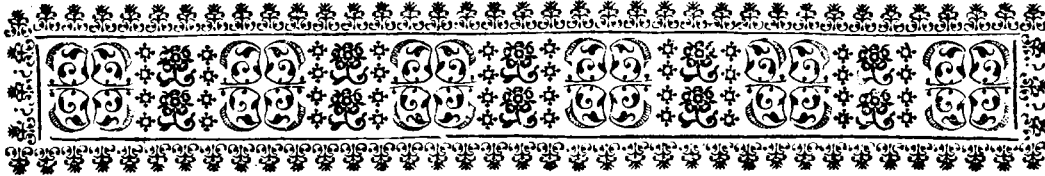


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A
 V O Y A G E
 INTO THE
 L E V A N T :
 By the KING's Expres Command.



L E T T E R I.
 To Monseigneur the Count de Pontchartrain,
 Secretary of State, &c.

MY LORD,

 F you had not taken a Resolution to make these Papers, I Of the Government and Policy of the Turks. send you, publick, I should not presume to entertain you with a world of things, which you know much better than myself: But as you have obliged me to communicate to the Publick an Account of the State of the *Levant*, I believe you will not be displeas'd that I insert in the Letters I have the Honour to write to you, several things which are not generally known, or which have received

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some Change since the last Relations: I shall also endeavour to explain the true Causes of those Alterations. But it will be necessary first, to lay open, as I may say, the Foundations of the Empire of the *Turks*, and discover the Principles upon which their Government is establish'd.

THOSE who do not reflect on the Original of this Empire, discern at first sight, that the *Turkish* Government is extremely severe, and almost tyrannical: But if we consider that it began in War, and that the first *Ottomans* were, from Father to Son, the most formidable Conquerors of their Age, we shall not be surpriz'd, that they set no other Limits to their Power, than merely their Will.

COULD it be expected that Princes, who ow'd their Greatness solely to their Arms, should divest themselves of their Right of Conquest, in favour of their Slaves? It is natural for an Empire, which is founded in a time of Peace, and the People of which make choice of a Chief to govern them, to be mild and gentle; and the Authority of it may, in a manner, be divided and shared. But the first Sultans owing their Promotion purely to their own Valour, and being full of Maxims of War, affected to have a blind Obedience, to punish with Severity, and to keep their Subjects under an Inability to revolt; and, in a word, to be serv'd only by Persons who stood indebted to them for their Fortune, and whom they could advance without Jealousy, and crush without Injustice.

THESE Maxims, which have continued among them for four Centuries, render the Sultán absolute Master of his Empire. In possessing the whole Revenues of it himself, he does but enjoy the Inheritance of his Ancestors, and if he has an absolute Power of Life and Death over his People, he regards them only as the Issue of his Forefathers Slaves. His Subjects also are so intirely persuad'd of the same Opinion, that they make no resistance, but submit to the first Order which is sent to take away their Life or their Goods; and by a refin'd piece of Policy, it is infus'd into them in their very Cradle, that this Excess of Obedience is rather a Duty of Religion, than a Maxim of State. Under the Force of this Prejudice, the Prime Officers of the Empire themselves conclude it to be the highest Good-fortune and Glory to end their Days by the Hand or Order of their Lord. But the Savages of *Canada* are
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more easy and compos'd under this Circumstance than the *Turks*; for without reading *Epiſtetus*, or the *Stoicks*, they naturally account Death a great Good, and deride us, who lament thoſe who are appointed to die: they ſing alſo in the middle of the Flames; and the quickeſt Pain affects them very little, becauſe they are fill'd with Hope of entring upon a happier Life. Letter I.

THE Grand Signior is ador'd by his Subjects, and wins them to him by the flighteſt Favours; for they have no Poſſeſſions, but what they hold of him. His Empire extends from the *Black Sea* to the *Red Sea*; he has the better part of *Africa*, is Maſter of all *Greece*, and even to the Frontiers of *Hungary* and *Poland*; and, in ſhort, can boaſt that his Predeceſſors, or their Grand Viſiers, have beſieg'd the Capital of the *Western Empire*, and have left only the Gulph of *Venice* between their Dominions and *Italy*. After this, would any Man believe there have been Sultans who have liv'd only on the Income of the Royal Gardens belonging to the Empire, tho even at preſent theſe Revenues amount but to an indifferent Sum? and that ſeveral have liv'd by the Labour of their own Hands? and that at *Adrianople* are ſhewn the Tools Sultan *Morat* us'd in making Arrows, which he ſold for his own Profit in the *Seraglio*? The Courtiers, it is likely, paid dear enough for their Emperor's Work. One is very far from ſeeing the ſame Frugality now-a-days in a Prince's Palace.

FOR fear of being ſurpriz'd in an unguarded Poſture, the Sultans have provided a Bulwark for themſelves and their Succeſſors, by inſtituting a formidable Militia, which is kept on foot as well in time of Peace as of War. The *Janizaries* and the *Spahis* balance the Power of the Prince, in ſuch a manner, as abſolute as it is, that they have ſometimes had the Infolence to demand his Head: and they depoſe Emperors, and create new ones more eaſily than the *Roman* Soldiers did of old. This is a Curb upon the Sultans, and reſtrains their Tyranny.

THE Revenues of the Emperor are partly fix'd, and partly caſual. The fix'd are the Customs; the Capitation impos'd upon the Jews and the Christians; the Excife upon all the Produce of the Soil; and the annual Tributes which the Cham of *Tartary* the leſs, the Princes of *Moldavia* and *Wallachia*, the Republick of *Ragufa*, and one part of *Mengrelia* and

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Russia pay in Gold. To which must be added five Millions of Livres return'd from *Egypt*; for of twelve Millions furnish'd by that spacious Kingdom, in Sequins coin'd upon the spot, the Pay of the Soldiers and the Officers consumes four; and three more the Grand Signior sends to *Mecha*, for an usual Present, to maintain the Expences of the Religious Worship, and of filling the Cisterns of *Arabia* with Water, which are on the Road where the Pilgrims pass.

THE Treasurers of the Provinces receive the Duties of their several Districts, and defray all the Charges by Assignments from the Port. These return the Money which is in their hands every three Months to the Treasurers of the Empire, who are accountable to the Grand Visier for what they receive from the Provinces.

THE casual Revenues of the Grand Signior consist in Inheritances: For, according to the Laws of the Empire, the Prince is Heir both to great and small, to whom he hath given Pensions during their Life; and in like manner, to the Soldiers, if they die without Children. If only Daughters are left, he receives two Thirds of the Estate, not out of the Fiefs, for they belong naturally to the Prince; but out of the Lands independent of the Fiefs, as of the Gardens, the Farms, the Cash, the Moveables, and of the Slaves, the Clothes, Horses, &c. The Relations dare not offer to alienate any part of the Estate, for there are Officers establish'd to look after it; and if they should attempt it, the whole would be forfeited to the Sultan.

THE Spoils of the great Men of the Port, and the Bassa's rise to an immense Sum, and make it impossible to know the Amount of the Grand Signior's Revenues. Very often he does not stay for their dying a natural Death, or give them time to conceal their Treasure; but their Gold, and Silver, and Jewels, and their Heads, are carry'd at once to the Seraglio. Nor is the Removal of the Bassa's only of advantage to the Grand Signior; but he who succeeds a displac'd Bassa, pays for his Preferment a considerable Sum. All whom the Sultan gratifies also with a Viceroyship, or any Post of Consequence, are indispensably oblig'd to make him Presents, not according to their Riches; for the Persons advanc'd are frequently taken out of the Seraglio, where they had no opportunity of laying up any thing; but the Presents must be answerable
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to the Favour they receive. The Present of the Bassa of *Cairo* is computed at fifteen hundred thousand Livres, without reckoning seven or eight hundred thousand he must distribute to them who procur'd him the Government, and who have Interest enough to preserve him in it: these are the chief Sultaneesses, the Mufti, the Grand Visier, the Bostangi-Bashi, &c. Letter I.

THESE Sums are not suffer'd to lie in the hands of the Treasurers, who might waste them or use them to their own Profit; but they are brought to the Seraglio into the Treasury-Royal, which is near the Hall of the Divan. It is divided into four Chambers; the first two of which are taken up with different Arms, and great Coffers of Vests and Furrs, Cushions embroider'd, and set with Pearls, with pieces of the finest Cloth of *England*, *Holland*, and *France*, and with Velvets, Brocades of Gold and Silver, and with Bridles and Saddles cover'd with precious Stones.

IN the third Chamber are kept the Jewels of the Crown, which are of an inestimable Price: the Staff which bears the Plume of Feathers is adorn'd with the richest Stones, and is in the Form of a Tulip; this is fasten'd to the Grand Signior's Turbant, who wears it there. If the Sultan desires to see any of his Jewels, the Chief Treasurer, accompany'd with 60 Pages belonging to that Chamber, gives notice to the Key-keeper to attend at the Treasury-Door; and first the Treasurer examines whether the Seal he plac'd the last time upon the Lock be entire; after which, he orders the Key-keeper to break it, and open the Door; and acquaints him which of the Jewels it is the Grand Signior demands; and receiving it, goes away to deliver it to him immediately. In this Chamber are lodg'd also the noblest Harnesses, and the richest Arms in the World: the Sabres, and Swords, and Poinards glitter with Diamonds, Rubies, Emeralds, Turquoises, and Pearls. These seldom lie long here, but are generally circulated; for in proportion as the Emperor has given any of them to the Bassa's, he receives others from them, when they die, or are remov'd.

THE fourth Chamber is properly the Publick Treasury: It is full of strong Coffers, arm'd with Bands of Iron, and secur'd every one with two Locks; in these are put all the pieces of Gold and Silver. The Door of the Chamber is seal'd with the Grand Signior's Signet, who keeps

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one of the Keys, and the other is in the hands of the Grand Vifier. Before they proceed to take off the Seal, it is certified very strictly that it has suffer'd no Alteration, and this is commonly done upon Council-Days; at which time they lock up the new Receipts in the Coffers, and take out Sums appointed for the Payment of the Troops, and other Services; after which, the Grand Vifier applies the Emperor's Signet again.

AS to the Gold, that passes into the Grand Signior's Privy-Treasury, which is a subterraneous Vault, in which no one enters beside the Prince, attended by some Pages of the Treasury: The Gold is put into Bags of Leather, containing fifteen thousand Sequins apiece, and the Bags are deposited in strong Chests. When it appears there is Gold enough in the fourth Chamber to fill two hundred Bags, the Grand Vifier signifies it to his Highness, who repairs thither to see them remov'd into his Privy-Treasury, and to seal them up himself. At that time he ordinarily makes his Largeesses, both to the Pages who wait on him in the Privy-Treasury, and to the great Men who follow him to the Door, and stay behind in the fourth Chamber with the Grand Vifier.

IF the Wars exhaust these Sums, or the State is in a pressing Necessity, the Treasures of the Mosques, which are kept in the Castle of the Seven Towers, are still a noble Supply to the Emperor.

THE Mosques are rich, especially that which is call'd the *Royal*: after the Officers are paid out of these Religious Revenues, the Remainder of the Money is put into that Treasury, of which the Grand Signior is the principal Guardian. This sacred Treasure, it is true, cannot be made use of, unless for the Defence of their Religion; but does not such an Occasion offer it self at every turn in the Wars with their Neighbours, who are either Christians or Schismatical Mahometans? And the Mufti knows not how to disapprove the applying of this Money to such a War.

THERE is no Prince who is serv'd with more Respect than the Sultan. Such a Veneration for him is inspir'd into those who are educated in the Seraglio; and their Condition requires from them so much Fidelity and Devotion to his Person, that he is not only regarded as the Lord of the World, but even as the Sovereign Arbiter of every Man's Good

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Good and Evil in particular: the Palace therefore is fill'd only with a Train of Creatures entirely consecrated to him. They may be divided into five Classes; the *Eunuchs*, the *Ichoglans*, the *Azamoglans*, the *Women*, and the *Mutes*; to whom may be added, the *Dwarfs* and the *Buffoons*, who deserve not to be accounted a distinct Class by themselves. Letter I.

THE *Eunuchs* have the Charge of the whole Palace, and are in the highest Confidence; being incapable of pleasing the Fair Sex, and disengag'd from Intrigues of Love, they resign themselves wholly to Ambition, and the Care of enriching their Fortune. They are easily distinguish'd by their Colour; for some are Black, and others are White. The White are employ'd in serving the Person of the Prince, and overseeing the Education of the Children of the Seraglio. The Black are the more unhappy, for they are always shut up in the Apartments of the Women. They are forc'd to use a Pipe in making Water, being depriv'd of the natural Conveyance in their Infancy: for the Sultans were jealous of them, while the Operation was perform'd in any other manner; and to cure this extravagant Imagination, they are cut smooth close to the Belly. The Operation is not without danger, and costs many of them their Lives: But the Eastern People and the *Africans* sacrifice every thing to their Jealousy. Yet after this barbarous Precaution, they scarcely suffer the poor Wretches to cast their Eyes upon their Women, and commonly permit them only to stand Centinel at the outer Door of the Chamber.

THE Chief of the White *Eunuchs*, who has been handled in his Youth as severely as the rest, is the great Master of the Seraglio; he has the Inspection of all the Pages of the Palace, and all Petitions, which are to be presented to the Prince, are deliver'd to him: he is in the Secret of the Cabinet, and commands all the *Eunuchs* of his own Complexion. The principal of these Eunuchs are, 1. The Great Chamberlain, who is first of the Officers of the Chamber. 2. The Deputy-Supervisor of the Pages Apartments, and other Buildings of the Palace: He never stirs out of *Constantinople*, and gives his Orders to others who follow the Grand Signior abroad. 3. The Privy-Treasurer, who keeps the Jewels of the Crown, and one of the Keys of the Secret Treasury, and commands all the

*The Chief of
the White Eu-
nuchs.*

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the Pages of the Treafury. 4. The Grand Expenditor of the Seraglio, who is alfo Great Master of the Wardrobe: it is his Charge to look to the Sultan's Sweet-meats and Drinks, the Syrups and Sherbet, and the Counter-poifons or Antidotes, as the Treacle and Bezoar, and other Drugs: he takes care alfo of the Grand Signior's *Porcelain* and *China Ware*. The other White *Eunuchs* are Preceptors to the Pages, the firft Priest of the Palace-Mofque, and Overfeer of the Infirmatories.

*The Chief of
the Black Eunuchs.*

THE Chief of the Black *Eunuchs*, who may be call'd, *The Eunuch*, by way of eminence, has the absolute Command of the Women's Apartment; and all the Black *Eunuchs*, who are plac'd there for a Guard, obey him blindly. He has the Super-intendence of the Royal Mofques of the Empire, and difpofes of all the Offices which belong to them. The principal Black *Eunuchs* are, the *Eunuch* of the Queen-Mother; the Intendant or Governour of the Princes of the Blood; the Comp-troller of the Queen-Mother's Treafury, the Steward of her Perfumes, Sweet-meats and Liquors; the two Chiefs of the Great and Little Chamber of the Women; the Head-Janitor of their Apartment; and the two Priests of the Royal Mofque, whither the Women refort to Prayers.

*Ichoglans and
Azamoglans.*

THE *Ichoglans* are young Men, bred up in the Seraglio, not only to ferve about the Prince, but to fill, in time, the firft Posts of the Empire. The *Azamoglans* are train'd up there for inferior Employments.

THAT Honours may not become hereditary or fucceffive, or any Family be advanc'd which may be able to form a confiderable Party; the Children of the Viflers and Baffa's are fo far from fucceeding their Fathers, that it is ordain'd they fhall not rife above the Degree of Captain of a Gally; and if there are Instances of the contrary, they are very rare. It is not long fince the Emperors employ'd fuch only as had neither Relations nor Friends in the Seraglio: And out of the diftant Provinces were continually fent thither Numbers of Chriftian Children taken in the War, or levy'd by way of Tribute in *Europe*, for thofe of *Afia* were exempted; the moft beautiful and well-made were chofen, and fuch as appear'd to have the greateft Spirit and Senfe. Their Names, Age, and Country were register'd; and the unhappy Infants foon forgetting Father and Mother, Brothers and Sifters, and their Country it felf,

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self, become wholly devoted to the Person of the Sultan. At present Letter I. this Tribute of Children is discontinu'd; not out of favour to the *Greeks*, but because the *Turks* themselves give Money to the Officers of the Seraglio to have their own Children admitted there, in prospect of their arriving to the highest Places in the Empire. According to the best of their Capacity, these Children think of nothing but how to please those who have the Care of their Education, in order to merit the Favour of the Court. The Emperor frequently makes his Choice of them, according as they are presented, or appoints them to be review'd by the Heads of the White *Eunuchs*, who are good Physiognomists: the greater part of them are kept at *Constantinople*; but some, I have been inform'd, are sent to *Adrianople* and *Prusa* in *Asia*: the most Graceful continue among the *Ichoglans*, and the others are distributed among the *Azamoglans*.

IN the first place they are requir'd to make a Profession of Faith, and are circumcis'd; during which Operation they repeat, *There is no God but God, and Mahomet is the Messenger of God*. They are bred with an exemplary Modesty, and are no less submissive and obedient, than the Novices among our Religious: they are chastis'd severely for the smallest Faults by the *Eunuchs* who overlook their Behaviour, and are strictly held for fourteen Years under these Preceptors Eyes. Instead of whipping, they receive the Bastinado upon the Soles of their Feet; which is so severely inflicted for some Transgressions, that they expire under the Blows. The *Eunuchs* are very cruel, and being vex'd at their own miserable Condition, discharge their Anger upon those who have not suffer'd in the same kind. These unhappy Youths therefore are forc'd to bear all their capricious Humours, and never leave the Seraglio till their time is finish'd, unless they are willing to quit the Society; and then they lose their Fortune, and receive but a trifling Acknowledgment at their Departure. The Seraglio is perfectly a Republick, the Members of which have Laws and Customs peculiar to themselves: Both those who command there, and they who obey, have no Notion of Liberty, and have no Commerce with the Inhabitants of the City; and the *Eunuchs* never stir out thither, but to execute their Orders. The Sultan himself is in a manner a Slave to the Pleasures of his Palace: He alone, and some of his Mistresses, are heartily merry, the rest are dull and sad.

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THE

*A VOYAGE into the Levant.**The Ichoglans*

THE *Ichoglans* are divided into four Chambers, which are beyond the Hall of the Divan, on the left side of the third Court. The first, which is call'd the Little Chamber, contains ordinarily 400 Pages, who are all subsisted at the Grand Signior's Charge, and receive every one four or five Aspers a day for their Pay. But the Education which is given them, is beyond any Price: Nothing is inculcated to them, but Civility, Modesty, Politeness, Accuracy, and Honesty; above all, they are taught to keep silence, to hold down their Eyes, and fold their Hands across their Breast. Beside Masters to teach them to read and write, there are some whose Care it is to instruct them in their Religion, and especially to shew them to say their Prayers at the stated Hours.

AFTER six Years Practice, they pass to the second Chamber with the same Pay and the same Habit, which is of common Cloth; they continue here also the same Exercises, but apply themselves more particularly to Languages, and whatever may improve and brighten their Wit. The Languages are the *Turkish*, the *Arabian*, and the *Persian*. As their Strength comes on, they put them to draw the Bow, to shoot, to throw the Dart, to handle the Pike or the Lance, to mount on Horseback, and every thing belonging to the Art of Riding; as to dart on Horseback, to discharge their Arrows before or behind, on the right hand and on the left. The Grand Signior takes a pleasure in seeing them fight on Horseback, and rewards those who shew the greatest Skill. The Pages continue four Years in this Chamber before they remove to the third.

IN that they learn to sew, embroider, and make Arrows; and here they also spend four Years, in order to become the better qualify'd to wait on the Sultan. To this end, beside Musick, they practise Shaving, paring the Nails, folding Vests and Turbants, attending in the Baths, washing the Grand Signior's Linen, and keeping Dogs and Birds.

DURING these fourteen Years of Noviciate, they never speak to one another but at certain Hours, and their Discourses are modest and grave: If they go to see one another at any time, it is under the Eyes of the Eunuchs, who follow them continually. In the Night, not only their Chambers are illuminated, but the Eyes of those *Argus's*, who are incessantly walking the Round, discover all that passes. Between every six Beds lies an Eunuch, who erects his Ears at the least Noise.

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