LOVELL ARCHIBALD

A VOYAGE TO THE MOON

Archibald Lovell

A Voyage to the Moon

http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=24168548
A Voyage to the Moon:

Содержание

Cyrano de Bergerac
A Voyage to the Moon

CYRANO DE BERGERAC

Savinien Hercule de Cyrano Bergerac, swashbuckler, hero, poet, and philosopher, came of an old and noble family, richer in titles than in estates. His grandfather still kept most of the titles, and was called Savinien de Cyrano Mauvières Bergerac Saint-Laurent. He was secretary to the King in 1571, and held other important offices. Since there was no absolute right of primogeniture in those matters, the names, as well as what was left of the properties they had represented, were distributed among his descendants. Our hero seems to have received a fair share of the titles; but of the property, nothing.

He was the fifth among seven children, and was born on the 6th of March, 1619; not in 1620, as has been usually stated. He was born, moreover, at Paris, not in Gascony; we must, alas, admit that he was not a Gascon. He ought to have been one, he certainly deserved to be one. But Fortune, who seems to have taken pleasure in always making him just miss his destiny, began by doing him this first and greatest wrong of not letting him be born a Gascon. The family was not even of distant Gascon origin, but was Périgourdin; Bergerac itself is a small town near

Périgueux. Cyrano, however, did his best to repair this as well as the other wrongs of Destiny; he acquired the Gascon accent, and often made himself pass for a Gascon.

The fortune of his early education made him fall into the hands of a country curate, who was an insufferable pedant (the species seems to have been common at that time), and who had no real scholarship (the two things are by no means contradictory). Cyrano dubbed his master an "Aristotelic Ass," and wrote to his father that he preferred Paris.

This period of exile had one very important result, however: the formation of his first and most lasting friendship, that with Lebret, who shared in the instruction of the country curate, but with a more docile acceptance of his teachings. Here again Fortune seems to have played tricks with Cyrano, in giving him by accident for lifelong friend one who just missed being what a real friend should be; who was true and loyal, but who was always seeking to reform Cyrano or to push him forward in the world; who admired him, who loved him, but who was of such opposite nature that he understood him not at all.

Back at Paris, Cyrano was sent to the Collège de Beauvais afterward Racine's college where he completed the course, under the principalship of another pedant named Grangier, who was a little more scholarly, but no less ridiculous than the first, and who figures in the leading rôle of Cyrano's comedy *Le Pédant joué*. He lived the Paris student's life, burning honest tradesmen's signs and "doing other crazy things," as his contemporary

Tallemant des Réaux tells us. On leaving college he started upon a downward track, according to Lebret; "on which," says the same good Lebret, "I dare to boast that I stopped him … by compelling him to enter the company of the Guards with me." It may be doubted whether a temporary suspension of the paternal allowance had nothing to do with the matter; and whether, after all, Cyrano felt so much repugnance to entering this company of the Guards.

For this company was the famous regiment of the "garde-nobles," commanded by Carbon de Castel-Jaloux, a "triple Gascon" and a "triple brave." And his men were hardly a step behind him, all of them nobles that was an essential condition of entrance and almost all of them Gascons. Cyrano, at first in the position rather of the Christian than of the Cyrano of M. Rostand's play, by his gallantry and wit compelled them to accept him, and even won among these "braves" the title of "*démon de la bravoure*." Unable to be the most Gascon of the Gascons, he made it up by being more Gascon than the Gascons.

Among his exploits the most famous is that of the fight with the hundred ruffians; for this appears to be not a dramatic creation or a legend, but history. One of his poet-friends, Linière (the name is sometimes spelt Lignière) a writer of epigram and contributor to the "Recueils" or "Keep-sakes" of the epoch, had wounded the susceptibilities of a certain "grand seigneur," who planned to avenge himself by the same method which another noble lord, in the eighteenth century, actually used

against Voltaire. He posted his hundred men at the Porte de Nesle, to waylay Linière. Linière, hearing of it, came to take refuge with Cyrano for the night. But Cyrano would not receive him. "No, you shall sleep at home," said he. "Here, take this lantern" (this is M. Brun's version), "walk behind me and hold the light, and I'll make bed-quilts of them for you!" And the next morning there were found scattered about the Porte de Nesle two dead men, seven wounded, and many hats, sticks, and pikes.

According to Lebret's account, the battle took place in broad daylight, and had several witnesses. For the rest, his story coincides with that above. And all versions agree in saying that M. de Cuigy and M. de Brissailles both men of the time fairly well known: one the son of an Advocate of the Parliament of Paris, the other Mestre de Camp of the Prince de Conti's regiment bore witness to the facts; and that the story became generally known, and was never denied. Perhaps it will not be well to guarantee the exactness of the number one hundred; but the story must be for the most part true.

Another exploit, less magnificent, but perhaps as characteristic of the wild temper of Cyrano, is his battle with Fagotin. A mountebank named Brioché had a theatre of marionnettes, near the Pont-Neuf, and used an ape called Fagotin, fantastically dressed, to attract spectators. Some enemy of Cyrano, perhaps Dassoucy, one day persuaded Brioché to dress his ape up in imitation of Cyrano, with long sword and nose as long. Cyrano, arriving and seeing this parody of himself

exalted on a platform, unsheathes in blind rage, drives the crowd of lackeys and loafers right and left with the flat of his sword, and impales the poor ape who was holding out his sword in a posture of self-defence. According to the contemporary pamphlet, partly in prose and partly in verse, which was made upon this marvellous adventure, Brioché brought suit for damages against Bergerac. But even in these ridiculous circumstances Cyrano managed to get the laughers on his side; and claiming that in the country of art there was no such thing as gold and silver, and that he had a right to pay in the money of the country, he promised to eternize the dead ape in Apollinic verse; and so was acquitted.

The story of Montfleury, the fat actor whom Cyrano detested, is hardly less fantastic; and in connection with it we have the witness of Cyrano's own letter "Against Montfleury the Fat, bad Actor and bad Author," the tenth of the *Satiric Letters*. According to all the books of theatrical anecdotes, Cyrano one evening ordered him off the stage, and forbade him to reappear for a month; and when two days later he did reappear, Cyrano once more drove him in disgrace to the wings. The audience protesting, Cyrano challenged them each and all to meet him in duel, and carried his point. Whether he offered to take down their names in order or not, does not appear.

In the meantime, more serious work turned up. The regiment of the cadets was sent against the Germans, entered Mouzon, was besieged there. In a sortie, Cyrano was seriously wounded, a musket-ball passing through his body. Hardly recovered from

his wound, he rejoined the army at the siege of Arras, in 1640; unfortunately for the story, he was probably no longer with the cadets there, but in the regiment of the Prince de Conti. Again he was wounded, this time even more seriously, with a sword-cut in the throat. And compelled to abandon the military career, he returned to Paris and took up his studies and his writing.

For he had always been a student and a poet. It is probable that the *Pédant joué* was in part composed during his college days. Lebret pictures him to us as studying between two duels, and working at an Elegy in all the noise of the regimental barracks, "as undistractedly as if he had been in a quiet study." He now joined a group of independents in thought and life, naturalists in ethics and empiricists in philosophy, and forced his way into a private class of the philosopher Gassendi, where he had for fellow-students Hesnaut, Chapelle, Bernier, and almost certainly a young Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, who was very soon to take the name of Molière, found the "Illustre Théâtre," and after its failure start on a fifteen years' tour of the provinces.

Cyrano was an earnest and capable student of philosophy, and came to it with the fresh interest not only of his own personality, but of a young man of barely twenty-two; he naturally imposed himself as a sort of leader in the group of young "libertins" or free-thinkers, just as he had done among the Guards. He knew well not only Gassendi, but also Campanella, and of course Descartes, in his works at least. He even seems to have read widely among the half-philosophers,

half-occultists of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, such as Cornelius Agrippa, Jerome Cardan, Abbot Tritheim, César de Nostradamus, etc. Among the ancients, his first favorites were Lucretius and Pyrrho: Pyrrho whom he especially admired, "because he was so nobly free, that no thinker of his age had been able to enslave his opinions; and so modest, that he would never give final decision on any point." There is much of Cyrano in this phrase, both in the half-bold modesty and in the half-timid fierceness of independence. Cyrano shuddered at the thought of having even a single one of his ideas enslaved to those of another thinker. Just as he had refused the Maréchal de Gassion for patron when he was in the Guards, so he would accept no one's *magister dixit*, no patron of his thought, not even the Aristotle of the Schools.

The period of his life from 1643 to 1653 is a very obscure one. Yet probably almost all of his works were composed during this time. He may have travelled; there are traditions and suggestions that he visited England, Italy, even Poland. He probably stood in danger of persecution from the Jesuits on account of his philosophical ideas, and may have suffered it, as did his contemporaries Campanella and Galileo, or, to mention a French poet only a little older than he, *Théophile de Viau*, who was even condemned to death for less independence than Cyrano's; though the sentence was fortunately commuted. He probably mingled somewhat in the society of the "Précieuses" of the time as well as in that of the "libertins"; for he has left a series

of "Love-Letters" which must almost exactly have suited the taste of those who prepared Discourses on the Tender Passion. He probably had many duels still, for Lebret tells us that he served a hundred times as second – the round number is to be taken as such – and any one acquainted with the epoch, or with the *Three Musketeers* of Dumas, knows that the seconds fought as well as the principals. Lebret adds, to be sure, that he never had a quarrel on his own account, but we may perhaps take this as a bit of the conscientious "white-washing" which Lebret could not refrain from in speaking of his friend's reputation; for we know enough of his character even from Lebret, and of his life from other sources, to make a gentle peacefulness, so out of keeping with the epoch, somewhat doubtful; and then there was his nose.

The Nose is authentic also. It appears in all the portraits, of which there are four. And in all of these it is the same: not a little ugly nose, flat at the top and projecting at the bottom in a little long gable turned up at the end; but a large, generous, well-shaped nose, hooked rather than retroussé, and planted squarely in the symmetrical middle of the face; not ridiculous, but monumental! The anecdotes of the duels it caused are so many, that one comes in spite of oneself to believe some of them. It is said that this nose brought death upon more than ten persons; that one could not look upon it, but he must unsheathe; if one looked away, it was worse; and as for speaking of Noses, that was a subject which Cyrano reserved for himself, to do it fitting honor. Listen to his treatment of it in the *Pédant joué*: "This veridic nose

arrives everywhere a quarter of an hour before its master. Ten shoemakers, good round fat ones too, go and sit down to work under it out of the rain." As for defending large noses, as the index of valor, intelligence, and all high qualities, it will appear in the *Voyage to the Moon* that he could do it as well with his pen as with his sword.

The end of his life was difficult and sad. He was finally compelled to accept the patronage of the Duc d'Arpajon, for no man could live or even exist by literature at that period, except as literature brought patronage or pensions. The great Corneille himself, than whom no one could be more simply sturdy and high of character, wrote begging letters to the great minister who controlled the pensions of literature. Cyrano dedicated the edition of his "Miscellaneous Works" in 1654 to the Duc d'Arpajon, in an epistle which fulfils, but with dignity and independence, the laws of the *genre*, and accompanied it with a sonnet addressed to the Duke's daughter, which is in the taste of the time, yet considerably better than the taste of the time. Things went well till *Agrippine* appeared, which had a "succès de scandale"; but its "belles impiétés," as the happy book-seller called them, seem to have pleased the timidly orthodox Duke less. In the meantime Cyrano had received a wound from a falling beam whether by mere accident or not, will never be known; but Cyrano had many enemies, and it has generally been thought that there was purpose behind the accident. For whatever reason, the Duc d'Arpajon seems to have advised Cyrano to leave him, and

Cyrano was received by Regnault des Bois-Clairs, a friend of Lebret. There he was kindly cared for and lectured on the evil of his past life by Lebret and three women of the Convent of the Daughters of the Cross: Soeur Hyacinthe, an aunt of Cyrano himself; Mère Marguerite, the superior of the convent; and the Baronne de Neuvillette, a cousin of Cyrano, who was Madeleine Robineau, and had married the Baron Christophe de Neuvillette, killed at the siege of Arras in 1640. The three women persuaded themselves that they had converted Cyrano to the true Church. This is doubtful, since he dragged himself away to the country to die, at the house of the cousin whom he speaks of at the end of the *Voyage to the Moon*. In any case, Mère Marguerite reclaimed his body, and he was buried in holy ground at the convent.

The Voyage to the Moon was not published till 1656, the year after Cyrano's death. It was certainly written as early as 1650, probably in 1649. It had been circulated widely in manuscript, and possibly a few copies had been printed, before the author's death. *The Voyage to the Sun*, or, to give the title more accurately, the "Comic History of the States and Empires of the Sun," was probably written immediately after the *Voyage to the Moon*, but was not published till 1662. The *History of the Spark* has never been found, unless that be the subtitle of a part of the Voyage to the Sun, as seems fairly probable.

The *Letters* of Cyrano are, in part at least, his earliest work. They were probably scattered over a considerable period in point of composition, but most of them were published in 1654.

It is to be remembered that like all the letters of that epoch which we have, they were meant to be read in company, in the salons, or sometimes (like that "Against Dassoucy"), in the taverns, corresponding to the modern cafés, where men of letters gathered. They were written not for the postman, but for the parlor; and not so much for the parlor as for the printer. But even with the artificiality of this method, and with the burlesque or précieuse expression that was obligatory in Letters at that time, there are touches of real sincerity and passion constantly breaking through.

The *Pédant joué* is a prose-comedy in five acts, made almost entirely on the model of the Italian "commedia dell' arte," a form in which Molière's early work is written, and which was practically the only form known at the time when Cyrano wrote for the play is certainly anterior to Corneille's *Menteur*. We have the almost obligatory two pairs of young lovers; the old father who is tyrannical but easily deceived in this particular case combined with the pedant-doctor type; the valet who does the deceiving, in the service of the young lovers; and the terrible captain, who takes flight at the shadow of danger. Cyrano has, however, introduced one new type a peasant with his dialect and local characteristics: a type that Molière used to great advantage later, but hardly so very much better than Cyrano uses it here; witness the fact that a number of this peasant's phrases have become proverbs. The famous scene of "qu'allait-il faire dans cette galère" (despairingly repeated by the father who is

compelled to give up his cherished money for the ransom of a son held in captivity supposedly on a Turkish galley) is exceedingly well imagined, and Molière did well to use it, sixteen years after Cyrano's death, for the two best scenes of his *Fourberies de Scapin*. It is not a matter to reproach Molière with, but it is a case in which Cyrano should receive due credit.

The only serious poetical work of Cyrano is his tragedy of *Agrippine, veuve de Germanicus*, written at some time in the forties, played in 1653, and published in 1654. The statement, repeated categorically by Mr. Sidney Lee in his recent Life of Shakespeare, that "Cyrano de Bergerac plagiarized 'Cymbeline,' 'Hamlet,' and 'The Merchant of Venice' in his 'Agrippina,'" has not the slightest foundation. There are no resemblances, either superficial or essential, on which to base it, and it is altogether improbable that Cyrano even knew of Shakespeare's existence. The subject of Agrippine is similar to that of Corneille's *Cinna*– a conspiracy under the Roman Empire. There are no resemblances to Corneille's work in the details of the plot, but in general spirit the play is what we call Cornelian, partly because Corneille was the only one who possessed this spirit of the epoch with sufficient creative and individual power to compel the attention of posterity. Cyrano, once more, just missed this. But his play is worthy not only to be ranked with the best dramas of any of his contemporaries except Corneille, but even to be at least compared with Corneille's better work (except perhaps the *Cid* and *Polyeucte*). The play is not thoroughly well constructed,

and so misses something of dramatic effectiveness, though by no means missing it entirely; but it is as well constructed as Corneille's *Cinna*, and better than his Horace to take examples only among his greatest plays. It has no scene to compare with that of the clemency of Augustus in *Cinna*, no character-study so fine as that of the different sentiments of Augustus. But it approaches, though it does not quite attain, the heroics of *Horace*. It is full of exaggeration so is Corneille; and of an exaggeration that sometimes becomes burlesque as in Corneille; but it is an exaggeration that is high and heroic, like Corneille's. And the high and heroic sometimes as in a line like this:

Et puis, mourir n'est rien; c'est achever de naître —

sometimes, but too rarely, drops its exaggeration to become simple as simple as real heroism, which is the simplest thing in the world.

Except real genius. Real genius is, finally, the essential thing, which Cyrano once more just missed attaining missed just by the lack of that simplicity, perhaps. But exaggeration, sometimes carried to the burlesque, is the essential trait which makes him what he is; and we cannot wish it away.

CURTIS HIDDEN PAGE.

NOTE ON THE TRANSLATION

There have been at least three translations into English of the *Voyage to the Moon*: that alluded to on page 1; the present translation; and one made in the eighteenth century by Samuel Derrick. The last is dedicated to the Earl of Orrery, author of "Remarks on the Life and Writings of Jonathan Swift," and attributes its "call from obscurity" to "your Lordship's mentioning it in your *Life of Swift*" as having served for inspiration to *Gulliver's Travels*.

Samuel Derrick's translation, however, is not so good as that of A. Lovell. The seventeenth century translation is more flowery and fanciful, and by that very fact closer to the original. For though the *Voyage to the Moon* is the most sober in style of Cyrano's works, yet there are still many touches of the "high fantastical" in its manner as well as in its substance. The eighteenth century translator has toned down the style to make it more acceptable to that age of reason and regularity. It is still another case of the irony of Fate pursuing Cyrano; the regularity of seventeenth century literature in France, against whom he struggled so swashbucklerly, had completely triumphed and spread their influence over Europe; so that even in the land where liberty and individuality are native, his work had to suffer correction in all its most fanciful passages. There are constant omissions of phrases or sentences in the eighteenth

century translation, and there are also numerous mistakes, as well as many points missed. The seventeenth century translation, on the other hand, is faithful throughout to its original, and accurate as well as vivid.

The translation has been compared throughout with the French of the edition of 1661, and the two or three slight corrections needed have been made in footnotes. Except for the breaking up of some very long paragraphs, and slight changes in punctuation when necessary for clearness, the text has been reprinted as exactly as possible. All changes or additions, except the correction of evident misprints, have been bracketed.

C. H. P.

A VOYAGE TO THE MOON

THE TRANSLATOR TO THE READER

It is now Seven and Twenty Years, since the Moon appeared first Historically on the English Horizon[1]: And let it not seem strange, that she should have retained Light and Brightness so long here, without Renovation; when we find by Experience, that in the Heavens, she never fails once a Month to Change and shift her Splendor. For it is the Excellency of Art, to represent Nature even in her absence; and this being a Piece done to the Life, by one that had the advantage of the true Light, as well as the Skill of Drawing, in this kind, to Perfection; he left so good an Original, which was so well Copied by another Hand, that the Picture might have served for many Years more, to have given the Lovers of the Moon, a sight of their Mistress, even in the darkest Nights; and when she was retired to put on a clean Smock in Phoebus his Apartment; if they had been so curious, as to have

[1] This evidently refers to an earlier translation of the *Voyage to the Moon*, published probably in 1660. The present editor will be greatly obliged to any one who will put him on the track of a copy of this, or any other early translation from Cyrano, such as the "Satyrical Characters and handsome Descriptions, in Letters, written to several Persons of Quality, by Monsieur De Cyrano Bergerac. Translated from the French, by a Person of Honor. London, 1658."

encouraged the Exposers.

However, Reader, you have now a second View of her, and that under the same Cover with the Sun too, which is very rare; since these two were never seen before in Conjunction. Yet I would have none be afraid, that their Eyes being dazzled with the glorious Light of the Sun, they should not see her; for Fancy will supply the Weakness of the Organ, and Imagination, by the help of this Mirrour, will not fail to discover them both; though Cynthia lye hid under Apollo's shining Mantle. And so much for the Luminaries.

Now as to the Worlds, which, with Analogy to ours below, I may call the Old and New; that of the Moon having been discovered, tho imperfectly, by others, but the Sun owing its Discovery wholly to our Author:[2] I make no doubt, but

[2] Among the "others" who had previously "discovered" the Moon, Ariosto is the most prominent. In his *Orlando Furioso*, Astolfo goes to the moon, visits the "Valley of Lost Things," finds there many broken resolutions, idlers' days, lovers' tears, and other such matters; and finally recovers Orlando's lost wits, which he brings back to the earth.The *Satire Ménippée* (1594) gives, in its *Supplément*, "News from the Regions of the Moon."Quevedo, the Spanish satirist and novelist (1580-1645), with whose works Cyrano was acquainted, also gives an account of the moon in his Sixth Vision.In England, the Rev. John Wilkins (1614-1672), once Principal of Trinity College, Cambridge, and later Bishop of Chester, a brother-in-law of Cromwell, and one of the founders of the Royal Society, published in 1638 the "*Discovery of a New World*; or, a Discourse to prove it is probable there may be another habitable world in the Moon; with a discourse concerning *the possibility of a passage thither*"; and later, in 1640, the "*Discourse* concerning a new Planet; tending to prove it is probable our earth is one of the Planets." These two works are said to have done more than any others to popularize the Copernican system in England. The *Discovery of a New World* was translated into French by Jean de Montagne, and published at Rouen in

the Ingenious Reader will find in both, so extraordinary and surprizing Rarities, as well Natural, Moral, as Civil; that if he be not as yet sufficiently disgusted with this lower World, (which I am sure some are) to think of making a Voyage thither, as our Author has done; he will at least be pleased with his Relations. Nevertheless, since this Age produces a great many bold Wits, that shoot even beyond the Moon, and cannot endure, (no more than our Author) to be stinted by Magisterial Authority, and to believe nothing but what Gray-headed Antiquity gives them leave: It's pity some soaring Virtuoso, instead of Travelling into France, does not take a flight up to the Sun; and by new Observations supply the defects of its History; occasioned not by the Negligence of our Witty French Author, but by the accursed Plagiary of some rude Hand, that in his Sickness, rifted his Trunks, and stole his Papers, as he himself complains.[3]

Let some venturous Undertaker auspiciously attempt it then;

1655 or 1656. See Charles Nodier, *Mélanges extraits d'une petite bibliothèque*.Finally, the most important of Cyrano's predecessors in the discovery of the moon was Francis Godwin, M.A., D.D., Bishop of Llandaff and later of Hereford (1562-1633). It was not till 1638, after the worthy Bishop's death, and in the same year that Rev. (later Bishop) John Wilkins' *Discovery of a New World* was published, that there appeared his "*Man in the Moone*; or a Discourse of a Voyage Thither, by Domingo Gonsales, the Speedy Messenger." This was translated into French by Jean Baudoin or Baudouin in 1648, as "L'homme dans la lune … voyage … fait par Dominique Gonzales, aventurier espagnol," and was well known to Cyrano, as we shall see.In saying that "the sun owes its discovery wholly to our author," the translator appears to be ignorant of a work which Cyrano certainly knew: the *Civitas solis* of Campanella, published in 1623 as a part of his *Realis Philosophiæ Epilogisticæ Partes IV*.

[3] Cf. the last sentence of the *Voyage to the Moon*.

and if neither of the two Universities, Gresham-College, nor Greenwich-Observatory can furnish him with an Instrument of Conveyance; let him try his own Invention, or make use of our Author's Machine: For our Loss is, indeed, so great, that one would think, none but the declared Enemy of Mankind, would have had the Malice, to purloyn and stiffle those rare Discoveries, which our Author made in the Province of the Solar Philosophers; and which undoubtedly would have gone far, as to the settleing our Sublunary Philosophy, which, as well as Religion, is lamentably rent by Sects and Whimseys; and have convinced us, perhaps, that in our present Doubts and Perplexities, a little more, or a little less of either, would better serve our Turns, and more content our Minds.

CHAPTER I.
Of how the Voyage was Conceived

I Had been with some Friends at Clamard, a House near Paris, and magnificently Entertain'd there by Monsieur de Cuigy,[4] the Lord of it; when upon our return home, about Nine of the Clock at Night, the Air serene, and the Moon in the Full, the Contemplation of that bright Luminary furnished us with such variety of Thoughts as made the way seem shorter than, indeed, it was. Our Eyes being fixed upon that stately Planet, every one spoke what he thought of it: One would needs have it be a Garret Window of Heaven; another presently affirmed, That it was the Pan whereupon *Diana* smoothed *Apollo's* Bands; whilst another was of Opinion, That it might very well be the Sun himself, who putting his Locks up under his Cap at Night, peeped through a hole to observe what was doing in the World during his absence.

"And for my part, Gentlemen," said I, "that I may put in for a share, and guess with the rest; not to amuse my self with those curious Notions wherewith you tickle and spur on slow-paced Time; I believe, that the Moon is a World like ours, to which this of ours serves likewise for a Moon."

---

[4] Monsieur de Cuigy, who is mentioned by Lebret as a friend and admirer of Cyrano, and who was one of the witnesses of his famous battle against the hundred ruffians, possessed an estate at Clamart-sous-Meudon, near Paris. He appears as a character in M. Rostand's play of *Cyrano de Bergerac*.

This was received with the general Laughter of the Company. "And perhaps," said I, "(Gentlemen) just so they laugh now in the Moon, at some who maintain, That this Globe, where we are, is a World." But I'd as good have said nothing, as have alledged to them, That a great many Learned Men had been of the same Opinion; for that only made them laugh the faster.

However, this thought, which because of its boldness suited my Humor, being confirmed by Contradiction, sunk so deep into my mind, that during the rest of the way I was big with Definitions of the Moon which I could not be delivered of: Insomuch that by striving to verifie this Comical Fancy by Reasons of appearing weight, I had almost perswaded my self already of the truth on't; when a Miracle, Accident, Providence, Fortune, or what, perhaps, some may call Vision, others Fiction, Whimsey, or (if you will) Folly, furnished me with an occasion that engaged me into this Discourse. Being come home, I went up into my Closet, where I found a Book open upon the Table, which I had not put there. It was a piece of *Cardanus*[5]; and though I had no design to read in it, yet I fell at first sight, as by force, exactly upon a Passage of that Philosopher where he tells us, That Studying one evening by Candle-light, he perceived Two tall old Men enter in through the door that was shut, who

[5] Jerome Cardan, 1501-1576, natural philosopher, doctor, astrologer, mathematician, and a voluminous author; in short, a sort of Italian Paracelsus, both by his universal learning, and by his intense interest in all domains of possible knowledge, in which he included astrology and necromancy. His most important work is the one referred to here, the *De Subtilitate Rerum*, 1551.

after many questions that he put to them, made him answer, That they were Inhabitants of the Moon, and thereupon immediately disappeared.

I was so surprised, not only to see a Book get thither of it self; but also because of the nicking of the Time so patly, and of the Page at which it lay upon, that I looked upon that Concatenation of Accidents as a Revelation, discovering to Mortals that the Moon is a World. "How!" said I to my self, having just now talked of a thing, can a Book, which perhaps is the only Book in the World that treats of that matter so particularly, fly down from the Shelf upon my Table; become capable of Reason, in opening so exactly at the place of so strange an adventure; force my Eyes in a manner to look upon it, and then to suggest to my fancy the Reflexions, and to my Will the Designs which I hatch.

"Without doubt," continued I, "the Two old Men, who appeared to that famous Philosopher, are the very same who have taken down my Book and opened it at that Page, to save themselves the labour of making to me the Harangue which they made to *Cardan*."

"But," added I, "I cannot be resolved of this Doubt, unless I mount up thither."

"And why not?" said I instantly to my self. "*Prometheus* heretofore went up to Heaven, and stole fire from thence. Have not I as much Boldness as he? And why should not I, then, expect as favourable a Success?"

CHAPTER II.
Of how the Author set out, and where he first arrived

After these sudden starts of Imagination, which may be termed, perhaps, the Ravings of a violent Feaver, I began to conceive some hopes of succeeding in so fair a Voyage: Insomuch that to take my measures aright, I shut my self up in a solitary Country-house; where having flattered my fancy with some means, proportionated to my design, at length I set out for Heaven in this manner.

I planted my self in the middle of a great many Glasses full of Dew, tied fast about me;[6] upon which the Sun so violently darted his Rays, that the Heat, which attracted them, as it does the thickest Clouds, carried me up so high, that at length I found my self above the middle Region of the Air. But seeing that Attraction hurried me up with so much rapidity that instead of drawing near the Moon, as I intended, she seem'd to me to be more distant than at my first setting out; I broke several of my Vials, until I found my weight exceed the force of the Attraction,

---

[6] Cf. M. Rostand's Cyrano de Bergerac, act III., scene xi.: "One way was to stand naked in the sunshine, in a harness thickly studded with glass phials, each filled with morning dew. The sun in drawing up the dew, you see, could not have helped drawing me up too!" (Miss Gertrude Hall' s translation.)

and that I began to descend again towards the Earth. I was not mistaken in my opinion, for some time after I fell to the ground again; and to reckon from the hour that I set out at, it must then have been about midnight. Nevertheless I found the Sun to be in the Meridian, and that it was Noon. I leave it to you to judge, in what Amazement I was; The truth is, I was so strangely surprised, that not knowing what to think of that Miracle, I had the insolence to imagine that in favour of my Boldness God had once more nailed the Sun to the Firmament, to light so generous[7] an Enterprise. That which encreased my Astonishment was, That I knew not the Country where I was; it seemed to me, that having mounted straight up, I should have fallen down again in the same place I parted from.

However, in the Equipage I was in, I directed my course towards a kind of Cottage, where I perceived some smoke; and I was not above a Pistol-shot from it, when I saw my self environed by a great number of People, stark naked: They seemed to be exceedingly surprised at the sight of me; for I was the first, (as I think) that they had ever seen clad in Bottles. Nay, and to baffle all the Interpretations that they could put upon that Equipage, they perceived that I hardly touched the ground as I walked; for, indeed, they understood not that upon the least agitation I gave my Body the Heat of the beams of the Noon-Sun raised me up with my Dew; and that if I had had Vials enough about me, it

[7] Generous = *noble*. Cf. Lord Burleigh, *Precepts to his Son*: "Let her not be poor, how *generous* soever; for a man can buy nothing in the market with gentility."

would possibly have carried me up into the Air in their view. I had a mind to have spoken to them; but as if Fear had changed them into Birds, immediately I lost sight of them in an adjoyning Forest. However, I catched hold of one, whose Legs had, without doubt, betrayed his Heart. I asked him, but with a great deal of pain, (for I was quite choked) how far they reckoned from thence to *Paris*? How long Men had gone naked in *France*? and why they fled from me in so great Consternation? The Man I spoke to was an old tawny Fellow, who presently fell at my Feet, and with lifted-up Hands joyned behind his Head, opened his Mouth and shut his Eyes: He mumbled a long while between his Teeth, but I could not distinguish an articulate Word; so that I took his Language for the maffling[8] noise of a Dumb-man.

Some time after, I saw a Company of Souldiers marching, with Drums beating; and I perceived Two detached from the rest, to come and take speech of me. When they were come within hearing, I asked them, Where I was? "You are in *France*" answered they: "But what Devil hath put you into that Dress? And how comes it that we know you not? Is the Fleet then arrived? Are you going to carry the News of it to the Governor? And why have you divided your Brandy into so many Bottles?" To all this I made answer, That the Devil had not put me into that Dress: That they knew me not; because they could not know all Men: That I knew, nothing of the *Seine's* carrying Ships to *Paris*:

[8] Stammering, mumbling; a North of England word.

That I had no news for the *Marshal de l'Hospital*;[9] and that I was not loaded with Brandy. "Ho, ho," said they to me, taking me by the Arm, "you are a merry Fellow indeed; come, the Governor will make a shift to know you, no doubt on't."

They led me to their Company, where I learnt that I was in reality in *France*, but that it was in *New-France*: So that some time after, I was presented before the Governor, who asked me my Country, my Name and Quality; and after that I had satisfied him in all Points, and told him the pleasant Success of my Voyage, whether he believed it, or only pretended to do so, he had the goodness to order me a Chamber in his Apartment. I was very happy, in meeting with a Man capable of lofty Opinions, and who was not at all surprised when I told him that the Earth must needs have turned during my Elevation; seeing that having begun to mount about Two Leagues from *Paris*, I was fallen, as it were, by a perpendicular Line in *Canada*.

[9] Paul Lacroix, the editor of the French edition of Cyrano's works, not understanding this phrase, has ingeniously invented the interpretation of "quarantine officer" for it. Not only have the words never had this meaning, but they are evidently a proper name. And in fact *François de l'Hospital, Maréchal de France*, was Governor of Paris in 1649, the year when the *Voyage to the Moon* was probably written. Cyrano, thinking he has fallen in France, near Paris, and being asked if he carries news of the fleet to the Governor, naturally answers that he knows nothing of ships going to Paris, and that he carries no news to the Maréchal de l'Hospital.

CHAPTER III.
Of his Conversation with the Vice-Roy of New France; and of the system of this Universe

When I was going to Bed at night, he came into my Chamber, and spoke to me to this purpose: "I should not have come to disturb your Rest, had I not thought that one who hath found out the secret of Travelling so far in Twelve hours space, had likewise a charm against Lassitude. But you know not," added he, "what a pleasant Quarrel I have just now had with our Fathers, upon your account? They'll have you absolutely to be a Magician; and the greatest favour you can expect from them, is to be reckoned only an Impostor: The truth is, that Motion which you attribute to the Earth[10] is a pretty nice Paradox; and for my part I'll frankly tell you, That that which hinders me from being of your Opinion, is, That though you parted yesterday from *Paris*, yet you might have arrived today in this Country without the Earth's turning: For the Sun having drawn you up by the means of your Bottles, ought

[10] In connection with this discussion it is to be remembered that nearly two centuries were required for the Copernican system, promulgated in 1543, in the De orbium *coelestium revolutionibus*, to become generally popularized; and that in 1633, only sixteen years before the *Voyage to the Moon* was written, Galileo had been compelled by the Inquisition to deny the motion of the earth.

he not to have brought you hither; since according to *Ptolemy*, and the Modern Philosophers,[11] he marches obliquely, as you make the Earth to move? And besides, what great Probability have you to imagine, that the Sun is immoveable, when we see it go? And what appearance is there, that the Earth turns with so great Rapidity, when we feel it firm under our Feet?"

"Sir," replied I to him, "These are, in a manner, the Reasons that oblige us to think so: In the first place, it is consonant to common Sense to think that the Sun is placed in the Center of the Universe; seeing all Bodies in nature standing in need of that radical Heat, it is fit he should reside in the heart of the Kingdom, that he may be in a condition readily to supply the Necessities of every Part; and that the Cause of Generations should he placed in the middle of all Bodies, that it may act there with greater Equality and Ease: After the same manner as Wise Nature hath placed the Seeds in the Center of Apples, the Kernels in the middle of their Fruits; and in the same manner as the Onion, under the cover of so many Coats that encompass it, preserves that precious Bud from which Millions of others are to have their being. For an Apple is in itself a little Universe; the Seed, hotter than the other parts thereof, is its Sun, which diffuses about it self that natural Heat which preserves its Globe: And in the Onion, the Germ is the little Sun of that little World, which vivifies

[11] According to the Ptolemaic system, still generally accepted by "modern Philosophers" at the time of Cyrano's writing, the fixed stars, the sun, the moon, and each of the five (then known) planets, revolved about the earth in different orbits, according to various "epicycles" and "excentrics."

and nourishes the vegetative Salt of that little mass. Having laid down this, then, for a ground, I say, That the Earth standing in need of the Light, Heat, and Influence of this great Fire, it turns round it, that it may receive in all parts alike that Virtue which keeps it in Being. For it would be as ridiculous to think, that that vast luminous Body turned about a point that it has not the least need of; as to imagine, that when we see a roasted Lark, that the Kitchin-fire must have turned round it. Else, were it the part of the Sun to do that drudgery, it would seem that the Physician stood in need of the Patient; that the Strong should yield to the Weak; the Superior serve the Inferior; and that the Ship did not sail about the Land, but the Land about the Ship.

"Now if you cannot easily conceive how so ponderous a Body can move; Pray, tell me, are the Stars and Heavens, which, in your Opinion, are so solid, any way lighter? Besides, it is not so difficult for us, who are assured of the Roundness of the Earth, to infer its motion from its Figure: But why do ye suppose the Heaven to be round, seeing you cannot know it, and that yet, if it hath not this Figure, it is impossible it can move? I object not to you your *Excentricks* nor *Epicycles*,[12] which you cannot explain but very confusedly, and which are out of doors in my Systeme. Let's reflect only on the natural Causes of that Motion. To make good your Hypothesis, you are forced to have recourse to Spirits

[12] The motion of the moon, for instance, was explained in the Ptolemaic system as an epicycle carried by an excentric; the centre of the excentric moving about the earth in a direction opposite to that of the epicycle.

or *Intelligences*, that move and govern your Spheres. But for my part, without disturbing the repose of the supreme Being, who, without doubt, hath made Nature entirely perfect, and whose Wisdom ought so to have compleated her, that being perfect in one thing, she should not have been defective in another: I say, that the Beams and Influences of the Sun, darting Circularly upon the Earth, make it to turn as with a turn of the Hand we make a Globe to move; or, which is much the same, that the Steams which continually evaporate from that side of it which the Sun shines upon, being reverberated by the Cold of the middle Region, rebound upon it, and striking obliquely do of necessity make it whirle about in that manner.

"The Explication of the other Motions[13] is less perplexed still; for pray, consider a little" At these words the Vice-Roy interrupted me: "I had rather," said he, "you would excuse your self from that trouble; for I have read some Books of *Gassendus*[14] on that subject: And hear what one of our Fathers,

---

[13] The French has: "of the *two* other motions": *i. e.*, the movement of the fixed stars, and that of the planets.

[14] *Gassendus* or *Gassendi* was Cyrano's own teacher of Philosophy. Of Provençal origin, and at first Professor in the University of Aix, he came to Paris in 1641, and gave both private lessons and public courses as Professor of the Collège Royal. It was in one of his private classes that Cyrano was a fellow-student with Chapelle, Hesnaut, Bernier, and almost certainly Molière; the most important group of young "libertins" (*i. e.* free-thinkers) of the epoch.Gassendi was a bitter opponent of the supposedly Aristotelian school-philosophy of the time; and was on the whole the leader of those who in the seventeenth century followed Epicurean methods in thought. He is the author of a life of Epicurus, and an exposition of his philosophy. He was

who maintained your Opinion one day, answered me. 'Really,' said he, 'I fancy that the Earth does move, not for the Reasons alledged by *Copernicus*; but because Hell-fire being shut up in the Center of the Earth, the damned, who make a great bustle to avoid its Flames, scramble up to the Vault, as far as they can from them, and so make the Earth to turn, as a Turn-spit[15] makes the Wheel go round when he runs about in it.'"

We applauded that Thought, as being a pure effect of the Zeal of that good Father: And then the Vice-Roy told me, That he much wondered, how the Systeme of *Ptolemy*, being so improbable, should have been so universally received. "Sir," said I to him, "most part of Men, who judge of all things by the Senses, have suffered themselves to be perswaded by their Eyes; and as he who Sails along a Shoar thinks the Ship immoveable, and the Land in motion; even so Men turning with the Earth round the Sun have thought that it was the Sun that moved about them. To this may be added the unsupportable Pride of Mankind, who perswade themselves that Nature hath only been made for them; as if it were likely that the Sun, a vast Body Four hundred and thirty four times bigger than the Earth,[16] had only been

---

also an opponent of Descartes, being the most important contemporary supporter of empiricism as against the essentially idealistic method of Descartes.He is important also as a popularizer of the Copernican system, by his Life of Copernicus, and his *Institutio Astronomica* (1647).

[15] A dog trained to turn a spit, by running about in a rotary cage attached to it. The French has simply: "as a *dog* makes a wheel turn, when he runs about in it."

[16] Cyrano had probably learned this from his master Gassendi. *Cf*. his "Epistola XX.

kindled to ripen their Medlars and plumpen their Cabbage.

"For my part, I am so far from complying with their Insolence, that I believe the Planets are Worlds about the Sun, and that the fixed Stars are also Suns which have Planets about them, that's to say, Worlds, which because of their smallness, and that their borrowed light cannot reach us, are not discernable by Men in this World: For in good earnest, how can it be imagined that such spacious Globes are no more but vast Desarts; and that ours, because we live in it, hath been framed for the habitation of a dozen of proud Dandyprats? How, must it be said, because the Sun measures our Days and Years, that it hath only been made to keep us from running our Heads against the Walls? No, no, if that visible Deity shine upon Man, it's by accident, as the King's Flamboy by accident lightens a Porter that walks along the Street."

"But," said he to me, "[if,] as you affirm, the fixed Stars be so many Suns, it will follow that the World is infinite; seeing it is probable that the People of that World which moves about that fixed Star you take for a Sun, discover above themselves other fixed Stars, which we cannot perceive from hence, and so others in that manner *in infinitum*."

"Never question," replied I, "but as God could create the Soul Immortal, He could also make the World Infinite; if so it be, that Eternity is nothing else but an illimited Duration, and an infinite,

---

de apparente magnitudine solis," 1641. Modern Gassendis say the sun is 1,300,000 times greater than the earth in volume, 316,000 times in mass.

a boundless Extension: And then God himself would be Finite, supposing the World not to be *infinite*; seeing he cannot be where nothing is, and that he could not encrease the greatness of the World without adding somewhat to his own Being, by beginning to exist where he did not exist before. We must believe then, that as from hence we see *Saturn* and *Jupiter*; if we were in either of the Two, we should discover a great many Worlds which we perceive not; and that the Universe extends so *in infinitum*."

"I' faith;" replied he, "when you have said all you can, I cannot at all comprehend that Infinitude." "Good now," replied I to him, "do you comprehend the Nothing that is beyond it? Not at all. For when you think of that *Nothing*, you imagine it at least to be like Wind or Air, and that is a Being: But if you conceive not an *Infinite* in general, you comprehend it at least in particulars; seeing it is not difficult to fancy to our selves, beyond the Earth, Air, and Fire which we see, other Air, and other Earth, and other Fire. Now Infinitude is nothing else but a boundless Series of all these. But if you ask me, How these Worlds have been made, seeing Holy Scripture speaks only of one that God made? My answer is, That I have no more to say: For to oblige me to give a Reason for every thing that comes into my Imagination, is to stop my Mouth, and make me confess that in things of that nature my Reason shall always stoop to Faith."

He ingeniously[17] acknowledged to me that his Question was to be censured, but bid me pursue my notion: So that I went

[17] *Ingenuously*. The two words were interchangeable in the seventeenth century.

on, and told him, That all the other Worlds, which are not seen, or but imperfectly believed, are no more but the Scum that purges out of the Suns. For how could these great Fires subsist without some matter, that served them for Fewel? Now as the Fire drives from it the Ashes that would stifle it, or the Gold in a Crucible separates from the Marcasite[18] and Dross, and is refined to the highest Standard; nay, and as our Stomack discharges it self by vomit, of the Crudities that oppress it; even so these Suns daily evacuate, and reject the Remains of matter that might incommode their Fire: But when they have wholly consumed that matter which entertains[19] them; you are not to doubt, but they spread themselves abroad on all sides to seek for fresh Fewel, and fasten upon the Worlds which heretofore they have made, and particularly upon those that are nearest: Then these great Fires, reconcocting all the Bodies, will as formerly force them out again, Pell-mell, from all parts; and being by little and little purified, they'll begin to serve for Suns to other little Worlds, which they procreate by driving them out of their Spheres: And that without doubt, made the *Pythagoreans* foretel the universal Conflagration.

"This is no ridiculous Imagination, for *New-France* where we are, gives us a very convincing instance of it. The vast Continent of *America* is one half of the Earth, which in spight of our

---

[18] Iron pyrites.

[19] *Supports, feeds*; cf. Shakspere, *Richard III*."I'll be at charges for a looking-glass,And entertain a score or two of tailors."

Predecessors, who a Thousand times had cruised the Ocean, was not at that time discovered: Nor, indeed, was it then in being, no more than a great many Islands, Peninsules, and Mountains that have since started up in our Globe, when the Sun purged out its Excrements to a convenient distance, and of a sufficient Gravity to be attracted by the Center of our World; either in small Particles, perhaps, or, it may be also, altogether in one lump. That is not so unreasonable but that *St. Austin*[20] would have applauded to it, if that Country had been discovered in his Age. Seeing that great Man, who had a very clear Wit, assures us, That in his time the Earth was flat like the floor of an Oven, and that it floated upon the Water, like the half of an Orange: But if ever I have the honour to see you in *France*, I'll make you observe, by means of a most excellent Celescope, that some Obscurities, which from hence appear to be Spots, are Worlds a forming."

My Eyes that shut with this Discourse, obliged the Vice-Roy to withdraw.

[20] St. Augustine.

CHAPTER IV.
Of how at last he set out again for the Moon, tho without his own Will

Next Day, and the Days following, we had some Discourses to the same purpose: But some time after, since the hurry of Affairs suspended our Philosophy, I fell afresh upon the design of mounting up to the Moon.

So soon as she was up, I walked about musing in the Woods, how I might manage and succeed in my Enterprise; and at length on St. John's[21] Eve, when they were at Council in the Fort, whether they should assist the Wild Natives of the Country against the *Iroqueans*; I went all alone to the top of a little Hill at the back of our Habitation, where I put in Practice what you shall hear. I had made a Machine which I fancied might carry me up as high as I pleased, so that nothing seeming to be wanting to it, I placed my self within, and from the Top of a Rock threw my self in the Air: But because I had not taken my measures aright, I fell with a sosh in the Valley below.

Bruised as I was, however, I returned to my Chamber without loosing courage, and with Beef-Marrow I anointed my Body, for I was all over mortified from Head to Foot: Then having taken a

[21] The Feast of St. John the Baptist, June 24.

dram of Cordial Waters to strengthen my Heart, I went back to look for my Machine; but I could not find it, for some Soldiers, that had been sent into the Forest to cut wood for a Bonnefire, meeting with it by chance, had carried it with them to the Fort: Where after a great deal of guessing what it might be, when they had discovered the invention of the Spring, some said, that a good many Fire-Works should be fastened to it, because their Force carrying them up on high, and the Machine playing its large Wings, no Body but would take it for a Fiery Dragon. In the mean time I was long in search of it, but found it at length in the Market-place of Kebeck (Quebec), just as they were setting Fire to it. I was so transported with Grief, to find the Work of my Hands in so great Peril, that I ran to the Souldier that was giving Fire to it, caught hold of his Arm, pluckt the Match out of his Hand, and in great rage threw my self into my Machine, that I might undo the Fire-Works that they had stuck about it; but I came too late, for hardly were both my Feet within, when whip, away went I up in a Cloud.

The Horror and Consternation I was in did not so confound the faculties of my Soul, but I have since remembered all that happened to me at that instant. For so soon as the Flame had devoured one tier of Squibs, which were ranked by six and six, by means of a Train that reached every half-dozen, another tier went off, and then another;[22] so that the Salt-Peter taking Fire,

[22] *Cf*. the play of *Cyrano de Bergerac*, act III., scene xi.: "Or else, mechanic as well as artificer, I could have fashioned a giant grasshopper, with steel joints, which,

put off the danger by encreasing it. However, all the combustible matter being spent, there was a period put to the Fire-work; and whilst I thought of nothing less than to knock my Head against the top of some Mountain, I felt, without the least stirring, my elevation continuing; and adieu Machine, for I saw it fall down again towards the Earth.

That extraordinary Adventure puffed up my Heart with so uncommon a Gladness; that, ravished to see my self delivered from certain danger, I had the impudence to philosophize upon it. Whilst then with Eyes and Thought I cast about to find what might be the cause of it, I perceived my flesh blown up, and still greasy with the Marrow, that I had daubed my self over with for the Bruises of my fall: I knew that the Moon being then in the Wain, and that it being usual for her in that Quarter to suck up the Marrow of Animals, she drank up that wherewith I was anointed, with so much the more force that her Globe was nearer to me, and that no interposition of Clouds weakened her Attraction.[23]

When I had, according to the computation I made since, advanced a good deal more than three quarters of the space that divided the Earth from the Moon; all of a sudden I fell with my Heels up and Head down, though I had made no Trip; and indeed, I had not been sensible of it, had not I felt my Head loaded under

---

impelled by successive explosions of saltpetre, would have hopped with me to the azure meadows where graze the starry flocks."

[23] *Cf*., in the play, the fifth of Cyrano's means for scaling the sky: "Since Phoebe, the moon-goddess, when she is at wane, is greedy, O beeves! of your marrow… with that marrow have besmeared myself!"

the weight of my Body: The truth is, I knew very well that I was not falling again towards our World; for though I found my self to be betwixt two Moons, and easily observed, that the nearer I drew to the one, the farther I removed from the other; yet I was certain, that ours was the bigger Globe of the two: Because after one or two days Journey, the remote Refractions of the Sun, confounding the diversity of Bodies and Climates, it appeared to me only as a large Plate of Gold: That made me imagine, that I byassed[24] towards the Moon; and I was confirmed in that Opinion, when I began to call to mind, that I did not fall till I was past three quarters of the way. For, said I to my self, that Mass being less than ours, the Sphere of its Activity must be of less Extent also; and by consequence, it was later before I felt the force of its Center.

[24] The translator has apparently misread *biaisais* where the French editions have *baissais*: *i. e.*, I *was descending* toward the moon.

CHAPTER V.
Of his Arrival there, and of the Beauty of that Country in which he fell

In fine, after I had been a very long while in falling, as I judged, for the violence of my Precipitation hindered me from observing it more exactly: The last thing I can remember is, that I found my self under a Tree, entangled with three or four pretty large Branches which I had broken off by my fall; and my face besmeared with an Apple, that had dashed against it.

By good luck that place was, as you shall know by and by * * * * * *[25] that you may very well conclude, that had it not been for

---

[25] "That place was," unquestionably, the Garden of Eden, which Cyrano heretically locates in the Moon; and the "Tree" turough which he has fallen, and an "Apple" of which has besmeared his face and recalled him to life, is the Tree of Life, that stood "in the midst of the garden."This is the first of a series of hiatuses, which occur in all the French editions as well as the English, and which are marked by those stars that Cyrano refers to in the play: "But I intend setting all this down in a book, and the golden stars I have brought back caught in my shaggy mantle, when the book is printed, will be seen serving as asterisks."Lebret speaks of these gaps in his preface, saying he would have tried to fill them but for fear of mixing his style with Cyrano's: "For the melancholy colour of my style will not let me imitate the gayety of his; nor can my Wit follow the fine flights of his Imagination."It seems altogether improbable, however, that Cyrano himself left the work thus incomplete, as Lebret would imply. And in fact we can supply from a Manuscript recently acquired (1890) by the *Bibliothèque Nationale*, a long passage not printed by Lebret (see pp. 60 ff.). There can be little doubt that the passages were deliberately *cut out* by some one on account of their

that Chance, if I had had a thousand lives, they had been all lost. I have many times since reflected upon the vulgar Opinion, That if one precipitate himself from a very high place, his breath is out before he reach the ground; and from my adventure I conclude it to be false, or else that the efficacious Juyce of that Fruit,[26] which squirted into my mouth, must needs have recalled my soul, that was not far from my Carcass, which was still hot and in a disposition of exerting the Functions of Life. The truth is, so soon as I was upon the ground my pain was gone, before I could think what it was; and the Hunger, which I felt during my Voyage, was fully satisfied with the sense that I had lost it.[27]

"heretical" character. It even seems probable, from passages at the beginning of the *Voyage to the Sun*, that when the work was circulated in Manuscript, Cyrano had been the object of persecution on account of them.The passages lacking were cut out then but by whom? The usually accepted opinion is that of our English translator, who says the gaps are "occasioned, not by the Negligence of our Witty French Author, but by the accursed Plagiary of some rude Hand, that in his sickness rifted his Trunks and stole his Papers, as he himself complains." M. Brun has suggested, however, and with some plausibility, that Lebret himself was responsible for the omissions; and that he thus continued, after Cyrano's death, his lifelong attempts at reforming and toning down the impolitic, unorthodox notions of his too-independent friend. So Cyrano was conquered once more in his battle with "les Compromis, les Préjugés, les Lâchètes," and finally "la Sottise":"Je sais bien qu' à la fin vous me mettrez à bas;N'importe! je me bats, je me bats, je me bats!"We are proud of printing for the first time in any edition of the *Voyage to the Moon*, at least a part of what had been cut out; and of being able to indicate for the first time what must have been the substance of the other lost passages, and what is the sense of the fragments preserved.

[26] The Apple of the Tree of Life.

[27] The translation is not fully adequate here; the French means: "… was fully satisfied, and left me in its place only a slight memory of having lost it."

When I was got up, I had hardly taken notice of the largest of Four great Rivers, which by their conflux make a Lake; when the Spirit, or invisible Soul, of Plants that breath upon that Country, refreshed my Brain with a delightful smell: And I found that the Stones there were neither hard nor rough; but that they carefully softened themselves when one trode upon them.

[28] I presently lighted upon a Walk with five Avenues, in figure like to a Star; the Trees whereof seemed to reach up to the Skie, a green plot of lofty Boughs: Casting up my Eyes from the root to the top, and then making the same Survey downwards, I was in doubt whether the Earth carried them, or they the Earth, hanging by their Roots: Their high and stately Forehead seemed also to bend, as it were by force, under the weight of the Celestial Globes; and one would say, that their Sighs and out-stretched Arms, wherewith they embraced the Firmament, demanded of the Stars the bounty of their purer Influences before they had lost any thing of their Innocence in the contagious Bed of the Elements. The Flowers there on all hands, without the aid of any other Gardiner but Nature, send out so sweet (though wild) a Perfume, that it rouzes and delights the Smell: There the incarnate of a Rose upon the Bush, and the lively Azure of a Violet under the Rushes, captivating the Choice, make each of themselves to be judged the Fairest: There the whole Year

[28] This beautiful Nature-description, the like of which cannot be found in all seventeenth-century French literature outside of Cyrano's works, was apparently his favorite passage, since it is the only one he has used twice. *Cf*. his *Lettre XI*., "D'une maison de campagne."

is Spring; there no poysonous Plant sprouts forth, but is as soon destroyed; there the Brooks by an agreeable murmuring, relate their Travels to the Pebbles; there Thousands of Quiristers make the Woods resound with their melodious Notes; and the quavering Clubs of these divine Musicians are so universal, that every Leaf of the Forest seems to have borrowed the Tongue and shape of a Nightingale; nay, and the Nymph *Eccho* is so delightful[29] with their Airs, that to hear her repeat, one would say, She were sollicitous to learn them. On the sides of that Wood are Two Meadows, whose continued Verdure seems an Emerauld reaching out of sight. The various Colours, which the Spring bestows upon the numerous little Flowers that grow there, so delightfully confounds and mingles their Shadows, that it is hard to be known, whether these Flowers shaken with a gentle Breeze pursue themselves, or fly rather from the Caresses of the Wanton *Zephyrus*; one would likewise take that Meadow for an Ocean, because, as the Sea, it presents no Shoar to the view; insomuch, that mine Eye fearing it might lose it self, having roamed so long, and discovered no Coast, sent my Thoughts presently thither; and my Thoughts, imagining it to be the end of the World, were willing to be perswaded, that such charming places had perhaps forced the Heavens to descend and join the Earth there. In the midst of that vast and pleasant Carpet, a rustick Fountain bubbles up in Silver Purles, crowning its enamelled Banks with Sets of Violets, and multitudes of other little Flowers, that seem to strive

[29] In the literal sense, *full of delight*, delighted.

which shall first behold it self in that Chrystal Myrroir: It is as yet in the Cradle, being but newly Born, and its Young and smooth Face shews not the least Wrinkle. The large Compasses it fetches, in circling within it self, demonstrate its unwillingness to leave its native Soyl: And as if it had been ashamed to be caressed in presence of its Mother, with a Murmuring it thrust back my hand that would have touched it: The Beasts that came to drink there, more rational than those of our World, seemed surprised to see it day upon the Horizon, whilst the Sun was with the *Antipodes*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.