

DENIS DIDEROT

LES BIJOUX INDISCRETS,
OR, THE INDISCREET
TOYS

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Содержание

СНАР. I.	6
СНАР. II.	10
СНАР. III.	13
СНАР. IV.	16
СНАР. V.	19
СНАР. VI.	23
СНАР. VII.	29
СНАР. VIII.	33
СНАР. IX.	38
СНАР. X.	43
СНАР. XI.	46
СНАР. XII.	50
СНАР. XIII.	56
СНАР. XIV.	60
СНАР. XV.	65
СНАР. XVI.	70
СНАР. XVII.	73
СНАР. XVIII.	79
СНАР. XIX.	82
СНАР. XX.	85
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	86

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TO ZIMA

Zima, embrace the moment. The Aga Narkis entertains your mother, and your governess is upon the watch in a balcony for your father's return: take, read, fear nothing. But even tho' the *Bijoux indiscrets* should be found behind your toilet, do you think it would be a matter of wonder? No, Zima, no; it is well known, that the *Sopha*, the *Tanzai*, and the *Confessions* have been under your pillow. Do you hesitate still? Know then, that Aglaé has not disdained to set her hand to the work, which you blush to accept. "Aglaé," say you, "the sober Aglaé!" – The same. While Zima was straying with, or perhaps contriving how to get rid of the young Bonza Alleluia; Aglaé amused herself innocently, by relating to me the adventures of Zaide, Alphana, Fannia, &c. – furnished me with the few strokes, which please me in the history of Mangogul, revised it, and pointed me out the means of making it better: for if Aglaé is one of the most virtuous and least edifying women in Congo; she is likewise one of the least jealous of wit, and one of the most witty. Can Zima now think, that it becomes

her to play the scrupulous? Once more, Zima, take, read, read all; even without excepting the narrative of the *Rambling Toy*, which may be interpreted to you, without any expence to your virtue, provided the interpreter be neither your spiritual director nor your lover.

CHAP. I.

Birth of Mangogul

Hiaouf Zeles Tanzai had already reigned long in great Chechiana, and this voluptuous prince still continued to be the delight of his subjects. Acajou king of Minutia had undergone the fate predicted by his father: Zulmis was no more: the Count De – was still living: Splendidus, Angola, Misapouf and some other potentates of the Indies and Asia were carried off by sudden deaths. The people tired of obeying weak sovereigns, had shaken off the yoke of their posterity; and the descendants of those unfortunate monarchs rambled unknown, or not regarded, in the provinces of their empires. The grandson of the illustrious Scheherazad was the only one who maintain'd his throne: and he was obeyed in Indostan by the name of Schach Baam, at the time when Mangogul was born in Congo. Thus it appears, that the death of several sovereigns was the mournful epoch of his birth.

His father Erguebzed did not summon the Fairies round the cradle of his son; because he had observed, that most of the princes of his time, who had been educated by these female intelligences, were no better than fools. He contented himself with ordering his nativity to be calculated by one Codindo, a person fitter for a portrait than an acquaintance.

Codindo, was head of the college of Soothsayers at Banza,

the ancient capital of the empire. Erguebzed had settled a large pension on him, and had granted to him and his descendants, on account of the merit of their great uncle, who was an excellent cook, a magnificent castle on the frontiers of Congo. Codindo was appointed to observe the flight of birds, and the state of the heavens, and to make a report thereof at court: which office he executed very indifferently. If it be true, that they had at Banza the best theatrical pieces, and the worst play-houses in all Africa; in return they had the most beautiful college in the world, and the most wretched predictions.

Codindo, informed of the business for which he was summoned to Erguebzed's palace, set out much embarrassed; for the poor man could no more read the stars than you or I. He was expected with impatience. The principal lords of the court were assembled in the apartment of the great Sultana. The ladies, magnificently dress'd, stood round the infant's cradle. The courtiers were hurrying to congratulate with Erguebzed on the great things, which he was undoubtedly on the point of hearing concerning his son. Erguebzed was a father, and thought it quite natural, to discern in the unform'd lines of an infant, what he was to be. In fine, Codindo arrived. "Draw near," says Erguebzed to him: "as soon as heaven had granted me the prince before you, I ordered the instant of his birth to be exactly registered, and without doubt you have been informed of it. Speak sincerely to your Master, and tell him boldly the destiny which heaven has reserved for his Son."

"Most magnanimous Sultan," answered Codindo, "the prince, born of parents equally illustrious and happy, can have no other than a great and fortunate destiny: but I should impose on your highness, if I plumed myself with a science which I do not possess. The stars rise and set for me as for the rest of mankind, and I am not more enlightened in futurity by their means, than the most ignorant of your subjects."

"But," replied the Sultan, "are you not an astrologer?" "Magnanimous prince," answered Codindo, "I have not that honour."

"What the devil are you then?" says the old, but passionate Erguebzed. "An Aruspex! By the heavens I did not imagine, that you had so much as thought of it. Believe me, Seigneur Codindo, suffer your poultry to feed in quiet, and pronounce on the fate of my son, as you lately did on the cold of my wife's parrot."

Codindo immediately drew a glass out of his pocket, took the infant's left ear, rubb'd his eyes, turn'd his spectacles again and again, peep'd at that ear, did the like to the right ear, and pronounced, "that the young prince's reign would be happy, if it proved long."

"I understand you," replied Erguebzed: "my son will do the finest things in the world, if he has time. But, zounds! what I want to have told me is, that he will have time. What matter is it to me, after he is dead, that he would have been the greatest prince upon earth, had he lived. I have sent for you to cast my son's horoscope, and you make me his funeral oration."

Codindo assured the prince, that he was sorry he was not more knowing; but beseeched his highness to consider, that his knowledge was sufficient for the little time he had been a conjurer. In effect, the moment before, what was Codindo?

CHAP. II.

Education of Mangogul

I will pass lightly over Mangogul's first years. The infancy of princes is the same with that of the rest of mankind; with this difference, however, that princes have the gift of saying a thousand pretty things, before they can speak. Thus before Erguebed's son was full four years old, he furnished matter for a volume of Mangogulana. Erguebed, who was a man of sense, and was resolved that his son's education should not be so much neglected as his own had been, sent betimes for all the great men in Congo; as, painters, philosophers, poets, musicians, architects, masters of dancing, mathematicks, history, fencing, &c. Thanks to the happy dispositions of Mangogul, and to the constant lessons of his masters, he was ignorant in nothing of what a young prince is wont to learn the first fifteen years of his life; and at the age of twenty he could eat, drink, and sleep, as completely as any potentate of his age.

Erguebed, whose weight of years began to make him feel the weight of his crown, tired with holding the reins of the empire, frighted at the disturbances which threatened it, full of confidence in the superior qualifications of Mangogul, and urged by sentiments of religion, sure prognostics of the approaching death or imbecility of the great, descended from the throne, to

seat his son thereon: and this good prince thought he was under an obligation of expiating, by a retirement, the crimes of the most just administration, of which there is any account in the annals of Congo.

Thus it was, that in the year of the world 15,000,000,032,000,021, of the empire of Congo 390,000,070,003, began the reign of Mangogul, the 1,234,500 of his race in a direct line. Frequent conferences with his ministers, wars carried on, and the management of affairs, taught him in a very short time what remained for him to know at getting out of the hands of his pedagogues; and that was somewhat.

However, in less than ten years Mangogul acquired the reputation of a great man. He gained battles, stormed towns, enlarged his empire, quieted his provinces, repaired the disorder of his finances, restored arts and sciences, raised edifices, immortalized himself by useful establishments, strengthened and corrected the legislative power, even founded academies; and, what his university could never comprehend, he executed all these great things, without knowing one word of Latin.

Mangogul was not less amiable in his Seraglio than great on the throne. He did not take it into his head to regulate his conduct by the ridiculous customs of his country. He broke the gates of the palaces inhabited by his women; he drove out those injurious guards of their virtue; he prudently confided in themselves for their fidelity: the entrance into their apartments was as free for men as into those of the canonesses of Flanders;

and doubtless their behaviour as decent. Oh! how good a Sultan he was! There never was his equal, but in some French romance. He was mild, affable, chearful, gallant, of a charming figure, a lover of pleasures, cut out for them, and contained more wit and sense in his head, than had been in those of all his predecessors put together.

'Tis easy to judge that, with such uncommon merit, a number of the sex aspired to make him their conquest: Some few succeeded. Those who miss'd his heart, endeavour'd to console themselves with the grandees of the court. Young Mirzoza was of the number of the former. I shall not amuse myself with detailing the qualities and charms of Mirzoza: the work would be without end, and I am resolv'd that this history shall have one.

CHAP. III.

Which may be regarded as the first of this history

Mirzoza had already fixed Mangogul for some years. These lovers had said, and a thousand times repeated, all that a violent passion suggests to persons who have the most wit. They were got as far as confidences, and they would impute it to themselves as a crime, to conceal the most minute circumstance of their lives from each other. These singular suppositions, "If heaven, which has placed me on the throne, had given me an obscure low birth, would you have deign'd to descend down to me, would Mirzoza have crown'd me?" "Should Mirzoza happen to lose the few charms which she is thought to have, would Mangogul love her still?" These suppositions, I say, which exercise the fancy of ingenious lovers, which sometimes make tender lovers quarrel, and frequently oblige the most sincere lovers to tell untruths, were quite worn out between our pair.

The favorite, who possess'd in a supreme degree, the necessary and uncommon talent of making a good narrative, had drained the scandalous history of Banza. As she had not the best constitution, she was not always disposed to receive the Sultan's caresses, nor he always in the humour of offering them. In short, there were some days, in which Mangogul and Mirzoza

had little to say, hardly any thing to do, and in which, without any diminution of love, they amused themselves but indifferently. Those days were rare indeed, but there were some; and this was one of them.

The Sultan was carelessly stretch'd on a sofa, opposite to the favorite, who was knotting in silence. The weather did not permit them to take a walk. Mangogul would not venture to propose a party of piquet; and this posture had lasted near a quarter of an hour, when the Sultan, yawning several times, said, "It must be allowed, that Geliotta sung like an angel." "And that your highness is tired to death," answered the favorite. "No, Madam," replied Mangogul, endeavouring to smother a yawn, "the minute that one sees you, is not that of tiresomeness." "If that is not a polite compliment, 'tis no body's fault but your own," rejoin'd Mirzoza: "but you ponder, you are absent, you yawn. Prince, what ails you?" "I know not," said the Sultan. "But I guess," continued the favorite. "I was eighteen, when I had the good fortune to please you. It is full four years since you began to love me. Eighteen and four make twenty-two. Therefore I am now very old." Mangogul smiled at this calculation. "But if I am no longer worth any thing for pleasure," added Mirzoza, "I will at least demonstrate that I am very good for advice. The variety of amusements which attend you, has not been able to secure you against disgust. You are disgusted. Prince, there is your disease." "I do not allow, that you have hit it off," says Mangogul: "but supposing you have, do you know a remedy?"

Mirzoza answered the Sultan, after a moment's pause, that his highness seem'd to take so much pleasure at the narratives she made him of the gallantries of the town, that she was sorry she had no more to relate to him, or that she was not better informed of those of the court; that she would have tried that expedient, till she thought of somewhat better. "I think it a good one," says Mangogul: "But who knows the stories of all those fools; and tho' they were known to any, who could relate them like you?" "Let us learn them however," replied Mirzoza. "Whosoever it be that tells them, I am certain that your highness will gain more by the matter, than you will lose by the form." "I shall join with you, if you please, in fancying the adventures of the court ladies very diverting," says Mangogul: "but tho' they were to be a hundred times more so, what does that avail, if it be impossible to come at them?" "There may be a difficulty in it," answers Mirzoza, "but in my opinion, that is all. The Genius Cucufa, your relation and friend, has done greater things. Why do you not consult him?" "Ah, joy of my heart!" cried the Sultan, "you are an admirable Creature. I make no doubt but the Genius will employ all his power in my favour. This moment I shut myself up in my closet, and invoke him."

Accordingly Mangogul arose, kissed the favorite on the left eye, pursuant to the custom of Congo, and departed.

CHAP. IV.

Evocation of the Genius

The Genius Cucufa is an old hypochondriac, who fearing lest the concerns of the world, and dealings with the rest of the genii, might prove an obstacle to his salvation, took refuge in the Void; in order to employ himself quite at leisure on the infinite perfections of the great Pagoda, to pinch, scratch and make notches in his flesh, to fret himself into madness, and starve himself to death. In that place he lies on a straw mat, his body tuck'd up in a sack, his flanks squeez'd with a cord, his arms crossed on his breast, and his head sunk into a hood, which suffers nothing to issue but the end of his beard. He sleeps, but one would think him in contemplation. All his company is an owl which nods at his feet, some rats which gnaw his mat, and bats which hover round his head. The manner of evoking him, is, by repeating, to the sound of a bell, the first verse of the nocturnal office of the Bramins: then he lifts up his hood, rubs his eyes, puts on his sandals, and sets out. Figure to yourself an old Camaldolian Monk carried in the air by two large horn-owls, which he holds by the legs. In this equipage it was, that Cucufa appear'd to the Sultan. "May the blessing of Brama be within these walls," says he, bowing. "Amen," answered the prince. "What do you want, my son?" "A very small matter,"

says Mangogul; "to procure me some pleasure at the expence of the court ladies." "Oh, my son!" replied Cucufa, "you have a larger appetite than a whole monastery of Bramins. What do you pretend to do with this troop of extravagants?" "To learn from themselves their present and past adventures, that is all." "But that is impossible," says the Genius. "To have women confess their adventures, is a thing that never was, nor ever will be." "Yet it must be," added the Sultan. At these words, the Genius scratching his ear, and combing his long beard with his fingers, fell to thinking. His meditation was short. "My child," said he to Mangogul, "I love you, you shall be satisfied." Instantly he plunged his right hand into a deep pocket made under his armpit on the left side of his frock, and, together with images, bless'd beads, little leaden pagoda's, and musty sweatmeats, drew out a silver ring, which Mangogul at first took for one of St. Hubert's rings. "You see this ring," said he to the Sultan, "put it on your finger, my child: every woman, at whom you shall level the stone, will relate her intrigues in a plain, audible voice. Do not imagine however, that 'tis by the mouth that they are to speak." "By what then will they speak?" says Mangogul. "By the frankest part about them, and the best instructed in those things which you desire to know," says Cucufa; "by their Toys." "By their Toys," replies Mangogul bursting into laughter; "that is particular. Talking Toys! That is an unheard extravagance." "My son," said the Genius, "I have performed many greater prodigies for your grandfather: therefore depend on my word. Go, and may

Brama bless you. Make a good use of your secret, and remember that there are ill-placed curiosities." This said, the old hypocrite nodded his head, pull'd his hood over his face, took his horn-owls by the legs, and vanish'd in the air.

CHAP. V.

Mangogul's dangerous Temptation

Scarcely was Mangogul in possession of Cucufa's mysterious ring, when he was tempted to make the first trial of it on the favorite. I forgot to mention, that besides the vertue of obliging the Toys of those women, on whom he turn'd the stone, to speak, it had that also of rendering the person invisible, who wore it on the little finger. Thus could Mangogul transport himself in the twinkling of an eye to a thousand places where he was not expected, and with his own eyes see many things, which are frequently transacted without witnesses. He had nothing more to do than to put on his ring, and say "I desire to be in such a place," and he was there in an instant. Behold him then in Mirzoza's bed-chamber.

Mirzoza, who gave over all hopes of the Sultan's company, was in bed. Mangogul approach'd her pillow softly, and saw by the glimmering light of a night taper, that she was asleep. "Good," say he, "she sleeps, let us quickly shift the ring on another finger, resume our natural shape, turn the stone on this fair sleeper, and awake her Toy a little while. – But what stops me? – I tremble. – Is it possible that Mirzoza? – No, it is not possible, Mirzoza is faithful to me. Fly from me, injurious suspicions, I will not, I ought not to heed ye." He said, and put his

fingers on the ring: but taking them off as hastily as if it had been fire, he cried within himself. "What do I do, wretched man! I insult Cucufa's advice. For the sake of satisfying a silly curiosity, I am going to run the hazard of losing my mistress and my life. If her Toy should be in the humor of talking extravagantly, I should never see her more, and I should dye of grief. And who knows what a Toy may have in its soul?" Mangogul's agitation made him in some measure forget himself: he pronounced these last words pretty loud, and the favorite awoke. "Ah, Prince," said she, less surprized than charmed at his presence, "you are here. Why did you not send me notice? Must you condescend to wait for my awaking?"

Mangogul answered the favorite by relating the success of his interview with Cucufa, shew'd her the ring, and did not conceal one of its properties from her. "Ah! what a diabolical secret has he given you!" cry'd Mirzoza. "But pray, Prince, do you intend to make any use of it." "How," said the Sultan, "do I intend to use it? I shall begin by you, if you argue with me." At these terrible words the favorite turn'd pale, trembled, recover'd herself, and conjured the Sultan by Brama, and all the Pagoda's of the Indies and Congo, not to try the experiment on her of a secret power, which indicated a diffidence of her fidelity. "If I have been constantly honest," continued she, "my Toy will not speak a word, and you will have done me such an injury as I shall never forgive. If it happens to speak, I shall lose your esteem and heart, and that will make you run distracted. Hitherto you have,

in my opinion, found your account in our connection; why would you run the risk of breaking it off? Prince, believe me. Follow the advice of the Genius; he has had great experience, and advices of Genius are always good to follow."

"This is exactly what I was saying to myself," answered Mangogul, "when you awoke. And yet if you had slept two minutes longer, I cannot answer for what might have happened."

"What would have happened," says Mirzoza, "is, that my Toy would have given you no information, and that you would have lost me for ever."

"That may be," replied Mangogul; "but now that I have a full view of the danger which I incurred, I solemnly swear to you by the eternal Pagoda, that you shall be excepted from the number of those, on whom I shall turn the ring."

At these words Mirzoza brightened up, and fell to joking at the expence of the Toys which the Prince should hereafter interrogate. "Cydalisa's Toy," said she, "has many stories to tell, and if it be as indiscreet as its mistress, it will not require much intreaty. Haria's Toy is no longer of this world, and your highness will obtain no tales from it of fresher date than the days of my grandmother. As for that of Glauce, I believe it is a proper one to be consulted. She is a coquet and pretty." "And for that reason precisely it is," replied the Sultan, "that her Toy will be mute." "Why then," said the Sultana, "apply to that of Phedima, she is ugly, and loves gallantry." "Yes," continued the Sultan; "and so ugly, that one must be as ill-natured as you, to accuse

her of gallantry. Phedima is sober; 'tis I who say it, and who know something of the matter." "As sober as you please," replied the favorite, "but she has a sort of grey eyes that speak the contrary." "Her eyes belye her," said the Sultan warmly. "You tire my patience with your Phedima. Might not one say, that there is no other Toy but this to examine." "But may I presume, without offending your highness," added Mirzoza, "to ask which is the first you intend to honour with your choice." "We shall see anon," said Mangogul, "in the circle of the Manimonbanda, (the Congese name of the great Sultana). We shall have a good deal of work upon our hands and when we happen to be tired of the Toys of my court, we may chance make a tour thro' Banza. Possibly we may find those of the city women more reasonable than those of dutchesses." "Prince," said Mirzoza, "I have some acquaintance with the former, and can assure you, that they are only more circumspect." "We shall soon hear from them: but I cannot refrain from laughter," continued Mangogul, "when I think on the confusion and surprize of these women at the first words of their Toys, ha, ha, ha! Remember, delight of my soul, that I shall expect you at the great Sultana's, and that I shall make no use of my ring till you are come." "Prince," said Mirzoza, "I rely on the promise you have made me." Mangogul smiled at her allarm, reiterated his promise, sealed them with kisses, and retired.

CHAP. VI.

First Trial of the Ring.

Alcina

Mangogul arrived before her at the great Sultana's, and found all the ladies very busy at cards. He survey'd all those, whose reputation was established, fully resolved to try his ring on one of them, and his only difficulty was in the choice. While, he was in suspence by whom to begin, he spied a young lady of the household of the Manimonbanda in a window. She was toying with her husband; which appear'd singular to the Sultan, inasmuch as they had been married above eight days. They had made their appearance in the same box at the Opera, in the same coach at the Bois de Boulogne, they had finished their visits; and the fashion of the times exempted them from loving or even meeting each other. "If this Toy," says Mangogul, "is as silly as its mistress, we shall have a diverting soliloquy." At this instant the favorite appear'd. "Welcome," said the Sultan to her in a whisper. "I have cast my lead, waiting for you." "And on whom?" ask'd Mirzoza. "On that couple which you see sporting in that window," answer'd Mangogul with a wink. "Well set out," replied the favorite.

Alcina, for that was the young lady's name, was sprightly and pretty. The Sultan's court had few women more amiable, and

not one of a gayer disposition. One of the Sultan's Emirs had filled his head with her. He was not left in ignorance of what the chronicle had published concerning Alcina: the report alarm'd him, but he followed the custom: he consulted his mistress about it. Alcina swore, that it was pure calumny invented by some coxcombs, who would have been silent, if they had had any reason for talking; but however, that there was no harm done, and that he was at full liberty to believe it or not, as he thought proper. This answer, delivered with an air of confidence, convinced the amorous Emir of his mistress's innocence. He closed the affair, and assumed the title of Alcina's husband with all its prerogatives.

The Sultan levelled his ring at her. A loud burst of laughter, which seized Alcina at some comical saying of her husband, was suddenly cut short by the operation of the ring; and immediately a murmuring noise was heard under her petticoats. "Well, now I am titled. Truly I am glad on't. Nothing like having a rank. If my first advices had been heeded, I should have been provided with something better than an Emir: but yet an Emir is better than nothing." At these words all the ladies quitted the game, to seek from what quarter the voice issued. This movement made a great noise. "Silence," says Mangogul, "this deserves attention." They obeyed, and the Toy continued. "One would be apt to think, that a husband is a guest of great importance, by the precautions which are taken to receive him. What preparatives! What profusion of myrtle water! Another fortnight of this regimen would have

demolished me. I had disappear'd, and the Emir might have sought lodgings elsewhere, or have shipped me off for the island Jonquille." Here my author says, that all the ladies grew pale, look'd at each other in deep silence, and grew vastly serious; which he ascribes to their fear, lest the conversation should grow warm, and become general. "Yet," continued Alcina's Toy, "in my opinion the Emir did neither require nor stand in need of so many formalities: but I must still acknowledge the prudence of my mistress. She guarded against the worst, and I was treated for the great lord as for his little page."

The Toy was on the point of continuing its extravagant harangue, when the Sultan, observing that this strange scene shock'd the modest Manimonbanda, interrupted the orator by turning off the ring. The Emir had vanish'd at the first words of his wife's Toy. Alcina, without being disconcerted, pretended to take a nap: mean while the ladies whispered that she had the vapours. "Yes," says a *Petit-maitre*, " – Vapours: Ch – y calls them hysterics, as much as to say, things which come from the lower region. For this case he has a divine elixir; it is a principle, princiating, princiatiated, which revives – which – I will propose it to the lady." The company laugh'd at this gibberish, and our Cynic resumed. "Nothing more true, ladies: I, who speak, have used it for a deperdition of substance." "A deperdition of substance, good marquiss," said a young person, "pray what is that?" "Madam," replied the marquiss, "it is one of those casual accidents which happen – but every body knows it."

By this time the pretended drowziness went off. Alcina sat down to play with as much intrepidity as if her Toy either had not spoken a word, or had made the finest speech in the world. Nay, she was the only lady that play'd without distraction. This sitting was worth a considerable sum to her. The rest did not know what they were about, could not count the dots on the cards, forgot their reckonings, neglected their good luck, dealt wrong, and committed a hundred other mistakes, of which Alcina took the advantage. In fine, they broke up play, and every one withdrew.

This adventure made great noise not only at court and in town, but all over Congo. Epigrams were handed about on it. The discourse of Alcina's Toy was published, revised, corrected, enlarged and commented by the Agreeables of the court. The Emir was lampoon'd, and his wife immortalized. She was pointed at in the play-house, and followed in the public walks. People flock'd about her, and she heard them buzzing: "Yes, 'tis she: her Toy made a discourse two hours long." Alcina bore her new reputation with admirable tranquillity. She listened to these expressions, and many more, with a serenity, which the rest of the women could not shew. They were every moment under apprehensions of some indiscretions being committed by their Toys: but the adventure of the following chapter compleated their confusion.

As soon as the company had broke up, Mangogul gave his hand to the favorite, and conduced her to her apartment. She was far from having that lively chearful air, which seldom

quitted her. She had lost considerably at play, and the effect of the dreadful ring had plunged her into a pensiveness, out of which she was not yet thoroughly recovered. She knew the Sultan's curiosity, and she had not sufficient confidence in the promises of a man less amorous than despotic, to be free from uneasiness. "What ails you, my soul's delight?" said Mangogul. "You are pensive." "I played with bad luck without example," answered Mirzoza. "I lost the possibility. I had twelve tableaux, and I don't think I mark'd three times." "That is vexatious," replied Mangogul; "but what think you of my secret?" "Prince," said the favorite, "I persist in deeming it diabolical. Doubtless it will amuse you, but that amusement will be attended with dismal consequences. You are going to spread discord in every family, undeceive husbands, throw lovers into despair, ruin wives, dishonour daughters, and raise a thousand other hurly-burlys. Ah! Prince, I conjure you. – " "By the light," said Mangogul, "you moralize like Nicole! I would be glad to know why the concern for your neighbour touches you so to the quick. No, no, madam; I will keep my ring. And what do I matter those husbands undeceived, those lovers thrown into despair, those wives ruined, those daughters dishonoured, provided I amuse myself. Am I then a Sultan for nothing? Good night, madam, we must hope that future scenes will be more comic than the first, and that you will take more pleasure in them by degrees." "I do not believe it, sir," replied Mirzoza. "And for my part, I promise you, that you will find pleasant Toys, nay, so pleasant,

that you cannot refuse giving them audience. And what would you do, if I sent them to you in quality of ambassadors? I will if you desire it, spare you the trouble of their harangues; but as to the recital of their adventures, you shall hear it either from their own mouths or mine. 'Tis a determined point; and I can abate nothing of it. Resolve to familiarize yourself with these new speech-makers." At these words he embraced her, and went into his closet, reflecting on the trial he had made, and devoutly thanking the Genius Cucufa.

CHAP. VII.

Second trial of the Ring.

The Altars

The next evening there was to be a private supper in Mirzoza's apartment. The persons invited came early. Before the prodigy of the preceding day, people came by inclination; this night they came purely out of politeness. All the ladies had an air of constraint, and spoke in monosyllables. They were upon the watch, and expected every moment, that some Toy would join in conversation. Notwithstanding their itch of bringing Alcina's odd adventure on the carpet, none of them dared to undertake opening the topic. Not that they were restrained by her presence: tho' included in the supper-list, she did not appear; it was judged that she had a swimming in her head. However, whether it was that they became less apprehensive of danger, as the whole day long they had heard no body speak but from the mouth; or whether they affected to appear courageous, the conversation revived, the women most suspected composed their countenances, put on an air of assurance, and Mirzoza ask'd the courtier Zegriz, if he knew any entertaining news. "Madam," replied Zegriz, "you have been informed of a match between the Aga Chazour and young Siberina: I assure you it is broke off." "Upon what account?" interrupted the favorite. "On account of a

strange voice," continued Zegriz, "which Chazour says he heard at the toilet of his princess. Since yesterday, the Sultan's court is full of people, who go with their ears cock'd, in hopes of catching, I can't say how, such declarations, as most certainly the persons concerned have no inclination to make them."

"That is silly," replied the favorite. "Alcina's misfortune, if it be one, is far from being averred. We have not got to the bottom —"

"Madam," interrupted Zelmaida, "I have heard her most distinctly. She spoke without opening her mouth. The facts were well articulated, and it was not very difficult to guess whence this extraordinary sound issued. I assure you, that I should have died, were I in her place."

"Died!" replied Zegriz. "Folks survive other sorts of accidents." "How?" cried Zelmaida. "Can there be a more dreadful one than the indiscretion of a Toy? Well, there is no medium left. One must either renounce gallantry, or resolve to pass for a woman of pleasure." "Indeed," said Mirzoza, "the option is severe." "No, no, madam," replied another lady, "you will see that women will fix their resolution. They will allow Toys to prate as much as they please; and will go their own way, without troubling themselves with what the world shall say. And after all, what does it signify, whether it be a woman's Toy or her lover that proves indiscreet? Are things less exposed?"

"Upon a serious consideration of the whole affair," continued a third, "if a woman's adventures must be divulged, 'tis better it

should happen by her Toy than her lover."

"The notion is singular," said the favorite; "and true," replied she who had broach'd it: "for, pray, observe that a lover is generally dissatisfied, before he becomes indiscreet, and therefore tempted to be revenged by exaggerating every thing: whereas a Toy talks without passion, and adds nothing to the truth."

"For my part," said Zelmaida, "I am not of that opinion. In this case it is not so much the importance of the depositions, as the strength of the evidence, that ruins the criminal. A lover, who by his discourse dishonours the Altar, on which he has sacrificed, is a kind of impious person, who deserves no credit: but if the altar lifts up its voice, what answer can be made."

"That the altar knows not what it says," replied the second. Monima, hitherto mute, broke silence, in order to say in a dragging, lazy tone: "Ah! let my Altar, since you call it so, speak or be silent, I fear nothing from its talk."

Mangogul enter'd that very instant, and Monima's last words did not escape him. He levell'd his Ring at her, and her Toy was heard to cry out: "Do not believe her, she lies." Her female neighbours, gazing at each other, ask'd whose Toy it was that made this answer. "'Tis not mine," said Zelmaida; "nor mine," said another; "nor mine," said Monima; "nor mine," said the Sultan. Every one, and the favorite among the rest, persisted in the negative.

The Sultan, taking the advantage of this uncertainty, and

addressing the ladies, said: "You have Altars then? Pray, how are they feasted?" As he was speaking, he nimbly turn'd his Ring successively on all the women except Mirzoza; and every one of their Toys answering in its turn, these words were heard in different tones. "I am frequented, batter'd, abandon'd, perfum'd, fatigu'd, ill serv'd, disgusted, &c." They all spoke their word, but so precipitately, that no just application could be made. Their jargon, sometimes rumbling, sometimes yelping, accompanied with loud laughs of Mangogul and his courtiers, made a noise of a new kind. The ladies agreed with a very grave air, that it was very diverting. "How," said the Sultan, "sure we are too happy, that the Toys deign to speak our language, and furnish half the expence of the conversation. Society must be a considerable gainer by this duplication of organs. Possibly we men shall speak also in our turn, by something else besides our mouths. Who knows? What agrees so perfectly well with Toys, may happen to be destin'd to make questions and responses to them: nevertheless my anatomist is of a different opinion."

CHAP. VIII.

Third trial of the Ring.

The Private Supper

Supper was served up, the company sate down at table, and at first they diverted themselves at Monima's charge: all the women unanimously agreed that her Toy had spoke first; and she must have sunk under this confederacy, had not the Sultan taken her part. "I do not pretend," said he, "that Monima is less gallant than Zelmaida; but I believe her Toy has more discretion. Besides, when the mouth and Toy of a woman contradict each other, which to believe?" "Sir," replied a courtier, "I know not what Toys will say hereafter; but hitherto they have explain'd themselves on a subject, which is very familiar to them. As long as they shall have the prudence to speak of nothing but what they understand, I shall believe them as so many oracles." "Others," said Mirzoa, "of greater authenticity might be consulted." "Pray, madam," replied Mangogul, "what interest can these have in disguising the truth? Nothing but a chimæra of honour could be their motive: but a Toy has none of these chimæras. That is not the place of prejudices." "A chimera of honour," said Mirzoa, "prejudices! If your highness had been exposed to the same inconveniences with us, you would become sensible, that whatever touches virtue, is far from being chimærical." All the

ladies, encouraged by the Sultana's answer, insisted that it was superfluous to put them to certain proofs; and Mangogul, that these proofs were generally dangerous at least.

This conversation ushered in the champagne: it moved briskly round, they plied it close, and it warmed the Toys. Then it was that Mangogul had intended to resume his frolicks. He turn'd his ring on a very gay sprightly young lady, who sate pretty near him, and directly opposite to her husband: and immediately issued from under the table a plaintive noise, a weak languishing voice, which said: "Oh, how I am harrassed! I can bear it no longer, I am at death's door." "How, by the Pagoda Pongo Sabiam," cried Hussein, "my wife's Toy speaks, and what can it say?" "We are going to hear," answered the Sultan. – "Prince, you will permit me not to be of the number of its auditors," replied Hussein; "for if any thing ridiculous drop'd from it, do you think?" – "I think you are a fool," said the Sultan, "to alarm yourself at the prattle of a Toy: do we not know a good part of what it can say, and may we not guess the rest? Sit down, then, and endeavour to divert yourself."

Hussein sat down, and his wife's Toy began to prate like a magpye. "Shall I eternally have this huge Flandrian Valanto? I have seen some who have made an end; but this man" – At these words Hussein arose in a fury, snatch'd up a knife, sprang to the other side of the table; and would have pierced his wife's breast, if his neighbours had not prevented him. "Hussein," said the Sultan, "you make too much noise: the company cannot hear.

Might not one say, that your wife's Toy is the only one that has not common sense? And what would become of these ladies, if their husbands were of your humour? How! you are out of your wits for a pitiful little adventure of one Valanto, who never made an end. Return to your seat, behave like a man of honour; see that you watch yourself, and not commit a second failure before a prince, who admits you to his pleasures."

While Husseim, stifling his rage, was leaning on the back of a chair, his eyes shut, and his hand on his forehead; the Sultan dexterously levell'd his Ring, and the Toy went on. "Valanto's young page would suit me pretty well: but I know not when he will begin. In the mean time till the one begins, and the other makes an end, I practise patience with the Bramin Egon. He is a frightful figure, I must own: but his talent is to make an end and begin again. Oh, what a great man a Bramin is!"

By the time the Toy had got as far as this exclamation, Husseim blush'd to fret for a woman who was so unworthy, and fell a laughing with the rest of the company; but he kept something in reserve for his spouse. The entertainment being over, every one went home directly, except Husseim, who conducted his wife into a house of veiled maidens, and there shut her up. Mangogul being inform'd of her disgrace paid her a visit. He found the whole community busy in comforting her, but still more in trying to get the secret of her exile from her. "'Tis for a mere trifle," said she, "that I am here. Being last night at supper with the Sultan, the Champagne was whip'd about, the Tokay

gallop'd, people hardly knew what they said, when my Toy must needs fall to prating. I do not remember on what subject it talk'd, but it made my husband take dudgeon."

"To be sure, Madam, he is in the wrong," replied the nuns: "people ought not to put themselves into such passions for trifles! – How! your Toy has spoke. Pray does it speak still? How charm'd we should be to hear it! It must certainly express itself with wit and a good grace." They were gratified: for the Sultan turn'd his ring on the poor recluse, and her Toy thank'd them for their civilities; protesting to them at the same time, that how pleased soever it was with their company, that of a Bramin would suit it better.

The Sultan embraced the opportunity, to learn some particulars of the life of these virgins. His Ring interrogated the Toy of a young recluse, whose name was Cleanthis; and the pretended virgin-Toy confessed two gardeners, a Bramin, and three cavaliers; and related how by the assistance of a purging draught and two bleedings, she had escaped giving scandal. Zephirina owned, by the organ of her Toy, that she was indebted to the errand-boy of the house, for the honourable title of mother. But one thing that astonish'd the Sultan, was, that tho' those sequester'd Toys expressed themselves in very indecent terms; the virgins, to whom they belong'd, heard them without blushing: which made him conjecture, that if they failed of the practical part in those retreats, they had in return a large share of speculation.

In order to clear up this point, he turn'd his ring on a novice between fifteen and sixteen years of age. "Flora," said her Toy, "has more than once ogled a young officer thro' the grate. I am certain that she had an inclination for him. Her little finger told me so." This was a mortifying stroke for Flora. The ancient ladies condemned her to two months silence and discipline; and ordered prayers, that the Toys of the community might remain mute.

CHAP. IX.

The state of the academy of sciences at Banza

Mangogul had scarcely quitted the recluses, among whom I left him, when a report was spread thro' Banza, that the virgins of the congregation of Brama's Coccyx, spoke by their Toys. This report, to which Husseim's violent proceedings had given credit, roused the curiosity of the learned. The phænomenon was thoroughly examined and allowed: and the freethinkers began to seek in the properties of matter, the reasons of a fact, which they had at first deemed impossible. The tattle of the Toys gave birth to a great number of excellent works; and this important subject swell'd the collections of the academies with several memoirs, which may be esteemed the utmost efforts of human understanding.

In order to model and perpetuate that of Banza, invitations with suitable encouragement had been, and still continued to be, given to all persons of the brightest parts in Congo, Monoémugi, Beleguanza, and the circumjacent kingdoms. It took in, under different titles, all those who had distinguished themselves in natural history, natural philosophy, mathematicks, and the greatest part of those, who promised to make a figure in them one time or other. This swarm of indefatigable bees labour'd

incessantly in the research of truth, and every year the public reaped the fruits of their labours in a volume full of discoveries.

It was at that time divided into two factions, the one composed of Vorticists, and the other of Attractionists. Olibrio, an able geometrician and great natural philosopher, founded the sect of the Vorticists. Circino, an able natural philosopher and great geometrician, was the first Attractionist. Both Olibrio and Circino proposed to explain nature. Olibrio's principles have at first sight a certain air of simplicity, which seduces: in the gross they account for the principal phænomena, but they contradict themselves in the detail. As for Circino, he seems to set out upon an absurdity; but 'tis the first step alone that is expensive. The minute details, which ruin Olibrio's system, establish his. He follows a road, dark at entrance, but which grows more lightsome according as a person advances. On the contrary, that of Olibrio, lightsome at entrance, grows darker and darker. The philosophy of the latter requires less study than understanding. One cannot be a disciple of the former, without a large share of understanding and study. One enters without preparation into Olibrio's school; every body has the key of it. That of Circino is open to none but geometricians of the first class. Olibrio's Vortices are within the reach of all capacities. Circino's central powers are made for first rate Algebraists only. Wherefore there will always be an hundred Vorticists for one Attractionist; and one Attractionist will always be worth an hundred Vorticists. Such was the state of the academy of sciences at Banza, when it

handled the subject of the indiscreet Toys.

This phænomenon was very slippery: it dodged the attraction, and the subtle matter could not come within reach of it. In vain did the president summon all those who had any notions, to communicate them: a profound silence reigned in the assembly. At length Persiflo the Vorticist, who had published treatises on many subjects, which he did not understand, rose up and said: "The fact, gentlemen, might well agree with the system of the world. I should suspect that it has in general the same cause with the tides. For pray take notice, that this day is the equinoctial full moon. But before I can depend on my conjecture, I must wait to hear what the Toys will say next month."

The company shrug'd their shoulders: they dared not remonstrate to him, that he reasoned like a Toy; but as he is a man of penetration he perceived in an instant that they thought as much.

The Attractionist Reciproco opened, and said: "Gentlemen, I have tables calculated by a theory on the highth of the tides in every port of the kingdom. True it is, that observations somewhat bely my calculations: but I flatter myself that this small inconvenience will be repaired by the advantage that will result from them, if the tattle of Toys continues to square with the phænomena of the ebb and flow."

A third person started up, went to the board, traced his figure, and said "let a Toy be A B, and – "

Here the ignorance of the translators has deprived us of

a demonstration, which without doubt the African author had preserv'd. After a blank of about two pages, we read: Reciproco's reasoning was thought demonstrative; and it was unanimously agreed, from the essays he had given on dialectics, that he would be able one day or other to make this deduction: women have from time immemorial heard with their ears: therefore they ought at this day to speak by their Toys.

Doctor Orcotomus, of the tribe of Anatomists, spoke next, and said: "Gentlemen, I am of opinion, that it would be properer to drop a phænomenon, than to seek its cause in vapory hypotheses. For my part, I would not have open'd my mouth, if I had nought but trifling conjectures to offer: but I have examined, studied, meditated. I have seen Toys in the paroxysm, and I am got so far, by means of my knowledge of the parts, and experience, as to be convinced, that that which in Greek we call Delphys, has all the properties of the windpipe, and that there are some who can speak as well by the Toy as by the mouth. Yes, gentlemen, the Delphys is a string and wind instrument; but much more a string than a wind one. The outward air, which lights on it, properly does the office of a bow on the tendinous fibres of the wings, which I shall call ribbons or vocal strings. The gentle collision of this air and the vocal strings puts them into a trembling motion; and it is by their quicker or slower vibrations, that they utter different sounds. The person modifies these sounds at discretion, speaks, and even might sing.

"As there are but two ribbons or vocal strings, and as they are

to the eye of equal length, it will doubtless be ask'd, how they suffice to give the multitude of sounds, grave and acute, strong and weak, of which the human voice is capable. I answer, in pursuing the comparison of this organ with musical instruments, that their lengthening and shortening are sufficient to produce these effects.

"That these parts are capable of distention and contraction, is needless to be demonstrated in an assembly of Literati of your rank: but that in consequence of this distention and contraction, the Delphys can utter sounds more or less acute; in a word, all the inflexions of the voice, and modulation of singing; is a fact, which I flatter myself I shall put out of doubt. My appeal is to experiments. Yes, gentlemen, I engage to make both a Delphys and a Toy reason, speak, nay, and sing too, before ye."

Thus harangued Orcotomus, promising to himself nothing less than to raise the Toys to the level of the windpipes of one of his learned brethren, whose success jealousy had attack'd in vain.

CHAP. X.

Less learned and less tedious than the preceding. Continuation of the academical sitting

By the difficulties started against Orcotomus, before he could make his experiments, it appeared, that his notions were judged to have less of solidity than ingenuity. "If Toys have the faculty of speech naturally," say they, "why have they not made use of it till now? If it was an effect of the goodness of Brama, who has been pleased to endow women with so strong a desire of talking, to double the organs of speech in them; it is very strange, that they have so long been ignorant of, or at least neglected this valuable gift of nature. Why has not the same Toy spoke more than once? Why has none of them spoke of aught but the same subject? By what mechanism does it fall out, that one of the mouths is forcibly kept shut, while the other speaks? Moreover," added they, "if we judge of the prattle of Toys by the circumstances, in which most of them have spoken, and by the things they have told; there is all the reason in the world to believe it involuntary, and that those parts would continue mute, if it had been in the power of their possessors to impose silence on them."

Orcotomus arose to answer these objections, and insisted that

Toys talk'd in all ages; but so low, that what they said was hardly heard, even by those to whom they belonged. That it is not surprizing, that they have raised their voice in our days, when the freedom of conversation is carried so high, that one may without impudence and indiscretion converse on those things, which are the most familiar to them: that if they have spoke audibly but once, we are not to infer that that will be the only time. That there is a vast difference between being mute and keeping silence; that if they have talk'd but on one and the same subject only, probably the reason is, that it is the only one, of which they have ideas. That those who have not spoke as yet, will speak. That if they remain silent, it is because they have nothing to say, or that they are ill made, or want ideas and terms.

"In a word," continued he, "to pretend that it was an effect of the goodness of Brama to grant to women the means of gratifying their strong desire of talking, by multiplying in them the organs of speech; is to grant, that if this benefaction drag'd any inconveniences after it, it was an effect of his wisdom to prevent them: and this he has done, by compelling one of the mouths to keep silence, while the other speaks. It is already but too inconvenient for us, that women change their mind from one instant to another: what then would it have been, if Brama had left them the power of being of two contradictory sentiments at the same time? Further, the gift of speech has been given, purely in order to be understood; but the women, who find it a difficult talk to understand one another with a single mouth each, how

could they possibly do it, if they spoke with two at a time?"

Thus Orcotomus answered several things, and thought he had given satisfactory solutions to all difficulties: but he was mistaken. New doubts were raised, and he was on the point of sinking under them; when Cimonazes came to his assistance. Then the dispute became tumultuous. They stray'd wide of the question, they bewilder'd themselves, they return'd, they bewilder'd themselves a second time, they grew angry, they brawled; from brawling they pass'd to injurious words, and the academical sitting ended.

CHAP. XI.

Fourth trial of the Ring.

The Echo

While the prattle of the Toys employed the academy, in other companies it became the news of the day, and the subject of the morrow, and of several succeeding days. It was an inexhaustible text. True facts were blended with false; every thing went down, the prodigy had removed all incredulity. In conversation people lived on it upwards of six months.

The Sultan had made but three trials of his ring; and yet, in a circle of ladies who were allowed a stool at the Manimonbanda's, one of them related a discourse held by the Toy of a president's lady, next that of a marchioness, then she disclosed the pious secrets of a devotee, in fine those of several women who were not there: and God knows the stories that were father'd on their Toys; nor was there any parcimony of smutty tales. From facts they came to reflections. "I must confess," says one of those ladies, "that this witchcraft (for it is a spell cast on Toys) keeps us in a cruel state. How! to be eternally under apprehensions of hearing an impertinent voice issuing from one's self." "But madam," answered another, "this fright astonishes us with regard to you. When a Toy has nothing ridiculous to tell, what does it signify, whether it be silent or speak?" "It signifies so much,"

replied the first, "that I would freely give half my jewels, to be assured that mine will never speak." "Surely," replied the second, "there must be substantial reasons for keeping measures with people, to purchase their discretion at so high a price." "I have not better reasons than another," said Cephisa: "and yet I do not eat my words. Twenty thousand crowns, is not too large a sum to buy tranquillity: for I will frankly own, that I have not more confidence in my Toy than in my mouth, and many silly things have slipt from me in my life. I hear every day so many incredible adventures unveiled, attested, detailed by Toys, that even retrenching three fourths, the remaining part is sufficient to destroy a reputation. If mine should prove but half so great a lyer as all those, I should be ruined. Was it not enough then that our conduct was in the power of our Toys, without our reputation being dependent on their discourses?" "For my part," answered Ismene smartly, without entering into endless arguments, "I allow things to go their own way. If it be Brama, that has given the faculty of speech to Toys, as my Bramin has convinced me, he will not suffer them to lye. It would be impious to assert the contrary. Wherefore my Toy may talk as often and much as it will. But after all what will it say?"

Then was heard a hollow voice, which seemed to come out of the ground, and answered by way of Echo: *Many things*. Ismene, not imagining whence the answer proceeded, flew into a passion, attack'd her neighbours, and increased the diversion of the company. The Sultan, charmed with her mistake, quitted his

minister, with whom he was in conference in a corner, went to her, and said: "I am afraid, madam, you have heretofore admitted some one of these ladies into your confidence, and that their Toys are so malicious as to recollect histories, which your own might have forgot."

At the same time, by moving his ring up and down with dexterity, Mangogul caused a very singular dialogue between the lady and her Toy. Ismene, who had always conducted her little affairs well enough, and had never had a confidante, answer'd the Sultan, that all the art of calumniators would be ineffectual. "*Perhaps,*" answer'd the unknown voice. "How, perhaps," reply'd Ismene, piqued at this injurious doubt, "what have I to fear from them?" "*Every thing, if they knew as much as I.*" "And what do you know?" "*Many things, I tell you.*" "Many things, that says much, but means nothing. Can you tell any particulars?" "*Without doubt.*" "And of what nature? Have I been really in Love?" "*No.*" "Have I had intrigues, adventures?" "*Exactly.*" "And with whom, pray? With Petits-maitres, military men, senators?" "*No.*" "Comedians?" "*No.*" "You shall see, it was with my pages, my footmen, my confessor, or my husband's chaplain." "*No.*" "Mr Impostor, you are at your wits end?" "*Not quite.*" "Yet I can see no other person, with whom one can possibly have adventures. Was it before, was it after my marriage? Answer me then, impertinent." "*Ah, madam, spare invectives, if you please. Compel not the best of your friends to take some disagreeable steps.*" "Speak, my dear, tell, tell all. I value your services as

little as I fear your indiscretion. Explain your self: I not only give you full permission, but even dare you to it." "*To what do you reduce me, Ismene?*" said the Toy, breathing a deep sigh. "To render justice to vertue." "*Well then, virtuous Ismene, have you quite forgot young Osmin, the sangiac Zegriz, your dancing master Alaziel, your music master Almoura?*" "Ah! what horrid calumnies," cried Ismene. "I had a mother, who was too vigilant to expose me to such irregularities: and my husband, were he here, would testify that he found me just such as he could wish." "*Very true,*" replied the Toy, "*thanks to the secret of your intimate friend Alcina.*"

"This is so extravagantly and so grossly ridiculous," said Ismene, "that it deserves no refutation. I cannot say," continued she, "which of these ladies Toys it is, that pretends to be so knowing in my affairs: but it has related things, of which my own does not know a syllable." "Madam," answered Cephisa, "I can assure you, that mine has gone no farther than giving ear." The rest said as much, and they sate down to play, without precisely knowing the interlocutor of the conversation above related.

CHAP. XII.

Fifth Trial of the Ring.

Play

Most of the ladies who made the party with the Manimonbanda, play'd with great eagerness; and it was not necessary to have Mangogul's sagacity, to perceive it. The passion of gaming is one of those that puts on the least disguise. It shews itself, whether in winning or losing, by strong symptoms. "But whence proceeds this fury?" said he within himself. "How can the ladies bear to pass whole nights round a Pharaoh table, to tremble in expectation of an ace or a seven? This phrensy injures their health and beauty, when they have any: without reckoning the disorders into which I am sure it precipitates them. I have a great desire," said he to Mirzoza in the ear, "to execute here a thought just come into my head." "And what is this fine thought, which you meditate?" said the favorite. "It is," answered Mangogul, "to turn my ring on the most unbridled of these brelandiers, to interrogate her Toy, and to transmit by that organ, a good advice to all those weak husbands, who allow their wives to stake the honour and fortune of their house on a card or a dye."

"I like this notion mightily," replied Mirzoza; "but know, Prince, that the Manimonbanda has just now sworn by her Pagoda's, that she would keep no more drawing-room nights,

if ever she found herself again exposed to the impudence of Engastrimuthes." "What have you said, my soul's delight?" interrupted the Sultan. "I have," answered the favorite, "made use of the name, which the modest Manimonbanda gives to all those, whose Toys have the faculty of speech." "It is of the invention of her stupid Bramin, who values himself upon knowing the Greek, and being ignorant of the Congese language," replied the Sultan. "However, with the Manimonbanda's leave, and that of her chaplain too, I would desire to question Manilla's Toy; and it would be proper to make the interrogatories here, for the edification of the neighbours." "Prince," said Mirzoza, "if you take my word, you will spare the Manimonbanda the uneasiness this proceeding must give her: which you may do, without balking your own curiosity or mine. Why do you not go to Manilla's house?" "I will go, since you advise," said Mangogul. "But at what hour?" said the Sultana. "About midnight," answered the Sultan. "At midnight she is at play," said the favorite. "I will put off my visit then till two in the morning," replied Mangogul. "Prince, you don't consider," rejoined the favorite: "'tis the most pleasant hour of the four and twenty for female gamesters. If your highness will be led by me, you will take Manilla in her first sleep, between seven and eight."

Mangogul followed Mirzoza's advice, and visited Manilla about seven. Her women were going to put her to bed. He judged by the sadness predominant in her countenance, that she had play'd with bad luck. She walk'd to and fro, stopp'd, lifted her

eyes to heaven, stamp'd with her foot, cover'd her eyes with her hands, and muttered somewhat, which the Sultan could not understand. Her women, who were undressing her, followed all these motions in panicks; and if they at length compassed getting her into bed, it was not done without receiving harsh language and something worse. Now Manilla is in bed, having made no other night prayer, but some curses against a damned ace, which came seven times successively to her loss. Scarcely had she closed her eyes, when Mangogul levell'd his ring at her. Instantly her Toy exclaimed in a sorrowful tone: "Now I am repiqued and capotted." The Sultan smiled to hear that every thing about Manilla, even to her Toy, spoke gaming. "No," continued the Toy, "I will never play against Abidul: he knows nothing but tricking. Speak to me no more of Dares: with him one runs the risq of some unlucky hits. Ismal is a pretty fair player, but every body has him not that would. Mazulim was a treasure, before he fell into the hands of Crissa. I don't know a more whimsical player than Zulmis. Rica is less so; but the poor lad is run dry. What can one do with Lazuli? The prettiest woman of Banza could not make him play high. What a piddling player Mollius is! In truth, desolation has spread among the gamesters: and e'er long we shall not know with whom to make a party."

After this Jeremiad, the Toy fell to relating uncommon strokes, of which it had been a witness; and excessively extoll'd the constancy and resources of its mistress in bad luck. "Were it not for me," it said, "Manilla would have ruin'd herself twenty

times over. All the Sultan's treasures would not have discharged the debts that I have paid. In one match at breland she lost to a farmer of the revenue and an *abbé*, above ten thousand ducats. She had nothing left but her jewels: but her husband had so lately redeem'd them, that she dared not to venture them. Nevertheless she took the cards, and had one of those seducing hands, which fortune sends, when she is on the point of cutting your throat. They urged her to speak. Manilla look'd at her cards, put her hand into her purse, whence she was sure to pull nothing, return'd to her cards, examined them again, but without determining. 'Does madam stand it at last?' said the farmer. 'Yes; I stake,' said she, – 'I stake – I stake my Toy.' 'For what value?' replied Turcares. 'For a hundred ducats,' said Manilla. The *abbé* withdrew, esteeming the Toy too high rated. Turcares declared at it: Manilla lost and paid.

"The silly vanity of possessing a titled Toy got the better of Turcares. He offered to supply my mistress with play-money, on condition that I should be subservient to his pleasures. The bargain was struck in a moment. But as Manilla play'd high, and the farmer was not inexhaustible, we soon saw the bottom of his coffers.

"My mistress had appointed a most brilliant party at Pharaoh. All her acquaintance were invited. They were to punt with nothing under ducats. We depended on the purse of Turcares. But the morning of this great day, the rascal wrote us word that he had not a penny, and left us in the utmost consternation.

However, we must extricate ourselves, and there was not a moment to be lost. We pitch'd on an old chief of the Bramins, to whom we sold at a dear rate some complaisances, which he had sollicitated a long time. This sitting cost him double the income of his ecclesiastical preferment.

"Turcares returned notwithstanding, in a few days. He said he was excessively concerned that madam had taken him at a nonplus: he still reckon'd on her goodness. 'Indeed you reckon ill, my dear,' replied Manilla: 'I cannot with decency receive you more. When you were in a condition to lend, the world knew why I admitted you: but now that you are good for nothing, you would blast my honour.'

"Turcares was piqued at this discourse, and so was I: for he was perhaps the best lad in Banza. He waved his usual politeness, and gave Manilla to understand, that she cost him more than three opera girls, who would have amused him better, 'Alas!' cried he most mournfully, 'why did I not stick to my little milliner? She loved me to folly. I made her so happy with a silk gown.' – Manilla, who did not relish comparisons, interrupted him in a tone, eno' to make one tremble, and bade him begone in an instant. Turcares knew her, and chose rather to return peaceably down stairs, than to leap thro' the window.

"After that, Manilla borrowed of another Bramin, who came, said she, to administer comfort in her afflictions. The holy man succeeded the farmer of the revenue, and we reimbursed him his comforts in the same coin. She lost me several times more, and

'tis well known that play-debts are the only ones that are paid among the *Beau Monde*.

"If Manilla happens to play with good luck, she is the most regular woman in Congo. Excepting her play, she takes surprising care of her conduct: she is never heard to swear an oath: she entertains well: she pays her mercer and other tradesmen, is liberal to her servants, redeems her nicknacks sometimes, and caresses her lap dog and her husband: but thirty times a month she risks these happy dispositions and her money on an ace of spades. Such is the life she leads, and will lead: and God knows how many times yet I shall be pawn'd."

Here the Toy ceased, and Mangogul went to take repose. He was awaken'd at five in the afternoon, and went to the opera, according to a promise made to the favorite.

CHAP. XIII.

Of the opera at Banza.

Sixth trial of the Ring

Of all the public diversions of Banza, none supported itself but the opera. Utmiutsol and Utremifasolasiututut, two celebrated musicians, one of whom was growing old, and the other was but just new-fledged, alternately occupied the lyric scene. Each of these two original authors had his partisans. The ignorant and the grey-bearded dotards stood up for Utmiutsol; the smart young fellows and the Virtuosi were for Utremifasolasiututut: and the people of taste, as well young as old, held them both in high esteem. Utremifasolasiututut, said the latter, is excellent when he is good, but he sleeps at times; and, pray, to whom does not that happen? Utmiutsol holds up better, and is more uniform. He is full of beauties; yet he has not one, of which there are not examples to be found, and even more striking, in his rival; in whom there are strokes to be observed, which are entirely his own, and are not to be met with any where but in his works. Old Utmiutsol is simple, natural, smooth, sometimes too smooth, and that is his fault. Young Utremifasolasiututut is singular, brilliant, composed, learned, sometimes too learned: but perhaps that is his hearer's fault. The one has but one opening, beautiful indeed, but repeated at the head of all his pieces.

The other has made as many openings as pieces, and they all pass for masterpieces. Nature guided Utmiutsol in the ways of melody; study and experience discovered the sources of harmony to Utremifasolasiututut. Who ever knew how to declaim, and who will ever speak a part like the old man? Who will compose light catches, voluptuous airs, and symphonies in character like the young one? Utmiutsol is the only person who understood dialogue. Before Utremifasolasiututut no body distinguished the delicate touches, which separate the tender from the voluptuous, the voluptuous from the passionate, the passionate from the lascivious. Nay some partisans of the latter pretend, that if Utmiutsol's dialogue is superior to his, this is not so much owing to the inequality of their talents, as to the difference of the poets, whom they made use of. "Read, read," cried they, "the scene of Dardanus, and you will be convinced, that if we give good words to Utremifasolasiututut, Utmiutsol's charming scenes will be revived." However that be, in my time, the whole town flock'd to the tragedies of the latter, and people stifled one another at the interludes of the former.

They were just then exhibiting in Banza an excellent piece of Utremifasolasiututut, which would never have been represented but in nightcaps, had not the favorite Sultana had the curiosity to see it. And besides, the periodical indisposition of Toys favored the jealousy of the fiddles, and made the principal actress flinch. She, who supplied her place, had not so good a voice, but as she made amends by her manner of acting, nothing hindered

the Sultan and the favorite from honouring the piece with their presence.

Mirzoza was already come, Mangogul comes, the curtain is raised, they begin. Every thing went on marvellously well: Miss Chevalier had effaced the memory of Miss le Maure, and they were at the fourth act, when the Sultan bethought himself, in the middle of a chorus, which he thought lasted too long, and had already cost the favorite two yawns, to point his ring on all the singers. Never was there seen on the stage so odd and comical a sight. Thirty women were struck dumb on a sudden. Their mouths were wide open, and they kept the same theatrical attitudes they held before. And at the same time their Toys made their throats sore with the violence of singing, this a *Pont-neuf*, that a *Vaudeville polisson*, another a very indecent parody, and all of them extravagances relative to their characters. On one hand was heard, *oh vraiment ma comere, oui*; on the other, *quoi douze fois? Here, qui me baise, est-ce Blaise? There, rien, Pere Cyprien, ne vous retient*. In fine, they all wound themselves up into a strain, so high, so rude, and so mad, that they formed the most extravagant brawling ridiculous choir, that had been heard before and since that of – no – d – on —

Here the manuscript was worm-eaten.

All this while the Orchestra went on, and the loud laughs of the pit and boxes joined to the sound of the instruments, and the singing of the Toys, completed the cacophony.

Some of the actresses, fearing lest their Toys, tired with

quavering impertinences, might resolve to speak them out, ran behind the scenes: but they escaped with the fright only. Mangogul being perswaded that the public would learn nothing new, turn'd off his ring. In an instant all the Toys were silent, the bursts of laughter ceased, the audience grew calm, the play was resumed and finished peaceably. The curtain drop'd, the Sultana and Sultan went off, and the Toys of our actresses went to their several appointments, where they were to have a different employment from singing.

This affair made a great noise. The men laugh'd, the women were alarmed, the Bonza's were scandalized, the academicians rack'd their brains about it. But what did Orcotomus say? Orcotomus triumph'd. He had hinted in one of his memoirs, that the Toys would infallibly sing: they had sung accordingly, and this phænomenon, which disconcerted his brethren, was to him a new ray of light, and compleated the confirmation of his system.

CHAP. XIV.

Orcotomus's experiments

It was on the fifteenth of the moon of – , that Orcotomus had read his memoir to the academy, and communicated his thoughts on the tattle of the Toys. As he then did with the greatest assurance promise to produce infallible experiments, which he had repeated several times, and always with success; the majority of people was struck with his doctrine. For some time the public preserved the favorable impressions they had received: and for full six weeks Orcotomus pass'd for having made considerable discoveries.

Nothing was wanting to complete his triumph, but performing before the academy the famous experiments, which he had preached so loudly. The assembly that met on this occasion was extremely brilliant. The ministers of state graced the meeting: the Sultan himself did not disdain to be there, but invisible.

As Mangogul was a great Monologue maker, and the futility of the conversations of his time had tainted him with the habitude of soliloquy: "Either Orcotomus," said he, "must be an arrant quack, or the Genius my protector, a great fool. If the academician, who certainly is not a conjurer, can restore speech to dead Toys; the Genius who protects me was in the wrong to make a compact, and sell his soul to the devil, for the sake of

communicating it to Toys full of life."

Mangogul was puzzling himself with such reflections, when he found himself in the middle of his academy. Orcotomus had for spectators, as appears, all those in Banza, who were knowing in the subject of Toys. In order to be satisfied with his audience, all he wanted was to give them satisfaction: but the issue of his experiments proved very unhappy. Orcotomus took up a Toy, put his mouth to it, blew into it till he was out of breath, quieted it, returned, tried another: for he had brought a variety of them with him, of all ages, sizes, conditions and colours: but in vain did he blow; nothing was heard but inarticulate sounds, vastly different from what he had promised.

Then ran a buzzing murmur thro' the company, which disconcerted him for a moment: but he recovered himself, and alledged that such experiments were not easy to be made before so great a number of people: and he was right.

Mangogul got up in wrath, went away, and in the twinkling of an eye was in the favorite Sultana's apartment. "Well, prince," said she upon seeing him, "who has won the day, you or Orcotomus? For his Toys have performed wonders to be sure." The Sultan took some turns about the room without a word of answer. "But," resumed the favorite, "your highness seems dissatisfied." "Oh! madam, the impudence of that Orcotomus is not to be match'd. Pray, do not so much as mention him from this moment – What will you say, O future generations, when you shall be informed, that the great Mangogul allowed

a hundred thousand crowns in yearly pensions to such fellows; while gallant officers, who with their blood had watered the laurels that surround his brow, were reduced to twenty pound a year? – By Jove, the thought distracts me: I shall be out of humor this month to come."

Here Mangogul broke off, and continued to walk about the room. He hung down his head, marched to and fro, stop'd, and now and then stamp'd the floor with his foot. He sat down a moment, rose up in a hurry, took his leave of Mirzoza, forgot to kiss her, and retir'd to his own apartment.

The African author, who has immortalized himself by the history of the high and marvellous exploits of Erguebed and Mangogul, continues in these words:

By Mangogul's ill humor it was thought, that he was on the point of banishing all the learned out of his dominions. Far from it, the next day he arose in a gay mood, performed his exercises at the riding-house in the morning, in the evening supp'd with Mirzoza and some favorites, under a magnificent tent in the gardens of the Seraglio, and never appeared more disengaged from affairs of state.

The dissatisfied and the disaffected of Congo, and the newsmongers of Banza, did not fail to spread their reports of this conduct. For what do not people of this stamp find fault with? "Is this," said they in the public walks and coffee-houses, "is this governing a state? To spend the day in tilting, and the night at table." "Well, if I was Sultan," cried a little Senator ruined by

gaming, parted from his wife, and whose children had the worst of education, "if I was Sultan, I would make Congo a flourishing empire. I would be the terror of my enemies, and the darling of my subjects. Within six months I would reestablish the Police, the laws, the army and the navy in their full vigour. I would have a hundred ships of the line. Our heaths should soon be grub'd up, and our high-ways repair'd. I would abolish the taxes, or at least reduce them to one half. As for pensions, gentlemen of sublime wit, by my faith, ye should but just taste them with the tip of your tongues. Good officers, Pongo Sabiam, good officers, old soldiers, magistrates like us, who devote our labours and night studies to dealing out justice to the people; these are the men on whom I would shed my bounty."

"Gentlemen," said an old toothless politician, with greasy flat hair, a coat worn out at elbows, and ragged ruffles, "have ye quite forgot our great emperor Abdelmalek, of the Dynasty of the Abyssinians, who reigned two thousand three hundred and eighty five years ago? Have ye forgot how he caused two astronomers to be impaled, for an error of three minutes in their prediction of an eclipse; and his first physician and surgeon to be dissected alive, for having ordered him a dose of manna at an improper time?"

"Moreover I ask you," continued another, "what are those idle Bramins good for, that vermin who suck our blood, and grow fat on it. Would not their immense overflowing riches better become honest folks like us."

From another quarter was heard: "Forty years ago, were the

new cookery and the liquors of Lorraine so much as known? Our rulers are plung'd deep into luxury, which threatens approaching destruction to the empire, a necessary consequence of the contempt of the Pagoda's and dissolution of morals. At the time when people eat but coarse meats, and drank but sherbet at Kanaglou's table; what regard would be paid to the cut-paper ornaments, to Martin's varnishes, and to Rameau's music? The opera girls were not more cruel then than at present, and were to be had much cheaper. The prince, you see, spoils many good things. But if I was Sultan – "

"If thou wert Sultan," answered in wrath an old officer, who had escaped the dangers of the battle of Fontenoy, and had lost an arm close to his prince in the fight of Laufelt; "thou wouldst commit greater impertinences than thou now dealst out. Eh, friend, thou can'st not govern thy tongue, and thou wouldst willingly rule an empire: thou hast not sense to manage thy family, and thou pretendst to guide a state. Respect the powers of the earth, and thank the Gods for having given thee birth in the empire, and in the reign of a prince, whose prudence instructs his ministers, and whose soldiery admire his valor; who has made himself dreaded by his enemies, and beloved by his people; and whose only fault is the lenity with which persons of thy stamp are treated under his government."

CHAP. XV.

The Bramins

After the learned had spent themselves on the Toys, the Bramins took possession of them. Religion laid claim to their chit-chat, as a subject that came within its jurisdiction, and its ministers pretended that the hand of Brama manifested itself in that work.

There was held a general assembly of Pontiffs, and a resolution was taken to employ the best pens to prove in form, that the thing was supernatural, and that, till their works could be published, it should be defended by way of theses in the schools, in private conversations, in the direction of consciences, and in public harangues.

Now, altho' they unanimously agreed that the thing was supernatural; yet as the people of Congo admitted two principles, and professed a sort of Manicheism, they were divided in opinion, to which of these two principles the chit-chat of the Toys ought to be attributed.

Those who had seldom or never been out of their cells, and had turned over nothing but their books, ascribed the prodigy to Brama. "There is none but he," said they, "that can interrupt the course of nature; and time will shew, that in all this he has most profound views."

Those on the contrary, who frequented the toilets, and were oftner surprized at bed-sides than in their closets, fearing lest some indiscreet Toy or other might unveil their hypocrisy, laid their prattle to the charge of Cadabra, a mischief-making deity, and a sworn enemy to Brama and his servants. This latter system was exposed to terrible objections, and had not so direct a tendency towards the reformation of morals. Nay, its defenders did not impose on themselves about it. But the business was, to screen themselves: and in order to compass that, religion had not a single minister, who would not have sacrificed the Pagodas and their Altars a hundred times over.

Mangogul and Mirzoza assisted regularly at the religious service of Brama, and the whole empire was informed thereof by the news-papers. On a certain day appointed for celebrating one of the principal solemnities in the great Mosq, they were present. The Bramin, whose turn it was to explain the law, mounted the rostrum, pour'd forth a volley of affected phrases and fulsome compliments on the Sultan and his favorite; and made an eloquent peroration on the manner of sitting orthodoxly in company. He had already demonstrated the necessity thereof by numberless authorities, when being instantaneously seized with a fit of sacred enthusiasm, he spoke this declamation, which had the greater effect, as it came in quite unexpected.

"What do I hear in all assemblies? a confused murmur, an unheard noise strikes my ears. All things are turn'd topsy-turvy, and the faculty of speech, which the goodness of Brama had

hitherto appropriated to the tongue, is now by an effect of his vengeance transported to other organs. And what organs? You know, gentlemen. O ungrateful people, was there a necessity for a new prodigy, to rouze ye from your lethargy; and had not your crimes witnesses enough, but their principal instruments must raise their voice? Doubtless their measure is filled up; since the wrath of heaven has sought new chastisements. In vain did you envelop yourself in darkness, in vain did you choose mute accomplices: do you not hear them at present? They have given depositions against ye from every quarter, and revealed your baseness to the universe. O thou who governest by thy wisdom! O Brama! just are thy judgments. Thy law condemns theft, perjury, lying and adultery: it proscribes the blackness of calumny, the intrigues of ambition, the fury of hatred, and the artifices of insincerity. Thy faithful ministers have not ceased declaring these truths to thy children, and threatening them with the chastisements, which thou in thy just anger reservedst for prevaricators: but in vain; the fools have delivered themselves up to the tide of their passions, they followed the torrent, they have despised our admonitions, they have laughed at our threats, they have regarded our anathema's as empty noise; their vices are accumulated, strengthen'd, multiplied; the voice of their impiety has ascended even to thy throne, and we have not been able to prevent the tremendous scourge, with which thou hast smote them. After having long implored thy mercy, let us now extoll thy justice. Overwhelmed by thy strokes, doubtless they will return

to thee, and acknowledge the hand which is laid heavy on them. But O prodigy of hardheartedness! O excess of blindness! They have imputed the effect of thy power to the blind mechanism of nature. They have said in their hearts, Brama is not. All the properties of matter are not known to us, and the new proof of its existence is but a proof of the ignorance and credulity of those, who object it to us. On this foundation they have raised systems, invented hypotheses, tried experiments: but from the highth of his eternal habitation, Brama has laugh'd at their vain projects. He has confounded audacious knowledge, and the Toys have broke, as glass, the impotent obstacles opposed to their loquacity. Wherefore let those vainglorious worms confess the weakness of their reason, and the vanity of their efforts. Let them cease to deny the existence of Brama, or to prescribe limits to his power. Brama is, he is almighty, and he does not shew himself to us more visibly in his dreadful scourges, than in his ineffable favours.

"But who has drawn down these scourges on this wretched country? Is it not thy injustice, greedy incredulous man? Thy gallantries and silly amours, worldly immodest woman! Thy excesses and shameful debaucheries, infamous man of pleasure! Thy hardheartedness for our monasteries, miser! Thy injustice, corrupt magistrate! Thy usuries, insatiable money-dealer! Thy effeminacy and irreligion, impious and sycophant courtier.

"And you, on whom this scourge is particularly fallen, women and maidens plunged into licentiousness; tho' we, renouncing the duties of our calling, should keep profound silence with regard

to your irregularities, you carry about you a more importunate voice than ours: it accompanies you, and will every where rebuke you for your impure desires, your equivocal connections, your criminal conversations, such excessive care to please, so many artifices to engage, so much address to fix, and the impetuosity of your transports, and the fury of your jealousy. Why then do you delay to shake off the yoke of Cadabra, and return under the mild laws of Brama? But let us return to our subject. Well then I was saying that worldlings sit down heretically, and that for nine reasons; the first, &c."

This discourse made very different impressions. Mangogul and the Sultana, who were the only persons that knew the secret of the ring, were convinced that the Bramin had as happily hit off the tattle of Toys by the assistance of religion, as Orcotomus by the light of reason. The court ladies and petits-maitres declared the sermon seditious, and the preacher a visionary. The rest of the audience esteem'd him a prophet, shed tears, fell to prayers, and even flagellations, and did not change their courses of life.

The noise of this sermon spread to the very coffee-houses. A wit pronounced in a decisive tone, that the Bramin had but very superficially handled the subject, and that his discourse was but a cold insipid declamation: but in the opinion of the devout women and the enlightened, it was the most solid piece of eloquence that had been delivered in the temples these hundred years. And in mine, both the wit and the devout women were in the right.

CHAP. XVI.

The Muzzles

While the Bramins were making Brama speak, airing their Pagoda's by processions, and exhorting the people to repentance; others were thinking how to reap benefit by the prattle of Toys.

Great cities swarm with persons, whom misery renders industrious. – They neither rob nor pick pockets: but they are to pick-pockets, what pick-pockets are to gamblers. They know every thing, they do every thing. They go up and down, they insinuate themselves. They are found at court, in the city, at Westminster hall, at church, at the play, at ladies toilets, in coffee-houses, at balls, opera's and in academies. They are any thing that you would have them be. Do you solicit a pension, they have the minister's ear. Have you a law-suit, they will sollicite for you. Do you love gaming, they will make a party with you; good cheer, they keep a good kitchen; women, they will introduce you to Amina or Acaris. From which of the two would you please to purchase the distemper? Take your choice, they will undertake your cure. Their chief occupation is to find the ridicules of private persons, and to make advantage of the follies of the public. From them it is, that papers are distributed in the streets, at the gates of temples, at the play-house doors, and other public places, by which you are advertised gratis, that such an one living

at the Louvre, St. John's, the temple, or the abby, at such a sign, dupes mankind at home from nine in the morning to noon, and abroad the rest of the day.

Scarce had the Toys began to speak, when one of these sharpers fill'd the houses of Banza with a printed bill of this form and tenor. – Advertisement to the ladies. And underneath in small Italic, by permission of my lord the great Seneschal, and with the approbation of the gentlemen of the royal academy of sciences. And lower down: The Sieur Eolipila of the royal academy of Banza, Member of the royal society of Monoémugi, of the imperial academy of Biafara, of the academy of the curious of Loango, of the society of Camur in Monomotapa, of the institute of Ereeco, and of the royal academies of Beleguanza and Angola; who has for many years given courses of baubles, with the applause of the court, the town, and the province; has, in favour of the fair sex, invented muzzles or portable gags, which deprive Toys of the use of speech, without obstructing their natural functions. They are neat and convenient. He has some of all sizes, of all prices, and for all ages: and he has had the honour to serve persons of the highest distinction with them.

There is nothing like being a member of a body of men. Be a work ever so ridiculous, it is puff'd into success. Thus it was, that Eolipila's invention gain'd ground. People flock'd to his house. The gay ladies went thither in their own equipages, prudent women in hackney-coaches; the devouts sent their confessors or footmen, and nuns their door-keepers. Every body must have a

muzzle, so that not one from the dutchess down to the cobler's Joan, but had one either for the fashion or for reasons.

The Bramins, who had declared the prattle of Toys to be a divine punishment, and flatter'd themselves with a reformation of manners and other advantages from it, could not without horror see a machine, which eluded the vengeance of heaven and their hopes. Scarcely had they come down from their pulpits, but they mount again, thunder, roar, make the oracles to speak, and pronounce that a muzzle is an infernal machine, and that there is no salvation for those who shall use them. "Carnal women, quit your muzzles; submit," cried they, "to the will of Brama. Permit the voice of your Toys to awaken that of your consciences, and blush not to acknowledge crimes, which you have not been ashamed to commit."

But their exclamations were of little avail: the same fate attended muzzles, that had formerly attended the gowns without sleeves. The preachers were left to catch cold in the temples. All the women took gags, and quitted them not, either till they found them useless, or were tired of them.

CHAP. XVII.

The two Devouts

For some days past the Sultan left the Toys at rest. Important affairs, on which he was busy, suspended the effects of his ring. In this interval it was, that two women of Banza made diversion for the whole town.

They were professed devouts. They had managed their intrigues with all possible discretion, and were in full enjoyment of a reputation, which even the malice of those of their own class paid respect to. In the mosques nothing was talk'd of but their virtue. Mothers proposed them as patterns to their daughters, and husbands to their wives. The principal maxim of both was, that scandal is the greatest of all sins. This conformity of sentiments, but above all, the difficulty of edifying a clear-sighted and crafty neighbour at an easy expence, had got the better of the difference of their tempers, and they were very good friends.

Zelida received Sophia's Bramin: and it was at Sophia's house that Zelida confer'd with her director; and by a little self-examination, the one could hardly be ignorant of what concerned the other's Toy: but the whimsical indiscretion of these Toys kept them both in cruel apprehensions. They held themselves as on the point of being unmask'd, and of losing that reputation of virtue, which had cost them fifteen years dissimulation and

management, and which now embarrassed them very much.

At some moments they would even forfeit their lives, especially Zelida, to be as much blasted as the greatest part of their acquaintance. "What will the world say? What will my husband do? – What! that woman so reserved, so modest, so virtuous, that Zelida, like others, is but – Alas! this thought distracts me! – Yes, I wish I never had any reputation," cried Zelida in a passion.

She was then with her female friend, who was making the same reflections, but without such violent commotion. Zelida's last words made her smile. "Laugh, madam, without constraint. Burst out," said Zelida, touched to the quick. "To be sure you have good cause." "I am as sensible of the impending danger, as you can be," answered Sophia, with an air of indifference; "but how to shun it? For you will agree with me, that there is no likelihood that your wish will be accomplish'd."

"Contrive an expedient then," replied Zelida: "Oh!" said Sophia, "I am tired of rummaging my brain, I can find none. – To bury one's self in a country seat, is one way; but to abandon the pleasures of Banza, and renounce life, is what I will never do. I perceive that my Toy will never approve it." "What is to be done then?" "What! to leave all to providence, and laugh, as I do, at what the world will say. I have tried all shifts to reconcile reputation with pleasures: but since it is decreed that we must renounce reputation, let us at least preserve pleasures. We were uniques: but now, my dear, we shall be like a hundred thousand

others; do you look on this as a hard fate?"

"Yes, without doubt," replied Zelida; "to me it seems hard to be like those, for whom I had put on a sovereign contempt. In order to avoid this mortification, methinks I would fly to the world's end."

"Set out, my dear," continued Sophia; "for my part, I stay – But *à propos*, I advise you to furnish yourself with some secret, to prevent your Toy from blabbing on the road."

"Indeed," replied Zelida, "pleasantry here has a very ill grace, and your intrepidity – "

"You are mistaken, Zelida, there is not a grain of intrepidity in my proceeding. To let things go their own way, when we cannot stop them, is resignation. I see that I am to be dishonoured: well then, dishonour for dishonour, I shall spare myself as much of the uneasiness as I can."

"Dishonour'd!" replied Zelida, bursting into tears. "Dishonour'd! What a shock! I cannot bear it. – Oh! accursed Bonza, 'tis thou that hast ruin'd me. I loved my husband, I was born virtuous; I should have loved him still, if thou hadst not made a wicked use of thy ministry and my confidence. Dishonour'd, dear Sophia! – "

She had not power to make an end. Sobs intercepted her words, and she fell on the carpet, quite in despair. As soon as Zelida recovered her speech, she cried out in a lamentable tone: "Alas! my dear Sophia, I shall die – I must die. No, I shall never survive my reputation."

"But Zelida, my dear Zelida, do not be in a hurry to die: perhaps," said Sophia – "No perhaps shall stop me, I must dye." – "But perhaps one might" – "One might do nothing, I tell you" – "But speak, my dear, what might one do?" – "Perhaps one might hinder a Toy from talking." "Ah! Sophia, you endeavour to comfort me by false hopes, you deceive me." "No, no, I do not deceive you; only hear me, instead of distracting yourself like a mad creature. I have heard talk of Frenicol, Eolipila, gags and muzzles." "Pray, what connexion is there between Frenicol, Eolipila, muzzles, and the danger which threatens us? What business has my Toyman here, and what is a muzzle?"

"It is this, my dear. A muzzle is a machine invented by Frenicol, approved by the academy, and improved by Eolipila, who claims the honour of the invention." "But pray, this machine invented by Frenicol, approved by the academy, and improved by that silly fellow Eolipila." – "Oh! you are of a vivacity that surpasses imagination. Well then, this machine being applied to a Toy, renders it discreet in spite of its teeth." – "Can this be true, my dear?" "It is so said." "We must know it," replied Zelida, "and immediately too."

She rang, one of her women appeared, and she sent for Frenicol. "Why not for Eolipila?" said Sophia. "Frenicol is less taken notice of," answered Zelida.

The Toyman came away with the messenger. "Ah! Frenicol, are you there," said Zelida, "you are welcome. Make haste, my friend, to extricate two women out of cruel anxiety." – "What is

the business, ladies? Would you please to have some rare Toys?" – "No, we have two already, and we would willingly" – "Part with them, I suppose. Pray, ladies, let me see them, I will take them, or we will make an exchange." – "You are mistaken, Mr. Frenicol, we have nothing to truck." – "Well, I understand you, you have some ear-rings, which you would desire to lose, so as that your husbands may find them in my shop." – "Not that neither; pray, Sophia, inform him of the matter." "Frenicol," continued Sophia, "we want two – What, don't you understand?" "No, madam: how would you have me understand, when you say nothing?" – "'Tis," said Sophia, "because when a woman is modest, it gives her pain to speak plain on certain things." "But yet," replied Frenicol, "she must speak plain. I am a Toyman, not a Conjuror." – "You must guess however." – "Faith, ladies, the more I look on ye, the less I comprehend ye. When a lady is young, rich, and pretty as you are, she is not reduced to artifice: moreover, I declare sincerely, that I sell them no longer. I have left the dealing in those baubles to young beginners in the trade."

Our devouts found the Toyman's mistake so ridiculous, that they both burst out into a violent fit of laughter, which disconcerted him. "Permit me, ladies, to make my bow, and withdraw. You might well have spared yourselves the trouble of sending for me three miles off, to divert yourselves at my cost." "Stop, stop, friend," said Zelida, still laughing on. "That was not our intention. But by your misapprehending us, such ridiculous notions came into your head." – "'Tis in your power, ladies, to

put juster into it. What is the business?" "Oh! Mr. Frenicol, let me laugh at ease, before I answer you."

Zelida laugh'd till she panted for breath. The Toyman thought within himself that she had the vapors, or was out of her senses, and had patience. At length Zelida ceased. – "Well," said she, "the business relates to our Toys, our own Toys, do you understand me, Mr. Frenicol? To be sure you cannot be ignorant, that for some time past several Toys have prattled like magpyes: now we would be very glad that ours would not follow this bad example." "Ah! now I take it, that is to say," replied Frenicol, "that you want a muzzle each." – "Very right, you have hit it off truly. I have been told that Mr. Frenicol was no fool." "Madam, your goodness is very great. As to what you require, I have of all sorts, I go this moment to bring you some."

Frenicol went accordingly: in the mean while Zelida embraced her friend, and thank'd her for her expedient: and I, says the African author, went to take a nap, waiting his return.

CHAP. XVIII.

The Toyman's return

The Toyman returned, and presented the ladies with two muzzles of the best sort. – "Ah! mercy!" cried Zelida. "What enormous muzzles are these! And who are the unhappy women, whom these will fit? This is an ell long. Indeed, friend, you must certainly have taken measure by the Sultan's mare." – "Yes," said Sophia indolently, after having measured them with her fingers, "you are in the right; and there is but the Sultan's mare and old Rimoso, for whom these can do." – "I protest, ladies, that they are of the common size; and that Zelmaida, Zyrphila, Amiana, and a hundred other ladies, have of the same sort." "That is impossible," said Zelida. – "'Tis actually so however," replied Frenicol: "but they all said the same thing as ye have: and as they have, so may you undeceive yourselves by trying them on." "Mr. Frenicol may say what he will; but he shall never persuade me that this will fit me," said Zelida, "nor this me," said Sophia. "Let him shew us others, if he has any."

Frenicol, who had often experienced that women are not to be converted on that article, shew'd them muzzles for the age of thirteen. "Well," cried both at the same time, "these are such as we want." "I wish they may prove so," whisper'd Frenicol aside. "How do you sell them?" said Zelida. "But ten ducats a

piece, madam." – "Ten ducats, you forget yourself, Frenicol." – "Madam, that is the price in conscience." – "You make us pay for the novelty." – "I protest, ladies, 'tis but two sixpences for a shilling." "I must own they are neatly made, but ten ducats are a great deal of money." – "I'll abate nothing." – "We will go to Eolipila's." – "You may, ladies: but there are workmen and workmen, muzzles and muzzles." Frenicol held firm, and Zelida came to. She paid for the two muzzles, and the Toyman went back, fully perswaded that they would be too little for them, and would soon be returned on his hands for a fourth part of the price he received for them. He was mistaken. Mangogul not happening to come within reach of turning his ring on those two women, their Toys were not seized with the humor of talking louder than ordinary; and happily for them: for Zelida having tried her muzzle, found it too little by one half. However, she did not part with it, fancying that it would be pretty near as inconvenient to change it, as not to make use of it at all.

These circumstances came to light from one of her women, who told them in confidence to her lover, who related them in confidence to others, who spread them all over Banza under the seal of secrecy. Nor was Frenicol silent: the adventure of the devouts became public, and for sometime afforded employment to the calumniators of Congo.

Zelida became inconsolable upon it. This woman, more to be pitied than blamed, conceived an aversion for her Bramin, quitted her husband, and shut herself up in a convent. As for Sophia,

she threw off the mask, despised censures, patch'd and painted,
frequented public places, and had adventures.

CHAP. XIX.

Seventh trial of the Ring.

The stifled Toy

Tho' the female cits of Banza doubted whether Toys of their rank would be honoured with the gift of speech; yet they all furnish'd themselves with muzzles. In Banza muzzles became as common, as a general court mourning in this country.

Here the African author observes with astonishment, that neither the lowness of the price, nor the commonness of muzzles put them out of fashion in the Seraglio. "This once," says he, "utility got the better of prejudice." So trite a reflection was not worth the pains of repeating: but to me it seems as if it was the defect of all the ancient authors of Congo, to fall into repetitions; whether they thereby hoped to give a greater air of truth and facility to their productions; or that they were far from having as much fecundity of invention as their admirers ascribe to them.

However that be, one day Mangogul, walking in his gardens, attended by his whole court, took the maggot to level his ring at Zelais. She was handsome, and suspected of several adventures: yet her Toy did no more than stammer, and utter'd only some few mangled words, which had no meaning, and which the Blasters interpreted as they thought fit. – "Pshuh!" says the Sultan, "here is a Toy that has a vast impediment of speech. Most certainly

there must be somewhat that impedes its respiration." Wherefore he applied his ring more intensely. The Toy made a second effort to speak; and in some measure surmounting the obstacle, that stop'd its mouth, these words were heard very distinctly. "Alas! alas! – I am – I am – I am stifled. I can no more. – Alas! alas! I am stifled."

Immediately Zelais found herself going: she grew pale, her neck swell'd, and she fell, with her eyes shut and mouth half open, between the arms of those who stood around her.

Any where else Zelais would have been speedily relieved. 'Twas only debarrassing her of her muzzle, and allowing her Toy a freedom of respiration: but how to lend the helping hand in Mangogul's presence. "Quick, quick, physicians," cried the Sultan, "Zelais is dying."

Some pages ran to the palace, and returned, with the doctors gravely marching after them. Orcotomus was at their head. Some gave their opinion for bleeding, others for the *kermes mineral*; but the penetrating Orcotomus ordered Zelais to be carried to a neighbouring closet, examined her, and cut the braces of her harness. This muzzled Toy was one of those, which he boasted to have seen in the paroxysm.

However, the bloating was excessive, and Zelais would have continued to suffer, had not the Sultan had pity on her condition. He turn'd off his ring, the fluids return'd to their equilibrium. Zelais came to herself, and Orcotomus assumed the honour of this miraculous cure.

Zelais's accident and her physician's indiscretion, made the muzzles lose much of their credit. Orcotomus, without any regard to Eolipila's interest, proposed to himself to raise his own fortune on the ruins of the others; advertised himself as a patentee physician of Toys that had caught cold: and some of his bills are to be seen at this day in the by-streets. He began by getting money, and ended by falling into contempt. The Sultan took pleasure in lowering the presumption of the empiric. Did Orcotomus boast of silencing a Toy that had never utter'd a word? Mangogul had the cruelty to make it speak. People went so far as to remark, that any Toy that was tired of silence, need only have two or three visits from Orcotomus. In a little time he was rank'd with Eolipila in the class of quacks; and they will both continue therein, until it shall please Brama to take them out.

Shame was preferred to the apoplexy. "The one kills," said the women, "the other does not." Wherefore they renounced their muzzles; let their Toys talk on; and no body died thereby.

CHAP. XX.

Eighth trial of the Ring.

The Vapors

There was a time, as we have seen, when the women dreaded the prating of their Toys, were stifled, and died away; but another succeeded, when they set themselves above this dread, threw away their muzzles, and had nothing beyond the vapors.

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