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Publication date: mercredi 15 avril 2020

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Usbek to Ibben in Smyrna

The desire for glory is no different from the instinct all creatures have for their own preservation. It seems that we augment our being when we can project it into the memory of others : it is a new life we acquire, and which becomes as precious to us as the one we have received from heaven.

But as all men are not equally attached to life, they also are not equally responsive to glory. That noble passion is indeed always engraved in their hearts, but imagination and education modify it in a thousand ways.

This difference which is found from one man to the next is felt even more between one people and another.

One can posit as a rule that in every state the desire for glory increases with the subjects' freedom, and diminishes with it ; glory is never the companion of servitude. [1]

A man of good sense said to me the other day : In France we are in many respects freer than in Persia, and so we love glory more. This happy fancy makes a Frenchman do willingly and with pleasure what your sultan obtains from his subjects only by keeping torture and rewards constantly before their eyes.

And so among us the prince is jealous of the honor of the least of his subjects. To maintain it there are respectable tribunals [2] : it is the sacred treasure of the nation, and the only one of which the sovereign is not the master, which he cannot be without countering his own interests. Thus, if a subject feels himself wounded in his honor by his prince, either by some preference [3] or by the slightest sign of disdain, he immediately leaves the court, his position, and his service, and withdraws to his estate.

The difference to be found between French troops and yours is that yours, composed of naturally cowardly slaves, overcome the fear of death only by the fear of punishment, which produces in the soul a new sort of terror that more or less numbs it ; whereas ours face the blows with delectation, and banish fear by a satisfaction that is superior to it.

But the sanctuary of honor, reputation, and virtue seems to be established in republics and in countries where one can speak the word homeland. In Rome, in Athens, in Lacedaemon, [4] honor alone paid for the most signal services. A crown of oak leaves or laurel, a statue, a eulogy were an immense reward for a battle won or city captured.

There, a man who had accomplished a great feat deemed himself sufficiently rewarded by that feat itself. He could not see one of his compatriots without feeling the pleasure of being his benefactor ; he counted the number of his services by the number of his fellow citizens. Every man is capable of doing good to another man ; but to contribute to the happiness of an entire society is to be like the gods.

But must not such noble emulation be entirely extinguished in the hearts of your Persians, among whom functions and dignities are only attributes of the sovereign's fancy ? Reputation and vertu there are regarded as imaginary if they are not accompanied by the prince's favor, with which they are born and likewise die. A man who has the esteem of the public for him is never sure not to be dishonored tomorrow : today he is a general of the army ; the prince might be

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about to make him his cook, and he will no longer have any praise to hope for beyond being congratulated for a good stew.

Paris this 15th day of the moon of Gemadi II, 1715

[1] Honor will become the principle of monarchical power in *The Spirit of Law* (III, 7) ; it is likewise the feeling of shame that substitutes for punishment in a moderated government. But here honor has a broader meaning.

[2] Reference to the *tribunal des maréchaux de France*, founded in Paris to judge questions of noble honor and prevent duels.

[3] *I.e.*, someone else received a promotion which he was anticipating.

[4] Sparta.