

14 9. 1767.

A M. Chardon

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Monsieur

Il paraît que le conseil cherche bien plus à —  
favoriser le commerce et la population du —  
royaume qu'à persécuter des idiots qui aiment le —  
prêche et qui ne peuvent plus nuire. Dans ces —  
circonstances favorables je prends la liberté de rapeller —  
à votre souvenir l'affaire des Sirven et d'implorer votre —  
protection et votre justice pour cette famille —  
infortunée. on dit que vous pourrez rapporter cette —  
affaire devant le Roi. ce sera, Monsieur, une —  
nouvelle preuve qu'il aura de votre capacité et de —  
votre humanité. il s'agit d'une famille entière qui —  
avait un bien honnête, et qui se voit flétrie, —  
réduite à la mendicité et errante en vertu d'une —  
sentence absurde d'un juge de village.

Il n'y a pas longtems, Monsieur, qu'on a imprimé

à Toulouse par ordre du parlement, une  
justification de l'affreux jugement rendu contre  
les Calas. cette piece soutient fortement  
l'incompétence de Messieurs des requêtes, et la  
nullité de leur arrêt. jugez comme la pauvre  
famille Sirey serait traitée par ce parlement  
si elle y étoit renvoyée après avoir demandé  
justice au conseil. vous êtes son unique appui, je  
partage son affliction et sa reconnaissance.  
J'ai l'honneur d'être avec beaucoup de respect

Monsieur

Votre très humble et très  
obéissant serviteur Voltaire

14. 9. 1767  
à Ferney

VOLTAIRE, Francois Marie Arouet de. Celebrated French  
Philosopher, Historian, Dramatist and Man of Letters.  
L.S. 2pp., 4to. Ferney, Nov. 14, 1767. To M. Chardon.

\$45.

A SUPERB LETTER, written by Voltaire from his country estate at Ferney on the shores of Lake Geneva, and referring to the celebrated cases of Jean Calas and Pierre Paul Sirven. Voltaire's indefatigable efforts in behalf of the victims in these two scandalous trials, the former of which terminated in a judicial murder, is an honor to the memory of the Squire of Ferney. This splendid letter in which he appeals to his correspondent to bring the matter to the attention of the king, Louis XV, reads in part, translated:

" . . . In these favorable circumstances I take the liberty of recalling to your to your memory the Sirven case, and to beg your protection and your justice for that unfortunate family. I am given to understand that you are in a position to lay the matter before the king. That, Sir, will be a new proof that he will have of your ability and your humanity.

. . . It is not long since, Sir, that there was printed at Toulouse, by order of the parlement, a vindication of the frightful sentence rendered against the Calas family. That publication strongly bears out the incompetence of the gentlemen petitioners and the nullity of their decision. Judge for yourself how the poor Sirven family will be treated by this parlement if it is sent back after having asked justice from the council." Etc., etc.

14 Sept 1767  
à Ferney

to Mr. Chardon.

Sir,

It seems that the Council is much more seeking to favour trade and the population of the kingdom than persecute idiots who like preaching and who cannot harm anyone. In these favorable circumstances, I take the liberty to remind you the "Sirvens' Case" and to beg your protection and your fair justice for this - unlucky family - One says that you can talk about this case to the king. It will be, Sir, another proof for the king of your ability and humanity. The matter is of a whole family who owned an honest landed property and who sees herself collapsing, ~~she~~ is driven to mendicity and wandering by virtue of an absurd verdict of a village judge.

It was not long, Sir, since in Toulouse and by the parliament order a justification of the awful judgment against the Calas was printed. This case strongly supports the incompetence of those Sirs of the Requests and the nullity of their verdicts. Imagine how this poor family is going to be treated by this parliament if she were to be sent back after having asked justice to the council.

You are her only support, I share her affliction and her gratitude.

I have the honor to be, with great respect,  
your humble and very obedient servant

Voltaire