

Euler to Wettstein  
Berlin, 29 August 1752  
Letter 277 (2778)

[...] After having received the 45 ecus 9 gr. from Mr. Splittgerber that you so kindly remitted, that I must inform you in the best possible way that the sum is too much since the Almanacs are only worth 37 ecus and even though I sent some books to you in return, please send ones of far greater worth like Halley' and Sherwin's tables, I fear that you have made a mistake in your calculations, therefore I implore you to review your accounts and to reduce the amount that you overpaid and apply it to the almanacs that you will purchase next year, which I will not fail to send to you as soon as they are printed. I am hoping that this business will grow considerably. Now, since Mr., Vaillant has no risk on the almanacs that he does not sell, he can lower the price which will not fail to help him sell more books. I see that you still date your letters according to the old calendar style, I am assuming that the new style has not yet taken off in England, anyhow the almanacs that I will send will be in the new style as for the ones next year as well.

Mr. Schumacher of Saint Petersburg has just informed me on the Grischow subject that the heirs of the late Dr. Mortimer have only to draw up a note that mentions that Grischow should pay what he owes them to Mr. Schumacher, which will provide me with the payment since this will be the only way in which to pay His Excellency Mr. d'Arnim, I request that you manage to get the young Mortimer to provide you with such a note and then I shall pay Mr. d'Arnim with the money that I receive from Petersburg.

Since you are a friend of Mr. Collinson who will be providing us with the two pounds of Mulberry bush seeds, perhaps he would be willing to gather other seeds of exotics and rare plants, our Academy would be willing to provide him a place among our membership. Since I must tell you that at this time the majority of the beautiful plants that you had the

goodness to send us and which began a good growth period, have died and after having well-examined them it was found that their roots had been damaged by the rigorous cold that they experienced during their trip to us. We would like to repair this damage with the seeds of the same plants and we are hoping that Mr. Collinson will do so at your insistence and since he had occasion to pick up seeds from all over the world. If he would be willing to add all the principal type to the mulberry bush seeds, we would be most grateful.

I received with Mr. Short's book on Mr. Sussmilch's, the Scriptural chronology and two treatises on Medicine. As to the first, I am not sure how to judge the work. It appears to me that he has found too many astronomical details in the Pentateuch, as far as the sun and the moon are concerned. Furthermore, I have noticed that these references do not appear in the Holy writings, because I am sure that neither the periodic solar time, nor those of the moon which are found, do not concur with the truth, especially since I am persuaded that these periodic times diminish. These "hard-heads" (philosophers) would have a field-day it seems to me if these things were actually found in the bible. As for the small treatises on medicine, I have passed them one to some of our principle doctors would appear to be thoroughly satisfied, especially Mr. Eller, first Doctor to the King, who says he knows Mr. Lobb personally and that he considers him one of the best doctors in London.

Mr. Lieberkuhn the doctor has a brother who is a goldsmith and is apparently the one passing as an alchemist at Mr. Collinson's, but no one here understands anything concerning his art of making gold. However there was once a case, a few years ago which I remember being there and without doubt the reason for this story. A stranger came often to see him to sell him few small portions of gold, and one day having a pleasant conversation with this man and speaking on a few subjects. He produced a small amount of a powder for gold -plating. Lieberkuhn tried the experiment and was surprised that the quantity of silver that he gilded with such a small amount of the powder. He placed a small amount on to the lead or on to the vif argent and it too became as gold. As he was all excited about this success his brother-in-law came to his house and he confided in him, however the brother-in-law turned around and immediately told a secretary of the King. The stranger became invisible, and Lieberkuhn who was examined on this matter denied everything. It is purportedly true

since I obtained all my information from the brother-in-law. The late Mr. Newton was without a doubt a great chemist, and I have never known a good chemist who was not a great alchemist. It is also a certain fact that the great astronomers were the greatest astrologers and that they made their great discoveries in astronomy so as to better advance their cause in astrology. The Great Kepler was more concerned about his astrological discoveries than the ones that we still admire in astronomy, and it was not so long ago that astrology was in greater fashion in England than astronomy.

As for my small difference concerning the theory of refraction with Mr. Dolland, I still cannot understand why they still wish to oppose my explanation. It is true that I had distanced myself from the theory of the great Newton, but only on a article that Newton did not provide with a proof, but rather supposed for easing the calculations and I am hoping that the diversity which surrounds Mr. Newton, the great man that he was, will not be judged sufficient in order to refute my feelings. It also appears to me to be ill-advised that one should want to detach the question of the eye's construction as a foreign thing, because it is true that if the rules of refraction that we attribute to Newton are provably true it would be entirely impossible to build such a diatropical instrument where the effects of refrangibility of the rays would be destroyed. Therefore as soon as one is obliged to admit that the eyes do not produce any deviation in this way, one is obliged to agree that the said rules are not rigorously true. I would appreciate it if one would deign to weigh all of these arguments that I have spread out to support my argument that unless one simply follows the authority but that they should respond directly to my proofs, I shall make no obstacle in submitting to a decision.

Many compliments from our distinguished president and from Baron de Gorgier but mostly from my whole family.

I have the honor of remaining with the most perfect affections [...]

PS. Please forgive for this ripped sheet. I had only noticed after having finished the letter. I am very familiar with Mr. Bruckner machine to discover the longitude at sea. I did not hesitate to tell him my feelings, but he hopes that they will be more favorably inclined in England than I did since he has always been a bit jealous concerning his pretty discoveries as much for the longitude as the quadrature of the circle.