

Chapter 1

King Affuerus celebrateth a great banquet to shew his glorie, 10. calleth quene Vafthi therto. Who refusing to come, is by aduife of his counfel depofed.

In the daies of Affuerus, who reigned from India vnto Æthiopia ouer an hundred twentie feuen prouinces: ² when he fate in the throne of his kingdō, the citie Sufā was in the begynning of his kingdom. ³ In the third yeare therfore of his empyre he made a great feaft to al the princes, and to his feruantes, to the moft valiant of the Perfians, and the nobles of the Medes, and the rulers of the prouinces in his fight, ⁴ that he might shew the riches of the glorie of his kingdom, and the greatnes, & vaunting of his might, a great time, to witte, an hundred & foure fcore dayes. ⁵ And when the daies of the feaft were accomplifhed, he inuited al people, that was found in Sufan, from the greateft to the leaft: and commanded feuen daies a feaft to be prepared in the entrance of the garden, and of the wood, which was planted with royal garnifhing and with hand. ⁶ And there hong on euerie fide hangings of skie colour, and grene, and hyacinthine colour, held vp with cordes of filke, and of purple, which were put into rings of yuorie, and were held vp with marble pillers. Beddes alfo of gold and filuer, were placed in order vpon the floore paued with the emerauld, and the touch ftone: which paynting adorned with meruelous varietie. ⁷ And they that were inuited, dranke in golden cuppes, and the meates were brought in change of veffels. Wine alfo plenteous and the beft was fet downe, as was worthie of a kings magnifence. ⁸ ^a)Neither was there that compelled them to drinke that would not, but as the king had appointed, making ech of his princes ouerfeer of euerie table, that euerie man might take what he would.

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^a Modestie and temperance amongft heathen people condemne Christianes that vrge men to drinke immoderatly, and fo caufe them to be drunke. *S. Au. Ser. 231. 232. de tempore.*

⁹ Vafthi alfo the queene made a feaft for the wemen in the palace, where king Affuerus had accuftomed to re-mayne. ¹⁰ Therefore the feuenth day, when the king was merier, and after very much drinking was wel warmed with wine, he commanded Maumam, and Bazatha, and Harbona, and Bagatha, and Abgatha, and Zethar, and Charchas, the feuen eunuches, that miniftred in his fight, ¹¹ that they fhould bring in queene Vafthi before the king, the crowne fet vpon her head, that he might fhew her beautie to al the peoples and princes: for fhe was exceding beautiful. ¹² Who refused, and contemned to come at the kings commandment, which he had commanded by the eunuches. Wherupon the king being wrath, and chaffed with ^a)exceding furie, ¹³ asked the wifemen, which after the manner of a king were alwayes prefent with him, and he did al thinges by their confel, which knew the lawes, and rightes of the elders: ¹⁴ (and the chiefe and neareft him were, Charfena, and Sethar, and Admatha, and Tharfis, and Mares, and Marfana, and Mamuchan, feuen dukes of the Perfians, and of the Medes, which faw the face of the king, and were wont to fit firft after him) ¹⁵ to what fentence Vafthi the queene fhould be fubiect, that would not do Affuerus the kings commandment, which he had commanded by the eunuches. ¹⁶ And Mamuchan answered, the king hearing, and the princes: ^b)Queene Vafthi hath not only hurt the king, but alfo al peoples, and princes, that are in al the prouinces of king Affuerus. ¹⁷ For the word of the queene wil goe forth to al wemen, that they wil contemne their

^a The end of immoderate feafting is commonly browling. Here the king became furious, and the queene was diuorfed from him.

^b Brentius approueth the fentence of this parafite, but Iofephus *li. 11. c. 6.* Macrobius *li. 7. c. 1. Saturn.* S. Ierome *ad Ruflic.* and S. Ambrofe *l. de Elia c. 14.* iudge the queenes refufal lawful, and agreeable to the Perfians lawes, which prohibited married wemē to come in fight of other men in great affembles: neither had the king iuft caufe to break that law, for pleafing his phanfie in his drunken humour. *v. 10.* Luther alfo wrefteth this example in fauoure of adulterie. *par. 2. de diuortio. folio 177. Editionis vvitember Ano. 1553.*

husbands, and wil fay: King Affuerus commanded that the queene Vafthi fhould come in to him, and fhe would not. ¹⁸ And by this example al the wiues of the princes of the Perfians and the Medes, wil little efteeme the commandmentes of their husbandes, wherfore the kings indignation is iuft. ¹⁹ If it please thee, let an edict goe forth from thy face, and let it be written according to the law of the Perfians and of Medes, which is not lawfull to be tranfgreffed, that Vafthi come in no more to the king, but an other, that is better then fhe, take her kingdome. ²⁰ And let this be publifhed into al the empire of thy prouinces (which is moft large) and let al the wiues, as wel of the greater as of the leffer geue honour to their husbandes. ²¹ His counfel pleased the king, and the princes: and the king did according to the counfel of Mamuchan, ²² and he fent letters to al the prouinces of his kingdome, as euerie nation could heare and reade, in diuers languages and characters, that the husbandes fhould be princes and maifters in their houfes: and that this fhould be publifhed through al peoples.