

Seventeenth-Century References

John Milton *Paradise Lost* (1667)

Book XI

And SOFALA thought OPHIR, to the Realme
Of CONGO, and ANGOLA fardest South;
Or thence from NIGER Flood to ATLAS Mount
**The Kingdoms of ALMANSOR, FEZ, and SUS,
MAROCCO and ALGIERS, and TREMISEN;**
On EUROPE thence, and where ROME was to sway
The World: in Spirit perhaps he also saw
Rich MEXICO the seat of MOTEZUME,
And CUSCO in PERU, the richer seat
Of ATABALIPA, and yet unspoil'd
GUIANA, whose great Citie GERYONS Sons
Call EL DORADO: but to nobler sights
MICHAEL from ADAM'S eyes the Filme remov'd
Which that false Fruit that promis'd clearer sight
Had bred;

John Bunyan *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678)

from This World to That Which Is to Come

CHRISTIAN : Thus say the common people that know him, A saint abroad, and a devil at home. His poor family finds it so; he is such a churl, such a railer at and so unreasonable with his servants, that they neither know how to do for or speak to him. Men that have any dealings with him say it is better to deal with a **Turk** than with him; for fairer dealing they shall have at their hands. This Talkative (if it be possible) will go beyond them, defraud, beguile, and overreach them.

From **William Lithgow's *Rare Adventures and Painful Peregrinations***

found Domesticke, some fiftene circumcised English Runagates, whose lives and Countenances were both alike, even as desperate as disdainfull. Yet old Waird their maister was placable, and joynd me safely with a passing Land conduct to Algiers; yea, and diverse times in my ten dayes staying there, I dyned and supped with him, but lay aboard in the French shippe. At last having obtayned my pasport from the Bassaw there, and surety taken from my life and moneyes, I imbraced the Land way with this conduct, consisting of forty Moores, and a hundred Camels loaden with Silkes, Dimmeteis, and other Commodities, traversing the Regions of Constantine and Bougie. In all which way (Lying nightly in a Tent) I found a pleasant and fruitfull Country, abounding in Wines, Rye, Barly, Wheate, and all kinde of fruites, with innumerable villages, and so infinitely peopled, that it made me wish there had beene none at all; otherwise that they had beene Christians, and so more civill. The greatest enemy this journey designed mee, was the Sunne, whose exceeding heate was intollerable to indure, being in September Anno 1615. But for provision of Water, Wine, and Victuals wee had abundance. Upon the seaventh day of our course, wee entred in the Countrey of Tlemsen. This copious Kingdome in all things, hath beene oft and ever molested with the Numidian Sarazens, or bastard Arabs, who falling downe from the Mountaines, do runne their carriere at random upon the ground-toyled Moores, to satisfie their needy and greedy desires. Tlemsen had of old foure Provinces, but now oncly two: Whose capitall Towne being too cognominated Tlemsen, contayned once eighteene thousand fire houses (208).

The Eighteenth-Century Perception
From Thomas Shaw's *Travels or Observations (Volume I)*

Dedication: To the King

Most Gracious Sovereign,

I BEG leave to approach Your Royal Person, with an humble present in my hand, after the fashion of those countries where I have long resided

It is a volume of Travels and Observations, wherein are described the situation, polity, and customs of various nations; nations unacquainted with liberty, and whose government is the very reverse of Your Majesty's wise and gracious administration.

I HAD an opportunity of making these observations, whilst I had the honour of being Your Majesty's Chaplain at Algiers. It was in this situation that I first collected materials for the following sheets; and so extensive is Your ' Majesty's influence, that it procured me safety and protection, even in countries remote and barbarous.

A WORK which owes its rise, its progress, and completion, to these assistances, seems in some degree entitled to Your Royal Favour, and IS therefore, with all humility, presented to Your Sacred Majesty.

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PREFACE.

must be what the Europeans call wild Arabs; for there is no such name peculiar to any one particular clan or body of them, they being all the same, with the like inclinations (whenever a proper opportunity or temptation offers itself) of robbing, stripping, and murdering, not strangers only, but also one another.

PART I. CHAPTER I.

Of the Kingdom of Algiers in general Page 29

There is not the like disagreement among these geographers, in relation to the breadth of this kingdom, though none of them make it less than CL M. where it is the narrowest; nor more than CCXL where it is the broadest. The breadth indeed, though much short of these accounts, is not every where the same: for near Tlemsan it is not above xl M. from the Sahara to the sea coast; near the sources of the rivers Sigg, and Shellifi it is about LX; which, in the western part of this kingdom, may be taken at a medium for the extent of what the Arabs call Tell, ie. land proper for tillage. But, to the eastward of Algiers, the breadth is more considerable; particularly in the meridians of Boujejali, Jijel, and Bona, where it is never less than CM.

CHAPTER IV.

***Of the most remarkable inland Places and Inhabitants
of the Western Province, or the Province of Tlemsan.***

If we return then to the westward, five leagues to the southward of the mouth of the river Tafna, is the city Tremesen, as the modern geographers write it, or Telemsan or Tlemsan, according to the Moorish pronunciation. It is situated upon a rising ground, below a range of rocky precipices... We have a large strip of level ground, that throws out from every part of it a number of fountains.

These, after uniting gradually into little rills, fall in a variety of cascades, as they draw near to Tlemsan. In the west part of the city, there is a large square bason of Moorish workmanship, two hundred yards long, and about half as broad. The inhabitants entertain a tradition, that formerly the kings of Tlemsan took here the diversion of the water, whilst their subjects were taught the art of rowing and navigation. But the water of the Sachratian, as Leo well observes, being easily turned off from its ordinary course, this bason might have been rather designed for

a reservoir in case of a siege; not to mention the constant use of it at all other times, in preserving a quantity of water sufficient to refresh the beautiful gardens and plantations that lie below it.

The Beni Mezzab notwithstanding they pay no tribute to the Algerines, and, being of the sect of the Melaki, are not permitted to enter their mosques; yet they have been from time immemorial the only persons who are employed in their slaughter houses, and who have furnished their shambles with provisions. It may be farther observed of these sons of Mezzab, that they are generally of a more swarthy complexion than the Gardaians to the northward; and as they lie separated from them by a wide inhospitable desert, without the least traces of dwellings, or even the footsteps of any living creatures, they may be in all probability, as it will be elsewhere observed, the most western branch of the Melanogaatuli, so much sought after, and so little known in the modern systems of geography.

Boujeiah is one of the garrisoned towns of this kingdom, where three Suffrahs constantly reside; yet they are of so little consequence, that the Goryah, the Toujah, and other neighbouring Kabyles, lay it under a perpetual blockade. Every market day especially, strange disorders are occasioned by these factious clans. All the morning, indeed, while the market continues, every thing is transacted with the utmost peace and tranquillity; but immediately afterwards, the whole place is in an uproar and confusion, and the day rarely ends without some flagrant instance of rapine and barbarity.

The Boujeians carry on a considerable trade in plowshares, mattocks, and such like utensils as they forge out of the iron, dug out of the adjacent mountains. Great quantities likewise of oil and wax, brought down every market day by the Kabyles, are shipped off for the Levant, and sometimes for Europe.

No nation in the world is so much given to superstition as the Arabs, or even as the Mahometans in general. They hang* about their childrens necks, the figure of an open hand, usually the right, which the Turks and Moors paint likewise upon their ships and houses, as a countercharm to an evil eye; for five is with them an unlucky number, and five (meaning their fingers) in your eyes, is their proverb of cursing and defiance.

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who have the Dey's ear; by flattering one, placing confidence in another, and especially by making a proper use of those invincible arguments, money, kaf-tans, and gold watches. For according to an old and infallible observation, "Give a Turk money with one hand, and he will permit his eyes to be plucked out by the other."

Of the state of Learning in Barbary, with the Method of teaching their Children.

The liberal arts and sciences among the Mahometans continue to be, as they have been for many ages, in a low state and condition. Philosophy, mathematics, and the knowledge of physic and medicine, which, a few centuries ago they had almost entirely to themselves, are at present very little known or studied. The roving and unsettled life of the Arabs, and the perpetual grievances which the Moors meet with from the Turks, will not permit either of them to enjoy that liberty, quiet and security, which have at all times given birth and encouragement to learning.

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Lady Montagu's Turkish Letters

PREFACE

I CONFESS, I am malicious enough to desire, that the world should see to how much better purpose the LADIES travel than their LORDS; and that, whilst it is surfeited with Male travels, all in the same tone, and stuffed with the same trifles; a lady has the skill to strike out a new path, and to embellish a worn-out subject with variety of fresh and elegant entertainment.

Letter XLI.

TO THE COUNTESS OF B——.

I know You'l expect that I should say something particular of the Slaves, and you will Imagine me half a Turk when I don't speak of it with the same horror that other Christians have done before me, but I cannot forbear applauding the Humanity of the Turks to those Creatures. They are never ill us'd and their Slavery is in my Opinion no worse than Servitude all over the world. 'Tis true, they have no wages; but they give them yearly clothes to a higher value than our salaries to our ordinary servants.

Letter xxix.

ADRIANOPE. — LADY M. DESCRIBES HER TURKISH DRESS — THE PERSONS AND MANNERS OF THE TURKISH LADIES — THEIR DRESS WHEN THEY GO ABROAD — THE PLURALITY OF WIVES ALLOWED BY THE KORAN SELDOM INDULGED.

TO THE COUNTESS OF ——.

Adrianople, April. 1. O. S. 1717.

Pray let me into more particulars, and I will try to awaken your gratitude, by giving you a full and true relation of the novelties of this place, none of which would surprise you more than a sight of my person, as I am now in my Turkish habit, though I believe you would be of my opinion, that 'tis admirably becoming. — I intend to send you my picture; in the mean time accept of it here.

THE first part of my dress is a pair of drawers, very full that reach to my shoes, and conceal the legs more modestly than your petticoats. They are of a thin rose-coloured damask, brocaded with silver flowers. My shoes are of white kid leather, embroidered with gold. Over this hangs my smock, of a fine white silk gauze, edged with embroidery. The antery is a waistcoat, made close to the shape, of white and gold damask, with very long sleeves falling back, and fringed with deep gold fringe, and should have diamond or pearl buttons. My caftan, of the same stuff with my drawers, is a robe exactly fitted to my shape, and reaching to my feet, with very long strait falling sleeves. Over this is my girdle, of about four fingers broad, which, all that can afford it, have entirely of diamonds or other precious stones; those who will not be at that expence, have it of exquisite embroidery on sattin; but it must be fastened before with a clasp of diamonds. The head dress is composed of a cap, called talpock, which is, in winter, of fine velvet embroidered with pearls or diamonds, and in summer, of a light shining silver stuff. This is fixed on one side of the head, hanging a little way down with a gold tassel, and bound on, either with a circle of diamonds (as I have seen several) or a rich embroidered handkerchief. On the other side of the head, the hair is laid flat; and here the ladies are at liberty to shew their fancies; some putting flowers, others a plume of heron's feathers, and, in short, what they please; but the most general fashion is a large bouquet of jewels, made like natural flowers; that is, the buds, of pearl; the roses, of different coloured rubies: the jessamines, of diamonds; the jonquils, of topazes, &c. so well set and enamelled, 'tis hard to imagine any thing of that kind so beautiful. The hair hangs at its full length behind, divided into tresses braided with pearl or

ribbon, which is always in great quantity. I never saw in my life so many fine heads of hair. 'Tis surprising to see a young woman that is not very handsome. They have naturally the most beautiful complexion in the world, and generally large black eyes. I can assure you with great truth, that the court of England (though I believe it the fairest in Christendom) does not contain so many beauties as are under our protection here. They generally shape their eye-brows, and both Greeks and Turks have the custom of putting round their eyes a black tincture, that, at a distance, or by candle-light, adds very much to the blackness of them. I fancy many of our ladies would be overjoyed to know this secret, but 'tis too visible by day.

AS to their morality or good conduct, I can say, like Harlequin, that 'tis just as 'tis with you; and the Turkish ladies don't commit one sin the less for not being Christians. Now, that I am a little acquainted with their ways, I cannot forbear admiring, either the exemplary discretion, or extreme stupidity of all the writers that have given accounts of them. 'Tis very easy to see, they have in reality more liberty than we have. No woman, of what rank soever, is permitted to go into the streets without two murlins, one that covers her face all but her eyes, and another, that hides the whole dress of her head, and hangs half way down her back. Their shapes are also wholly concealed, by a thing they call a serigee, which no woman of any sort appears without; this has strait sleeves, that reach to their fingers-ends, and it laps all round them, not unlike a riding-hood. In winter, 'tis of cloth; and in summer, of plain stuff or silk. You may guess then, how effectually this disguises them, so that there is no distinguishing the great lady from her slave. 'Tis impossible for the most jealous husband to know his wife, when he meets her; and no man dare touch or follow a woman in the street.

Letter XXVI.

TO THE LADY ——.

Adrianople, April 1. O. S. 1717.

IN one of these covered waggons, I went to the bagnio about ten o'clock. It was already full of women. It is built of stone, in the shape of a dome, with no windows but in the roof, which gives light enough. There were five of these domes joined together, the outmost being less than the rest, and serving only as a hall, where the portress stood at the door. Ladies of quality generally give this woman a crown or ten shillings; and I did not forget that ceremony. The next room is a very large one paved with marble, and all round it are two raised sofas of marble, one above another. There were four fountains of cold water in this room, falling first into marble basons, and then running on the floor in little channels made for that purpose, which carried the streams into the next room, something less than this, with the same sort of marble sofas, but so hot with steams of sulphur proceeding from the baths joining to it, 'twas impossible to stay there with one's cloaths (sic) on. The two other domes were the hot baths, one of which had cocks of cold water turning into it, to temper it to what degree of warmth the bathers pleased to have.

I WAS in my travelling habit, which is a riding dress, and certainly appeared very extraordinary to them. Yet there was not one of them that shewed the least surprise or impertinent curiosity, but received me with all the obliging civility possible. I know no European court, where the ladies would have behaved themselves in so polite a manner to such a stranger. I believe, upon the whole, there were two hundred women, and yet none of those disdainful smiles, and satirical whispers, that never fail in our assemblies, when any body appears that is not dressed exactly in the fashion. They repeated over and over to me; "UZELLE, PEK UZELLE," which is nothing but, Charming, very Charming.—The first sofas were covered with cushions and rich carpets, on which sat the ladies; and on the second, their slaves behind them, but without any distinction of rank by their dress, all being in the state of nature, that is, in plain English, stark naked, without any beauty or defect concealed. Yet there was not the least wanton smile or immodest gesture amongst them. They walked and moved with the same majestic grace, which Milton describes our general mother with... in different postures, some in conversation, some working,

others drinking coffee or sherbet, and many negligently lying on their cushions, while their slaves (generally pretty girls of seventeen or eighteen) were employed in braiding their hair in several pretty fancies. In short, 'tis the women's coffee-house, where all the news of the town is told, scandal invented, &c.—They generally take this diversion once a-week, and stay there at least four or five hours, without getting cold by immediate coming out of the hot bath into the cold room, which was very surprising to me... I was charmed with their civility and beauty, and should have been very glad to pass more time with them; but Mr W—— resolving to pursue his journey next morning early.. ADIEU, madam, I am sure I have now entertained you with an account of such a sight as you never saw in your life, and what no book of travels could inform you of, as 'tis no less than death for a man to be found in one of these places.

LET. XLII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF ——.

'Tis also very pleasant to observe how tenderly he and all his brethren voyage-writers lament the miserable confinement of the Turkish ladies, who are perhaps more free than any ladies in the universe, and are the only women in the world that lead a life of uninterrupted pleasure, exempt from cares; their whole time being spent in visiting, bathing, or the agreeable amusement of spending money, and inventing new fashions. A husband would be thought mad, that exacted any degree of economy from his wife, whose expences are no way limited but by her own fancy. 'Tis his business to get money, and hers to spend it: and this noble prerogative extends itself to the very meanest of the sex. Here is a fellow that carries embroidered handkerchiefs upon his back to sell. And as miserable a figure as you may suppose such a mean dealer, yet, I'll assure you, his wife scorns to wear any thing less than cloth of gold; has her ermine furs, and a very handsome set of jewels for her head.

Letter. XXVIII

My only diversion is the conversation of our host, Achmet Beg, a title something like that of count in Germany. His father was a great bassa, and he has been educated in the most polite eastern learning, being perfectly skilled in the Arabic and Persian languages, and an extraordinary scribe, which they call effendi... I was going to tell you, that an intimate daily conversation with the effendi Achmet-beg, gave me an opportunity of knowing their religion and morals in a more particular manner than perhaps any Christian ever did. I explained to him the difference between the religion of England and Rome; and he was pleased to hear there were Christians that did not worship images, or adore the Virgin Mary. The ridicule of transubstantiation appeared very strong to him... He assured me, that if I understood Arabic, I should be very well pleased with reading the alcoran, which is so far from the nonsense we charge it with, that it is the purest morality, delivered in the very best language. I have since heard impartial Christians speak of it in the same manner; and I don't doubt but that all our translations are from copies got from the Greek priests, who would not fail to falsify it with the extremity of malice...