

# VOLTAIRE

A PHILOSOPHICAL  
DICTIONARY, VOLUME  
03

**Voltaire**  
**A Philosophical**  
**Dictionary, Volume 03**

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*A Philosophical Dictionary, Volume 03:*

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# François-Marie Arouet (AKA Voltaire) A Philosophical Dictionary, Volume 03

## CANNIBALS

### SECTION I

We have spoken of love. It is hard to pass from people *kissing* to people *eating* one another. It is, however, but too true that there have been cannibals. We have found them in America; they are, perhaps, still to be found; and the Cyclops were not the only individuals in antiquity who sometimes fed on human flesh. Juvenal relates that among the Egyptians – that wise people, so renowned for their laws – those pious worshippers of crocodiles and onions – the Tentyrites ate one of their enemies who had fallen into their hands. He does not tell this tale on hearsay; the crime was committed almost before his eyes; he was then in Egypt, and not far from Tentyra. On this occasion he quotes the Gascons and the Saguntines, who formerly fed on the flesh of

their countrymen.

In 1725 four savages were brought from the Mississippi to Fontainebleau, with whom I had the honor of conversing. There was among them a lady of the country, whom I asked if she had eaten men; she answered, with great simplicity that she had. I appeared somewhat scandalized; on which she excused herself by saying that it was better to eat one's dead enemy than to leave him to be devoured by wild beasts, and that the conquerors deserved to have the preference. We kill our neighbors in battles, or skirmishes; and, for the meanest consideration, provide meals for the crows and the worms. There is the horror; there is the crime. What matters it, when a man is dead, whether he is eaten by a soldier, or by a dog and a crow?

We have more respect for the dead than for the living. It would be better to respect both the one and the other. The nations called polished have done right in not putting their vanquished enemies on the spit; for if we were allowed to eat our neighbors, we should soon eat our countrymen, which would be rather unfortunate for the social virtues. But polished nations have not always been so; they were all for a long time savage; and, in the infinite number of revolutions which this globe has undergone, mankind have been sometimes numerous and sometimes scarce. It has been with human beings as it now is with elephants, lions, or tigers, the race of which has very much decreased. In times when a country was but thinly inhabited by men, they had few arts; they were hunters. The custom of eating what they had killed easily led

them to treat their enemies like their stags and their boars. It was superstition that caused human victims to be immolated; it was necessity that caused them to be eaten.

Which is the greater crime – to assemble piously together to plunge a knife into the heart of a girl adorned with fillets, or to eat a worthless man who has been killed in our own defence?

Yet we have many more instances of girls and boys sacrificed than of girls and boys eaten. Almost every nation of which we know anything has sacrificed boys and girls. The Jews immolated them. This was called *the Anathema*; it was a real sacrifice; and in Leviticus it is ordained that the living souls which shall be devoted shall not be spared; but it is not in any manner prescribed that they shall be eaten; this is only threatened. Moses tells the Jews that unless they observe his ceremonies they shall not only have the itch, but the mothers shall eat their children. It is true that in the time of Ezekiel the Jews must have been accustomed to eat human flesh; for, in his thirty-ninth chapter, he foretells to them that God will cause them to eat, not only the horses of their enemies, but moreover the horsemen and the rest of the warriors. And, indeed, why should not the Jews have been cannibals? It was the only thing wanting to make the people of God the most abominable people upon earth.

## SECTION II

In the essay on the "Manners and Spirit of Nations" we

read the following singular passage: "Herrera assures us that the Mexicans ate the human victims whom they immolated. Most of the first travellers and missionaries say that the Brazilians, the Caribbees, the Iroquois, the Hurons, and some other tribes, ate their captives taken in war; and they do not consider this as the practice of some individuals alone, but as a national usage. So many writers, ancient and modern, have spoken of cannibals, that it is difficult to deny their existence. A hunting people, like the Brazilians or the Canadians, not always having a certain subsistence, may sometimes become cannibals. Famine and revenge accustomed them to this kind of food; and while in the most civilized ages we see the people of Paris devouring the bleeding remains of Marshal d'Ancre, and the people of The Hague eating the heart of the grand pensionary, De Witt, we ought not to be surprised that a momentary outrage among us has been continual among savages.

"The most ancient books we have leave no room to doubt that hunger has driven men to this excess. The prophet Ezekiel, according to some commentators, promises to the Hebrews from God that if they defend themselves well against the king of Persia, they shall eat of 'the flesh of horses and of mighty men.'

"Marco Polo says that in his time in a part of Tartary the magicians or priests – it was the same thing – had the privilege of eating the flesh of criminals condemned to death. All this is shocking to the feelings; but the picture of humanity must often have the same effect.

"How can it have been that nations constantly separated from one another have united in so horrible a custom? Must we believe that it is not so absolutely opposed to human nature as it appears to be? It is certain that it has been rare, but it is equally certain that it has existed. It is not known that the Tartars and the Jews often ate their fellow creatures. During the sieges of Sancerre and Paris, in our religious wars, hunger and despair compelled mothers to feed on the flesh of their children. The charitable Las Casas, bishop of Chiapa, says that this horror was committed in America, only by some nations among whom he had not travelled. Dampierre assures us that he never met with cannibals; and at this day there are not, perhaps, any tribes which retain this horrible custom."

Americus Vespucius says in one of his letters that the Brazilians were much astonished when he made them understand that for a long time the Europeans had not eaten their prisoners of war.

According to Juvenal's fifteenth satire, the Gascons and the Spaniards had been guilty of this barbarity. He himself witnessed a similar abomination in Egypt during the consulate of Junius. A quarrel happening between the inhabitants of Tentyra and those of Ombi, they fought; and an Ombian having fallen into the hands of the Tentyrians, they had him cooked, and ate him, all but the bare bones. But he does not say that this was the usual custom; on the contrary, he speaks of it as an act of more than ordinary fury.

The Jesuit Charlevoix, whom I knew very well, and who was



a man of great veracity, gives us clearly to understand in his "History of Canada," in which country he resided thirty years, that all the nations of northern America were cannibals; since he remarks, as a thing very extraordinary, that in 1711 the Acadians did not eat men.

The Jesuit Brebeuf relates that in 1640 the first Iroquois that was converted, having unfortunately got drunk with brandy, was taken by the Hurons, then at war with the Iroquois. The prisoner, baptized by Father Brebeuf by the name of Joseph, was condemned to death. He was put to a thousand tortures, which he endured, singing all the while, according to the custom of his country. They finished by cutting off a foot, a hand, and lastly his head; after which the Hurons put all the members into a cauldron, each one partook of them, and a piece was offered to Father Brebeuf.

Charlevoix speaks in another place of twenty-two Hurons eaten by the Iroquois. It cannot, then, be doubted, that in more countries than one, human nature has reached this last pitch of horror; and this execrable custom must be of the highest antiquity; for we see in the Holy Scriptures that the Jews were threatened with eating their children if they did not obey their laws. The Jews are told not only that they shall have the itch, and that their wives shall give themselves up to others, but also that they shall eat their sons and daughters in anguish and devastation; that they shall contend with one another for the eating of their children; and that the husband will not give to his wife a morsel

of her son, because, he will say, he has hardly enough for himself.

Some very bold critics do indeed assert that the Book of Deuteronomy was not composed until after the siege of Samaria by Benhadad, during which, it is said in the Second Book of Kings, that mothers ate their children. But these critics, in considering Deuteronomy as a book written after the siege of Samaria, do but verify this terrible occurrence. Others assert that it could not happen as it is related in the Second Book of Kings. It is there said: "And as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall [of Samaria], there cried a woman unto him, saying, 'Help, my lord, O king.' And he said, 'If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee? out of the barn floor? or out of the wine-press?' And the king said unto her, 'What aileth thee?' And she answered, 'This woman said unto me, give thy son, that we may eat him to-day, and we shall eat my son to-morrow. So we boiled my son, and did eat him; and I said unto her on the next day, 'Give thy son, that we may eat him,' and she hath hid her son.'"

These censors assert that it is not likely that while King Benhadad was besieging Samaria, King Joram passed quietly by the wall, or upon the wall, to settle differences between Samaritan women. It is still less likely that one child should not have satisfied two women for two days. There must have been enough to feed them for four days at least. But let these critics reason as they may, we must believe that fathers and mothers ate their children during the siege of Samaria, since it is expressly

foretold in Deuteronomy. The same thing happened at the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar; and this, too, was foretold by Ezekiel.

Jeremiah exclaims, in his "Lamentations": "Shall the women eat their fruit, and children of a span long?" And in another place: "The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children." Here may be added the words of Baruch: "Man has eaten the flesh of his son and of his daughter."

This horror is repeated so often that it cannot but be true. Lastly, we know the story related in Josephus, of the woman who fed on the flesh of her son when Titus was besieging Jerusalem. The book attributed to Enoch, cited by St. Jude, says that the giants born from the commerce of the angels with the daughters of men were the first cannibals.

In the eighth homily attributed to St. Clement, St. Peter, who is made to speak in it, says that these same giants quenched their thirst with human blood and ate the flesh of their fellow creatures. Hence resulted, adds the author, maladies until then unknown; monsters of all kinds sprung up on the earth; and then it was that God resolved to drown all human kind. All this shows us how universal was the reigning opinion of the existence of cannibals.

What St. Peter is made to say in St. Clement's homily has a palpable affinity with the story of Lycaon, one of the oldest of Greek fables, and which we find in the first book of Ovid's "Metamorphoses."

The "Relations of the Indies and China," written in the eighth century by two Arabs, and translated by the Abbé Renaudot, is not a book to which implicit credit should be attached; far from it; but we must not reject all these two travellers say, especially when their testimony is corroborated by that of other authors who have merited some belief. They tell us that there are in the Indian Sea islands peopled with blacks who ate men; they call these islands Ramni.

Marco Polo, who had not read the works of these two Arabs, says the same thing four hundred years after them. Archbishop Navarette, who was afterwards a voyager in the same seas, confirms this account: "*Los Europeos que cogen, es constante que vivos se los van comiendo.*"

Texeira asserts that the people of Java ate human flesh, which abominable custom they had not left off more than two hundred years before his time. He adds that they did not learn milder manners until they embraced Mahometanism.

The same thing has been said of the people of Pegu, of the Kaffirs, and of several other African nations. Marco Polo, whom we have just now cited, says that in some Tartar hordes, when a criminal had been condemned to death they made a meal of him: "*Hanno costoro un bestiale e orribile costume, che quando alcuno e guidicato a morte, lo tolgono, e cuocono, e mangian' selo.*"

What is more extraordinary and incredible is that the two Arabs attributed to the Chinese what Marco Polo says of some of the Tartars: that, "in general, the Chinese eat all who have been

killed." This abomination is so repugnant to Chinese manners, that it cannot be believed. Father Parennin has refuted it by saying that it is unworthy of refutation.

It must, however, be observed that the eighth century, the time when these Arabs wrote their travels, was one of those most disastrous to the Chinese. Two hundred thousand Tartars passed the great wall, plundered Pekin, and everywhere spread the most horrible desolation. It is very likely that there was then a great famine, for China was as populous as it is now; and some poor creatures among the lowest of the people might eat dead bodies. What interest could these Arabians have in inventing so disgusting a fable? Perhaps they, like most other travellers, took a particular instance for a national custom.

Not to go so far for examples, we have one in our own country, in the very province in which I write; it is attested by our conqueror, our master, Julius Cæsar. He was besieging Alexia, in the Auxois. The besieged being resolved to defend themselves to the last extremity, and wanting provisions, a great council was assembled, in which one of the chiefs, named Critognatus, proposed that the children should be eaten one after another to sustain the strength of the combatants. His proposal was carried by a majority of voices. Nor is this all; Critognatus in his harangue tells them that their ancestors had had recourse to the same kind of sustenance in the war with the Cimbri and Teutones.

We will conclude with the testimony of Montaigne. Speaking

of what was told him by the companions of Villegagnon, returned from Brazil, and of what he had seen in France, he certifies that the Brazilians ate their enemies killed in war, but mark what follows: "Is it more barbarous to eat a man when dead than to have him roasted by a slow fire, or torn to pieces by dogs and swine, as is yet fresh in our memories – and that not between ancient enemies, but among neighbors and fellow-citizens – and, which is worse, on pretence of piety and religion?" What a question for a philosopher like Montaigne! Then, if Anacreon and Tibullus had been Iroquois, they would have eaten men! Alas! alas!

### SECTION III

Well; two Englishmen have sailed round the world. They have discovered that New Holland is an island larger than Europe, and that men still eat one another there, as in New Zealand. Whence come this race? supposing that they exist. Are they descended from the ancient Egyptians, from the ancient people of Ethiopia, from the Africans, from the Indians – or from the vultures, or the wolves? What a contrast between Marcus Aurelius, or Epictetus, and the cannibals of New Zealand! Yet they have the same organs, they are alike human beings. We have already treated on this property of the human race; it may not be amiss to add another paragraph.

The following are St. Jerome's own words in one of his letters:

*"Quid loquar de cæteris nationibus, quum ipse adolescentulus in Gallia viderim Scotos, gentem Britannicam, humanis vesci carnibus, et quum per silvas porcorum greges pecudumque reperiant, tamen pastorum nates et fæminarum papillas solere abscindere et has solas ciborum delicias arbitrari?"*— What shall I say of other nations; when I myself, when young, have seen Scotchmen in Gaul, who, though they might have fed on swine and other animals of the forest, chose rather to cut off the posteriors of the youths and the breasts of the young women, and considered them as the most delicious food."

Pelloutier, who sought for everything that might do honor to the Celts, took the pains to contradict Jerome, and to maintain that his credulity had been imposed on. But Jerome speaks very gravely, and of what he *saw*. We may, with deference, dispute with a father of the church about what he has heard; but to doubt of what he has *seen* is going very far. After all, the safest way is to doubt of everything, even of what we have seen ourselves.

One word more on cannibalism. In a book which has had considerable success among the well-disposed we find the following, or words to the same effect: "In Cromwell's time a woman who kept a tallow chandler's shop in Dublin sold excellent candles, made of the fat of Englishmen. After some time one of her customers complained that the candles were not so good. 'Sir,' said the woman, 'it is because we are short of Englishmen.'"

I ask which were the most guilty – those who assassinated the English, or the poor woman who made candles of their fat? And

further, I ask which was the greatest crime – to have Englishmen cooked for dinner, or to use their tallow to give light at supper? It appears to me that the great evil is the being killed; it matters little to us whether, after death, we are roasted on the spit or are made into candles. Indeed, no well-disposed man can be unwilling to be useful when he is dead.



## CASTING (IN METAL)

There is not an ancient fable, not an old absurdity which some simpleton will not revive, and that in a magisterial tone, if it be but authorized by some classical or theological writer.

Lycophron (if I remember rightly) relates that a horde of robbers who had been justly condemned in Ethiopia by King Actisanes to lose their ears and noses, fled to the cataracts of the Nile and from thence penetrated into the Sandy Desert, where they at length built the temple of Jupiter Ammon.

Lycophron, and after him Theopompus, tells us that these banditti, reduced to extreme want, having neither shoes, nor clothes, nor utensils, nor bread, bethought themselves of raising a statue of gold to an Egyptian god. This statue was ordered one evening and made in the course of the night. A member of the university much attached to Lycophron and the Ethiopian robbers asserts that nothing was more common in the venerable ages of antiquity than to cast a statue of gold in one night, and afterwards throw it into a fire to reduce it to an impalpable powder, in order to be swallowed by a whole people.

But where did these poor devils, without breeches, find so much gold? "What, sir!" says the man of learning, "do you forget that they had stolen enough to buy all Africa and that their daughters' earrings alone were worth nine millions five hundred thousand livres of our currency?"

Be it so. But for casting a statue a little preparation is necessary. M. Le Moine employed nearly two years in casting that of Louis XV. "Oh! but this Jupiter Ammon was at most but three feet high. Go to any pewterer; will he not make you half a dozen plates in a day?"

Sir, a statue of Jupiter is harder to make than pewter plates, and I even doubt whether your thieves had wherewith to make plates so quickly, clever as they might be at pilfering. It is not very likely that they had the necessary apparatus; they had more need to provide themselves with meal. I respect Lycophron much, but this profound Greek and his yet more profound commentators know so little of the arts – they are so learned in all that is useless, and so ignorant in all that concerns the necessities and conveniences of life, professions, trades, and daily occupations that we will take this opportunity of informing them how a metal figure is cast. This is an operation which they will find neither in Lycophron, nor in Manetho, nor even in St. Thomas's dream.

I omit many other preparations which the encyclopædists, especially M. Diderot, have explained much better than I could do, in the work which must immortalize their glory as well as all the arts. But to form a clear idea of the process of this art the artist must be seen at work. No one can ever learn in a book to weave stockings, nor to polish diamonds, nor to work tapestry. Arts and trades are learned only by example and practice.

# CATO

## ON SUICIDE, AND THE ABBE ST. CYRAN'S BOOK LEGITIMATING SUICIDE

The ingenious La Motte says of Cato, in one of his philosophical rather than poetical odes:

*Caton, d'une âme plus égale,  
Sous l'heureux vainqueur de Pharsale,  
Eût souffert que Rome pliât;  
Mais, incapable de se rendre,  
Il n'eut pas la force d'attendre  
Un pardon qui l'humiliât.*

Stern Cato, with more equal soul,  
Had bowed to Cæsar's wide control —  
With Rome had to the conqueror bowed —  
But that his spirit, rough and proud,  
Had not the courage to await  
A pardoned foe's too humbling fate.

It was, I believe, because Cato's soul was always equal, and retained to the last its love for his country and her laws that he chose rather to perish with her than to crouch to the tyrant. He

died as he had lived. Incapable of surrendering! And to whom? To the enemy of Rome – to the man who had forcibly robbed the public treasury in order to make war upon his fellow-citizens and enslave them by means of their own money. A pardoned foe! It seems as if La Motte-Houdart were speaking of some revolted subject who might have obtained his majesty's pardon by letters in chancery.

It seems rather absurd to say that Cato slew himself through weakness. None but a strong mind can thus surmount the most powerful instinct of nature. This strength is sometimes that of frenzy, but a frantic man is not weak.

Suicide is forbidden amongst us by the canon law. But the decretals, which form the jurisprudence of a part of Europe, were unknown to Cato, to Brutus, to Cassius, to the sublime Arria, to the Emperor Otho, to Mark Antony, and the rest of the heroes of true Rome, who preferred a voluntary death to a life which they believed to be ignominious.

We, too, kill ourselves, but it is when we have lost our money, or in the very rare excess of foolish passion for an unworthy object. I have known women kill themselves for the most stupid men imaginable. And sometimes we kill ourselves when we are in bad health, which action is a real weakness.

Disgust with our own existence, weariness of ourselves is a malady which is likewise a cause of suicide. The remedy is a little exercise, music, hunting, the play, or an agreeable woman. The man who, in a fit of melancholy, kills himself to-day, would have

wished to live had he waited a week.

I was almost an eye-witness of a suicide which deserves the attention of all cultivators of physical science. A man of a serious profession, of mature age, of regular conduct, without passions, and above indigence, killed himself on Oct. 17, 1769, and left to the town council of the place where he was born, a written apology for his voluntary death, which it was thought proper not to publish lest it should encourage men to quit a life of which so much ill is said. Thus far there is nothing extraordinary; such instances are almost every day to be met with. The astonishing part of the story is this:

His brother and his father had each killed himself at the same age. What secret disposition of organs, what sympathy, what concurrence of physical laws, occasions a father and his two sons to perish by their own hands, and by the same kind of death, precisely when they have attained such a year? Is it a disease which unfolds itself successively in the different members of a family – as we often see fathers and children die of smallpox, consumption, or any other complaint? Three or four generations have become deaf or blind, gouty or scorbutic, at a predetermined period.

Physical organization, of which moral is the offspring, transmits the same character from father to son through a succession of ages. The Appii were always haughty and inflexible, the Catos always severe. The whole line of the Guises were bold, rash, factious; compounded of the most insolent pride,

and the most seductive politeness. From Francis de Guise to him who alone and in silence went and put himself at the head of the people of Naples, they were all, in figure, in courage, and in turn of mind, above ordinary men. I have seen whole length portraits of Francis de Guise, of the Balafré, and of his son: they are all six feet high, with the same features, the same courage and boldness in the forehead, the eye, and the attitude.

This continuity, this series of beings alike is still more observable in animals, and if as much care were taken to perpetuate fine races of men as some nations still take to prevent the mixing of the breeds of their horses and hounds the genealogy would be written in the countenance and displayed in the manners. There have been races of crooked and of six-fingered people, as we see red-haired, thick-lipped, long-nosed, and flat-nosed races.

But that nature should so dispose the organs of a whole race that at a certain age each individual of that family will have a passion for self-destruction – this is a problem which all the sagacity of the most attentive anatomists cannot resolve. The effect is certainly all physical, but it belongs to occult physics. Indeed, what principle is not occult?

We are not informed, nor is it likely that in, the time of Cæsar and the emperors the inhabitants of Great Britain killed themselves as deliberately as they now do, when they have the vapors which they denominate the spleen.

On the other hand, the Romans, who never had the spleen,

did not hesitate to put themselves to death. They reasoned, they were philosophers, and the people of the island of Britain were not so. Now, English citizens are philosophers and Roman citizens are nothing. The Englishman quits this life proudly and disdainfully when the whim takes him, but the Roman must have an *indulgentia in articulo mortis*; he can neither live nor die.

Sir William Temple says that a man should depart when he has no longer any pleasure in remaining. So died Atticus. Young women who hang and drown themselves for love should then listen to the voice of hope, for changes are as frequent in love as in other affairs.

An almost infallible means of saving yourself from the desire of self-destruction is always to have something to do. Creech, the commentator on Lucretius, marked upon his manuscripts: "N.B. Must hang myself when I have finished." He kept his word with himself that he might have the pleasure of ending like his author. If he had undertaken a commentary upon Ovid he would have lived longer.

Why have we fewer suicides in the country than in the towns? Because in the fields only the body suffers; in the town it is the mind. The laborer has not time to be melancholy; none kill themselves but the idle – they who, in the eyes of the multitude, are so happy.

I shall here relate some suicides that have happened in my own time, several of which have already been published in other works. The dead may be made useful to the living:

## *A Brief Account of Some Singular Suicides.*

Philip Mordaunt, cousin-german to the celebrated earl of Peterborough – so well known in all the European courts, and who boasted of having seen more postillions and kings than any other man – was a young man of twenty-seven, handsome, well made, rich, of noble blood, with the highest pretensions, and, which was more than all, adored by his mistress, yet Mordaunt was seized with a disgust for life. He paid his debts, wrote to his friends, and even made some verses on the occasion. He dispatched himself with a pistol without having given any other reason than that his soul was tired of his body and that when we are dissatisfied with our abode we ought to quit it. It seemed that he wished to die because he was disgusted with his good fortune.

In 1726 Richard Smith exhibited a strange spectacle to the world from a very different cause. Richard Smith was disgusted with real misfortune. He had been rich, and he was poor; he had been in health, and he was infirm; he had a wife with whom he had naught but his misery to share; their only remaining property was a child in the cradle. Richard Smith and Bridget Smith, with common consent, having embraced each other tenderly and given their infant the last kiss began with killing the poor child, after which they hanged themselves to the posts of their bed.

I do not know any other act of cold-blooded horror so striking as this. But the letter which these unfortunate persons wrote to their cousin, Mr. Brindley, before their death, is as singular as their death itself. "We believe," say they, "that God will



forgive us... We quit this life because we are miserable – without resource, and we have done our only son the service of killing him, lest he should become as unfortunate as ourselves..." It must be observed that these people, after killing their son through parental tenderness, wrote to recommend their dog and cat to the care of a friend. It seems they thought it easier to make a cat and dog happy in this life than a child, and they would not be a burden to their friends.

Lord Scarborough quitted this life in 1727, with the same coolness as he had quitted his office of Master of the Horse. He was reproached, in the House of Peers, with taking the king's part because he had a good place at court. "My lords," said he, "to prove to you that my opinion is independent of my place, I resign it this moment." He afterwards found himself in a perplexing dilemma between a mistress whom he loved, but to whom he had promised nothing, and a woman whom he esteemed, and to whom he had promised marriage. He killed himself to escape from his embarrassment.

These tragical stories which swarm in the English newspapers, have made the rest of Europe think that, in England, men kill themselves more willingly than elsewhere. However, I know not but there are as many madmen or heroes to be found in Paris as in London. Perhaps, if our newspapers kept an exact list of all who had been so infatuated as to seek their own destruction, and so lamentably courageous as to effect it, we should, in this particular, have the misfortune to rival the English. But our

journals are more discreet. In such of them as are acknowledged by the government private occurrences are never exposed to public slander.

All I can venture to say with assurance is that there is no reason to apprehend that this rage for self-murder will ever become an epidemical disorder. Against this, nature has too well provided. Hope and fear are the powerful agents which she often employs to stay the hand of the unhappy individual about to strike at his own breast. Cardinal Dubois was once heard to say to himself: "Kill thyself! Coward, thou darest not!"

It is said that there have been countries in which a council was established to grant the citizens permission to kill themselves when they had good and sufficient reasons. I answer either that it was not so or that those magistrates had not much to do.

It might, indeed, astonish us, and does, I think, merit a serious examination, that almost all the ancient Roman heroes killed themselves when they had lost a battle in the civil wars. But I do not find, neither in the time of the League, nor in that of the Frond, nor in the troubles of Italy, nor in those of England, that any chief thought proper to die by his own hand. These chiefs, it is true, were Christians, and there is a great difference between the principles of a Christian warrior and those of a Pagan hero. But why were these men whom Christianity restrained when they would have put themselves to death, restrained by nothing when they chose to poison, assassinate, and bring their conquered enemies to the scaffold? Does not the Christian religion forbid

these murders much more than self-murder, of which the New Testament makes no mention?

The apostles of suicide tell us that it is quite allowable to quit one's house when one is tired of it. Agreed, but most men would prefer sleeping in a mean house to lying in the open air.

I once received a circular letter from an Englishman, in which he offered a prize to any one who should most satisfactorily prove that there are occasions on which a man might kill himself. I made no answer: I had nothing to prove to him. He had only to examine whether he liked better to die than to live.

Another Englishman came to me at Paris in 1724; he was ill, and promised me that he would kill himself if he was not cured by July 20. He accordingly gave me his epitaph in these words: "*Valet curia!*" "Farewell care!" and gave me twenty-five louis to get a small monument erected to him at the end of the Faubourg St. Martin. I returned him his money on July 20, and kept his epitaph.

In my own time the last prince of the house of Courtenai, when very old, and the last branch of Lorraine-Harcourt, when very young, destroyed themselves almost without its being heard of. These occurrences cause a terrible uproar the first day, but when the property of the deceased has been divided they are no longer talked of.

The following most remarkable of all suicides has just occurred at Lyons, in June, 1770: A young man well known, who was handsome, well made, clever, and amiable, fell in love with

a young woman whom her parents would not give to him. So far we have nothing more than the opening scene of a comedy, the astonishing tragedy is to follow.

The lover broke a blood-vessel and the surgeons informed him there was no remedy. His mistress engaged to meet him, with two pistols and two daggers in order that, if the pistols missed the daggers might the next moment pierce their hearts. They embraced each other for the last time: rose-colored ribbons were tied to the triggers of the pistols; the lover holding the ribbon of his mistress's pistol, while she held the ribbon of his. Both fired at a signal given, and both fell at the same instant.

Of this fact the whole city of Lyons is witness. Pætus and Arria, you set the example, but you were condemned by a tyrant, while love alone immolated these two victims.

### ***Laws Against Suicide.***

Has any law, civil or religious, ever forbidden a man to kill himself, on pain of being hanged after death, or on pain of being damned? It is true that Virgil has said:

*Proximo, deinde tenent mæsti loca, qui sibi lethum  
Insontes peperere manu, lucemque perosi  
Projecere animas. Quam vellent æthere in alto  
Nunc et pauperiem et duros perferre labores!  
Fata obstant, tristique palus inamabilis unda  
Alligat, et novies Styx interfusa coerces.*

The next in place, and punishment, are they  
Who prodigally throw their souls away —  
Fools, who repining at their wretched state,  
And loathing anxious life, suborn their fate;  
With late repentance now they would retrieve  
The bodies they forsook, and wish to live;  
Their pains and poverty desire to bear,  
To view the light of heaven and breathe the vital air; —  
But fate forbids, the Stygian floods oppose,  
And, with nine circling streams, the captive souls inclose.

— *DRYDEN*.

Such was the religion of some of the pagans, yet, notwithstanding the weariness which awaited them in the next world it was an honor to quit this by killing themselves — so contradictory are the ways of men. And among us is not duelling unfortunately still honorable, though forbidden by reason, by religion, and by every law? If Cato and Cæsar, Antony and Augustus, were not duellists it was not that they were less brave than our Frenchmen. If the duke of Montmorency, Marshal de Marillac, de Thou, Cinq-Mars, and so many others, chose rather to be dragged to execution in a wagon, like highwaymen, than to kill themselves like Cato and Brutus, it was not that they had less courage than those Romans, nor less of what is called *honor*. The true reason is that at Paris self-murder in such cases was not then the fashion; but it was the fashion at Rome.

The women of the Malabar coast throw themselves, living, on the funeral piles of their husbands. Have they, then, more courage than Cornelia? No; but in that country it is the custom for the wives to burn themselves.

In Japan it is the custom for a man of honor, when he has been insulted by another man of honor, to rip open his belly in the presence of his enemy and say to him: "Do you likewise if thou hast the heart." The aggressor is dishonored for ever if he does not immediately plunge a great knife into his belly.

The only religion in which suicide is forbidden by a clear and positive law is Mahometanism. In the fourth sura it is said: "Do not kill yourself, for God is merciful unto you, and whosoever killeth himself through malice and wickedness shall assuredly be burned in hell fire."

This is a literal translation. The text, like many other texts, appears to want common sense. What is meant by "Do not kill yourself for God is merciful"? Perhaps we are to understand – Do not sink under your misfortunes, which God may alleviate: do not be so foolish as to kill yourself to-day since you may be happy to-morrow.

"And whosoever killeth himself through malice and wickedness." This is yet more difficult to explain. Perhaps, in all antiquity, this never happened to any one but the Phrædra of Euripides, who hanged herself on purpose to make Theseus believe that she had been forcibly violated by Hippolytus. In our own times a man shot himself in the head, after arranging all

things to make another man suspected of the act.

In the play of George Dandin, his jade of a wife threatens him with killing herself to have him hanged. Such cases are rare. If Mahomet foresaw them he may be said to have seen a great way. The famous Duverger de Haurane, abbot of St. Cyran, regarded as the founder of Port Royal, wrote, about the year 1608, a treatise on "Suicide," which has become one of the scarcest books in Europe.

"The Decalogue," says he, "forbids us to kill. In this precept self-murder seems no less to be comprised than murder of our neighbor. But if there are cases in which it is allowable to kill our neighbor there likewise are cases in which it is allowable to kill ourselves.

"We must not make an attempt upon our lives until we have consulted reason. The public authority, which holds the place of God, may dispose of our lives. The reason of man may likewise hold the place of the reason of God: it is a ray of the eternal light."

St. Cyran extends this argument, which may be considered as a mere sophism, to great length, but when he comes to the explanation and the details it is more difficult to answer him. He says: "A man may kill himself for the good of his prince, for that of his country, or for that of his relations."

We do not, indeed, see how Codrus or Curtius could be condemned. No sovereign would dare to punish the family of a man who had devoted himself to death for him; nay, there is not one who would dare neglect to recompense it. St. Thomas,

before St. Cyran, had said the same thing. But we need neither St. Thomas, nor Cardinal Bonaventura, nor Duverger de Haurane to tell us that a man who dies for his country is deserving of praise.

The abbot of St. Cyran concludes that it is allowable to do for ourselves what it is noble to do for others. All that is advanced by Plutarch, by Seneca, by Montaigne, and by fifty other philosophers, in favor of suicide is sufficiently known; it is a hackneyed topic – a wornout commonplace. I seek not to apologize for an act which the laws condemn, but neither the Old Testament, nor the New has ever forbidden man to depart this life when it has become insupportable to him. No Roman law condemned self-murder; on the contrary, the following was the law of the Emperor Antoine, which was never revoked:

"If your father or your brother not being accused of any crime kill himself, either to escape from grief, or through weariness of life, or through despair, or through mental derangement, his will shall be valid, or, if he die intestate his heirs shall succeed."

Notwithstanding this humane law of our masters we still drag on a sledge and drive a stake through the body of a man who has died a voluntary death; we do all we can to make his memory infamous; we dishonor his family as far as we are able; we punish the son for having lost his father, and the widow for being deprived of her husband.

We even confiscate the property of the deceased, which is robbing the living of the patrimony which of right belongs to them. This custom is derived from our canon law, which deprives



of Christian burial such as die a voluntary death. Hence it is concluded that we cannot inherit from a man who is judged to have no inheritance in heaven. The canon law, under the head "*De Pœnitentia*," assures us that Judas committed a greater crime in strangling himself than in selling our Lord Jesus Christ.

# CELTS

Among those who have had the leisure, the means, and the courage to seek for the origin of nations, there have been some who have found that of our Celts, or at least would make us believe that they had met with it. This illusion being the only recompense of their immense travail, we should not envy them its possession.

If we wish to know anything about the Huns – who, indeed, are scarcely worth knowing anything about, for they have rendered no service to mankind – we find some slight notices of those barbarians among the Chinese – that most ancient of all nations, after the Indians. From them we learn that, in certain ages, the Huns went like famishing wolves and ravaged countries which, even at this day are regarded as places of exile and of horror. This is a very melancholy, a very miserable sort of knowledge. It is, doubtless, much better to cultivate a useful art at Paris, Lyons, or Bordeaux, than seriously to study the history of the Huns and the bears. Nevertheless we are aided in these researches by some of the Chinese archives.

But for the Celts there are no archives. We know no more of their antiquities than we do of those of the Samoyeds or the Australasians.

We have learned nothing about our ancestors except from the few words which their conqueror, Julius Cæsar, condescended

to say of them. He begins his "Commentaries" by dividing the Gauls into the Belgians, Aquitanians, and Celts.

Whence some of the daring among the erudite have concluded that the Celts were the Scythians, and they have made these Scythio-Celts include all Europe. But why not include the whole earth? Why stop short in so fine a career?

We have also been duly told that Noah's son, Japhet, came out of the Ark, and went with all speed to people all those vast regions with Celts, whom he governed marvellously well. But authors of greater modesty refer the origin of our Celts to the tower of Babel – to the confusion of tongues – to Gomer, of whom no one ever heard until the very recent period when some wise men of the West read the name of Gomer in a bad translation of the Septuagint.

Bochart, in his "Sacred Chronology" – what a chronology! – takes quite a different turn. Of these innumerable hordes of Celts he makes an Egyptian colony, skilfully and easily led by Hercules from the fertile banks of the Nile into the forests and morasses of Germany, whither, no doubt, these colonists carried the arts and the language of Egypt and the mysteries of Isis, no trace of which has ever been found among them.

I think they are still more to be congratulated on their discoveries, who say that the Celts of the mountains of Dauphiny were called Cottians, from their King Cottius; that the Bérichons were named from their King Betrich; the Welsh, or Gaulish, from their King Wallus, and the Belgians from Balgem, which means

quarrelsome.

A still finer origin is that of the Celto-Pannonians, from the Latin word *pannus*, cloth, for, we are told they dressed themselves in old pieces of cloth badly sewn together, much resembling a harlequin's jacket. But the best origin of all is, undeniably, the tower of Babel.

# **CEREMONIES – TITLES – PRECEDENCE**

All these things, which would be useless and impertinent in a state of pure nature, are, in our corrupt and ridiculous state, of great service. Of all nations, the Chinese are those who have carried the use of ceremonies to the greatest length; they certainly serve to calm as well as to weary the mind. The Chinese porters and carters are obliged, whenever they occasion the least hindrance in the streets, to fall on their knees and ask one another's pardon according to the prescribed formula. This prevents ill language, blows and murders. They have time to grow cool and are then willing to assist one another.

The more free a people are, the fewer ceremonies, the fewer ostentatious titles, the fewer demonstrations of annihilation in the presence of a superior, they possess. To Scipio men said "Scipio"; to Cæsar, "Cæsar"; but in after times they said to the emperors, "your majesty," "your divinity."

The titles of St. Peter and St. Paul were "Peter" and "Paul." Their successors gave one another the title of "your holiness," which is not to be found in the Acts of the Apostles, nor in the writings of the disciples.

We read in the history of Germany that the dauphin of France, afterwards Charles V., went to the Emperor Charles IV. at Metz

and was presented after Cardinal de Périgord.

There has since been a time when chancellors went before cardinals; after which cardinals again took precedence of chancellors.

In France the peers preceded the princes of the blood, going in the order of their creation, until the consecration of Henry III.

The dignity of peer was, until that time, so exalted that at the ceremony of the consecration of Elizabeth, wife to Charles IX., in 1572, described by Simon Bouquet, *échevin* of Paris, it is said that the queen's *dames* and *demoiselles* having handed to the *dame d'honneur* the bread, wine and wax, with the silver, for the offering to be presented to the queen by the said *dame d'honneur*, the said *dame d'honneur*, being a duchess, commanded the *dames* to go and carry the offering to the princesses themselves, etc. This *dame d'honneur* was the wife of the constable Montmorency.

The armchair, the chair with a back, the stool, the right hand and the left were for several ages important political matters. I believe that we owe the ancient etiquette concerning armchairs to the circumstance that our barbarians of ancestors had at most but one in a house, and even this was used only by the sick. In some provinces of Germany and England an armchair is still called a sick-chair.

Long after the times of Attila and Dagobert, when luxury found its way into our courts and the great men of the earth had two or three armchairs in their donjons, it was a noble distinction

to sit upon one of these thrones; and a castellan would place among his titles how he had gone half a league from home to pay his court to a count, and how he had been received in an easy-chair.

We see in the Memoirs of Mademoiselle that that august princess passed one-fourth of her life amid the mortal agonies of disputes for the back-chair. Were you to sit in a certain apartment, in a chair, or on a stool, or not to sit at all? Here was enough to involve a whole court in intrigue. Manners are now more easy; ladies may use couches and sofas without occasioning any disturbance in society.

When Cardinal de Richelieu was treating with the English ambassadors for the marriage of Henriette of France with Charles I., the affair was on the point of being broken off on account of a demand made by the ambassadors of two or three steps more towards a door; but the cardinal removed the difficulty by taking to his bed. History has carefully handed clown this precious circumstance. I believe that, if it had been proposed to Scipio to get between the sheets to receive the visit of Hannibal, he would have thought the ceremony something like a joke.

For a whole century the order of carriages and taking the wall were testimonials of greatness and the source of pretensions, disputes, and conflicts. To procure the passing of one carriage before another was looked upon as a signal victory. The ambassadors went along the streets as if they were contending

for the prize in the circus; and when a Spanish minister had succeeded in making a Portuguese coachman pull up, he sent a courier to Madrid to apprise the king, his master, of this great advantage.

Our histories regale us with fifty pugilistic combats for precedence – as that of the parliament with the bishops' clerks at the funeral of Henry IV., the *chambre des comptes* with the parliament in the cathedral when Louis XIII. gave France to the Virgin, the duke of Epernon with the keeper of the seals, Du Vair, in the church of St. Germain. The presidents of the *enquêtes* buffeted Savare, the *doyen* of the *conseillers de grand' chambre*, to make him quit his place of honor (so much is honor the soul of monarchical governments!), and four archers were obliged to lay hold of the President Barillon, who was beating the poor *doyen* without mercy. We find no contests like these in the Areopagus, nor in the Roman senate.

In proportion to the barbarism of countries or the weakness of courts, we find ceremony in vogue. True power and true politeness are above vanity. We may venture to believe that the custom will at last be given up which some ambassadors still retain, of ruining themselves in order to go along the streets in procession with a few hired carriages, fresh painted and gilded, and preceded by a few footmen. This is called "making their entry"; and it is a fine joke to make your entry into a town seven or eight months before you arrive.

This important affair of punctilio, which constitutes the



greatness of the modern Romans – this science of the number of steps that should be made in showing in a *monsignor*, in drawing or half drawing a curtain, in walking in a room to the right or to the left – this great art, which neither Fabius nor Cato could ever imagine, is beginning to sink; and the train-bearers to the cardinals complain that everything indicates a decline.

A French colonel, being at Brussels a year after the taking of that place by Marshal de Saxe, and having nothing to do, resolved to go to the town assembly. "It is held at a princess'," said one to him. "Be it so," answered the other, "what matters it to me?" "But only princes go there; are you a prince?" "Pshaw!" said the colonel, "they are a very good sort of princes; I had a dozen of them in my anteroom last year, when we had taken the town, and they were very polite."

In turning over the leaves of "Horace" I observe this line in an epistle to Mæcnas, "*Te, dulcis amice revisam.*" – "I will come and see you, my good friend." This Mæcnas was the second person in the Roman Empire; that is, a man of greater power and influence than the greatest monarch of modern Europe.

Looking into the works of Corneille, I observed that in a letter to the great Scuderi, governor of Notre Dame de la Garde, etc., he uses this expression in reference to Cardinal Richelieu: "Monsieur the cardinal, your master and mine." It is, perhaps, the first time that such language has been applied to a minister, since there have been ministers, kings and flatterers in the world. The same Peter Corneille, the author of "Cinna," humbly dedicates

that work to the Sieur de Montauron, the king's treasurer, whom in direct terms he compares to Augustus. I regret that he did not give Montauron the title of monseigneur or my lord.

An anecdote is related of an old officer, but little conversant with the precedents and formulas of vanity, who wrote to the Marquis Louvois as plain monsieur, but receiving no answer, next addressed him under the title of monseigneur, still, however, without effect, the unlucky monsieur continuing to rankle in the minister's heart. He finally directed his letter "to my God, my God Louvois"; commencing it by the words, "my God, my Creator." Does not all this sufficiently prove that the Romans were magnanimous and modest, and that we are frivolous and vain?

"How d'ye do, my dear friend?" said a duke and peer to a gentleman. "At your service, my dear friend," replied he; and from that instant his "dear friend" became his implacable enemy. A grandee of Portugal was once conversing with a Spanish hidalgo and addressing him every moment in the terms, "your excellency." The Castilian as frequently replied, "your courtesy" (*vuestra merced*), a title bestowed on those who have none by right. The irritated Portuguese in return retorted "your courtesy" on the Spaniard, who then called the Portuguese "your excellency." The Portuguese, at length wearied out, demanded, "How is it that you always call me your courtesy, when I call you your excellency, and your excellency when I call you your courtesy?" "The reason is," says the Castilian with a bow, "that

all titles are equal to me, provided that there is nothing equal between you and me."

The vanity of titles was not introduced into our northern climes of Europe till the Romans had become acquainted with Asiatic magnificence. The greater part of the sovereigns of Asia were, and still are, cousins german of the sun and the moon; their subjects dare not make any pretension to such high affinity; and many a provincial governor, who styles himself "nutmeg of consolation" and "rose of delight" would be empaled alive if he were to claim the slightest relationship to the sun and moon.

Constantine was, I think, the first Roman emperor who overwhelmed Christian humility in a page of pompous titles. It is true that before his time the emperors bore the title of god, but the term implied nothing similar to what we understand by it. Divus Augustus, Divus Trajanus, meant St. Augustus, St. Trajan. It was thought only conformable to the dignity of the Roman Empire that the soul of its chief should, after his death, ascend to heaven; and it frequently even happened that the title of saint, of god, was granted to the emperor by a sort of anticipated inheritance. Nearly for the same reason the first patriarchs of the Christian church were all called "your holiness." They were thus named to remind them of what in fact they ought to be.

Men sometimes take upon themselves very humble titles, provided they can obtain from others very honorable ones. Many an abbé who calls himself brother exacts from his monks the title of monseigneur. The pope styles himself "servant of the servants

of God." An honest priest of Holstein once addressed a letter "to Pius IV., servant of the servants of God." He afterwards went to Rome to urge his suit, and the inquisition put him in prison to teach him how to address letters.

Formerly the emperor alone had the title of majesty. Other sovereigns were called your highness, your serenity, your grace. Louis XI. was the first in France who was generally called majesty, a title certainly not less suitable to the dignity of a powerful hereditary kingdom than to an elective principality. But long after him the term highness was applied to kings of France; and some letters to Henry III. are still extant in which he is addressed by that title. The states of Orleans objected to Queen Catherine de Medici being called majesty. But this last denomination gradually prevailed. The name is indifferent; it is the power alone that is not so.

The German chancery, ever unchangeable in its stately formalities, has pretended down to our own times that no kings have a right to a higher title than serenity. At the celebrated treaty of Westphalia, in which France and Sweden dictated the law to the holy Roman Empire, the emperor's plenipotentiaries continually presented Latin memorials, in which "his most sacred imperial majesty" negotiated with the "most serene kings of France and Sweden"; while, on the other hand, the French and Swedes fail not to declare that their "sacred majesties of France and Sweden" had many subjects of complaint against the "most serene emperor." Since that period, however, the great sovereigns

have, in regard to rank, been considered as equals, and he alone who beats his neighbor is adjudged to have the pre-eminence.

Philip II. was the first majesty in Spain, for the serenity of Charles V. was converted into majesty only on account of the empire. The children of Philip II. were the first highnesses; and afterwards they were royal highnesses. The duke of Orleans, brother of Louis XIII., did not take up the title of royal highness till 1631; then the prince of Condé claimed that the most serene highness, which the Dukes de Vendôme did not venture to assume. The duke of Savoy, at that time royal highness, afterwards substituted majesty. The grand duke of Florence did the same, excepting as to majesty; and finally the czar, who was known in Europe only as the grand duke, declared himself emperor, and was recognized as such.

Formerly there were only two marquises in Germany, two in France and two in Italy. The marquis of Brandenburg has become a king, and a great king. But at present our Italian and French marquises are of a somewhat different species.

If an Italian citizen has the honor of giving a dinner to the legate of his province, and the legate, when drinking, says to him, "Monsieur le marquis, to your good health," he suddenly becomes a marquis, he and his heirs after him, forever. If the inhabitant of any province of France, whose whole estate consists of a quarter part of a little decayed castle-ward, goes to Paris, makes something of a fortune, or carries the air of having made one, he is styled in the deeds and legal instruments in which he is

concerned "high and mighty seigneur, marquis and count," and his son will be denominated by his notary "very high and very mighty seigneur," and as this frivolous ambition is in no way injurious to government or civil society, it is permitted to take its course. Some French lords boast of employing German barons in their stables; some German lords say they have French marquises in their kitchens; it is not a long time since a foreigner at Naples made his coachman a duke. Custom in these cases has more power than royal authority. If you are but little known at Paris, you may there be a count or a marquis as long as you please; if you are connected with the law of finance, though the king should confer on you a real marquisate, you will not, therefore, be monsieur le marquis. The celebrated Samuel Bernard was, in truth, more a count than five hundred such as we often see not possessing four acres of land. The king had converted his estate of Coubert into a fine county; yet if on any occasion he had ordered himself to be announced as Count Bernard, etc., he would have excited bursts of laughter. In England it is different; if the king confers the title of earl or baron on a merchant, all classes address him with the designation suitable to it without the slightest hesitation. By persons of the highest birth, by the king himself, he is called my lord. It is the same in Italy; there is a register kept there of monsignori. The pope himself addresses them under that title; his physician is monsignor, and no one objects.

In France the title of monseigneur or my lord is a very serious

business. Before the time of Cardinal Richelieu a bishop was only "a most reverend father in God."

Before the year 1635 bishops did not only not assume the title of monseigneur themselves, but they did not even give it to cardinals. These two customs were introduced by a bishop of Chartres, who, in full canonicals of lawn and purple, went to call Cardinal Richelieu monseigneur, on which occasion Louis XIII. observed that "Chartrain would not mind saluting the cardinal *au derrière*."

It is only since that period that bishops have mutually applied to each other the title of monseigneur.

The public made no objection to this application of it; but, as it was a new title, not conferred on bishops by kings, they continued to be called sieurs in edicts, declarations, ordinances and all official documents; and when the council wrote to a bishop they gave him no higher title than monsieur.

The dukes and peers have encountered more difficulty in acquiring possession of the title of monseigneur. The *grande noblesse*, and what is called the grand robe, decidedly refuse them that distinction. The highest gratification of human pride consists in a man's receiving titles of honor from those who conceive themselves his equals; but to attain this is exceedingly difficult; pride always finds pride to contend with.

When the dukes insisted on receiving the title of monseigneur from the class of gentlemen, the presidents of the parliaments required the same from advocates and proctors. A certain

president actually refused to be bled because his surgeon asked: "In which arm will you be bled, monsieur?" An old counsellor treated this matter somewhat more gayly. A pleader was saying to him, "Monseigneur, monsieur, your secretary"... He stopped him short: "You have uttered three blunders," says he, "in as many words. I am not monseigneur; my secretary is not monsieur; he is my clerk."

To put an end to this grand conflict of vanity it will eventually be found necessary to give the title of monseigneur to every individual in the nation; as women, who were formerly content with mademoiselle, are now to be called madame. In Spain, when a mendicant meets a brother beggar, he thus accosts him: "Has your courtesy taken chocolate?" This politeness of language elevates the mind and keeps up the dignity of the species. Cæsar and Pompey were called in the senate Cæsar and Pompey. But these men knew nothing of life. They ended their letters with *vale*— adieu. We, who possess more exalted notions, were sixty years ago "affectionate servants"; then "very humble and very obedient"; and now we "have the honor to be" so. I really grieve for posterity, which will find it extremely difficult to add to these very beautiful formulas. The Duke d'Épernon, the first of Gascons in pride, though far from being the first of statesmen, wrote on his deathbed to Cardinal Richelieu and ended his letter with: "Your very humble and very obedient." Recollecting, however, that the cardinal had used only the phrase "very affectionate," he despatched an express to bring back the



letter (for it had been actually sent off), began it anew, signed "very affectionate," and died in the bed of honor.

We have made many of these observations elsewhere. It is well, however, to repeat them, were it only to correct some pompous peacocks, who would strut away their lives in contemptibly displaying their plumes and their pride.

# CERTAIN – CERTAINTY

I am certain; I have friends; my fortune is secure; my relations will never abandon me; I shall have justice done me; my work is good, it will be well received; what is owing to me will be paid; my friend will be faithful, he has sworn it; the minister will advance me – he has, by the way, promised it – all these are words which a man who has lived a short time in the world erases from his dictionary.

When the judges condemned L'Anglade, Le Brun, Calas, Sirven, Martin, Montbailli, and so many others, since acknowledged to have been innocent, they were certain, or they ought to have been certain, that all these unhappy men were guilty; yet they were deceived. There are two ways of being deceived; by false judgment and self-blindness – that of erring like a man of genius, and that of deciding like a fool.

The judges deceived themselves like men of genius in the affair of L'Anglade; they were blinded by dazzling appearances and did not sufficiently examine the probabilities on the other side. Their wisdom made them believe it certain that L'Anglade had committed a theft, which he certainly had not committed; and on this miserable *uncertain* certainty of the human mind, a gentleman was put to the ordinary and extraordinary question; subsequent thrown, without succor, into a dungeon and condemned to the galleys, where he died. His

wife was shut up in another dungeon, with her daughter, aged seven years, who afterwards married a counsellor of the same parliament which had condemned her father to the galleys and her mother to banishment.

It is clear that the judges would not have pronounced this sentence had they been really certain. However, even at the time this sentence was passed several persons knew that the theft had been committed by a priest named Gagnat, associated with a highwayman, and the innocence of L'Anglade was not recognized till after his death.

They were in the same manner certain when, by a sentence in the first instance, they condemned to the wheel the innocent Le Brun, who, by an arrêt pronounced on his appeal, was broken on the rack, and died under the torture.

The examples of Calas and Sirven are well known, that of Martin is less so. He was an honest agriculturist near Bar in Lorraine. A villain stole his dress and in this dress murdered a traveller whom he knew to have money and whose route he had watched. Martin was accused, his dress was a witness against him; the judges regarded this evidence as a certainty. Not the past conduct of the prisoner, a numerous family whom he had brought up virtuously, neither the little money found on him, nor the extreme probability of his innocence – nothing could save him. The subaltern judge made a merit of his rigor. He condemned the innocent victim to be broken on the wheel, and, by an unhappy fatality the sentence was executed to the full extent. The senior

Martin is broken alive, calling God to witness his innocence to his last breath; his family is dispersed, his little property is confiscated, and scarcely are his broken members exposed on the great road when the assassin who had committed the murder and theft is put in prison for another crime, and confesses on the rack, to which he is condemned in his turn, that he only was guilty of the crime for which Martin had suffered torture and death.

Montbailli, who slept with his wife, was accused with having, in concert with her, killed his mother, who had evidently died of apoplexy. The council of Arras condemned Montbailli to expire on the rack, and his wife to be burnt. Their innocence was discovered, but not until Montbailli had been tortured. Let us cease advertence to these melancholy adventures, which make us groan at the human condition; but let us continue to lament the pretended certainty of judges, when they pass such sentences.

There is no certainty, except when it is physically or morally impossible that the thing can be otherwise. What! is a strict demonstration necessary to enable us to assert that the surface of a sphere is equal to four times the area of its great circle; and is not one required to warrant taking away the life of a citizen by a disgraceful punishment?

If such is the misfortune of humanity that judges must be contented with extreme probabilities, they should at least consult the age, the rank, the conduct of the accused – the interest which he could have in committing the crime, and the interest of his enemies to destroy him. Every judge should say to himself: Will

not posterity, will not entire Europe condemn my sentence? Shall I sleep tranquilly with my hands tainted with innocent blood? Let us pass from this horrible picture to other examples of a certainty which leads directly to error.

Why art thou loaded with chains, fanatical and unhappy Santon? Why hast thou added a large iron ring on thy miserable scourge? It is because I am certain of being one day placed in the first heaven, by the side of our great prophet. Alas, my friend, come with me to the neighborhood of Mount Athos and thou wilt see three thousand mendicants who are as certain that thou wilt go to the gulf which is under the narrow bridge, as that they will all go to the first heaven!

Stop, miserable Malabar widow, believe not the fool who persuades you that you shall be reunited to your husband in all the delights of another world, if you burn yourself on his funeral pile! No, I persist in burning myself because I am certain of living in felicity with my husband; my brahmin told me so.

Let us attend to less frightful certainties, and which have a little more appearance of truth. What is the age of your friend Christopher? Twenty-eight years. I have seen his marriage contract, and his baptismal register; I knew him in his infancy; he is twenty-eight – I am certain of it.

Scarcely have I heard the answer of this man, so sure of what he said, and of twenty others who confirmed the same thing, when I learn that for secret reasons, and by a singular circumstance the baptismal register of Christopher has been

antedated. Those to whom I had spoken as yet know nothing of it, yet they have still the same certainty of that which is not.

If you had asked the whole earth before the time of Copernicus: has the sun risen? has it set to-day? all men would have answered: We are quite certain of it. They were certain and they were in error.

Witchcraft, divinations, and possessions were for a long time the most certain things in the world in the eyes of society. What an innumerable crowd of people who have seen all these fine things and who have been certain of them! At present this certainty is a little shaken.

A young man who is beginning to study geometry comes to me; he is only at the definition of triangles. Are you not certain, said I to him, that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles? He answered that not only was he not certain of it, but that he had not the slightest idea of the proposition. I demonstrated it to him. He then became very certain of it, and will remain so all his life. This is a certainty very different from the others; they were only probabilities and these probabilities, when examined, have turned out errors, but mathematical certainty is immutable and eternal.

I exist, I think, I feel grief – is all that as certain as a geometrical truth? Yes, skeptical as I am, I avow it. Why? It is that these truths are proved by the same principle that it is impossible for a thing to exist and not exist at the same time. I cannot at the same time feel and not feel. A triangle cannot at

the same time contain a hundred and eighty degrees, which are the sum of two right angles, and not contain them. The physical certainty of my existence, of my identity, is of the same value as mathematical certainty, although it is of a different kind.

It is not the same with the certainty founded on appearances, or on the unanimous testimony of mankind.

But how, you will say to me, are you not certain that Pekin exists? Have you not merchandise from Pekin? People of different countries and different opinions have vehemently written against one another while preaching the truth at Pekin; then are you not assured of the existence of this town? I answer that it is extremely probable that there may be a city of Pekin but I would not wager my life that such a town exists, and I would at any time wager my life that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles.

In the "*Dictionnaire Encyclopédique*" a very pleasant thing appears. It is there maintained that a man ought to be as certain that Marshal Saxe rose from the dead, if all Paris tells him so, as he is sure that Marshal Saxe gained the battle of Fontenoy, upon the same testimony. Pray observe the beauty of this reasoning: as I believe all Paris when it tells me a thing morally possible, I ought to believe all Paris when it tells me a thing morally and physically impossible. Apparently the author of this article has a disposition to be risible; as to ourselves who have only undertaken this little dictionary to ask a few questions, we are very far from possessing this very extensive certainty.

# CHAIN OF CREATED BEINGS

The gradation of beings rising from the lowest to the Great Supreme – the scale of infinity – is an idea that fills us with admiration, but when steadily regarded this phantom disappears, as apparitions were wont to vanish at the crowing of the cock.

The imagination is pleased with the imperceptible transition from brute matter to organized matter, from plants to zoophytes, from zoophytes to animals, from animals to men, from men to genii, from these genii, clad in a light ærial body, to immaterial substances of a thousand different orders, rising from beauty to perfection, up to God Himself. This hierarchy is very pleasing to young men who look upon it as upon the pope and cardinals, followed by the archbishops and bishops, after whom are the vicars, curates and priests, the deacons and subdeacons, then come the monks, and the capuchins bring up the rear.

But there is, perhaps, a somewhat greater distance between God and His most perfect creatures than between the holy father and the dean of the sacred college. The dean may become pope, but can the most perfect genii created by the Supreme Being become God? Is there not infinity between them?

Nor does this chain, this pretended gradation, any more exist in vegetables and animals; the proof is that some species of plants and animals have been entirely destroyed. We have no murex. The Jews were forbidden to eat griffin and ixion, these two



species, whatever Bochart may say, have probably disappeared from the earth. Where, then, is the chain?

Supposing that we had not lost some species, it is evident that they may be destroyed. Lions and rhinoceroses are becoming very scarce, and if the rest of the nations had imitated the English, there would not now have been a wolf left. It is probable that there have been races of men who are no longer to be found. Why should they not have existed as well as the whites, the blacks, the Kaffirs, to whom nature has given an apron of their own skin, hanging from the belly to the middle of the thigh; the Samoyeds, whose women have nipples of a beautiful jet.

Is there not a manifest void between the ape and man? Is it not easy to imagine a two-legged animal without feathers having intelligence without our shape or the use of speech – one which we could tame, which would answer our signs, and serve us? And again, between this species and man, cannot we imagine others?

Beyond man, divine Plato, you place in heaven a string of celestial substances, in some of which we believe because the faith so teaches us. But what reason had you to believe in them? It does not appear that you had spoken with the genius of Socrates, and though Heres, good man, rose again on purpose to tell you the secrets of the other world, he told you nothing of these substances. In the sensible universe the pretended chain is no less interrupted.

What gradation, I pray you, is there among the planets? The moon is forty times smaller than our globe. Travelling from the

moon through space, you find Venus, about as large as the earth. From thence you go to Mercury, which revolves in an ellipsis very different from the circular orbit of Venus; it is twenty-seven times smaller than the earth, the sun is a million times larger, and Mars is five times smaller. The latter goes his round in two years, his neighbor Jupiter in twelve, and Saturn in thirty; yet Saturn, the most distant of all, is not so large as Jupiter. Where is the pretended gradation?

And then, how, in so many empty spaces, do you extend a chain connecting the whole? There can certainly be no other than that which Newton discovered – that which makes all the globes of the planetary world gravitate one towards another in the immense void.

Oh, much admired Plato! I fear that you have told us nothing but fables, that you have spoken to us only as a sophist! Oh, Plato! you have done more mischief than you are aware of. How so? you will ask. I will not tell you.

# CHAIN OR GENERATION OF EVENTS

The present, we say, is pregnant with the future; events are linked one with another by an invincible fatality. This is the fate which, in Homer, is superior to Jupiter himself. The master of gods and men expressly declares that he cannot prevent his son Sarpedon from dying at the time appointed. Sarpedon was born at the moment when it was necessary that he should be born, and could not be born at any other; he could not die elsewhere than before Troy; he could not be buried elsewhere than in Lycia; his body must, in the appointed time, produce vegetables, which must change into the substance of some of the Lycians; his heirs must establish a new order of things in his states; that new order must influence neighboring kingdoms; thence must result a new arrangement in war and in peace with the neighbors of Lycia. So that, from link to link, the destiny of the whole earth depended on the elopement of Helen, which had a necessary connection with the marriage of Hecuba, which, ascending to higher events, was connected with the origin of things.

Had any one of these occurrences been ordered otherwise, the result would have been a different universe. Now, it was not possible for the actual universe not to exist; therefore it was not possible for Jupiter, Jove as he was, to save the life of his

son. We are told that this doctrine of necessity and fatality has been invented in our own times by Leibnitz, under the name of sufficing reason. It is, however, of great antiquity. It is no recent discovery that there is no effect without a cause and that often the smallest cause produces the greatest effects.

Lord Bolingbroke acknowledges that he was indebted to the petty quarrels between the duchess of Marlborough and Mrs. Masham for an opportunity of concluding the private treaty between Queen Anne and Louis XIV. This treaty led to the peace of Utrecht; the peace of Utrecht secured the throne of Spain to Philip V.; Philip took Naples and Sicily from the house of Austria. Thus the Spanish prince, who is now king of Naples, evidently owes his kingdom to Mrs. Masham; he would not have had it, nor even have been born, if the duchess of Marlborough had been more complaisant towards the queen of England; his existence at Naples depended on one folly more or less at the court of London.

Examine the situations of every people upon earth; they are in like manner founded on a train of occurrences seemingly without connection, but all connected. In this immense machine all is wheel, pulley, cord, or spring. It is the same in physical order. A wind blowing from the southern seas and the remotest parts of Africa brings with it a portion of the African atmosphere, which, falling in showers in the valleys of the Alps, fertilizes our lands; on the other hand our north wind carries our vapors among the negroes; we do good to Guinea, and Guinea to us. The chain

extends from one end of the universe to the other.

But the truth of this principle seems to me to be strangely abused; for it is thence concluded that there is no atom, however small, the movement of which has not influenced the actual arrangement of the whole world; that the most trivial accident, whether among men or animals, is an essential link in the great chain of destiny.

Let us understand one another. Every effect evidently has its cause, ascending from cause to cause, into the abyss of eternity; but every cause has not its effect, going down to the end of ages. I grant that all events are produced one by another; if the past was pregnant with the present, the present is pregnant with the future; everything is begotten, but everything does not beget. It is a genealogical tree; every house, we know, ascends to Adam, but many of the family have died without issue.

The events of this world form a genealogical tree. It is indisputable that the inhabitants of Spain and Gaul are descended from Gomer, and the Russians from his younger brother Magog, for in how many great books is this genealogy to be found! It cannot then be denied that the grand Turk, who is also descended from Magog, is obliged to him for the good beating given him in 1769 by the Empress Catherine II. This occurrence is evidently linked with other great events; but whether Magog spat to the right or to the left near Mount Caucasus – made two or three circles in a well – or whether he lay on his right side or his left, I do not see that it could have much influence on present affairs.

It must be remembered, because it is proved by Newton, that nature is not a plenum, and that motion is not communicated by collision until it has made the tour of the universe. Throw a body of a certain density into water, you easily calculate that at the end of such a time the movement of this body, and that which it has given to the water, will cease; the motion will be lost and rest will be restored. So the motion produced by Magog in spitting into a well cannot have influenced what is now passing in Moldavia and Wallachia. Present events, then, are not the offspring of all past events, they have their direct lines, but with a thousand small collateral fines they have nothing to do. Once more be it observed that every being has a parent but every one has not an offspring.

# CHANGES THAT HAVE OCCURRED IN THE GLOBE

When we have seen with our own eyes a mountain advancing into a plain – that is, an immense rock detached from that mountain, and covering the fields, an entire castle buried in the earth, or a swallowed-up river bursting from below, indubitable marks of an immense mass of water having once inundated a country now inhabited, and so many traces of other revolutions, we are even more disposed to believe in the great changes that have altered the face of the world than a Parisian lady who knows that the square in which her house stands was formerly a cultivated field, but a lady of Naples who has seen the ruins of Herculaneum underground is still less enthralled by the prejudice which leads us to believe that everything has always been as it now is.

Was there a great burning of the world in the time of Phaethon? Nothing is more likely, but this catastrophe was no more caused by the ambition of Phaethon or the anger of Jupiter the Thunderer than at Lisbon, in 1755, the Divine vengeance was drawn down, the subterraneous fires kindled, and half the city destroyed by the fires so often lighted there by the inquisition – besides, we know that Mequinez, Tetuan and considerable hordes of Arabs have been treated even worse than Lisbon, though they

had no inquisition. The island of St. Domingo, entirely devastated not long ago, had no more displeased the Great Being than the island of Corsica; all is subject to eternal physical laws.

Sulphur, bitumen, nitre, and iron, enclosed within the bowels of the earth have overturned many a city, opened many a gulf, and we are constantly liable to these accidents attached to the way in which this globe is put together, just as, in many countries during winter, we are exposed to the attacks of famishing wolves and tigers. If fire, which Heraclitus believed to be the principle of all, has altered the face of a part of the earth, Thales's first principle, water, has operated as great changes.

One-half of America is still inundated by the ancient overflowings of the Maranon, Rio de la Plata, the St. Lawrence, the Mississippi, and all the rivers perpetually swelled by the eternal snows of the highest mountains in the world, stretching from one end of that continent to the other. These accumulated floods have almost everywhere produced vast marshes. The neighboring lands have become uninhabitable, and the earth, which the hands of man should have made fruitful, has produced only pestilence.

The same thing happened in China and in Egypt: a multitude of ages were necessary to dig canals and dry the lands. Add to these lengthened disasters the irruptions of the sea, the lands it has invaded and deserted, the islands it has detached from the continent and you will find that from east to west, from Japan to Mount Atlas, it has devastated more than eighty thousand square



leagues.

The swallowing up of the island Atlantis from the ocean may, with as much reason, be considered historical, as fabulous. The shallowness of the Atlantic as far as the Canaries might be taken as a proof of this great event and the Canaries themselves for fragments of the island Atlantis.

Plato tells us in his "*Timæus*," that the Egyptian priests, among whom he had travelled, had in their possession ancient registers which certified that island's going under water. Plato says that this catastrophe happened nine thousand years before his time. No one will believe this chronology on Plato's word only, but neither can any one adduce against it any physical proof, nor even a historical testimony from any profane writer.

Pliny, in his third book, says that from time immemorial the people of the southern coasts of Spain believed that the sea had forced a passage between Calpe and Abila: "*Indigenæ columnas Herculis vocant, creduntque per fossas exclusa antea admisisse maria, et rerum naturæ mutasse faciem.*"

An attentive traveller may convince himself by his own eyes that the Cyclades and the Sporades were once part of the continent of Greece, and especially that Sicily was once joined to Apulia. The two volcanos of Etna and Vesuvius having the same basis in the sea, the little gulf of Charybdis, the only deep part of that sea, the perfect resemblance of the two soils are incontrovertible testimonies. The floods of Deucalion and Ogyges are well known, and the fables founded upon this truth

are still more the talk of all the West.

The ancients have mentioned several deluges in Asia. The one spoken of by Berosus happened (as he tells us) in Chaldaea, about four thousand three, or four hundred years before the Christian era, and Asia was as much inundated with fables about this deluge as it was by the overflowings of the Tigris and Euphrates, and all the rivers that fall into the Euxine.

It is true that such overflowings cannot cover the country with more than a few feet of water, but the consequent sterility, the washing away of houses, and the destruction of cattle are losses which it requires nearly a century to repair. We know how much they have cost Holland, more than the half of which has been lost since the year 1050. She is still obliged to maintain a daily conflict with the ever-threatening ocean. She has never employed so many soldiers in resisting her enemies as she employs laborers in continually defending her against the assaults of a sea always ready to swallow her.

The road from Egypt to Phœnicia, along the borders of Lake Serbo, was once quite practicable, but it has long ceased to be so; it is now nothing but a quicksand, moistened by stagnant water. In short, a great portion of the earth would be no other than a vast poisonous marsh inhabited by monsters, but for the assiduous labor of the human race.

We shall not here speak of the universal deluge of Noah. Let it suffice to read the Holy Scriptures with submission. Noah's flood was an incomprehensible miracle supernaturally worked

by the justice and goodness of an ineffable Providence whose will it was to destroy the whole guilty human race and form a new and innocent race. If the new race was more wicked than the former, and became more criminal from age to age, from reformation to reformation, this is but another effect of the same Providence, of which it is impossible for us to fathom the depths, the inconceivable mysteries transmitted to the nations of the West for many ages, in the Latin translation of the Septuagint. We shall never enter these awful sanctuaries; our questions will be limited to simple nature.

# CHARACTER

[From the Greek word signifying *Impression, Engraving*. – It is what nature has engraved in us.]

Can we change our character? Yes, if we change our body. A man born turbulent, violent, and inflexible, may, through falling in his old age into an apoplexy, become like a silly, weak, timid, puling child. His body is no longer the same, but so long as his nerves, his blood, and his marrow remain in the same state his disposition will not change any more than the instinct of a wolf or a polecat. The English author of "The Dispensary," a poem much superior to the Italian "*Capitoli*" and perhaps even to Boileau's "*Lutrin*", has, as it seems to me, well observed.

How matter, by the varied shape of pores,  
Or idiots frames, or solemn senators.

The character is formed of our ideas and our feelings. Now it is quite clear that we neither give ourselves feelings nor ideas, therefore our character cannot depend on ourselves. If it did so depend, every one would be perfect. We cannot give ourselves tastes, nor talents, why, then, should we give ourselves qualities? When we do not reflect we think we are masters of all: when we reflect we find that we are masters of nothing.

If you would absolutely change a man's character purge him

with diluents till he is dead. Charles XII., in his illness on the way to Bender, was no longer the same man; he was as tractable as a child. If I have a wry nose and cat's eyes I can hide them behind a mask, and can I do more with the character that nature has given me?

A man born violent and passionate presents himself before Francis I., king of France, to complain of a trespass. The countenance of the prince, the respectful behavior of the courtiers, the very place he is in make a powerful impression upon this man. He mechanically casts down his eyes, his rude voice is softened, he presents his petition with humility, you would think him as mild as (at that moment at least) the courtiers appear to be, among whom he is often disconcerted, but if Francis I. knows anything of physiognomy, he will easily discover in his eye, though downcast, glistening with a sullen fire, in the extended muscles of his face, in his fast-closed lips, that this man is not so mild as he is forced to appear. The same man follows him to Pavia, is taken prisoner along with him and thrown into the same dungeon at Madrid. The majesty of Francis I. no longer awes him as before, he becomes familiar with the object of his reverence. One day, pulling on the king's boots, and happening to pull them on ill, the king, soured by misfortune, grows angry, on which our man of courtesy wishes his majesty at the devil and throws his boots out the window.

Sixtus V. was by nature petulant, obstinate, haughty, impetuous, vindictive, arrogant. This character, however, seems

to have been softened by the trials of his novitiate. But see him beginning to acquire some influence in his order; he flies into a passion against a guardian and knocks him down. Behold him an inquisitor at Venice, he exercises his office with insolence. Behold him cardinal; he is possessed *della rabbia papale*; this rage triumphs over his natural propensities; he buries his person and his character in obscurity and counterfeits humility and infirmity. He is elected pope, and the spring which policy had held back now acts with all the force of its long-restrained elasticity; he is the proudest and most despotic of sovereigns.

*Naturam expellas furea, tamen usque recurret.*

Howe'er expelled, nature will still return.

Religion and morality curb the strength of the disposition, but they cannot destroy it. The drunkard in a cloister, reduced to a quarter of a pint of cider each meal will never more get drunk, but he will always be fond of wine.

Age weakens the character; it is as an old tree producing only a few degenerate fruits, but always of the same nature, which is covered with knots and moss and becomes worm-eaten, but is ever the same, whether oak or pear tree. If we could change our character we could give ourselves one and become the master of nature. Can we give ourselves anything? do not we receive everything? To strive to animate the indolent man with persevering activity, to freeze with apathy the boiling blood of

the impetuous, to inspire a taste for poetry into him who has neither taste nor ear were as futile as to attempt to give sight to one born blind. We perfect, we ameliorate, we conceal what nature has placed in us, but we place nothing there ourselves.

An agriculturist is told: "You have too many fish in this pond; they will not thrive, here are too many cattle in your meadows; they will want grass and grow lean." After this exhortation the pikes come and eat one-half this man's carps, the wolves one-half of his sheep, and the rest fatten. And will you applaud his economy? This countryman is yourself; one of your passions devours the rest and you think you have gained a triumph. Do we not almost all resemble the old general of ninety, who, having found some young officers behaving in a rather disorderly manner with some young women, said to them in anger: "Gentlemen, is this the example that I set you?"

# CHARITY

## CHARITABLE AND BENEFICENT INSTITUTIONS, ALMS- HOUSES, HOSPITALS, ETC

Cicero frequently speaks of universal charity, *charitas humani generis*; but it does not appear that the policy or the beneficence of the Romans ever induced them to establish charitable institutions, in which the indigent and the sick might be relieved at the expense of the public. There was a receptacle for strangers at the port of Ostia, called Xenodokium, St. Jerome renders this justice to the Romans. Almshouses seem to have been unknown in ancient Rome. A more noble usage prevailed – that of supplying the people with corn. There were in Rome three hundred and twenty-seven public granaries. This constant liberality precluded any need of alms-houses. They were strangers to necessity.

Neither was there any occasion among the Romans for founding charities. None exposed their own children. Those of slaves were taken care of by their masters. Childbirth was not deemed disgraceful to the daughters of citizens. The poorest families, maintained by the republic and afterwards by the



emperors, saw the subsistence of their children secured.

The expression, "charitable establishment," *maison de charité*, implies a state of indigence among modern nations which the form of our governments has not been able to preclude.

The word "hospital," which recalls that of hospitality, reminds us of a virtue in high estimation among the Greeks, now no longer existing; but it also expresses a virtue far superior. There is a mighty difference between lodging, maintaining, and providing in sickness for all afflicted applicants whatever, and entertaining in your own house two or three travellers by whom you might claim a right to be entertained in return. Hospitality, after all, was but an exchange. Hospitals are monuments of beneficence.

It is true that the Greeks were acquainted with charitable institutions under the name of *Xenodokia*, for strangers, *Noscomeia*, for the sick, and *Ptokia*, for the indigent. In Diogenes Laertius, concerning Bion, we find this passage: "He suffered much from the indigence of those who were charged with the care of the sick."

Hospitality among friends was called *Idioxenia*, and among strangers *Proxenia*. Hence, the person who received and entertained strangers in his house, in the name of the whole city, was called *Proxenos*. But this institution appears to have been exceedingly rare. At the present day there is scarcely a city in Europe without its hospitals. The Turks have them even for beasts, which seems to be carrying charity rather too far, it would be better to forget the beasts and think more about men.

This prodigious multitude of charitable establishments clearly proves a truth deserving of all our attention – that man is not so depraved as he is stated to be, and that, notwithstanding all his absurd opinions, notwithstanding all the horrors of war which transform him into a ferocious beast, we have reason to consider him as a creature naturally well disposed and kind, and who, like other animals, becomes vicious only in proportion as he is stung by provocation.

The misfortune is that he is provoked too often.

Modern Rome has almost as many charitable institutions as ancient Rome had triumphal arches and other monuments of conquest. The most considerable of them all is a bank which lends money at two per cent. upon pledge, and sells the property if the borrower does not redeem it by an appointed time. This establishment is called the *Archiospedale*, or chief hospital. It is said always to contain within its walls nearly two thousand sick, which would be about the fiftieth part of the population of Rome for this one house alone, without including the children brought up, and the pilgrims lodged there. Where are the computations which do not require abatement?

Has it not been actually published at Rome that the hospital of the Trinity had lodged and maintained for three days four hundred and forty thousand five hundred male and twenty-five thousand female pilgrims at the jubilee in 1600? Has not Misson himself told us that the hospital of the Annunciation at Naples possesses a rental of two millions in our money? (About four

hundred thousand dollars.)

However, to return, perhaps a charitable establishment for pilgrims who are generally mere vagabonds, is rather an encouragement to idleness than an act of humanity. It is, however, a decisive evidence of humanity that Rome contains fifty charitable establishments including all descriptions. These beneficent institutions are quite as useful and respectable as the riches of some monasteries and chapels are useless and ridiculous.

To dispense food, clothing, medicine, and aid of every kind, to our brethren, is truly meritorious, but what need can a saint have of gold and diamonds? What benefit results to mankind from "our Lady of Loretto" possessing more gorgeous treasures than the Turkish sultan? Loretto is a house of vanity, and not of charity. London, reckoning its charity schools, has as many beneficent establishments as Rome.

The most beautiful monument of beneficence ever erected is the Hôtel des Invalides, founded by Louis XIV.

Of all hospitals, that in which the greatest number of indigent sick are daily received is the Hôtel Dieu of Paris. It frequently contains four or five thousand inmates at a time. It is at once the receptacle of all the dreadful ills to which mankind are subject and the temple of true virtue, which consists in relieving them.

It is impossible to avoid frequently drawing a contrast between a fête at Versailles or an opera at Paris, in which all the pleasures and all the splendors of life are combined with the most exquisite

art, and a Hôtel Dieu, where all that is painful, all that is loathsome, and even death itself are accumulated in one mass of horror. Such is the composition of great cities! By an admirable policy pleasures and luxury are rendered subservient to misery and pain. The theatres of Paris pay on an average the yearly sum of a hundred thousand crowns to the hospital. It often happens in these charitable institutions that the inconveniences counterbalance the advantages. One proof of the abuses attached to them is that patients dread the very idea of being removed to them.

The Hôtel Dieu, for example, was formerly well situated, in the middle of the city, near the bishop's palace. The situation now is very bad, for the city has become overgrown; four or five patients are crowded into every bed, the victim of scurvy communicates it to his neighbor and in return receives from him smallpox, and a pestilential atmosphere spreads incurable disease and death, not only through the building destined to restore men to healthful life but through a great part of the city which surrounds it.

M. de Chamousset, one of the most valuable and active of citizens, has computed, from accurate authorities, that in the Hôtel Dieu, a fourth part of the patients die, an eighth in the hospital of Charity, a ninth in the London hospitals, and a thirtieth in those of Versailles. In the great and celebrated hospital of Lyons, which has long been one of the best conducted in Europe, the average mortality has been found to be only one-

fifteenth. It has been often proposed to divide the Hôtel Dieu of Paris into smaller establishments better situated, more airy, and salubrious, but money has been wanting to carry the plan into execution.

*Curtae nescio quid semper abest rei.*

Money is always to be found when men are to be sent to the frontiers to be destroyed, but when the object is to preserve them it is no longer so. Yet the Hôtel Dieu of Paris has a revenue amounting to more than a million (forty thousand pounds), and every day increasing, and the Parisians have rivalled each other in their endowments of it.

We cannot help remarking in this place that Germain Brice, in his "Description of Paris," speaking of some legacies bequeathed by the first president, Bellievre, to the hall of the Hôtel Dieu, named St. Charles, says: "Every one ought to read the beautiful inscription, engraved in letters of gold on a grand marble tablet, and composed by Oliver Patru, one of the choicest spirits of his time, some of whose pleadings are extant and in very high esteem.

"Whoever thou art that enterest this sacred place thou wilt almost everywhere behold traces of the charity of the great Pomponne. The gold and silver tapestry and the exquisite furniture which formerly adorned his apartments are now, by a happy metamorphosis, made to minister to the necessities of the sick. That divine man, who was the ornament and delight of his age, even in his conflict with death, considered how he might

relieve the afflicted. The blood of Bellievre was manifested in every action of his life. The glory of his embassies is full well known," etc.

The useful Chamousset did better than Germain Brice, or than Oliver Patru, "one of the choicest spirits of his time." He offered to undertake at his own expense, backed by a responsible company, the following contract:

The administrators of the Hôtel Dieu estimated the cost of every patient, whether killed or cured, at fifty livres. M. Chamousset and the company offered to undertake the business, on receiving fifty livres on recovery only. The deaths were to be thrown out of the account, of which the expenses were to be borne by himself.

The proposal was so very advantageous that it was not accepted. It was feared that he would not be able to accomplish it. Every abuse attempted to be reformed is the patrimony of those who have more influence than the reformers.

A circumstance no less singular is that the Hôtel Dieu alone has the privilege of selling meat in Lent, for its own advantage and it loses money thereby. M. Chamousset proposed to enter into a contract by which the establishment would gain; his offer was rejected and the butcher, who was thought to have suggested it to him, was dismissed.

*Ainsi chez les humains, par un abus fatal,  
Le bien le plus parfait est la source du mal.*

Thus serious ill, if tainted by abuse,  
The noblest works of man will oft produce.

# CHARLES IX

Charles IX., king of France, was, we are told, a good poet. It is quite certain that while he lived his verses were admired. Brantôme does not, indeed, tell us that this king was the best poet in Europe, but he assures us that "he made very genteel quatrains impromptu, without thinking (for he had seen several of them), and when it was wet or gloomy weather, or very hot, he would send for the poets into his cabinet and pass his time there with them."

Had he always passed his time thus, and, above all, had he made good verses, we should not have had a St. Bartholomew, he would not have fired with a carbine through his window upon his own subjects, as if they had been a covey of partridges. Is it not impossible for a good poet to be a barbarian? I am persuaded it is.

These lines, addressed in his name to Ronsard, have been attributed to him:

*La lyre, qui ravit par de si doux accords,  
Te soumet les esprits dont je n'ai que les corps;  
Le maître elle t'en rend, et te fait introduire  
Où le plus fier tyran ne peut avoir d'empire.*

The lyre's delightful softly swelling lay



Subdues the mind, I but the body sway;  
Make thee its master, thy sweet art can bind  
What haughty tyrants cannot rule – the mind.

These lines are good. But are they his? Are they not his preceptor's? Here are some of his royal imaginings, which are somewhat different:

*Il faut suivre ton roi qui t'aime par sur tous  
Pour les vers qui de toi coulent braves et doux;  
Et crois, si tu ne viens me trouver à Pontoise,  
Qu'entre nous adviendra une très-grande noise.*

Know, thou must follow close thy king, who oft  
Hath heard, and loves thee for, thy verse so soft;  
Unless thou come and meet me at Pontoise,  
Believe me, I shall make no little noise.

These are worthy the author of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Cæsar's lines on Terence are written with rather more spirit and taste; they breathe Roman urbanity. In those of Francis I. and Charles IX. we find the barbarism of the Celts. Would to God that Charles IX. had written more verses, even though bad ones! For constant application to the fine arts softens the manners and dispels ferocity:

Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros.

Besides, the French languages scarcely began to take any form until long after Charles IX. See such of Francis I.'s letters as have been preserved: "*Tout est perdu hors l'honneur*" – "All is lost save honor" – was worthy of a chevalier. But the following is neither in the style of Cicero nor in that of Cæsar:

*"Tout a fleure ynsi que je me voloys mettre o lit est arrivé Laval qui m'a aporté la serteneté du lévement du siege."*

"All was going so well that, when I was going to bed Laval arrived, and brought me the certainty of the siege being raised."

We have letters from the hand of Louis XIII., which are no better written. It is not required of a king to write letters like Pliny, or verses like Virgil; but no one can be excused from expressing himself with propriety in his own tongue. Every prince that writes like a lady's maid has been ill educated.

# CHINA

## SECTION I

We have frequently observed elsewhere, how rash and injudicious it is to controvert with any nation, such as the Chinese, its authentic pretensions. There is no house in Europe, the antiquity of which is so well proved as that of the Empire of China. Let us figure to ourselves a learned Maronite of Mount Athos questioning the nobility of the Morozini, the Tiepolo, and other ancient houses of Venice; of the princes of Germany, of the Montmorencys, the Chatillons, or the Talleyrands, of France, under the pretence that they are not mentioned in St. Thomas, or St. Bonaventure. We must impeach either his sense or his sincerity.

Many of the learned of our northern climes have felt confounded at the antiquity claimed by the Chinese. The question, however, is not one of learning. Leaving all the Chinese literati, all the mandarins, all the emperors, to acknowledge Fohi as one of the first who gave laws to China, about two thousand five hundred years before our vulgar era; admit that there must be people before there are kings. Allow that a long period of time is necessary before a numerous people, having discovered the

necessary arts of life, unite in the choice of a common governor. But if you do not make these admissions, it is not of the slightest consequence. Whether you agree with us or not, we shall always believe that two and two make four.

In a western province, formerly called Celtica, the love of singularity and paradox has been carried so far as to induce some to assert that the Chinese were only an Egyptian, or rather perhaps a Phœnician colony. It was attempted to prove, in the same way as a thousand other things have been proved, that a king of Egypt, called Menes by the Greeks, was the Chinese King Yu; and that Atoes was Ki, by the change of certain letters. In addition to which, the following is a specimen of the reasoning applied to the subject:

The Egyptians sometimes lighted torches at night. The Chinese light lanterns: the Chinese are, therefore, evidently a colony from Egypt. The Jesuit Parennin who had, at the time, resided five and twenty years in China, and was master both of its language and its sciences, has rejected all these fancies with a happy mixture of elegance and sarcasm. All the missionaries, and all the Chinese, on receiving the intelligence that a country in the extremity of the west was developing a new formation of the Chinese Empire, treated it with a contemptuous ridicule. Father Parennin replied with somewhat more seriousness: "Your Egyptians," said he, "when going to people China, must evidently have passed through India." Was India at that time peopled or not? If it was, would it permit a foreign army to pass through it? If

it was not, would not the Egyptians have stopped in India? Would they have continued their journey through barren deserts, and over almost impracticable mountains, till they reached China, in order to form colonies there, when they might so easily have established them on the fertile banks of the Indus or the Ganges?

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