

flourishing: and so far was he from taking any care to multiply his people, that he caused three thousand of them to be put to death in one day: we must therefore admire the influence of Divine Providence in him, and examine what is said concerning the Virtue and Prudence of the others] [*d*].

I confess ingenuously and without prejudice, that in general it would require great genius, courage, and address to equal the actions of such men as Theseus, Cyrus, Romulus, and Mahomet: yet I cannot tell whether they deserve the epithet of *Virtuous*. Valour and address are equally common to Highwaymen and Conquerors. The only difference betwixt them is, that the Conqueror is an illustrious Robber, and the Highwayman an obscure Thief: one receives oblations of incense and crowns of laurel, the other, a halter as a reward for his villainies [*e*]. [Whoever is ambitious of trampling his equals under foot, without doubt is an unjust and blood-thirsty man. The Chiefs of the Fanatics amongst the Cevennois pretended to be inspired by the Holy Ghost, and caused numbers to be massacred, who, they said, were condemned to die by the *Spirit*: yet those wretches, who defied both God and man in the fastnesses of their Mountains, were very brave and would have been looked upon as more than men in the days of Fohi [*f*] and Zoroaster [*g*]. In times when mankind were little better than Savages, a Knight errant, an Orlando Furioso [*h*], a John of Leyden, would have been regarded as an Hercules or Osiris [*i*]: but at present an Hercules or an Osiris would not be able to distinguish themselves in any considerable degree] [*k*].

[*d*] What is included betwixt the two Crotches above, runs thus in the first edition; “ Moise etoit d’ailleurs si peu habile, (a raisonner humainement) qu’ il conduisit le peuple Juif pendant quarante annees par un chemin qu’ ils auroient tres commodement fait en six semaines: il avoit tres peu profite des lumieres des Egiptiens, & il etoit en ce sens-la beaucoup inferieur a Romulus, & a Thesee, & a ces Heros. Si Moise etoit inspire de Dieu, comme il se voit sans doute, on ne peut le regarder que comme l’organe aveugle de la toute-puissance Divine; & le conducteur des Juifs etoit en ce sens bien inferieur, comme homme, au fondateur de l’Empire Romain, au Monarque Persan, & aux Heros qui faisoient par leur propre valeur & par leurs propres forces de plus grandes actions que l’autre n’en faisoit avec l’assistance immediate de Dieu.

[*e*] Ille cruce[m] sceleris pretium tulit, hic diadema.

Juvenal.

[*f*] The first King of China.

[*g*] King of the Bactrians, in the time of Ninus, by whom he was vanquished. *Justin*, lib. i. cap. i.

[*h*] The Hero of Ariosto’s Epic Poem.

[*i*] A Conqueror, and Law-giver of the Egyptians, who was deified after his death.

[*k*] What is included in the two Crochets above, was not in the first edition, which runs thus, “ Il est vrai que toutes les fois que l’on voudra introduire des novautez dans