

Early Modern Europe, 1450–1789

CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF EUROPE, 2ND EDITION

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Primary Sources

CHAPTER TEN: CULTURAL AND INTELLECTUAL LIFE, 1600-1789

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1. Letters patent establishing the French Academy, 1635

Private and regional learned societies and academies were founded as early as the fifteenth century, but the first national academy was the French Academy Académie Française, founded in 1635 by Louis XIII and Cardinal Richelieu. It was dedicated to French language and culture, as this letter patent, issued by Louis, indicates. Louis speaks here in the royal “we.”

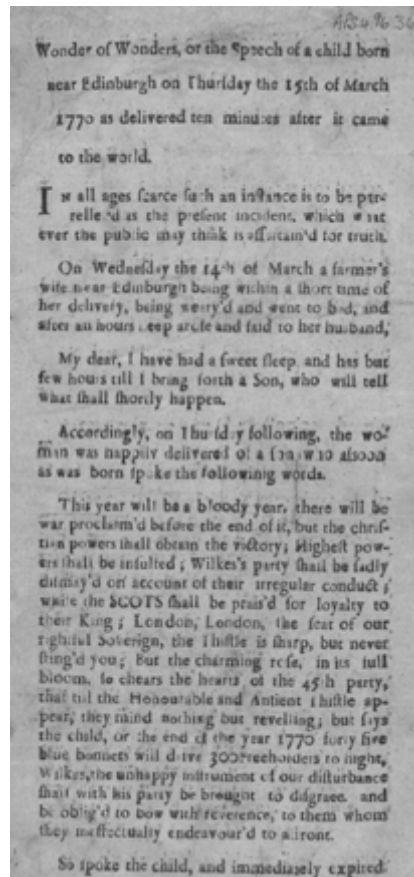
<http://history.hanover.edu/texts/facademy.html>

2. John Wallis, *The Origin of The Royal Society*, 1645-1662

The Royal Society of London was founded in 1660, but it grew out of earlier, less formal meetings of physicians, mathematicians, and others interested in new scientific ideas in London and Oxford. John Wallis (1616-1703) was a mathematician, and one of its early organizers.

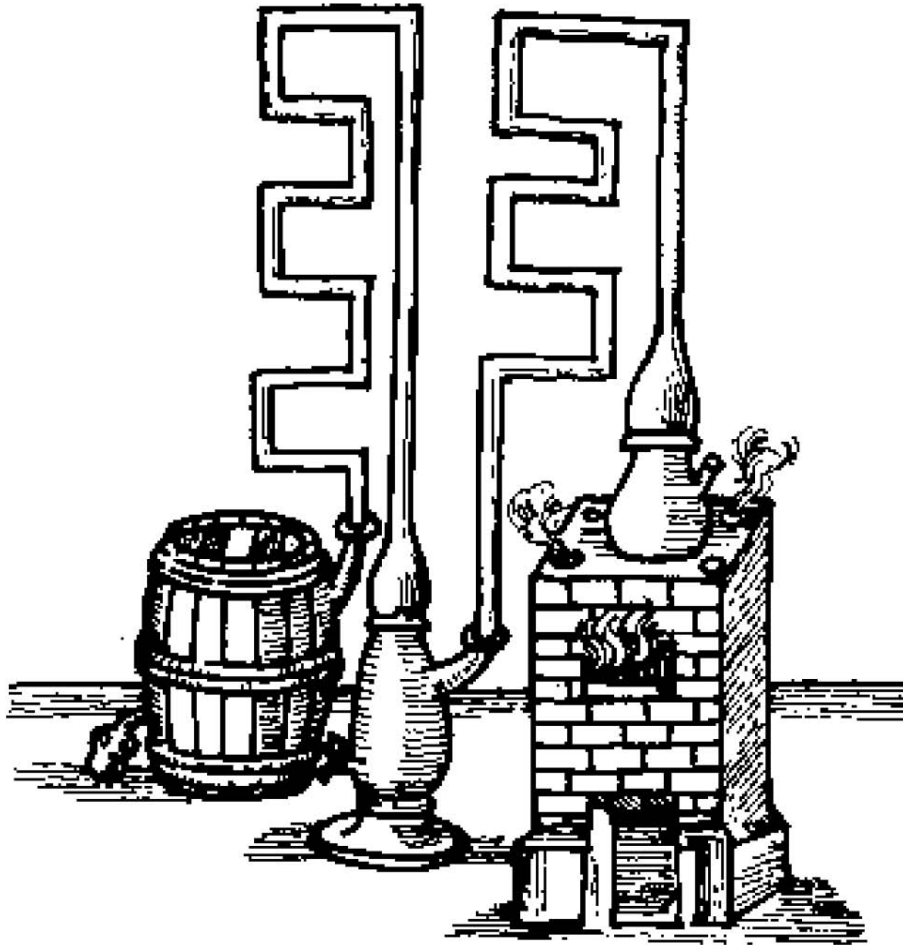
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1662royalsociety.html>

3. Scottish Broadside, 1770



Along with learned societies, printed journals, newspapers, and broadsides spread new ideas. Those critical of religious and political authorities were sometimes censored, but many were too ephemeral to control. This Scottish broadside of 1770 tells of a baby born with the ability to speak, who delivered political predictions ten minutes after it was born, and then died.

<http://www.nls.uk/broadsides/broadside.cfm/id/16824>



Woodcut illustration from an alchemy manual

4. Theophrastus Paracelsus, *The Aurora Of The Philosophers*, (first published 1575)

Alchemists experimented with various ways to extract pure elements from substances, hoping to find one powerful agent that was capable of healing all illnesses and transforming less perfect substances into more perfect ones. Here Paracelsus talks about the origins of this agent, which he calls the “Philosopher’s Stone.” Alchemical texts are often very difficult to follow, and were frequently illustrated with diagrams of procedures and equipment. This entire text, and many other alchemical texts and images, can be found at:

<http://www.levity.com/alchemy/texts.html>

Chapter I.

Concerning The Origin Of The Philosophers' Stone.

ADAM was the first inventor of arts, because he had knowledge of all things as well after the Fall as before. Thence he predicted the world's destruction by water. From this cause, too, it came about that his successors erected two tables of stone, on which they engraved all natural arts in hieroglyphical characters, in order that their posterity might also become acquainted with this prediction, that so it might be heeded, and provision made in the time of danger. Subsequently, Noah found one of these tables under Mount Araroth, after the Deluge. In this table were described the courses of the upper firmament and of the lower globe, and also of the planets. At length this universal knowledge was divided into several parts, and lessened in its vigour and power. By means of this separation, one man became an astronomer, another a magician, another a cabalist, and a fourth an alchemist. Abraham, that Vulcanic Tubalcain, a consummate astrologer and arithmetician, carried the Art out of the land of Canaan into Egypt, whereupon the Egyptians rose to so great a height and dignity that this wisdom was derived from them by other nations. The patriarch Jacob painted, as it were, the sheep with various colours; and this was done by magic: for in the theology of the Chaldeans, Hebrews, Persians, and Egyptians, they held these arts to be the highest philosophy, to be learnt by their chief nobles and priests. So it was in the time of Moses, when both the priests and also the physicians were chosen from among the Magi – the priests for the judgment of what related to health, especially in the knowledge of leprosy. Moses, likewise, was instructed in the Egyptian schools, at the cost and care of Pharaoh's daughter, so that he excelled in all the wisdom and learning of that people. Thus, too, was it with Daniel, who in his youthful days imbibed the learning of the Chaldeans, so that he

became a cabalist. Witness his divine predictions and his exposition of those words, "Mene, Mene, Tecelphares". These words can be understood by the prophetic and cabalistic Art. This cabalistic Art was perfectly familiar to, and in constant use by, Moses and the Prophets. The Prophet Elias foretold many things by his cabalistic numbers. So did the Wise Men of old, by this natural and mystical Art, learn to know God rightly. They abode in His laws, and walked in His statutes with great firmness. It is also evident in the Book of Samuel, that the Berelists did not follow the devil's part, but became, by Divine permission, partakers of visions and veritable apparitions, whereof we shall treat more at large in the Book of Supercelestial Things. This gift is granted by the Lord God to those priests who walk in the Divine precepts. It was a custom among the Persians never to admit any one as king unless he were a Wise Man, pre-eminent in reality as well as in name. This is clear from the customary name of their kings; for they were called Wise Men. Such were those Wise Men and Persian Magi who came from the East to seek out the Lord Jesus, and are called natural priests. The Egyptians, also, having obtained this magic and philosophy from the Chaldeans and Persians, desired that their priests should learn the same wisdom; and they became so fruitful and successful therein that all the neighbouring countries admired them. For this reason Hermes was so truly named Trismegistus, because he was a king, a priest, a prophet, a magician, and a sophist of natural things. Such another was Zoroaster...

Chapter V.

Concerning The Chief And Supreme Essence Of Things.

The Magi in their wisdom asserted that all creatures might be brought to one unified substance, which substance they affirm may, by purifications and purgations, attain to so high a degree of subtlety, such divine nature and occult property, as to work wonderful results. For they considered that

by returning to the earth, and by a supreme magical separation, a certain perfect substance would come forth, which is at length, by many industrious and prolonged preparations, exalted and raised up above the range of vegetable substances into mineral, above mineral into metallic, and above perfect metallic substances into a perpetual and divine Quintessence⁷, including in itself the essence of all celestial and terrestrial creatures. The Arabs and Greeks, by the occult characters and hieroglyphic descriptions of the Persians and the Egyptians, attained to secret and abstruse mysteries. When these were obtained and partially understood they saw with their own eyes, in the course of experimenting, many wonderful and strange effects. But since the supercelestial operations lay more deeply hidden than their capacity could penetrate, they did not call this a supercelestial arcanum according to the institution of the Magi, but the arcanum of the Philosophers' Stone according to the counsel and judgment of Pythagoras. Whoever obtained this Stone overshadowed it with various enigmatical figures, deceptive resemblances, comparisons, and fictitious titles, so that its matter might remain occult. Very little or no knowledge of it therefore can be had from them.

5. Francis Bacon, *The New Atlantis*, 1627

Francis Bacon described the values and techniques of the “scientific method” in *The Advancement of Learning* and *Novum Organum*, but he also laid them out in his description of a utopian, scientifically-organized community he called the “New Atlantis.”

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1627bacon-atlantis.html>



6. Letter to Galileo, from his daughter Maria Celeste, 1633

It is often difficult to find sources that reveal much about the personal lives and family relationships of early modern people, even those for whom we have a large number of published writings. In the case of Galileo (shown above) historians are lucky, for 124 letters from his grown daughter Maria Celeste have survived. Maria Celeste was a nun, and had lived in a convent since she was thirteen. She rarely saw her father, but loved

him deeply and was aware of all the turmoil surrounding him. The letters formed the core of Dava Sobel's *Galileo's Daughter*, and can be found at:

<http://galileo.rice.edu/fam/daughter.html>

5 November 1633

Most Beloved Lord Father

Were you able to fathom my soul and its longing the way you penetrate the Heavens, Sire, I feel certain you would not complain of me, as you did in your last letter; because you would see and assure yourself how much I should like, if only it were possible, to receive your letters every day and also to send you one every day, esteeming this the greatest satisfaction that I could give to and take from you, until it pleases God that we may once again delight in each other's presence.

I believe nonetheless that from those few lines I wrote you so hurriedly, Sire, you could gather that they were written in the most limited time available, as I had none at all last Saturday when I could render you your proper due; and I do have every good intention (if you will grant me this) of following through with that tribute, because in these lamentations of yours I descry an excess of affection that motivates them, and I glory in it. I did try nevertheless to make good during the vigil of All Saints' Day by sending you a letter via Signor Geri, and because I believe that one has already reached you, I will not reply extensively to the questions you pose in this last one, except to say I have received the packet for Master Ippolito [Francini, another name for Il Tordo the lens-maker], which you had not sent me previously: and as for Geppo, to tell you that, after he brought me the boxes, he did not return to San Casciano, because Il Ninci no longer needed him: he will go back there in any case to see him again one day this coming week.

Good fortune has attended my ardent wish, enabling me to find the ortolans [small songbirds that people ate] that you wanted, Sire, and I am just about to consign the box, with flour inside it, to the boy, commissioning him to go and get them at the game

preserve, which is in the Boboli Gardens, from a bird-keeper of the Grand Duke named Berna or Bernino, from whom I bought them as a favor at one lira the pair, but judging by what Geppo tells me after having seen them yesterday, they are quite beautiful and to buy them from the poulterer would cost as much as two giuli: Signor Rondinelli will then graciously do us the favor of packing them in the box, because the boy would not have time to carry them all the way up here and then back down again once more, but will deliver them straight away to Signor Geri. May you enjoy them happily, Sire, and then tell me whether they were to your liking: there will be 20 as you wished.

I am called to the infirmary, wherefore I cannot say another word except that I send you my love together with the usual regards from the others, and especially Suor Luisa who fares considerably better, God be praised, and may He grant you, Sire, every true consolation.

From San Matteo, the 5th day of November 1633.

Your most affectionate daughter, S. M. Celeste

7. René Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, 1637

Descartes rejected the teachings of ancient authorities, arguing that they could never lead to true knowledge or certainty. He also rejected the skepticism of Montaigne, and argued that we can know something for certain—that we exist as thinking beings. He sets this out in the *Discourse on Method*, which contains his famous phrase, “I think, therefore I am.”

http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~wldciv/world_civ_reader/world_civ_reader_2/descartes.html

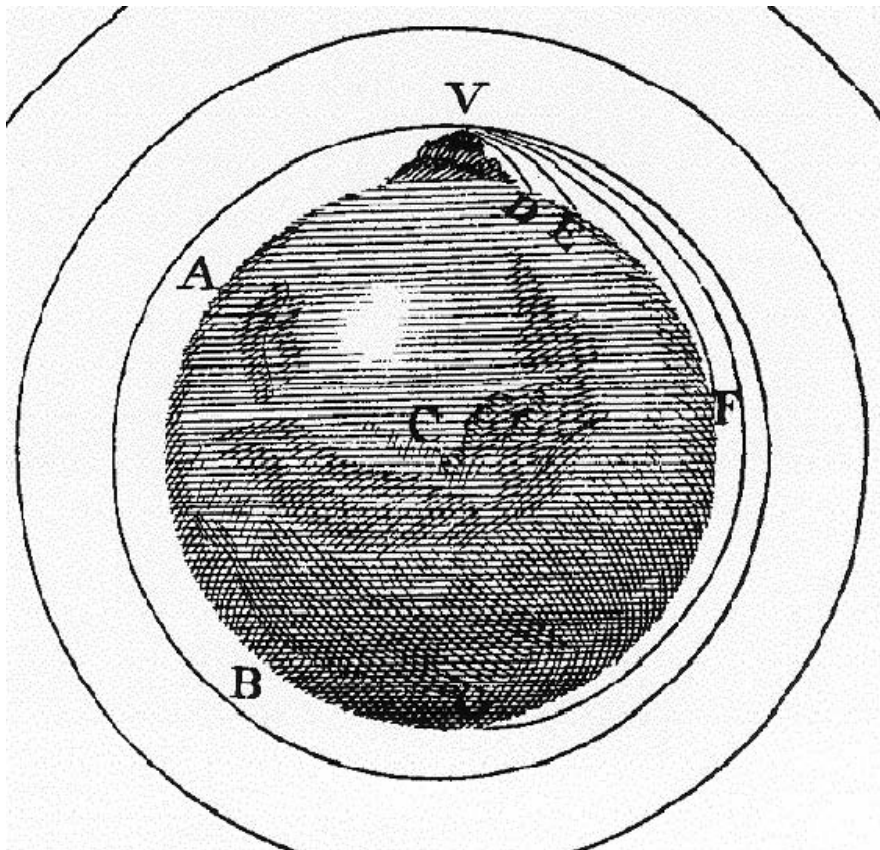


Illustration from the *Principia*

8. Isaac Newton, *Principia*, 1687



Newton's Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy (*Principia*) provided mathematical descriptions of the laws of motion and the operation of gravity, presenting them as universal laws that applied anywhere. Though few people actually understood it all, it solidified his reputation as a genius.

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/newton-princ.html>

Part III, Chapter II

AT MY ALIGHTING I was surrounded by a Crowd of People, but those who stood nearest seemed to be of better Quality. They beheld me with all the Marks and Circumstances of wonder; neither indeed was I much in their Debt; having never till then seen a Race of Mortals so singular in their Shapes, Habits, and Countenances. Their Heads were all reclined either to the Right, or the Left; one of their Eyes turned inward, and the other directly up to the Zenith. Their outward Garments were adorned with the Figures of Suns, Moons, and Stars, interwoven with those of Fiddles, Flutes, Harps, Trumpets, Guittars, Harpsichords, and many more Instruments of Musick, unknown to us in Europe. I observed here and there many in the Habit of Servants, with a blown Bladder fastned like a Flail to the End of a short Stick, which they carried in their Hands. In each Bladder was a small Quantity of dried Pease, or little Pebbles, (as I was afterwards informed.) With these Bladders they now and then flapped the Mouths and Ears of those who stood near them, of which Practice I could not then conceive the Meaning. It seems the Minds of these People are so taken up with intense Speculations, that they neither can speak, nor attend to the Discourses of others, without being rouzed by some external Taction upon the Organs of Speech and Hearing; for which Reason those Persons who are able to afford it always keep a Flapper (the Original is Climenole) in their Family, as one of their Domesticks; nor ever walk abroad or make Visits without him. And the Business of this Officer is, when two or more Persons are in Company, gently to strike with his Bladder the Mouth of him who is to speak, and the right Ear of him or them to whom the Speaker addresses himself. This Flapper is likewise employed diligently to attend his Master in his Walks, and upon Occasion to give him a soft Flap on his Eyes; because he is always so wrapped up in Cogitation, that he is in manifest Danger of falling down every Precipice, and bouncing his Head against every Post; and in the Streets, of jostling others, or being jostled himself into the Kennel.

9. Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, 1726

Not everyone was convinced about the value of science or regarded Newton as close to God. Jonathan Swift wrote of the fictional traveler Gulliver (shown here in the frontispiece from the first edition) who visited a number of distant lands, including Laputa and Lagado, where experimental science is highly valued. Swift's description of the absent-minded inhabitants of Laputa may be based on contemporaries descriptions of Newton, and his description of the experiments going on at the academy of Lagao was based in part on actual proposals being discussed at the Royal Academy. The entire text of *Gulliver's Travels* is at:

<http://www.jaffebros.com/lee/gulliver/contents.html>

It was necessary to give the Reader this Information, without which he would be at the same Loss with me, to understand the Proceedings of these People, as they conducted me up the Stairs, to the Top of the Island, and from thence to the Royal Palace. While we were ascending, they forgot several Times what they were about, and left me to my self, till their Memories were again rouzed by their Flappers; for they appeared altogether unmoved by the Sight of my foreign Habit and Countenance, and by the Shouts of the Vulgar, whose Thoughts and Minds were more disengaged.

Part III, Chapter V

The first Man I saw was of a meager Aspect, with sooty Hands and Face, his Hair and Beard long, ragged and singed in several Places. His Cloathes, Shirt, and Skin were all of the same Colour. He had been Eight Years upon a Project for extracting Sun-Beams out of Cucumbers, which were to be put into Vials hermetically sealed, and let out to warm the Air in raw inclement Summers. He told me he did not doubt in Eight Years more he should be able to supply the Governors Gardens with Sun-shine at a reasonable Rate;

but he complained that his stock was low, and intreated me to give him something as an Encouragement to Ingenuity, especially since this had been a very dear Season for Cucumbers. I made him a small Present, for my Lord had furnished me with Money on Purpose, because he knew their Practice of begging from all who go to see them.

I went into another Chamber, but was ready to hasten back, being almost overcome with a horrible Stink. My Conductor pressed me forward, conjuring me in a Whisper to give no Offence, which would be highly resented; and therefore I durst not so much as stop my Nose. The Projector of this Cell was the most ancient Student of the Academy. His Face and Beard were of a pale Yellow; his Hands and Clothes daubed over with Filth. When I was presented to him, he gave me a close Embrace (a Compliment I could well have excused.) His Employment from his first coming into the Academy, was an Operation to reduce human Excrement to its original Food, by separating the several Parts, removing the Tincture which it receives from the Gall, making the Odour exhale, and scumming off the Saliva. He had a weekly Allowance from the Society, of a Vessel filled with human Ordure about the Bigness of a Bristol Barrel.

I saw another at work to calcine Ice into Gunpowder; who likewise shewed me a Treatise he had written concerning the Malleability of Fire, which he intended to publish.

There was a most ingenious Architect who had contrived a new Method for building Houses, by beginning at the Roof, and working downwards to the Foundation; which he justified to me by the like Practice of those two prudent Insects, the Bee and the Spider.

There was a Man born blind, who had several Apprentices in his own Condition: Their Employment was to mix Colours for Painters, which their Master taught them to distinguish by feeling and smelling. It was indeed my

Misfortune to find them at that Time not very perfect in their Lessons; and the Professor himself happened to be generally mistaken: This Artist is much encouraged and esteemed by the whole Fraternity.

In another Apartment I was highly pleased with a Projector, who had found a Device of plowing the Ground with Hogs, to save the Charges of Plows, Cattle, and Labour. The Method in this: In an Acre of Ground you bury at six Inches Distance, and eight deep, a Quantity of Acorns, Dates, Chestnuts, and other Maste or Vegetables whereof these Animals are fondest; then you drive six Hundred or more of them into the Field, where in a few Days they will root up the whole Ground in search of their Food, and make it fit for sowing, at the same time manuring it with their Dung. It is true, upon Experiment they found the Charge and Trouble very great, and they had little or no Crop. However, it is not doubted that this Invention may be capable of great Improvement.

10. Four Key Works on the Proper Basis of Government

Seventeenth and eighteenth-century political theorists debated the proper bases of government. For Robert Filmer, the divine right of kings was based on patriarchal power given to Adam by God. For Thomas Hobbes, legitimate political power was based on an original contract in which monarchs had been given authority in return for order. For John Locke, individuals had formed contracts with governments to assure better protection for their property. For Jean-Jacques Rousseau, private property had increased inequality and the wealthy had forced the less powerful to agree to political structures that reinforced their dominance; the only way out was a “social contract” in which individuals agreed to submit to the “general will of the people.”

Filmer’s Patriarcha can be found at:

<http://www.constitution.org/eng/patriarcha.htm>

Hobbes’ Leviathan at:

<http://www.constitution.org/th/leviatha.htm>

Locke’s Second Treatise on Government at:

<http://www.constitution.org/jl/2ndtreat.htm>

Rousseau’s Social Contract at:

<http://www.constitution.org/jjr/socon.htm>

11. Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, 1748

While Filmer, Hobbes, and Locke arrived at their ideas by reading works within the western philosophical tradition, Baron de Montesquieu studied governments around the world in an effort to deduce general laws of politics that would correspond to the general laws of the natural world that Newton and others were positing. He argued that climate was influential on government and legal systems, and that governments in which the legislative, executive, and judicial powers were separated and balanced was the best. *The Spirit of the Laws* was extremely influential on both sides of the Atlantic. Brief excerpts with some of Montesquieu's key ideas are at:

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/montesquieu-spirit.html>

The entire text can be found at:

<http://www.constitution.org/cm/sol.txt>



Frontispiece from a play based on Aphra Behn's novel, in which Oroonoko kills his lover Imoinda, with her agreement, rather than let her live under slavery. In Behn's novel Imoinda is African; the playwright changed her to a white woman.

12. Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko, or the history of the Royal Slave*, 1688

Aphra Behn was an English playwright, poet, and novelist. Her novel *Oroonoko* tells the story of an African prince taken as a slave to South America; Behn herself had lived in the Dutch colony of Surinam. In this section, from the opening of the book, she describes the natives of this area as in many ways "noble savages," and then goes on to describe the African prince Oroonoko in even more positive terms, though her explanations of where he got his noble qualities reveal quite typical European attitudes toward Africans. The entire text can be found at:

<http://etext.library.adelaide.edu.au/b/behn/aphra/b42o/>

I do not pretend, in giving you the history of this Royal Slave, to entertain my reader with adventures of a feigned hero, whose life and fortunes fancy may manage at the poet's pleasure; nor in relating the truth, design to adorn it with any accidents but such as arrived in earnest to him: and it shall come simply into the world, recommended by its own proper merits

and natural intrigues; there being enough of reality to support it, and to render it diverting, without the addition of invention.

I was myself an eye-witness to a great part of what you will find here set down; and what I could not be witness of, I received from the mouth of the chief actor in this history, the hero himself, who gave us the whole transactions of his youth: and though I shall omit, for brevity's sake, a thousand little accidents of his life, which, however pleasant to us, where history was scarce and adventures very rare, yet might prove tedious and heavy to my reader, in a world where he finds diversions for every minute, new and strange. But we who were perfectly charmed with the character of this great man were curious to gather every circumstance of his life.

The scene of the last part of his adventures lies in a colony in America, called Surinam, in the West Indies. ..

But before I give you the story of this gallant slave, 'tis fit I tell you the manner of bringing them to these new colonies; those they make use of there not being natives of the place: for those we live with in perfect amity, without daring to command 'em; but, on the contrary, caress 'em with all the brotherly and friendly affection in the world; trading with them for their fish, venison, buffalo's skins, and little rarities; as marmosets, a sort of monkey, as big as a rat or weasel, but of marvelous and delicate shape, having face and hands like a human creature; and couseries, a little beast in the form and fashion of a lion, as big as a kitten, but so exactly made in all parts like that noble beast that it is it in miniature. Then for little parakatoes, great parrots, mackaws, and a thousand other birds and beasts of wonderful and surprising forms, shapes, and colors. For skins of prodigious snakes, of which there are some threescore yards in length; as is the skin of one that may be seen at his Majesty's Antiquary's; where are also some rare flies, of amazing forms and colors, presented to 'em by

myself; some as big as my fist, some less; and all of various excellencies, such as art cannot imitate. Then we trade for feathers, which they order into all shapes, make themselves little short habits of 'em and glorious wreaths for their heads, necks, arms, and legs, whose tinctures are unconceivable. I had a set of these presented to me, and I gave 'em to the King's Theater, and it was the dress of the Indian Queen, infinitely admired by persons of quality; and was unimitable. Besides these, a thousand little knacks and rarities in nature; and some of art, as their baskets, weapons, aprons, etc. We dealt with 'em with beads of all colors, knives, axes, pins, and needles; which they used only as tools to drill holes with in their ears, noses, and lips, where they hang a great many little things; as long beads, bits of tin, brass or silver beat thin, and any shining trinket. The beads they weave into aprons about a quarter of an ell long, and of the same breadth; working them very prettily in flowers of several colors; which apron they wear just before 'em, as Adam and Eve did the fig-leaves; the men wearing a long stripe of linen, which they deal with us for. They thread these beads also on long cotton threads, and make girdles to tie their aprons to, which come twenty times, or more, about the waist, and then cross, like a shoulder-belt, both ways, and round their necks, arms, and legs. This adornment, with their long black hair, and the face painted in little specks or flowers here and there, makes 'em a wonderful figure to behold. Some of the beauties, which indeed are finely shaped, as almost all are, and who have pretty features, are charming and novel; for they have all that is called beauty, except the color, which is a reddish yellow; or after a new oiling, which they often use to themselves, they are of the color of a new brick, but smooth, soft, and sleek. They are extreme modest and bashful, very shy, and nice of being touched. And though they are all thus naked, if one lives forever among 'em there is not to be seen an undecent action, or glance: and being continually used to see one another so unadorned, so

like our first parents before the Fall, it seems as if they had no wishes, there being nothing to heighten curiosity; but all you can see, you see at once, and every moment see; and where there is no novelty, there can be no curiosity. Not but I have seen a handsome young Indian dying for love of a very beautiful young Indian maid; but all his courtship was to fold his arms, pursue her with his eyes, and sighs were all his language: while she, as if no such lover were present, or rather as if she desired none such, carefully guarded her eyes from beholding him; and never approached him but she looked down with all the blushing modesty I have seen in the most severe and cautious of our world. And these people represented to me an absolute idea of the first state of innocence, before man knew how to sin. And 'tis most evident and plain that simple Nature is the most harmless, inoffensive, and virtuous mistress. 'Tis she alone, if she were permitted, that better instructs the world than all the inventions of man. Religion would here but destroy that tranquillity they possess by ignorance; and laws would but teach 'em to know offense, of which now they have no notion. They once made mourning and fasting for the death of the English Governor, who had given his hand to come on such a day to 'em, and neither came nor sent; believing, when a man's word was past, nothing but death could or should prevent his keeping it: and when they saw he was not dead, they asked him what name they had for a man who promised a thing he did not do. The Governor told them, such a man was a liar, which was a word of infamy to a gentleman. Then one of 'em replied, "Governor, you are a liar, and guilty of that infamy." They have a native justice, which knows no fraud; and they understand no vice, or cunning, but when they are taught by the white men. They have plurality of wives; which, when they grow old, serve those that succeed 'em, who are young, but with a servitude easy and respected; and unless they take slaves in war, they have no other attendants.

With these people, as I said, we live in perfect tranquillity and good understanding, as it behoves us to do; they knowing all the places where to seek the best food of the country, and the means of getting it; and for very small and unvaluable trifles, supply us with that 'tis impossible for us to get: for they do not only in the woods, and over the savannahs, in hunting, supply the parts of hounds, by swiftly scouring through those almost impassable places, and by the mere activity of their feet run down the nimblest deer and other eatable beasts; but in the water, one would think they were gods of the rivers, or fellow-citizens of the deep; so rare an art they have in swimming, diving, and almost living in water; by which they command the less swift inhabitants of the floods. And then for shooting, what they cannot take, or reach with their hands, they do with arrows; and have so admirable an aim that they will split almost an hair, and at any distance that an arrow can reach: they will shoot down oranges and other fruit, and only touch the stalk with the dart's point, that they may not hurt the fruit. So that they being on all occasions very useful to us, we find it absolutely necessary to caress 'em as friends, and not to treat 'em as slaves, nor dare we do other, their numbers so far surpassing ours in that continent.

Those then whom we make use of to work in our plantations of sugar are negroes, black slaves altogether, who are transported thither in this manner.

Those who want slaves make a bargain with a master or a captain of a ship, and contract to pay him so much apiece, a matter of twenty pound a head, for as many as he agrees for, and to pay for 'em when they shall be delivered on such a plantation: so that when there arrives a ship laden with slaves, they who have so contracted go aboard, and receive their number by lot; and perhaps in one lot that may be for ten, there may happen to be

three or four men, the rest women and children. Or be there more or less of either sex, you are obliged to be contented with your lot.

Coramantien, a country of blacks so called, was one of those places in which they found the most advantageous trading for these slaves, and thither most of our great traders in that merchandise traffic; for that nation is very warlike and brave: and having a continual campaign, being always in hostility with one neighboring prince or other, they had the fortune to take a great many captives: for all they took in battle were sold as slaves; at least those common men who could not ransom themselves. Of these slaves so taken, the general only has all the profit; and of these generals our captains and masters of ships buy all their freights.

The King of Coramantien was himself a man of an hundred and odd years old, and had no son, though he had many beautiful black wives: for most certainly there are beauties that can charm of that color. In his younger years he had had many gallant men to his sons, thirteen of whom died in battle, conquering when they fell; and he had only left him for his successor one grandchild, son to one of these dead victors, who, as soon as he could bear a bow in his hand, and a quiver at his back, was sent into the field to be trained up by one of the oldest generals to war; where, from his natural inclination to arms, and the occasions given him, with the good conduct of the old general, he became, at the age of seventeen, one of the most expert captains and bravest soldiers that ever saw the field of Mars: so that he was adored as the wonder of all that world, and the darling of the soldiers. Besides, he was adorned with a native beauty, so transcending all those of his gloomy race that he struck an awe and reverence even into those that knew not his quality; as he did into me, who beheld him with surprise and wonder, when afterwards he arrived in our world.

He had scarce arrived at his seventeenth year, when, fighting by his side, the general was killed with an arrow in his eye, which the Prince Oroonoko (for so was this gallant Moor called) very narrowly avoided; nor had he, if the general who saw the arrow shot, and perceiving it aimed at the prince, had not bowed his head between, on purpose to receive it in his own body, rather than it should touch that of the prince, and so saved him.

'Twas then, afflicted as Oroonoko was, that he was proclaimed general in the old man's place: and then it was, at the finishing of that war, which had continued for two years, that the prince came to court, where he had hardly been a month together, from the time of his fifth year to that of seventeen; and 'twas amazing to imagine where it was he learned so much humanity: or, to give his accomplishments a juster name, where 'twas he got that real greatness of soul, those refined notions of true honor, that absolute generosity, and that softness that was capable of the highest passions of love and gallantry, whose objects were almost continually fighting men, or those mangled or dead, who heard no sounds but those of war and groans. Some part of it we may attribute to the care of a Frenchman of wit and learning, who, finding it turn to very good account to be a sort of royal tutor to this young black, and perceiving him very ready, apt, and quick of apprehension, took a great pleasure to teach him morals, language, and science; and was for it extremely beloved and valued by him. Another reason was, he loved when he came from war, to see all the English gentlemen that traded thither; and did not only learn their language, but that of the Spaniard also, with whom he traded afterwards for slaves.

I have often seen and conversed with this great man, and been a witness to many of his mighty actions; and do assure my reader, the most illustrious courts could not have produced a braver man, both for greatness of

courage and mind, a judgment more solid, a wit more quick, and a conversation more sweet and diverting. He knew almost as much as if he had read much: he had heard of and admired the Romans: he had heard of the late Civil Wars in England, and the deplorable death of our great monarch; and would discourse of it with all the sense and abhorrence of the injustice imaginable. He had an extreme good and graceful mien, and all the civility of a well-bred great man. He had nothing of barbarity in his nature, but in all points addressed himself as if his education had been in some European court.

This great and just character of Oroonoko gave me an extreme curiosity to see him, especially when I knew he spoke French and English, and that I could talk with him. But though I had heard so much of him, I was as greatly surprised when I saw him as if I had heard nothing of him; so beyond all report I found him. He came into the room, and addressed himself to me and some other women with the best grace in the world. He was pretty tall, but of a shape the most exact that can be fancied: the most famous statuary could not form the figure of a man more admirably turned from head to foot. His face was not of that brown rusty black which most of that nation are, but of perfect ebony, or polished jet. His eyes were the most awful that could be seen, and very piercing; the white of 'em being like snow, as were his teeth. His nose was rising and Roman, instead of African and flat. His mouth the finest shaped that could be seen; far from those great turned lips which are so natural to the rest of the negroes. The whole proportion and air of his face was so nobly and exactly formed that, bating his color, there could be nothing in nature more beautiful, agreeable, and handsome. There was no one grace wanting that bears the standard of true beauty. His hair came down to his shoulders, by the aids of art, which was by pulling it out with a quill, and keeping it combed; of which he took particular care. Nor did the perfections of his mind come short of those of

his person; for his discourse was admirable upon almost any subject: and whoever had heard him speak would have been convinced of their errors, that all fine wit is confined to the white men, especially to those of Christendom; and would have confessed that Oroonoko was as capable even of reigning well, and of governing as wisely, had as great a soul, as politic maxims, and was as sensible of power, as any prince civilized in the most refined schools of humanity and learning, or the most illustrious courts.



Illustration from an early edition of Pamela

13. Samuel Richardson, *Pamela or Virtue Rewarded* (1740)

Richardson's wildly popular novel about a virtuous young serving girl who successfully withstands the attempts of the son of her employer to seduce and rape her was written in the form of letters; this is the opening. The entire work can be found at:

<http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/6124>

LETTER I

DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,

I have great trouble, and some comfort, to acquaint you with. The trouble is, that my good lady died of the illness I mentioned to you, and left us all much grieved for the loss of her; for she was a dear good lady, and kind to all us her servants. Much I feared, that as I was taken by her ladyship to wait upon her person, I should be quite destitute again, and forced to return to you and my poor mother, who have enough to do to maintain yourselves; and, as my lady's goodness had put me to write and cast accounts, and made me a little expert at my needle, and otherwise qualified above my degree, it was not every family that could have found a place that your poor Pamela was fit for: but

God, whose graciousness to us we have so often experienced at a pinch, put it into my good lady's heart, on her death-bed, just an hour before she expired, to recommend to my young master all her servants, one by one; and when it came to my turn to be recommended, (for I was sobbing and crying at her pillow) she could only say, My dear son!--and so broke off a little; and then recovering--Remember my poor Pamela--And these were some of her last words! O how my eyes run--Don't wonder to see the paper so blotted.

Well, but God's will must be done!--And so comes the comfort, that I shall not be obliged to return back to be a clog upon my dear parents! For my master said, I will take care of you all, my good maidens; and for you, Pamela, (and took me by the hand; yes, he took my hand before them all,) for my dear mother's sake, I will be a friend to you, and you shall take care of my linen. God bless him! and pray with me, my dear father and mother, for a blessing upon him, for he has given mourning and a year's wages to all my lady's servants; and I having no wages as yet, my lady having said she should do for me as I deserved, ordered the housekeeper to give me mourning with the rest; and gave me with his own hand four golden guineas, and some silver, which were in my old lady's pocket when she died; and said, if I was a good girl, and faithful and diligent, he would be a friend to me, for his mother's sake. And so I send you these four guineas for your comfort; for Providence will not let me want: And so you may pay some old debt with part, and keep the other part to comfort you both. If I get more, I am sure it is my duty, and it shall be my care, to love and cherish you both; for you have loved and cherished me, when I could do nothing for myself. I send them by John, our footman, who goes your way: but he does not know what he carries; because I seal them up in one of the little pill-boxes, which my lady had, wrapt close in paper, that they mayn't chink; and be sure don't open it before him. I know, dear father and mother, I must give you both grief and pleasure; and so I will only say, Pray for your Pamela; who will ever be Your most dutiful DAUGHTER.

I have been scared out of my senses; for just now, as I was folding up this letter in my late lady's dressing-room, in comes my young master! Good sirs! how was I frightened! I went to hide the letter in my bosom; and he, seeing me tremble, said, smiling, To whom have you been writing, Pamela?--I said, in my confusion, Pray your honour forgive me!--Only to my father and mother. He said, Well then, let me see how you are come on in your writing! O how ashamed I was!--He took it, without saying more, and read it quite through, and then gave it me again;--and I said, Pray your honour forgive me!--Yet I know not for what: for he was always dutiful to his parents; and why should he be angry that I was so to mine? And indeed he was not angry; for he took me by the hand, and said, You are a good girl, Pamela, to be kind to your aged father and mother. I am not angry with you for writing such innocent matters as these: though you ought to be wary what tales you send out of a family.--Be faithful and diligent; and do as you should do, and I like you the better for this. And then he said, Why, Pamela, you write a very pretty hand, and spell tolerably too. I see my good mother's care in your learning has not been thrown away upon you. She used to say you loved reading; you may look into any of her books, to improve yourself, so you take care of them. To be sure I did nothing but courtesy and cry, and was all in confusion, at his goodness. Indeed he is the best of gentlemen, I think! But I am making another long letter: So will only add to it, that I shall ever be Your dutiful daughter,

PAMELA ANDREWS.

14. Artemisia Gentileschi, *Letter to Her Patron Don Antonio Ruffo*, 1649

Though it was difficult for women to get artistic training, a few were able to learn from their fathers, and a very few became widely known for their skill. Artemisia Gentileschi was one of the most prolific female painters of the seventeenth century. She painted many mythological and biblical scenes involving women, including numerous depictions of the Old Testament heroine Judith, who cut off the head of the tyrant Holofernes during his war with the Israelites. Here she is writing to one of her patrons.

My Most Illustrious Sir,

I prefer not to discuss our business in this letter in case that gentleman [the bearer of this letter] will read it. With regard to your request that I reduce the price of the paintings, I will tell Your Most Illustrious Lordship that I can take a little from the amount that I asked, but the price must not be less than four hundred ducats, and you must send me a deposit as all other gentlemen do. However, I can tell you for certain that the higher the price, the harder I will strive to make a painting that will please Your Most Illustrious Lordship and that will conform to my taste and yours. With regard to the painting which I have already finished for Your Most Illustrious Lordship, I cannot give it to you for less than I asked, as I have already overextended myself to give the lowest price. I swear, as your servant, that I would not have given it even to my father for the price that I gave you. Don Antonio, my Lord, I beg you, for God's sake, not to reduce the price because I am sure that when you see it, you will say that I was not presumptuous. Your nephew, the Duke, thinks that I must have great affection for you to charge you such a price. I only wish to remind you that there are eight [figures], two dogs and landscape and water. Your Most Illustrious Lordship will understand that the expense for models is staggering.

I am going to say no more except what I have in my mind, that I think Your Most Illustrious Lordship will not suffer any loss with me and that you will find the spirit of Caesar in the soul of a woman.

And thus I most humbly bow to you.

Your Most Illustrious Lordship's most humble servant Artemisia

15. Johann Sebastian Bach, *The Well-Tempered Clavier*

Johann Sebastian Bach is generally considered the greatest baroque composer, writing hundreds of complex works. Many of these are for organ, on which he was a virtuoso performer, and others are for different keyboard instruments, including a series of short pieces for the piano that were collected after he died and issued as the *Well-tempered Clavier*. Mp3 files for all of the pieces may be found at:

<http://www.pianosociety.com/index.php?id=98>



16. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Various pieces

Mozart was a child prodigy whose first music was composed before he was ten. He composed in a huge number of genres, including opera, symphonies, concertos, masses, and quartets. A brief sample of his range, including piano music, string quartets, vocal compositions, and triosonatas, can be found in Mp3 files at:

<http://www.studio-mozart.com/mozart/>