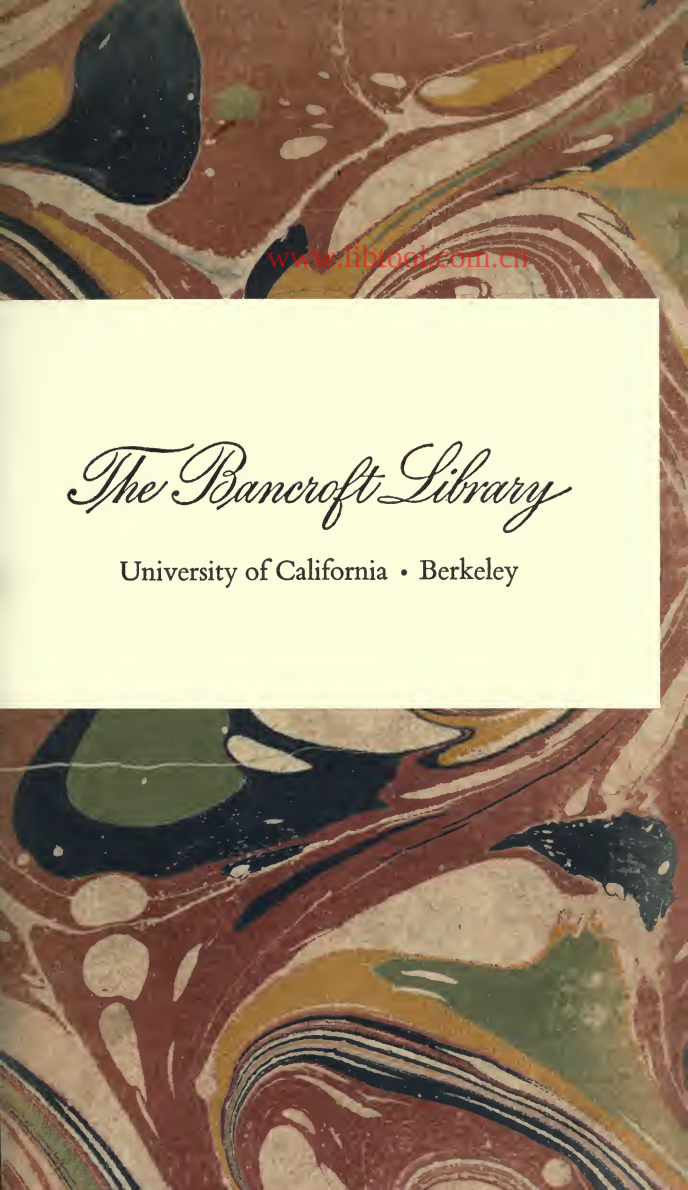


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P H I L O S O P H Y.

B Y M R. D' A L E M B E R T,

MEMBER OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF
INSCRIPTIONS AT PARIS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

L O N D O N:

Printed for C. HENDERSON, at the Royal Exchange;
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AMONG the many trifling productions which are daily imported from our ingenious rivals the French, it is surprising that such an author as Mr. D' Alembert should be almost unknown in our language.

It may be a sufficient encomium upon the character of Mr. D' Alembert, to say, that he was the friend of Montesquieu when living, and the guardian of his reputation when dead: one thing, however, must be acknowledged, that no writer has united the precision of philosophy and the graces of poetry with more success.

The principles laid down in his *Essay on Translation* are new and ingenious; and it were to be wished, that the finest passages of the best classics were selected with the same judgment, which the author has shewn in his *Extracts from Tacitus*.

The pieces in this volume are more adapted to the generality of readers than the rest of the author's compositions, as they chiefly relate to history and the belles lettres.—The *Memoirs of Christina*, queen of Sweden, contain many interesting facts, interspersed with observations that are pertinent, spirited and concise.—The *Account of the Government of Geneva* would not have disgraced the pen of Tacitus or Sallust.—The *Essay upon the Abuse of Criticism on Religion* is perhaps the best and most candid defence of philosophy, and philosophers, that has yet been published.—The *Piece upon Eloquence* discovers to us the true foundation of the sublime, and, by resolving it solely into the genuine sentiments of the heart, strongly conceived and clearly expressed, exposes the futility of those false systems of rhetoric,

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rhetoric, which would reduce eloquence to a mechanical science, when it is the gift of nature alone.—The Alliance between learned Men and the Great shews the true way of living with great men, free from servile adulation or cynical rusticity. None were ever better qualified than Mr. D'Alembert to treat so delicate a subject, as none ever received more distinguished marks of respect without courting them at the expence of his honour or repose: he has given the result of his observations without spleen or vanity; the consciousness of his own merit might have excused the one, and the favours he has received have tempted him to the other. Great talents are the titles and distinctions of Nature, while those conferred by princes are often capricious or venal gratuities for the prostitution of virtue and honour: the former are the inherent unalienable property of their possessors; the latter descend alike to the hero and the knave.

The editor is indebted for the translation of the Essay on Taste to Mr. Gerrard, and for that of the Government of Geneva, and the Memoirs of Christina, to another gentleman.

MISCEL-

M I S C E L L A N I E S.

REMARKS ON TRANSLATION.

THEY are not laws which I am now going to dictate. It would better become those writers among us, who have engaged in translation with most success, to set themselves up for legislators. But they have done better than transcribe rules, they have given examples. Let us learn this art from their works, and not from certain confident decisions which are liable to dispute. Where are the precepts that ought to be preferred to great models? the last always enlighten, the first may prove pernicious. In all kinds of literature, reason has laid down a few rules, caprice has multiplied them, and pedantry has forged shackles, which prejudice reveres, and which talents dare not break through. To which of the fine arts soever we cast our eyes, we see every-where mediocrity dictating laws, and genius meanly stooping to obey them. It is a sovereign imprisoned by his slaves. But if we will not suffer it to be subjugated, neither should we suffer it to range without controul.

2 REMARKS ON TRANSLATION,

This rule, so useful to the progress of learning, should be extended, I think, not only to originals, but to works of imitation; among which may be ranked translations.

In this essay we will attempt to shew the two extremes of rigour and indulgence, which are equally dangerous. We will examine the laws of translation, with respect to the genius of languages; and then with respect to the genius of authors; and lastly, with relation to the principles which may be laid down in this kind of writing.

It is commonly imagined, that translation would be very easy, if all languages were formed upon one another. In that case, I dare say, there would be many indifferent translators, and few excellent. The former would confine themselves servilely to a literal version, and look no farther; the latter would aim at something more, harmony, and ease of style; two qualities which good writers have never neglected, and which form the characteristic of some.

The translator ought to have a nice discernment, to distinguish when a strict fidelity may yield to the graces of diction, without enfeebling the sentiment. One of the great difficulties of writing, and especially of translating, is to know how far energy may be sacrificed to nobleness, correctness to ease, and a rigorous justness to the mechanism of style. Reason is a severe judge, whom we ought to fear. The ear, a haughty one, that must be used with address. It ought not to be laid down as a rule to translate literally, even in passages where the genius of the languages corresponds,

sponds, if the translation would be dry, harsh, and inharmonious.

However, the difference of the characters of languages, scarcely ever permitting a literal version, saves the translator this difficulty, from the necessity it lays him under of sacrificing either agreement to precision, or precision to agreement. But the impossibility of rendering the original word for word, leaves him a dangerous liberty; for, as he cannot give his copy a perfect resemblance, there is reason to fear he will not give it such a one as it may have.

Besides, as the niceties of our own language* require so much study to be well understood, how much more is necessary to unravel the niceties of a foreign language; and what is a translator without this double knowledge?

The translators of the antients think themselves the least interested in this remark. If the niceties of diction escape them in the original, they escape their readers too; and yet, by an unaccountable fate, they are treated with more severity than any other of their profession. A kind of superstition in favour of antiquity disposes us to imagine, that the antients always expressed themselves in the happiest manner. Our ignorance turns to the advantage of the original, and the prejudice of the copy. The translator always appears to come short, not of the idea the original gives us of himself, but of that which we have of him; and, to render the absurdity complete, we admire at the same time that mob of modern La-

* The French language.

4 REMARKS ON TRANSLATION.

tinists, most of whom, being insipid in their own language, impose upon us in a dead one; so true is it with respect to languages, as well as authors, that whatever is dead has a title to our homage.

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But is it true, some perhaps will say, that languages have a different character? We are not ignorant, that some modern literati, who pique themselves upon a philosophical spirit, and who have given proofs of it sometimes, have maintained a contrary opinion; an absurdity which, according to custom, has been charged upon the philosophical spirit, but which it never dictated.

In the hands of a man of genius every language is adapted to all styles. It will be either light or pathetic, neat or sublime, according to the subject and the writer. In this sense languages have not a distinguishing character; but, if they are all equally proper for the same kind of work, they are not equally fit to express the same idea. It is this in which the diversity of their genius consists.

Languages, in consequence of this diversity, must have their mutual advantages over one another. But their advantage, in general, will be great, in proportion to their variety of turns, brevity of construction, licence, and richness. This richness does not consist in a power of expressing the same idea in a barren abundance of synonymous terms, but every shade of an idea in different terms.

Of all languages cultivated by men of letters, the Italian is the most variegated, the most flexible, and
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the most capable of the different forms we may want to give it. It is not less rich in good translations, than excellent in vocal music, which is a species of translation. On the other hand, our language is the most severe in its laws, the most uniform in its construction, the most contracted in its career. Can we wonder then that it should be the rock of translators, as it is also of poets? But what should be the result of these difficulties? To teach us to prize good authors, as they are incapable of giving us mean productions.

If languages have their genius, authors likewise have theirs. The character of the original ought to be transferred to the copy. This is a rule which ought to be the more recommended, as it is practised the least; and as readers are most apt to dispense with the observation of it.

How many translations are there which, like regular beauties, without soul, without physiognomy, represent in the same manner works of the most unequal composition? This is, if I may so express myself, a kind of wrong sense, which does the most harm to a translation. Others are hasty, and amend themselves; but these are endless and incorrigible. The blemishes, which may be removed by cancelling them, do not deserve the name. It is not the faults, it is the coldness, which murders compositions; and they are almost always more blameable for the things which are not there, than for those which the author has inserted.

6 REMARKS ON TRANSLATIONS

It is the more difficult to do full justice to an original in a translation, as it is so easy to mistake his strokes, and to see him only in one point of view. A writer, for example, shall possess two properties in his style, conciseness and vivacity, which are not necessarily united, as brevity is often found with coldness and insipidity. Yet a translator, in imitating him, shall be contented with aiming at conciseness, without being lively; and thus the most beautiful part of the resemblance is wanting.

But, indeed, how should we put on the air of a stranger, if we are not fitted for it by nature. Men of genius ought to be translated only by those who resemble them; and who, while they imitate them, are capable of being their rivals. A painter, of moderate merit in original drawing, may be a good copyist; but for this a servile imitation is all that is necessary. The translator copies with colours which are peculiar to him.

The character of writers is distinguished either by their thoughts, or style, or both. Those who excel in thoughts, lose the least in passing from one language to another. Corneille would be easier translated than Racine; and (what may seem a paradox) Tacitus than Sallust. Sallust, having said every thing, requires a translation that scarce preserves him. Tacitus, leaving much understood, and making his reader think, requires a translation only to lose nothing.

Writers, who join a refinement of ideas with that of style, afford more advantages to a translator, than those whose agreeableness is in their style only. In
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REMARKS ON TRANSLATION. 7

the first case, one may flatter one's self with being able to transfer to the copy the character of the thought; and, consequently, at least part of the spirit of the author. In the second place, if we do not render the diction, we do nothing.

Of the last class of authors, so peculiarly unfavourable for translation, the least stubborn are those whose principal quality is to handle their language elegantly; the most intractable are those whose manner of writing is peculiar to themselves.

The English have translated some of Racine's tragedies well: I doubt whether they would translate, with the same success, Fontaine's fables, the most original work perhaps in the French language; or *Aminte*, a pastoral full of those details of gallantry and agreeable stories, which the Italian language is so well formed to express, and which it must be left in the intire possession of; or, in short, the letters of madam de Sevigne, so frivolous as to their subject, and so seducing by their negligence of style. Some foreigners have mistaken them, not being able to translate them. Indeed nothing cuts short so many difficulties as misapprehension.

It has been asked, whether poets may be translated into verse, especially in our language, which does not admit of blank verse like the English and Italian, and which will not excuse the want of rhyme, either in the translator or the poet. Many of our writers, from a passion for difficulty, or poetry, have pretended, that it is impossible to give a prose version of poets, without disfiguring them, and spoiling their

3 REMARKS ON TRANSLATION.

principal charms, the measure and harmony. It remains to inquire, whether rendering them into verse is not, properly speaking, imitating, and not translating them. The single article of the different harmony of the two languages raises an insurmountable bar against translations in verse. Can it be imagined, that our poetry, with its rhimes, its hemisticks always alike, the uniformity of its course, and, if I durst say it, its monotony, can represent the varied cadence of the Greek and Roman poesy? and yet the difference of harmony is the least obstacle. Ask some of our best poets, who transplanted into our language some of the finest passages in Homer and Virgil, how many times they have been forced to substitute, in the room of ideas they could not render, ideas of equal dignity taken from their own fund, to supply imagery by sentiment; energy of expression, by vivacity of turn; pomp of harmony, by strength of thought? Those fine verses of Virgil upon suicides are well known,

Qui sibi letum

Infantes peperere manu lucemque perosi,
Projecere animas.

They detest the light, and fling away their lives.

The timid genius of our language will not allow this image, though so noble and animating; in the room of which one of our great poets has substituted these pretty verses;

Ils non pu supporter foibles et furieux,
Le fardeau de la vie impose par les dieux.

Furious and weak they sink beneath the weight
Of life's sad burthen by the gods imposed.

Perhaps it would be difficult to decide the merit of these two poets; but it is easy to see, that the French verses are no translation of the Latin. To translate poetry into prose, is to turn a measured air into recitative: To translate it into verse, is to change one measured air into another, which is not inferior to it, yet not the same. The first a good copy, but feeble; the second is a work upon the same subject, rather than a copy. But how shall we be able to do justice to poets who have written in a foreign language? We must learn it.

To bring these reflections to a conclusion. If the greatness of the difficulty constitutes the principal merit, then he who translates has more merit than he who creates.

In men of genius ideas are born without pains, and the expression most adapted to them springs up along with them; to express in our own manner, ideas which are not our own, is almost intirely the work of art, and this art is the more perfect as it is the less discovered; but, let it be ever so well conceal'd, we know that it exists; and for this reason we prefer originals to works of imitation. Nature will not lose her claim upon us. The productions at which she alone presides, are those which

strike us the most. Thus fruits in their natural soil, raised with ordinary culture, and moderate care, are preferred to exotics, which are forced under the same sun with much pains and industry. We may taste the last, but we have recourse always to the first.

However, while we assign to creative writers the first rank, which they deserve, it is but just to place good translators next to them, above those who have wrote perhaps as well as possible without genius. But there is a kind of fatality attached to those arts, which consist in altering the dress of a strange personage. There are those whom we degrade by the most unjust prejudice. There are those to whose merit we do not do sufficient justice, and the translator is certainly among that number.

This is not the only injustice which renders their work so ungrateful, and their number so small; for, though they find sufficient difficulties which they cannot surmount, yet we take a pleasure in rivetting their chains, as if it was for the sake of being a bar to their encouragement, and to our own interest.

The first hardship we impose on them, or rather which they incur themselves, is, to rest content with being the copyists, instead of the rivals, of the authors they translate: Superstitiously devoted to their originals, they look upon it as sacrilege, to dare to embellish even passages that are feeble; they dare not be superiors, and will not be at the pains to succeed.

It is just as if an able engraver, in copying the drawing of a great master, should forbid himself any
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fine and delicate touches to hide its faults, or distinguish its beauties.

Obliged, as the translator is, so often to fall short of his author, ought he not to be above him when he can?

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It may be objected, that such liberty is in danger of degenerating into licentiousness. But, when the original is well chose, the occasions for amendment or embellishment will occur very rarely; if they are frequent, it is not worth translating.

A second obstacle, which translators have made for themselves, is that timidity which stops them, when with courage they dare swerve from their model. This courage consists in risking new expressions to do justice to lively and strong passages in the original. These liberties ought to be used with sobriety, they ought to be necessary; but when does that happen? Is it in all cases where the difficulty of translating arises from the genius of language? Each has its peculiar laws, which ought not to be violated. To speak Latin in French would be a fantastical temerity, instead of a happy boldness. But when there is room to believe, the author has adopted an expression of genius in his own language, then we may seek for a similar one. But what is an expression of genius? It is not a new word dictated by singularity or idleness, but the necessary and exact re-union of some known terms, to render a new idea with energy. This is almost the only innovation with which a translator may be indulged.

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The most indispensable condition of using new expressions is, that they shall give the reader no idea of constraint, though constraint was the occasion of them. In conversing with strangers of great fire, who speak our language with ease and boldness, we find, that they think in their own language, and translate into ours; and we regret, that the singular and forcible terms they make use of are not authorized by custom.

The conversation of strangers (supposing it to be correct) is the image of a good translation. The original ought to speak our language not with that superstitious timidity which is felt for a native tongue, but with that noble liberty which knows how to embellish one language, by borrowing peculiar strokes from another. Thus the translation will have every quality to render it worthy of esteem; that easy and natural air, which is imprinted by the genius of the original, and, at the same time, that taste of the soil which a foreign tincture must give it.

Good translations are the best calculated for enriching language. This is the use I would make of them, which, in my opinion, is more proper, than what is hinted by a famous Satyrist of the last age, who was as passionate an admirer of the antients, as he was a severe, and sometimes unjust censor of the moderns. “The French, says he, want taste, and
 “only the taste of the antients can form it amongst
 “our authors and connoisseurs; and good translations would give that valuable taste to those who
 “are not qualified to read the originals.” If we
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want taste, I know not where it is fled. It is not, at least, the fault of the models in our language, which are inferior to the antients in no respects. To mention only the dead; who will dare to place Sophocles above Corneille, Euripides above Racine, Theophrastus above Bruyere, or Phædrus above Fontaine? Let not our classical library consist solely of translations, nor let us exclude them. They will multiply good models; they will assist us in understanding the character of writers, ages, and people; they will teach us to perceive those shades, which distinguish absolute and universal taste from national.

The third arbitrary law to which translators are subject, is the ridiculous constraint of translating an author from beginning to end. By this means the translator, fatigued and chilled by the weak passages, languishes in the most excellent parts; besides, why should he be put to the torture to give an elegant turn to a false thought, or to be nice upon a common idea? It is not to bring the faults of the antients to light, that we transplant them into our language, but to enrich our learning by what is excellent among them. To translate them by parcels is not to mutilate them, it is to paint them in profile, and to advantage. What entertainment can there be in a translation of that part of the *Æneid*, where the harpies rob the Trojans of their dinner; or of those cold, and sometimes gross pleasantries, which disfigure the harangues of Cicero; or of those passages in an historian, which present nothing interesting to the reader in point of matter or style? Why,

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in short, should we transfer into another language that which has only graces in its own, like the details of agriculture and pastoral life, which are so agreeable in Virgil, and so insipid in all the translations which have been made of them.

Why should not the wise rule of Horace, to neglect what we cannot succeed in, be as applicable to translations as any other kind of writing?

Our learned men would find a considerable advantage, in translating by parcels certain works, (which contain beauties sufficient to make the fortune of a number of writers,) whose authors, if they had as much taste as genius, would eclipse writers of the first rank. What pleasure, for instance, would Seneca and Lucan give thus opened and translated by a masterly hand? Seneca, so excellent to cite, and so tiresome to read successively forward, who turns round the same object with a brilliant rapidity; in this respect different from Cicero, who always keeps advancing, though slowly, to his end. Lucan, the Seneca of poets, so full of masculine and true beauties, but too declamatory, too monotonous, too full of maxims, and too void of images. The only writers who have a title to be translated intirely, are they whose agreeableness consists in their very negligence, such as Plutarch in his lives of illustrious men, where, quitting and resuming his subject every instant, he converses with his reader without tiring him.

I am led by the preceding to another reflection, which, though it has not a direct relation to the present

sent matter, may be useful. The authors we can put into the hands of youth in the course of study are but a small number, and of them it is a still smaller part which we can teach them to enter into and understand; yet www.libtool.com must be promiscuously charged with good, indifferent, and wretched, just as this part happens to turn out; while the true beauties, thanks to the little taste of the generality of masters, are commonly the least noticed. Would it not be infinitely better to select, from the different works of each author, the most excellent passages, and to lay before the reader nothing of the antients, but what deserves to be retained? Thus, they would not only become possessed of their thoughts in general, but the best of them; they would be acquainted with the style and genius of a great number of their writers; in short, they would have the advantage of cultivating their minds, while they formed their taste. Such a collection need not be immensely large, if it was made with choice, and the common term of study would be long enough to render it familiar: We cannot enough recommend it to some able scholar, to undertake this work. He ought, however, to have two qualities rarely united, a profound intimacy with the antients, and a freedom from all superstition in their favour. He ought not to be like that enthusiastic worshipper of Homer, who, having undertook to mark all the fine passages in that great poet, had, in three readings, marked the whole from one end to the other. Could such a man flatter himself, that he knew the true beauties of
Homer,

Homer? or could Homer himself have been pleased with such an admirer?

I return to my subject. The principles of translating laid down here are such as I have followed in rendering different passages of Tacitus. Some of them have already appeared; and as the public relish them, and wish for more, it is to oblige them that I have added a greater number, the fruits of a few moments leisure left me, after six years of painful labour of a different kind. However, I am far from pretending to have extracted all that is remarkable in his works. The prejudices of a translator apart, as he is beyond comparison the greatest historian of antiquity, so he furnishes us with most passages worthy of being selected. Nevertheless, perhaps this will be sufficient to point out the different kind of beauties of which we find models in this incomparable author, who has painted men with so much energy, truth, and address, affecting events in so pathetic a manner, and virtue with so much sentiment; who possessed, in so high a degree, the true eloquence of expressing great things simply; and who may be regarded as one of the best masters of morality, by that sad, but useful knowledge of men, which may be learnt from his works. He is accused, I know, of giving too bad a portrait of human nature, that is, of studying it too well; of being obscure, which means only, that he did not write for the multitude; of having too rapid and concise a style, as if it was not the greatest merit of a writer, to say a great deal in a few words.

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It is impossible to translate a great genius, unless it be with vivacity and enthusiasm; but, if he be also a profound writer, it requires time to study how to render him; besides, in order to avoid all at once the coldness and negligence of some works of taste, it seems necessary to write quick, and to correct slow. Convinced of these principles, I made this essay with rapidity, and I reviewed it afterwards with as much rigor and exactness as I was capable of.

The principal thing to which I applied myself, was to preserve the precision, the nobleness, the brevity of the original, as far as might be permitted for my small talents, (with the feeble assistance of a language so difficult to manage as ours, so ungrateful, so drawling, so equivocal,) to contend with such a writer as Tacitus. In those passages where it was impossible to be as close as the original, I have broken the style to render it more lively, and to supply by that means, though imperfectly, that conciseness I was not capable of attaining.

I have attempted, in short, to render his spirit where I could not render his words. The pieces I have published are retouch'd in some places, and the object of most of the alterations has been, to make the alteration more forcible and concise, without destroying the sense of the original, or giving any hardness and aridity to the style. I have restored the true sense in two or three passages where I was before mistaken. I have sometimes departed from the sense adopted by others, and sometimes from that which has had the sanction of a whole mob of commentators

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and translators; I believe never without good reasons. In general, where the sense appeared to me disputable or doubtful, I have always chose the best, as there is always reason to think that is the author's. Sometimes, where it was impossible to give his full meaning to common readers, without a multitude of words, I have preferred leaving his beauties to the sagacity of the intelligent reader, to annihilating them by a paraphrase. Sometimes, indeed, I have taken the liberty to alter his sense a little, when it seemed to present an image or idea that was puerile; for my just admiration of Tacitus does not blind my eyes to that small number of passages, where he appears to me to fall beneath himself. Such, for example, in my opinion, is that part of the life of Agricola, where Tacitus opposes the redness of Domitian's countenance, to the paleness of the wretches whom he caused to be executed in his presence, where he remarks, that this colour being natural, preserved the face of the emperor from the impression of shame; a trifling and frivolous circumstance, neither worthy of the genius of the historian, nor the hateful and affecting picture he gives of so many innocent victims, and a tyrant who could see them expire.

Whatever be the rest of the plan I have laid down in this translation, I ought not to expect it will be relished by all the world. In this subject, more than any other, each reader has, if I may so speak, his peculiar standard, or, if you will, his prejudices, to which he expects a translator will be conformed. Hence, nothing perhaps is more rare in literature,
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than a translation generally approved. If it be liked on the whole, how many particulars are there which give a handle to criticism?

I should think myself happy in obtaining the suffrage of a small number of men of letters, who, by an intimate knowledge of the nature of the two languages, the genius of Tacitus, and the true principles of translating, are capable of estimating the pains I have taken; with respect to those who only believe they are, I have nothing to expect, or to demand from them.

The only favour I wish to receive from those whom I acknowledge to be true judges is, not to confine themselves to the discovery of my faults; but to offer me at the same time the means of correcting them. Of all the injuries translators have a right to resent, many of which I have already remarked, the principal is the manner in which they have been accustomed to be censured. I don't speak of those silly, vague, false criticisms, which deserve no attention; I speak of censure that is not without grounds, and equitable in appearance. Yet even this, I say, in subjects of translation, is not warrantable. We may judge of a free work without reserve, and content ourselves with exposing its faults in a just criticism, because the author was master of his plan, of what he ought to say, and the manner of saying it; but the translator is in a state of constraint on all sides; obliged to advance in a narrow and slippery path, not of his own chusing, and sometimes to throw himself on one side to escape a precipice; so that, to criticise
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upon him with justice, it is not sufficient to shew he has committed a fault, he must be convinced, that he could have done better, or as well, without so doing : In vain will it be to reproach him, that his translation wants a rigorous justness, if it cannot be proved, that he could preserve this justness without ceasing to be agreeable ; in vain will it be to pretend, that he has not given the full idea of his author, unless it can be shewn, that it was possible, without rendering the copy feeble and languid. In vain will it be to accuse his translation of harshness, if another is not substituted in its stead, more natural and forcible. To correct the mistakes of an author is merit in a common critic, but is a duty in the censor of a translation. It is not to be wondered at then, if, in this kind of writing, as in all others, good critics should be as scarce as good compositions. And why should it be so? Satyr is so very convenient ! The generality of readers are lavish of it to shew their acuteness. 'Tis true learning alone that gives us a security, I will not say for being esteemed, but I will say, for being read.

DISCOURSE BEFORE THE FRENCH ACADEMY.

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MESSIEURS,

BEING engaged in abstract studies from my youth, and since obliged to devote myself to them by my adoption into a learned and celebrated society, I must content myself with loving and admiring your labours. The votes you have honoured me with, are not to be imputed so much to my writings as to my sentiments for you, my zeal for the glory of letters, and my attachment to those, who, in imitation of your example, render them respectable by their talents, and their manners. These are the titles which I bring here; they do me honour, and they cost me nothing to maintain.

But, first, this is speaking too much of myself: The first duty, which gratitude obliges me to, is to forget myself, that I may attend to what you are interested in, and partake in that concern you now express for the loss you have sustained. The bishop of Vannes was only indebted to himself for the reputation and honours he enjoyed: He was a stranger to the suppleness of address, the baseness of intrigue, and all those contemptible measures, which lift men to dignities by meanness. He was eloquent and virtuous, and these two qualities intitled him to episcopal honours, and your suffrages.

Permit

Permit me to introduce the homage I owe to his memory, by some reflections upon that art for which he was distinguished. These reflections are drawn from your works, and they are submitted to your judgment.

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Eloquence is the talent of conveying with rapidity and force to the minds of others, those sentiments with which we ourselves are affected. This sublime talent has its origin in an uncommon sensibility of what is grand and true. The same disposition of mind, which makes us susceptible of a lively and singular emotion, is sufficiently qualified to give an external representation of them; so that there is no art in eloquence, since it requires nothing but to feel. It is not for the sake of producing beauties, but avoiding faults, that the rules of great masters have been instituted. Nature forms men of genius, as she forms precious metals in the bowels of the earth, rough, irregular, and allayed with different matter. Art is of no more service to genius than it is to metals; it adds nothing to their substance, it only separates that which is foreign, and displays the genuine work of nature.

According to these principles, firs, which are yours, nothing can be truly eloquent, but what preserves this character in passing from one language to another. The sublime will always be transferred, and often the style. Why do the Cicero's and the Demosthenes's interest those who read them in a different language from their own, though mutilated and travestied? The genius of those great men
breathes

breathes still; and, if I may so express myself, the print of their spirit cannot be effaced.

To be eloquent, without aspiring to the glory of it, nothing more is required, than a genius elevated with great objects. Descartes and Newton, (pardon this example in a géométrician, who dares to speak of eloquence before you) Descartes and Newton, those two legislators in the art of thinking, whom I do not pretend to place in the rank of orators, are eloquent when they speak of God, and Time, and Space.

Indeed, whatever elevates the mind or soul, is the proper subject of eloquence, on account of the pleasure we feel in seeing ourselves great.

On the other hand, that which annihilates us in our own eyes, is not less proper; and, perhaps, for the same reason: For, what is more capable of exalting us, even in humbling us, than a contrast betwixt that small space we occupy in the universe, and that immense extent which our ideas dare traverse, darting, as I may say, from that centre where we are placed?

Nothing then, sirs, can be more favourable to eloquence, than the truths of religion. They set before us the nothingness and dignity of man; but the grander the subject is, the more does it require such as are capable of treating it, and the rules of pulpit eloquence sufficiently balance by their rigour the advantages of the object.

Almost every thing is dangerous in this kind. The difficulty of pronouncing in a manner affecting, yet natural,

natural, those truths whose importance has rendered them common ; the dry and didactic form, so opposite to great movements, and great ideas ; the air of forwardness and affectation, which discovers the orator to be more attentive to himself than the God whom he represents ; in short, the taste for frivolous ornaments, which are an outrage to the majesty of the subject. Of all the different styles which profane eloquence admits, there is properly only one style which agrees with that of the pulpit. The sublime ought always to be in the sentiment, or the thought, and the simplicity in the expression.

Such, gentlemen, was the eloquence of the orator, who is the object of your regret this day. He was affecting and artless, like religion and truth : He seems to have formed himself upon the model of those simple and noble discourses (by which one of your most illustrious members* inspired our monarch, while young, with virtues whose fruits we are now reaping.)

Happy would it be for the church and the nation, if, after enjoying the eloquence of my predecessor so long, they could but collect the remains of it after his death ! The reading of them would undoubtedly be to insure their success ; but the bishop of Vannes, from a sentiment we cannot blame, though we do not respect, distrusted, as he used to say of himself, his youth and his friends. He was too intelligent not to

* M. Maffillon, bishop of Clermont, in his petit Carême, preached before the king during his minority.

be modest. His mind was like his eloquence, simple and elevated. Simplicity is the common effect of an elevation of sentiments, because simplicity consists in appearing what one really is, and noble minds are always gainers by being known.

In short, what did most honour to the bishop of Vannes, was his enlightened regard for religion; he had respect enough for it, to wish to make others love it; he knew that the opinions of men are as dear as their passions, but less durable, when they are left to themselves; that error is but too apt to resist the application of violent remedies; that moderation, gentleness, and time, will subdue every thing but truth.

He was also very far from entertaining that blind and barbarous zeal, which searches for impiety where it is not; and which being less a friend to religion than an enemy to science, and letters, insults and injures men, whose conduct and writings are without reproach. Where can I, gentlemen, inveigh with more force and success against this cruel injustice, than in a society which contains all that is respectable in religion, great in the state, and celebrated in letters. Religion owes to literature and philosophy, the confirmation of its principles; sovereigns, the establishment of their rights, which are violated and disputed in ages of ignorance; and the people, that general knowledge, which makes authority more sweet, and obedience more faithful.

How happy are we, gentlemen, in living under a prince, both wise and humane, who knows how well letters are calculated to make a nation love what he

cherishes most himself, justice, truth, order and peace. Dispositions so respectable as these, in our august sovereign, ought to be as high in our estimation as those shining actions, one of which would be sufficient to immortalize his reign; the grandeur of his family augmented; two provinces conquered; and two victories gained in person; peace restored to Europe by his moderation; the noblesse reconciled to the defenders of their country; the school of heroes raised by the side of their asylum; the earth measured from the extremity of Africa to the Icy-Sea; the taste for agriculture and useful arts encouraged by operations most wisely combined; the most necessary part of commerce made free, and by that means subsistence afforded to twenty millions of people, who appeal to him as their father.

It belongs to us, gentlemen, (a zeal for my country authorizes me to add myself to the number) to us, I say, to answer such pure and equitable intentions of our just prince, by recommending in our writings the peaceable love of religion, and the laws. It was principally with a view to fix the manner of thinking, as well as speaking, by your works, that your illustrious founder established you. He knew all the consideration, and consequently all the authority which a man of letters might draw from his situation; Richlieu, the conqueror of Spain, of heroes and the great, amidst the homage paid him from all quarters, perceived, that if the sage honoured his great talents, the multitude only honoured his place; and that the applauses which Corneille snatched from the multitude and the philosopher, were given to the man.

The plan and the laws which your founder prescribed to you, were the result of the idea he entertained of the dignity of your labours ; he made you the most valuable and just present that a great minister could make to a society of men, (who meet together for the advancement of science) equality and liberty. By this means he prevented that spirit of ferment and intrigue, which is a slow poison to literary societies. By this means he laid up for himself that honour you have conferred upon him ; that which the first members of the state derive to themselves among you, by sacrificing to learning that rank which it respects in the great, even while they stand upon it, and much more when they forget it.

Thus it was that Pompey, the conqueror of Mithridates, of Africa, and Asia, who was capable of disputing with Cæsar the empire of the world, laid down his fasces, his ambition, and his laurels at the gate of a philosopher, with whom he was going to converse, leaving it a doubt among sages, which of them upon this occasion was the greatest, the philosopher, or the conqueror.

But the most distinguished honour you have received has been the immediate protection of your sovereigns. Such a dignity is too great for any but princes ; letters can only be protected honourably by kings, or by themselves : The French academy has seen at its head that prince, who was so famous in the annals of France, of Europe, and of the universe ; to whose glory adversity itself contributed, greater when, for the relief of his people, he obtained peace of the na-

tions leagued against him, than when he compelled them to receive it; in fine when he merited of his subjects, of strangers, and of his enemies, the honour of giving his name to the age he lived in.

Such, gentlemen, are the immortal subjects you are bound to celebrate; such are the engagements of those whom the possession of its tenets has called to a seat among you. For my own part, I shall content myself with hearing and reading. You see my affection for my country, already known to a prince who is the ally and friend of our nation, and whose eulogium Europe, and his own actions, will excuse me from making, will improve by your example. In short, I shall learn of you what the Lacedemonian youths learnt of their masters a reverence for the laws, a love of virtue, and an abhorrence of every base and unworthy action.

To conclude, gentlemen, penetrated as I am with a sense of your honour, and my own duty, the sentiments which fill my soul, impatient to shew themselves, injure one another, and I shall bear an exception to that rule, that to feel is to be eloquent.

REFLECTIONS ON ELOCUTION, AND STYLE IN GENERAL.

Eloquence, the daughter of genius and liberty, owes its birth only to republics. Orators have devoted the talent of speaking to the great objects of government; and as, upon these occasions, it is necessary to convince and engage the people, eloquence is called the art of persuading, that is, of commanding the understanding, and moving the passions at the same time.

Our modern writers, for the most part superstitious and servile imitators of antiquity, have adopted this definition, without recollecting, that the antients, who gave it, confined eloquence to the most noble and exalted purposes; and consequently, this definition must be incomplete.

On the other hand, how many pieces of masterly eloquence are there, which have no other end, but purely to move, and not to convince.

To think otherwise, is to be of the opinion of that rigid mathematician, who, after reading an admirable scene of madness in Phædrus, asked coolly, “What does all this prove?”

The definition we have given of eloquence, contains the most general idea we can conceive; “It is the talent of rapidly conveying, and forcibly impressing, that deep sentiment with which we ourselves are inspired.” This idea will suit with the eloquence even of silence, that powerful, and some-

times sublime language of great passions ; it will suit with the eloquence of gesture, which one may call the eloquence of the people, by the power it has to captivate the multitude, who are always struck more with what they see, than what they understand : In fine, it will suit with that exact, calm eloquence, which confines itself to convince without moving, and which seeks to obtain our consent, without forcing it by violence. This last species of eloquence is not perhaps the least powerful ; for we are less guarded against insinuation than force. However, as the talent of moving constitutes the principal character of eloquence, it is in that point of view that we shall now chiefly consider it.

The property of eloquence is not only to move, but to elevate the mind. This is the concomitant effect of that which seems only intended to excite tears : The pathetic and the sublime make a deep impression upon us ; in finding ourselves softened, we feel a consciousness that we are greater at that time, because we perceive that we are better ; the sweet and delightful pensiveness into which we are thrown by a discourse, or an affecting representation, gives us a good opinion of ourselves, by the testimony it bears to our sensibility of spirit. This testimony is the principal source of the pleasure we enjoy in love ; and, in general, of all those agreeable sensations, which accompany all tender and awful sentiments.

We call eloquence a talent, and not an art, as most rhetoricians have represented it ; for every art may be acquired by study and exercise, but eloquence is the gift

gift of nature. Rules are designed to check a genius which is irregular, and not to damp that flame of genius which takes wing; their only use is to prevent those passages, which are truly eloquent, from being debased by others, where negligence or bad taste prevail. All the rules in the world could never have inspired Shakespeare's admirable soliloquy in Hamlet, though they might have saved the barbarous and disgusting scene of the grave-diggers.

We express well what we conceive well; we deliver with warmth what we feel with enthusiasm; and words as easily present themselves to paint a lively emotion, as a clear idea. The sentiment is enfeebled, is extinguished in the orator, by the cold and studied care to express it; and all that his labour amounts to, is to convince his hearers, that he does not feel himself what he wants to instil into them. "Love, and do what you will," said one of the fathers of the church. "Feel, and say what you will," this is all the mystery of orators.

If we were to ask writers of genius about the finest passages in their works, they would acknowledge, that these cost them the least pains, because they were inspired when they produced them. Nature, disengaged from all constraint, and braving all rules, works her greatest miracles; and we experience the truth of that passage in Quintilian, "It is the soul alone which makes us eloquent; the most ignorant, when agitated by a violent passion, are never at a loss how to express themselves."

Such was the enthusiasm which once animated the peasant of the Danube, and made him admired by the senate in the very sanctuary of eloquence. It is the same enthusiasm, prompt to communicate itself to the hearer, which makes such difference betwixt spoken eloquence, if I may use the expression, and that which is written. Eloquence in books is like music upon paper, mute, void, and lifeless; it loses its greatest force, and it stands in need of action to display it. It is impossible, without being melted, to read the affecting perorations of Cicero for Flaccus* Fonteius, Sextus Plancius, and Sylla; the most admirable models of eloquence which all antiquity has left us of the pathetic kind. How vast must be their effect, may we not imagine, in the lips of that great man? Let us only represent to ourselves Cicero, in the midst of the bar, animating with tears the most affecting discourse, holding the son of Flaccus in his arms, presenting him to the judges, and imploring in his behalf humanity and the laws: Can we wonder at the effect we are told of, that he was interrupted by the groans and sobs of the auditory? Can we wonder, that such a scene should seduce and bias the judges? In fine, is it to be looked upon as amazing, that the eloquence of Cicero was so frequently successful in saving his guilty clients? The Areopagus, which was resolved to maintain strict justice, forbade the advocates the use of all eloquence. He must there,

* See the peroration for Flaccus; it is perhaps next to that for Milo, which was never spoke, the best in Cicero.

and at our tribunals, have produced other reasons, besides those which were pathetic ; and the judges of Athens, like ours, would have given most of those causes against him, which he gained at Rome.

We must not only feel, to be eloquent, but we must not feel by halves, as we must not conceive by halves, if we would speak with clearness. If you would have me weep, you must weep yourself, says Horace, in his admirable Art of Poetry, which may be justly called the code of good taste. We must acknowledge, however, that if the agitation, which animates the orator when he writes, be very lively, it is not necessary it should be always equal to what it proposes to excite. Our minds have two principles by which they are moved, sentiment and imagination. The first of these resources has doubtless the greatest force ; but the imagination can sometimes act a part, and yet keep its place ; by its means an orator will draw tears from the audience, and shed them himself, without being really affected ; by its means it is that a comedian, putting himself in the place of those he represents, agitates and distresses the spectators with the animated recital of those misfortunes he is not sensible of ; in fine, it is by means of the imagination, that men of fine parts are capable, by their writings, of inspiring that love of virtue, which they have not themselves. Imagination does not supply the want of sentiment by the impression it makes on ourselves, but it can supply it by the impulse which it gives to others. The effect of sentiment in us is more concentrated ; that of imagination is more calculated to expand itself abroad ; the action of

the latter is more violent and short ; that of sentiment is more strong and constant.

Thus the emotion, which ought to animate an orator, should compensate, by its vehemence, what it wants in point of duration. It is not like that superficial agitation which eloquence excites in cold breasts, an impression purely mechanic, produced by example, and the tone which is given to a multitude : The more genius the hearer is endued with, the more will his impression resemble that of the orator, and the more capable will he be of imitating that which he admires.

If the end of eloquence is to convey to the mind of another person the movements of our own breast, it follows, that the more simple a discourse is upon grand subjects, the more eloquent it will be, because it will paint the sentiment with the greatest truth.

I cannot tell what has induced so many modern writers to talk so much of the “ eloquence of things,” as if there was an eloquence of words.

Eloquence (it cannot be repeated too often) is always in the subject, and the nature of the subject ; or rather of the sentiment it produces, transfused into the discourse. Eloquence does not consist, (as some of the antients have said, and a great many echoes have since repeated) in saying great things in a sublime style, but in a simple one. It is enfeebling a great idea, to seek to elevate it with a pomp of words. The Psalmist says, “ The heavens declare
“ the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth forth
“ his handy-work.” How strangely has one of our
own

own poets disfigured this sublime thought in attempting to extend and adorn it.

The heavens instruct the earth

Their author to revere,

All that the globe contains

Extols creating power :

O ! what a lofty song,

A concert, O ! how grand,

Of all the heavenly orbs ;

What grandeur infinite !

What harmony divine

Results from their accords !

This example, perhaps, it will be said, is ill chose : The entire strophe is but indifferent, and unworthy to be compared with the original. Let us take another, whose beauty cannot be denied, the song of Ezekiah, translated by the same poet.

I've seen my penfive days

Verging to their decline,

And, at the noon of life,

I'm going just to set,

Death, spreading wide his wings,

O'erwhelms in endless shade

The light I once enjoy'd,

And in that darksome night

I seek in vain the rest

Of my departed days.

How

How admirable are these verses ! We cannot help tracing the poet in “ the noon of life, and the setting
 “ of life ; the days verging to their decline, and the
 “ wide-spread wings of death.” Can these images, beautiful as they are, (but the productions of wit, which seeks to paint, and not of sentiment, which seeks only to express) be compared with the striking simplicity of Scripture, the deep and unfeigned penitiveness with which the young prince represents himself at the gates of death ? “ I have said, in the
 “ midst of my days I shall die, and I have sought
 “ the rest of my years.”

But further, let us compare the poet with himself in the same piece ; we shall find, that, however beautiful be the strophe we have just cited, we shall not hesitate to prefer the following for this single reason, that the expression is more natural, and less studied.

With mournful cries and fears
 My troubles seem to grow,
 My eyes, bedew'd with tears,
 Would gladly ope no more :
 I tell the darksome night,
 Thou'lt overwhelm my soul ;
 I tell the ruddy morn,
 That day thou gilds so bright
 Shall be the last to me.

Nothing could have been more beautiful than this strophe, if the original had not exceeded it in being
 more

more simple “I have said I shall see my people no more, and my eyes, weary with looking to heaven, are closed.”

The just elogium of Longinus upon that sublime passage in Genesis, is well known, “God said let there be light, and there was light;” some modern writers have pretended, that this passage, instead of an example of the sublime, should be mentioned as an example of simplicity. They look upon that to be the direct opposite of the sublime, which constitutes its true character, “the simple expression of a great idea”.

But let us pass from sacred to profane instances and give another example of the advantages of simplicity of expression, to convey noble and pathetic ideas with all possible energy and truth; let us recollect in what manner Virgil paints Orpheus, solitary and pensive on the sea-shore, lamenting his dear Euridice from the rising to the departing day. A middling poet, a poet with less taste, would have used the poetical phrase of the rising and the setting sun; Ovid would have been glad of the opportunity, but let us hear Virgil,

*Te dulcis conjux, te solo in littore secum,
Te veniente die, te decedente canebat.*

If any thing can be superior to these admirable lines, it is the moving and real description of the Jews in captivity: “By the streams of Babylon we sat, and wept when we remembered Sion”.

The

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The natural and simple style, says Pascal, enchants us with reason ; for we expected the author, and we find the man. The most brilliant expression loses its merit, when the attention of the mind is wearied with pursuing it : This exertion makes us think the author is possessed with himself, and has a mind to possess us also with the same idea ; from that time his title to our approbation sinks, and we give our consent to him, as scantily and as reluctantly as possible. Besides, the affectation of style injures the expression of the sentiment, and consequently the truth of it. A writer, justly celebrated for his works, but a dangerous model, and deemed suspicious in matters of taste, has past an elogium upon this phrase of Rochefoucault, “ my understanding was the dupe of my heart,” meaning, “ I believed my mistress faithful, because I wished her so ;” the last expression is that of nature, it is the only one which would present itself to a distressed lover ; the first is that of a wit, who never was in love, or is past it.

One of the surest ways of judging whether a style has this inestimable and rare simplicity or no, is to place ourselves in the circumstances of the author ; to suppose we have the same thought to express, and to see if, without pains or preparation, we render it in the same manner.

“ Unhappy Phocas ! Maurice ! O how happy ! thou hast two sons, who after thee will die ; but when I’m gone, I have not one to reign.”

Could the most ordinary person in the world, who had this sentiment to express, convey it in any other terms ?

terms? the only difference between a common man and a genius, is that the second finds the sentiment in his own heart, the first must have it suggested to him.

Genuine strokes of eloquence are the most easily translated, because of the grandeur of the idea, under whatever form it is presented; and there is no language which will not admit of a natural and simple expression of a sublime sentiment.

Men, said a philosopher, have pretty near the same fund of thoughts, they only differ in the manner of conveying them. This maxim is both true and false; all men have the same fund of common thoughts, which the vulgar express disagreeably, and the ingenious gracefully; great ideas belong only to great geniuses; middling ones receive them only upon credit, and the ornaments in which they appear, discover them to be not in their natural soils, but exotics, and transplanted.

But it may be said, if eloquence, properly so call'd, that which moves us by great objects, has so little need of the rules of elocution; if it requires only to follow the expression which is dictated by nature; why have the antients given us so many treatises upon the rules of elocution? This question deserves to be examined deeply.

Eloquence, properly speaking, consists only in lively and rapid strokes; its effect is to move violently, and all the emotion dies in a short time; so that it is impossible that eloquence should reign in long discourses, except by intervals; the darkness and light must alternately prevail. But if the shades of a picture are necessary

necessary, they ought not to be too strong : The orator and the auditor must both have their resting places ; but in those places he must only breathe, not sleep ; and it is by the calm charms of elocution, that he must be kept in this sweet and agreeable situation. Thus it is certain, whatever air of paradox it may assume, that the rules of elocution are only required for those passages, which are not truly eloquent, where nature stands in need of art. The man of genius is in no danger of falling into a feeble and negligent style, except where he is not sustained by his matter. It is then he ought to have recourse to elocution, and intently to pursue it ; when he has great things to say, his elocution will be what it ought to be, without pains.

The ancients, if I am not mistaken, were sensible of this truth, on which account they treated eloquence with such detail, and for the same reason we shall trace its principles the more cursorily.

Elocution has two parts, which it is necessary to distinguish, though they are frequently confounded, diction, and style. Diction has properly no relation but to the grammatical qualities of a discourse, such as correctness, and clearness. Style, on the other hand, comprehends those qualities of elocution, which are more particular, more difficult, and more rare, which mark the genius and talents of the writer or speaker ; such as propriety, elevation, harmony, and ease. Let us go over them in order.

Though correctness be so essential a quality that it needs no recommendation, the orator ought not to be
such

such a slave to it, as to injure the spirit of his discourse. A happy licentiousness is to be ranked among small faults; it is blameable to be incorrect, but it is a crime to be cold. When Racine said, “*Je t’aimois inconstant qu’eusse je fait fidele!*” he chose rather to be inaccurate, than languid, and to fail in grammar, than in expression.

Clearness, that fundamental law, neglected every day by so many writers, who think themselves profound, and are only obscure, consists in avoiding not merely ambiguous constructions, and phrases loaded with ideas accessory to the principal one, but all epigrammatic turns, the wit of which the multitude are not capable of understanding. I say the multitude, for the orator must not forget that it is to them he speaks; it is them whom he is to move, to melt, and to persuade. Eloquence, which is not calculated for the bulk of mankind, is no eloquence at all; but if the orator is to banish from his discourse the epigrammatic finessè, which for the most part is nothing but the puerile and contemptible art of making things appear more ingenuous than they are, there is another kind of finessè, which may be allowed him, which is sometimes necessary, and which ought to be distinguished from obscurity. Obscurity consists in presenting to the mind an adulterated sense; the finessè, in presenting two senses, the one obvious and simple, for the vulgar, and a more ornamented and polished one for men of genius; and why may not an eloquent discourse reserve a few strokes for those, whom an orator will really have the highest ambition to please? It belongs

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belongs to great geniuses to judge him, and to the multitude to obey him. He ought however to be sober and cautious in indulging this finessè, and to forbid himself the use of it in all subjects susceptible of elevation or vehemence, which require a manly colouring, and bold and deep strokes; refinement of expression in such subjects destroys all nobleness, and serves only to enervate without embellishing. It is in style, as it is in character; grandeur and finessè are incompatible. If we regard literally what has been frequently asserted, that clearness is the characteristic of our language, we shall imagine it to be the most favourable for an orator. But to be undeceived in this respect, nothing more is necessary than to write in French ourselves, or to ask those who have. No language without exception is more liable to obscurity than ours, and none requires more minute caution in the use of it, in order to be understood.

Clearness is the property of our language in this sense only, that a French writer ought never to lose the clearness of his view, because it is always ready to escape him; it may naturally be asked then, how a language, subject to this greivous fault, and itself timid, furd, and far from exuberant, should have met with such rare fortune all over Europe? Many causes have concurred to this, the grandeur France rose to in the late reign, the superiority of our good writers in point of taste, above those of other nations, and perhaps that capricious destiny which determines the fate of languages, as well as that of men.

Besides

Besides clearness and correctness, which are entirely grammatical, and have no relation to any thing but diction, there is another correctness equally essential, which belongs to style, and consists in the propriety of the terms : in midling authors, their expression is always beside the idea, and the perusal of them gives men of genius a kind of pain like that which a fine ear feels from a person, who sings neither well nor ill. Propriety of terms is the distinctive characteristic of great writers ; it is this which sets their style upon a level with their subject ; it is this quality which discovers the true talent of writing, and not the frivolous art of disguising common ideas with false colours.

It is this necessity of using proper terms, that makes good verses so rare, because the restraint laid upon poetry, obliges versifiers to content themselves with expressing their thoughts feebly or imperfectly, when by good luck they happen to have any ; on the other hand, those who have true poetical talents, derive from this very restraint, a source of new beauties. The obligation the poet is under to seek for expression, often leads him to those which have the greatest energy and propriety, which perhaps he would never have hit upon, if he had wrote in prose, because his pride induces him to be pleased with those, which first offer themselves to his pen. This constraint, and the advantage springing from it, is the best reason perhaps that can be assigned, why our tragedies should still be in rhyme ; but it would be worth while to enquire whether the observance of this law has not produced more bad verses than good ; and whether it
does

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does not hurt many excellent geniuses, who, without much skill in poetry, may possess extraordinary talents for the stage.

From the propriety of terms, arise precision, elegance, and energy, according to the nature of the subjects treated of, or the things described: Precision in philosophical, elegance in entertaining, and energy in grand or pathetic subjects.

These qualities at the same time that they suit the style to the subject, give it an air of nobleness, especially as an orator ought to separate all popular ideas and low subjects. It is true, that the lowness of ideas and subjects is too often arbitrary; the ancients allowed themselves much more liberty than we, who, having banish'd all delicacy from our manners, have carried it to excess in our writings, and our discourses. However unphilosophical a nation may be in this respect, an orator, who would expect to succeed in it, must conform himself to its prejudices, which may be called the philosophy of the vulgar; even genius braves them in vain, especially among a light and frivolous people, who are more struck with the ridiculous than the grand, who would be unmoved with a sublime, while they would not suffer a popular or a trivial expression to escape them; and who after whole pages of genius, would be implacable to a single line of bad taste.

We come now to harmony, one of the most indispensable ornaments of an eloquent discourse. To ask if there be any harmony of style, is almost to enquire, whether there be any such thing as music; and

to

to attempt to prove it, almost as ridiculous as to put the question. Some no doubt have no ear for harmony of language, as others have none for musical harmony; but nature, and not reasoning, must help them.

The antients were extremely delicate upon this point, as we may learn from a passage of Cicero †, where, in describing the effect of the eloquence of a tribune, who invoked the manes of a citizen against a seditious son, he appears more engaged with the arrangement of his words, than the idea they convey.

Cicero's attention to harmony in pathetic passages, is no contradiction to what we have advanced, "that great ideas excuse negligence of terms." We do not mean here expression in itself, but the mechanical disposition of words; the first is dictated by nature, the second proceeds from a good ear, and the art of arranging terms in the most harmonious manner. An orator is like a musician, genius may enable him to

† I was present, says Cicero, when L. Carbi, cried out in an harangue to the people, "O Marce Druse (patrem appello) tu dicere solebas sacram, esse rempublicam; quicumque eam violavisset ab omnibus esse ei pœnas perfolutas; patris dictum sapiens temeritas filii comprobavit".

This termination "comprobavit" adds Cicero, excited a general admiration throughout the whole assembly; were we to change the order of the words in this manner, "comprobavit filii temeritas", it will have no effect. This will convince us, by the way, of the modesty of our modern Latinists, who speak Latin as ill as they write it: This example will be sufficient to shew how exquisitely sensible the antients were of harmony.

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sing, but art and a good ear alone can direct in properly connecting modulated sounds.

Though our poetry and prose are less susceptible of harmony than those of the antients, they have notwithstanding a certain kind of melody which is peculiar to them. Perhaps our prose has one advantage in not being so monotonous, and consequently not so fatiguing; the conquest of difficulties is the great merit of poetry, and the principal source of the pleasure it occasions: Is it not on this account that we seldom read a long work in verse at once without disgust, and that the charms of versification affect us less in proportion to our advancement in years?

However it be, as poets have formed languages, so the harmony of poetry has given birth to that of prose. Malherbe among us wrote harmonious odes, when our prose was barbarous and uncouth: We are indebted to Balzac for first giving it harmony. "Eloquence, says "Mr. Voltaire, has so much power over mankind, "that we admire Balzac in his time, for having found "that small share of an unknown, but necessary art, "which consists in the choice of harmonious words, "and for having used them out of their place." The style of Thucydides, which wants nothing but harmony, according to Cicero, is like the buckler of Minerva by Phidias, which might be taken to pieces.

There are two things which charm the ear in a discourse, sound, and number; the sound, by the quality of the words; the number, by their arrangement. It is not easy for an orator to err in these points; as little pretensions as he may have to a fine ear, the pronunciation

ciation alone will enable him to distinguish sounds that are sweet and melodious, from those which are harsh and unmusical; and for the same reason those, which when connected are smooth and harmonious, from those which are rough and uneven; but there is another thing with respect to harmony to be attended to, which is equally necessary with the choice and succession of words, and which requires a well-versed and delicate ear.

As in music, the agreement of the melody does not arise only from the relation which the sounds, but also which the several phrases of the song, have to each other; so oratory (which is more analogous to musical harmony than we imagine) consists in not making too great an inequality betwixt the members of the same phrase; and also in not making the last members too short in proportion to the first; to shun equally periods which are too long, and phrases which are too contracted, or, if I may say so, half blown, a style, which takes away our breath, and one which obliges us to draw it every instant, which resembles a kind of chequer work; in fine, to know how to intermingle rounded and well-supported periods, with others which are less, and only serve for the repose of the ear. It is scarce to be believed, how much a single word, being longer or shorter at the end of a phrase, or a termination being masculine or feminine, or even the difference of a single syllable, changes the harmony of the whole. The close study of the best masters, joined to a quick and sensible ear, will teach us better than all the rules in the world.

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As to affectation and stiffness, those enemies to every kind of beauty, they are not less so in this respect. Cicero so difficult in every thing relating to harmony of style, condemns Theopompus very justly for his extreme attention to avoid every concurrence of vowels. Custom and the ear, must procure for us this talent of themselves, without fatigue. The practised orator, by a kind of instinct, perceives the succession of harmonious words, as a good reader sees by a glance of his eyes, the syllables which go before and those which come after.

In imitation of the antients, we have banished the great verse from our prose; but it is remarkable that our most sounding prose contains many verses of smaller measure, which being properly intermixed and without rhyme, give it all the agreeableness of poetry, without that monotony and uniformity, for which our verse is reproached. The prose of Moliere abounds with this kind of verse, the first scene of the Sicilian furnishes us with an example.

Chut n'avancez pas d'avantage
 Et demeurez en cet endroit,
 Jusqu'a ce que, je vous appelle
 Il fait nour comme dans un four mouche
 Le ciel si est habille ce soir en scara
 Et je ne vois pas une cloile,
 Que montre le bout de son nez
 Sotte condition que celle diin esclave
 Dene vivre jamais pour soi,

Et

Et d'être toujours, tout enties

Aux passions d' un maitre

The rest of the piece is pretty nearly of the same kind.

The harmonious disposition of words is sometimes incompatible with their logical arrangement; what shall be done in this case? A rigid philosopher would not hesitate at all; reason is his master, I had almost said, his tyrant. The orator, as much a captive to his ear, as the philosopher to reason, sacrifices sometimes harmony, sometimes justness, according to the object he has in view; harmony, when he wants to strike by things; justness, when he seeks to attract by expression; but these sacrifices ought seldom to be made, and then only in light instances.

To unite justness and harmony was in all probability the superior talent of Demosthenes; but in a dead language, the merit of these two qualities in a great measure disappears. We suppose more than we feel †, and its no wonder that some moderns in doing justice to his eloquence, should not be struck in the same manner as the Athenians; their admiration doubtless was just, because they were a delicate and sensible nation;

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† In pronouncing Latin verses, we maim the prosody and the measure every moment we make long short, and short long; we dwell upon vowels which ought to disappear on account of the elision; in short, we scan the verse against the sense, and yet we find harmony in Latin verse; is this reason or prejudice? I have said we scan the verse against the sense, the demonstration is easy. In scanning for example hexameter verses, we stop at the last syllable of the dactyle,

and

nation; and they understood his eloquence and his language. Ours in the same degree would be the extravagance of enthusiasm.

The rational esteem of a philosopher does more honour to great writers, than the exclamations of a college, and the prejudice of pedants. Pindar was certainly a great poet; antiquity, more capable of deciding his merit than we, has pronounced him such; but is this a reason why we should admire him like infants, even in his extravagancies?

Can we laugh at any thing more ridiculous than the commentary of Despreaux on the first ode of this author, and his efforts to give a sublime translation of the fantastical mixture, which the Greek poet makes of water, gold, and the sun, with the olympic games, in the same strophe? If Perrault or Chapelain had been the author of such a one, what a copious subject would it have afforded for pleasantry or satyr.

But to return to our subject: however agreeable harmony may be in itself, it will lose a great deal of its value, if it is only employed in adorning a loose, diffuse style. A concise style, which is neither disjointed nor obscure, has this singular merit above all others, to make a discourse resemble the progress of the

and yet it is always short; 'tis just as if in a composition of music, consisting of minims and crochets, we should stop and dwell upon the last crochet; we scan verses as if the dactyle, instead of being a long syllable followed by two short ones, was a short syllable followed by two long ones. Musicians will understand me, and I must use too many words to be understood by others,

mind,

mind, and imitate that rapid operation by which the intellectual powers communicate their ideas. We become often more obscure in shunning brevity, than in courting it; in taking the longest rout we often lose our way; the surest method of accomplishing our purpose, is to go the shortest road, provided we can keep constantly advancing, and not leaping from one place to another. Brevity does not consist in omitting any necessary ideas, but in ranging each idea in its proper place, and expressing it by the most proper terms; by this means our style will have this twofold advantage, of being concise without fatiguing, and explicit without being loose.

From these principles we may judge how distant from true eloquence is that loquacity so frequent at the bar, which consists in saying a very little in a great many words; two reasons have contributed to this fault, (than which there cannot be a more unsupportable one to true genius) the false ideas of eloquence, which are entertained in our colleges, where youth are taught to drown a common thought in a deluge of insipid periods; and that example of Cicero, who is too often verbose, "He who has life and pith, says Montaigne, is stuffed with his long-winded sentences." 'Tis true, Cicero makes us forget this fault for the other qualities of an orator, which he possesses in a supreme degree; but the defects of great writers are always imitated by middling authors.

It is not sufficient that the style of the orator be clear, correct, noble, harmonious, lively, and concise;

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it must also be easy; or, in other words, the pains it costs must not be perceivable.

Cicero, so often cited already, and who cannot be too much recommended, in a treatise concerning eloquence, owes one of his greatest charms to the inimitable facility of his style. If we perceive a slight degree of study, it is in his care to arrange his words, and yet we may see this care does not cost him much; and that the words, after presenting themselves to his mind without seeking for them, come in of themselves, and marshal themselves without trouble under his pen.

The true character of the eloquence of Cicero, in my opinion, is, a happy conjunction of ease and harmony. It is this union, being so difficult to imitate, which renders this author so hard to translate, especially in a language like ours, where the inversion is not permitted, and where a forced arrangement of words is a continual danger to the harmony. The habit and use of writing in verse, produces those signs of affectation and labour in writing in prose, which the orator ought very carefully to avoid.

Most poets, accustomed to the ordinary language of versification, transport themselves, against their will, into prose; and, if they make any efforts to become simple, they are constrained and stiff; if they abandon themselves to the negligence of their pen, their style is languid and spiritless. Thus, our poets have commonly succeeded ill in prose. The prefaces of Racine are feebly written; those of Corneille are as defective in point of language, as they are excellent
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in depth of matter. The prose of Rousseau is hard, that of Despreaux heavy, and that of Fontaine insipid.

Nothing is more opposite to an easy style, and consequently to a good taste, than that figurative and poetical language, which is charged with metaphors and antitheses, which is called, for what reason I cannot tell, the academic style, though the most celebrated members of the French academy have shunned it with care, and severely proscribed it in their works. We may call it, with more reason, the style of the pulpit, as being used by most of our modern preachers: It makes their sermons resemble—not the effusion of a heart penetrated with the truths which it wants to persuade others, but a kind of tedious, monotonous representation, where the actor is applauding himself, without being attended to. What shall we say of a man, who, being about to address us on the things of a world, where we are most interested, acquits himself by a studied, measured discourse, charged with figures and ornaments? Can this rhetorician appear to us any otherwise, than as acting an insipid and ridiculous part? This is the true picture of the generality of our preachers. Their declamations seem beneath the pious comedies of our missionaries, which make men of the world smile, and common people weep. These missionaries seem at least to be affected with what they deliver, and their elocution, coarse and unpolished as it is, produces its effect on those for whom it is calculated.

Is it not astonishing after this, that the eloquence of the pulpit should be regarded as a bad species, by those who confound this species with the abuse of it? Le Petit Careme of father Massillon will suffice to teach Christian orators, and their judges, the difference betwixt true elegance, and that affectation to which it is opposed. We may likewise appeal to the sermon on the humanity of the great, which preachers ought constantly to read, to form a good taste, and princes to be acquainted with, to learn they are men.

The simplicity and nature of Massillon appear to me more qualified to lead us into the spirit of the truth of Christianity, than all the dialectic of Boudaloue. The logic of the gospel is in our hearts; there only must we seek for it. The most pressing arguments in favour of the distressed, will never touch him, who can see his fellow creatures suffer without being moved; an insensible mind is an harp-sichord without strings, from which it is impossible to draw any sound. If the dialectic is necessary, it is only in matters of doctrine, and these are more calculated for books than the pulpit, which is only the theatre of great emotion, and not minute discussion.

The severity of controversy rejects and proscribes every-thing, but reason and proof. To instruct and convince are its only object; we ought not to undertake to prove the truths of Christianity in sermons, or in verse. The recollection of the closet, and the austerity of prose, are more adapted to a matter so serious.

In

In explaining the rules of oratorical elocution, we have given those of style in general. The orator, the historian, and the philosopher, (for one may reduce all writers to these classes) differ from each other most in the subject they treat of, and this difference of subject renders a difference of style necessary. The historian ought to think and paint; the philosopher should feel and think; the orator feel, paint, and think. But elocution has but one rule for all: To be clear, precise, harmonious, and also easy and natural.

The affectation of style, always painful and disgusting, is peculiarly so in matters of philosophy, which ought to shine in their own beauty, the chief ornament being the subject itself, and which reject, as unworthy, all borrowed finery. It is principally to these matters, that we may apply that beautiful passage of Petronius; "*Grandis et ut ita dicam pudica oratio naturali pulchritudine exurgit.*" The great, and, if I may say, the chaste oration, rises up in its own natural beauty.

In a word, truth, simplicity, and nature, are all which a writer ought to have constantly before his eyes. The essential point of good writing is, to be rich in ideas; but ideas are scarce, and rhetoric common.

A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF GENEVA.

THE city of Geneva stands upon two hills at the end of the lake, which at present bears its name, and was formerly called the Lemman Lake. The situation is delightful;—on one side you see the lake,—on the other the Rhone, and all around a beautiful country:—Hills covered with rural villas the whole length of the lake; and here and there the frozen summits of the Alps, which in fine weather, when illuminated by the sun, look like mountains of silver.

The port of Geneva, upon the lake, secured by moles, furnished with vessels, having a good mart, and lying between France, Italy, and Germany, renders the inhabitants industrious, commercial, and opulent.

Geneva has many fine buildings, and agreeable walks:—The streets are well lighted in the night, and they have erected an engine upon the Rhone, very simple in its construction, which can raise water an hundred feet; and by that means supplies the highest parts of the town.—The lake is about eighteen leagues in length, and between four and five in breadth in the broadest part. It is a kind of smaller sea, subject to tempests, and exhibiting other curious phænomena.

Julius Cæsar speaks of Geneva as a town of the Allobroges, at that time a Roman province: He came

came there to stop the progress of the Helvetians, known since by the name of Swiss. — When Christianity was introduced, it became an episcopal see, subject to the bishop of Vienna. — At the beginning of the fifth century, the emperor Honorius gave up the government to the citizens, who were dispossessed of it again in 534, by the French king.

When Charlemagne, towards the end of the eighth century, went to attack the kings of Lombardy, and to deliver the Roman pontiffs from those tyrants, (for which he was rewarded with the imperial crown) he came to Geneva, and made it the general rendezvous of his army. — It was afterwards annexed as an inheritance to the German empire, and Conrad was crowned there in 1034. — But the succeeding emperors, occupied in more important business, which the restless spirit of the holy see was perpetually furnishing for more than 300 years, overlooked Geneva, which insensibly shook off the yoke, and became an imperial city, having the bishop for its prince, or rather its chief magistrate, whose authority was restrained by that of the citizens. The arms they took from that time were expressive of this sort of mixed government, an imperial eagle on one side, the reverse, a key, representing the power of the church, with this device, “*Post tenebras lux.*”

The city of Geneva still retains these arms, after having renounced the Roman church. — They have nothing in common with the papacy, but the keys, which they bear upon their escutcheon; and it is something singular, that they retain even these, after

having broke, with a kind of superstition, every other connection with Rome :—They seem to have imagined, that the device “*Post tenebras lux*,” which, as they thought, expressed exactly their religious condition, would not allow them to make any alteration in the other parts of their arms.

Their neighbours the dukes of Savoy, countenanced sometimes by the bishop, made many attempts upon the liberty of the Genevois, which they bravely repelled, supported by the alliance of Fribourg and Berne.—It was at that time, that is, about the year 1526, that the council of the two hundred was established.—The opinions of Luther and Zuinglius began then to gain ground; they had been embraced at Berne, were approved of by the Genevois, and, in 1535, established among them; popery was abolished, and the bishop, who still takes upon him the title of bishop of Geneva, without having any more jurisdiction there, than the bishop of Babylon has in his diocese, has been since that time resident at Annecy.

There is yet to be seen, between the two gates of the town's hall at Geneva, a Latin inscription, in memory of the abolition of the Catholic religion : The pope is there called Antichrist.—This expression, which, in the first fervours of liberty and innovation, might be indulged to that uncultivated age, seems to us, at this time, rather unworthy the philosophic spirit of Geneva. Let us recommend to them to substitute, in the stead of this rude and injurious memorial,

memorial, something better, and with more truth and simplicity.

In respect to the Catholics, the pope is the head of the true church:—To Protestants, the wiser and more moderate of them, he is a sovereign prince intitled to respect, though not obedience; but, in an age like this, the notion of Antichrist should be forgotten.

To maintain their liberty against the enterprizes of the dukes of Savoy, and of their own bishops, the Genevois strengthened themselves farther by an alliance with Zurich, but especially with France.—By these they were enabled to resist the armies of Charles Emmanuel, and the treasures of Philip the second, a man whose ambition and despotism, cruelty and superstition, have loaded his memory with the execrations of all posterity.—Henry the fourth, who had sent 300 soldiers to aid the Genevois, had himself soon after occasion for their assistance, which proved serviceable to him during the time of the league, and on other occasions; and from hence the Genevois, as well as the Switzers, derive those privileges which they enjoy in France.

Desirous of doing honour to their city, the Genevois invited Calvin amongst them, who had very deservedly gained a high reputation: He was a man of the first rank in point of learning; wrote Latin as well as a dead language would allow, and French with a purity very rare in that age.—This excellence, which able grammarians admire even now, rendered his writings much superior to most of his own time;

as the works of Messrs. de Port Royal are distinguished at this day, on the same account, from the barbarous rhapsodies of their adversaries and cotemporaries.

Calvin, who was an able lawyer, and a wise divine, though heretical, composed, in concert with the magistrates, a body of civil and ecclesiastical laws, which received the sanction of the people in the year 1543, and are become the established laws of the republic.

The superfluous wealth of the church, which, before the reformation, served only to pamper the luxury of the bishops, and their dependants, was employed in founding an hospital, a college, and an academy.—But the wars, in which Geneva was engaged for near 60 years, retarded the progress of the arts, and of commerce, as well as the sciences. In fine, the ill success of the escalade, attempted by the duke of Savoy in 1602, is the epocha of the tranquillity of this republic.

The Genevois repulsed their enemies, who had attacked them by surprize; and, to deter the duke from attempting such kinds of enterprizes for the future, they ordered three of his principal generals to be hanged. They thought they had a right to treat as criminals and robbers, those who attacked their city, without having made any declaration of war; for this singular and modern piece of policy, of making war without any declaration, was at that time unknown in Europe; and though it has been a practice ever since among the larger states, it is too injurious to small ones ever to be relished by them.

Duke

Duke Charles having lost his generals, and finding himself thus repulsed, gave over all thoughts of making himself master of Geneva.—His example served for a lesson to his successors; and, since that period, Geneva has been gradually increasing in inhabitants, riches, and improvements, in the bosom of peace. Some intestine dissensions indeed (the last of which happened in 1738,) have now and then disturbed a little the tranquillity of the state, but they have been all happily composed under the mediation of France, and the confederate cantons; and their security against foreign dangers is now better provided for than ever, by two late treaties; one concluded in 1749 with France, the other in 1754, with the king of Sardinia.

It is very remarkable, that a city, which contains scarce 24,000 inhabitants, and whose scattered territory consists not of 30 villages, should be a sovereign state, and one of the most flourishing cities of Europe; enriched by her liberty and her commerce, she frequently beholds every-thing around her in flames, without having any share in the calamity. The events which disturb the rest of Europe, afford her only an amusing spectacle, which she observes without taking any part in them. Attached to France by treaties and by commerce, to England by commerce and religion, she is too prudent to interest herself in the wars that embroil these two powerful nations; she pronounces with impartiality upon the justice of their contests, and judges all the sovereigns of Europe, without flattering, injuring, or fearing them.

The city is well fortified, particularly on the side of that prince from whom it has most to fear, the king of Sardinia. On the side of France it is almost open and defenceless; but discipline is kept up as in a military place, the arsenals and magazines well furnished, every citizen is a soldier, as in Switzerland and antient Rome:—The Genevois are allowed to go into foreign service, but the republic does not furnish any state with regular bodies of men, nor does it suffer an enrolment within its own territories.

Though the individuals are rich, the government is poor, from that aversion which the people shew to new taxes, how little burthensome soever. The revenues of the state do not amount to 500,000 livres of French money; and yet, by the admirable œconomy with which they are managed, they are sufficient, and even afford a surplus for extraordinary emergencies.

The people of Geneva are divided into four classes.

1. Citizens—Who are the sons of burgeses, and born in the city; these only are intitled to any share in the magistracy.
2. Burgeses—Who are the sons of burgeses or citizens, but born in a foreign country—or strangers, who have obtained the freedom of the city, which the magistrates have a power to bestow:—These may be appointed of the general council, and even of the grand council, called the council of 200.
3. Inhabitants—Strangers, who have the permission of the magistrates to live there, but no other privilege.
4. Natives—The sons of inhabitants; these have some privileges their fathers have

have not, but are excluded from all share in the government.

At the head of the republic are four syndics, the members of which continue only for one year, and cannot be re-elected till the expiration of four years : To these are joined a small council, consisting of 20 counsellors, a treasurer, and two secretaries of state ; and another corps, which is called the corps of justice. The daily occurrences which require dispatch, whether of a criminal or civil kind, are the province of these two bodies of men.

The grand council is composed of 250 citizens, or burghesses ; these determine upon the more important affairs of the civil government, grant pardons, coin money, elect the members of the petit council, and deliberate on what is proper to be laid before the general council, which comprehends the whole body of the citizens and burghesses, except those under 20, — bankrupts, and those who are rendered infamous : — To this assembly belongs the legislative power, the right of making peace and war, concluding treaties, imposing taxes, and electing the principal magistrates, which is done in the cathedral, with great order and decency, though the number of the electors is about 1500.

It is observable from this account, that the government of Geneva has all the advantages, without any of the inconveniences, of a democracy. Every thing is under the direction of the syndics : All measures for public deliberation proceed from the petit council, and are returned there to be put in execution.

cution.—The city of Geneva seems to have taken for its model that wise law of the antient Germans recorded by Tacitus; “De minoribus rebus principes consultant, de majoribus omnes; ita tamen, ut ea quorum penes plebem arbitrium est, apud principes prætractentur.”

The civil law of Geneva is almost intirely a transcript of the Roman civil law, with some modifications; for instance, a father is not allowed the free disposal of more than half his fortune, the rest is divided equally amongst his children. This law secures, on one hand, the dependance of the child; and prevents the injustice of the father, on the other.

M. de Montesquieu, with reason, calls that an excellent law, which excludes from all public employments those who do not discharge their fathers debts after his death; and yet with more reason, those who do not pay their own.

The degrees of consanguinity, within which marriage is prohibited, are not extended beyond those of the Levitical law. Thus, germain-cousins are allowed to marry, but the prohibited degrees admit of no dispensation.—Divorce is allowed in case of adultery, or wilful desertion after judicial proclamations.

Criminal justice is executed with more regularity than rigour. The torture, which is now laid aside in most countries, and should be every-where, as a useless cruelty, is abolished at Geneva. It is only made use of to criminals under sentence of death, in order to discover their accomplices, where it is necessary.

The

The person accused has a right to a copy of the proceedings against him, and may require the assistance of his parents, and of an advocate, who is allowed eight hours to defend him before the judges. Criminal sentences are pronounced in public by the syndics with much solemnity.

Hereditary dignity is unknown at Geneva: The sons of the first magistrate are lost in the crowd, till their own merit distinguishes them; nobility and riches confer neither rank nor privilege, nor give any facility of advancement to the offices of the state. All solicitation for places is strictly prohibited:—Public employments are so little lucrative, they afford no temptations for the avaricious: They are objects only to nobler minds, by the consideration and respect they procure.

Few disputes come to a legal trial, they are generally adjusted by common friends, by the advocates themselves, and by the judges.

Their sumptuary laws forbid the use of jewels and embroidery, limit the expence of funerals, and oblige all the citizens to walk on foot in the streets, carriages being allowed only in the country.—These laws, which are regarded in France as too severe, nay, almost barbarous and inhuman, by no means abridge the real conveniences of life, which are always to be obtained at little expence; they retrench only the pageantry of it, which contributes not to happiness, and often produces ruin, without any advantage.

There

There is, perhaps, no-where so many happy marriages; Geneva has, in this respect, the start of our manners at least two centuries:—The restraints upon luxury remove the fear of a multitude of children; and by this means luxury is not, as in France, one of the greatest obstacles to population.

Plays are not suffered at Geneva, not because they disapprove of these diversions themselves, but they are afraid, it seems, that a turn for dress, for dissipation and licentiousness, should be introduced among their youth, by such entertainments. Is it not possible, however, to remedy this inconvenience, by wise and well executed laws for the conduct of the players? By such means Geneva might enjoy these amusements, preserve their manners, and have the benefit of both.—Dramatic representations would form the taste of the citizens, and give them a delicacy of feeling, and an elegance of sentiment, which are very difficult to be acquired without this resource. Learning would improve, licentiousness would not increase, and Geneva might unite the wisdom of Sparta, with the politeness of Athens.

There is another consideration worthy the regard of so wise and learned a republic, and ought, perhaps, to persuade them to admit these entertainments. That barbarous prejudice against the profession of a player, that kind of ignominy which we throw upon these people, who are so necessary to the progress and support of the fine arts, is certainly one of the principal causes of the irregularities they are reproached with. They seek, in the indulgences of pleasure,
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some recompence for that want of respect, which their profession cannot obtain.

A comedian, amongst us, who behaves well, deserves a double share of respect, and yet we scarce think him intitled to any. — The scurrilous, who insults the public distress, and supports himself by it; the courtier, who cringes and bows, but pays no debts; — these are a sort of people we honour most. If comedians were not only tolerated at Geneva, but properly regulated, countenanced, respected as they deserve; and, in short, put upon the same footing with the rest of the citizens, this city would soon have the advantage of possessing what is thought so rare, and yet is made so by our own fault, a company of respectable comedians, which would soon become the best in Europe. Persons of good taste, and of a turn for the theatre, who are afraid of hurting their characters with us, by this sort of employment, would resort to Geneva, in order to cultivate, not only without reproach, but with respect, a talent so agreeable and uncommon. Residing here, which many of the French think so melancholy, from the want of public entertainments, would then be living amongst liberal pleasures, and in the bosom of liberty and philosophy; and strangers would no longer be surpris'd at seeing, in a place where decent and regular entertainments are forbidden, the permission of those gross and buffoon farces, which are equally offensive to good taste and good manners: — This is not all; in a little time, the example of the comedians of Geneva, the regularity of their conduct, and the regard paid

paid to them, would serve as a model to the comedians of other nations, and a lesson to those who have hitherto treated them with so much rigour, and even contempt:—We should no longer see them pensioned by the government, and anathematized by the church:—Our priests would lose the habit of excommunicating, our citizens of despising them; and a small republic would have the honour of having reformed Europe in this point, a more important one perhaps than we are aware of.

Geneva has an university, which they call an academy, where youth are educated without expence: The professors are eligible into offices of state—Many of them have become magistrates, and this privilege contributes much to keep up the emulation and fame of the academy.—Some years ago they established a school for designing. The advocates, scriveners, and physicians, form several bodies, into which none are admitted, till after public examination. All the trading companies have likewise their regulations, their apprenticeships, and their governors.

Their public library is a well chosen collection of books, consisting of six and twenty thousand volumes, and a great number of MSS. The books are lent to all the citizens, every one reads and informs himself; and, by this means, the people of Genève are better instructed than any-where else. They find none of those inconveniences, which we suppose would follow the same indulgence amongst us; perhaps the Genevois and our politicians may both be in the right.

Geneva

Geneva was the first, after England, in adopting the practice of inoculation for the small-pox, which has been established with such difficulty in France; which however is established, notwithstanding many of our physicians still oppose it, as their predecessors did the circulation of the blood, the use of emetics, and many other incontestable truths, and practical improvements.

All the sciences, and most of the arts, have been cultivated with so much success at Geneva, that it is surprising to see the list of learned men and artists of every kind, which this city has produced within the two last ages.—It has even had the good fortune sometimes to be the residence of celebrated strangers, whom its agreeable situation, and the liberty it enjoys, have invited to retire thither. M. de Voltaire, who has resided there for the last seven years, finds, among these republicans, the same marks of esteem and consideration, which he has received from so many monarchs.

The art of making clocks and watches is in great perfection at Geneva; more than five thousand people are employed in it, that is to say, more than a fifth part of the citizens. The other arts, agriculture especially, are not neglected. Their great care and labour is a remedy against the natural poverty of the soil. All the houses are built of stone, which very often prevents fires; assistance is immediately had, when they do happen, by their admirable regulations for extinguishing fires.

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The hospitals at Geneva are not, as in other places, a mere refuge for infirmity and disease, the poor traveller is hospitably entertained in them; and besides, a number of small contributions are received there, and doled out to poor families, to enable them to live, without leaving their homes, or their employments. The hospitals expend yearly more than treble their revenue: Such is the munificence and charitable disposition of these people.

What remains, is to say something of the religion of Geneva; a subject more interesting, perhaps, to philosophers than any other: We will therefore enter into this matter with some particularity, desiring our reader, however, to remember, that we are writing history, not controversy, and that to relate is not to approve.

The ecclesiastical constitution of Geneva is pure Presbyterianism; no bishops nor canons;—Not that they disapprove of Episcopacy, but, as they have no faith in the divine right of bishops, they think pastors, not quite so rich and important as bishops, agree better with a small republic.

The ministers are either pastors, like our parish priests, or postulans, as our priests without benefice. The revenue of the pastors does not amount to above 1200 livres, without any casual profits:—The state makes this allowance.—The church has nothing. The ministers are not admitted till they are 24 years of age, and then not till after very strict examinations, both of their learning and morals.—It were much to be wished our church would follow this example.

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The clergy have nothing to do with funerals, it is a mere act of the police, and is done without any parade: They think at Geneva all pomp on such occasions ridiculous. — They bury their dead in a large cemetery, at a convenient distance from the city; a custom that should be followed every-where.

The clergy of Geneva are men of exemplary manners: The ministers live in great harmony together; they are never seen, as in other countries, disputing with bitterness upon subjects that are not intelligible; persecuting one another, accusing one another indecently before the magistrates: It is necessary, however, that they agree in those articles that are thought essential to religion. — Most of them do not believe in the divinity of Christ, of which Calvin, their chief, was so zealous a defender, and on which account he had Servetus burned to death. When they are told of this barbarity, which throws a stain upon the charity and moderation of their patriarch, they do not attempt to defend him; they acknowledge, that Calvin did a very blameable thing, and they content themselves (if it is a Catholic they are talking to) with opposing to the death of Servetus, the horrid day of St. Bartholomew (which every honest Frenchman wishes to blot from our history, even with his blood,) and the punishment of John Huss, which the Catholics themselves, they say, do not venture to justify; where humanity and good faith were equally violated; and which should cover the memory of the emperor Sigismund with eternal disgrace.

It is no inconsiderable proof of the progress of human reason, says M. Voltaire, that it has been allowed to say, in a book printed at Geneva with public approbation, (An essay on universal history by this author) “ Calvin had a bad heart with a good understanding, the death of Servetus appears at this day abominable.” We presume, the encomiums, due to this noble liberty of thinking and writing, belong equally to the author, to his age, and to Geneva. How many countries are there, in which philosophy has made equal progress, but where truth is still in captivity, where reason dares not raise her voice, to reprobate what she condemns in silence, and where too many pusillanimous writers, whom they called learned, pay respect to prejudices, which they might remove with equal decency and success.

The notion of hell, one of the great articles of our creed, many of the clergy of Geneva do not believe in. They think it injurious to the Deity to suppose, that a Being of so much goodness and justice should be capable of punishing our faults with an eternity of torment.

They explain away, as well as they can, the passages of Scripture, which expressly contradict this opinion, asserting, that no passage in the sacred books should be literally interpreted, against which humanity and reason revolt. They believe, however, that there are sufferings in another life, but these only temporary: Thus Purgatory, which was one of the principal causes of the separation of Protestants from the Roman communion, is the only punishment they

they believe in after death ; — Another instance to be added to the history of human contradictions.

In short, perfect Socinianism is the religion of most of their pastors ; rejecting every-thing that is called mystery, they imagine the first principle of a religion that is true, is, to propose nothing as an article of faith, that is not reconcileable to reason: Thus, when they are urged with the necessity of revelation, so essential a doctrine of Christianity, they substitute the term of *utility*, which they like better. In this, if they are not orthodox, they are at least consistent with their own principles.

A clergy, who think in this manner, should have a spirit of toleration, which is a sufficient reason to make them regarded with an evil eye by the ministers of other reformed churches : One may venture to say, however, without intending to approve in other respects the religion of Geneva, that there are few countries where the theologians and ecclesiastics are greater enemies to superstition ; on the other hand, as intolerance and superstition serve only to multiply unbelievers, there are fewer complaints at Geneva, than in other places, of the progress of infidelity ; which is not to be wondered at. Religion there is confined almost intirely to the adoration of one God, at least among those who are not of the multitude ; a reverence for Christ, and for the Scriptures, are perhaps the only points that distinguish from pure Deism the Christianity of Geneva.

Toleration is not the only good quality of the ecclesiastics ; observing strictly the duties of their function,

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they are the first in giving the citizens an example of submission to the laws. The consistory, established to superintend their conduct, inflict only spiritual punishments. The differing interests of church and state, which, in times of ignorance, have shaken the crowns of so many emperors, and which we know but too well have been the cause of dreadful calamities even in more enlightened ages, are quite unknown at Geneva. The clergy do nothing without the approbation of the magistrates.

Their worship is simple and plain; no images, no lights, no ornaments in their churches. They have just now new-fronted their cathedral in a good taste, perhaps, in a little time, they may decorate the inside of their churches: Where, indeed, should be the inconvenience of having pictures and statues, directing the people, if they thought proper not to pay any worship to them, to regard them only as memorials intended to represent, in a striking and agreeable manner, the great events of religion? Superstition would not be encouraged by this, and the arts would improve. We speak here as the reader would think, on the principles of the Genevois clergy, not on those of the Catholic faith.

Their church service consists of sermons and hymns; their sermons are in a great measure confined to subjects of morality, by which they are so much the better; their singing is in a wretched taste, and the French verses they sing still worse: One would hope they will make some reform in this respect. They have lately placed an organ in the cathedral, and perhaps,

haps, in time, may perform the religious worship in better language, and with better music. In other respects, truth obliges us to say, the Supreme Being is worshipped at Geneva with a decency and sobriety not to be found in our churches.

We should not probably have said so much, if we had been writing upon the government of a great monarchy. In the eye of philosophy, the republic of bees is not less interesting, than the history of a mighty kingdom; and perhaps it is only in little states that we can find a perfect model of political government. If religion will not allow us to think the Genevois have taken the best means to secure the happiness of another life, reason obliges us to confess, they are almost as happy as they can be in this.—

O fortunatos nimium sua si bona norint!

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THE ABUSE OF CRITICISM IN RELIGION.

Quæ caput a cœli regionibus ostendebat.

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FAther Laubrussel, an author of little note, and less merit, published a work, which has been long since forgot, with the same title that this bears.

His aim was to revenge religion of those important attacks which infidelity and heresy have made against it. The enterprize was very laudable, and it is to be lamented that he was not more happy in the execution of it; and that he has so frequently substituted declamations and injuries in the room of reasoning; however, without approving his logic, we may reckon something to the account of his zeal, if zeal ought to cover a multitude of trifles, as charity a multitude of sins. The object we have in view is very different from this, but not less useful, and we shall endeavour to execute it better. It is to vindicate philosophers from the reproach of impiety with which they have often been unjustly charged, by ascribing to them sentiments not their own; giving forced interpretations to their words; drawing from their principles odious and false consequences which they disavow; in a word, by stigmatizing as criminal, or dangerous, opinions which Christianity has not forbid. Among the innumerable abuses with which criticism may be reproached, there is none more pernicious than that we are complaining of: it is highly necessary therefore

therefore we should pull off the mask, and discountenance it.

The importance of this subject, perhaps, would require a considerable work; the reflexions I am going to lay before the reader are but a plan or sketch; may they meet with the approbation of those sages who equally understand the rights of faith and reason; may this scheme of an apology be esteemed and adopted by some of our celebrated writers, more worthy and more capable of executing it than myself.

II. The first duty either in defending truth or enquiring after it, is to be just; we will begin with acknowledging that the advocates for Christianity have some reason to be apprehensive for it, at least as far as they ought to be for that which is not the production of man. It is not to be dissembled that Christianity is now-a-days indecently attacked in a great number of writings. It is true the manner in which it is commonly done, is sufficient to satisfy those who might be alarmed by the attack. The desire to lay aside all the restraint of passion, and the vanity of thinking different from the multitude, have made more unbelievers than the illusions of sophism, if indeed we are to include in the number of unbelievers all those impious persons who only wish to appear so, and, as Montaigne says, would fain be worse than they are able. Such a shower of arrows shot from all sides against Christianity, has thrown some of our most pious writers into consternation. Engaged to sustain the cause and honour of religion,

which they believe to be in danger, because they see it outrageously beset, they lie in ambush, if I may so speak, to surprise infidelity in every new book, and it must be confessed, that they have found out a sad and plentiful crop: but some among them, like soldiers transported by an impetuosity of courage and ardour beyond their rank, expose themselves to be attacked in flank; and in the vehemence of their zeal and their researches, betray an indiscretion dangerous to their cause. When they have not been able to find real impieties, they have been obliged to forge imaginary ones, to have the honour of combating them. They have supposed intentions when crimes have been wanting, and have gone so far as to accuse silence itself.

“Socrates, said a Roman, I am attacked on account of my words, because I am innocent in my actions.” So might one of our philosophers say, I am attacked on account of my thoughts, because I am irreproachable in my words. Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse, put to death one of his subjects who had conspired against him in a dream. There is seldom wanting a false zeal to carry injustice still further than credit or power. The tyrant punished dreams; the enemies of philosophy suppose them, demand the blood of the guilty, and it is but rare that they have not obtained it, to the shame of reason and humanity.

III. Nothing has been more common than the charge of irreligion brought against learned men by those who have no pretensions to philosophy. Pericles had scarce

scarce credit enough to save Anaxagoras, accused of atheism by the Athenian priests, for having pretended, that the universe was governed by one Supreme Intelligence, according to general and invariable laws. The allies of Socrates were still smothering, when Aristotle, being cited by fanatical enemies before the same judges, was forced to shun persecution by flight. "We must not expose, says he, philosophy to a second injury." The superstitious Athenians, who applauded the impiety of Aristophanes, suffered him to turn the objects of their worship into ridicule, and would not suffer any other to be substituted in their stead. No-body was forbid to speak of the Divinity among the Greeks, but those only who were capable of doing it worthily. But without rising so high as the age of Anaxagoras, Socrates and Aristotle, let us confine ourselves to what is passing in our own.

IV. The famous jesuit Harduin, one of the first men of his age for the depth of his erudition, and one of the last for the ridiculous use he made of it, had once the extravagance to compose a piece on purpose to put under the ban of atheism, without shame or remorse, respectable authors, many of whom had solidly proved the existence of God in their writings; an absurdity well worthy of a visionary, who pretended that most of the best works of antiquity were composed by monks of the 13th century. This pious sceptic in attacking, as he did, the certainty of almost all historical monuments, deserved more than any man the name of an enemy to religion,

if his opinions had not been too stupid to have any followers. "His folly, says a celebrated writer, takes away the heinousness of his calumny; but those who repeat this calumny in our age, are not always reckoned fools, and they are often very dangerous." Naturally intolerant in their opinions, however indifferent they are in themselves, these men seize with eagerness every thing which may serve for a pretext to render their opinions respectable. They want to connect with Christianity the most contentious metaphysical questions, and the most arbitrary systems of philosophy. In vain does religion, so simple and precise as it is in its doctrines, reject constantly an alliance which dishonours it; it is on account of this imaginary alliance that it has been imagined to have been attacked in those works where there is not the least suspicion. Let us enter into a detail with relation to this point, and shew with what injustice the wisest and most respectable philosophers have been treated on a subject of such importance.

V. Give me matter and motion and I will make a world, said Descartes once, and after him one of his followers. This proposition, which has been regarded as injurious to God, is, perhaps, the sublimest thing which philosophy has pronounced of the glory of the Supreme Being; a thought so profound and so great could only come from a great genius, who, on one side, perceived the necessity of an Almighty Intelligence to give existence and impulse to matter, and who perceived, on the other, the simplicity and
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the variety not less to be admired of the laws of motion; laws, by virtue of which the Creator has included all events in the first, as their seed, and need nothing to produce them but a *word*, according the sublime language of Scripture. This is all that the proposition of Descartes can mean, to one who is disposed to understand it; but the enemies of reason, who only perceive the works of the Supreme Being in miniature, and who offer him a worship that is rigid, pusillanimous, and bounded like themselves, discern nothing in the purer and sublimer homage of philosophy, but a proud fabricator of systems, who seems to wish to put himself in the place of the Divinity.

VI. The Newtonians admitted a vacuum and attraction; this was very near the physic of Epicurus; now this philosopher was an atheist, and therefore the Newtonians must be the same; such is the logic of one of their adversaries. Notwithstanding, it is true that no philosophy is more favourable to the belief of the being of a God than Newton's. For how should the particles of matter, which have no action themselves, be able to tend towards one another, unless this tendency was excited by the Omnipotent will of a Sovereign Mover? A Cartesian atheist is one who is mistaken in his principles; a Newtonian atheist would be something worse, a philosopher who draws false conclusions.

VII. "When I lift up my eyes to heaven, said an
 "impious man, I believe I see traces of the Divinity,
 "but when I look around me—" Look within you,

one might answer, and woe be to you if that proof is not sufficient. Indeed nothing else is necessary but to descend into ourselves, to discover the workmanship of a Sovereign Intelligence which has given us existence, and has preserved us in it. That existence is a prodigy which cannot strike us too much, because it is a continual one. It brings back to our mind every instance of a Supreme Power on which we depend. But the more sensible the impression of his acting is upon ourselves and all surrounding objects, the more inexcusable are we in seeking it in minute and frivolous objects. A learned man, of modern times, who was so persuaded of the existence of God, that he has investigated and given new proofs of it; nevertheless thought it is his duty to attack certain puerile, and even indecent arguments, by which certain authors have attempted to establish this great truth, but in reality have only injured and degraded it. This philosopher took those weapons out of the hands of atheists, which the weakness of these authors lent them; would one expect he should be charged with furnishing them? yet this is what those ignorant or treacherous censors have been so scandalous as to reproach him with. Thus the illustrious Boerhaave was once accused of Spinozism, because having heard that this system was badly attacked by some unknown person more orthodox, he asked him, if he had read what he was going to confute.

VIII. The same philosopher, too easily moved by the differences of certain scholastics about the arguments for the existence of God, has pretended, that the
proofs

proofs, on which it rests, are not, properly speaking, demonstrations; that they turn only upon very great probabilities, and that they derive their invincible force from their multitude and their union. We are far from believing that no proof of the being of God is rigorously demonstrative, but we are not the more disposed therefore to tax with atheism those who think otherwise. The existence of Cæsar is not demonstrated like the theorems of geometry; is that a reason for entertaining the least doubt about it? In an infinity of matters, many arguments may form in the mind, by their concurrence, a conviction as strong as that which springs from demonstration, though each particular in itself is only probable, as a concurrence of testimonies in the support of a fact produces a certainty as irreverfible as that of geometry, though of a different kind. This is what Pascal has before remarked on the proof of the being of God; and was Pascal ever suspected of doubting this truth? The enemies of that great man have said, that it was a sufficient answer to his 18 provincial letters to repeat 18 times that he was a heretic, but they never once dared to say that he was an atheist.

IX. Some writers have maintained that the explicit and distinct notion of the creation, is not to be found either in the Old or New Testament. This assertion has been attacked as impious; it would have been more natural to have discussed this point by an examination of the passages themselves, and this examination would not have been difficult; but whatever side we take, it seems to me that faith has nothing

to fear ; this needs some explication. The creation, as the theologians themselves confess, is a truth which reason itself teaches, a necessary effect of the existence of a first Being. This notion then is of the number of those which revelation supposes, and upon which there is no occasion for it to speak in an express and particular manner. It is sufficient that the sacred books affirm nothing in contradiction to it. It is on this account we do not accuse them ; and when some of the ancient Christian fathers, as it is pretended, did not express themselves with sufficient clearness on the subject of creation, is it a reason for believing they thought matter to be eternal ?

X. The opinion which has been attributed to two or three fathers upon the nature of the soul, has raised the same clamour, and deserves the same answer. If we may believe different critics, those fathers had not very distinct ideas about the spirituality of the thinking principle, and seemed to have made it material. The pretension, however, of these critics, whether well or ill-founded, has furnished a handle to accuse them of that materialism they attribute to others ; for, now-a-days, materialism, which we see every where the hydra, has seven heads to combat ; but if two or three ecclesiastical writers have been in an error, which we do not pretend to determine, what has this mistake to do with religion ? are the philosophical proofs for the spirituality of the soul less convincing ? cannot we allow the full force to these proofs which Descartes first investigated and explained, and believe, that some of the fathers of the church were

were not acquainted with them? But, say they, those who maintain that the distinct idea of creation is not to be found in the Scripture, nor the spirituality of the soul in the ancient doctors, do it only because they pretend that the world is eternal, and the soul matter. If they pretend this, they ought to be convinced of the contrary, nothing is more necessary or more just; but it should seem not to be the likeliest way that can be chose to misrepresent them, especially when they acknowledge, as many have done in the most express terms, those two truths which they are charged with calling in question.

XI. It is not enough to stand up against impiety, we must not be mistaken in the kind of impiety we attack. “ I am accused, said a Pyrrhonian one day, of
 “ materialism. This is just as if a Constitutionary
 “ should be accused of Jansenism; if I was to doubt,
 “ it would rather be upon the existence of matter than
 “ of thought. I know nothing of the former, but
 “ from the equivocal report of my senses; and I know
 “ the other by the infallible testimony of interior sen-
 “ timent; my own thought assures me of the exist-
 “ ence of a thinking principle. The idea which I
 “ have of body and extension is much more uncertain
 “ and obscure, and upon this object I only entertain
 “ a reasonable scepticism. Thus instead of being a
 “ materialist, I am inclined to deny the existence of
 “ matter, at least such as my senses represent to me;
 “ but it appears to me wiser to be silent and to
 “ doubt.”

The name of materialist (I cannot help repeating it) is become now-a-days a kind of war-hoop; it is a qualification which is indiscriminately applied to all kinds of unbelievers, and even to those whom we want to stigmatize as such. In all religions, and in all times, fanaticism has not plumed itself, either upon equity or justice: It has given to those, whom it wanted to damn, not the names they deserved, but those which would do them most hurt: Thus, in the primitive times, the Pagans gave all Christians the name of Jews.

XII. During the reign of the Aristotelian philosophy; that is, for many ages, it was believed, that all our ideas came from the senses; and it could not be imagined, that an opinion, so conformable to reason and experience, should ever be regarded as dangerous. It was even forbid, on pain of death, to teach a contrary doctrine. The punishment was, it must be confessed, a little hard, whether our ideas are derived from sense or not. It is right all the world should live; but the prohibition and the penalty prove the religious attachment of our fathers to an antient opinion, “that sensation is the source of all knowledge.” Descartes came, and said, “The soul is spiritual: Now, what is a spiritual being without ideas? The soul therefore has ideas from the instant its existence commences, that is, it has innate ideas.” This reasoning, joined to the attraction of a new opinion, seduced many schools; but they went farther than their master. From the spirituality of the soul, Descartes concluded innate ideas; one of his disciples concluded

concluded more, that to deny innate ideas, was to deny the spirituality of the soul; perhaps they would have made innate ideas an article of faith, if they could have dissembled, that this pretended truth was only discovered in the last century. We have seen theologians carry their extravagance so far, as to maintain, that the opinion, which unites our ideas to our sensations, endangers the mystery of original sin, and the grace of baptism. It is thus, that the most incontestable maxims in philosophy and the mathematics have been attacked, under pretence of their seeming opposition with some doctrine of faith: Besides, is it impossible to combat innate ideas, by the same weapons of religion which established it? Must not an infant, who has the idea of God, as the Cartesians pretend, from the breast, and even from the womb, also know the duties owing to God, which is contrary to the first principles of religion and common sense? Will any one say, the idea of God exists in infants, without being developed? But what are ideas which the soul possesses without knowing them, and the things which it knows without thought, and yet is obliged to learn afterwards, as much as if it had never known them? A spiritual being, some may say, must necessarily have ideas from the moment it exists. It is easy to answer, that this being, in the first moments of its existence, may be confined to sensation; that a capacity of thinking is sufficient to constitute it immaterial, since that power, by the confession of all divines, belongs only to a spiritual substance. But further, to decide in what spirituality consists,

consists, and whether it be the nature of a spiritual being to think, or even to perceive always, what distinct idea have we of the nature of the soul? Let us ask Malebranche, who will not be suspected of confounding mind with matter. In fine, it is by our senses that we have the knowledge of corporeal substance: It is therefore through their means, that we have been taught to regard it as incapable of will and sensation, and consequently of thought: From thence result two consequences; the first, that we owe to our sensations and reflections the knowledge we have of the immateriality of the soul; in the second place, that the idea we have of spirituality is negative, which teaches what a spiritual being is not, without informing us what it is; it would be presumption to think otherwise, and weakness to believe we must think otherwise to be orthodox.

The soul is neither matter nor extension, and yet it is something; though gross prejudice, fortified by habitude, leads us to judge, that what is not matter is nothing. See where philosophy conducts us, and where it leaves us!

XIII. That strange madness, of wishing to convert into doctrines the most groundless opinions concerning the soul, is not peculiar to our age. We will relate only a single example. Hincmar, archbishop of Rheims, who got Gothescalc so well scourged at the council of Quercy, while it was proving that Gothescalc was blameable, procured the condemnation of one John Scot Erigones, who, among many real errors, maintained, that the soul was not in the body. It is difficult

difficult to conceive in what this pretended heresy could consist; for it is the property of the body only to be in one place rather than in another; and, if they had been as vigilant against materialism in the 9th century as at present, John Scot would have had a good chance for accusing his adversary. The soul is united to the body in a manner altogether unknown to us, and inexplicable by all the dark metaphysics of the schools; but, in the time of Hincmar, they were too ignorant to know how to doubt.

XIV. If the philosopher, always obliged to express himself clearly, ought not to allow himself any improper expressions on so delicate a subject, he ought not to condemn too lightly, and without explication, equivocal expressions on a subject which is likewise so obscure, and which gives us such little hold to reasoning and to language: For example, an author, who should say now-a-days, that the soul "is essentially the substantial form of the human body," would at least be suspected of materialism. Nevertheless, whoever should advance such a proposition, would only repeat the first canon of the general council of Vienna. The truth is, the word *form* is a vague term, to which the fathers of the council undoubtedly applied a catholic sense, and consequently, we may be permitted to use it, if we fix the same sense to it.

In a modern work this canon is mentioned and explained, to prevent the abuse the materialists of our days might make of it. This apologist might repent him of his zeal, if a good action should be repented of;

of; for, notwithstanding the serious and simple tone of his defence, he has been foolishly accused of an intention to turn into ridicule the doctrine of the œcumenic council.

XV. This is not the only example of equivocal expressions used differently in the schools, or even adopted now-a-days by whole sects of philosophers. Malebranche, and his disciples, called God, the Universal Being. The Spinozists would not express themselves otherwise. The Scotists allow God to be extended, eternal, immense, immoveable, indivisible; and it is only by involving themselves in an obscure jargon, that they defend their making him corporeal, or at least extended: Nevertheless, it would be unjust to accuse Malebranche of Spinozism, or the Scotists of confounding God with space. Why should not the same indulgence be shewn to men as little inclined to deceive as they? And it is the more equitable, as there is no subject where an intention to injure finds more plausible pretences of exerting itself, than religion. Expressions that are innocent in themselves, or in the sense affixed to them by their author, are often made susceptible of an erroneous or dangerous sense, especially when separated from that which goes before, and that which follows. To convince us of this, it is sufficient to cast our eyes upon the innumerable abuses, which error has made of Scripture expressions.

XVI. The metaphysical opinions of the philosophers have not been the object of a thousand declamations only, their systems too, concerning the formation and arrangement

rangement of the universe, have met with the same fate. Matter is not eternal; it must have begun therefore to exist; here is a point where we may differ: Has God ranged in order the different particles of matter from the time that he created them, or was it a greater or lesser time that chaos continued, before the separation of the particles? here philosophers may be divided. Indeed, if there be nothing in body but figure and motion, as sound philosophy intimates, what difficulty is there in supposing, that the Supreme Being, after creating matter, and forming it instantly into a single, homogeneous mass, apparently shapeless, should impress upon its different particles that movement, which is necessary to separate, or bring them to one another, and produce by this means different bodies; and that light, stars, animals, and plants, spring from this great operation, the work of the eternal Geometician, in that succession and time the Creator prescribed? This grand and noble idea, so far from being a contradiction to divine power and goodness, serves to display them before our eyes. Besides, the existence of chaos, before the separation of its particles, is an hypothesis necessary to the physical explanation of the formation of the terrestrial globe.

The Supreme Being had power, at the same instant, to create and arrange the world, without having forbid the philosopher from inquiring, in what manner he might have produced it in a longer time, and by virtue of laws of motion established by the Author of nature. The system of this philosopher may be more
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or less consistent with phænomena, but the naturalist, not the theologian, must judge him. Thus the Newtonians, to explain the figure of the earth, supposed that it was originally a fluid. Thus Descartes thought it once a sun, obscured by a thick crust which covered it; an hypothesis which has occasioned as much pitiable chicanery among divines, as solid objections among philosophers.

XVII. No natural philosopher now-a-days doubts, that the sea has covered a great part of the earth. It appears impossible to attribute solely to the deluge all the vestiges which remain of so antient an inundation; this opinion has been attacked, as contrary to Scripture: We need only open the book of Genesis, to see how unjust such an imputation is, “On the third day God said, let the waters assemble together in one place; and there was dry land.” Has this passage any need of a commentary? Perhaps we might find, in the same chapter, proofs of the existence of chaos before the formation of the world, if we had not already observed it is of no consequence to religion, provided that we do not maintain the eternity of chaos. But we cannot omit, without censure, on this occasion, the bad judgment of a modern critic. The illustrious historian of the academy of sciences, in one of his extracts, said, that fish were the first inhabitants of our globe: The censor inveighs with all his might against the impiety, not believing that he had Scripture for his voucher. Consult Genesis, and we find, that he either wants honesty or memory, for we there read, that

that fish were in reality the first animals that were created.

XVIII. No person is ignorant, that the passage in the book of Joshua, which has been both injudiciously attacked and defended, was the cause of Galileo's misfortunes. "Wherefore, say your quick geniuses, did Joshua
" order the sun to stand still, instead of commanding
" the earth? What difficulty could there be for an
" author, who pretends to be inspired, to describe
" things as they really are? Why should the Holy
" Spirit, which dictated the Scriptures, lead us into
" a physical error, while it clears up our duty?"
" You ought to believe, answer the inquisitors on
" the other hand, that the sun turns round the earth;
" the Holy Spirit, which ought to know, assures you
" of it, and it cannot deceive you." One might
reply to them both, that, in indifferent matters, the
Scripture makes use of the language of the people.
But this answer is not sufficient; it seems to me, that,
in order to confound the impiety of one side, and the
weakness of the other, we should add, that the
Scripture must speak the language of the people, in
order to be understood; that a missionary, preaching
among savages in this manner, " I announce to you,
" that God, who makes the earth we inhabit roll
" round the sun," would engage no attention to his
discourse. It is necessary for us to hold another kind
of language to induce them to hear us; we must imi-
tate, in some measure, the example of him, who had
recourse to a fable to dispose the Athenians to listen
to him. In a word, we should first of all make them
Christians;

Christians ; and afterwards, if we please, or if we can, make them astronomers. When they are such, they will not seek for systems of the world in ill-understood passages of Scripture ; and, in forming their opinions, they will prefer the observatory to the holy office. They will be like the king of Spain, who, as Pascal informs us, chose rather to believe the antipodes on the authority of Columbus, who came from thence, than reject them, on account of pope Zechariah, who never had been there. Let us respect Scripture so as never to use it profanely ; and let us leave madam Dacier to justify the talking of Achilles's horses in Homer, by the discourse of Balaam's ass.

XIX. Opinions purely metaphysical, and systems concerning the formation of the world, have not furnished the only pretences for arraigning philosophers ; calumny has neglected nothing that might conduce to the same purpose. Can one refrain from sentiments of pity or indignation, to see one of our most celebrated writers accused of impiety by journalists, for having said, that Jordan is but a small river, that Palestine was, at the time of the crusades, what it is now, one of the most barren countries of Asia ?

Critics accumulate passages of Scripture to prove, that it was very fertile in Joshua's days : But what do all these passages prove of this place in the time of Saladin, or of its present state ? Why may not God have avenged the death of Christ, by turning its riches and abundance into sterility ? Or rather, (for the simplest explanations are always the best) why
may

may not a country, enslaved and unpeopled, become barren by that very depopulation? But, when they are determined to make a writer suspected, everything is impiety in his lips; his proofs of the being of God are treated as sophisms, his arguments in favour of religion, as pleasantries levelled against it. Let him write against superstition and fanaticism, it is Christianity he aims at: Does he plead for the civil toleration of every religion, it is only to shew his indifference to all.

XX. Give me, said Fontenelle, in his history of oracles, but half a dozen men who are capable of being persuaded, that it is not the sun which makes the day, and I will not despair of bringing all nations, by their means, into the same belief. If any-thing in the world is incontestable, it is assuredly this proposition, of which the absurd religions of Asia and Africa furnish but too melancholy and striking a proof. What have the censors of the history of oracles made of this? “Why it only wanted half a dozen more, say they, to make it an impious assertion.” The impiety, however, is intirely their own; for, if half a dozen were capable of seducing mankind into error, does it follow, that twelve different persons could not lead them into truth? In what respects can the many just and solid observations, which have been made in modern times, upon prejudice, credulity, false prophecies, and false miracles, affect those invincible arguments by which true religion is supported?

XXI. The fathers of the church, the first defenders of Christianity, did not distrust in this manner the goodness

ness of their cause. They were not afraid of objections, nor open day; they were ignorant of false attacks, and pusillanimous precautions. Many writers of our days, worthy to follow them in so noble a career, have imitated their example; but if the respectable cause of the gospel has had its Pascals and Bossuets, it has likewise had its Chaumeiux and its Garasse's.

XXII. The abuse of criticism in religious matters is pernicious to religion itself on many accounts;—for the dissingenuity and trifling with which a good cause is sometimes defended;—for the consequences drawn by the multitude from the vague charge of irreligion brought against the philosophers,—for the motives which have induced men, pretendedly good, to declare war against reason;—in short, from the little union, and reciprocal animosity, of its adversaries; each of these objects merits a separate article, and we will devote a few moments to them.

XXIII. The Encyclopedia will furnish us with the subject of the first article. Under substantial forms we mentioned the argument of the Cartesians against the souls of beasts, drawn from this principle of St. Austin, that, “under a just God, no creature could suffer, “who had not deserved it;” an argument well known in the schools, which Malebranche has availed himself of with much force; and which sensible philosophers and divines have always looked upon as very difficult to confute. In explaining this argument, it was remarked at the same time, that this was at most an objection, which ought not to hurt those

these proofs, there are of the spirituality of the soul, of its immortality, and of Divine justice and providence.

What has one of the adversaries of the Encyclopedia made of this? He has pretended, that the only design of this article was to ridicule this principle of St. Austin; and to prove it, they have concluded from the principle, that he looked upon brutes as machines, an opinion very far from the good doctor's thoughts, and the honour of which solely belongs to his pretended apologist. Thus it is not the Encyclopedia, but its ridiculous adversary, who accuses one of the most respectable fathers of the church of absurdities and false conclusions, and in this manner it is that religion is defended. According to this new apostle, it is not possible to be Christians without believing brutes to be machines. Thus from St. Peter, to Descartes, there have been no Christians. But this writer astonishes us with equal absurdities, when he pretends, that moral duties are not known by reason, and that the existence of the body is a truth of revelation, and maintains, in short, against unbelievers, that the soul is of its own nature immortal; a proposition which is blasphemous, since it robs the Supreme Intelligence of one of his most essential attributes. The uncreated Being alone is of his essence immortal. Our soul exists only by the will of this Being, who thinks proper to give it an eternal existence, which it receives every instant by a continual creation. It is not by the dissolution of the parts that the soul ceases to be as the body does; it

is in relapsing into that non-entity, from whence the author of nature drew it, and to which it is liable every instant to return. These are the first elements of Christian metaphysics, which the author ought to have been instructed in before he wrote. It must be a sad and humbling circumstance to be obliged to learn this doctrine of those very persons whom he taxes with denying them.

XXIV. Those who exercise their critical talents with most violence, and consequently with indiscretion, assume sometimes the air of moderation, when they are sure of attacking with advantage. I know not by what fatality the champions of Christianity have acted otherwise, and supported the interest of God with injurious malignity. They have this disadvantage, that they prejudice the reader against the advocates of religion, they exasperate, and consequently alienate those minds which would be reconciled by moderation; in short, they hinder the critic from bestowing upon the arguments all the regard and attention that is due to them. When they content themselves, for example, as enthusiasts sometimes do, with saying of atheists, that they are not honest, and that atheism has its source only in libertinism, this undoubtedly may be true in general; but have they any reason to expect to make profelytes by these means? Although the interest we have in denying a truth may render our unbelief suspected, this interest is not a sufficient reason for being condemned, when better proofs may be offered. The more a wise man examines the evidence of God's existence, the more
intelli-

intelligence will he derive from thence, and the more ought he to be in a disposition to offer him a reasonable worship, the only one which truly honours him, and which is one of the first of his precepts.

The best method of maintaining that atheists cannot be honest, is to prove, with the greatest clearness, the truth they oppose. Let us not imitate a modern writer, who began with advancing that there were no infidels, and ended with refuting them; besides, of what signification to truth are the motives of those who deny it? what, does it contribute towards conviction to disallow our adversaries probity and good faith? This is imitating the schoolmaster in the fable, who scolded the boy for drowning himself, and made an harangue before he would save him. Can it be denied, in short, that many philosophers, ancient and modern, accused of atheism or scepticism, have been, in appearance at least, irreproachable in their conduct, and shewn themselves as regular in their manners, as blind and inconclusive in their opinions? "Strike, but hear," said Themistocles to Eurebiades; one might say to these pretended champions of religion, "strike, but reason." Alas! it is to be feared such wise and prudent advice as this might be repeated a long while without effect. Excess in every thing is the element of man; his nature is to be passionate upon all subjects which engage him; moderation is to him a state of violence; it is only through constraint or reflexion that he submits, and when the importance of the cause he defends, serves for a pretext to his animosity, he abandons himself to it with-

out decency or remorse. Has false zeal then forgot that the Gospel has two precepts equally indispensable, the love of God, and our neighbour? and does it imagine that the best way of keeping the first is by violating the second?

XXV. The defence of Christianity has not only been prejudiced by aspersions, but by the nature of the accusations, and the character of the accused. The more heinous it is to propagate irreligion, the more criminal it is to accuse others of so doing who are innocent; in this case particularly, it is more necessary that we judge of men by what they have written, than by what they are unjustly suspected of having thought, or intended to say. Faith is the gift of God, which is not to be procured of ourselves*, and all that society ordains, is to respect this precious gift in those who have the happiness to enjoy it; it belongs to men to judge of discourse, and to God, of the heart. Thus the charge of irreligion, especially when brought before the public, cannot be supported by proofs too convincing and notorious. But this precaution, so equitable in itself, is still more necessary when a celebrated writer is attacked, whose name is sufficient to give weight to his opinions, even to those he is

* If he means by faith the belief of the Christian religion in general, it is to be procured of ourselves by the exercise of common candour, like the belief of any historical event or moral truth; but if he means the belief of some doctrines of human invention, falsely ascribed to Christianity, he may call it supernatural, if he pleases.

falsely accused of. What advantage did religion derive from the imputations and invectives so often cast upon the illustrious author of the Spirit of Laws? On the one hand, they have not been able to convict him of having meant the least injury to the Gospel, of which he speaks with the greatest respect throughout his work: on the other, the infidels have gloried in a chief so generously given them; they have accepted with gratitude this present, and the name of Montesquieu has been more serviceable to them, than the pretended blows he is accused of levelling against Christianity. Authority is the great argument of the multitude; and infidelity, said a man of genius, is the faith of libertines. After so many writings and pious railings against the author of the Spirit of Laws, the sensible defenders of religion, who at first kept silence, at length broke it (perhaps a little too late) to vindicate this philosopher themselves. They felt the weight of a name which they had opposed, and did not forget to blot it out of the list of miscreants, where it had been rashly placed.

XXVI. Should we wish to know one of the principal causes of this declared war against philosophers: The divines of France are divided into two parties, who have long detested and tore one another in pieces for the glory of God, and the good of the church and state. The weakest of the two, after exhausting all that malice or calumny could invent to defeat their adversaries, concluded with taxing them of indifference towards the doctrines of the Gospel, attacked every day in innumerable writings. Sensible of this re-

proach, and piqued in honour, they seem to have united with the weaker to fall foul upon all infidels indiscriminately, whether real or supposed. This offensive alliance ought naturally to have put a stop to the war that has been kindled in the bosom of the Gallican church above these 100 years, but, unhappily for religion, it does not produce this effect, and one cannot say, on this occasion, "*facti sunt amici ex ipsa die*;" on the contrary, this declared war against the common enemy, has only furnished the two parties with a new pretext for reviling one another with the more fury and scandal; a late striking example will be a sad proof of what we now advance: there appeared last year a work famous for a great number of editions and criticisms that were made upon it, which we condemn, with the author, as far as they are found worthy of censure. The Journalists of Trevoux, who have enjoyed the privilege of abusing every-thing under the name of irreligion, whether it mentioned it or no, made a very brisk attack upon this work in their vulgar dogmatical style, and have endeavoured even to lessen the talents of this author; but in this last respect, indeed, they must permit us to be of a different opinion from them; matters of taste and philosophy are a profane sort of knowledge, in which they dare not pique themselves with being infallible. Divinity is their fort, and yet it is a province which good men now contest with them. However, these journalists enjoyed their victory peaceably, till a periodical concealed writer, a more declared enemy to them than even

even to the infidel, came to make his charge in his turn against the same book, which had been so zealously and largely attacked already. But it happened that the blows of this new bruiser fall much heavier upon the journalists than the work itself. “Behold, says he, the effects of the abominable morality of the casuists, behold the doctrine of the Casnedis, the Tamborins, the Berruyers and their brethren, consecrated in this pernicious production.” The reasonable men, on the other hand, exclaim in their turn: “See the brethren of the Casnedis, the Tamborins, and the Berruyers, well recompenced for their zeal and religion, avenged in a very edifying manner.” Indeed, if these critics accuse one another of being in the principles of the author condemned, one of them must necessarily be dishonest; let us not think of taxing them in common, and deciding their quarrel like the process of the wolf and the fox before the ape.

XXVII. When we see the author of a libel, twenty times disgraced by the magistrate, declaim against infidels, we cannot help thinking of Calvin, who burnt Servetus. But fanatics are always austere; in accusing the person who differs from them in opinion of irreligion, they give themselves an air of zeal, which is always agreeable to partymen; they have the satisfaction of calumniating government, which is indifferent to them, in comparison of what they call the cause of God, which is in reality their own. However, this may be said with confidence, if those are to be punished who do most harm to Christianity, fanatics

ought much rather to be suppressed than infidels. What idea must the people form of religion when they see its ministers anathematizing each other, till authority forces them to that silence which charity itself ought to prescribe? Don't we believe, that the scandalous disputes of divines of our days, upon matters often futile, and always unintelligible, have not done more mischief to Christianity, than the feeble reasonings of the impious? Why shall they not produce the same effect upon the deists, which the quarrels of the Dominicans did upon the emperor of China? "These men, says he, are come 5000 leagues to preach to us a doctrine upon which they are not agreed themselves." In fine, what can have a greater tendency to stumble the weak, and make irreligion triumph, than so many contradictory works as we have seen accumulated in these later times upon grace, the character of the true church, and miracles? The public, at last, has contented itself with being ignorant of these works, and despising their authors; and they, in revenge for not being read, have attacked those who are.

XXVIII. Let us plead, as much as lies in our power, in favour of humanity and philosophy, against their unjust complaints. Facts will suffice without reasonings, and, perhaps, will have greater force. Open ecclesiastical history, which is always so useful to the Christian and the philosopher; to the Christian, to animate him by examples of virtue, and the accomplishments of the divine Promises, in spite of the opposition of all the powers of the earth; to the philosopher

losopher, by the incredible and numberless monuments it presents to him of human extravagance, and the evils which fanaticism has produced. We might shew, by a detail of these evils, how government has interested itself in defending and supporting men of letters, who, being convinced of the true doctrines of the faith, have had the justice and the equity to separate what did not belong to it. It is, indeed, to them that sovereigns owe the confirmation of their power, and the destruction of a tribe of absurd opinions, hurtful to the state ; on the contrary, it is by confounding those objects with religion which are foreign to it, that the people have groaned so long under the temporal power of ecclesiastics, that excommunications, those respectable arms of the church, have been lavished to support rights purely human, and often ill-founded ; that the son of Charlemain, as a slave rather than a Christian, underwent ten times, successively, the ignominy of a public penitence, which some bishop had the assurance to command him, and which he merited only by the baseness of submitting to it* ; that an œcumenique council, in the

* In 822 and 823 Lewis, who was called the Debonnair, but who much better deserved the appellation of the Weak, submitted to a public penance at Attigny and Soissons ; the first time, for putting to death his nephew who had revolted against him ; the second time, for not receiving the law from his children. " The bishops, who imposed this penance, pretended, that it was not lawful for him to resume the royal dignity. St. Ambrose did

the age of servitude and ignorance, durst not openly protest against the designs of an audacious pontiff, who imagined he had a right to deprive an emperor of his patrimony*; that one of our kings, to ex-

piate

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“ not draw such consequences from the penitence of Theodosius ;
 “ will any one say, that that great Saint wanted courage to avail
 “ himself of the authority of the church, or that he was less
 “ wise than the bishops of the ninth century ? These bishops,
 “ much more hardened, declared themselves against Lewis the
 “ Debonnair, in favour of his children, and stirred up that civil
 “ war which ruined the empire of France. Specious pretexts
 “ were not wanting ; Lewis was a weak prince, governed by his
 “ second wife ; the empire was in disorder ; but they should have
 “ had some regard to consequences, and not pretend to expose a
 “ monarch to the same penance as a simple monk.” The two
 penances of this prince, especially the last, which he deserved the
 least, were attended with the most mortifying circumstances.
 Ebbon, archbishop of Rheims, who had dared to degrade his master,
 was indeed deposed the year after, but the emperor was disho-
 noured.

* In 1245, at the first general council of Lyons, pope Innocent IV. publicly deposed, in the presence of the council, Frederic II. all the fathers holding a lighted candle, which he regarded as a tacit approbation, but very unjustly ; for it is evident, as M. Fleury observes, that this deposition was not made with the approbation of the council, as other decrees. But, say the Protestants, why the candle and their silence ? To this objection it is answered, that the greatest part of the ecclesiastics were, in general, of the opinion, that the popes had power over the
 temporal

piate the crime of burning 1300 ecclesiastics, took the resolution of killing 100,000 persons in Syria to shew his penitence*; that fools have plundered their own families to enrich ignorant and useless monks; that the ridiculous controversies of the Greeks upon absurdities, have hastened the destruction of their empire†; that uncertain and cruel proofs were regarded

as temporal kings, but that God did not permit that this opinion should be confirmed by a positive suffrage of the œcumenic council; and the silence of the church assembled, is not always a mark of approbation, especially in matters not expressly relative to the faith.

* It is well known that the abbe Suger, as great a statesman as the abbe de la Clairvaux was an orator, opposed this unfortunate croisade, which Lewis the Young undertook by the advice of St. Bernard. The event justified the fears of the minister, and confuted the promises of the preacher. Lewis took up the cross to conquer Palestine, and drive out the Saracens, his expedition ended in divorcing his wife at his return, and losing, by that means, Poitou and Guienne. In vain did St. Bernard wish to justify himself, by imputing to the sins of the warrior the miscarriage of that enterprize; he forgot that the first croisade was more successful, though its champions were not more worthy of success, and he did not see, says M. Fleury, that a proof is never conclusive, which is not always so.

† About the middle of the 14th century, certain weak monks of Mount Athos, whose brains were turned by long and frequent fastings, imagined they saw upon their navel the light of Mount Taber, and spent their time in contemplating it, a most

as the judgments of God, the consequence of which was often the condemnation of the innocent, and the acquittal of the guilty * ; that one of the richest parts

deplorable herefy ! They pretended further, that this light was uncreated, being no other than God himself. Barlaam, their adversary, still more ridiculous than they in giving them a serious answer, had credit to get an assembly convened at Constantino-ple against these visionaries, little aware that he himself should be condemned there ; however, this was the consequence.—The emperor Andronicus Paleologus harangued the pretended council with so much vehemence that he died a few hours afterwards, an exit worthy an emperor. It was this Andronicus Paleologus who abandoned the sea-coast of his dominion to ruin, because he was assured that God was so well satisfied with his zeal for the church, that his enemies durst not attack him. The same emperor regretted the time, which the management of his affairs stole from theological debates. The quarrel of the Greeks about the light of Tabor, lasted till the destruction of the empire, and continued with violence while Bajazet was besieging Constantino-ple. All these ridiculous controversies, in which the emperors took part, hastened their downfall, in making them neglect the government.

* One may read in a great number of works a detail of these sort of proofs, and the reasons why they were abolished ; all sorts of questions were generally decided in this manner : they went so far as to throw two missals into the fire, to try which was the best ; the most extraordinary event, and the least expected by them, happened on this occasion, they were both burnt. A Clerk of Provence submitted himself to the fiery trial, to prove a re-velation

parts of the world has been depopulated by monsters, who put the inhabitants to death by punishing them into conversion; that one half of our nation has been bathed in the blood of the other; in fine, that the standard of rebellion has been put into the hands of subjects against their sovereigns, and a sword into the hand of sovereigns against their subjects*. It is by the light of philosophy that we have been delivered from so many evils. A few intrepid men

velation which he said he had of the discovery of the holy spear. The priest died. The event would always have been equally uniform in all trials, if they had been honestly managed; but in ages of ignorance, as well as others, there are men who know how to cheat.

* We cannot conclude these notes better than by a passage of M. Fleury. "It is melancholy, I am very sensible, to relate these unedifying facts,—but the foundation of history is truth. There are two sorts of persons who are displeased with the relation of these things; the first are the profane politicians, who, not knowing true religion, confound it with false; they are afraid of diminishing its respect in the minds of the people, that is to say, according to them, of undeceiving them. I will not dispute with these politicians. One ought to begin with instructing and converting them; but I ought to satisfy, if possible, those scrupulous good men, who, through a mistaken zeal, fall into the same misfortune of shuddering where there is no danger to be apprehended. What are you afraid of, I would say? of finding out the truth? Do you love then to remain in error, at least in ignorance? and can you stay there with safety, you who ought to instruct others?"

have

have sometimes dared, at the peril of their liberty, their fortunes, and their lives, to open the eyes of subjects and kings. The gratitude which they have a right to demand of our age, ought to be estimated by the importance of the services they have rendered, and the most real effect of this gratitude is in the protection which ought to be given to their successors. This protection, we can say with pleasure, finds fewer obstacles every day, in proportion as the spirit of philosophy, which spreads continually, communicates itself to the more sound and wise part of the divines, and renders them more indulgent, or more equitable in matters which are not their object. We do not live in those times, when it was a crime to teach any other philosophy than Aristotle; with a little more ignorance and authority it had been made a law of the state, as it is still among our neighbouring nations*.

XXIX. We need but cast our eyes upon those unhappy nations, who are victims to so ridiculous a law, to convince us of the sad effects which arise from fear,

* Our fathers saw but little more in 1624, when, at the request of the university, and especially of the Sorbonne, it was forbid by an arret of parliament, "on pain of death to hold or
" teach any maxim contrary to ancient and approved authors,
" or to enter into any debate but such as should be approved
" by the doctors of the faculty of theology." By the same arret several persons who had composed and published theses against the doctrine of Aristotle, were either reprimanded or banished.

and

and the impossibility of being instructed. Will posterity believe it of our days, that there was printed in one of the capital cities of Europe, a work with this title, *Systema Aristotelicum de formis substantialibus & accidentibus absolutis*, 1750? will they not imagine it was a mistake of the press, and that it ought to be read 1550? Such, however, in the midst of the eighteenth century, is the deplorable state of reason, in one of the finest regions of the earth, in a nation otherwise refined and polite; while the sciences are making such progress in England, France and the Protestant part of Germany. I say the Protestant part; for we must acknowledge, with sorrow, the present superiority of the universities of that party to the Catholic schools. It is so striking, that strangers, travelling in those places, and passing from a Catholic university to a neighbouring Protestant one, cannot help thinking, they have removed 400 leagues or lived 400 years; that they have got from Salamanca to Cambridge, or from the age of Scotus to that of Newton. We make this remark with the more freedom, as the difference of light and knowledge in these regions cannot be ascribed to their different religions.

In France, where the Catholic doctrine is followed and respected, the sciences are cultivated with great success. In Italy itself they are not neglected; doubtless for this reason, because the sovereign pontiffs, for the most part sensible and wise, and knowing the abuses which spring from ignorance, can more readily suppress in Italy the tyranny of subaltern inquisitors, where it is necessary; for every thing serves as a pre-

text to this contemptible and mischievous wretches to extinguish light, and obstruct the progress of the mind.

XXX. It seems to me, that one way of reducing their dominion in those unfortunate countries where they happen still to rule, is to encourage, as much as possible, the study of the demonstrative sciences. Princes who govern these people, and would have them shake off the yoke of superstition and ignorance, encourage the increase of mathematicians among them. This will produce philosophers in time. The most delicate orthodoxy has no contention with geometry. Those who believe they have an interest in keeping the mind in darkness, should they be foresighted enough to know the effect of the progress of this science, would want a pretext for hindering its spreading. The study of geometry will soon lead to that of sound physics, and this to true philosophy, which, by the light it will diffuse all around, will soon rise superior to all the efforts of superstition; for these efforts, however great, become quite useless when a nation is once enlightened.

XXXI. It is doing injury to religion, to endeavour to support it by ignorance. The provinces of philosophers and divines are like those of the spiritual and temporal powers; nothing can be better distinguished than their respective rights of each; but as sometimes the spiritual power, having shook off the temporal yoke which oppressed it, is willing to oppress in its turn: so some ministers of religion, after emerging from the darkness which an insolent philosophy endeavoured to throw over them, have been willing, in their turn, to lock in this philosophy within the bounds which religion

gion prescribes. Their several rights appear, at this time of day, too well fixed, too well understood and determined, to have any thing to fear from each other's attacks. It is their interest to be united, as it is for two powerful princes to be upon amicable terms; and if, on the one hand, Christianity, being supported by divine and human laws, be established on the most durable foundation; on the other, there is room to believe, that the philosophers of the eighteenth century, while they justly respect the doctrines of faith, will defend their interests with more force and advantage than the princes of the twelfth century defended their crowns.

XXXII. This is the substance of the reflections which seemed proper to be made at this time of day, upon criticism in points of religion. I doubt not but they will be approved, when they are examined without prejudice, and with the light of sound philosophy. I believe I am sufficiently fortified against the attacks of weak and hypocritical fanatics; but with regard to persons who are prejudiced against me out of a sincere, but mistaken, zeal, I shall respect the cause, without dreading or approving the effect of it; and content myself with replying in the words of Cicero,

Istos homines sine contumelia dimittamus, sunt enim & boni viri et quoniam ita ipsi sibi videntur, beati.

AN ESSAY UPON THE ALLIANCE BETWIXT LEARNED MEN, AND THE GREAT.

Sine ira et studio quorum causas procul habeo. TACIT.

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To M. L' Abbe De Canaye, of the royal academy of
inscription and belle letters.

Accept, my good friend, the fruits of our philosophical
conversations, in which you are equally concerned
with myself. To whom can I present them with
more propriety than to you, whose example so well
shews, how happily one may live without the great,
and whose company how easily they may be dispen-
sed with? Whatever pains I may have taken in
this essay, to speak the truth in a manner the least
offensive, consistent with integrity, I cannot hope to
please all the world: However, men of letters will
admire my courage, honest men will applaud me,
and you will love me the more.

THERE are no people who have not continued a
long time in a state of barbarism, or rather of
ignorance: for it is not yet decided whether they are
synonymous expressions or not. Our own nation, from
an infinity of causes which are no less dangerous to
explain, than easy to perceive, remained many ages
buried under the profoundest ignorance.

This indeed was not to be lamented, if we may credit
some philosophers, who pretend to ascribe the deprava-
tion of human nature to the influence of knowledge.

For,

For, as this enlightened age is corrupt, those philosophers conclude, that it is the consequence and effect of the progress of science. If they had lived in those periods which we call barbarous, they would then have regarded ignorance as the enemy of virtue. The wise man, who calmly contemplates all ages as well as his own, discerns among all mankind a pretty near resemblance.

Be this as it will, our day is at last come; but, as the night has continued long, the twilight and the dawn have been long also. Charles V. (one of the wisest, and, consequently, one of the greatest of princes who ever reigned, though less celebrated than a mob of kings who have been only fortunate or powerful) made some efforts to revive in his dominions a taste for the sciences. He had undoubtedly the wisdom to perceive, in the midst of the troubles which disturbed his reign, that the cultivation of letters was one of the most infallible means of securing the tranquillity of a monarchy, for a reason which, on the contrary, may render them pernicious to republics, because, when pursued too far, there is an attraction attending them which engrosses mens attention, and makes them cold to every other object.

His successors, either too ignorant, or too despotic, seemed to neglect the wise views of Charles: But the original movement, though enfeebled, still subsisted till the time of Francis I. who gave to languishing genius a new impulse. This prince was happily born with a disposition to love men of learning, or at least with a discernment that led him to protect them:

them : for we may defend them without loving them ; and interest or vanity often make men dupes with respect to the motives of their regards for them. Their gratitude, in return, to this monarch was without parallel. Men of letters, like the people, think themselves indebted to princes for the least privileges ; and (what is truly memorable in the history of genius and the human heart) the title of Father of letters contributed more to efface the innúmerable faults of Francis I. than the more respectable name of Father of his people availed to cancel those of Lewis XII. History seems to have placed the first of these two kings in the same rank with his rival in glory, Charles V. who, though greatly his superior in abilities, could not engage so many pens in his praise, and who neglected the vanity of being the idol of learned men, for the less real, but more destructive honour, of being the terror of Europe.

The nobility of France, though always fond of following blindly the example of their kings, did not discover the same taste for letters as Francis I.

Little removed from those times when the heroes, who knew not how to read, could gain battles, and subdue provinces, they were conscious of no glory but that of arms ; and here we find one of those circumstances in our history, in which pride and prejudice prevailed over the desire of paying court to the monarch. The natural disposition of the courtiers to ignorance, found more indulgence under the kings who succeeded him, who were rather to be called protectors of letters, than zealous friends ; I except
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neither Charles IX. the author of some verses, which, perhaps, would never have been mentioned if they had not been wrote by a sovereign, nor even Henry IV. who, as some say, gave sufficient encouragement to learned men, but who treated all his subjects nearly as well; because, having conquered his kingdom, he had the affections of his people to engage, and any marks of distinction shewn to a small number of particular men, might have tended to alienate the minds of the multitude.

However, on the one hand, as the power of the king increased, on the other, the shoot of knowledge, which bloomed under Francis I. became fruitful in the centre of the nation, without spreading itself much towards the extremities; or, in other words, it flourished not among the poor, whose subsistence confined them to hard labour, nor among the rich, who spent their lives in idleness and intrigues. At last Lewis XIV. appeared, and the respect he shewed to men of letters soon gave the tone to a nation long accustomed to receive it from its lords. Ignorance ceased to be the dear privilege of the nobility; knowledge and genius, having recovered their reputation, surpassed those bounds which unadvised vanity seemed to have prescribed. Philosophy, animated by the esteem of the monarch, by slow steps rose out of the dungeon to which imbecility and superstition had confined it. Prejudice gradually retreated, without noise or violence, because it is the nature of philosophy to force no barriers, but to wait till they fall down before it, and to turn aside when they will not.

Even

Even sciences she did not give birth to, and geniuses, least qualified for her service, were not left destitute of encouragement.

The diffusion of a philosophical spirit through all books, and all ranks, forms that period of time when a people may be said to be most enlightened. It is then that the body of the nation begins to have wisdom; or, which is nearly the same, begins to perceive how much it is defective, after the labour of two centuries to procure it. It is then that the great begin to be solicitous, not only about the works, but the persons, of moderate, as well as distinguished reputation; they are eager, from vanity at least, to reward abilities with marks of esteem, often more interested than sincere. Snatched from their solitude, learned men see themselves translated to a new vortex, where they have frequent occasions of observing how injudiciously they are placed. This experiment I have tried, and it may be useful when we do not try it too long: the reflections which it suggested to me shall be the subject of this essay. As mankind in the same circumstances, and with similar interest, see nearly the same things, I doubt not but other learned men have made the same observations before me; so much the worse for those to whom they are new. However, the greatest number must be strangers to some or other of them, because they were made in a country where I was only a passenger; and we cannot speak with freedom of the nations we have visited, till our return. I wish my reflections may be of some advantage to those who shall follow me in
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the same course; but if I cannot propose to myself so reasonable a design, I will imitate those travellers who, though too well satisfied to have any desire of recommencing their adventure, cannot help entertaining others with an account of them.

It is not surprising that the company of the great should have some attractions for learned men. The real or apparent advantages to be drawn from such a connection, easily present themselves: the inconveniences are only known by experience. Such is the misfortune of self-love, that, though it receives the deepest wounds from that which did not seem able to affect it, though it is very often more easily deceived than satisfied, it lays itself open to the advances of every-thing that may flatter, and never suspects that which may do it an injury.

The first advantage which men of letters find in the world is, that they are more celebrated at least, if not more known, and appear before a tribunal different from that of their rivals. To unfold, and, at the same time, to estimate this advantage, it is necessary to rise higher, and to examine upon what principles, and in what manner, we endeavour to arrive at that glory which is founded on great talents.

The more genius a man has, the more discontented he is with it: I appeal to persons of wit of all ages and nations. It is true, the examination they make of themselves is in secret: the pleadings and sentence of this process are both carried on in the privy-chamber, if I may use such an expression, and they would be sorry if the determination was confirmed by
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the world. On the contrary, the esteem of others is a substitute to the unfavourable opinion we entertain of ourselves; it is the staff upon which self-love supports itself. There are but two kinds of men who are perfectly satisfied in their judgments of themselves, a perfect genius, which never existed, and a perfect fool, which is common enough; the inability of the last to understand his own ignorance, supplies that which he does not know; from hence it happens, that, in the distribution of happiness, fools are far from having the worst share.

I doubt not but men of letters, who have taken the pains to look into themselves, and to think like philosophers, will readily admit the truth of what I advance. The merit of mens writings is like that of their hearts, none can pronounce upon it so well as themselves, because none can have so near a point of view, nor so long an acquaintance. It is in consequence of this, that the more the excellence of a work consists in something intrinsic and independent of opinion, the less solicitous we are of the approbation of others: from whence it comes, that the satisfaction arising from the study of geometry is so pure and complete, the progress we make in that science, and the degree of excellence to which we attain, may be measured, I might say, with the same accuracy as the objects to which it relates.

We have no occasion to recur to the estimate of others, except in those cases where there is no established standard, and there we hope they will be favourable to us. Now, in subjects of taste and the
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belles lettres, it consists in a certain kind of value, which is always arbitrary in part, if not wholly so, at least as far as negligence, passion, or caprice, interfere in raising or depressing it. This makes it evident to me, that, if mankind were to live separate, and to employ themselves in the pursuit of such objects as their preservation dictated, they would prefer the study of the useful, to the entertaining sciences. We devote our thoughts to the latter for the advantage of others, to the former for our own. A poet in a desert island would, in my opinion, be a very idle character in comparison of a geometrician. It is natural to conclude, from these reflections, that the desire of reputation, though natural to mankind, is sufficient to mortify them, when philosophically considered. But, without examining so severe a consequence, let us go a little farther, and pursue all the frauds, or, as Montaigne says, all the lures of self-love.

Though it is jealous of the power of deceiving others, it must not deceive them too grossly; for they may soon be convinced of their mistake, and avenge themselves by a contempt as unjust as their esteem. Besides, should the illusion of others continue, the more gross it is, the more is the flattery of self-love diminished; the pleasure we find in imposing upon others, is constituted, in part, of the satisfaction that is felt in seeing ourselves better judges than they of our own qualifications and abilities; but, to make this satisfaction as pure and perfect as possible, it is of importance to have our cause before disinterested

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arbiters,

arbiters, who shall have no motives, from rivalry or passion, to depress us; so well skilled, as not to be suspected of pronouncing without examination; and so superficial, as to give us no reason to dread the severity of their judgment.

This, if I am not mistaken, is the reason why the generality of learned men seek after the esteem and protection of the great.

It is taken for granted their education has given them some judgment, at least we find this prejudice generally established, and, as vanity finds an advantage here, it avails itself of it: for philosophers themselves never fail to foment prejudices which may benefit, with the same ardour that they attack those which may hurt them.

They are principally solicitous to retain in their cause those among the great who, without devoting themselves to the profession of letters, cultivate them in a certain degree, but are not indebted to them either for their fortune or distinction; having nothing to fear from the acuteness of their penetration, they find in them precisely that share of understanding which does not alarm the jealousy of their self-love. Nevertheless, as this sort of half connoisseurs is rare among the great, he does not confine himself to aim only at the esteem of the most celebrated, but persuades himself to press into his service the whole body, because he hopes that, his admirers being the greatest number, their approbation will draw a multitude of followers after them. The suffrages of this troop of subalterns would be a little flattering, if they

they stood alone, but, when adorned by a leading vote, they not only increase their number, but acquire a kind of additional value. Self-love, insatiable in its appetite for glory, seeks to espouse to its interest those among the great, who have most of these echoes at their command; a less delicate vanity is content with ranking one or two great names in the number of its patrons.

Such is the real or pretended utility which men of letters think they draw to their reputation from a commerce with the great; I mean by this word all those who, either from their ancestors or themselves, have attained a considerable distinction in society: for in a state so monarchical as ours, where there is, properly speaking, but one lord, the power of the prince blends the state happily together. Opulence, the proof of independence and credit, readily joins itself by its own authority to high birth; and I do not know but it would be wrong to prevent it. The inferior states, who are possessed of neither of them, endeavour to place themselves in the same line, with a view, undoubtedly, of lessening the number of that class of men who are above them, and to bring the different conditions of life to that equality which is so natural, and to which they are always tending, without being conscious of it.

I will now, with permission, coolly estimate, without caprice or flattery, these Dispensers of renown, and the right which they usurp, or are entitled to, of delivering their oracles.

It is but just, however, for me previously to declare, that it is not my intention here to establish any principles or facts, which are absolutely universal; some exceptions there are, I acknowledge it with pleasure: birth and fortune www.kibtool.com.cn neither exclude talents, nor bestow them.

First of all, I shall not be timorous in branding with the name of prejudice the common opinion, which supposes the Great to have a better education than others; and consequently, (if equal in other respects) to be more intelligent judges. The education they receive being wholly confined to external accomplishments, may qualify them to impose on the people, but not to judge of men. What a satire upon our manners is Philip's letter to Aristotle on the birth-day of Alexander*! What would Socrates have said of the public education we give to our young nobility, of the puerilities which we encourage in them, as if there

* "The gods (were the words of Philip to the finest genius of that age) have given me a son; but I thank them not so much for giving me one, as for giving him in the time of Aristotle." This letter, which equally redounds to the honour of the prince and of the philosopher, ought to immortalize Philip in the esteem of wise men, more than those dangerous abilities with which he forged the chains of Greece. Such letters to philosophers have been now a long time obsolete: I don't mean only from princes, but from persons who have no hope of becoming such. But now I speak of the Great only by the bye, and because it has a necessary relation to my subject. What a world of matter would so important a point suggest!

was nothing better to be taught them? Sensible of the situation of youthful minds, who are most susceptible of the impressions of goodness, grandeur, and truth, he had but too frequent occasion to inculcate upon their masters, the ~~maxims which are so~~ applicable to our present manners, that "youth could not be too much respected."

But how astonished would he have been to see persons living in the midst of a religion so meek and lowly as ours, and so well calculated to humble the mind of man, continually affecting to remind the noble pupils of the glory of their name and birth, and for want of more real and honourable motives, having recourse to such as these; instead of repeating to them, as they always should, that all mankind are their equals by the intention of nature; that on account of talents, many are their superiors; and that a great name, to him who knows how to think, is of as great weight and value as the most pompous equipage!

I doubt not but this censure of the public education of the Great, which is unfortunately too just, will be opposed by those encomiums which celebrated persons have given them. I answer, that they only speak of what it ought to be, or, if what they said of it might be true in their days, it is palpably different now. I dare say to these seges, "Come and see." I am as little solicitous about another objection, from there having been a few happy geniuses, whose singular talents have not been stifled by a bad education. It would be equally as pleasant to pretend there is no difficulty

in polishing the Muscovites, because the Czar was born among them.

It is with this rich fund of ideas and capacity, that so many of the Great judge and condemn what they ought to revere. They have not even the sorry satisfaction of knowing where they are unjust. Having neither received from others, nor acquired of themselves, the principles of criticising upon any thing, is it astonishing, that they should be ignorant of any difference either in writings or in men? The writer, who visits and flatters them most, however little in himself, is to them the first of his order; as the courtier is most in the graces of the minister who solicits with most assiduity. This man of letters is their oracle, and their council, and they are the echo of his ridiculous decisions.

This affords us a prospect, not less agreeable than philosophical, to see how widely they vary in their judgments: the current sentiments, which their flatterers take care to dictate to them, are their own again, because they have none but from them. The last work of a famous man, who has not had the good fortune to please them, is always the worst of his productions: and they never begin to do him justice, till some new performance of his offers new food to their satire; they then declare 'that his former piece discovered some 'ingenuity; but what can be expected from a genius 'quite exhausted?'

The most effectual method of making these Aristarchuses more circumspect, would be to prevail upon them

them to give their opinion under their own hand. At the end of a very few years, when the fury of cabal and the spirit of party yield to the decision of the wise, these unrelenting, but ignorant, judges would be found either contradicting themselves or the public: for notwithstanding all the injuries charged so often upon the public, and sometimes so deservedly, it generally determines with judgment and equity. It is true, the public which judges, that is to say, which thinks, is not constituted of those who pronounce, nor of all who read. Its decrees are not tumultuous; sometimes it gives a second examination, where prejudice and passion seemed to think they had decided the cause; and its oracles committed to the trust of a small number of celebrated men, at least teach the multitude the opinions they are to form.

Besides, it is among men of letters, and among them only, that they must expect to meet with themselves; that is, with persons of the same art, (whatever it be) capable of estimating the true beauties of a work, and the degrees of difficulty that have been surmounted in executing it. If the Great have any right to be esteemed sound judges, it is only so far as they are, in the strictest sense, men of letters themselves. A mere admirer of an art seldom reasons with so much judgment, I will not say as an accomplished artist, but as an indifferent one. It is in vain to imagine, that a talent so easy and common as that of composing bad works, (which may be dignified by the honourable appellation of works of The Society) gives a title to the requisite qualities of a judge.

It requires an exertion of all the powers we possess, to obtain a just knowledge of the secrets of an art ; it is no less than a gift flowing from the generous profusion of nature. Now, to display all the efforts in our power, we must not confine our views in writing to the little circle of friends or complaisant flatterers ; we must address our performances to the world, or at least finish them with the same pains, as if they were to make their appearance in it.

Woe be to the author, whose work seeks only the passport of his own times, or obtains no more than the sanction of five or six votes, already engaged by a previous perusal ! I appeal to those abortive productions, which their illustrious authors condemn so justly to perpetual obscurity, and which those who are privy to them, must one day as extravagantly despise, as they before applauded them. I appeal to the genuine sentiments of the public, when by some misfortune or some ill address of vanity, these performances venture to make their public appearance. Perhaps some may say, “ What, will you bring a man of letters to be “ judged by his rivals ? what indulgence has he to “ hope for from the emulation of a competitor, at least “ when he has not been able to settle his own judgment “ concerning himself ? ” To answer this objection, I must remark, that among men of letters, who pursue the same path, as there are different talents, so there are different classes. These classes are sufficiently marked of themselves ; and men of letters, by a kind of tacit convention, form this distinction without intending it.

Each

Each person, indeed, I must confess, endeavours to advance himself to a class more elevated than he is qualified to fill; but there is no reason to fear, lest the several ranks should be overturned by these pretensions; for vanity can never be deluded beyond a certain degree: the sole effect of this is, to reduce the number of the classes, for they can never be confounded all together: besides, he who should aspire to universal and perpetual monarchy, even though he should be worthy of it, would run a great risque of finding many malecontents; that anarchy which destroys political states, gives strength and subsistence to the literary republic. It is with some difficulty that any magistrates are endured; but kings are utterly unsupportable.

The different classes being thus constituted, and each having nothing to distinguish it from its neighbours, if we are not equitably tried in our own class, we may may obtain justice at least in the inferior or superior ones. If we were to consult these different classes separately, there would result from the combination of their suffrages, a decision on which we may safely rely, when we are not qualified to pass judgment on ourselves. Thus the sentiment of common soldiers and subalterns, is a far more equitable test of the abilities of a general, than that of prejudiced rivals, or corrupted flatterers. It is the same in the course of literature; the determination of connoisseurs produces sometimes a slow effect, because it finds itself frequently encountered by a great number of unjust and clamorous decisions. It is as true with respect to taste and

genius as philosophy; nothing is more rarely possessed, more impracticable to acquire, nor more commonly pretended to. Hence so many reputations usurped, for a time at least, which while they call forth moderate talents, only discourage great ones, and humble them by letting them see through what hands fame is distributed. Hence that mob of petty societies and tribunals, where great geniuses are mangled to pieces by persons not worthy to read them.

If persons of distinguished talents did but possess a little more practical philosophy than they do, it would be an entertainment to them to see the quarrels of these little societies we are speaking of, and the contempt they affect for one another, or rather the strict justice with which they treat each other's merit; the high and decisive air with which they spurn the sentence of their rival, to make it ridiculous; and, in short, the neologism they have introduced into our language, from which better writers are scarce able to secure themselves.

A prospect like this, viewed with the eyes of calm reason, is more than sufficient to console true philosophy under the loss of a multitude of frivolous voices. Like a powerful sovereign, rendered by his superior forces inaccessible to every attack, he may look down and see at a distance barbarous corsairs mangling one another, after attempting, in vain, to injure the frontiers of his dominions; but philosophers, or rather those who profess themselves such, like sovereign princes, cannot dissemble the least insult; and the
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desire of returning vengeance often proves more hurtful to them than the insults themselves.

We are little acquainted with the nature of envy, if we think we can silence it, by appearing too sensible of it : this is only giving it that consequence which it desires. Posterity had been ignorant of the very names of *Bœvius* and *Mævius*, if *Virgil* had not been so weak as to mention them in his verses.

Men of letters, of a certain rank, degrade themselves by answering satire ; and they are blamed for it by the public, which sometimes takes a malignant pleasure in the shafts that are thrown against them. A man, whose talents and genius give him the consciousness of deserving reputation, may let the public voice alone. He need not trouble himself with dictating what it shall determine ; but wait, if I may say so, for future fame to come and take his orders. He will soon put to silence every inferior voice, as the force of the fundamental sound in a concord destroys every dissonance which tends to alter the harmony.

But the man of letters is so little of a philosopher, as to be chagrined because justice is not done him ; and so imprudent as to suffer his resentments to be blazed abroad. Then envy redoubles her attacks, and even ridicules him for not enjoying the reputation of his own excellent works. In short, we must act in fame as cautiously as in sickness ; impatience is fatal in either of them. How many men are there distinguished for their rare endowments, to whom we may apply the rebuke formerly made to a *Carthaginian* general, “ The gods do not give all talents to one :

“ you have that of obtaining a victory, but not that
 “ of using one.”

Renown is a kind of game of commerce, where chance sometimes gets a fortune; but where merit acquires, in general, more certain gains; provided, that while it uses the tricks of gamblers, it does not expose itself to be betrayed by them. But it is too frequently considered as a mere lottery, where persons imagine they make their fortune by inventing false tickets.

When I consider the empire of letters, I think I see a spacious place, crowded with a multitude of empirics mounted upon stages, calling to passengers, and deceiving the people; who begin with laughing at them, and end with being their dupes. It is by these means so many writers gain a kind of name in the world. Would you be applauded for a wit? tell the public aloud that you are one. You will be ridiculed by a great number: you will impose, however, upon some fools, who will gather round you. The mob will thicken more and more; and those who would not hearken to you at first, shall either fall in with the opinion of the multitude at last, or be forced to hold their tongues.

Thus the reputation of some literati, when compared with their works and their persons, is a very extraordinary phenomenon, which cannot be accounted for; but which must be admitted, out of respect to what is called the public. We must recollect on this occasion, the story of the naturalist, who upon attempting to explain why caverns are warmer in summer than
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winter, said, Perhaps it was owing to one cause; and perhaps to another; and perhaps it was not true.

I shall not declaim before learned men on the common-place topics of contempt of glory, so often recommended, and with such little sincerity, by philosophers. I will not seek to degrade motives, which without having, if you will, any real foundation, are the springs of every thing great, useful, and agreeable among mankind. The esteem of our cotemporaries and fellow-countrymen is a felicity by common agreement; and so universally is it acknowledged for such; that it would be senseless, useless, and dangerous to undeceive the world in this point. But as public esteem is the object which calls forth great performances, it is by great performances alone that we must seek to obtain it, or at least to deserve it; and not to usurp it by idle and despicable machinations.

Write as if you was in love with glory: act as if you was indifferent to it.

These considerations chiefly belong to those, whom we call wits; and whose works being intended to be read, meet with the worst judges. They are less necessary to those who are engaged in the demonstrative sciences, where merit does not stand so much in need of the estimation of others to determine it. But it would tempt one to be of a different opinion, to see the artifice they have recourse to, to obtain suffrages, that are more pompous than honourable; and the envenomed hatred they carry about them, which they have not the prudence to conceal; yet these men have
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the modesty to call themselves philosophers ; as if philosophy, before it pretended to regulate the system of the world, should not teach us to begin with ourselves, and to set a proper value upon every object. We place the hatred of poets next to that of women : I don't know but it would be right to rank that of these men betwixt them both, or at their head. A severe epigram exhausts all the vengeance of a poet. The rage of a philosopher is more constant and inflexible, though it has no more for its object, perhaps, than to stand in the list of the partizans of a woman, who takes herself for a great personage, only because she has overcome the fatigue of reading philosophical books, without understanding them.

I am far from imagining this a just portrait of all those who run the noble career of science ; neither am I willing to make any particular application : this would be disfiguring, and spoiling by satire, an essay which I would have solely dedicated to truth. General paintings are only permitted by philosophy and humanity. It is true, if we seldom apply them, they will be little serviceable ; but portraits of a peculiar kind, and striking likenesses, are still less.

To avoid the like reproach, let us draw a veil over the intercourses of the learned. When I speak of the learned, I don't mean by that term those who may be called persons of erudition ; they are a nation little known, and not very numerous or commercial, and quite innocent of this charge. Most of them belonged to the sixteenth century, and had the good fortune to be strangers to ours. Happy would it be, if our philosophers.

losophers and geometricians lived together like them; their labour profited the world, without making so much clamour; and in this respect they were better.

A stranger wrote a book with this title, "Of the quackery of the learned:" this title promised much. If unfortunately the book did not prove a good one, it was not because the author wanted memoirs, but because the memoirs wanted an author. However, if he had travelled in France, he had deprived his book of an excellent chapter.

To examine things without prejudice, why do we prefer to a man of erudition whom we neglect, a philosopher and geometrician whom we understand less, and who contributes, seemingly, nothing to our amusement? Opinion and established custom have certainly a great share in so arbitrary a preference. What has brought into fashion geometricians so much of late? It used to be regarded as an incontestable thing, that a geometrician, being transported out of his own sphere, could not possibly have common sense. It was easy, indeed, to rectify this mistake by reading Descartes, Hobbes, Pascal, and many others: but that was too much trouble. To how many persons have these great men never yet existed! In England they were contented in having the greatest genius of his age; in France they would not have been satisfied if he had not been an agreeable man. In fine, a geometrician, of the first reputation, snatched from us by Prussia, is found to possess, in an uncommon degree, all that engaging sprightliness which we so much admire, and which he adorned by more substantial qualities, that spright-

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lines which geometry is no more likely do destroy where it is, than the belles lettres are to give where it is not. All at once our eyes are open to behold as it were a new and extraordinary phænomenon. We are astonished to find that a geometrician is not a kind of savage. Immediately, as we keep no medium in our judgment, a geometrician is a sight indiscriminately sought after. 'Tis true, this madness does not last long; not because it is found to be a madness, but because no madness is of long continuance in our nation. It still subsists, though in an inferior degree. But if I was one of these geometricians, I should not be much elated with the reception they meet with. The elogium bestowed on them are only relative to the unfavourable idea formerly conceived of them. He is a great geometrician, they say, and an agreeable man too; encomiums sufficiently mortifying in their principle, and similar to those we give noblemen. Should the last happen to reason tolerably well on a work of science or belles lettres, we extol their sagacity to the skies; as if a man of quality was forced, by his rank, to be less instructed than others in the subject on which he speaks. In a word, in France we treat geometricians and the nobility as we do Turkish and Persian ambassadors. We are surprised to find good sense, in the most ordinary degree, in a person who is neither a Frenchman nor a Christian; and, consequently, we catch at every trivial and foolish thing that drops from their lips, as so many apophthegms. In truth, were we to trace the motives of those elogiums, which some persons are so prodigal of, we should find enough to console

console us under their satire, and, perhaps, even their contempt.

I cannot quit this subject without making some reflections on that passion we affect for strangers. What I am going to say will be the less a digression, since strangers, being so well received every where now-a-days, and especially when they are rich and of great name, they constitute a particular party in the world; which deserves observation, as they are courted by men of letters for the sake of their beloved reputation.

When we attentively consider the strangers transplanted amongst us, whom we reproach by the elogiums we are so profuse of, we rarely discover any other motive for them than a ridiculous prejudice in our own favour, joined to an ambition of humbling our fellow-countrymen.

I should be sorry if the English, whom we affect to praise in preference to others, should be dupes to these motives. I may be accused, perhaps, of revealing a secret of state; but I believe I am going to commit no great crime. However it happens, I confess, that with all the esteem I have for their persons, I have still more for their nation: and I am as little curious to see an Englishman at Paris, as I should be to see a Frenchman at London. Such a lord arrived here, with a very great reputation, who appears in conversation to be no more than a common person. He may be a great statesman, and know how to treat the most important subjects in the senate, in his own language, and yet stammer in a strange tongue, among
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a people whose customs, interests, ridiculousness and littleness he is utterly unacquainted with.

It is to men of letters, we must acknowledge, that the English nation is indebted for the prodigious good fortune it has met with among us. Inferior to the French in matters of taste and agreeableness, but superior in merit, at least in the number of excellent philosophers she has produced, she has gradually communicated, in the works of her writers, that precious liberty of thinking, which reason knows how to improve, which men of wit abuse, and which fools murmur at.

So many French pens have celebrated England, that their eulogiums seemed to have calmed the national hatred, at least on our part: for it must be agreed, that in this point we have the advantage of them a little; and they do not exactly return the praises we give them. Is not this reserve (by the way) an acknowledgment of our superiority? at least, the honour they do us to come and see our taste, our air, and even our prejudice, is a kind of tacit and involuntary eulogium, which the French vanity can accommodate itself to better than any other. It seems that we have actually made an exchange with England: instructed and enlightened by them, we seem to carry away, at least to dispute with them, the glory of the mathematical sciences; and they, on the other hand, are about deriving from our conversation and books, that taste, and agreeableness, and method, which is wanting in their productions. Let us take care that she does not soon surpass her masters.

Our

Our literati, who have contributed so much to the progress of the madness of Anglicism, have very good reasons for protecting and countenancing their own conduct. They flatter themselves, that the respect they express for strangers will be paid them back again at the same price; that they will celebrate their admirers upon their return to their own country, and acquaint France, in their writings, what treasures she possesses, sometimes incognito, and without ostentation. This is, doubtless, taking a long rout to fame; but the longest way in this case is the least troublesome, and if reputation does but come at last, they will submit to wait for it with patience.

Sometimes a man of letters makes himself a stranger to his own country, and removes three hundred leagues from envy, after having strove against it in vain; but he forgets, that distance, which disarms the shafts of satire, likewise chills the ardor of friendship more than of hatred; and that with respect to the connections, which were formed with persons at a great distance, they are often broke when they are present. Thus all the advantage he reaps from this step is, cooling the zeal of the friends he has in the place to which he retires, and going to seek for new enemies. He flatters himself, that strangers are a kind of living POSTERITY, whose testimony will triumph over compatriots that are either blind or insincere. He is not aware, that the more he is attached to strangers, the less they deserve the name of POSTERITY, to constitute which the distance of leagues is much less necessary than the distance of years; in proportion as they become

come in a certain degree his fellow countrymen, they adopt his passions, because they have the same interests; the greatest superiority cannot intirely stifle the voice of envy, and he must wait till it is no more, to receive the recompence of that real POSTERITY, before which jealousy is eclipsed, and all little objects vanish away. The only motive which can justify a man of letters in renouncing his country, is the cry of superstition raised against his works, and the persecutions, sometimes secret, sometimes public, which she kindles against him. However indebted he may be to his fellow countrymen for the use of his talents, he is more to himself for his own happiness; and he may then adopt the words of Milo; "If I
 " can no longer enjoy the blessings of my native
 " country, at least I will avoid the evils it may in-
 " flict upon me, and I will go and seek my repose
 " in a state that is just and free." Thus the Ari-
 stotles, the Descarteses, and such-like, conducted themselves.

To finish these reflections, I could wish some ingenious author would give us a philosophical description of the temple of literary fame; till a more able architect rises up, I will present my reader with the idea I have formed of it.

We are conducted to this temple through an immense forest, by a kind of labyrinth, planted with little piercing thorns, and so narrow, that two travellers cannot walk abreast without throwing one another down. In the middle of the forest, and in front of the temple, there is one single, grand avenue,
 infested

infested with free-booters, and not many others, except it be a few either so courageous as to resist them, or so complaisant as to pay them respect on the road.

Fame, a spectre composed of lips and ears, without eyes, having a false ballance in one hand, and a discordant trumpet in the other, admits a party of travellers into the temple in the utmost confusion; then all states are confounded, while the rest of the candidates, eager to enter, but repulsed by fortune or justice, make the environs of the temple resound with their satires against those who are within. The sanctuary is peopled only with those dead, who were denied entrance in their lives, or of those living, who were almost always chased away till their death. A few good books are found in the sanctuary intire, and a few detached of a still greater number; but on the outside of the temple may be read the simple titles of an infinite number of others affixed to all the columns of the portico, and presented by the hawkers to reward all passengers, just like the bills of mountebanks and empirics at the doors of our public places, which we receive without ever reading them.

Thus I have, in my opinion, stated those principles which will enable us to estimate that reputation, which men of letters think they derive from the society of the Great. There is, besides this, another advantage which they expect to find in this commerce, and that is what they call IMPORTANCE, and which we must not confound with reputation; the last is principally the reward of talents or ingenuity; the first is connected with rank, place, riches,

or,

or, in general, with the need we stand in of those on whom they are bestowed. Absence, or distance of time and place, far from enfeebling reputation, become useful to it; the other, on the contrary, being wholly external, seems inseparable from the present.

Let us endeavour to see this in a philosophical point of view. All men (whatever weakness or flattery may pretend) by the law of nature, are equal: The principle of this equality is found in the mutual occasion we have of each other, and the necessity of living together in society; but this natural equality is in some measure destroyed by an inequality of convention, which, by making a distinction of ranks, has prescribed to each a certain order of external duties; external duties I say, for the internal and real ones are perfectly equal to all, though of a different kind: To mention the highest state; the sovereign himself owes justice to the meanest of his subjects, as rigorously as they owe obedience to him.

The grand distinctions among mankind are owing to these four things; abilities, wit, birth and fortune. Let none wonder that I begin with abilities; in effect, it is in these that the true difference of mankind consists. Yet it must be allowed, if the question of superiority is to be decided by that which contributes most to happiness, by that which renders us most independent of each other, and others most dependent upon us, by that which brings us the most apparent friends, and the fewest declared enemies; then fortune undoubtedly ought to have the
first

first place. Notwithstanding this, why happens it that talents obtain the preference in the public esteem? It is because they have the valuable advantage of being a certain resource which cannot be taken away, and which ~~even misfortunes serve but~~ to render more quick and sure; it is because a nation is principally indebted to abilities for the esteem of strangers, and the benefits it is capable of drawing from a crowd of neighbours, whether equitable or jealous, which surround it.

But if, in the order of public estimation, abilities go before birth and fortune; in return, they are behind both of them at a very great distance in the order of external importance. This practice, altogether inconstant, and perhaps unjust as it is, must be founded, however, on some reasons; for it is impossible that all men, without some motives, plausible ones at least, should admit a prejudice burthensome to the greatest number.

I apprehend this to be the principle of it:

Mankind not finding it in their power to be equal, it is necessary that the difference betwixt them should be settled and peaceful, that it should be built on those advantages which can neither be disputed nor denied; now this is what is found in birth and fortune. To ascertain the difference betwixt any two persons, nothing more is required, than to be able to determine the value of titles, and their contrast, and this is easier done than by putting talents in their place. The disparity betwixt them in this respect will not be so unanimously acknowledged, especially
by

by interested parties. It is convenient then that birth and fortune should be the principal mark of the inequality among men, for the same reason that every-thing is decided in company by a plurality of voices, though the determination of the greatest number is not always the best.

Thus the reason is evident why importance and reputation cannot possibly be the same. A man of letters, full of probity and wisdom, is incomparably more excellent than an incapable minister, or a peer in disgrace; nevertheless, let them be in the same place, and all the attention will be paid to rank, and the man of letters may say, like Philopœmen, "I pay a tax for my bad * look." In vain will you object to me the honour given to Corneille, that he had a place allotted to him in the théâtre, and that all the company saluted him when he made his appearance. I answer, either that the fact is exaggerated, or that they had a mind to shew a mark of distinction to that great man in particular, which the nation had decreed him in public.

* The story to which this alludes is this: Philopœmen had a mean aspect, and took no pains to adorn his person. Once he sent word to a friend in Megara, that he would sup with him; but going earlier than he was expected, and before his friend was ready to receive him, he was employed by some of the servants in cleaving wood; and being surprised by his host, and asked, how he could be employed in so dishonourable an employment? he cheerfully replied, I am now suffering for my bad looks and appearance.

It is so true, that importance is annexed to state rather than abilities, that of two men of letters he who is the weakest, but the most wealthy, is generally caressed with the most civility. If ingenious men are offended with this distinction, they have nobody to complain of but themselves: Let them cease to lavish their homage upon a set of men, who think they honour them by taking notice of them, and who seem to shew, by the ostentation of their politeness, that it is an act of benevolence rather than justice: Let them cease to court the company of the great, reminded by the secret and visible disgusts they meet with. Let them no longer be ignorant of those advantages, which superiority of genius gives them over other men. In short, let them not prostrate themselves before the knees of those who ought to be at their feet. A man of merit ought, on this occasion, to act the part of Achilles at the court of Scyros, happy when he could find an Ulysses capable of being brought over to his side. But where are the Ulysseses?

Men of letters, who pay their court to the great, form different classes. Some are their slaves, without being sensible of it, and consequently without remedy; others are filled with indignation at a disagreeable personage when he is forced upon them, yet do not fail to support themselves constantly under it, by the advantage they flatter themselves with deriving from it to their fortune. It is pardoning them to pity them: They might easily be convinced by their own experience, that this method of arriving

at a fortune is very tedious, and by no means certain, and that a great many complaisances and basenesses are necessary to accomplish this most despicable service. A third class, not so numerous, includes those, who, having formed in the morning the most serious projects of continuing free, begin the evening with being slaves, and who, at all times, bold and timid, noble and interested, seem to reject with one hand, what they are stretching out the other to lay hold of.

The little consistence between their sentiments and conduct makes them resemble certain amphibious animals, whose nature is not determined, though their existence is out of all doubt. In this last class, in my apprehension the most criminal, we may rank those, who, after having paid incense to the great in public, pull them in pieces among particulars, and make a great parade among their equals in philosophy, which costs them very little. This class is more extensive than we are apt to imagine. They imitate those sects of antient philosophers, who, after worshipping publicly in the temple, ridicule Jupiter in private; with this difference, that the philosophers of Greece and Rome were obliged to frequent the temple, but nothing obliges the others to offer worship to mens persons.

I do not mean to fix the same reproach upon those who live with the great, only to tell them the truth. This is, doubtless, the most honourable part we can act before men; but have they deserved—that we should run such risks?

Lucian,

Lucian, whom we may call the Grecian Swift, because, like him, he laughed at every-thing, even at those things which did not deserve it, has left us a very spirited dissertation upon men of letters, who devote themselves to the service of the great. The tablet he has drawn might very justly be inserted under the article of calumny*: “Figure to yourselves, says he, Fortune upon a lofty throne environed with precipices, and round her an infinite number of people eager to climb up to it, while they are dazzled with her glory. Hope, richly adorned, offers to be their guide, having at her side Deceit and Slavery. Behind her Labour and Pain (and, I would have added, the vexation of the sons of opulence and grandeur) torment the miserable wretches, and abandon them to old age and repentance.” I am sorry that this same Lucian, after having said, that slavery to the great destroys the very name of friendship, should end by accepting a place in the service of the emperor, and, what is worse, by justifying himself in this respect so wretchedly, he is like an empiric violently ill of the tooth-ache, who sells infallible medicines against it. Lucian began by being a philosopher; the reputation of his works made him universally sought after; this should have served to make his retreat the more inaccessible, for philosophy is like devotion, to make no longer progress, is to stop. He resign’d himself to the caresses which awaited him, became a man of

* The article Calumny in the Encyclopedia.

the world without perceiving it, and concluded with being a courtier.

The last part is the basest that can be acted by a man of letters. In effect, what is a courtier? He is a man whom the misfortune of kings and people has placed betwixt the sovereign and truth to conceal it from his eyes. The weak tyrant listens to and loves these vile and dangerous men: The able tyrant avails himself of them, and despises them. The king, who knows how to reign, banishes them from his presence, and punishes them, and then truth regains her ascendancy.

It has been said, what a happiness it would be for states, if kings were philosophers. It would be sufficient if they were surrounded by wise men; but philosophy shuns a court, and either would be a misanthrope there, or very uneasy, and therefore very improperly situated. Aristotle at last was discontented with Alexander; and Plato, at the court of Dionysius, reproached himself for having endured, in his old age, the caprices of a young tyrant. In vain did another philosopher, a flatterer of this Dionysius, seek to excuse his living at a court, by saying, that physicians should always attend the diseased. He might easily be answered, that when disorders are incurable and contagious, to undertake their cure is exposing ourselves to the infection. If there must be philosophers at court, it is for just such a reason as there are professors of Arabic in the republic of letters, who may teach a language which scarce anybody studies, and which they themselves are in danger

of forgetting, without recalling it by frequent exercise.

The wise man, in paying to birth and fortune those devotions which society has prescribed, is in some respects frugal of them; he confines them to externals, because a philosopher should know how to manage, and not to inflame, the prejudices of the nation: He should salute the idols of the people when he is obliged to it, but never seek them of his own accord. Does he find himself under that rare necessity of making his court, which he is sometimes compelled to from great and laudable motives? Protected by his talents and his virtue, he smiles, without anger or disdain, upon the man whom he is then obliged to address. The man of quality, whose ancestors are his only merit, is of no more consequence in the eye of reason, than an old man returned to infancy, who once performed great things; or rather he is a man to whom all others must use a certain language, because a certain personage of the same name, some years before, had either genius or power, or riches or fame, or perhaps only fortune and address.

The wise man does not forget, that if ingenuity must pay to titles external respect, that titles owe ingenuity other homage more real and valuable: But how many learned men split upon this rock in their connections with the great! If they are not permitted to use that familiarity, and that perfect equality, without which all the intercourses of society are insipid and spiritless, the distance is mortifying, because they have frequent occasions of feeling it; and

if they go into familiarity, it is the fable of the lion, with whom it is dangerous to play.

A man of letters, forced by singular circumstances to spend his days near a minister of state, said one day, with much truth and delicacy, "he would be familiar with me, but I push him from me with respect."

Among the most affable and courteous persons of distinction, there are few who, in company with men of letters, lay aside their real or pretended grandeur so far as to forget it altogether. This is observable, particularly in those conversations where we are not of their opinion. It seems, that in proportion as the man of genius eclipses him, the man of quality shews himself, and appears to exact a deference which the other had dispensed with: Thus, the commerce of the great with men of letters too often concludes by some notorious rupture, a rupture which almost always proceeds from a forgetfulness of those mutual duties, which were owing on one side or other, sometimes on both.

Nevertheless I acknowledge, for the sake of truth, and from no other motive whatsoever, there are some persons of distinction who deserve to be excepted; and if I was not apprehensive their names and elogiums might look like an indirect and unjust satire upon those whom I must omit, because I do not know them, I would mention them here *. Their

* To speak here only of strangers; all who have known M. le marquis Lomellini, envoy extraordinary from the republic of Genoa,

familiarity needs not be suspected, because it is the effect of that esteem they entertain for great talents,

Genoa, know, that truth only dictated this elogium, which the author made in his dedication of his Enquiry into the procession of the equinoxes: "The greatest geniuses of antiquity prefixed
" the names of their friends to their works, because a friend
" was dearer to them than a patron. A sentiment so worthy of
" you as this, is all I shall pretend to imitate them in. I am
" not going to pay homage to your birth, that would be putting
" your ancestors in your place, and forgetting that I am writing
" to a philosopher. The reception you give to men of letters
" does not permit them to see your superiority of rank, because
" you do not envy their superiority of knowledge. Not satisfied
" with seeking their company, you shew them that real respect,
" which will never mislead them if they are worthy of it; and
" as vanity has no share in your esteem for them, reputation
" never imposes on your judgment. I present these researches
" to you as to a profound geometrician, who knows how to
" unite the charms of wit with the sublimest knowledge, and
" whose praise I distinguish among the small number of those
" whose encomiums do me honour."

If it be lawful to add to the elogium of strangers that of the dead, which can never hurt the living, the author would mention, as a proof of the sentiments of his heart, what he wrote in 1752, to a man whose memory ought to be dear to all men of letters, the marquis d'Argenson, in the dedication of an Essay of a new theory on the resistance; "Learned men and great writers,
" who approach you in such numbers, will applaud the homage
" I pay you. The respect which they express for you is the
" more sincere, as it is founded in attachment; and the more

and that sincere pleasure they find in the company of men of letters. Indeed, this society is really the most useful and noble that a man who thinks can possibly wish for. If the sciences sooth the soul, they elevate it too: One of these qualities directly flows from the other, and it is an incontestible truth, (in spite of the heavy reproaches that have been made against men of letters) that they are not only superior to other men in understanding, but are also generally less vicious in their sentiments and conduct; as their desires are more limited, they are more delicate about the means of gratifying them, and more grateful for favours conferred, because the fewer obligations gra-

“just, as you do not demand it. You owe a sentiment so true,
 “and yet so flattering, to that condescending familiarity with
 “which you treat men of talents, and which can alone render
 “the society of the great and men of letters equally worthy of
 “each other. Your company, both useful and agreeable, from
 “that infinite variety of knowledge which secures to you the
 “voices of the most sensible part of the nation, is, to all who
 “surround you, a constant lesson of modesty, candour, and
 “public spirit, and all those virtues which this age is content to
 “admire. In fine, a philosopher in your sentiments and your
 “conduct, you comprehend in this singular character a quality
 “still more singular, that of possessing these talents without
 “ostentation. May your example teach some of our Mæcenas’s
 “(now too much multiplied for the glory and advantage of let-
 “ters) that the true way of honouring merit is to protect it, is
 “to honour themselves by the manner in which they distin-
 “guish it.”

charge

titude has to fulfil, the more scrupulous it is to discharge them. M. Fouquet was abandoned in his disgrace by all that got their fortunes under him. Two men of letters alone remained faithful, Fontaine and Pellisson : Undoubtedly the number might have been more considerable ; and I am sorry not to be able to add to these two names those of Moliere and the great Corneille ; but, in short, men of letters distinguished themselves on this occasion, and the descendants of that minister cannot be too mindful of it.

The conclusion of all we have been saying is, that the only persons of distinction, whose acquaintance ought to be cultivated by men of letters, are those whom they can treat and esteem, with the utmost confidence, as their equals and friends, and that all others are to be shunned without exception. Philoxenes, after he had heard the verses of Dionysius the tyrant, could say, " O that he would send me to the mines." How many men of letters, snatched from their obscurity, and plunged all at once into a circle of courtiers, might cry out, almost at their entrance, " O that they would restore me my solitude again." I never understood how the answer of Aristippus to Diogenes came to be admired : " If you had known how to live with great men, you would never have lived upon pulse." Diogenes did not reproach him for living with great men, but for paying his court to a tyrant. That Diogenes who, in the midst of poverty, was capable of braving the conqueror of Asia, and who only wanted decency to make him a

model for wise men, was a philosopher of antiquity the most cried down, because his intrepid veracity rendered him the scourge of philosophers themselves; he was, in reality, one of those who had the clearest knowledge of mankind, and the true value of things.

Every age, and especially our own, stands in need of a Diogenes; but the difficulty is in finding men who have the courage to be one, and men who have patience to endure one.

Amongst the great, who seem to hold men of letters in estimation, those who have some pretensions to a fine genius constitute a singular party; vanity inspires them with these pretensions, pride prevents them from shewing them to all the world. Notwithstanding that general light with which our philosophical age has been irradiated, there are some worthy men, more than is generally imagined, who do not think the quality of author, or professor of literature, to be a title sufficiently noble of itself. It must be confessed, the French nation has scarce shook off the yoke of that barbarity it has endured so long. This is not at all to be wondered at. Birth being an advantage which chance bestows, it is natural not only to be willing to enjoy it, but still further, to subject to it all those whose acquisitions are more painful. Pride and self-love both find their account in this disposition.

I know that the generality of the great exclaim against such a reproach; but let them ask their own consciences; let them but give us leave to examine their conversations, and we shall remain convinced,
that

that the name of the man of letters is regarded by them as but a subaltern title, which can only fall to the share of an inferior rank ; as if the art of instructing and enlightening mankind, next to that very rare one of governing them well, was not the most noble investiture of humanity. A great prince, sensible, as it behoves him to be, to all kinds of glory, will be chiefly solicitous for that which arises from the talents of the mind, when he can attain it ; because he knows if it be not the most brilliant, it has at least this invaluable advantage, that no person can challenge a share with us.

To be convinced of the truth of what I have mentioned, the low opinion which is generally formed in the world concerning men of letters ; it will be sufficient to attend to that kind of reception they commonly meet with from it. It is pretty near of the same kind with that we give to certain agreeable professions, which undoubtedly require talents, but which, in enquiring after them, we affect to degrade, as we honour other states without knowing why. Indolence would be possessed of talents ; and vanity finds means to separate them from persons. It is this which makes the part of men of letters, next to that of ecclesiastics, the most difficult to be acted in the world. One of these two professions is situated betwixt the extremes of hypocrisy and scandal, and the other of pride and baseness.—Must men of letters, then, utterly renounce the company of the great ? Besides the exceptions which I have made above to

this rule, some particular considerations make it necessary to moderate and restrain it.

Those men of letters who can derive no advantage to the objects of their studies, from a commerce with the world, ought to limit themselves to that company (of what kind soever it be) where they will find the relaxation they want, in the sweets of confidence and friendship. What end would our frivolous conversations answer to a philosopher, except to coop up his genius, and deprive him of those excellent ideas he would acquire by meditation and reading. It was not at the hotel de Rambouillet that Descartes discovered the application of algebra to geometry, nor at the court of Charles II. that Newton found out the principle of universal gravitation; and for the manner of writing, Malebranch, who lived in retirement, and whose amusements were only the diversion of a child, is by no means, in point of style, the worst model for philosophers.

It is not the same with respect to those whom we call fine geniuses. To paint men in works of imagination, they must know them; to represent facts justly, they must not flatter themselves they can guess at them; so much the worse for those of whom they do make random conjectures. A commerce with the world is absolutely necessary for this kind of men of letters; but it were to be wished, however, they would content themselves with being bare spectators in this artificial society, and spectators so attentive and observant as not to be obliged too often to return to a comedy, which is not always good enough to be seen over-again;

that

that they would assist at the piece no more than the pit—who judge of the actors, and whom the actors dare not insult; in a word, that they should be of the same mind with Apollonius Thyaneus, who came to Rome once, in the reign of Nero, to see, as he said, what sort of an animal was a tyrant.

It is much to be desired, that those who take upon them to draw a picture of the age, whether by a piece for the theatre, or any other performance, would not satisfy themselves with borrowing its jargon and cant phrase. It is by this distorted and barbarous language, now days, that persons pretend to distinguish the authors who frequent what is called “Good company;” but who are, in reality, the worse for it, whatever may be imagined; and whose manner of writing, I appeal to experience, would be much better if the company they kept was less brilliant.

It belongs only to a small number of singular men to preserve themselves from this contagion; but it is very extraordinary that men of letters, formed for studying, knowing and fixing language, should, by a tacit agreement, submit to take the law in this point from the great, to whom they ought to prescribe it. In those days, when our language was only a fantastical mixture of the bad and good, the great writers saw into futurity, if I may speak so, and banished from their works those turns and words which they thought would soon grow old: this is what Pascal did in his Provincial Letters, a work which is read in our days, though composed one hundred years ago. At this time, when our language is degenerated

and

and degraded, great writers will shew the same prophetic spirit in proscribing from their writings the daily jingling of our sets of good company. Perhaps it will become at last so ridiculous, that our authors will become more ridiculous than they, for having adopted it, and be obliged to return to the simple and the true.

One of the principal inconveniences arising from the society of the great with men of letters, and yet at the same time one of the principal means by which the last propose to arrive at esteem and consideration, is the rage of patronizing, which has produced among us the Mæcenas's, as they are called. How would that favourite of Augustus be surpris'd to see his name so often profaned, and the abject situation in which men of letters stand, with respect to those who wear this name! Horace wrote to Mæcenas, that is, to the greatest nobleman of the greatest empire that ever existed, upon terms of equality, which did honour to them both; and in a nation so polished, so enlightened, so little enslaved as ours pretends to be, a man of letters, who was to address his protector as Horace addressed his, would be condemned by his fellow-writers.

The common form of our dedicatory epistles is one of those things which have disgraced letters. Almost every body is ringing the honour they do to letters, by protecting them, but never the honour they receive from them, nor the obligations they are under to respect them. It seems that baseness and falshood are the necessary perfections of these kinds of compositions;

sitions; as if praises, bestowed with nobleness of spirit, were not far more flattering to him who receives, and more honourable to him who gives them.

Are we to be surprised then that so many of moderate, but mean, talents, should be celebrated at the expence of genius? The Orpheus of our nation, who in giving so rapid a change to the whole form of French music, prepared a revolution, which he could not help discovering some glimpse of, was he not (to mention no other examples) the object of hatred and persecution from a great number of Mæcenas's, for no other crime but being above their protection?

It is true, that excepting only a small number of great personages so happy as to be fully sensible of the talents of this famous man, and so bold as to proclaim them, the rest had not the satisfaction of seeing the public confirm their opinion, but ended their opposition, by reluctantly subscribing to the judgment of the nation; a judgment which they would have prevented, if it had been in their power; had that illustrious artist deigned to make a shew of consulting them upon music. His success and his glory furnish us with a striking example of the truth of what we have advanced above, that the authority of men of letters always prevails at last. It is to their suffrage, next to himself, that a writer owes the reputation he enjoys, in spite of cabal and envy; not that we approve the fanaticism of some sort of admirers. The esteem of the wise is the most calm; but it is the property of great talents to make fanatics; and

and we must expect to meet with them in an age, when it is a kind of heroism to celebrate superior genius, as naturally as we look for enthusiasts, flaggelists and convulsion-mongers among the sects who are under persecution.

Corneille, for the consolation of great geniuses who shall follow him be it remembered, was constantly persecuted by almost all the lovers of that time, who had Scudery and Boissrobert for their heroes. It must be so. Racine, who perhaps wanted nothing to make him capable of surpassing Corneille but to have lived like him, left no room for his adversaries to attack him. That spirit of the courtier, which he had too much of, and which without *Athalia*, *Phædra* and *Brittanicus*, would have been a stain upon his glory, did not hinder him from suppressing the chagrin that came from those whose protection he idolized, and to which he was enslaved.

It ought to be, however, some satisfaction to persecuted talents, to see how readily the public is pleased to reverse the sentence of pretended men of taste. It is almost an infallible reprobation of a work, to envy their esteem. They imagine, by proclaiming the talents of the authors they have espoused, to inspire a prepossession in their favour. The nation, on the other hand, esteeming every opportunity of exercising its liberty an invaluable privilege, and perceiving a design to surprise or seize upon its suffrage by violence, is always the least disposed to give its consent upon such terms. It is the same with respect to works proclaimed before-hand, which are kept
from

from the public a long time. The world cannot live upon expectation; the longer it has been disappointed, the more strictly it requires the effects to answer; and woe be to him that frustrates its hopes! It is not having recourse to such ridiculous and useless ostentation as this that will secure the success of a work, it must be by making severe and intelligent friends its judges in private, such as will never approve but when they cannot do otherwise; and whose opinion we readily submit to.

Hitherto I have only spoken of those lovers of sciences, who are content with supporting men of letters by the power of their credit, and the weakness of their suffrages; by a person of credit I mean, one who is solicitous to procure admirers, not one who has courage to enter the lists with formidable adversaries. Experience but too strongly proves, that persecuted talents have nothing to look for from this quarter: their patrons will soon be repulsed by their enemies. But men of letters, perhaps, imagine other resources are to be found in the wisdom of certain lovers of science, which we will divide into two classes.

The first contains those who know themselves too well to venture to appear in public, but who are not satisfied, like the rest of their brethren, with being absolute at dinner, and calling for the sublime from a poet, and discoveries from a learned man: they have further pretensions than these; even to enlighten their followers, to furnish them with plans for their works, and to direct them in the execution. I am surprised none of their defendants address them as some negotiators

tiators did Colbert, when he was instructing them, "Leave these things to us." This statesman, who shewed his abilities in never speaking upon a subject he did not understand, and in giving none but useful advice, shewed them too in taking it well, that men, better informed than himself, should in this respect maintain their own judgment.

In the second class of Mæcenæ's are those who aspire to the glory of being authors themselves. There are few who do not succeed in this enterprize, thanks to the adulation which enflames them; let them only be the adopted fathers of a work published in their name, a hundred pens are eager to applaud it, from the hero down to the Thermites in literature. All cry out, Here is a master-piece. Have they made but an almanack, it can be demonstrated, they have found out the system of the world.

This reproach is chiefly levelled at certain foreign journalists; (for I would hardly dare to say that there are any in France who deserve it) with one hand they lift up from their humble situations, statues of clay, and with the other they vainly attempt to mutilate the golden statues of great men, destitute of patronage and credit. In their periodical memoirs, which we may call, as Voltaire called history, immense archives of falshood, and little repositories of truth; they commend every one but him who deserves to be commended: thus the good things they say of bad books, disgrace them even more than the injustice which they would inflict upon the good.

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The journalists I speak of might be compared to those mercenary subalterns appointed to collect the customs in great cities, who are inflexibly severe to the people, but pass by great lords with respect; permit contraband trade to their friends; practise it frequently themselves, while they greedily seize upon the property of others under this pretence. It is in vain to solicit of those critics any thing so unreasonable as flattery; but sure we may be permitted to exhort them at least to distinguish between the author and the work.

What most scandalously reflects upon the great and on literature, is that writers, who dishonour themselves by satire, should find patrons still more contemptible than they. The man of letters, who deserves that name, equally disdains, on his own account, to complain of the one, or to answer the other; but how little soever he is affected by the injuries themselves, he will not be inattentive to the influence which lends them credit, if it be only for the sake of forming a just idea of those who condescend to be their protectors. In a place where the liberty of the press is not free, the liberty of abusing men of letters by satire, is one proof of the little real esteem they are held in, and the pleasure there is in seeing them insulted; for why is it more innocent to offer an indignity to a man of letters, who is an honour to his country, than to ridicule a man in a public station, who is a scandal to it?

If it was imagined that all libels and satires were freely permitted; in this case, all states and condi-
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tions would indiscriminately be the objects of them. We may say further, let personal satire be punished as severely as possible.

Those who attack a person in the meanest rank of society in his probity, in his manners, or in his condition, must answer for it; but let free liberty be given, in the face of the public, to estimate the talents of those who protect, as well as those who write; those haughty and despicable persons, who look upon men of letters as a kind of animals, destined to fight upon the arena for the pleasure of the multitude, should come down then from their amphitheatres, and let their judges take their places.

I cannot omit this opportunity of relating an anecdote, well enough to give an idea of the character and injustice of the men I speak of. One of them turned into ridicule the excessive delicacy of a certain author, who had expressed some chagrin (perhaps too much) at some satires published against him. The ingenious author composed a song, in which the great man was delicately ridiculed: had he been capable of understanding the offence, the laws would not have been severe enough to have punished so great an injury.

The last sort of lovers of science, who, for some reasons, have a better title to be considered than the rest, and who may be regarded as the real protectors of literature, are those who seek to contribute to the progress of the sciences and the arts by their benefactions.

I am sorry for those men of letters, whose fortune obliges them to fly to so sad and dangerous a resource.

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It is in their power, however, to conduct themselves with so much dignity and nobleness of spirit, as to lay their very benefactors under obligation. I discharge, with interest, the kindness your father did me, said the philosopher to one of his disciples; for I have been the cause of his being applauded all over the world.

The abbé De St. Pierre, once depriving himself of a considerable part of his fortune in favour of M. Varignon, said to him, "I don't give you a pension, but the reverse; I would make you independent of me;" a piece of heroism well worthy of being proposed as a model to all benefactors. This is the price which such a title should cost; but how few would wish to purchase it on the same conditions!

What a lesson does this example of the Abbé afford to certain benefactors, often as covetous as vain, who think themselves the fathers of literature, for some few slight favours far beneath their fortune, which they take care secretly to divulge? When they have obliged worthy men, they ought not to speak to them of gratitude; that principle knows how to impose upon itself laws sufficiently severe. But mankind are so attentive to seize upon every thing that may give them a superiority over their equals, that a benefit conferred is commonly regarded as a kind of claim or purchase-money for him whom we have obliged; an act of sovereignty which is abused to make persons miserable in their dependence. Much has been written, and with justice, against the ungrateful; but such benefactors as these have been left in repose; and they

they would furnish a chapter, which is wanting to the history of tyrants*.

Thus, to a well-born mind, the greatest obstacle to opulence is the exercise of its own essential rights.

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* The author, though he declares this sad truth, is far from thinking gratitude a restraint; on the other hand, he has given lasting proofs of his own to the only man in place to whom he owed it, the count d'Argenson, in his dedication of his new treatise *De Dynamique*. "The favourable reception (says he) which the learned have given to this work, encourages me to present it to you. I could wish to have rendered it worthy of posterity, for the sake of transmitting down to it the only testimony I can give of my attachment and gratitude. There is no truth in this book dearer to me than so noble and just a sentiment as this. The less I have sought after benefactors, the more mindful should I be of those who have generously offered me their patronage, and the favours of majesty, which are never out of my mind, always bring to my remembrance the minister who procured them. May the sciences, Sir, always faithful in preserving the names of those who have loved them, celebrate in a manner worthy of France and you, those establishments so glorious to your ministry, which leave your successors the honour of cultivating them. May you retire from the world, enjoy in peace the happiness a private life can give, in removing from you too near a view of the miseries of mankind. Such are the wishes of a citizen, who will always interest himself in your felicity, and who now, for the first time, cannot help complaining, that his situation is not more exalted to enable him to give more eclat to his applause."

Absolute indigence is a surer road to places and riches; because slavery is what it has always been accustomed to. The necessity of delivering itself from extreme misery, while it renders all means excusable, insensibly familiarizes them to the mind: so that they can be used afterwards with less reluctance in enlarging their fortune. These persons are disciplined by disgusts and rebuffs; and they think of nothing farther than to find their account from the unhappy habitude of swallowing them. How disagreeable, not to say debasing, does the pride and despotism of benefactors render their favours! How mischievous are bounties, even to persons of real abilities, when abjectly received! They communicate to the mind a degree of abjectness which insensibly sinks its ideas, and at length infects his writings: for the style takes its tincture from the character. Are you sublime in your sentiments? your manner of writing will be firm and noble. I don't deny but there may be exceptions to this rule, as there are to many other; but these exceptions will be a kind of phænomena.

The Roman could cry out, "Bread and shews!" how desirable would it be if men of letters could cry out "Bread and liberty!" I speak of liberty not only in their persons, but in their writings. I don't mean to confound it with that criminal licence which attacks what it ought to reverence. True courage is that which combats vice and follies, keeps persons in awe, and obeys the laws of LIBERTY. TRUTH, and POVERTY, (poverty I say; for if this be dreaded, the former will be absent) ought to be always before
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the eyes of men of letters, as POSTERITY should be before sovereign princes.

When I say that poverty ought to be one of the words of this device for men of letters, I don't pretend to assert that it is equally necessary for them to be poor, as it is for them to be true and free, and that poverty forms an essential circumstance in their condition; I only maintain that they ought not to fear it. It would be unjust to forbid them riches; for why has not a man of letters the same right to opulence as so many others, who are either useless, or hurtful to their country, whose scandalous luxury is an insult upon the public misery? But if a man of letters ambitiously seeks after fortune, (as one of our most illustrious writers observed very justly) he deserves to get one; and why should it be imagined so very difficult to get one, even by honourable methods? We can produce, in the history of philosophy, one, who being reproached by his enemies for despising riches, because he had not the abilities to acquire them, applied himself to commerce, enriched himself by it in one year, and then turned philosopher again.

If it be easy to make a fortune by honourable methods, it must be still more easy to attain it when persons can scruple at nothing. For this purpose, it requires nothing more than a strongly determined resolution to succeed by patience and boldness: perhaps it is the only success which affords no proof of any kind of genius; for a genius of intrigue and dexterity is not worthy of that name; it is the genius of those who have no other, and wish for none beside. It is by
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making a long and successful use of this so very common a talent, that persons without merit, and without name, are able to arrive at very large fortunes, and considerable employments. England only has this honour to boast of, that ~~where men of letters have~~ advanced themselves, by their genius, to the highest stations; with us such merit is generally a sufficient motive to exclude them, and, perhaps, this is no misfortune to learning. In general, there are not a set of more implacable enemies in the world to letters, than those who have made their fortune by them, or by the appearance of them. Elated with favour, these middling men are sensible, that good judges must behold them in their true situation, and therefore they can never forgive them.

Nevertheless, this rule is not entirely a general one. Among the different Mecenas's of our age, some are to be found, who, being enriched by letters, take under their protection learned men of inferior note and fortune. But, to see the manner in which they treat them, one would be tempted to think, that the name of republic of letters was a very ill contrived one, as nothing can be less republican than their conduct and manner of behaving to their equals. They seem to be persuaded, they are the only persons who deserve to be rich; and, at the same time that they complain of their own indigence in the midst of a very genteel fortune, should you mention a man of letters destitute of necessaries, they won't fail to represent him in very easy circumstances. "Thou hast reason, Diogenes

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"would

“ would have answered, I wish I could but see thee a
 “ single day in my place.”

The Mæcenæ's I speak of have adopted a favourite maxim, that men of letters ought to be poor : the reason they give is, ~~that necessity sharpens genius~~, while wealth benumbs and enfeebles the exercise of it; but their true motive is, by this circumstance, to have a more numerous and dirty levee to flatter them.

I must confess, that they have sometimes been punished, and it is not very uncommon to see these tyrants in literature, after being celebrated by foreigners as well as Frenchmen, at last outlive their literary reputation, when a change of circumstances disables them from doing either good or harm any longer.

It is upon a principle nearly the same with this pretended necessity, of keeping men of letters in a state of dependence, that we have seen, in some of our famous academies, that spirit of despotism prevail, which, I dare say, would have been very pernicious to the progress of science, had it not been for the superior talents of many members of those companies; for, in a despotic state, the virtues of a citizen are the virtues of a dupe; they must know how to be bubbled sometimes, and persons of such qualifications may be found in plenty every where.

The Cardinal Richlieu gave to the French academy a very simple and a very noble form, but then it was Cardinal Richlieu. He was sensible, notwithstanding the system of despotism of which he was full, and which he had extended so far, that a Democratic
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form was most suitable to such a state as that of the republic of letters, which lives only by liberty: that singular man, who understood the value of talents, determined that, in the French academy, genius should walk in the same line by the side of rank and nobility, and that all titles there should give way to that of the man of letters. He was desirous that this academy should be almost entirely composed of the best writers in the nation, to give an ornament to it in the eyes of the wise; and a small number of distinguished noblemen, to make it splendid to the people; and that the last should only be brought in to supply the places which great writers might leave vacant; and thus that, in the French academy, prejudices should contribute to do honour to abilities, and not abilities to flatter prejudices; and especially, that attention should be paid to exclude those, who, all at once pretending to be great authors and great lords, had no title to either. He little imagined, that one day a certain set of men would be offended to see themselves in the French academy betwixt Despreau and Racine, a place which Mæcenas himself would have thought an honour, and which he would have filled with modesty. In a word, Cardinal Richlieu easily perceived, that it was too dangerous to establish, in literary companies, a spirit of inequality, so likely to create disturbance, to repulse great talents, to fill that illustrious society at length with mediocrity, and to expose literary rewards too much to the mercy of caprice and envy.

But, to speak the truth, these recompences are not of such absolute necessity to the progress of letters, as is imagined even in our nation. Corneille, Fontain, and several others, had them not : apparently without them Racine wrote ~~te this, tragedies, and~~ Despreau his art of poetry ; without them our age has produced the *Henriad*, the *Spirit of Laws*, *Hippolytus* and *Aricia*, and many fine works of the same authors, and of others. Great talents require no other principles but the impulse of nature to unfold them. It is this, and not fortune, which forms a great man ; it was this which, in the midst of civil wars, peopled Flanders with poor, but able painters ; it was this which gave to Italy so many celebrated artists, of which but a small number liv'd in affluence. In fact, with talents and genius nature is pleased, if I may so express it, to open, from time to time, mines, which she absolutely closes up again afterwards, and that for many ages. She diverts herself equally with the injustice of fortune and of mankind : she raises up singular geniuses in the midst of a barbarous people, as she produces precious plants among savage nations, who are ignorant of their virtues.

Nevertheless, it is a mistake to assert, without restriction, that ill distributed rewards always discourage superior geniuses ; they are serviceable sometimes to produce great performances from those who never obtain them, and who must labour not to attain them, but to deserve them. Such is the principal utility resulting from these premiums, especially when they are distributed in a promiscuous and plentiful manner.

Far be it from us then to wish to dry up this source. The discouragement which such a conduct would introduce (for a time at least) among men of letters, would, in my opinion, be a greater mischief than the homages, not to say idolatry, which interest obliges them to pay ; and I am not for imitating that foolish emperor, who destroyed the library of Constantinople, because the men of letters of his empire worshipped images ; I only think literary recompences should be less frequent. This would be the means of bringing them to be dispensed with more propriety : by so doing men would be confined to their particular province ; favours being more difficultly acquired, would be disputed by none but those who are capable of meriting them ; and celebrated writers, philosophers and artists, would find elsewhere, in the esteem of their country, a premium sufficiently flattering to reconcile them to wait for other rewards, or to smile at those by whom they were deprived of them.

But what is never to be forgotten by the great, if they would promote the cause of literature, is, that personal consideration is the only genuine reward of talents, that which gives a value to every other, or rather which supplies their place. It was this which Greece paid to the great men whom she produced of every kind ; this is the inestimable reward which letters receive at this day from a monarch who fills the throne with the wisdom and virtue of a Julian, without his superstition. The indifference of Charles V. to literature, transmitted to his descendants, seems to be one of the principal causes which has retarded the

progress of genius in his dominions. Prussia, on the other hand, will be for ever indebted to Frederick for that progress she has made in science and arts. Superior to prejudice, merit alone, with him, was the distinction of mankind: light and truth, so necessary, yet so much concealed from most princes, are the fruits of that noble and philosophical liberty, which he affords to literature. Genius, misfortune and philosophy are a sufficient title to his bounty: his taste for the sciences and the fine arts is as eminent as it is true, and the more to be applauded, as he does not sacrifice to them more important concerns, and knows how to be a monarch better than any thing else.

As the elogiums he has received are not confined to the suffrages of his subjects, but ratified by all Europe, whose unanimous voice is the test of the merit of princes, they will be confirmed by the judgment of future ages, which we may venture to anticipate, because there is no reason to fear it. Will he then accept the feeble, but disinterested homage of a man of letters, whose pen has not yet been dishonoured by flattery, who had no hopes, when he wrote this encomium, of being admitted one day to thank him for his favours, whom friendship still detains in his own country, for he holds it dearer than fortune, and who never desired any thing of him but his esteem?

Would to God, for the honour of our nation, I could not have said so much of our Macenas's, but truth and justice check'd my good will, and forbid my silence. I can, however, honestly protest, that I
never

never intended to apply the critical reflections, contained in this essay, to any one person in particular: if, contrary to my design, some one should think he can discover his own features in this picture, I shall give him no other answer, but that of Protagoras to Demetrius, “I cannot believe you would proclaim war with the arts;” for an ill-advised patronage of the ingenious is, in reality, an hostile attempt against them. Happy would men of letters be, if they were at last convinced, that the surest means of making themselves respected, is to live in the closest harmony and friendship with each other; that by this union they would become capable of giving the law to the rest of the nation, in matters of taste and philosophy; that true esteem is that which is despatched by those who are worthy to be esteemed themselves; that quackery, in short, is a farce which degrades the spectator and the actor; and that the thirst for reputation and riches is one of the causes which contributes most to the decline of letters among us.

These are the reflexions and views of a writer without artifice and without intrigue, without patronage, and consequently without hope, but happily without care. I have endeavoured to explain myself freely, though without caprice, upon the different objects which form the matter of this essay. I am, and I ought to be, less suspected on this account, as being engaged in a career not very brilliant, but calm, in which the number of judges, of enemies, and flatterers, is very small. I do myself the justice of not aspiring to places or literary recompences, as I have not the ho-

nour to be any man's dependant or rival, as I have seen too many Mæcenæ's and great personages, not to find something to commend, and too few not to have something to complain of.

The fate of this work, when it first appeared, was absolutely different from what I expected; some persons of distinction honoured it with their encomiums; some men of letters pulled it in pieces: the first saw in it nothing but a respectable pride, the last nothing but a mutinous vanity. The public must judge whether the former have done me more justice than the latter. My zeal would be sufficiently repaid, if those, who have censured me most, would practise the maxims they have dictated to me. Letters, in my opinion, would then meet with more respect, and be more deserving of it; I know that the false interests of men are always opposite to their true interests. In this case I shall not be the first missionary, who, with moderate talents, but very good intentions, with reasons still better, and a conduct conformable to his doctrine, has had the misfortune to make no proselytes.

Some of the more celebrated and accomplished of our fine geniuses may propagate these doctrines with better success. Let me, escaped from a tumultuous sea, over which I have only been a passenger, give this piece of advice to men of letters, "*Parcite ovæ nimium procedere, non bene ripæ creditur; ipse aries etiam nunc vellera siccet.*"

REFLEXIONS ON THE USE AND ABUSE OF
PHILOSOPHY IN MATTERS THAT ARE
PROPERLY RELATIVE TO TASTE*.

THE philosophical spirit, so celebrated by one part of our nation, and so decried by another, has produced different, and even contrary, effects, according as we consider it with respect to the sciences, or in relation to the belles lettres. Operating in the sphere of science, to which it properly belongs, it has set limits to that passion for explaining all things which arose from the towering pride of system; but entering into the circle of belles lettres, it has presumed, on the contrary, to analyze our pleasures; to call before its tribunal the more elegant feelings of the human mind, and to submit to its examination the various objects of taste. If the wise moderation, which has been observed, in these latter times, by philosophers in matters of science, has met with much contradiction; is it surprising that the encroaching spirit of the new adventurers in literature has also been opposed? This philosophical spirit, applied to the objects of taste, must undoubtedly displease such of our writers as imagine, that, in matters of taste, as well as in those of a more serious kind, every paradox ought to be rejected, every new opinion banished, and that, merely because it is new. This way of thinking, however,

* These reflexions were read by Mr. D'Alembert before the French academy, the 14th of March, 1757.

appears to me both unreasonable and pernicious; we cannot extend too far the liberty of examining, judging, and inventing in matters of speculation and literary amusement, even though, in many cases, that liberty should be utterly unsuccessful in its efforts. The flight of genius must be unrestrained, since it is often in the midst of its wildest excursions that it creates the true sublime. Such also is the case with the faculty of reason, or the philosophical spirit. Let us therefore permit this discerning spirit to extend indiscriminately, though sometimes without success, its inspection to all the objects of our pleasures, and by that means put it in a capacity of striking out new paths, and conducting genius itself into unknown regions.

One of the great advantages of philosophy in its application to matters of taste, is its being so admirably adapted to cure, or to prevent, that excessive veneration for a certain class of authors, which we may call by the name of literary superstition. It will justify our esteem of the antients by rendering that esteem rational, and reducing it within its proper bounds; it will prevent our admiring them in their defects; it will shew us their equals in several of our modern writers; who, because they have followed the models exhibited by the antients, are so unreasonably modest as to esteem themselves inferior to their masters. But it will be asked, whether this method of analysing metaphysically matters of feeling and sentiment, will not be attended with many inconveniences? Whether it will not often engage us to enquire into the reasons of things which have no reason at all, damp our pleasure

sure by leading us into the custom of discussing coldly what was designed by nature to touch and to inflame, and put such shackles upon true genius, as to render it servilely timorous, and check its enterprising ardor? Let us endeavour to give a satisfactory answer to these important questions. www.libtool.com.cn

Taste, though far from being generally possessed, yet it is by no means an arbitrary thing. This is a truth acknowledged on all sides, both by those who reduce taste to mere feeling and perception, and by those also who would bring it within the sphere of reasoning and discussion. But we must observe at the same time, that all the beauties and perfections which appear in the productions of nature or of art, are not properly the objects of taste, whose perceptions are less extensive than many are apt to imagine. There are certain charms of a sublime and striking kind, which equally affect all observers, and of which, consequently, all the various orders of mankind, in all ages and nations of the world, are competent judges. But there is also another species of beauty, which only affects those minds that are possessed of a certain delicacy of feeling, and which remains imperceptible to vulgar spirits. The beauties which belong to this class, are beauties only of a second order; because objects, which excite the idea of grandeur, surpass those which affect us only by their gracefulness and elegance. The charms however of this second class of objects are those, which it requires the most sagacity to discern, and the greatest delicacy to feel truly; and accordingly they abound most in those nations

where social intercourse has contributed to the perfection of the arts, and multiplied the sources of pleasure and enjoyment. It is then in this class of beauty, which is adapted to the contemplation of the discerning few, that we are properly to look for the objects of taste. These observations lead us naturally to define taste, as the faculty of distinguishing, in the works of art, the various qualities which are adapted to excite pleasure or disgust, in minds that are susceptible of delicate sentiments and perceptions.

If, then, taste be not an arbitrary thing, it must be founded on fixed and evident principles, by the application of which, we may form a decisive judgment of all the various productions of art. The truth is, that the source of our pleasures and of our disgusts lies solely and intirely within ourselves; so that, if we reflect with attention upon our mental frame, we shall find there general and invariable rules of taste, which will serve as the criterion of beauty and deformity, in all the objects, which the fecundity of the different arts presents to our view. From hence it follows, that the same philosophical spirit, which obliges us, for want of sufficient evidence, to suspend every moment our enquires about the nature and qualities of those objects that are without us, ought, on the contrary, to animate our researches with respect to the objects and the nature of taste, which lies obvious to our examination, as it exists within us, and constitutes a part of our mental frame. The true philosopher will, at the same time, easily perceive that this examination must be confined within proper limits. We must

must never, in our researches upon any subject, flatter ourselves with the hopes of rising to First Principles, which a thick veil perpetually conceals from the eyes of mortals. To investigate the primitive and metaphysical cause of our various pleasures, would be as chimerical a project, as to attempt explaining the operation of external objects upon our senses. But as the origin of our knowledge has been reduced to a small number of sensations; so the sources of those pleasures, that are relative to taste, may be traced out by a few evident observations upon the manner in which we perceive and feel. Thus far the true sage extends his researches; but here also he stops, and descends from hence, as from first principles, to those consequences that result from his accurate observations.

In analysing taste, we shall find many qualities necessary to the proper exercise of that perceptive power, which escape the notice of inattentive observers. It does not consist wholly in accuracy and rectitude of judgment, however rare and precious this quality may be, nor yet in a delicate sensibility alone. No: there is yet, further, a considerable assemblage of senses and powers (if I may so speak) which enters into its composition, and which we must therefore carefully take into the account. A few examples will illustrate this observation. When we read a sublime piece of poetry, what are the powers and faculties of our nature to which the bard addresses himself? They are various; sometimes he speaks to our imagination, sometimes to our affections, sometimes to our reason,

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but always to the external sense or organ of hearing. Verse is a species of harmony, with respect to which the ear is too delicate to admit of the least defect; so that reason itself, upon some occasions, is obliged to make certain sacrifices to rhyme. A philosopher, then, with all his penetration and delicacy of sentiment, will be an incompetent judge of poetry, if he has not a good ear. He will assert, that the pleasures which result from poetic harmony are merely chimerical; that all authors, of whatever kind their productions may be, ought to address themselves alone to the understanding and the heart; nay, by captious reasonings, he will cast an apparent ridicule upon the care and industry, which are employed in arranging words and periods, so as to render them harmonious and pleasing to the ear. Thus a natural philosopher, who possessed no other external sense but that of feeling, would hold it as a thing impossible, that distant objects should operate upon our bodily organs, and would prove his assertion by sophistical arguments, to which no satisfactory answer could be given, as long as he was deprived of sight and hearing. Such is the case of that philosopher, who, without a delicate ear, pretends to have a taste for poetry. He imagines he does no real injury to a poem, when, by transposing the words, he destroys their harmony and cadence, and he will attribute the languor and flatness, which the poem acquires by this change, to the power of prejudice and custom, to which he acknowledges his own involuntary subjection. He will never once imagine, that, by breaking the measure, and transposing
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the words, he has destroyed the delightful harmony that resulted from their metrical arrangement and proportions. To judge, however, properly of such a conduct, we have only to ask ourselves, what we should think of a musician, who, to prove that the pleasure of melody is founded in opinion, and not in nature, should spoil a fine air, by destroying the symmetry of the sounds, of which it was composed?

It is not thus that the true philosopher will judge of the pleasures that arise from poetry. Avoiding wisely all extremes, he will neither attribute them entirely to nature on the one hand, nor wholly to opinion on the other. He will observe, that, as all nations are, more or less, agreeably affected with the charms of music in general, though they may not all delight in the same particular kinds of melody; so, in like manner, they are all, in general, susceptible of pleasure from poetic harmony, though the poetry of one people may differ extremely from that of another. It is by examining attentively this difference, that the true sage will be able, at length, to determine how far the pleasures we receive from poetry and music are influenced by habit; what real additions they derive from thence, and what imaginary ones they receive from opinion. For he will ever distinguish between that pleasure, which is the result of habit, and that which is arbitrary, and merely founded on opinion; a distinction hitherto not sufficiently attended to, in treating this subject, but which, notwithstanding, daily experience sufficiently justifies. There are certain pleasures that strike us immediately, and that pervade the

the soul the very moment that their objects are presented; there are others, which require time to produce their proper effect; which are received with indifference or disgust, until the mind has been modified by their action upon it to a certain degree, and are then enjoyed with the quickened sensation of delight. How often has it happened, that a piece of music which we have heard, for the first time, without any agreeable emotion, has excited afterwards in us the most extatic raptures, when, by its being often repeated, the ear has been at length able to distinguish its complicated charms, and to perceive the whole delicacy and force of its expression.

This is a striking instance of the pleasures which arise from habit, and which must by no means be looked upon as arbitrary, because they may be, at first, received with indifference, and have the force of prejudice against them.

Thus a philosophical connoisseur will be careful to maintain every faculty and every sense in their respective privileges, and to attribute to a good ear the authority that belongs to it, in deciding concerning the merit of poetical compositions. But, at the same time, he will be far from thinking, that the poet's attention to please the external sense can justify his dispensing with the more important obligation of satisfying the reason and imagination of his readers, by the justness of his ideas, and the sublimity of his views. As he is persuaded that the first and most important rule of good writing requires a conformity between the style of an author, and the matter which

he treats, so nothing will disgust him more than common and trivial ideas expressed with affectation, and adorned with the vain pomp and harmony of poetry. A plain and easy prose will, in his opinion, be preferable to such numbers as derive their principal merit from their cadence, and little or none from the truths and sentiments which they are employed to embellish and set off. Feelingly sensible also of the charms of poetic imagery, he is, on that very account, pleased with such images alone, as are new and striking; and yet even to these he will prefer, without hesitation, those beautiful sentiments which unfold, in a noble and affecting manner, truths that are useful to mankind.

It must, however, be carefully observed, that though a philosopher be possessed of all that variety of senses and faculties that enter into the composition of true taste, yet this is not all that is required in the matter now under consideration; it is farther necessary, that the exercise of these faculties be not too much confined to one particular set of objects. The famous Malebranche could not read the most sublime verses, without a certain weariness and disgust; and yet his style abounds with all the grand characters of poetry, and is full of imagination, sentiment, and harmony; but his imagination, entirely occupied about matters purely intellectual, confined its energy to the creation of philosophical systems; and the high degree of feeling and vivacity with which he was endued, only served to make him embrace with ardor, as truth, what was no more than mere hypothesis. Though his prose was extremely harmonious, yet
poetical

poetical harmony had no charms to him; which may perhaps be owing to one of the following reasons: either that the sensibility of his ear was confined to the harmony of prose, or that a mechanical and natural talent enabled him to write harmonious prose without his perceiving it, just as his imagination had served him in philosophy without his knowledge, or as a musical instrument produces, without consciousness, well-proportioned sounds.

It is not only to a want of delicacy in the mind, or of sensibility in the external organs of perception, that we are to impute all erroneous judgments in matters of taste. The pleasure we receive from any excellent production of art, is, or may be derived from different sources. The true philosophical analysis consists therefore, in distinguishing well these various sources, and keeping them separate from each other, that so we may refer to each what properly belongs to it, and may not attribute our pleasures to causes that have had no sort of influence in their production. It has been observed, that the rules of each art should be taken from the most excellent compositions which each respective art has furnished; and the observation is undoubtedly just. It is not, however, by the confused aggregate of pleasure, by the collective result of the agreeable perceptions, which these compositions have produced in us, that we are to fix the rules of taste; but by that reflex act of the mind, which enables us to distinguish the particular passages that excited in us delightful sensations, from those which were only designed as shades in the piece, or as resting places

places for the exhausted attention of the reader, and also from those where the author has exhibited marks of involuntary negligence. For want of observing this method, the imagination, warmed by certain beauties of the noblest kind, which may shine forth in a work, otherwise full of the most monstrous defects, will gradually become insensible of these defects; nay, will transform them into beauties, and conduct us at length to that stupid enthusiasm, which, by admiring every thing indiscriminately, perceives, or rather feels nothing truly. Thus, by a confused and mechanical impression, many will be led either to establish false rules of taste, or, what is equally pernicious, to substitute arbitrary notions in the place of fixed principles; to contract the sphere of the arts; to prescribe bounds to our pleasures, in order to render them insipidly uniform, and to confine the efforts of genius and industry within a narrow circle.

It is the province of philosophy to break these inglorious bonds asunder; but she cannot be too circumspect in the choice of the arms, by which this noble deliverance is to be accomplished. The late *Montesquieu* maintained, that versification was not essential to dramatical compositions; but to prove an opinion so susceptible of a rational defence, he injudiciously launched into paradox, wrote against poetry in general, and thereby did nothing but injury to his cause: he might as well have wrote against music of every kind, in order to prove, that the chorus is not essential to tragedy. This ingenious writer was under no necessity of combating the prejudices of the public
against

against his opinion, by such senseless paradoxes. There was, methinks, a much shorter way of proving his point, and that was, to have composed his celebrated tragedy of *Inés de Castro* in prose; the affecting nature of a subject so tenderly interesting should have encouraged him to venture upon this innovation, and thus the theatre would have been enriched with a new species of dramatic poetry. But an ambitious desire of being distinguished from the crowd, leads men sometimes to combat, in theory, received opinions, while a timorous self-love, that dreads all new and dangerous attempts, through the apprehension of miscarrying, obliges them to follow those very opinions in practice. It is here that we may observe a considerable difference between the philosopher and the legislator; the latter dispenses, in his private conduct, with the laws which he imposes upon others; while the philosopher observes in his work, the rules which he condemns in his preface.

The two sources of error which we have been hitherto considering, viz. the want of sensibility, on the one hand, and the want of that reflexion, which is requisite to distinguish the true causes of our pleasure, on the other, will be the occasion of perpetuating that tedious controversy, so often renewed, and so injudiciously carried on, the merit of the ancients. Their advocates, under the impulse of an enthusiastic admiration, are too prone to exalt their productions upon the whole, on account of the striking beauties that appear in some of the parts; while their adver-

saries refuse those applauses that are due to the parts, on account of the defects that appear in the whole.

There is, however, another error, into which the philosophical critic is more liable to fall; and to avoid which, he must consequently employ his principal attention. This error consists in applying to the peculiar objects of taste, principles, which, though true in themselves, yet have no relation to these objects. Every one is acquainted with those lines in the tragedy of the Horatii,

*Que voulez vous qu'il fit contre trois? Qu'il mourut.
Ou qu'un beau desespoir alors le secourût*.*

* To enable those, who don't understand the French language, to enter into the true spirit of this ingenious criticism, it will be proper to observe, that in Corneille's tragedy of the Horatii, a messenger arrives to inform the old Horatius, that two of his sons were killed, and that the third was flying from the three Curiatii. The venerable old man is filled with indignation at the conduct of his remaining son. The messenger, to excuse him, addresses himself thus to the incensed father: "What other resource had he than flight, overpowered as he was by three combatants?" "A glorious death (replies the old Horatius) or that succour that is administered by a noble despair." These words, A glorious death, which are equivalent to *Qu'il mourut*, conclude the first line in the French, and give us a striking instance of the true sublime. What follows is censured by Mr. d'Alembert, for the excellent reasons offered in his elegant observations on this passage.

The

The heroic expression of the aged father *Qu'il mourut*, has been justly and universally admired; and the following verse as justly and universally condemned; and yet the common principles of metaphysics will furnish arguments, or rather sophisms, to justify this verse, against all the rules of true taste. It will be alledged, for instance, that this second verse is necessary to express all the feelings that passed in the mind of the old Horatius; for though it was his duty to prefer the death of his son to a life of dishonour; yet it was still more natural to wish that his son might escape by the means of his valour, and that, animated by a noble despair, he might stand alone against his three adversaries, and return victorious from the combat. This defence, however plausible upon metaphysical principles, is absolutely misapplied in the case before us, where the question is not concerning the mere expression of truth and nature, but concerning such expressions of both as are striking and sublime. According to the reasoning of the metaphysical critic, the second verse, as it contains the sentiment that is the most natural of the two, should have preceded the first, which, by that means, would have lost the greatest part of its force. Besides, nothing is more feeble, flat, and frigid than this second verse, even when restored to its true and natural place. For where is the necessity for the old Horatius's expressing the desire which that verse contains? Will not every one suppose, without difficulty, that it would have been infinitely more rejoicing to him to have seen his son living, and crowned with victory, than falling a victim

victim to the superior force of his enemies? The poet then had no occasion to express a desire, which every one must suppose: the only sentiment which suited that violent state of emotion, in which the venerable old man now was, the ~~only affection which was proper~~ to be discovered upon such an occasion, and in circumstances where the glory of his country and of his name were immediately concerned, was that heroic courage, which engaged him to choose for his son a noble death, rather than a life of dishonour and infamy. The cold and tardy reasonings of slow and phlegmatic spirits are very different from the sudden and prodigious bounds, which minds, nobly fired, make towards the true sublime; the latter disdaining to remain, even for a moment, in the sphere of vulgar sentiments, understand much more than they express, and soar with a rapid flight to those sentiments and passions that carry the strongest marks of energy and grandeur. Their progress resembles that of one of Homer's gods, whose fourth stride brought him from one end of the universe to the other.

Thus, then, it happens, that, in matters of taste, the demi-philosopher (if I may employ that term) leads us from the paths of truth and nature, to which it is the province of true philosophy to restore our wandering steps. It is therefore an injury done both to the belles lettres and to philosophy, to imagine that they are either incompatible with, or prejudicial to, each other. Whatever relates to our ideas and perceptions, and even to our sentiments and feelings, is the true domain, the proper sphere of philosophy. It would

would therefore be as unreasonable to confine her to the heavenly bodies, or to the material system of the universe, as it would be to limit poetry to the praises of the gods, or the pleasures of love. The true spirit of philosophy is so far from being in opposition to taste, that it is, on the contrary, its most solid support, as it teaches us always to set out from true and evident principles, to observe that every art has its peculiar nature, every situation and affection of the mind its proper character, and every object its distinctive colouring, and thus prevents our confounding the limits by which the various kinds are so carefully distinguished. Such is the nature, excellence, and power of the philosophical spirit, the abuse of which shews that it is not truly possessed.

It has been remarked by some, that the submitting the objects of taste to analytical discussion is adapted to blunt the delicacy of the feeling powers, and to damp the fire and vigour of genius. But this effect is not to be feared. The true philosopher knows that in the moment when genius creates and invents, it will not admit of the least check or restraint; that it loves to rush forward without controul and without rule, to produce indiscriminately the monstrous and the sublime, and to carry down its rapid stream gold and mud mingled together, by the impetuosity of its course. Reason, therefore, gives way to genius, while it creates a boundless liberty, and even permits it to continue its career, until it exhausts its vigour, and sinks down to repose, like those fiery coursers, which it is impossible to tame any other way than by throwing the bridle upon

upon their necks. But then it is the time for reason to exercise its authority, and to sit in judgment upon the productions of genius. Accordingly, it preserves whatever was the offspring of a true and noble enthusiasm, effaces, on the contrary, whatever was produced by the irregular fallies of an over-heated imagination, and thus enriches the republic of letters with masterly performances in all the various kinds. Where is the writer of genius and taste, who does not perceive, in the heat of composition, that one part of his mind (if I may so express myself) separates itself from the other which is employed in composing, in order to observe its motions, and to give them a free course, and also points out beforehand what is afterwards to be effaced?

The true philosopher uses much the same method in judging of the productions of others, that he employs in composing his own. He begins by giving himself up to the high and lively sensations of pleasure, which generally arise from the first impression that a new and masterly performance makes upon the mind. Persuaded, however, that real beauties gain in proportion as they are attentively examined, he recollects himself; extends his researches to the causes of his satisfaction; singles them out one after another; distinguishes carefully between illusory sensations and deep and lasting impressions; and by this analytical procedure is rendered capable of pronouncing with judgment concerning the merit of a work in general, and of each of its particular and constituent parts.

From these observations we shall be furnished with an answer to a question, which has been often proposed, and also much debated, viz. Whether, in judging concerning a work of taste, sentiment or feeling is to be preferred before reasoning and discussion? Feeling is undoubtedly the natural judge for the first moment, Discussion for the second; and the second judge will, almost always, confirm the decisions of the first in those persons, who, with a quick and delicate sense of beauty, are so happy as to possess a just and accurate discernment. But the difficulty, it will be alledged, still remains; for as sentiment and discussion will not always agree, what must be done when they differ? Is it not best, in all cases, to follow sentiment as our guide, and hold always by its decision? Is it not a miserable occupation, some will say, to be disputing against our agreeable sensations? and what obligations shall we lie under to philosophy, if it manifestly tend to diminish our pleasures? We cannot answer this latter question without the utmost regret; because we are obliged to acknowledge the effect of philosophy to be, in reality, what it is here represented to be.

Such is the unhappy lot of humanity, that the knowledge we acquire, serves only to give us a mortifying view of the scenes of error and illusion through which we have passed, and is, almost always, attended with the diminution of our pleasures. The rude simplicity of our ancestors rendered the impressions they received from the monstrous productions of the antient theatre,

theatre, more lively and striking than those which we receive, in this polished age, from the most perfect of our dramatic performances. The nations, which we surpass in knowledge and in refinement, are not less happy than we are www.since.lib.boo.k.com/en and their wants are less numerous than ours, and they are satisfied with pleasures of a less elegant kind, than those which we pursue. We should not, however, be willing to exchange our knowledge for the ignorance of those nations, or for the rude simplicity of our ancestors. For, though this knowledge may diminish our pleasures, yet it flatters our vanity. We applaud ourselves on account of that delicacy and refinement, that render us difficult to be pleased, and even look upon them as meritorious. Self-love is the reigning passion, and that which, generally speaking, we are the most eager to gratify. The pleasure we derive from thence, is not, like many others, the effect of a sudden and violent impression; it is uniform and permanent, and may, therefore, be enjoyed at leisure.

These reflections, methinks, will be esteemed sufficient to justify philosophy from the accusations that have been brought against it by ignorance and envy. We cannot, however, conclude without observing, than even upon the supposition that these accusations and reproaches were just, yet they lose their influence, and become unseemly, when they are not made by philosophers themselves. To them alone it belongs to determine the sphere, and to fix the boundaries of the philosophical spirit; as it belongs only to those who have wit, to plead against the abuse that may be

made of it. But it unluckily happens, in opposition to this rule, that those, who have the least acquaintance with philosophy, are its most violent detractors; just as poetry is decried by such as have no talent for that noble art, the profound sciences, by such as are ignorant of their first principles, and the age we live in, by those writers, whose productions are the most adapted to expose it to contempt.

MEMOIRS OF CHRISTINA, QUEEN OF SWEDEN.

THE knowledge of history, when it is not enlightened by philosophy, is but a trifling attainment. The study of it would have been more interesting, if more time had been spent upon the history of men, and less upon that of princes, which, for the most part, is little else than a register of vice and folly; and the matter is made worse, when a multitude of facts are added unworthy of being remembered. A man of genius, unacquainted with history, consoles himself in his ignorance, by reflecting, that what passes before his eyes will one day become history.

It were to be wished, that every hundred years a collection was made of historical facts that are worth preserving, and the refuse burnt. — This would be a means of relieving our posterity from that inundation with which it is threatened, if we go on abusing the press under the notion of informing future ages of things we don't think it worth while to enquire after even when they happen. I suppose, for this reasonable wish, I shall have the reproaches and anathemas of the compilers; but I appeal from these anathemas to the wise; they alone ought to describe men as well as govern them: if they did, history and men would fare the better for it.

I could not help making these reflections at seeing two huge volumes, which have been just published in Holland, of Memoirs of Christina, queen of Sweden.

If the author of these Memoirs had any design of making the world acquainted with his heroine, I doubt he has miscarried; I know many learned men, who are habituated to painful study, and yet could not endure this work, or go through with any patience, that farrago of erudition and citation, in which the History of Christina is involved. 'Tis a portrait ill-designed, torn to pieces, and dispersed under a heap of rubbish.

However, the desire I have always had of forming some idea of this extraordinary princess, about whom the world is so much divided, induced me to run over this enormous compilation; I have surveyed it as one does those perspectives, in which the painter has drawn a human figure in a deformed manner, and which is not to be distinguished but in a certain point of view; where it appears in its just proportion, disengaged from those adventitious objects that disguise it. I have endeavoured to catch this point of view, but I do not flatter myself with having found it. Be that as it will, here is the result of what I could learn. If my performance is thought tiresome, the reader must have recourse to the original for better entertainment. I shall endeavour, at least, to render this piece useful, by the principles I shall interperse, and the reflections which I shall have occasion to make upon those two scourges of the human race, tyranny and superstition.

My first design was to have given, from these Memoirs, a short history of Christina; but the uniform pace and unvaried style, to which they have thought proper to subject history, would have been a perpetual
clog

clog upon me. I know not for what reason it has been so generally agreed to reduce history to a kind of regular gazette. They pretend, that an historian ought not to take the liberty of making reflections, but leave them to be made by the reader. For my own part, I think the best way of suggesting reflections to the reader, is to make them. The whole secret lies in good management, in presenting them dexterously, and connecting them with the subject, so as to make it more interesting, and not tedious.

In a word, reflections seem to be as necessary to make history agreeable, even to fix facts in the memory, as geometrical demonstrations are to impress upon the mind the truth of propositions. Historians, some say, should only give their depositions as witnesses; reflections expose them to the suspicion of partiality. But, in my opinion, the manner of relating facts may render an historian as justly suspected of being partial, as any reflections he can make; and if he is liable to partiality either way, sure we should prefer that which is the most agreeable. Besides, the suspicion of partiality properly belongs only to authors who write the history of their own times. Is it probable that I should either make a satyr or a panegyric upon Christina? I may be charged with being mistaken, and this might be the case, if I gave no more than a simple recital, but I can never be accused of being biassed either to one side or the other.

However, not to contend with a prejudice so generally received, I am not going to give the reader the history of Christina, but only some observations upon

her life. I have no objection to their being called an extract from Christina's memoirs—a letter upon the subject—a conversation with my reader, or any other title he thinks proper.

I shall take no notice of the letters which Christina wrote to her father when she was five years old, to inform him that she was learning to say her prayers; letters which the compiler acknowledges to be little interesting to strangers, though, he thinks, they may be of great service to the Swedes.

I pass by the calculation of her nativity, and her father's Gustavus Adolphus, to consider a few moments that celebrated conqueror.

While he was avenging the protestants of the empire against the oppression of Ferdinand, in alliance with France, and secretly countenanced by the court of Rome, on account of its jealousy of the Austrian power, all Bavaria resounded with declamations, exorcisms, litanies and imprecations against this prince: the German monks said he was antichrist, the Lutheran ministers said he was not antichrist; our author, however, assures us, that this prince used his victories with great moderation. It is pretended, that Germany was indebted, for the sentiments Gustavus entertained about the Catholics, to his studying in his youth at Pavia, under the celebrated Galileo, whom the inquisition treated as a heretic, because he was an astronomer. But (to say nothing of its being doubtful whether Gustavus ever was in Italy) a place where the Ptolemaic system was an article of faith, does not seem likely to inspire a Lutheran prince with such favourable sentiments.

sentiments. Be this as it will, pope Urban VIII. who, to all the zeal of a sovereign pontiff for his religion, joined an aversion still more violent to the emperor Ferdinand, assures us, that the Spaniards of Charles V. did more harm to the Romish church than the Swedes of Gustavus did in Germany. It is to be wished, for the honour of humanity and of Gustavus, that he deserved the encomiums given to his moderation. If any thing can render them suspected, it is that pretended taste for letters ascribed to him, for no other reason, but because he had read books on tactics and the military art. It might as well be maintained, that the late king of Prussia was a lover of the sciences, because his violent passion for his troops induced him to give protection to the surgeons of the army.

The compiler has such a strange veneration for sovereigns, that he allows the merit of countenancing letters even to Charles XII. who never read any thing in his life but Cæsar's Commentaries. Thus, in our prodigality of praises to princes, we never consider whether they deserve them; but posterity, the impartial judge of writers and of kings, will assign their proper ranks to those who commend, and those who are commended.

Nothing strikes me more in the history of Gustavus, than the wise reflections ascribed to him upon conquerors. One might have believed them of Socrates, and Gustavus should have added, to the merit of being the author of them, the glory of putting them in practice.

The mischief he did to the house of Austria did not render Sweden more happy. I don't know but Peter the Great, whose conquests always redounded to the advantage of his people, was the best qualified to determine this moral question, whether a prince has a right to aggrandize his subjects at the expence of his neighbours? To establish the tranquillity of the empire, and to humble the house of Austria, it was not necessary that Gustavus, in one year, should invade two-thirds of Germany, and create jealousy in his allies, because Louis XIII. refused an interview with him, the honour of which would have belonged entirely to the king of Sweden.

Gustavus urged very justly, that merit constituted the only distinguishing virtue of kings; but the principal merit of a sovereign is his love of humanity, justice and the laws. Kings who have only power, or perhaps valour, though the first among courtiers, are the last among wise men.

1632. This prince being killed at the battle of Lutzen in a manner so difficult to be accounted for, Christina, yet an infant, succeeded him. In the plan which the celebrated chancellor Oxenstiern laid down for the regency, we can't help discovering an enmity to despotism, which ought to consecrate the memory of that great statesman.

He seems inclined to a mixt government, between a monarchy and a republic; and we do not deny that this form enjoys many advantages, without entering into that delicate question about the best government that can be instituted; the solution of which
must

must receive different modifications from the difference of climates, situation and circumstances, as well as genius of kings and people.

We can never suspect so intelligent a man as Oxenstiern, as some have done, of giving the preference to an Aristocratical government, which natural right and experience demonstrate to be the worst of all.

Those who were charged with the education of Christina, were ordered early to inculcate upon her not to put absolute confidence in any one person ; an excellent maxim undoubtedly in itself, but which has been abused by so many princes, to distrust both vice and virtue, never to take counsel, and to think themselves prudent and firm, when they are only obstinate.

Christina early discovered an uncommon penetration and capacity. We are told that, in her infancy, she could read Thucidides and Polybius in the original, and that she formed a just judgment concerning those writers. It would have been much better to have made her acquainted with men than Greek authors. True philosophy is more necessary to a prince than history ; I except that of the Bible, to which the states of Sweden would have had her devote most of her time, being (as they said in a memorial drawn upon this occasion) the source of all others. We cannot but commend the states for taking care that the young queen should be taught the principles of religion ; but it seems that other qualifications were too much forgotten. The sequel shews they should not have been neglected.

I shall not enter into any particulars relating to the minority of Christina, nor of her conduct with France

when she took the reins of government into her own hands, nor into the reciprocal complaints, perhaps equally just, of Christina and her allies; to explain these political contests is undoubtedly an arduous task, but the uncertainty of facts, which we are even witnesses of, should make the pretended developement of these secret and past intrigues very suspicious; they would probably have been represented in a very different light by the principal actors in them. On these subjects then I shall observe a profound silence. 'Tis the private history of Christina, and not the history of her kingdom, that I am employed about: I shall not consider her a moment upon the throne of Sweden, but for the sake of viewing her more distinctly, and at my leisure, in her retirement.

One of the things, which ought to be remembered to the honour of Christina, was the respect she expressed for the famous Grotius. This man, illustrious for his works, but more so for the honour of being the friend of Barneveldt, and the defender of the liberties of his country, went to France to seek an asylum against the persecution of the Gomarists. He offended cardinal Richlieu by not flattering his literary talents; for it generally happens that great men, by some foible or other, sink themselves to the common level. The protector of *Myronne*, and of *l'Amour tyrannique*, who both persecuted and rewarded Corneille at the same time, not only neglected doing any thing for Grotius, but obliged him to retire in disgust. Gustávus Adolphus received him; Oxenstiern sent him to France with the title of ambassador, and Christina soon after confirmed

confirmed this title. Thus she recompensed, in a manner worthy of herself, a man of the most distinguished merit, mortified the Hollanders, whom she could not endure, and piqued the cardinal, of whom she thought she had reason to complain.

Grotius was excused, by his rank, from practising that suppleeness, to which his genius and temper were by no means adapted; and he had the pleasure of treating, upon an equality, a minister who had despised him. It is for the honour of Christina that she entertained the same sentiments concerning Grotius with posterity; not that this concurrence of testimonies was necessary to the reputation of so great a man: But princes ought to be reminded to be just, and, like the public, to distinguish great and virtuous men. If Christina shewed her respect out of vanity; even such a passion is not to be despised; for if it be a weakness in kings as well as other persons, it is a weakness capable of producing great effects.

1646. After the victory of Norlingen, by which the prince of Conde, and Turenne, at the head of the troops of France, avenged the honour of the Swedes, who had been repulsed there some years before, Christina wrote a letter of thanks to the prince of Conde. Some historians assert, that this prince, in his answer, acknowledged a great part of his success to be due to the viscount Turenne. If this fact is true, the prince of Conde added to his glory by this acknowledgment: but no traces of it are to be found in his answer.

It is no matter of surprize that Christina, as passionately fond of letters and repose as her father was of war, should hasten the conclusion of the peace of Westphalia. The animosity and jealousy of the ministers occasioned greater difficulties than the prodigious number of interests, which were to be adjusted. The plenipotentiaries of Sweden (divided as much among themselves as those of France) were the count Oxenstiern, son of the great Chancellor, and Alder Salvius, chancellor of the court. The first acted agreeable to the instructions of his father, who displeased Christina, because she could not do without him, and because he wanted to protract the conclusion of the peace, in opposition to the queen's inclinations. He thought the continuation of the war would redound to the honour of Sweden, reduce the power of France, whom he looked upon as a dangerous friend, and benefit all the Protestants of Germany. It was he who wrote to his son, confused with the chaos of business, "Don't you know, my son, what a little matter is the secret of governing the world?"

Salvius, the colleague of Oxenstiern, and of a more obliging turn, enjoyed all the queen's favour and confidence; nor was he destitute of merit. Christina, like other princes, loved rather to be flattered than served; but at the same time, she was too sensible to sacrifice her discernment and her true interest to vanity and self-love. Upon making Salvius senator of Sweden, though he was not of noble family, she addressed herself to the senate in these words: "If an affair of consequence and counsel be proposed, we

“ we don’t ask who were your ancestors—— but
 “ what is proper to be done. Salvius would have
 “ been qualified in all respects, had he been born of
 “ a great family. If young persons of rank have
 “ abilities, they shall make their fortunes like others,
 “ I will not throw obstacles in their way.”

This long wished for peace of Westphalia was at last accomplished, to the mutual satisfaction of most of the powers concerned, but to the great discontent of Innocent X. This pope wanted to carry two points in the peace, which were incompatible in themselves, the humbling the house of Austria, which he desired as a temporal prince, and the reduction of the Protestants, which he wished for as a sovereign pontiff. He published a bull, in which he refused Christina the title of queen of Sweden, to punish her for being too much influenced in the accomplishment of the peace. Such a step would have been politic in the twelfth century, when princes thought their titles stood in need of briefs and benedictions : it came five hundred years too late. The nuncio posted up the bull of his master at Vienna ; the emperor ordered it to be pulled down ; Innocent held his tongue ; and there was an end of the matter.

The love of liberty made Christina refuse all the offers of marriage that were made her, though some of them were very advantageous, and the Swedes pressed her much to marry. Philip IV, king of Spain, was one of her suitors ; but he soon dropped the affair, being afraid, by this alliance, he should no longer be able to treat the protestants as heretics.

Of those that made pretensions, he who seemed the most urgent, was Charles Gustavus, Christina's cousin, and prince Palatine, for whom she had been designed from her being a child; but she was as deaf to him as to his rivals; and yet, whether he was less disagreeable to her than the rest, or that she then had taken the resolution of abdicating her throne, she prevailed with the states to have him declared her successor. By this step she kept herself at liberty, secured the tranquillity of Sweden, and prevented the ambition of some great families, who might, after her death, have made pretensions to the crown. Charles Gustavus had a revenue assigned him to keep up a court; but the queen said it was the policy of the royal family to give no territory to a prince who was in the succession; a maxim of no great importance, and which despotic princes, the most short-sighted of them, have always followed. Christina, for the same reason, always kept prince Charles in the dark about the affairs of the government during her reign. Though she was not fond of governing, yet her independent spirit would bear no constraint while she did govern.

It was about this time that the troubles in France began—the war of the Fronde, more famous for the ridiculous circumstances that attended it, than the evils that followed—the banishment of Mazarine—his return—his second banishment—the imprisonment of the princes—the turbulent assemblies of parliament, which at one time seditious, and at another pacific,

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published arrets while they fought battles, and issued out warrants for whole armies.

The love Christina had for tranquillity, her fears that this civil war would occasion new troubles in Europe, and perhaps the regard she always had for the prince of Conde, induced her to take part in these commotions. She wrote to queen Anne of Austria, to the duke of Orleans, to the prince, and even to the parliament. Her letters had no other effect, than to draw upon her Resident complaints and reprimands from the court of France, though he had only followed his orders. These troubles, which were begun without her, were soon after put an end to without her mediation. The parliament, which had been upon the point of treating with this princess, were banished to Pontoise; and so happy with being recalled, that they complimented, a few years after, that very cardinal, upon whose head they had set a price. The prince of Conde, a fugitive in Spain, lost every thing but his reputation; and Mazarine, till his death, remained master of the queen, the king, and the kingdom.

The regard which Christina had, or affected, for eminent men, made her wish to have near her the celebrated Descartes, the restorer of philosophy, who was unknown in his own country, because he had cultivated the sciences more than his fortune; proscribed at Rome, because in the question about the motion of the earth, he had paid more regard to astronomical observations than to the pope's bulls, and persecuted in Holland, for having substituted the true method of
philo-

philosophising to the jargon of the schools. Christina, charmed with the writings of this great man, proposed to him some of those questions in morals, which philosophers have agitated so long, without deciding, or making ~~men at all the better or~~ happier. Such, among others, was that of the sovereign good, which, Descartes said, consisted in the right management of the will; because, says he, the happiness arising from fortune, health and knowledge do not depend upon ourselves—as if the government of the will was not equally under the controul of the Supreme Being, as the other sources of happiness. This solution, unsatisfactory as it was, pleased Christina so much, that she ardently wished to see the author, as a man whom she thought must be happy, and whose condition she envied. Mr. Chanut, the French ambassador in Sweden, and a friend of the philosopher, was charged with this negotiation, in which he found great difficulty to succeed. The difference of climate was one of the principal reasons that deterred Descartes from this voyage. He told his friend, that a man, born in the gardens of Touraine, and retired to a country where, indeed, he has less honey, but more milk, perhaps, than in the land promised to the Israelites, could not easily prevail upon himself to leave it for the sake of living in a country of bears, among rocks and ice. This was a sufficient reason for a philosopher, who could not be too careful of his health, because it is one of those blessings that does not depend upon other men. But may not we make some doubt whether Descartes, who loved to live in

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solitude, to pursue his studies at leisure, was not a little afraid of coming too near a throne.

A prince in vain attempts to be a philosopher, or to affect it. Royalty forms a certain character, that cannot be laid aside, strikes awe into those who approach it, and is troublesome to the philosopher; in spite of all the pains the monarch may take to inspire him with confidence. The wise man reverences princes; sometimes esteems them, but always avoids them*. “We are a theatre great enough for one another,” said Descartes to another philosopher, whom he had invited to take part of his retreat, at the time Christina wanted to draw him out of it.

However as the love of liberty cannot stand out against the importunity of kings, Descartes soon after repaired to Stockholm, with a full resolution, as he said, not to conceal his sentiments from the queen, and his intention of returning to a philosophical retirement.

We see by his letter that he was well satisfied with the reception the queen gave him. He was excused from the drudgery of courtiers; but it was in order to impose upon him other hardships, which totally disconcerted his manner of living, and which, in conjunction with the severities of the climate, brought him to his grave in about four months.

* If there are any exceptions to this rule, happy is the sovereign in whose favour they are made! Socrates, accused by Anytus before the Areopagus, would have fled to the protection of Marcus Aurelius, had he lived at that time.

Descartes

Descartes found in Christina a great deal of wit and sagacity; but it is evident, the unfortunate princess Palatine was that philosopher's favourite pupil. Whether the troubles he had experienced himself increased his attachment, ~~or whether he found~~ her of a more comprehensive genius, or of a more tractable disposition, which is the greatest recommendation to the head of a sect, he could not conceal his partiality to her, and by that means alarmed the jealousy of Christina.

While he renounced every other advantage, he retained the ambition of philosophy to see his opinion and his taste exclusively adopted; and, therefore, he did not approve of the queen's dividing her time betwixt philosophy and the study of the languages. He found himself in a disagreeable situation, among such a crowd of scholars as surrounded the queen; such a literary levee gave occasion to foreigners to say, that Sweden would soon be governed by grammarians. He had the courage to make such free and spirited remonstrances to the queen upon this head, as produced an irreconcilable difference betwixt him and the learned Isaac Vossius, that incredulous and superstitious theologian, of whom Charles II. ~~king~~ of England, used to say, that he believed every thing but the Bible. Descartes's representations did not prevent the queen from learning Greek: however they did not alter her sentiments concerning him.

The moments she devoted to him, were stole from her sleep. She intended to have made him director of an academy, which she thought of establishing. In short, she

she distinguished him by so many marks of favour, that it was pretended the grammarians of Stockholm hastened the philosopher's death by poison. But this manner of being avenged of an enemy, says Sorbier, is an honour which men of letters leave to the great.

Whatever passionate fondness Christina might shew for the philosophy of Descartes, there is no reason to imagine, as some have done, that she consulted him in political affairs. Placed, as she was, in the most advantageous school in the world for this kind of knowledge, the senate of Sweden, what assistance could she receive from a philosopher, who, by his conduct in Holland, shewed that he was unfit to deal with mankind, and who had been hindred, by a thirty years retreat, from knowing them? It has been pretended, that she had much more regard for Descartes himself, than she had for his opinions; and that she reaped no other benefit from the study of philosophy than ~~this~~, to learn that the modern fools are no better than the antients.

1651. The troubles which soon after arose in her kingdom, furnished her with much more important subjects than the study of Greek, innate ideas, and vortexes. The resolution she had taken never to marry, alarmed the people, who were afraid they should be destitute of a master. The disorder of the finances, exhausted by her profuseness, occasioned an universal discontent. This first suggested to her the design of quitting the throne. She surrendered herself in full senate; declared her intention, and signified it by letter to prince

prince Charles Gustavus. He, versed in dissimulation, and fearing lest the queen had laid a snare for him, rejected her proposal, ~~and~~ prayed that God and Sweden might preserve her long; ~~and~~, with much parade, pretended to sentiments he was little acquainted with.

The solitude in which he affected to live, after having accepted the succession, his precaution to keep at a distance from court, and the excessive circumspection he observed in all his words and actions, discovered plainly his wishes to ascend the throne. He flattered himself perhaps that the senate would accept her resignation, and appoint him to the government, in recompence for his modesty : but he was mistaken in his expectations. Whether Christina had a mind to appease her discontented subjects, and establish herself the more firmly on the throne by their suffrage, or she saw that her abdication was not so favourably received among foreigners as she expected; in short, whether having renounced the crown out of vanity, she had a mind to resume it again out of caprice, she submitted, or pretended to submit to the importunity of her successor, and her subjects.

1652. The year following Christina wrote to Mr. Godeau, bishop of Vence, who published a great many verses, with very little poetry. This prelate had bestowed many compliments upon her, which she answered to this effect ; “ That the gentlemen of
“ France were so *used to pay compliments*, that she
“ durst not complain of a general custom ; and that
“ she was obliged to him.” The same person had discovered some signs of an ambition to make a con-
vert

vert of her. The queen, after thanking him for his kind intentions, wished she had the honour to be of his opinion, and expressed her surprize that so sensible a man should not be a Lutheran. She shewed so little her intentions of turning Catholic, that she wrote a letter about the same time to prince Frederic of Hesse, to dissuade him from embracing the Romish religion. Two such letters as these from a princess who became a Catholic a year after, would furnish matter of astonishment, if experience had not taught us, how little time is necessary to change the sentiments and taste of mankind in general, and especially of princes. A protestant author, who has mentioned these letters, remarks, with more malignity than wit, that the hour of grace was not yet come : we may say, with more reason, that perhaps Christina had not been yet sufficiently tormented by the ministers, to give her an aversion to their doctrines. Such is the strange injustice which mankind are guilty of, that there is but one step betwixt the hatred of divines and the hatred of the worship they recommend. If we begin to disengage ourselves from them, that which appeared respectable, becomes indifferent ; if they abuse their power, that which was indifferent, is indifferent no longer. This kind of reasoning is, doubtless, neither solid nor equitable ; but it is the logic of the passions. We must manage them as we do a sick man : and the surest way of teaching mankind to be just, is to begin, by acting justly towards them.

Besides, if we examine the arguments themselves which Christina made use of to engage the prince of Hesse

Hesse to continue in his religion ; it is easy to discern at bottom a real indifference for her own. Though a Lutheran, and consequently as far remote from Calvinism as the church of Rome*, she nevertheless advises this Calvinist prince not to change his principles. She seems to have a just abhorrence of that stupid rage with which persons, who call themselves wise, have written about things *which are only to be believed*. “ I leave it, says she, to those whose profession it is to meddle in controversies, to surfeit with them at their pleasure.” She represents to the prince nothing but motives of honour, constancy, and the advantage of his family and state ; motives by no means sufficient to ballance the interest of true religion, but very well adapted to vanity and human weakness.

The liberality of Christina, bounties lavished with little prudence or limitation, soon became the subject of panegyrics to the learned men of Sweden and other countries. Her historian has reckoned two hundred, which at this time are utterly forgotten ; a fate common to most panegyrics made in the life-time of their heroes. That of Trajan, by Pliny the younger, pronounced before the emperor in full senate, is almost the only one which is now extant ; and of this we may say, that even the name of the orator,

* The Lutherans and Calvinists have frequently expressed an implacable antipathy to each other ; yet they are more nearly allied to each other than to Papists, having the same common objections to most of the fundamental doctrines of popery.

and the idea which his work gives us of the eloquence of those times, have not contributed so much to preserve it as the virtues of the prince who was the subject of it. It is not the work which immortalizes the monarch; it is the monarch who gives the work a passport to posterity. Perhaps this very panegyric would have done an injury to Trajan, if, by deserving it, he had not made us forget his weakness in hearing it pronounced.

I pass over all the marks of respect which Christina shewed to Saumaise (that very learned and very disagreeable man, who, amongst the many things in which he was engaged, undertook to interpret dreams) — the visit which Christina made him — their lecture together — the boxing match betwixt messieurs Bourdelot and Meiboom, and other anecdotes of equal importance. I omit likewise the names of all the learned men whom this princess invited into her kingdom, or found in it, as well as their epistolary correspondence with her. Instead of writing so many letters of compliment to the learned, she had better have sent a few more letters of exchange to Nicholas Heinsius, whom she commissioned to purchase books, manuscripts, and medals; and who could never be reimbursed the money he had advanced. However, the historian undertakes to vindicate her conduct, even upon this article, and makes it almost amount to a crime in Heinsius to complain. This want of fidelity and fair-dealing is common enough among monarchs with one another, but they might be excused acting so, to private persons.

1653. What is most remarkable in the letters in question, is the offer which, according to a modern author, Christina made to Scudery, of accepting the dedication of Alaric, and making him a considerable present, on condition he would strike out of the poem the eulogium of Mr. de la Gardie, who was in disgrace with her majesty. Scudery made answer to this proposal, that he would never destroy the altar on which he had sacrificed. After such an answer, one cannot help saying, what a pity it is the poem of Alaric had not been better!

Among the many learned men whom she patronized; of different countries, we don't find one Englishman.

That nation, which has since been so fruitful of great geniuses, was then agitated by internal troubles and civil wars, very unfriendly to letters. They went so far at last, as to cut off the head of their sovereign Charles I. and were attentive to nothing but their grandeur, liberty, and commerce. The execution of this prince, at first, made a great noise in Sweden. Some did not think of it with much horror; Mr. Chanut, ambassador of France, said, that depriving the king of England of his sovereignty, for violating his contract with his subjects, was an example to all princes; but the excess of fury and injustice to which the nation was carried, was universally condemned. It is scarce probable Christina, upon hearing this news, should have held the conversation which has been ascribed to her; “The English have cut off the head of their king
“ for

“ for making no use of it; and they have acted very
 “ wisely.” Who can reconcile this discourse with
 the letter she wrote, at the same time, to the son of
 that unfortunate monarch, in which she exclaims
 against the sentence of that sanguinary parliament? www.libtool.com.cn
 The horror Christina had conceived of it, was one
 of the principal causes of delay to the conclusion of
 the treaty which Cromwell’s ambassador was then ne-
 gotiating with her. The ambassador, who could not
 execute his commission but at the expence of a great
 deal of pains and time, complained, that at the au-
 diences she gave him, she talked of nothing but phi-
 losophy, diversions, and ballads.

Of all the foreign ministers at the court of Sweden,
 Pimentel, the Spanish ambassador, was the queen’s
 great favourite. At the first audience he had with
 Christina, he retired without saying a word; and he
 declared to her the next day, that he had been struck
 dumb by the majesty of her person: one may judge
 whether this pleased her or not. Pimentel, an able
 minister, availed himself of this first advantage, to
 gain the confidence of the queen. He soon dis-
 covered in her a violent passion for novelty, a preju-
 dice for the last comers, and a readiness to betray her
 secrets where she had bestowed her liking. But her
 partiality to Pimentel, however useful to Spain, gave
 both France and Sweden so much umbrage, that she
 was soon obliged to dismiss him.

1654. We are now come to the period at which
 she abdicated the crown. The design she had enter-
 tained some years now broke out with so much vio-

lence, that it was impossible to dissuade her from it. It seems as if a disgust at business, and a desire of being free, were the principal motives that influenced her to that determination. "I am perpetually hearing the same thing, (said she, speaking about business.) I see I must restore myself to study, and the conversation of the learned." She imagined (to use one of her own expressions) she saw the devil when her secretaries came with dispatches for her to sign; and the fatigue of government threw her into such a deep melancholy, that it was apprehended her mind would be quite broken with it. She communicated to Mr. Chanut the resolution she had taken. The talk, occasioned by her conduct in this respect, disturbed her but little. "I am not solicitous, said she, about the *plaudite*. It is almost impossible that a resolute and vigorous design should please all the world. I can content myself with a single approver; and I dare engage I shall have one. I shall always have the pleasure of recollecting, that I have done good to mankind." Why then was she desirous to give over doing so?

The abdication of Christina occasioned great variety of opinions. It would have been more generally approved (without deserving to be so) if her conversion, which happened soon after, had not incensed all the enemies of the catholic church against her. In general, we are disposed to applaud persons who descend from a throne. We have so diminutive an idea of the immense duties of a prince, that we look upon their abdication as a splendid kind of sacrifice. We should

should not be so rash and precipitate in forming our judgment, if we were to enquire into the obligation which the name of monarch imposes. Rigorously devoted to justice, and to decorum, and bound to be the first in observing the laws, of which they are the guardians, they are accountable to the state for all the evil that happens by their means, and all the good that does not happen. How few kings are there who would be kings on such conditions. A sovereign, however, that does possess proper talents for government, is guilty of a crime in rendering those talents useless, by a voluntary desertion of his station. He is excuseable only by substituting a successor capable of supplying his place. Besides that such successors are very rare, there are different motives that determine the conduct of some princes in this respect, they are only fond, perhaps, of glory, and they have no regard for the happiness of mankind. Princes, indeed, who quit their throne for want of ability to govern, acquit themselves of a very essential duty. They deserve praise, if this was done from an idea of the propriety of it, and their consciousness of incapacity for government. But most of them want a laudable motive to give even the appearance of justice to such a step. A love of indolence, the desire of indulging at leisure some trifling, contemptible passion, are generally the reasons of their abdication.

One of the great benefits that princes might have in descending from their throne, would be to assure themselves, by this means, of the reality of those encomiums which had been lavished upon them while

they were in power — to see the herd of flatterers vanish, and to find themselves alone in the company of virtue, if happily virtue be of their acquaintance. But it is not often that these benefits have any charms for princes. The example of kings, who voluntarily get rid of their courtiers, is not very contagious.

It is said Christina, before she abdicated her crown, wanted Charles Gustavus to have entered into a treaty with her, that would have been very dishonourable to him. She wanted to reserve great part of the kingdom to herself, to be absolutely independent, to have the liberty of going abroad, or staying in what part of Sweden she thought proper. In short, she expected her successor should make no alteration of her appointments in the government. Charles, who had from the first endeavoured to dissuade Christina from this abdication, but who saw plainly that now she had gone too far to return, refused these conditions, and told her he would not be a mere titular monarch. When Christina heard his answer, she said, she had only made these proposals to find out his real character; that she was now satisfied he was fit to govern, since he knew so well the rights of a king. This extorted compliment from Christina to her successor was, to be sure, very sincere.

To pay his acknowledgments to the queen, Charles had a medal struck on this occasion, with these words, “That he received the crown from God and Christina.” This medal offended the states; they said, and very justly, that it was by their election that he ascended the throne.

We cannot deny, since religion teaches us, that the lawful authority of kings is derived from God; but it is the consent of the people which is the visible sign of this lawful authority, and which secures the exercise of it.

The clergy wanted to oblige Christina to remain in Sweden, for fear she should change her religion; as if this princess, after having made a sacrifice of her crown to her liberty, had not a right to use this liberty without controul, and could not go to mass at Stockholm, without disturbing the state. But whether it was that she wanted to secure herself against ecclesiastical persecutions, so formidable to princes, even when in the height of their power; or whether she then formed the resolution of spending the remainder of her life out of her own country, she took leave of Sweden a few days after her abdication, and had a medal engraved, the device of which was, “*Que le Parnasse vaut mieux que le trône.*” This medal did as little honour to her sentiments, as the device of it did to her taste. When she arrived upon the frontiers of Sweden, at a little rivulet which divides that kingdom from Denmark, “*At length (says she) I am at liberty, and out of Sweden, where, I hope, never to return.*” Charles once more made her an offer of his heart and hand; but she told him, that the time was past.

Disguised in men’s cloaths part of her journey, she travelled over Denmark and Germany; scarce ever regarding the discourse which her abdication generally introduced, but discovering upon these oc-

casions more philosophy than she had shewn in her resignation.

The prince of Conde being at Brussels when Christina passed through, asked where that queen could be who had so easily renounced a crown, for which, says he, we are so eagerly contending and grasping at all our lives, without being able to attain? Her enemies pretended, that she expressed some regret when she came to Brussels, at the step she had taken. The report reached Sweden; and the chancellor Oxenstiern, then at the point of death, could not help saying, “I foretold she would repent of her conduct; but she is the daughter of Gustavus still.” These were the last words of that great man.

Christina had prepared for the change of her religion, by visiting all the monasteries and churches she found in her rout, especially those which contained any remarkable curiosities. In short, after embracing the Roman Catholic religion at Brussels, she publicly abjured Lutheranism at Inspruck, and took this device, “*Fata viam invenient.*” “The fates will direct my course.”

This action furnished matter of great triumph to the Catholics—as if the opinions of this princess gave any new weight to the arguments on which the Romish religion is founded, and as if it might not be possible to embrace even true religion merely from human motives. The Protestants, on the other hand, with as little reason, fell into despair; they pretended indeed that Christina, indifferent to all religions in her heart, had only changed for her convenience, that she might live in Italy at her ease, where she had intended

tended to retire, to enjoy the fine arts which that country possessed. In proof of this indifference, they mention some letters or some discourses, the truth of which must be well attested before we can conclude any thing from them. It is asserted, for instance, that when the Jesuits of Lorrain once offered her a place near St. Bridget of Sweden, she answered, I had rather have a place among the philosophers. It cannot be denied, and experience too evidently proves, that we seldom embrace from conviction any religion in which we have not been educated from our infancy. Interest is so general a motive for such a change, that even those, who abjure a false religion, are hardly ever esteemed, being always suspected of entertaining less noble views than a pure regard to truth.

If Christina became a Catholic only to indulge her curiosity for statues, she did not deserve to have her own erected; and if she renounced the happiness of her people for the sake of pictures, she is more contemptible than the meanest of monarchs.

It is certain that, during her residence at Rome, she shewed a taste for the works of the great masters that filled the city. One day, as she was admiring a marble statue of Truth, done by the chevalier Bernini, a cardinal, who was near her, took occasion to compliment her as a more sincere lover of truth than princes in general are. "All truths, answered she, are not of marble."

The changing of her religion proved fatal to the bishop John Mathia, a moderate Lutheran, who had projected several schemes for the re-union of the Prote-

stant churches. The Reformers, who inveigh with so much bitterness against the intolerant spirit of the Romish church, only hate persecution when it is against them, never when they have occasion to practise it themselves. Mathia, unjustly accused of having a share in the supposed apostacy of the queen, was degraded from his bishoprick by the states of the kingdom.

1656. The queen, who had always entertained an ill opinion of France, changed her mind on a sudden, from some malevolent conversation held of her among her Spanish domestics. From hence we may see, that love and hatred were motives pretty familiar to her. This passion for France became so violent, that she soon formed a resolution of paying a visit there, and shewing that country, enamoured of monarchy, a queen capable of abandoning a throne for philosophy.

As she passed through the French cities, she submitted to all those harangues which sovereigns are condemned to receive. Though but just admitted into the bosom of the church, Christina, always a princess and a woman, could but ill brook the discourse of a certain orator upon the judgments of God and the contempt of the world. At last she reached Fontainebleau, and surprised at the ceremonials of the court, she demanded why the ladies were so eager to pay their respects to her? "Is it, says she, because "I am so like a man?"

The celebrated Ninon was the only French woman on whom she bestowed marks of her particular esteem. This singular person, who, by her genius, her manner

ner of thinking, and even her conduct, acted the part of a courtesan with peculiar distinction, was more fit than any other woman to attract the notice of a princess as singular as herself. We may commend Ninon for the reception she met with, but we ought not to blame the queen.

From Fontainebleau she went to Paris, where she was universally complimented. Here she underwent again those long and dismal entertainments which were prepared for her, not omitting even the tragedies of the college, which she had the hardiness to despise most heartily. She revenged herself upon them for the fatigue which that parade of ceremonies and reception gave her.

She saw at Paris many learned men, received innumerable verses, and set a proper value upon those that had merit. She had long entertained a great regard for the celebrated Menage, who has written so many frivolous things, among some which are useful. In her journey from Sweden to Rome, she wrote to him to come to her at Brussels; and, as she met him half way, she expected he would readily perform the rest of the journey; but Menage did not care to put himself out of his way to oblige a queen who was no more. However, she did not resent this behaviour; on the other hand, as her intention in coming to Paris was to seek out men of letters, she appointed him to be her master of the ceremonies, to introduce strangers into her presence; a place which, one may venture to say, was never enjoyed before by a learned man, and probably never will again. As it was a kind of ho-

nour to be presented to the queen, Menage would not suffer all, who were desirous to be admitted to this favour, without distinction, but conferred it only on those who were worthy; which made some persons observe to the queen, that Menage was a good judge of men of merit.

She had more reason to be pleased with Paris than with the court which had given her but little entertainment.

The women and courtiers could not relish a princess who appeared in the habit of a man, who drove flatterers away from her presence, complimented those that told her agreeable stories, and, in short, whose genius had something too manly in it for such frivolous beings, with whom all kind of knowledge is absolutely useless. Those who thought they knew her, compared her to the castle of Fontainbleau, great, but irregular. We shall hardly be astonished at the indifferent reception she met with, when we recollect the little impression which a personage, much superior to Christina, made at the same court in 1717, I mean Peter the Great. The generality of the courtiers discovered nothing in this monarch but a stranger of different manners from their own; they saw not the sovereign stored with genius, travelling in quest of knowledge, and quitting a throne only to render himself more worthy of it. Our nation seems to have possessed a great deal of that inferior kind of attention described by Tacitus, which investigates the reputation of great men in their looks, and is astonished when it does not find it.

Christina

1657. Christina had such an attachment to France, that she was hardly got back to Italy, before she thought proper to make a second journey thither, and it was imagined with political views; but this journey was remarkable for nothing but the tragical death of Monaldechi, her master of the horse, whom she caused to be assassinated in the gallery des Cerfs at Fontainebleau, almost in her own presence. The circumstances of this murder are very well known; but what is not so well known, and yet seems more strange than the barbarity of Christina, are the dissertations that were wrote by the learned lawyers to justify her. These dissertations (a lamentable instance of the flattery of men of letters to princes) are the reproach of their authors, without being an apology for the fact. I am concerned for the memory of Leibnitz, and for humanity, to find the name of this great man among the defenders of an assassin. I am yet more surprised at the insult he offered to the court of France, in saying that, if they were offended by this action of Christina, it was only because they had lost their regard for her. Posterity will be astonished to find that, in the centre of Europe, and in an enlightened age, it was seriously debated whether a queen, who had quitted her throne, did not however retain the right of putting her domestics to death without any trial? It should rather have been inquired, whether Christina, even upon the throne of Sweden, should have had this barbarous prerogative? a question which would have been soon determined at the tribunal of the law of nature and nations.

The state (whose constitution should be held sacred by monarchs, because it remains while kings and subjects disappear) is concerned to see every man judged according to the laws : it is the interest too of princes, who derive their power and security from the laws. Humanity sometimes permits them to soften their rigour by pardoning, but never to abuse them into cruelty. It would be injurious to princes to imagine that these principles can offend them, or that it should be thought a mark of courage to assert them even in the bosom of a monarchy. They are the voice of nature.—Maxims so true and so deeply engraven on the hearts of all men, make it needless to say before what tribunal Christina, now stripped of her authority, ought to have summoned Monaldechi, whether that of Sweden, of Rome, or of France ; it would not have been material at what tribunal, provided it had not been at her own. It seems less necessary to inquire what could be the reason of the assassination of Monaldechi : it may, perhaps, be for the honour of Christina to draw a veil over this mystery ; it would be shocking if a love intrigue should have been the cause of it, as some writers have said ; such a motive need not be assigned to render her conduct in this respect odious.

1657. She was now out of humour with France, where she was looked upon with horror, and wanted to go over to England. Cromwell, who then governed that kingdom with an authority more absolute than he had punished in Charles I. did not think it convenient to receive her. This man, who was as able a politician as he was a dangerous citizen, was afraid of having
his

his affairs exposed to the piercing eye of a woman who had an intriguing spirit; he could not persuade himself to see a queen who had sacrificed three crowns, to a religion which he detested, and he did not care to employ the public money in such useless hospitality, so that Christina was soon out of conceit with this expedition, and only went to the French academy, where they had nothing better to present to her than a translation by Cotin, of some verses of Lucretius, against Providence, to which, says Patru, they might oppose twenty others, by the same author, in favour of Providence. It may not be amiss to mention, that they likewise read to her some articles of the dictionary, which the French academy have been employed about ever since that time. They happened to fall upon the article *Jeu*, in which were these words, “*Jeux de*
“ *princes qui ne plaisent qu’a ceux qui les font.*”

1658. At length the queen of Sweden returned to Rome, where, in all the sweetness of an elegant repose, she indulged her taste for the arts and sciences, especially for chemistry, medals and statues.

The cardinal Azzolini, who had conceived for the queen an affection, which malice and calumny have not spared, re-established the state of her finances, which had been greatly disordered by her extravagant profuseness, and by the little punctuality with which her pension had been remitted to her from Sweden. The cardinal preserved her confidence and friendship till he died; and one may say, there were but three persons in the world, who, in reality, enjoyed her esteem; the prince of Conde on account of his courage,
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the cardinal De Retz for his spirit, and the cardinal Azzolini for his complaisance. If we may judge by the queen's character, she does not seem at any time to have been much actuated by a principle of libertinism or of love, as some have imagined; mistaken vanity was her predominant passion.

She had not been long at Rome, before a misunderstanding happened between her and Alexander VII. who then filled the pontifical chair. This pope, a man of a vain and trifling character, was very desirous of the honour of the conversion of the princess, from whom he had received but a single letter. The part she appeared to take in the interests of France, chagrined the pope, who could not endure Lewis XIV. But the queen, who knew the temper of Alexander, and who had certain ends to serve by managing him, used to pacify him by receiving, from time to time, his benedictions in the public processions. She went so far as to lodge in a convent, for fear of giving umbrage to the pope, who did not forget to plant round her a number of monks and ecclesiastics as spies upon her actions. This retreat into a convent gave occasion to the report, which was generally believed, that she was going to turn *religious*. “The queen, says Guy Patin, will try every profession in life, if she does not die soon; she has already played many parts, very different from her first situation, so that she may be called the tenth muse, and the Sybille of the north.” It is not easy to believe that a princess, incensed against the pope, should wish to rivet, in so strange a manner, these bonds which

which increased her dependence upon him. However, the causes she had, or thought she had, to complain, increased so much, that, upon the death of Charles Gustavus, 1660, she had thoughts of returning to Sweden. This journey, the motives of which were unknown, furnished many speculations to the politicians, not very agreeable; for Christina's ancient subjects, having forgot all she had done for them, and all the affection they had formerly expressed, now beheld her only as a woman who had quitted them for the sake of going to live in a strange land, in the profession of a religion which they looked upon with detestation in Sweden. The mass, which she caused to be read without any restraint in the palace, gave very little uneasiness to the nobility, whose attention was fully occupied with war and intrigue. But two orders of the kingdom were highly displeased; the clergy, whose authority she had insulted, and the peasants, whose prejudices she had shocked. These two orders refused to confirm her revenues, being persuaded that nobody deserved to live who did not believe in Luther. It signified nothing to say that, as a sovereign, she was not responsible for her actions to any person. The answer was very ready, that she was no longer their mistress to annul the fundamental constitutions of the kingdom. The states ordered her chapel to be pulled down, and banished the Italian almoners who accompanied her. She was no longer a queen except in name, says an historian; and he whom she had made king, and who boasted of holding every thing of God and Christina, was no more.

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She seemed to have intended a revenge for this persecution, if she had succeeded in her project of ascending the throne again; but this design produced only a second renunciation, to which she was forced to submit. She then returned to Rome in her way through Hamburgh, she called upon the celebrated Lambecius, whom she consoled under the persecutions he suffered from the Protestant divines, by the honour she shewed him. These persecutions induced him to profess himself a Catholic, to justify himself from the charge of Atheism, which his enemies urged against him: that is, he changed his religion, to prove that he had one to change.

The siege of Candia, of which the princes of Christendom were mere spectators, without giving it any relief, was by no means an object of indifference to the queen of Sweden. She exerted herself to procure assistance for the Venetians both in money and troops. These efforts, though fruitless, were so great, as to give occasion to some to suspect her of being influenced by interest; so ready is the malignity of human nature; to poison the most commendable actions without any foundation.

1662. A little time after happened the famous affair of the guards, in which the king of France obtained a satisfaction so mortifying to the court of Rome. Christina had the honour to intercede with the king for a pope whom she hated, and the pleasure, at the same time, to intercede without effect. The pope, who was vexed at being indebted to her for the king's indulgence, and who perhaps had penetrated into her motives,

motives, imagined himself released from all obligation when she did not succeed: at last, being quite wearied out with absolutions and affronts from the pontiff, she formed a serious resolution of returning to Sweden again. While she was founding the states of the kingdom upon this measure, she filled up her time at Rome with the conversation of men of letters, and often diverted herself at their expence. Among other things, she caused a medal to be struck for the sake of laughing at the embarrassments which the legend occasioned them. I know not whether such sort of diversion is to be commended. A prince, whose interest it is in particular to be a patron and lover of letters, ought to be the last person in the world to turn into ridicule those who cultivate them. It is a thing which he ought to leave to themselves, and it is what they are unfortunately but too apt to succeed in.

The conditions which the senate annexed to her residence in Sweden, even when she had set out upon her second journey, were so hard, that she thought it adviseable to stop at Hamburgh, and wait for the next diet to settle her demands.

It was then she wrote to the senator Sevedt Baar, charged with her affairs at the court of Sweden, that the obligation she had been under to manage concerns of great importance, had taught her to suffer and to dissemble. It was in the same journey that, having found in the cabinet of an antiquary, a medal of her abdication, she threw it aside, and would not look at it. This action, which perhaps might proceed from
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real chagrin, was regarded with some probability as a strong expression of the indignation she felt at having resigned the crown.

The diet was held, and it seems the interests of God were quite altered, for of all orders of the state the clergy were the only persons inclined to espouse her cause. But the rest of the nation, who had conceived but little regard for Christina from her past-rambles, and who saw in her conduct a great deal of inconstancy and intrigue, exerted the right she had given them, and refused almost all her demands. She then renounced Sweden for ever, and returned to Rome, where she spent the remainder of her days discontented, and ill paid by her antient subjects, forgotten by France, and little regarded by that nation which she had preferred to all others. Gratitude and admiration were the first sentiments of the Romans to a princess who had refused to reign in order to live among them; but those men have not a lasting sentiment for any thing but grandeur and power.

Even princes that are the most esteemed, and the most worthy of being so, are not sufficiently apprised how necessary a throne is to do justice to their talents; and in the eyes of the people, that is, of all mankind, they derive a merit from their crown, even when they have the least need of it. “ Christina, said the historian Nani, perceived, soon after her abdication, that a queen without a state, is like a deity without a temple, whose worship will be soon abandoned.”

She was not yet arrived at Rome, when she heard of the death of Alexander VII. The following circumstance

cumstance will enable us to form some idea of the character of this pope. In the beginning of his pontificate, he had shewn great severity and aversion to what is called at Rome, Nepotism. His disinterested conduct, in this respect, was the subject of a letter, which cardinal Pallavicini had addressed to him, in the introduction of his history of the council of Trent. But the pope, on a sudden, thought better of the matter, and so over-ran Rome with his nephews, that Pallavicini perceiving the ridicule of the letter, suppressed the publication of it, though it was already printed.

1667—1669. Alexander VII. was succeeded by Clement IX. whose too short pontificate was called the golden age of Rome. Munificent, noble, the friend of learning and of man, he had the wisdom to make religion respectable, by putting an end to vain disputations; his pacific disposition deserves more imitation.

Christina kept up a constant correspondence with the learned men of Rome, and with foreigners.—The author of the memoirs has given us a list of the learned, who then composed the Arcadian academy, as sorry a one as that which he gives us of the learned men of Sweden in the reign of Christina.

We will only cite from this part of the memoirs, the title of a work of Nicholas Pallavicini; “A vindication of Divine Providence, in the great acquisition made by the Catholic church, in the person of the queen of Sweden.” This treatise was not published

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lished, because there were fifty-four heresies found in it.—Commend me to the patience of those that counted them.—

It is observable, from a letter which Christina wrote about this time to www.willibee.com.cn Otto de Guericke, how violently they were prejudiced at Rome, against the notion of the earth's moving. This princess, who had renounced her throne for the sake of being free, had not yet the courage to confess to a foreigner, that she believed the sun did not move.

1672. Soon after this, the famous war was begun which Lewis XIV. maintained with such glory against all Europe, whose jealousy was roused by his humiliation of the Dutch. It was concluded by the treaty of Nimeguen. Christina did not approve of the Swedes entering into this war; in which, indeed, they had ill success. Perhaps it was from her resentment of a libel just published against her in France, and for which she could obtain no satisfaction. But what had most weight with her, was the apprehension that they would delay the payment of her subsidy. She sent a plenipotentiary to take care of her interest at Nimeguen, who was received and treated as the ambassador of a queen of no consideration. This plenipotentiary was a young Swede, whose name was Cedercrantz; the want of genius and knowledge, which Christina had observed in him, did not prevent her trusting him with the conduct of her affairs; she said, it belonged to her to bestow not only success, but understanding, on those that served her. The Swede,

Swede, however, did procure the remittance of considerable sums of money soon after the conclusion of the peace; but Christina absolutely refused the proposal that was made of receiving her debt by certain annual payments from France.

1679. The following year, the opinions of the Quietists, more mortifying to human reason than those which have disturbed France in these latter times, made a great noise at Rome, where these kinds of disputes are really held in contempt, but treated with great solemnity in appearance. The author of this new system was Michael Molinos, a Spanish priest, grand director, and a worthy man even in the opinion of the pope; two titles sufficient to make him enemies enough. Those who had the government of consciences, would needs see dangerous heresies in a man, whose ideas about spirituality deserved rather pity than indignation.

Christina, whether from natural compassion or from her dislike of the persecutors of Molinos, or whether, in short, from her desire of making some figure in an affair which engaged the attention of all Christendom, took the part of Molinos so zealously, that she was even suspected of favouring his opinions; and they almost thought it criminal in this princess to pay the duties of humanity to an unfortunate man. The spiritual repose, which Molinos preached, and which then entirely employed the attention of the holy office, made Pasquin say pleasantly, “If we speak, we go to the gallies; if we write, to the gibbet;

“ gibbet ; if we keep ourselves quiet, to the inquiry. What is to be done, then ? ”

Molinos, though supported by Christina, found a formidable adversary in the king of France, who, being instigated by the enemies of this harmless heretic, vigorously prosecuted his condemnation at Rome. It was at length pronounced by pope Innocent XI. who then filled the holy see. And independent of the equity with which he acted on this occasion, it is but justice to him to say, that no consideration of interest could influence his conduct. It plainly appears, through the whole of his transactions with France, that he acted upon no temporising plan ; virtuous, opinionative, and of limited views, he behaved with an inflexibility, which, under a king less pious than Lewis XIV. might have caused a schism between the churches of France and Rome. His successors obtained much more by their ductility, than he could by an ill-tim'd firmness. And 'tis somewhat remarkable, that the court of France, notwithstanding its attachment to the holy see, has been the most dexterous in managing the popes to their own advantage.

The celebrated mademoiselle le Fever, since madame Dacier, sent, about this time, to Christina, Florus, in usum, &c. which she had just published. The queen thanked her, and advised her to make herself a Catholic. — Mademoiselle le Fever, some time after, made use of this advice.

I know not whether one should mention another letter, which our author has inserted, and in which
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the queen of Sweden exhorts one count Vassanau to turn monk. The compiler makes use of this letter to prove the religious sentiments of the queen; tho' in many parts of his book, he intimates his suspicions of the sincerity of her conversion. This problem appeared to him very difficult to resolve; and seems to have given him great disturbance. But a letter so unworthy of the princess, and of the person to whom it was wrote, serves only to shew that Christina mispent her time. The author should not have published it.

The same may be said of the apology for Christina, upon her affected passion for astrology. In an age, when philosophy (which seldom disturbs crowned heads) had not made a general progress, it is not to be wondered at that the queen, wanting to know more than was possible, should be prejudiced in favour of a science, to which, frivolous as it was, some considerable men had applied themselves; and which had employed, in his younger days, the celebrated Cassini. Christina, however, shewed some discernment and knowledge of the world, when she observed that the terrestrial astrology seemed to her a better guide in discovering events, than the celestial; and that astrology, like medicine, must be studied, only that we may not be dupes to it.

As a queen, as a Catholic, as an enthusiastic admirer of great actions, this princess, in 1683, wrote a letter to John Sobieski, king of Poland, who, by relieving Vienna, then besieged by the Turks, and abandoned by Leopold, both served and humbled the

emperor. Christina, in this letter, acquainted Sobieski with his being reproached for converting, improperly, the spoils of the war to his own use. "I
" envy not your majesty (says she) the treasures you
" have got; I envy you only the glorious title you
" have acquired, of the deliverer of Christendom;
" and though I am without a kingdom, I think my-
" self under that obligation that is due to you from
" all monarchs."

Lewis XIV. who, while he was humbling the pope on one hand, thought, on the other, to extirpate Calvinism from his kingdom, in 1685, published the famous edict, revoking that of Nantz. Christina wrote, on this occasion, to the chevalier de Terlon the French ambassador in Sweden, a letter, which Bayle has preserved in his journal. She there laments the fortune of the persecuted Calvinists, with that warmth and sincerity, that made them say, that the queen's letter was the relics of Protestantism. This is, however, very doubtful; and there is all the appearance, that the rights of humanity alone drew this letter from her. The persecution of the Reformed was carried to a degree of cruelty, which one cannot impute to Lewis XIV. It was the effect of violent animosities amongst his ministry. I don't enter at all into the question, whether the king should have tolerated Calvinism in his kingdom? whether two powerful and rival sects of religion are more dangerous in a kingdom, than the violent extirpation of one of them? or whether in a country of commerce, it would not have been better to have employed

ployed mildness than open force, and gradually, and by gentle methods, made profelytes to the Catholic faith, than martyrs to Calvinism? These political and religious questions require a different pen from mine, and another style than this. www.Alibon.com.cn All the world, however, agrees, at this day, that the cruelty of this persecution equally shocked religion and justice. Should we acknowledge the rectitude of the king's intentions, we can't help lamenting, that they were so barbarously executed.

The sentiments which Christina discovers in this letter, do her honour, and are one of the best memorials that remain of her. "Are you thoroughly satisfied (says she to the chevalier de Terlon) of the sincerity of these new converts?—Military folks are strange apostles—I am grieved to see so many honest men reduced to beggary—If they are in an error, they rather deserve pity than hatred—France seems, to me, in a malady, to which she applies a violent remedy, when patience and gentle treatment would have wrought the cure." She concludes this letter, by opposing the conduct of Lewis XIV. to his Protestant subjects, to his conduct towards the pope.

This last article is too long, as well as her transalpine declamations against the rights of the Gallican church, and the famous articles of 1682.

Christina was very much offended at Bayle for publishing this letter; and more so on account of the reflections which he has added, and which throw some doubt upon her conversion. These complaints were

the subject of a long altercation between the philosopher and the queen; which ended, however, to the mutual satisfaction of both parties.

1687. The affair of privileges, which then made a great noise in France, made no less disturbance at Rome. Christina, who had just given up her right, wanted to recal it, from her indignation at the insolence of the pope's officers, who had pursued and taken a criminal, even in her house. But this affair, which was treated at Paris with great parade, and which produced excommunications from the pope, and from the parliament arrets, and appeals to a general council, was managed more smoothly between the pope and the queen, by the mediation of their confessors. Nevertheless Christina was as difficult to please, as if she had really been formidable.

The prince of Conde had died the preceding year. Christina, whose admiration of him was not abated by his disgrace, wrote to mademoiselle de Scudery, to engage her to celebrate a hero so worthy of elogium. She appears, in this letter, to contemplate her own end with great calmness; "The approach of death," (says she) "which is hastening on, gives me no disturbance: I wait for it, without wishing or fearing it."

1688. War, in the mean time, commenced again in Europe. It is observable, by one of the last letters of Christina, that she foresaw what would be the event of it, with regard to king James II. This prince, who makes a better figure in a funeral oration than he does in history, and whose persecuting temper will
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always be offensive to the true genuine spirit of Christianity, had been driven from his throne for tormenting a nation that never disturbed him with his monks and his mistresses, and for attempting to make the English believe by force what he should have taught them by his own example. A refugee in France, little respected in Europe, and a subject of raillery even in the court he had fled to, they pretend he wrought miracles after his death, though he had not skill enough to manage the miracle of recovering his throne while he was alive.

Always averse to France, Christina seemed to wish that the Swedes would not have joined Lewis XIV. in this war. They pretend too, that she was weary of the pope and the Romans, and was concerting measures with the elector of Brandenburg to retreat into his dominions. Some writers, without examining whether there really was any negotiation for this purpose, have concluded, that she had thoughts of returning to the Lutheran religion.

1689. But if she had indeed any such design, which is not probable, she had not, however, time to put it in execution. She died a little while after, with great composure and philosophy. They say, her death was superior to that of Elizabeth; one could wish to say as much for her life. She ordered, by her will, that these words only should be put upon her tomb; "D. O. M. Vixit Christina, Ann. LXIII." The modesty and the ostentation of monumental inscriptions are equally the effect of vanity. Modesty agrees best with that species of vanity which has
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produced some great actions ; parade with that vanity which has only signalized itself in trifles. If we examine the epitaph of Christina by this rule—the irregularities of her conduct, of her temper and her taste—the want of decency she shewed in her behaviour—the little use she made of her knowledge and understanding towards the happiness of mankind—her pride, which was often misplaced (and which is always so when it does not produce respect),—her equivocal discourse upon the religion she had renounced, and that which she had embraced ; in fine, the vagrant life which she led among strangers who did not love her : all these circumstances together justify more than she was aware of, the brevity of her epitaph.

I shall say nothing of her obsequies, her library, her pictures, or the medals that were struck on this occasion : I leave it to the author of the Memoirs to amuse himself with this détail, chusing rather to take notice of two pieces which she composed ; one intitled, “ *Pensées diverses*,” which, like most things of this kind, is but a collection of common-place observations, and those frequently where there have not been even the pains taken to disguise them by an epigrammatic turn.

But, what is most remarkable in this performance, are the maxims upon toleration, which diametrically oppose the propositions in support of the infallibility of the pope. If she meant to lay down these maxims by way of counterpoise to the others, I doubt we must be forced to say, that the remedy is worse than the disease.

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The other performance of Christina is an elogium upon Alexander, that conqueror who is the idol of antiquity, and the subject of criticism in our days ; who, like most celebrated princes, neither deserves the praises which adulation has bestowed on him, nor the censure with which he has been treated by learned men, because they had no interest in commending him. Christina should have praised him less, and imitated him more, not in his extravagant love of fame and conquest, but in the dignity of his mind, in his talents for government, in his knowledge of mankind, in the enlargement of his views, and in his refined taste for the arts and sciences.

F I N I S.

The other part of the work is an edition of the letters of the author, which are now for the first time published in English. The letters are of great interest, and show the author in a very different light from what he is usually represented. The edition is by the author's son, and is very carefully edited. The letters are arranged in chronological order, and are accompanied by a biographical notice of the author. The edition is a very valuable addition to the literature of the author.

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