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- Persian Letters - Letters -

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### *Usbek to Rhedi in Venice*

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In Paris liberty and equality reign. Birth, virtue, even merit in war, however brilliant it be, do not save a man from the crowd in which he is submerged. Jealousy of rank is unknown here. They say that the most important man in Paris is the one who has the best horses on his carriage.

A great lord is a man who sees the king, who speaks with ministers, who has ancestors, debts, and annuities. If in addition he can conceal his idleness with a busy demeanor or a feigned attachment for pleasures, he deems himself the happiest of all men.

In Persia there are no greats except those to whom the monarch gives some role in the government. [1] Here, there are people who are great by birth, but they have no influence. The kings do as those skilled workers who in executing their works always use the simplest machines.

Favor is the great diety of the French. [2] The minister is the high priest, who offers to him many victims. Those who surround him are not dressed in white ; sometimes sacrificers and sometimes sacrificed, they consecrate themselves to their idol with all the people.

*Paris this 9th day of the moon of Gemmadi II, 1715*

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[1] "There is no nobility in Persia, nor anywhere in the Orient, and respect is given only to functions, dignities, extraordinary merit, and particularly to wealth." (Chardin, VI, 60-61.)

[2] See letter 95.