity in doing it, and conduct it with such precautions, that the people may naturally conceive that the laws are very sacred, since so many formalities are necessary to be observed in repealing them. They have often made them too refin'd, and have followed logical ideas, rather than natural equity. In process of time they were found to be severe; and men thought themselves obliged in equity to deviate from them; but this remedy was a new inconvenience. Be  
the

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the laws of what nature they will, they should be always punctually adhered to, and considered as the conscience of the publick, to which that of individuals should always be conformable. We should however acknowledge, that some legislators have by one regulation discovered great prudence, they have given fathers a great share of authority over their children. Nothing contributes more to the ease of the magistrates ; nothing more prevents the courts of justice from being crowded ; nothing more firmly establishes tranquility in a state, where morality always makes better citizens than laws can make. Of all sorts of authority this is the seldomest abused : this is the most sacred sort of magistracy ; it is the only one which does not owe its origin to any contract, but has even preceded all contracts. It has been observed, that in the countries where the greatest share of power is lodg'd in the hands of parents, the families are always best regulated : fathers are representatives of the Creator of the Universe, who, though he might bind men to serve him through love alone, has thought proper to attach them to him still stronger by the motives of  
hope

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hope and fear. I cannot finish this letter, without putting you in mind of the capriciousness of the French. It is said that they have retained many things in the Roman laws, which are either useless, or worse; and they have not borrowed from them the paternal authority, which they represent as the basis of all lawful authority.

Paris, the 4th day of the  
moon of the 2d Gem-  
madi, 1719.

L E T T E R CXXX. ]

RICA to \* \* \*.

I Shall in this letter give thee an account of the race of Quidnuncs, who assemble in a magnificent garden, where their leisure finds constant employment. They are of no manner of use to the state; and were they to talk fifty years without pausing, their discourse would produce no greater effect than a silence of the same duration: yet they think themselves men  
of

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of importance, because they harangue upon glorious projects, and talk of grand interests. A curiosity at once frivolous and ridiculous is the basis of their conversation : no cabinet can be so mysterious, but they pretend to dive into its secrets : they will not allow themselves to be ignorant of any thing ; they know how many wives our august Sultan has, how many children he begets every year ; and though they are at no expence to hire spies, they are acquainted with the measures to humble the emperor of the Turks and the Great Mogul. Scarcely have they exhausted the present, but they plunge deep into futurity ; and taking the lead of providence, they prevent it in all its conduct towards man. They lead a general by the hand, and after having praised him for many follies, of which he never was guilty, they make him commit a thousand more, which will never come to pass. They make armies fly like cranes, and the walls of cities fall as easily as the walls of a card-house : they have bridges upon all the rivers, secret roads upon every mountain, immense magazines upon burning sands : in fine, they want but one thing,  
and

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and that is good sense. A man who lodges in the same house with me, received the following letter from a Quidnunc : as it appeared somewhat extraordinary, I kept it, and shall give it to you in this place.

‘ Sir,

‘ I am seldom mistaken in my conjectures upon public affairs. Upon the  
‘ first of January, 1711, I foretold that  
‘ the emperor would die within the year :  
‘ it is true, as he was then in good health,  
‘ I was apprehensive of becoming an object of ridicule, if I declared my sentiments in express terms ; for which  
‘ reason I used expressions somewhat enigmatical ; but all rational people easily  
‘ guessed my meaning. He died of the  
‘ small-pox in the same year, upon the  
‘ 17th of April. As soon as war was  
‘ declared between the emperor and the  
‘ Turks, I went through every corner  
‘ of the Tuilleries in quest of our gentlemen : I assembled them near the  
‘ basin, and prophesied to them that Bel-  
‘ grade

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' grade would be besieged and taken. I  
 ' had the happiness of seeing my pre-  
 ' diction fulfilled. It is true, about the  
 ' middle of the siege, I laid a wager of  
 ' 100 pistoles, that it would be taken on  
 ' the 18th of August: it was however  
 ' taken the day after: is it not provoking  
 ' to lose when so near the mark? When I  
 ' saw the Spanish fleet invade Sardinia, I  
 ' imagined they would reduce the island:  
 ' I said so, and my conjecture was justified  
 ' by the event. Encouraged by this suc-  
 ' cess, I added, that this victorious fleet  
 ' would make a descent at Final, in order  
 ' to reduce the Milanese. As this opi-  
 ' nion met with opposition, I was resolved  
 ' to support it nobly: I laid a wager  
 ' of 50 pistoles, and I lost a second-time:  
 ' for that confounded cardinal Alberoni,  
 ' in violation of the faith of treaties,  
 ' sent his fleet to Sicily, and proved  
 ' at once too hard for two great poli-  
 ' ticians, I mean the duke of Savoy and  
 ' myself. All this, sir, has so greatly  
 ' disconcerted me, that I have formed a  
 ' resolution to foretel henceforward with-  
 ' out ever betting. Formerly the practice  
 ' of betting was unknown at the Tuille-  
 ' rics,

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‘ ries, and the count de L—— would  
 ‘ never suffer them; but since a consi-  
 ‘ derable number of petit maîtres has  
 ‘ mixed with our society, we scarce know  
 ‘ what to do. Scarce can we open our  
 ‘ lips, to tell a piece of news, but one of  
 ‘ these youngsters offers to lay a wager  
 ‘ that it is not true. The other day, as I  
 ‘ was opening my manuscript, and settling  
 ‘ my spectacles upon my nose, one of  
 ‘ these flashy gentlemen, catching at the  
 ‘ pause I made between the first and se-  
 ‘ cond word, told me, I’ll hold a hundred  
 ‘ pistoles to the contrary. I affected not  
 ‘ to have taken notice of this extrava-  
 ‘ gance, and speaking in more empha-  
 ‘ tical terms, I said, the marshal of \* \* \*  
 ‘ having learned —— that is false, said  
 ‘ he, you always propagate extravagant  
 ‘ intelligence; there is not common sense  
 ‘ in what you say. Sir, you would greatly  
 ‘ oblige me by lending me fifty pistoles,  
 ‘ for these wagers have been the occasion  
 ‘ of great perplexity to me. I herewith  
 ‘ send you the copy of two letters, which  
 ‘ I have wrote to the minister.’

The

The Letter of an Intelligencer to the  
Minister.

‘ MY LORD,

‘ I am one of the most loyal subjects the  
 ‘ king ever had. It was I that prevailed on  
 ‘ a friend, to put in execution the project I  
 ‘ had formed of a book to prove to a De-  
 ‘ monstration, that Lewis the great was by  
 ‘ all Means the greatest Prince that ever  
 ‘ was surnamed the great. I have been  
 ‘ moreover a long time employed in an-  
 ‘ other work, which will contribute to raise  
 ‘ our national glory still higher, if your  
 ‘ eminence will grant me a privilege ; my  
 ‘ design is to prove that since the foun-  
 ‘ dation of the monarchy, the French  
 ‘ never lost a battle ; and that what histo-  
 ‘ rians have hitherto said of our having  
 ‘ been sometimes worsted, is utterly false  
 ‘ and groundless. I am obliged to set  
 ‘ them right upon many occasions ; and I  
 ‘ think I may say, without vanity, that I  
 ‘ have great Talents for Criticism.

‘ I am, My Lord,’ &c.

My



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‘ MY LORD,

‘ As we have lost the Count de L——  
‘ we beg you will be so kind as to give  
‘ us leave to elect a president. Great  
‘ confusion begins to prevail in our con-  
‘ ferences; and state affairs are not in  
‘ them treated with as much method and  
‘ regularity as they have been formerly :  
‘ our young men live without the least  
‘ respect for the old, and without any  
‘ subordination amongst themselves; it is  
‘ a true council of Roboam, in which the  
‘ young keep the old in awe. It is in vain  
‘ for us to remonstrate to them, that we  
‘ were in possession of the Tuilleries long  
‘ before they were born. I am inclined to  
‘ think they will at last drive us out of  
‘ it; and that being deprived of the Asy-  
‘ lum where we had often called up the  
‘ Shades of our French Heroes, we shall  
‘ be obliged to assemble in the king’s  
‘ garden, or in some more remote place.

‘ I am,’ &c.

Paris, the 7th day of  
the moon of the 2d  
Gemmedi, 1719.

LET-

## L E T T E R CXXXI.

RHEDI TO RICA, at PARIS.

SINCE my arrival in Europe, nothing has more engaged my curiosity, than the history and origin of republics. You are not ignorant that most of the Asiatics have not even an idea of this form of government, and that the powers of imagination have not yet enabled them to conceive that there can be on earth any other form but the despotic. The first governments of which we have any knowledge were monarchical, it was merely by accident, and the succession of ages, that republics were at length formed. Greece having been overflowed by a deluge, new inhabitants came to people it: it drew all its colonies from Egypt and the neighbouring countries of Africa: and as those were governed by kings, the people who came from thence were governed in the same Manner. But the tyranny of these princes becoming insupportable, they shook off the yoke; and from the ruins of so many

many kingdoms, sprung those republics which caused Greece so greatly to flourish, and rendered it the model of politeness, whilst surrounded with barbarous nations. The love of liberty, and the aversion to kings, long preserved Greece in a state of independence, and made the republican form of government become every day more extensive. The cities of Greece made alliances with some cities of Asia Minor: they sent thither colonies as free as themselves, which served them as ramparts against the enterprizes of the kings of Persia. This is not all; Greece peopled Italy; Italy Spain, and perhaps Gaul. It is well known that the great Hisperia, so much renowned amongst the Antients, was at first the Greece considered by neighbouring nations as a blissful abode; the Greeks who could not find that happy place of residence at home, went in quest of it to Italy; those of Italy to Spain, those of Spain to Betica or Portugal. So that all these regions went by that appellation amongst the antients. These Greek colonies brought with them a spirit of liberty, which they had contracted in that mild country. It is for this reason we do  
not

not meet with any example of a monarchy in Italy, Spain, or Gaul, during these ancient ages. It will be soon seen that the people of the North, and of Germany, were no less free: and if any traces of kingly government are thought to be found amongst them, this may easily be accounted for, as the commanders of armies, and the chief magistrates of republics have frequently been taken for kings. All this happened in Europe, for Asia and Africa have always groaned beneath the yoke of despotism, excepting only the cities of Asia Minor which have been spoken of above, and the republic of Carthage in Africa. The Empire of the world was shared by two powerful republics, I mean those of Rome and Carthage: no part of history is less known than that of the origin of the republic of Carthage. We are totally in the dark with regard to the succession of African princes, from the time of Dido, as well as of the manner in which they were deprived of their power. The prodigious grandeur of the Roman commonwealth would have been an advantage to the world in general, if there had not been that unjust distinction between the  
citizens

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citizens of Rome and the conquered nations, if the governors of provinces had not been invested with an authority so considerable, if the just laws established in opposition to their tyranny, had been always put in execution, and if they had not, in order to render them of no effect, availed themselves of the very treasures which they had amassed by their injustice. Cæsar destroyed the Roman commonwealth, and made it subject to an arbitrary power. Europe long groaned under a military and violent government, and the mild sway of the Romans was converted into a cruel oppression. In the mean time an infinite number of nations, never before heard of, poured out of the North, and spread like torrents all over the Roman provinces; as these found it equally easy to make conquests, and to exercise piracy, they dismembered the empire, and founded other kingdoms upon its ruins. These people were free; and the authority of their kings was so limited, that they could properly be called only their chiefs, or generals. Thus these kingdoms, though founded by force, never once felt the conqueror's yoke. When

the people of Asia, for example, the Turks and Tartars, made conquests whilst under the command of a single person, they had nothing else in view but to procure him new subjects, and to establish his violent authority by the force of arms ; but the people of the North, free in their own country, when they seized upon the Roman provinces, did not allow their chiefs much authority ; nay some of these people, as the Vandals in Africa, and the Goths in Spain, went so far as to depose their kings, when they were dissatisfied with their conduct : and amongst others, the authority of the prince was limited in a variety of manners : a great number of the nobility shared it with him ; wars were never waged without their concurrence : the spoils were divided between the chief and the soldiers ; no tax was levied in favour of the prince ; the laws were made in the national assembly, and upon this fundamental principle were formed all the states that rose out of the ruins of the Roman empire.

Venice, the 20th of the  
moon Rhegeb, 1719.

L E T-

## L E T T E R CXXXII.

RICA to \* \* \*.

I Happened to be five or six months ago in a coffee-house: there I observed a gentleman tolerably well dressed, who had got an audience about him: he spoke of the pleasure of living at Paris: he lamented the necessity he lay under of retiring to languish away his life in the country. I have, said he, an estate of fifteen thousand livres a year in land; and I should think myself much more happy, if I had one quarter of it in money and portable effects. It is to no purpose for me to bear hard upon my tenants, and put them to expence by frequent law-suits, this only makes them less able to pay. I can never see a hundred pistoles at a time. If I was to owe ten thousand livres, all my land would be seized on, and I should be reduced to an hospital. I went out, without giving much attention to all this conversation; but happening to be yesterday in the same part of the town, I

F 2

entered

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entered the same house, and I there saw a grave man, with a long pale visage, who sat melancholy and pensive in the midst of five or six praters, at length beginning somewhat abruptly, he said, with a loud voice, Gentlemen I am ruined, I have nothing left to live upon : for I have now at home two hundred thousand livres in bank bills, and a hundred thousand crowns in money : I am in a most melancholy situation ; I thought myself rich, and now I find myself reduced to beggary : if I had but a small estate in the country to retire to, I should at least be secure of a subsistence ; but I have not the breadth of this hat in land. Happening to turn my head on the other side, I saw a man who made such grimaces, that one would have thought him possessed. Who can we trust for the future, exclaimed he. There is a villain whom I had so good an opinion of, and thought so sincerely my friend, that I lent him money : he paid me again ! what black perfidy and ingratitude is this ; let him do what he will, he will never be able to retrieve my good opinion. Near him was a man very ill dressed, who lifting up his eyes to heaven, said, God prosper  
the



the projects of our ministers, may the actions rise to two thousand livres, and the footmen of Paris be richer than their masters! I had the curiosity to ask his name. The answer I received was, he is a very poor man, and has a poor trade: he is a genealogist, and he hopes that his art will become profitable, if these changes of fortune continue, and that all the new-rich will have occasion for him to reform their names, furbish up their ancestors, and adorn their coaches. He has a notion that he will have it in his power to make as many persons of quality as he thinks proper, and he exults within himself to think, that the number of his customers will increase. At last I saw an old man enter, pale and thin, whom I knew to be a coffee-house politician before he sat down: he was not one of those who are never to be intimidated by disasters, but always prophecy of victories and success: he was one of those timorous wretches who are always boding ill. Our affairs, said he, are in a very bad situation in Spain, we have no horse upon the frontiers; and it is to be feared that the prince Pio, who has a considerable body, will levy contributions

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upon the whole province of Languedoc. There sat opposite to me a philosopher of a tolerably shabby appearance, who seemed to despise the politician, and shrugged his shoulders in token of contempt, whilst the other elevated the tone of his voice. I approached him, and he whispered in my ear, you see how that coxcomb talks of his apprehensions for Languedoc: and I for my part yesterday perceived a spot in the sun, which, if it should increase, might cause a general dissolution of nature, and yet I did not say a single word about it.

Paris, the 17th of the moon  
Rhamazan, 1719.

L E T T E R CXXXIII.

RICA, to \* \* \*.

I Went the other day to see a great library at a convent of dervises, who are in some measure the proprietors of it, but who are obliged to give admittance to all comers, at stated hours. Upon entering,  
I beheld

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I beheld a serious personage, who walked amidst a prodigious number of surrounding volumes. I went up to him, and begged he would be so kind as to inform me what those books were which I saw so much better bound than the rest. Sir, said he, I am here as the inhabitant of a foreign country, I know no body. Many besides you have proposed such questions to me; but you cannot think it reasonable that I should read all these books, in order to give them information; my librarian here can satisfy your curiosity, for he is busied night and day in decyphering what you see here; he is a very worthless member, and a great burthen to us, because he does nothing for the convent. But the bell rings to call me to the refectory. Those who, like me, are at the head of a society, should be the first to assist at all the exercises peculiar to it. The monk having spoke thus, pushed me out, shut the door, and disappeared, just as if he had possessed the art of flying.

Paris, the 21<sup>st</sup> of the moon  
Rhamazan, 1719.



## L E T T E R CXXXIV.

RICA to the Same.

**I** Yesterday returned to the same library, where I met with a man very different from him whom I had seen before. His air was simple, his countenance lively, and his address affable. As soon as I signified to him my curiosity, he prepared to gratify it, and even to instruct me, as I appeared to be a stranger. Reverend father, said I, what are those books with which all that side of the library is filled? Those are the works of the interpreters of scripture, answered he. There is a prodigious number of them, replied I; scripture must have been formerly very obscure, but very perspicuous at present. Can there possibly be any doubts remaining? Can there possibly be any controverted points? Can there possibly! answered he, good God! can there possibly! There are almost as many doubts as verses. Indeed, said I, what good then have the writings of these authors done? These authors, answered he, have not searched

searched the scriptures, for what should be believed, but what they believed themselves; they did not consider the scriptures as books containing the opinions they were bound to embrace, but as a work which might give a sanction to their own opinions: for this reason, they have every where corrupted its sense, and put forced constructions upon every passage. It resembles a country, which men of every sect invade, and to which they go as it were to pillage; it is a field of battle, where the hostile nations that meet have frequent engagements, where they attack each other, and where they have skirmishes of various sorts. Not far from these you see the ascetic books, or books of devotion; then follow the books of morality, which are of much greater utility; theological tracts, doubly unintelligible, both on account of the subject there treated of, and the manner in which it is treated; the works of the mystics, that is of such devotees as have hearts addicted to love and tenderness. Hold reverend father, one moment, said I; let me hear something of those mystics. Sir, said he, devotion warms a heart naturally inclined;

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clined, and causes the animal spirits to mount up to the brain, so as to warm it in the same manner: from hence proceed ecstasies and ravishing visions. This state may be called the delirium of devotion; it often attains to the perfection of, or rather degenerates into quietism: you cannot be ignorant that a quietist is nothing else but a man that is at once mad, devout, and a libertine. Behold there the casuists who reveal the secrets of the night; who form in their imagination all the monsters that the demon of love is capable of producing, combine, compare them, and make them the constant objects of their thoughts; happy is it for them if their heart is not caught in the snare, and does not itself become an accomplice in so many debaucheries, so exactly and so plainly described. You see, sir, that I think freely, and that I freely discover my thoughts. I am naturally of an open disposition, and more with you who are a stranger, and who desire to understand things, and know their true nature. If that was my way of thinking, I should speak of all these things with a tone of astonishment; I should every moment use  
the

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the terms, that is divine, that is excellent; this abounds with the marvellous; and the consequence would be, that I should either impose upon you, or lessen myself in your opinion. There our conversation ended. it was suddenly interrupted by the dervise's being called upon about some business of the convent.

Paris, the 23d of the moon  
Rhamazan, 1719.

L E T T E R CXXXV.

RICA to the Same.

**I** Returned at the appointed hour; and my new acquaintance conducted me to the very place where we parted. Behold here, said he, the grammarians, the glossary makers, and the commentators. My reverend father, said I, have not all these a dispensation from having common sense? Yes, answered he, they have, and no body is ever the wiser: their works are neither the better nor the worse for it; and this is a great privilege they are invested with.  
That.

That is very just, said I, and I know many philosophers who would do wisely to attach themselves to sciences of this nature. Here, continued he, you may see the orators who are endowed with the talent of persuading without ratiocination; and the geometricians who force a man to assent to their arguments whither he will or no, and convince him by downright force. Here you see the metaphysical treatises which turn upon interests so important, and in which infinity every where occurs; and the treatises upon natural philosophy, the authors of which can discover no more of the marvellous in the œconomy of the vast universe, than in one of the most simple machines made by human art. Books of physic, those monuments of the frailty of human nature, and the power of art; which fill us with terror, even in treating of the slightest disorders, they bring death so near our view; but which renders us equally secure, when they treat of the virtues of remedies, as if they could confer immortality upon us. Near them are the books of anatomy, which do not so properly contain the description of the parts of the human body, as the barbarous names  
by



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by which they are called ; which can never cure the sick man of his disease, nor the physician of his ignorance. Here are the chymists, who sometimes inhabit hospitals, and sometimes mad-houses, which are dwellings equally well suited to them. Here again are the books which treat of the occult science, or rather of occult ignorance ; such are those which contain something concerning the magic art : these are execrable in the opinion of many, altogether contemptible in mine. Such likewise are the books of judicial astrology. How can you say that, father, the books of judicial astrology, replied I, with vivacity. These are the very books which are most esteemed in Persia, they regulate all the actions of our lives, and determine our will in all our undertakings : the astrologers may properly be called our directors ; they do more than direct us, they are concerned in the government of the state. If that be the case, said he, you live under a government much more severe than that of reason : this must be the most capricious government imaginable : I greatly pity a family, and much more a nation, that suffers the planets to have such powerful influence over it. We  
use

## PRO PERSIAN LETTERS.

use astrology, answered I, just in the same manner as you use algebra. Every nation has a peculiar science, according to which it regulates its politics. All our astrologers put together never committed so many absurdities in our Persia, as a single algebraist has done here. Can you think that the fortuitous meeting of the stars is not as sure a rule of conduct as all the fine reasoning of your builder of systems. If the votes upon that subject were to be reckoned up both in France and Persia, astrology would soon triumph over algebra; you would soon see the calculators greatly humbled, what terrible inferences might be drawn against them from hence? Our dispute was interrupted, and we were under a necessity of parting.

Paris, the 26th of the moon  
Rhamazan, 1719.

E. E. T.

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LETTER CXXXVI.

RICA to the Same.

**A**T our next interview, my learned instructor conducted me into a separate apartment. Here, said he, are the books of modern history. Behold here the authors of church history, and the lives of the popes; these are books which I read for edification, but which in me often produce a quite opposite effect. In that place are those who have wrote concerning the decline of the formidable empire of the Romans, which sprung from the ruin of so many monarchies, and upon the ruins of which so many new ones were founded; an infinite number of barbarous nations, as little known as the countries which they inhabited, appeared all of a sudden, overrun it, ravaged it, tore it to pieces, and founded all the kingdoms which you now see in Europe. These people cannot properly be called Barbarians, because they were free, since being universally subjected to a despotic power, they lost that delightful

ful liberty which is so conformable to reason, humanity, and nature. Here you will see the historians of the German empire, which is only a shadow of the first empire; but which is, I think, the only power upon earth which has not been weakened by faction; the only power, I must repeat it, which acquires strength from its losses, and which, slow in availing itself of its success, becomes invincible by its defeats. Here are the French historians, in which we first see the regal power form itself, perish twice; then recover itself again, and languish during a succession of ages; but collecting strength, and being increased in every particular, at last arrives at its final period: like those rivers which in their course lose their waters, or hide themselves under the earth; then shewing themselves again, and swelled by the rivers, which flow into them, rapidly hurry away whatever opposes itself to their passage. There you see the Spanish nation pour itself forth from certain mountains: the Mahometan princes subdued as slowly as they had rapidly conquered: so many kingdoms united in one vast monarchy, which became almost the only one; till overwhelmed by its own greatness, and its  
false

PERSIAN LETTERS. 113

false opulence, it lost its forced reputation, and retained nothing but the pride with which it was inspired but its former power. Here are the English historians, in which we constantly see liberty rekindled by the flames of discord and sedition, the prince always tottering upon a throne not to be shaken, a nation impatient but prudent even in its sallies of passion, and which being possessed of the empire of the sea (a thing unheard of till then) unites commerce with power. Not far from thence are the historians of that other queen of the sea, the republic of Holland, so much respected in Europe, and so formidable in Asia, where its merchants see so many kings fall prostrate before them. The Italian historians represent to us a nation once mistress of the world, become the slave of all the others; its princes divided and weak, and having nothing of sovereignty to boast, besides its vain policy. Here are the historians of the republics of Switzerland, which is the emblem of liberty; of Venice, whose only refuge is in its economy; and of Genoa, that has nothing to boast of but its buildings. Here are those of the North, and amongst others, of  
Poland,

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Poland, which makes so bad a use of its liberty, and the right it is possessed of, of electing its kings, that one would think its intention is thereby to console the neighbouring nations, which have lost both. Hereupon we parted till the next day.

Paris, the 2d of the moon  
Chalval, 1719.

L E T T E R CXXXVII.

RICA to the Same.

**T**HE next day he conducted me into another apartment. These, said he, are the poets, whose chief merit consists in putting good sense in shackles, and in overwhelming reason by a heap of ornaments, as the women were formerly incumbered by the parade of dress. You are no stranger to them, they are common amongst the Orientals, where a hotter sun seems to warm the imagination of the natives. Here are the epic poems; what, said I, somewhat surpris'd, is an epic poem? To deal plainly with you, answered he,

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he, I do not know : the critics tell us, that there never were more than two, and that the others which go by the same name, are by no means worthy of it : I cannot judge of this neither. They say besides, that it is impossible to compose any more; this to me appears still more surprising. Here are the dramatic poets, who, I think, hold the first place amongst those of their profession, and may be justly looked upon as the masters of our passions. There are two different species of dramatic poets ; the comic poets, who stir our passions so gently, and the tragic poets, who rouse and agitate us with so much violence. Here are the lyric poets, whom I despise as much as I esteem the others, who convert their art into an harmonious extravagance. Next in order follow the authors of Idyllium and Eclogues, who please even courtiers, by exciting in them an idea of a certain tranquility which they do not possess, which they present to their view in the condition of shepherds. But here are authors more dangerous than any you have yet seen : these are they who point epigrams, little sharp arrows which make a deep wound that admits of no cure. Here you behold

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behold romances, the authors of which may be in some measure considered as poets who are equally extravagant in their wit, and in their representations of passion; they pass their whole lives in seeking after nature, and their research is always equally vain; their heroes are no more in nature than the winged dragons, and the hippocentaurs. I have, answered I, seen some of your romances, and if you had seen any of ours, you would have been still more disgusted. They are full as void of nature, and lie under great constraints on account of our manners: An amorous passion must have lasted ten years before the lover can see so much as his mistress's face; yet the authors are under a necessity of making their readers pass through all these tedious preliminaries; now as it is impossible to invent new incidents for ever, these authors have recourse to an artifice, which has a worse effect than the inconvenience they mean to obviate by it; they avail themselves of prodigies. I am convinced that you cannot approve of a sorceress making an army rise out of the earth by the power of her art; that a single hero should destroy a fleet consisting of a hundred thousand



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thousand men. Yet in this taste our romances are wrote: these cold adventures, so often repeated, appear to us altogether insipid, and give us the highest disgust.

Paris, the 6th of the  
moon. Chalval, 1719.

L E T T E R CXXXVIII.

RICA TO IBBEN, at SMYRNA.

**M**INISTERS here succeed to and destroy each other, just as the seasons do: during the space of six years I have seen the system of the finances changed four times. Taxes are now levied in Turkey and Persia, exactly in the same manner as they were levied by the founders of those empires: this is far from being the case here. It must indeed be owned that we do not levy them with so much address as the inhabitants of the West. It is our opinion, that there is no more difference between managing the revenues of a prince, and the fortune of a private person, than between reckoning a hundred thousand tomans, and  
reckoning

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reckoning only a hundred : but this affair is much more mysterious and refined than we think it. Geniusses of the first rank must labour night and day, they must without ceasing, and with the most painful efforts, invent continually new projects ; they must hear the advice of an infinite number of persons, who meddle with their business without being desired ; they must retire and live reclusely in a closet impene- trable to great folks, and awful to the little ; they must always have their heads full of important secrets, wonderful designs, new systems ; and being quite absorbed in meditation, they must be deprived of the use of speech, and sometimes even void of politeness. No sooner were the eyes of the late king closed, but it was judged proper to establish a new administration. It was easy to perceive that the kingdom was in a bad situation, but how to remedy the inconveniences it laboured under, was the question. The unlimited authority of former ministers, had not been found advantageous to the state ; and therefore it was judged proper to divide it among several. For this purpose, five or six counsels were created, and perhaps France was never  
more

more wisely governed, than by that ministry : it did not last long, no more than the good of which it was productive. France, at the late king's death, resembled a body sinking under a thousand disorders : N—— took the knife in hand, cut off some of the useless flesh, and applied a few topical remedies. But there still remained an internal vice to be cured : a foreigner who came over, undertook to effect the cure : after the application of many violent remedies, he thought that he had restored the state to its former vigour, whereas it was only become bloated. Those who were in affluence about six months ago, are now reduced to the most extreme poverty ; and those who were in want of the necessaries of life, are now wallowing in opulence. The two extremities never made so near an approach before. This foreigner has turned the kingdom with as much ease as a taylor turns a coat ; he makes that which was under appear upwards, and what was uppermost he turns down. Such unexpected fortunes have been made, as appeared incredible to those who acquired them ; God does not with greater ease create men out of nothing.

How

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How many footmen are now attended by their fellow-servants ; and may perhaps tomorrow be attended by their masters. This is sometimes productive of very odd accidents. Footmen who acquired their fortunes in the last reign, now boast of their birth, they revenge themselves upon those who have just laid aside their liveries, of all the contempt which others expressed for them about six months before : they exclaim aloud the nobility is ruined ; what disorder prevails in the state ! what confusion is there in all ranks ! none but mean persons now make fortunes ! Depend upon it these will take ample revenge upon those who come after them ; and that in thirty years these new people of quality will make a great noise in the world.

Paris, the 1st of the moon  
Zilcade, 1720.

LET-

## L E T T E R CXXXIX.

RICA to the Same.

**T**HERE cannot be a greater example of conjugal affection, and that not in a private woman, but in a queen, than that which I now relate. The queen of Sweden being positively resolved that her husband should be her partner in the government, to remove all obstacles to this her purpose, sent a declaration to the states, whereby she renounces the regency, provided they elect him. Somewhat above sixty years ago, another queen, named Christina, abdicated the throne to devote herself entirely to philosophy. I do not know which of these examples should excite our admiration most. Though I would by all means, have every body firmly maintain the post and dignity to which he has been raised by fortune ; and though I cannot approve of the weakness of those, who finding themselves inferior to their station, basely forsake it by a sort of desertion; I am notwithstanding struck with the greatness of

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soul of these two queens, when I see that the mind in the one and the heart in the other; - were more elevated than their fortune. Christina aspired to know at a time when others think of nothing but the enjoyment of present pleasures ; and the other desires to enjoy empire only, with a view of putting it into the hands of her august husband.

Paris, the 27th of the moon  
Maharran, 1720.

L E T T E R CXL.

RICA to USBEK, at \* \* \*.

**T**HE parliament of Paris has been just banished to a little town called Pontoise. The council sent orders to it either to register, or approve, a declaration by which it might be dishonoured, and the parliament has registered it in a manner that reflects dishonour upon the council. Some other parliaments of the kingdom are threatened with the same treatment. These assemblies are always hated : they approach  
kings

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kings only to tell them unwelcome truths ; and whilst a crowd of courtiers constantly represent to them that the people are quite happy by their administration ; they contradict the flattery, and bear to the foot of the throne the complaints and lamentations of a distressed nation. Truth, dear Usbek, is a grievous burthen, when we are obliged to carry it into the presence of princes, they should therefore consider, that those who undertake the office, are constrained to it, and that they would never have resolved to take a step so invidious and ungrateful, if they had not been forced to it by their duty, their respect, and even their love.

Paris, the 21st day of  
the moon of the 1st  
Gemadi, 1720.

G 2

LET-

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

RICA to the Same.

**A**T the end of the week I will pay you a visit: How agreeably shall I pass my time with you! I was introduced some days ago to a certain court-lady, who had a fancy to see my foreign figure. I thought her beautiful, worthy of the affection of our monarch, and of a distinguished rank in the sacred place where his heart reposes. She proposed me many questions concerning the manners of the Persians, and the sort of life led by the women of Persia. It appeared to me that the seraglio was not to her taste, and that it gave her great disgust to think that a man should be shared by ten, or twelve, women. She could not think of the happiness of the men, without envy, nor of the wretched condition of the women, without the utmost compassion. As she loves reading in general, but chiefly poems and romances, she was desirous to hear some account of ours. The account I  
gave



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gave her doubled her curiosity : she begged the favour of me to translate a fragment of one of those I had brought with me. I did so, and sent her a few days after an oriental tale ; perhaps you will not be displeas'd to see it in disguise. “ In the time of Cheick-ali-can, there was in Persia a woman named Zulima : she had the sacred Alkoran quite by heart ; no dervise could understand the traditions of the holy prophets better than she ; the Arabian doctors never said any thing so mysterious, but she could easily comprehend it, and to such knowledge she join'd a certain chearfulness of temper, which put it out of the power of those she conversed with, to guess whether she intended to instruct, or please, them. One day whilst she was with her companions in one of the apartments of the seraglio, one of them asked her what her sentiments were concerning a life to come ; and whether she believed that ancient tradition of our doctors, that paradise was made only for the men. It is the general opinion, said she ; they have done all that they could to degrade and villify our sex. There is even a nation dispers'd all over Persia, called

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the Jewish, that maintain by the authority of their sacred books, that women have no souls: These injurious opinions take their rise entirely from the pride of men, who would willingly preserve their superiority over our sex even after death, and do not consider, that at the last great day, all the creatures will appear as nothing before God, and that one shall have no prerogative over another, but that which it has acquired by superior virtue. God will be unbounded in his recompenses: and as the men who have lived a virtuous life, and made a good use of their power over us upon earth, will be admitted into a paradise filled with celestial and ravishing beauties; beauties so brilliant, that if a mortal could get a sight of them, he would immediately put an end to his life, through impatience to enjoy them; in like manner, virtuous women will enter a delightful abode, where they will be glutted with the most exquisite enjoyments of all sorts, with men of a divine nature, who will be subjected to their command: each of them will possess a seraglio, in which they will be shut up; and have unuchs, much more faithful than ours, to guard them. I have  
read,

read, continued she, in an Arabian author, that a man named Ibrahim, was of a temper most insupportably jealous. He had twelve women of the utmost beauty, whom he treated with a brutality unparalleled: he would not trust even his eunuchs, or the walls of his seraglio; he generally kept them under lock and key in their respective apartments, so that they could neither see nor speak to each other; for even an innocent friendship roused his jealousy: all his actions discovered a tincture of his natural brutality: his mouth never pronounced an obliging word, and his most trifling gestures never failed to aggravate the bitterness of their slavery. One day, when he had assembled them all in an apartment of his seraglio, one of them, more bold than the rest, reproached him with his ill-nature. Those who take such pains to make themselves feared, said she, are, generally speaking, successful only in making themselves hated. We are so very unhappy, that we cannot possibly avoid wishing for a change of condition: others would, in my situation wish your death, I only wish for my own; and, as I cannot hope to be separated from you, except by

death, it will notwithstanding be a great happiness to me to be separated from you. This discourse, which should have given him some compunction, made him on the contrary fly into a furious passion; he drew his poignard, and plunged it into her breast. My dear companions, said she, with a dying voice, if heaven has compassion for my virtue, your sufferings will be revenged. Having uttered these words, she left this unhappy world, and passed immediately into that blessed abode, where such women as have lived virtuous lives, enjoy a never-fading happiness. The first sight that presented itself to her eyes, was a beautiful meadow, whose verdure was set off by an enamel of flowers, whose variegated colours vied with each other in loveliness; a stream, whose waters were more clear than chrystal, ran there in a variety of meanders. She then entered into delightful groves, where nothing was heard but the harmonious songs of tuneful birds. The finest gardens imaginable then offered themselves to her view; nature had bestowed upon them all its lustre with its simplicity. At last she came to a magnificent palace, which was prepared for her,  
and

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and filled with men of a divine nature, destined to be subservient to her pleasures. Two of them immediately advanced, in order to undress her: others conducted her to a bath, and perfumed her with the most delicious essences: they then presented her with clothes, much more rich than her own: after which they led her into a spacious hall, where she found a fire made of odoriferous wood, and a table covered with viands of the most exquisite flavour. All things seemed to concur to fill her senses with rapture; she heard on one side musick, so much the more divine, as it was more tender; on the other she saw dances performed by those divine men, whose sole occupation was to please her, and yet such a variety of pleasure was intended only to conduct her by insensible degrees, to pleasures infinitely greater. They then conducted her to her apartment; having again undressed her, they then put her into a bed extremely rich, where two divine men immediately received her in their arms. She was then completely happy her ecstasy surpassed even her desires. I am quite transported, said she to them, I should think myself dying if I was not sure of

my immortality. It is too much, leave me ; I sink through the excess of pleasure. Yes, you again restore a calm to my senses ; I am beginning to revive and come to myself. Why have they taken away the flambeaux ? Why am I not permitted still to contemplate your divine charms ? Why am I not allowed to see ?——But why do I talk of seeing ? You make me once more enter into my former transports. Gods how delightful this darkness is ? What shall I be immortal, and immortal in your company ? I shall—but no—I beg a moment's rest, for I see you are but little disposed to ask it. After reiterated commands, she was at last obeyed, but it was not till she appeared to desire it in good earnest. She then gave way to soft repose, and 'slumbered in their arms. Two moments of sleep restored her wasted strength : twice they embraced her, and thus the flame of love was rekindled. She opened her eyes, and said, I am quite uneasy to find myself neglected thus, I fear you have ceased to love me. This was a doubt in which she was unwilling to remain long : and indeed she soon received convincing proofs of her mistake. I am conscious of  
my

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my error, exclaimed she, excuse me, I now see I may depend upon you. You do not utter a single word, but your actions prove your love more strongly than it is in the power of words to do. Yes, yes, I own it, no love could ever equal yours. But how! you vie with each other in endeavouring to convince me; ah if you vie with each other, if you join ambition to the pleasure of defeating me, I am lost, you will both be conquerors, and I the only vanquished party; but the victory shall cost you dear, that you may depend upon. Their pleasures were not discontinued till day appeared; her faithful and amiable domestics entered her apartment, and caused the two young men to rise, they were thereupon reconducted to the places wherein they were kept for her pleasures. She then rose, and made her appearance at that court by which she was idolized in the charms of a simple dishabille, and then richly attired in the most sumptuous ornaments. The past night had added new lustre to her beauties; it had enlivened her complexion, and given a stronger expression to her graces. The whole day was divided between dances, concerts, festivals, sports,  
and

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and other amusements of that kind ; and it was observed that Anais often stept aside, and flew to the embraces of her two lovers ; after having had a short interview with them, she returned to the company she had quitted, always with a countenance more lively than before. But about evening the company lost sight of her entirely : she went, and shut herself up in the seraglio, where she was desirous, as she said, of cultivating her acquaintance with these immortal captives, who were to live with her for ever. She therefore visited the most retired and the most delightful apartments of these places, where she reckoned fifty slaves of a most extraordinary beauty : she wandered all day from apartment to apartment, receiving every where a different homage, but one that was always of the same nature. It was thus the immortal Anais passed her days, sometimes in all the dissipation and gaiety of pleasure, and sometimes in solitary pleasures, admired by a brilliant assembly, or adored by an ardent lover : she often quitted an enchanted palace, to repair to a rural grotto : flowers seemed to spring up under her feet, and pleasures offered themselves to her in crowds.



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crowds. She had been above eight days in this happy place, in the hurry of a constant round of pleasure, and without having ever made a single reflexion; she had enjoyed her felicity without knowing it, and without having one of those moments of tranquility, in which the soul settles with itself, if I may be allowed the expression, and attends to its own report in the silence of the passions. Happy souls have pleasures so lively, that they can seldom enjoy that freedom of mind: wherefore being invincibly attached to present objects, they lose all memory of things past, and have no longer the least concern about what they have loved, or known, in the other world. But Anais, whose mind was of a truly philosophical turn, had passed almost her whole life in meditation: she had carried her reflexions a great deal further than could be expected from a woman left to herself. The close retirement in which her husband had left her, had deprived her of every other advantage. It was that strength of mind which had made her despise the fear that filled the souls of her companions with consternation, as well as death, by which her sufferings were to be terminated,  
and

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and her felicity to commence. She therefore by degrees, quitted the intoxication of pleasure, and retired to an apartment in her palace. She gave herself up to pleasing reflexions upon her past condition and her present happiness ; she could not help compassionating the misery of her companions. We are always affected with ills which we have partaken of. Anais did not stop within the limits of simple compassion : such was her tenderness for these unfortunate creatures, that she found herself inclined to assist them in their distress. She ordered one of the young men that was with her, to assume the form of her husband, to enter his seraglio, to make himself master of it, and to turn the former possessor out of doors, and to remain there in his place, till such time as she should think proper to recal him. Her orders were quickly put in execution ; he cut the air with rapid wings, and quickly arrived at the door of Ibrahim's seraglio : Ibrahim happened not to be there. The young man knocked, every door flew open to him, the eunuchs fell at his feet. He flew to the apartments where the women of Ibrahim were shut up ; he had as  
he

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he passed, stolen the keys from this monster of jealousy ; to him he found means to render himself invisible. He entered, and at first surpris'd them by his mild and affable air, but soon after surpris'd them much more by his ardour, and by his reiterated warm embraces. They were all equally astonish'd at this event, and they would have taken it for a dream, had there been less reality in it. Whilst this extraordinary scene was played in the seraglio, Ibrahim knock'd at it, told his name, and made a terrible outcry and disturbance. After having surmounted a great many difficulties, he entered, and threw the eunuchs into a most terrible fright. He walked on with great rapidity, but he started back with great astonishment, when he beheld the counterfeit Ibrahim, his perfect image, taking all the liberties of master of the seraglio. He calls out for help ; he calls upon the eunuchs to assist him in killing the impostor ; but he was not obeyed. He has now but one refuge left, and that a weak one ; he refers it to the judgment of his wives. In the space of one hour, the counterfeit Ibrahim had corrupted all the judges. The other was ignominiously  
dragged

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dragged out of the seraglio, and would inevitably have suffered death, if his rival had not given positive orders that his life should be spared. In a word, the new Ibrahim, remaining master of the field of battle, gave every day new proofs that he was worthy of such a preference, and signalized himself by feats unheard of before in the seraglio. You are not like Ibrahim, said the women. Say rather, answered the triumphant Ibrahim, that that impostor is not like me; what must be done to deserve your favours, if what I do is insufficient. Ah we shall take care how we doubt, answered the women, if you are not the true Ibrahim, it is enough for us that you have so well deserved to be so; you show yourself more Ibrahim in one day, than he did in ten years. You promise then, returned he, to declare in my favour, and against that impostor. Doubt not of that, answered they all with one unanimous voice; we swear to be eternally faithful to you: we have been but too long imposed upon; the villain did not suspect our virtue, all his suspicions were occasioned by his own impotence: we now see plainly that men are not made alike, it is you doubtless they

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they resemble: if you but knew how much you make us hate him! Ah, replied the counterfeit Ibrahim, I will often give you fresh reasons to hate him, you do not yet know how great an injury he has done you. We judge of his injustice by the greatness of your revenge, answered they. You are in the right, answered the divine man; I have proportioned the expiation to the crime; I am glad you like my manner of punishing. But, said the women, if that impostor should return, what shall we do? I believe it would be a hard matter for him to deceive you, answered he; in the station which I hold with you, no man can support himself by artifice: besides I will send him so far off, that you will never hear more of him. I then will take upon myself the care of your happiness. I will not be jealous; I know how to secure your affections, without laying you under any restraint; I have not so bad an opinion of my merit, to think that you will not be faithful to me: if your virtue is not secure with me, with whom can it be secure? The conversation lasted a long time between him and the women, who, more struck with the difference of the two Ibrahims,

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Ibrahims, than with their resemblance, were not in the least solicitous to have so many mysteries cleared up. At last the husband, quite desperate, came again to disturb their repose: he found his whole family in joy, and his women more unwilling to believe him than ever. It was become now no place for a jealous man; he went away in a rage; the very next moment the counterfeit Ibrahim followed him, seized him, hurried him through the air, and left him at the distance of two thousand leagues from thence. Gods how disconsolate were the women in the absence of their dear Ibrahim! Their eunuchs had already resumed their natural severity, the whole family was in tears, they thought sometimes that all that had happened to them was but a dream; they looked often upon each other, and recalled to their memories the most minute circumstances of these strange adventures. At length the divine Ibrahim returned more amiable than ever; it appeared to the women that he had not been in the least fatigued by his journey. The new master observed a conduct so opposite to that of the old one, that all the neighbours were surpris'd at it. He dismissed

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miffed all the eunuchs, made his houfe accessible to every body: he would not even fuffer the women to ufe veils. It was fomething extraordinary to fee them at feafts amongst the men, and as free as they. Ibrahim thought, and with reafon, that fuch citizens as he, were not bound to obferve the customs of the country. Yet he fpared no expence; he with the utmoft profufion fquandered the wealth of the jealous man, who returning three years after from the remote countries to which he had been carried, found nothing at home but his women, and thirty-fix children."

Paris, the 25th of the moon  
Gemadi, 1720.

L E T T E R CXLII.

RICA to USBEK, at \* \* \*.

**I** Send you herewith a letter, which I received from a man of learning, you will think it fomewhat extraordinary.

“ SIR,

“ SIR,

“ About six months ago I succeeded to the fortune of a very rich uncle, who left me five or six hundred thousand livres, and a well furnished house. It is a pleasure to be possessed of wealth, when one knows how to make a good use of it. I have no ambition nor taste for pleasures ; I am almost always shut up in a closet, where I lead the life of a studious man. It is in such a place as this, that a virtuoso, who loves venerable antiquity, is to be found. When my uncle expired, I would gladly have had him interred with the ceremonies observed by the Greeks and Romans, but I had neither antique mourning, urns, or lamps. But since that time, I have provided myself well with those precious rarities. I not long ago sold my plate, to purchase an earthen lamp, that had been used by a stoic philosopher. I have disposed of all the pier-glasses with which my uncle had covered his apartments, to buy a little cracked looking-glass, that formerly belonged to Virgil : I am highly delighted  
to



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to see it reflect my face, instead of that of the swan of Mantua. This is not all; I have given a hundred louis d'ors for five, or six pieces of copper coin, which were current a thousand years ago. I do not think I have now in my house, a single moveable, which was not made before the decline of the Roman empire. I have a little closet filled with manuscripts, as precious as dear: though by reading them I destroy my eye-sight, I had much rather use them than printed books, which are not so correct, and which are moreover in the hands of every body. Though I scarce ever stir out of my house, I am extremely solicitous to know all the ancient roads which were made in the time of the old Romans. There is one not far from my house, which was made by the orders of a proconsul of Gaul, twelve hundred years ago. When I go to my country house, I always take care to pass it, though it is very inconvenient, and adds almost a league to my journey: but what provokes me, is, that in several places, they have fixed wooden posts, to show the distances of the neighbouring towns. I am quite in despair, to see these miserable erections, in the room  
of

of those miliary columns which were there before. I doubt not but I shall cause them to be replaced by my heirs, and shall be able to make a will of such a nature, as will induce them to do it. If you have got ever a Persian Manuscript by you, sir, I would be obliged to you for it; I will pay you your own price for it, and I will give you into the bargain some works of my own composing, which will convince you that I am not an useles member of the republic of letters. Amongst others, you will see a dissertation, in which I prove, that the crown used in triumphs, was made of oak leaves, and not of laurel: you will be in raptures with another, in which I prove by learned conjectures, taken from the greatest Greek authors, that Cambyfes was wounded in the left leg, and not in the right; another, in which I prove, that a short forehead was a beauty highly esteemed by the Romans. I will send you moreover a volume in quarto, which contains an explanation of a verse of the sixth book of Virgil. It will be a few days before I can send you these; at present, all I can do, is to send you this fragment of an ancient Grecian mythologist,

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logist, which has not hitherto appeared in print, and which I found in the dust of a library. I must take my leave of you, on account of an important affair that I have upon my hands: the business is, to restore a beautiful passage of Pliny the naturalist, which the copyists of the fifth century have strangely disfigured.

I am, &c.

Fragment of an ancient Mythologist.

‘ In an island near the Orcades, a child  
‘ was born, who had Æolus for his sire,  
‘ and for his mother a nymph of Cale-  
‘ donia. It is said of him, that he,  
‘ without assistance, learned to reckon  
‘ upon his fingers; and that even at four  
‘ years of age, he distinguished metals  
‘ so well, that his mother once offering  
‘ him a tin ring instead of a gold one,  
‘ he perceived the deceit, and threw it  
‘ upon the ground. As soon as he was  
‘ grown up, his father taught him to shut  
‘ up the wind in buckets, which he af-  
‘ terwards sold to the travellers who  
‘ passed

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‘ passed that way : but as commerce was  
‘ not much esteemed in his country, he  
‘ quitted it, and began to roam the world,  
‘ in company with the blind god of  
‘ chance. In the course of his travels,  
‘ he had learned, that gold glitters every  
‘ where in Betica, he repaired thither  
‘ with the utmost expedition. He was  
‘ very ill received by Saturn, who reigned  
‘ there at that time ; but that God having  
‘ left the earth, he took it into his head  
‘ to go about the streets every where,  
‘ crying continually with a hoarse voice,  
‘ People of Betica, you think yourselves  
‘ rich, because you are possessed of gold  
‘ and silver : your error raises my con-  
‘ tempt. Be ruled by me, quit the coun-  
‘ try of base metals : enter the empire  
‘ of imagination, and I promise you  
‘ riches, which will fill even you with  
‘ astonishment. He immediately opened  
‘ several of the buckets which he had  
‘ brought with him, and he distributed  
‘ his commodity to whoever was willing  
‘ to take it. The next day he entered  
‘ the same streets, and cried out, People  
‘ of Betica, do you desire to be rich ?  
‘ Fancy to yourselves that I am extremely  
‘ rich,

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' rich, and that you are so also : take it  
 ' for granted every morning, that your  
 ' wealth has been doubled during the  
 ' night : then rise, and if you have cre-  
 ' ditors, go and pay them with the ima-  
 ' ginary treasure, then bid them imagine  
 ' in their turn. He appeared again in a  
 ' few days after, and he spoke thus :  
 ' People of Betica, I see very well that  
 ' your imagination is not as lively as it  
 ' was yesterday ; let me regulate your  
 ' imagination by mine : I will every day  
 ' place before your eyes, a scroll, which  
 ' will be to you the source of great  
 ' riches : it will contain but four words ;  
 ' but these words will be extremely sig-  
 ' nificant ; for they will determine the  
 ' portions of your wives, the fortunes  
 ' of your children, and the number of  
 ' your servants. And as for you, said  
 ' he, to such of the croud as were nearest  
 ' to him ; as to you, my dear children  
 ' (I may call you by that name, for from  
 ' me have you received a second birth)  
 ' my scroll shall decide the grandeur  
 ' of your magnificence, equipages, the  
 ' sumptuousness of your feasts, and the  
 ' number and pay of your mistresses. A  
 VOL. II. H ' few

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‘ few days after he came into the public  
 ‘ streets, quite out of breath ; and in a  
 ‘ violent passion cried out : People of  
 ‘ Betica, I advised you to imagine, and  
 ‘ I see that you do not follow my ad-  
 ‘ vice : well then, now I command you  
 ‘ to do so. Thereupon he quitted them  
 ‘ abruptly : but reflection made him soon  
 ‘ come back. I hear, said he, that some  
 ‘ of you are so destable as to keep your  
 ‘ gold and silver. For the silver it is  
 ‘ no great matter, but gold, gold——  
 ‘ ah ! that makes me quite mad.——  
 ‘ I swear by my sacred buckets, that if  
 ‘ they do not bring it to me, I will  
 ‘ punish them severely. He then added,  
 ‘ with the most persuasive air imaginable,  
 ‘ Do you think I ask you for these wretched  
 ‘ metals, in order to keep them. A  
 ‘ proof of my candour is, that when you  
 ‘ brought them to me a few days ago,  
 ‘ I immediately returned you one half.  
 ‘ The next day they saw him at a distance,  
 ‘ they perceived that he endeavoured to  
 ‘ insinuate himself into their favour, by  
 ‘ smooth and complaisant discourse : Peo-  
 ‘ ple of Betica, I am informed that part  
 ‘ of your treasure is in foreign countries ;  
 ‘ I in-

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' I intreat you to send for them, you will  
 ' greatly oblige me, and I shall eternally  
 ' acknowlege the favour. The son of  
 ' Æolus happened then to speak to peo-  
 ' ple, who were by no means in a merry  
 ' mood; they could not, however, help  
 ' laughing, which made him sneak off in  
 ' great confusion. He was not, however,  
 ' quite discouraged, he returned again,  
 ' and ventured to make another petition.  
 ' I know that you have precious stones ;  
 ' dispose of them in the name of Jupiter ;  
 ' nothing can possibly impoverish you  
 ' more than keeping such baubles. Dis-  
 ' pose of them by all means : If you  
 ' cannot do it yourselves, I will procure  
 ' you excellent agents. How you will  
 ' wallow in riches, if you but follow my  
 ' advice ! I do assure you, you shall have  
 ' the richest treasures of my buckets.  
 ' At last he mounted a scaffold, and with  
 ' a more resolute voice spoke thus : Peo-  
 ' ple of Betica, I have compared the  
 ' happy state in which you are at present,  
 ' with that in which I found you upon my  
 ' arrival in this country ; you are now  
 ' the most opulent people upon earth ;  
 ' but that I may make your good fortune

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‘ compleat, permit me to ease you of  
‘ one half of your wealth. Having ut-  
‘ tered these words, the son of Æolus  
‘ soared up into the air, and fled away  
‘ upon rapid wings, leaving his auditors  
‘ in a consternation not to be expressed,  
‘ which occasioned his coming again the  
‘ next day, when he delivered himself in  
‘ these terms: I perceived yesterday, that  
‘ my conversation displeased you highly.  
‘ Well then, suppose all I said, unsaid.  
‘ It is true, one half is too much. Let  
‘ us have recourse to other expedients  
‘ to attain the proposed end. Let us de-  
‘ posit all our riches in the same place; it  
‘ will be easily done, for they will not  
‘ take up much room. At that instant,  
‘ three parts of their wealth out of four,  
‘ vanished away.’

Paris, the 9th of the moon  
Chahban, 1720.

N. B. Mr. Law is alluded to in this satire,  
who was a goldsmith in Edinburgh, and  
many years a professed gamester; by  
Saturn is meant Lewis XIV.

LET-



## LETTER CXLIII.

RICA TO NATHANIEL LEVI, a Jewish  
Physician at LEGHORN.

**Y**OU ask my opinion concerning the virtue of charms, and the power of talismans, why do you apply to me upon this occasion? you are a Jew, and I am a Mahometan, consequently we must both be extremely superstitious. I always carry with me above a thousand passages of the holy Alkoran: I tie to my arms a paper, upon which are written the names of above two hundred dervises: those of Hali, of Fatme, and all the personages renowned for their sanctity, are concealed in my clothes in above twenty places. However, I cannot entirely disapprove of the opinion of those who will not admit of this virtue annexed to certain words. It is much more difficult for us to answer their arguments, than for them to oppose our experience. I carry all these sacred scrolls about me, merely through habit,

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and in order to conform to a received custom : I am of opinion, that if they have not a greater virtue than rings and other ornaments of dress, they cannot possibly be inferior to them in this respect. But you put entire confidence in a few mysterious letters ; and without that defence, you would be under continual apprehensions. Men are indeed unhappy ! they constantly float between falacious hopes and absurd fears : and instead of adhering to the dictates of reason, they either form to themselves monsters that intimidate them, or phantoms that seduce and mislead them. What effect do you think the placing of a few letters can produce ? What evil can result from their being put into disorder ? What influence have they over the winds, to calm tempests ; over gun-powder to resist its force ; or over what physicians call peccant humour, or the morbid cause of diseases, to cure them ? What is most extraordinary, is, that those who puzzle their brains to account for certain events, by occult virtues, are obliged to take equal pains to avoid seeing the true cause. You will tell me, that certain enchantments have caused a battle to be  
won :

won; but for my part, I cannot help telling you, that you must be blind not to see in the situation of the field, the number, or courage, of the soldiers, or the experience of the generals, causes capable of producing this effect, whose real cause you wilfully shut your eyes to. I will grant you for a moment, that there may be enchantments: grant me for a moment that there are none, for that is possible. It will not follow from your concession, that two armies may not engage: will you then maintain, that in that case, neither of the two can be victorious? Do you think their fate will continue doubtful, till an invisible power comes to decide it? That all their blows will be ineffectual, all their conduct vain, and all their courage fruitless? Do you think that death, rendered present in a thousand different ways, cannot produce those panics, which you find it so difficult to account for? Do you think, that there may not be one coward in an army of two hundred thousand men? Do you think that the terror which may seize this one, may not excite terror in another? That the second who quits a third, will not make him quit a fourth? Even that would be

sufficient to throw a whole army into despair; and the more numerous the army, the more quickly it spreads. All the world knows, and all the world is sensible, that men, like all other creatures, who are directed by nature to preserve their being, are passionately fond of life; this is a truth generally known; how then can it be asked how they can be afraid of losing it upon a particular occasion? Though the sacred books of all nations abound with accounts of such panics, or supernatural terrors, I think there cannot be a more ridiculous notion; for before we should admit that an effect which may be produced by a hundred thousand natural causes, is supernatural, one should before have examined, whether none of these causes has operated; which is impossible. I shall say no more to you upon this subject, Nathaniel; in my opinion it does not deserve to be treated in so serious a manner.

Paris, the 20th of the moon

Chahban, 1720.

P. S. As I was just concluding, I heard  
cried about the streets, a letter from a  
country

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country physician, to a physician at Paris (for here the greatest trifles are printed, published, and bought). I thought I should do well to send it to you, because it has some relation to the subject we have been upon\*.

A Letter from a country physician, to a physician at PARIS.

‘ There was formerly a sick person in  
‘ our town, who never once slept for  
‘ thirty-five days together. His physi-  
‘ cian prescribed him opium: but he would  
‘ never consent to take it; and whilst he  
‘ held the cup, he was as little inclined to  
‘ take it as ever. At last, he said to his  
‘ physician, Sir, I beg you will give me  
‘ quarter till to-morrow: I know a man

\* The former edition had here as follows:  
‘ There are many things in it which I do not un-  
‘ derstand; but you, who are a physician, must  
‘ be acquainted with the language of your bre-  
‘ thren.’

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' who does not practise physic, and yet  
 ' has an infinity of remedies against want  
 ' of sleep. Give me leave to send for  
 ' him ; and if I do not sleep to-night, I  
 ' will send for you again to-morrow. The  
 ' physician being gone, the sick man or-  
 ' dered his curtains to be drawn, and  
 ' said to his footman, Go to Mr. Anis,  
 ' and tell him, I should be glad to see  
 ' him. Mr. Anis came. My dear Mr.  
 ' Anis. I am in a dying condition, I can-  
 ' not sleep ; have you not in your shop  
 ' the C. of G. or some book of devotion,  
 ' composed by some reverend father, which  
 ' still lies upon your hands ? for the reme-  
 ' dies that have been the longest kept, are  
 ' generally the best. Sir, answered the  
 ' bookseller, I have in my shop, the holy  
 ' court of father Caussin, at your service ;  
 ' I will send it to you directly, and I hope  
 ' you will find yourself the better for it.  
 ' If you have a mind for the works of the  
 ' reverend father Rodriguez, a Portugueze  
 ' jesuit, they are very much at your ser-  
 ' vice. But take my advice, and stick  
 ' to father Caussin. I hope, that with the  
 ' assistance of God, one period of father  
 ' Caussin will do you more good, than a  
 ' whole

‘ whole leaf of the C. of G. Having  
‘ spoke thus, Mr. Anis went out, in order  
‘ to search his shop for the remedy. He  
‘ soon returned with the holy court, after  
‘ having caused the dust to be rubbed off :  
‘ the patient’s son, a school-boy, began to  
‘ read ; he was the first to feel the effects  
‘ of it ; at the second page, he could  
‘ scarce pronounce with an articulate voice,  
‘ and all present began to feel themselves  
‘ drowsy : a few moments after they all  
‘ began to snore, except the sick man,  
‘ who, after having long continued to listen  
‘ to it awake, at last was overpowered by  
‘ sleep himself. Early in the morning, the  
‘ physician arrived. Well, said he, has  
‘ my opium been taken ? To this question  
‘ he received no answer ; but the wife, the  
‘ daughter, and the child, in transports  
‘ of joy, showed him father Caussin’s  
‘ work. He asked what it was ; they  
‘ answered, O blest father Caussin, his  
‘ book well deserves to be bound. Who  
‘ would have said it ? who would have  
‘ thought it ? It is a perfect miracle. See  
‘ here, sir, see father Caussin’s treatise ; it  
‘ was this that made my father sleep.  
‘ Hereupon they informed him of all  
‘ that

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‘ that had happened. \* The physician  
‘ was a subtile man, greatly attached to  
‘ the mysteries of the Cabala, and who  
‘ had much faith in the power of words  
‘ and spirits : this struck him so, that upon  
‘ mature deliberation, he resolved to change  
‘ his method of practice. This is a very  
‘ extraordinary effect, said he, this expe-  
‘ riment is worth carrying further. Why  
‘ may not a spirit have power to commu-  
‘ nicate to its works, the qualities which  
‘ it is itself possessed of? Do not we see  
‘ this happen every day? At least the ex-  
‘ periment is very well worth trying. I  
‘ am tired of apothecaries; their syrups,  
‘ their julips, and all their galenical drugs;  
‘ destroy the sick, and quite ruin their  
‘ health. Let us change the method of  
‘ practice; let us try the virtue of spirits:  
‘ With this view, he drew up a new  
‘ system of pharmacy, as you will see by  
‘ the account which I shall give of the  
‘ new remedies which he made use of.

Pur-

\* See the last Note.



Purgative Ptisan.

‘ Take three leaves of Aristotle’s logicke  
 ‘ in Greek, two leaves of one of the most  
 ‘ crabbed theological treatises ; as for in-  
 ‘ stance, that of the subtile Scotus ; four  
 ‘ of Paracelsus, one of Avicenna ; six of  
 ‘ Avenoes, three of Porphyry ; as many  
 ‘ of Plotinus, as many of Jamblicus.  
 ‘ Mix them all together, and let them stand  
 ‘ for four and twenty hours, then take  
 ‘ four doses of them at a time.’

A more violent Purgative.

‘ Take ten A\*\*\* of C\*\*\*, con-  
 ‘ cerning the B and the C of the J\*\* ;  
 ‘ cause them to be distilled in balnea ma-  
 ‘ rina ; put a drop of the sharp humour  
 ‘ which it produces, in a glass of water to  
 ‘ deaden it, then drink off the whole with  
 ‘ confidence.’

A Vomit.

‘ Take six harangues ; the first dozen  
 ‘ of funeral orations that comes to hand ;  
 ‘ with this one restriction however, that  
 ‘ you

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‘ you do not make use of those of M de  
‘ N ; a collection of new opera’s, fifty  
‘ romances, and thirty sets of new me-  
‘ moirs ; put all these ingredients into a  
‘ large glass bottle, with a big belly, and  
‘ a little neck, leave it to settle during two  
‘ days ; then cause it to be distilled by a  
‘ fire of ashes ; and if all this should prove  
‘ ineffectual,

Another more powerful Vomit.

‘ Take a leaf of marble-paper, which  
‘ has served as a cover to a collec-  
‘ tion of the pieces of J. F. let it be  
‘ infused during the space of three minutes,  
‘ cause a spoonful of that infusion to be  
‘ made hot, and drink it up.’

A very simple Remedy for an Asthma.

‘ Read all the works of the reverend  
‘ father Maimbourg, heretofore jesuit ;  
‘ but take care not to stop till the conclu-  
‘ sion of each period ; and you will find  
‘ a freedom of breathing return by de-  
‘ grees, without being under any necessity  
‘ of repeating the remedy.’

‘ A

PERSIAN LETTERS. 159

A Preservative from the Itch, Scabs, and other cutaneous Disorders.

- Take three categories of Aristotle,
- three prædicables of three different degrees in the metaphysical scale, one distinction, six verses of Chapelain, one phrase extracted from the letters of the
- Abbe de St. Cyran: write the whole upon a bit of paper, fold it up, tie it to a ribband, and carry it about your neck.

Miraculum Chymicum de violentâ fermentatione, cùm fumo, igne et flammâ.

- Misce Quæfnellianam infusionem, cùm infusione Lallemanianâ; fiat fermentatio cùm magnâ vi, impetu, et tonitru, acidis pugnantibus, et invicem penetrantibus alcalinos sales: fiet evaporatio ardentium spirituum. Pone liquorem fermentatum in alembica: nihil indè extrahes, et nihil invenies, nisi caput mortuum.

Lenitivum.

- Recipe Molinæ anodini chartas duas;
- Escobaris relaxativi paginas sex; Vasquii emolientis folium unum: infunde in aquæ
- com-

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‘ communis, *lib.* iij. Ad consumptionem  
‘ dimidiæ partis colentur et exprimantur ;  
‘ et, in expressione, dissolve Bauni deter-  
‘ sivi et Tamburini abluentis, folia iii.’  
Fiat clister.

In chlorosim, quam vulgus pallidos-colores,  
res, aut febrim-amatoriam, appellat.

‘ Recipe Aretini figuras iij. R. Thomæ  
‘ Sanchii de matrimonio folia ij. infundan-  
‘ tur in aquæ communis libras quinque.’  
Fiat ptisana aperiens.

‘ These drugs our physician applied with  
‘ extraordinary success ; he would not, as  
‘ he said, for fear of destroying his patients,  
‘ employ remedies very hard to come at :  
‘ as for instance, a dedication which had  
‘ never made any body yawn ; too short  
‘ a preface ; a bishop’s order, wrote by  
‘ himself, and the work of a jansenist,  
‘ either despised by a jansenist, or much  
‘ admired by a jesuit. It was his opinion,  
‘ that these remedies were calculated for  
‘ nothing, but to promote quackery, which  
‘ he professed to hold in the utmost ab-  
‘ horrence.’

L E T-

## L E T T E R CXLIV.

USBEK TO RICA.

YESTERDAY at a country-seat, where I happened to visit, I met with two learned men, who have a great name in this part of the world. I thought their characters somewhat singular. The conversation of the first, well weighed, might be reduced to this; what I have said is true, because it is I that have said it. The conversation of the second, seemed to be founded upon another maxim; what I have not said, is not true, because I have not said it. The first I was tolerably well pleased with, for it is nothing to me if another person shows himself to be quite positive and obstinate, but the impertinence of another is not so easily born with. The first maintains his opinions, they may be considered as his property; the second attacks those of others, that is to say, he invades the property of all mankind. Dear Usbek, how unfortunate are those who have more vanity than is absolutely necessary

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cessary for self preservation! These people aspire to be admired, by means which must make them give offence. They aim at superiority, and they can scarce ever attain to an equality with others. Oh you modest men approach, that I may embrace you! From you spring all the charms of society. You think yourselves destitute of all sorts of merit; but I cannot help saying, that every merit is yours. You think you humble no-body, though you humble all the world. And when I, in idea, compare you to those assuming persons whom I meet with every where, I immediately pull them from their tribunal, and make them fall prostrate at your feet.

Paris, the 22d of the  
moon Chahban, 1719.

L E T-

## L E T T E R CXLV.

USBEK to \* \* \*.

A Man of parts is generally untractable in society. He chooses but few companions ; he is disgusted with that numerous body of people, whom he is pleased to call bad company ; this disgust he cannot thoroughly conceal, which brings upon him the hatred of numbers. Being sure to please, whenever he thinks proper to exert himself, he frequently neglects to do so. He has a turn to criticising, because he sees many things that escape another, and is more sensibly affected by them. He generally ruins his fortune, because the fertility of his genius furnishes him with a variety of means so to do. His enterprises miscarry, because he risks a great deal. His penetration, which generally causes him to see too far, makes him often give attention to objects that are extremely remote. Add to this, that at the formation of a project, he is less occupied by the difficulties that grow out of the business,

ness, than with the remedies to them, which are of his own inventing. He neglects minute particulars, though upon them the success of most great affairs depends. On the other hand, the man of more confined abilities endeavours to avail himself in every thing : he is thoroughly sensible, that he must not neglect even trifles. The man of moderate abilities oftener meets with general esteem. Every body takes pleasure in raising the one, whilst all are equally delighted to depress the other. Whilst envy falls foul upon one, and excuses him nothing, all the defects of the other are overlooked ; the vanity of others declares in his favour. But if a man of genius lies under so many disadvantages, what must we think of the wretched condition of the learned ? I can never think of it, without recollecting the following letter, wrote by one of them to his friend. I send it to you herewith :

‘ SIR,

‘ I am one of those who pass whole nights  
 ‘ in contemplating through telescopes of  
 ‘ thirty.



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‘ thirty feet long, those vast bodies that  
‘ roll over our heads ; and when I am dis-  
‘ posed to unbend my mind, I take up  
‘ a microscope, and examine a maggot, or  
‘ a mite ; I am not rich, and I have but  
‘ one room : I dare not even make a fire  
‘ in it, lest the warmth should make the  
‘ mercury rise in my thermometer, which  
‘ I keep there. Last winter the cold al-  
‘ most killed me ; and though my ther-  
‘ mometer was at the lowest, and though  
‘ my hands were almost frozen, I still  
‘ went on my own way. Thus I have  
‘ the pleasure of knowing with the greatest  
‘ exactness, all the most inconsiderable  
‘ changes of the weather for last year. I  
‘ am very reserved, and scarce know any  
‘ body that I see. But there is a person at  
‘ Stockholm, another at Leipfick, and  
‘ another at London, whom I neither ever  
‘ saw, nor ever expect to see, with whom  
‘ I keep up a constant correspondence ; I  
‘ write to them every post. But though I  
‘ have no connection with any body in the  
‘ street where I live, I have got so bad a  
‘ character all over the neighbourhood,  
‘ that I believe I must soon change my  
‘ lodging. About five years ago, I was  
‘ treated

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' treated very roughly by a woman in the  
 ' neighbourhood, for having dissected a  
 ' dog, which, she said, belonged to her.  
 ' The wife of a butcher, who happened  
 ' to be present, took her part ; and whilst  
 ' one poured out a torrent of abuse against  
 ' me, the other pelted me with stones, as  
 ' well as Dr—— who was with me, who  
 ' received a terrible blow upon the os fron-  
 ' tal and os occipital, by which the seat  
 ' of reason is very much injured. Ever  
 ' since that time, if a dog happens to be  
 ' missing in the street, it is immediately  
 ' taken for granted that it has passed  
 ' through my hands. A worthy citizen's  
 ' wife, that had lost a lap-dog, which, as  
 ' she said herself, was more dear to her  
 ' than her own children, came the other  
 ' day, and fainted away in my room, and  
 ' not having found her dog, summoned  
 ' me before a magistrate. I believe I shall  
 ' be for ever persecuted by the malice of  
 ' these women, who, with their shrill  
 ' voices, stun me every day, by making  
 ' funeral orations upon all the automates  
 ' who have died these ten years.

' Yours, &c.'

All

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All men of learning were accused of being magicians, some ages past. I am not at all surpris'd at it. Every one of them said within himself, I have acquired as much knowledge as can be attained by the power of natural abilities, and yet another philosopher has the advantage of me; he must certainly deal with the devil. As accusations of this nature are out of date in the present age, other means have been made use of, and a man of learning can never escape being reproach'd with irreligion, or heresy. It avails him little to be deemed innocent by the people; the wound once made, will never perfectly close. It remains a sore place ever after. An adversary may come thirty years after, and address him in these modest terms: God forbid that I should imagine, that the accusation against you is just, but you have lain under the sad necessity of vindicating your character. Thus is his very justification turned against him. If he writes a history, and discovers any elevation of mind, or integrity of heart, he is liable to a thousand persecutions. There will not be wanting persons to irritate the magistrate against him, on account of a fact which  
has

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has passed a thousand years ago; and if his pen is not venal, they would have it restrained. Their condition, is, however, more happy than that of those men who violate their faith for an inconsiderable pension, who by all their numerous impostures hardly gain a single farthing; who subvert the constitution of an empire, diminish the prerogatives of one power, increase those of another; give to princes, take from their subjects, revive antiquated duties, encourage the passions which are in vogue in their age, and such vices as receive a sanction from the throne; imposing upon posterity in the more scandalous manner, as it is not provided with means to detect their impostures. But it is not enough that an author has all these insults to suffer, it is not enough that he has lived in constant anxiety for the success of his work. At length the work that cost him so much pains and trouble, comes out; it involves him in a thousand quarrels, and how is it possible to avoid them? The author has an opinion, he maintains it in his writings, without knowing that another man of learning, who lives two hundred leagues distant from him, had asserted the reverse.

Yet

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Yet this gives rise to a paper war. It would indeed be some consolation to him, if he had any prospect of becoming famous. But he has not even this alleviation of his distress. He is at most esteemed by those who have applied themselves to the same studies with himself. A philosopher holds nothing more in contempt, than a man whose head is loaded with facts, whilst he, in his turn, is considered as a visionary by the man that has a good memory. With regard to those who take pride in their ignorance, they would willingly have all mankind buried in that oblivion, to which they are themselves consigned. When a man is destitute of any particular talent, he indemnifies himself, by expressing his contempt for it; he removes that obstacle which stood between merit and him, and by that means, raises himself to a level with those whom he before feared as rivals. Thus is an author obliged to abstain from pleasures, and endanger his health, to acquire a doubtful and precarious reputation.

Paris, the 26th of the moon  
Chahban, 1720.

VOL. II.

I

LET.

## LETTER CXLVI.

USBK to RHEDI, at VENICE.

**I**T is a maxim of long standing, that sincerity is the soul of a great ministry. An individual may avail himself of the obscurity in which he is placed ; his character is lessened only in the opinion of some particular persons ; he keeps himself masked before others : but a minister, who acts contrary to the rules of probity, has witnesses of his bad conduct, and judges as many in number as the people he governs. Shall I hazard a bold assertion ? The greatest mischief done by a minister without principle, does not arise from his serving his prince unfaithfully, or from his ruining the people, it arises from the bad example he sets. You are not ignorant that I have a long time travelled up and down the Indies. I have there known a nation, by nature generous, debauched in an instant, as it were, by the bad example of a minister ; I have seen a whole people, amongst whom, generosity, probity, candour

dour and uprightnes, had long been considered as qualities natural to them, become all on a sudden the most despicable people upon the face of the earth; I have seen the contagion spread, and not spare even the most sacred members of the community; I have known men famous for their virtue, guilty of the most unworthy actions; I have known them violate the first principles of justice, alledging in excuse, the frivolous pretext, that they had been violated with respect to themselves. They justified the basest actions by odious laws, and made necessity a plea for their base and perfidious conduct. I have seen faith banished from contracts, the most solemn compacts rendered void, and all the laws of families subverted. I have seen avaricious debtors puffed up with pride, in the midst of poverty, unworthy instruments of the severity of the laws, and the public distress, pretend payment, without having ever made it, and plunge a dagger in the breast of their benefactors. I have seen others still more unworthy, buy for a trifle, or rather, as it were, pick up oak-leaves from the ground, in order to supply the place of the substance of widows and

I 2 orphans.

orphans. I have known an insatiable thirst for riches spring up on a sudden in the hearts of all men. I have seen a detestable confederacy formed by several persons, to enrich themselves, not by an honest industry, but by the ruin of the prince, the state, and their fellow-citizens. I have known a worthy citizen, in these times of distress, never go to bed without saying to himself; I have ruined a family to-day, I will ruin another to-morrow. I am going, says another, with a man in black, who carries an inkhorn in his hand, to ruin all those to whom I have any obligation. Another said, I find I am beginning to thrive; true it is, when I went about three days ago to pay off some money, I left a whole family in tears, that I squandered the portions of two girls of condition, that I deprived a young lad of the means of acquiring education; his father will die of grief, his mother pines away with sorrow: but I have done nothing but what is allowed by the law. What crime can be greater, than that which a minister commits, when he corrupts the manners of a whole nation, debases the most noble souls, stains the lustre of dignities, makes virtue  
itself



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itself obscure, and confounds the noblest birth, in the general contempt? What will posterity say, when it finds itself under a necessity of blushing for the shame of its ancestors? What will the people of the next age say, when they compare the iron of their ancestors, to the gold of those from whom they immediately derived their birth? I doubt not but the nobility will retrench from their coats of arms, an unworthy distinction, which dishonours them, and leave the present generation in the despicable state to which it has reduced itself.

Paris, the 11th of the moon  
Rhamazan, 1720.

L E T T E R CXLVII.

The chief Eunuch to **USBEK**, at **PARIS**.

**T**HINGS are come to such a pass here, that the state they are in is almost desperate; your wives have taken it into their heads, that your departure has left them entirely at liberty, and that they

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may do what they please with impunity : most shocking things are done here, I cannot write the dreadful account of them without trembling. Zelis, as she was the other day going to the mosque, let drop her veil, and appeared with her face almost entirely uncovered before the people. I found Zachi in bed with one of her female slaves, a thing positively forbidden by the laws of the seraglio. I, by meer accident, surpris'd the letter which I now send you ; I could not possibly discover who it was intended for. Yesterday a young lad was found in the garden of the seraglio, but he made his escape over the walls. To this add all that has escaped my knowledge ; you must doubtless have been betrayed. I wait for your orders, and till the happy moment that I receive them, shall remain in constant anxiety. But if you do not give me an arbitrary power over all these women, I cannot answer for any of them, but shall every day have news equally afflicting, to send you.

From the seraglio at Ispahan, the 1st of the moon Rhegeb, 1717.

LET-

L E T T E R CXLVIII.

USBEK to the chief Eunuch at the Seraglio  
of ISPAHAN.

**R**ECEIVE, by virtue of this letter, an unlimited power over the whole seraglio : command with as much authority as I do myself : let fear and terror accompany you every where ; visit every apartment with correction and punishment : let consternation seize upon all, let all shed tears in thy presence : question all that belong to the seraglio : begin with the slaves ; do not spare even my love : let all be subject to your awful tribunal : discover the most hidden secrets ; purify the infamous place, and make banished virtue return once more to it. For, from this moment, I will place the smallest faults committed there, to your account. I suspect that Zelis is the person to whom the letter you intercepted was addressed : pry into that affair with the eyes of a lynx.

From \* \* \*, the 11th  
of the moon Zilhage,  
1718.

## L E T T E R CXLIX.

NARSIT TO USBEK, at PARIS.

**H**onoured Lord, the chief of the eunuchs is just dead: as I am the eldest of your slaves, I have taken his place, till you signify to me whom you have chosen for it. Two days after his death, one of your letters, directed to him, was brought me; I took care not to open it, I folded it with respect, and locked it up till you think proper to inform me of your sacred pleasure. Yesterday a slave came in the midst of the night, to tell me, that he had found a young man in the seraglio: I got up, made a strict search, and found that it was the effect of his imagination. Ever honoured lord, I kiss thy feet, and beg thou wilt put confidence in my zeal, my experience, and my age.

From the seraglio at Ispahan,  
the 5th of the moon of the  
1st Gemmadi, 1718.

L E T-

L E T T E R C L.

USBEK to NARSIT, at the Seraglio of  
ISPAHAN.

**W**RETCH that thou art! thou hast, in thy hands, letters, which contain orders that require to be carried into execution with the utmost speed; the least delay may reduce me to despair, and you remain inactive under a frivolous pretext! Terrible things happen in the seraglio: perhaps one half of my slaves deserve death. I send you herewith the letter which the chief of the eunuchs wrote to me upon that subject, just before he died. If you had opened the packet which is directed to him, you would have found bloody orders in it. Read therefore those orders, and execute them punctually, or thou shalt perish.

From \* \* \*, the 25th  
of the moon Chalval,  
1718.

## L E T T E R C L I .

SOLIN to USBEK, at PARIS.

WERE I to keep silence any longer, I should be as guilty as any of those wicked wretches in the seraglio. I was the confidant of the chief eunuch, the most faithful of your slaves. When he saw himself near his latter end, he sent for me, and addressed me in these terms: I am dying, but the only thing that gives me uneasiness at leaving the world, is that with my dying eyes I have beheld the guilt of my master's wives. May heaven preserve him from all the misfortunes which I foresee! After my death, may my threatening shade return, to put these perfidious women in mind of their duty, and intimidate them even then: here are the keys of those awful places; go, carry them to the oldest of the black eunuchs. But if, after my death, he should be deficient in diligence, take care to let your master know. Having uttered these words, he expired in my arms. I am not ignorant  
of

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of what he wrote to you concerning the conduct of your wives, a little before his death ; there is a letter in the seraglio, which would have occasioned general terror, if it had been opened. That which you wrote since, was intercepted, three leagues from here. I do not know what it is owing to ; but all things turn out unhappily. Your wives however no longer keep within the bounds of decency : since the death of the chief eunuch, their behaviour is altogether licentious ; Roxana is the only one that does her duty, and continues to retain her modesty. Their morals grow more corrupt every day. One can no longer discover in the countenances of your wives, that severe and rigid virtue which might so easily be discerned there before : an unusual joy which reigns in this place, in my opinion, proves some new satisfaction in those who live here. In the most trifling circumstances, I observe, that they take liberties unknown to this place before. There prevails, even amongst your slaves, an indolence in the discharge of their duty, and a remissness in observing the rules of the seraglio, which I am quite surpris'd at ; they are no longer inspired  
by

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by that warmth of zeal, which seemed to animate the whole seraglio. Your wives have been eight days in the country, at one of your most neglected seats. It is said, that the slave who takes care of it, was gained over by them, and that two days before their arrival, he caused two men to be hid in a hollow place in the wall of the principal chamber, which they came out of in the evening, after we had retired. The old eunuch, who is at present at the head of the seraglio, is a dotard, who believes whatever he is told. Such horrid perfidy excites my indignation : and if heaven, for the good of your service, would make you think me capable of ruling, I can answer for it, that if your wives did not prove virtuous, they would at least prove faithful.

From the seraglio at Ispahan,  
the 6th of the moon of the  
1st Rebiab, 1719.

LET-



## L E T T E R CLII.

NARSIT TO USBEK, at PARIS.

**R**OXANA and Zelis had a desire to go to the country : I thought it would not be proper to refuse them. Happy Usbek, your wives are faithful, and your slaves vigilant : I command in a place which seems to be the asylum of virtue. Depend upon it, nothing is done there, but what you would willingly behold yourself. An unhappy accident has happened, which gives me great uneasiness. Certain Armenian merchants, lately arrived at Ispahan, brought one of thy letters to me ; I sent a slave in quest of it ; he was robbed at his return, and the letter is lost. Write to me therefore speedily, for I take it for granted, that in this change of affairs, you have something important to enjoin me.

From the seraglio at Fatme,  
the 6th of the moon of  
the 1st Rebiab, 1719.

L E T-

## L E T T E R C L I I I .

U S B E K   t o   S O L I N ,   a t   t h e   S e r a g l i o   o f  
I S P A H A N .

**I** Put the sword into your hand. I entrust you with what is of all things most dear to me, that is my revenge. Enter upon this employment, but enter upon it without either compassion, or feeling. I have wrote to my wives to obey you implicitly : in the confusion which so many crimes have made them obnoxious to, they will not be able to stand even your looks. To you I must be indebted for my happiness and ease. Restore me my seraglio in the condition I left it. Begin by purifying it ; destroy the guilty, and make those who propose to become so, tremble. What may you not expect from your master, in recompence for such signal services ! It will be in your own power to rise above your condition, and all the rewards you could ever have wished for.

Paris, the 4th of the moon  
Chahban, 1719.

L E T -

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LETTER CLIV.

USBK to his Wives, at the Seraglio of  
ISPAHAN.

**M**A Y this letter have the effect of thunder, which falls in the midst of lightning and tempests ! Solin is now the chief eunuch, but his business is not so much to guard as punish you. Let the whole seraglio humble itself before him. He is to pass a judgment upon your past actions ; and for the future he will make you live under so rigorous a yoke, that you will regret your liberty, if you do not regret your virtue.

Paris, the 4th of the moon  
Chabban, 1719.

LET-

## L E T T E R C L V .

U S B E K T O N E S S I R , a t I S P A H A N .

**H**APPY the man, who being fully convinced of the value of a life of ease and tranquility, deposits his heart in the midst of his own family, and never knows any country but that in which he was born. I live in a barbarous country, whatever offends me being present, whatever I have a regard for being at a distance from me : a deep melancholy seizes upon me ; I sink into a most shocking depression of spirits : I think myself almost annihilated ; and I do not become sensible of my existence, till a dismal jealousy comes to kindle and produce in my heart, fear, suspicions, hatred and regret. You know me, Nessir, you are as well acquainted with my heart as your own. You would pity me, if you knew in how deplorable a condition I am. Sometimes I am obliged to wait six whole months for news from the seraglio ; I reckon every moment as it passes, my impatience makes them  
appear

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appear to me of a tedious length ; and when the long expected moment is approaching, a sudden revolution arises in my heart ; my hand trembles at opening the fatal letter ; that anxiety which made me despair, I look upon as the happiest state I can be in, and I dread being forced from it, by a stroke, that would, to me, be more cruel than a thousand deaths. But whatever reasons I may have had to leave my country, though I owe my life to absentsing myself, I can no longer, Nessir, bear this dismal banishment. Must I not die equally a victim to my grief ? I have a thousand times importuned Rica to quit this foreign country : but he thwarts all my resolutions ; he confines me here upon a thousand pretexts : he seems to have quite forgot his country ; or rather he seems to have forgot me ; so insensible does he seem to my uneasiness. Unhappy wretch that I am, I wish to see my country again, yet perhaps it is to become still more unhappy : What can I do there ? I shall expose my life again to my enemies. This is not all, I shall enter the seraglio ; I must there exact an account of what passed in the fatal time of my absence ; and if I  
find

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find my wives guilty, what will become of me? If the very idea is insupportable to me at this distance, what must the effect be, when my presence renders it so much more lively? How great must my trouble be, if I am obliged to see and hear what I cannot even think of without shuddering? How dreadful will it be, if punishments, which I must myself cause to be inflicted, should be the eternal marks of my confusion and despair? I shall go and shut myself up within walls, more terrible to me, than to the women who are there confined; I shall carry with me all my suspicions, the ardour of their caresses will not in the least diminish them; in my bed, in their very arms, I shall feel all my inquietudes; at a time so improper for reflexions, jealousy will be a constant source of the most uneasy ones. Worthless out-casts of human nature, vile slaves, whose hearts are for ever shut to all the sentiments of love, you would no longer lament your condition, if you knew the misery of mine.

Paris, the 4th of the moon  
Chahban, 1719.

L E T-

## L E T T E R CLVI.

ROXANA TO USBEK, at PARIS.

**H**ORROR, darkness, and terror reign throughout the seraglio, a dismal melancholy surrounds, a tyger there gives a loose to all his rage at every moment. He caused two white eunuchs to be tortured, but they did not make confession of any crime; he has sold some of our slaves, and obliged us to change those that remained amongst ourselves. Zachi and Zelis have, in the darkness of the night, received in their chamber the most unworthy treatment; the villain has been so audacious as to lay his sacrilegious hands upon them. He keeps us all locked up in our respective apartments; and though we are alone, obliges us to wear our veils. We are not allowed to speak to each other; to write would be deemed highly criminal; we are free in nothing but our tears. A croud of new eunuchs has entered the seraglio, where they watch us night and day: our sleep is every moment interrupted by their  
real,

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real, or feigned, distrusts. My only comfort is, that this cannot last long, and that all these troubles must end with my life: It will not last long, cruel Usbek; I will not give you time to put a stop to all these outrages.

From the seraglio at Is-  
han, the 2d of the moon  
Maharran, 1720.

L E T T E R CLVII.

ZACHI to USBEK, at PARIS.

**O** Heavens! a barbarous wretch has outraged me; in the very manner of punishing, he has inflicted upon me that kind of chastisement, which shocks modesty; that chastisement which gives rise to the deepest humiliation; that chastisement which brings us back, as it were, to a state of infancy. My soul at first sinking with shame, recovered sentiment of itself, and began to be seized with indignation, when my cries made the vaults of the seraglio resound. I was heard to beg for mercy, from the lowest of human kind,  
and



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and to endeavour to excite his compassion as he grew inexorable. Ever since his insolent and servile soul has got the ascendant over mine, his presence, his looks, his words, drive me to distraction. When I am alone, I at least have the consolation of shedding tears: but whenever he appears, I am seized with a transport of rage, and finding my rage impotent, I sink into despair. The tyger dares to tell me, that you are the causer of all these barbarities. He would even deprive me of my love, and profane the sentiments of my heart. When he pronounces the name of the man I love, I can no longer complain; I can only die. I have borne your absence, and preserved my love by the force of my passion. Nights, days, and moments, were all dedicated to you. I even valued myself upon my love, and yours for me caused me to be respected here. But now——no, I can no longer bear the abject condition to which I am fallen. If I am innocent, return and restore me your love; if I am guilty, return, that I may expire at your Feet.

From the seraglio at Is-  
han, the 2d of the moon  
Maharran, 1720.

L E T-

## L E T T E R CLVIII.

ZELIS to USBEK, at PARIS.

**T**HOUGH thirty leagues distant from me, you pronounce me guilty, though thirty leagues distant from me, you punish me. If a barbarous eunuch lays his vile hands upon me, he does it by your orders : it is the tyrant that outrages me, and not the tyrant's instrument. You may, if you think proper, add to your cruel treatment. My heart is quite at ease, now that it loves you no longer. Your soul degrades itself, and you are grown cruel. Depend upon it, you are not possessed of my affections. Farewell.

From the seraglio at Ispahan, the 2d of the moon Maharran, 1720.

L E T.

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

SOLIN to USBEK, at PARIS.

**H**ONoured lord, I am equally afflicted upon my own account and yours ; never was faithful servant reduced to so deep a despair as I am. I send you here a narrative of your own misfortunes and mine, which I write with a trembling hand. I swear by all the prophets in heaven, that since thou didst entrust me with thy wives, I have watched over them night and day ; that I never for one moment, remitted of my vigilance in the least. I began my office with correction, and discontinued it, without departing from my natural austerity. But what am I saying ? Wherefore do I boast of a fidelity which has been of no service to thee ? Forget all my past services ; consider me as a traitor, and punish me for all the crimes I have not been able to prevent. Roxana, the haughty Roxana, Heavens, in whom can we henceforward place any confidence ! you suspected Zelis, and you were

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were perfectly secure with regard to Roxana, but her fierce virtue was a most odious imposture ; it was only a veil to her perfidy. I surpris'd her in the embraces of a young man, who, as soon as he saw himself discovered, run at me ; he gave me two stabs of a poigniard ; the eunuchs who ran togther upon hearing the noise, surrounded him : he defended himself a long time, and killed several ; he would even have re-entered the chamber, in order, as he said, to die in the presence of Roxana. But being at last oppressed by numbers, he fell dead at our feet. I know, not, honoured sir, whether I shall wait your severe orders. You have entrusted me with your revenge, and I ought not to defer it.

From the seraglio at Ispahan, the 8th of the moon of the first Rebiab, 1720.



LET-

L E T T E R CLX.

SOLIN to USBEK at PARIS.

**M**Y resolution is taken, thy misfortunes will shortly vanish; I am preparing to punish. I already feel a secret joy: my soul and thine will shortly be appeased; we will exterminate the criminal, and even the innocent shall shudder. O you, who seem to be made for nothing but to be ignorant of your own senses, and offended at your desires, eternal victims of shame and modesty, why cannot I make you enter this unhappy seraglio, to see your surprize at the torrents of blood I am going to shed!

From the seraglio of Ispahan, the 8th of the moon of the first Rebiab, 1720.

## L E T T E R CLXI.

ROXANA to USBEK at PARIS.

**I**T is true, I have imposed upon thee, I have suborned thy eunuchs; I have made sport of thy jealousy; and I have found means to make thy frightful seraglio an abode of bliss and delight. I am upon the point of death; poison will soon put an end to my life; for why should I live, when the only man who rendered life desirable, is no more? I die: but my shade will be well attended. I have just sent before me the sacrilegious guards, who have shed the most precious blood in the world. How could thou think me weak enough to consider myself as born only to adore thy caprice? that whilst you allowed yourself the full indulgence of all your desires, you had a right to thwart mine in every respect? No, though I have lived in a state of servitude, I contrived means

to

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to be always free : I reformed your laws by the laws of nature ; and my mind has always continued in a state of independency. Thou oughtest even to thank me for the sacrifice which I have made thee ; for having descended so low as to counterfeit a passion for you ; for having basely concealed within my breast, what I should have published to thee ; in fine, for having profaned virtue, by suffering my bearing with your humours to be called by that name. You were surpris'd at never observing in me the transports of love : had you known me well, you would have discovered in me all the violence of hatred. But you have long enjoyed the happy deception of thinking yourself possessed of such a heart as mine : we were both satisfied ; you thought me deceived, whilst I deceived you. You must doubtless be surpris'd at my addressing you in such a stile as this. Is it possible then, that after having overwhelmed thee with my affliction, I should still have it in my power to make thee admire my resolution ? But all this is over now, the poison wastes me away, my strength

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forfakes me, the pen drops from my  
hand; I find even my hatred grow weaker :  
I die.

From the feraglio at Ispa-  
han, the 8th of the moon  
of the 1st Rebiab, 1720.

END of the LETTERS.

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