

VOLTAIRE

A PHILOSOPHICAL
DICTIONARY, VOLUME
04

Voltaire
A Philosophical
Dictionary, Volume 04

http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=25560836

A Philosophical Dictionary, Volume 04:

Содержание

COUNTRY	4
CRIMES OR OFFENCES	11
CRIMINAL	18
CROMWELL	28
CUISSAGE	37
CURATE (OF THE COUNTRY)	40
CURIOSITY	44
CUSTOMS – USAGES	49
CYRUS	50
DANTE	55
DAVID	58
DECRETALS	63
DELUGE (UNIVERSAL)	71
DEMOCRACY	76
DEMONIACS	84
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	86

François-Marie Arouet (AKA Voltaire) A Philosophical Dictionary, Volume 04

COUNTRY

SECTION I

According to our custom, we confine ourselves on this subject to the statement of a few queries which we cannot resolve. Has a Jew a country? If he is born at Coimbra, it is in the midst of a crowd of ignorant and absurd persons, who will dispute with him, and to whom he makes foolish answers, if he dare reply at all. He is surrounded by inquisitors, who would burn him if they knew that he declined to eat bacon, and all his wealth would belong to them. Is Coimbra *his* country? Can he exclaim, like the Horatii in Corneille:

*Mourir pour la patrie est un si digne sort
Qu'on briguerait en foule, une si belle mort.*

So high his meed who for his country dies,
Men should contend to gain the glorious prize.

He might as well exclaim, "fiddlestick!" Again! is Jerusalem his country? He has probably heard of his ancestors of old; that they had formerly inhabited a sterile and stony country, which is bordered by a horrible desert, of which little country the Turks are at present masters, but derive little or nothing from it. Jerusalem is, therefore, not his country. In short, he has no country: there is not a square foot of land on the globe which belongs to him.

The Gueber, more ancient, and a hundred times more respectable than the Jew, a slave of the Turks, the Persians, or the Great Mogul, can he regard as his country the fire-altars which he raises in secret among the mountains? The Banian, the Armenian, who pass their lives in wandering through all the east, in the capacity of money-brokers, can they exclaim, "My dear country, my dear country" – who have no other country than their purses and their account-books?

Among the nations of Europe, all those cut-throats who let out their services to hire, and sell their blood to the first king who will purchase it – have they a country? Not so much so as a bird of prey, who returns every evening to the hollow of the rock where its mother built its nest! The monks – will they venture to say that they have a country? It is in heaven, they say. All in good

time; but in this world I know nothing about one.

This expression, "my country," how sounds it from the mouth of a Greek, who, altogether ignorant of the previous existence of a Miltiades, an Agesilaus, only knows that he is the slave of a Miltiades, who is the slave of an aga, who is the slave of a pasha, who is the slave of a vizier, who is the slave of an individual whom we call, in Paris, the Grand Turk?

What, then, is country? – Is it not, probably, a good piece of ground, in the midst of which the owner, residing in a well-built and commodious house, may say: "This field which I cultivate, this house which I have built, is my own; I live under the protection of laws which no tyrant can infringe. When those who, like me, possess fields and houses assemble for their common interests, I have a voice in such assembly. I am a part of the whole, one of the community, a portion of the sovereignty: behold my country!" What cannot be included in this description too often amounts to little beyond studs of horses under the command of a groom, who employs the whip at his pleasure. People may have a country under a good king, but never under a bad one.

SECTION II

A young pastry-cook who had been to college, and who had mustered some phrases from Cicero, gave himself airs one day about loving his country. "What dost thou mean by country?"

said a neighbor to him. "Is it thy oven? Is it the village where thou wast born, which thou hast never seen, and to which thou wilt never return? Is it the street in which thy father and mother reside? Is it the town hall, where thou wilt never become so much as a clerk or an alderman? Is it the church of Notre Dame, in which thou hast not been able to obtain a place among the boys of the choir, although a very silly person, who is archbishop and duke, obtains from it an annual income of twenty-four thousand louis d'or?"

The young pastry-cook knew not how to reply; and a person of reflection, who overheard the conversation, was led to infer that a country of moderate extent may contain many millions of men who have no country at all. And thou, voluptuous Parisian, who hast never made a longer voyage than to Dieppe, to feed upon fresh sea-fish – who art acquainted only with thy splendid town-house, thy pretty villa in the country, thy box at that opera which all the world makes it a point to feel tiresome but thyself – who speakest thy own language agreeably enough, because thou art ignorant of every other; thou lovest all this, no doubt, as well as thy brilliant champagne from Rheims, and thy rents, payable every six months; and loving these, thou dwellest upon thy love for thy country.

Speaking conscientiously, can a financier cordially love his country? Where was the country of the duke of Guise, surnamed Balafré – at Nancy, at Paris, at Madrid, or at Rome? What country had your cardinals Balue, Duprat, Lorraine, and

Mazarin? Where was the country of Attila situated, or that of a hundred other heroes of the same kind, who, although eternally travelling, make themselves always at home? I should be much obliged to any one who would acquaint me with the country of Abraham.

The first who observed that every land is our country in which we "do well," was, I believe, Euripides, in his "*Phædo*":

"Ὡς παντακῶς γε πατρίς βοσκοῦσα γῆ."

The first man, however, who left the place of his birth to seek a greater share of welfare in another, said it before him.

SECTION III

A country is a composition of many families; and as a family is commonly supported on the principle of self-love, when, by an opposing interest, the same self-love extends to our town, our province, or our nation, it is called love of country. The greater a country becomes, the less we love it; for love is weakened by diffusion. It is impossible to love a family so numerous that all the members can scarcely be known.

He who is burning with ambition to be edile, tribune, prætor, consul, or dictator, exclaims that he loves his country, while he loves only himself. Every man wishes to possess the power of sleeping quietly at home, and of preventing any other man

from possessing the power of sending him to sleep elsewhere. Every one would be certain of his property and his life. Thus, all forming the same wishes, the particular becomes the general interest. The welfare of the republic is spoken of, while all that is signified is love of self.

It is impossible that a state was ever formed on earth, which was not governed in the first instance as a republic: it is the natural march of human nature. On the discovery of America, all the people were found divided into republics; there were but two kingdoms in all that part of the world. Of a thousand nations, but two were found subjugated.

It was the same in the ancient world; all was republican in Europe before the little kinglings of Etruria and of Rome. There are yet republics in Africa: the Hottentots, towards the south, still live as people are said to have lived in the first ages of the world – free, equal, without masters, without subjects, without money, and almost without wants. The flesh of their sheep feeds them; they are clothed with their skins; huts of wood and clay form their habitations. They are the most dirty of all men, but they feel it not, but live and die more easily than we do. There remain eight republics in Europe without monarchs – Venice, Holland, Switzerland, Genoa, Lucca, Ragusa, Geneva, and San Marino. Poland, Sweden, and England may be regarded as republics under a king, but Poland is the only one of them which takes the name.

But which of the two is to be preferred for a country – a

monarchy or a republic? The question has been agitated for four thousand years. Ask the rich, and they will tell you an aristocracy; ask the people, and they will reply a democracy; kings alone prefer royalty. Why, then, is almost all the earth governed by monarchs? Put that question to the rats who proposed to hang a bell around the cat's neck. In truth, the genuine reason is, because men are rarely worthy of governing themselves.

It is lamentable, that to be a good patriot we must become the enemy of the rest of mankind. That good citizen, the ancient Cato, always gave it as his opinion, that Carthage must be destroyed: "*Delenda est Carthago.*" To be a good patriot is to wish our own country enriched by commerce, and powerful by arms; but such is the condition of mankind, that to wish the greatness of our own country is often to wish evil to our neighbors. He who could bring himself to wish that his country should always remain as it is, would be a citizen of the universe.

CRIMES OR OFFENCES

Of Time and Place.

A Roman in Egypt very unfortunately killed a consecrated cat, and the infuriated people punished this sacrilege by tearing him to pieces. If this Roman had been carried before the tribunal, and the judges had possessed common sense, he would have been condemned to ask pardon of the Egyptians and the cats, and to pay a heavy fine, either in money or mice. They would have told him that he ought to respect the follies of the people, since he was not strong enough to correct them.

The venerable chief justice should have spoken to him in this manner: "Every country has its legal impertinences, and its offences of time and place. If in your Rome, which has become the sovereign of Europe, Africa, and Asia Minor, you were to kill a sacred fowl, at the precise time that you give it grain in order to ascertain the just will of the gods, you would be severely punished. We believe that you have only killed our cat accidentally. The court admonishes you. Go in peace, and be more circumspect in future."

It seems a very indifferent thing to have a statue in our hall; but if, when Octavius, surnamed Augustus, was absolute master, a Roman had placed in his house the statue of Brutus, he would have been punished as seditious. If a citizen, under a reigning emperor, had the statue of the competitor to the empire, it is said

that it was accounted a crime of high treason.

An Englishman, having nothing to do, went to Rome, where he met Prince Charles Edward at the house of a cardinal. Pleased at the incident, on his return he drank in a tavern to the health of Prince Charles Edward, and was immediately accused of high treason. But whom did he highly betray in wishing the prince well? If he had conspired to place him on the throne, then he would have been guilty towards the nation; but I do not see that the most rigid justice of parliament could require more from him than to drink four cups to the health of the house of Hanover, supposing he had drunk two to the house of Stuart.

Of Crimes of Time and Place, which Ought to Be Concealed.

It is well known how much our Lady of Loretto ought to be respected in the March of Ancona. Three young people happened to be joking on the house of our lady, which has travelled through the air to Dalmatia; which has two or three times changed its situation, and has only found itself comfortable at Loretto. Our three scatterbrains sang a song at supper, formerly made by a Huguenot, in ridicule of the translation of the *santa casa* of Jerusalem to the end of the Adriatic Gulf. A fanatic, having heard by chance what passed at their supper, made strict inquiries, sought witnesses, and engaged a magistrate to issue a summons. This proceeding alarmed all consciences. Every one trembled in speaking of it. Chambermaids, vergers, inn-keepers, lackeys, servants, all heard what was never said, and saw what was never done: there was an uproar, a horrible scandal

throughout the whole March of Ancona. It was said, half a league from Loretto, that these youths had killed our lady; and a league farther, that they had thrown the *santa casa* into the sea. In short, they were condemned. The sentence was, that their hands should be cut off, and their tongues be torn out; after which they were to be put to the torture, to learn – at least by signs – how many couplets there were in the song. Finally, they were to be burnt to death by a slow fire.

An advocate of Milan, who happened to be at Loretto at this time, asked the principal judge to what he would have condemned these boys if they had violated their mother, and afterwards killed and eaten her? "Oh!" replied the judge, "there is a great deal of difference; to assassinate and devour their father and mother is only a crime against men." "Have you an express law," said the Milanese, "which obliges you to put young people scarcely out of their nurseries to such a horrible death, for having indiscreetly made game of the *santa casa*, which is contemptuously laughed at all over the world, except in the March of Ancona?" "No," said the judge, "the wisdom of our jurisprudence leaves all to our discretion." "Very well, you ought to have discretion enough to remember that one of these children is the grandson of a general who has shed his blood for his country, and the nephew of an amiable and respectable abbess; the youth and his companions are giddy boys, who deserve paternal correction. You tear citizens from the state, who might one day serve it; you imbrue yourself in innocent blood,

and are more cruel than cannibals. You will render yourselves execrable to posterity. What motive has been powerful enough, thus to extinguish reason, justice, and humanity in your minds, and to change you into ferocious beasts?" The unhappy judge at last replied: "We have been quarrelling with the clergy of Ancona; they accuse us of being too zealous for the liberties of the Lombard Church, and consequently of having no religion." "I understand, then," said the Milanese, "that you have made yourselves assassins to appear Christians." At these words the judge fell to the ground, as if struck by a thunderbolt; and his brother judges having been since deprived of office, they cry out that injustice is done them. They forget what they have done, and perceive not that the hand of God is upon them.

For seven persons legally to amuse themselves by making an eighth perish on a public scaffold by blows from iron bars; take a secret and malignant pleasure in witnessing his torments; speak of it afterwards at table with their wives and neighbors; for the executioners to perform this office gaily, and joyously anticipate their reward; for the public to run to this spectacle as to a fair – all this requires that a crime merit this horrid punishment in the opinion of all well-governed nations, and, as we here treat of universal humanity, that it is necessary to the well-being of society. Above all, the actual perpetration should be demonstrated beyond contradiction. If against a hundred thousand probabilities that the accused be guilty there is a single one that he is innocent, that alone should balance all the rest.

Query: Are Two Witnesses Enough to Condemn a Man to be Hanged?

It has been for a long time imagined, and the proverb assures us, that two witnesses are enough to hang a man, with a safe conscience. Another ambiguity! The world, then, is to be governed by equivoques. It is said in St. Matthew that two or three witnesses will suffice to reconcile two divided friends; and after this text has criminal jurisprudence been regulated, so far as to decree that by divine law a citizen may be condemned to die on the uniform deposition of two witnesses who may be villains? It has been already said that a crowd of according witnesses cannot prove an improbable thing when denied by the accused. What, then, must be done in such a case? Put off the judgment for a hundred years, like the Athenians!

We shall here relate a striking example of what passed under our eyes at Lyons. A woman suddenly missed her daughter; she ran everywhere in search of her in vain, and at length suspected a neighbor of having secreted the girl, and of having caused her violation. Some weeks after some fishermen found a female drowned, and in a state of putrefaction, in the Rhône at Condmeux. The woman of whom we have spoken immediately believed that it was her daughter. She was persuaded by the enemies of her neighbor that the latter had caused the deceased to be dishonored, strangled, and thrown into the Rhône. She made this accusation publicly, and the populace repeated it; persons were found who knew the minutest circumstances of the crime.

The rumor ran through all the town, and all mouths cried out for vengeance. There is nothing more common than this in a populace without judgment; but here follows the most prodigious part of the affair. This neighbor's own son, a child of five years and a half old, accused his mother of having caused the unhappy girl who was found in the Rhône to be violated before his eyes, and to be held by five men, while the sixth committed the crime. He had heard the words which pronounced her violated; he painted her attitudes; he saw his mother and these villains strangle this unfortunate girl after the consummation of the act. He also saw his mother and the assassins throw her into a well, draw her out of it, wrap her up in a cloth, carry her about in triumph, dance round the corpse, and, at last, throw her into the Rhône. The judges were obliged to put all the pretended accomplices deposed against in chains. The child is again heard, and still maintains, with the simplicity of his age, all that he had said of them and of his mother. How could it be imagined that this child had not spoken the pure truth? The crime was not probable, but it was still less so that a child of the age of five years and a half should thus calumniate his mother, and repeat with exactness all the circumstances of an abominable and unheard-of crime; if he had not been the eye-witness of it, and been overcome with the force of the truth, such things would not have been wrung from him.

Every one expected to feast his eyes on the torment of the accused; but what was the end of this strange criminal process?

There was not a word of truth in the accusation. There was no girl violated, no young men assembled at the house of the accused, no murder, not the least transaction of the sort, nor the least noise. The child had been suborned; and by whom? Strange, but true, by two other children, who were the sons of the accused. He had been on the point of burning his mother to get some sweetmeats.

The heads of the accusation were clearly incompatible. The sage and enlightened court of judicature, after having yielded to the public fury so far as to seek every possible testimony for and against the accused, fully and unanimously acquitted them. Formerly, perhaps, this innocent prisoner would have been broken on the wheel, or judicially burned, for the pleasure of supplying an execution – the tragedy of the mob.

CRIMINAL

Criminal Prosecution.

Very innocent actions have been frequently punished with death. Thus in England, Richard III., and Edward IV., effected by the judges the condemnation of those whom they suspected of disaffection. Such are not criminal processes; they are assassinations committed by privileged murderers. It is the last degree of abuse to make the laws the instruments of injustice.

It is said that the Athenians punished with death every stranger who entered their areopagus or sovereign tribunal. But if this stranger was actuated by mere curiosity, nothing was more cruel than to take away his life. It is observed, in "The Spirit of Laws," that this vigor was exercised, "because he usurped the rights of a citizen."

But a Frenchman in London who goes to the House of Commons to hear the debates, does not aspire to the rights of a citizen. He is received with politeness. If any splenetic member calls for the clearing of the house, the traveller clears it by withdrawing; he is not hanged. It is probable that, if the Athenians passed this temporary law, it was at a time when it was suspected that every stranger might be a spy, and not from the fear that he would arrogate to himself the rights of citizenship. Every Athenian voted in his tribe; all the individuals in the tribe knew each other; no stranger could have put in his bean.

We speak here only of a real criminal prosecution, and among the Romans every criminal prosecution was public. The citizen accused of the most enormous crimes had an advocate who pleaded in his presence; who even interrogated the adverse party; who investigated everything before his judges. All the witnesses, for and against, were produced in open court; nothing was secret. Cicero pleaded for Milo, who had assassinated Clodius, in the presence of a thousand citizens. The same Cicero undertook the defence of Roscius Amerinus, accused of parricide. A single judge did not in secret examine witnesses, generally consisting of the dregs of the people, who may be influenced at pleasure.

A Roman citizen was not put to the torture at the arbitrary order of another Roman citizen, invested with this cruel authority by purchase. That horrible outrage against humanity was not perpetrated on the persons of those who were regarded as the first of men, but only on those of their slaves, scarcely regarded as men. It would have been better not to have employed torture, even against slaves.

The method of conducting a criminal prosecution at Rome accorded with the magnanimity and liberality of the nation. It is nearly the same in London. The assistance of an advocate is never in any case refused. Every one is judged by his peers. Every citizen has the power, out of thirty-six jurymen sworn, to challenge twelve without reasons, twelve with reasons, and, consequently, of choosing his judges in the remaining twelve. The judges cannot deviate from or go beyond the law. No

punishment is arbitrary. No judgment can be executed before it has been reported to the king, who may, and who ought to bestow pardon on those who are deserving of it, and to whom the law cannot extend it. This case frequently occurs. A man outrageously wronged kills the offender under the impulse of venial passion; he is condemned by the rigor of the law, and saved by that mercy which ought to be the prerogative of the sovereign.

It deserves particular remark that in the same country where the laws are as favorable to the accused as they are terrible for the guilty, not only is false imprisonment in ordinary cases punished by heavy damages and severe penalties, but if an illegal imprisonment has been ordered by a minister of state, under color of royal authority, that minister may be condemned to pay damages corresponding to the imprisonment.

Proceedings in Criminal Cases Among Particular Nations.

There are countries in which criminal jurisprudence has been founded on the canon law, and even on the practice of the Inquisition, although that tribunal has long since been held in detestation there. The people in such countries still remain in a species of slavery. A citizen prosecuted by the king's officer is at once immured in a dungeon, which is in itself a real punishment of perhaps an innocent man. A single judge, with his clerk, hears secretly and in succession, every witness summoned.

Let us here merely compare, in a few points, the criminal procedure of the Romans with that of a country of the west, which was once a Roman province. Among the Romans,

witnesses were heard publicly in the presence of the accused, who might reply to them, and examine them himself, or through an advocate. This practice was noble and frank; it breathed of Roman magnanimity. In France, in many parts of Germany, everything is done in secret. This practice, established under Francis I., was authorized by the commissioners, who, in 1670, drew up the ordinance of Louis XIV. A mere mistake was the cause of it.

It was imagined, on reading the code "*De Testibus*" that the words, *Testes intrare judicii secretum*, signified that witnesses were examined in secret. But *secretum* here signifies the chambers of the judge. *Intrare secretum* to express speaking in secret, would not be Latin. This part of our jurisprudence was occasioned by a solecism. Witnesses were usually persons of the lowest class, and whom the judge, when closeted with them, might induce to say whatever he wished. These witnesses are examined a second time, always in secret, which is called, re-examination; and if, after re-examination, they retract their depositions, or vary them in essential circumstances, they are punished as false witnesses. Thus, when an upright man of weak understanding, and unused to express his ideas, is conscious that he has stated either too much or too little – that he has misunderstood the judge, or that the judge has misunderstood him – and revokes, in the spirit of justice, what he has advanced through incaution, he is punished as a felon. He is in this manner often compelled to persevere in false testimony, from the actual

dread of being treated as a false witness.

The person accused exposes himself by flight to condemnation, whether the crime has been proved or not. Some juriconsults, indeed, have wisely held that the contumacious person ought not to be condemned unless the crime were clearly established; but other lawyers have been of a contrary opinion: they have boldly affirmed that the flight of the accused was a proof of the crime; that the contempt which he showed for justice, by refusing to appear, merited the same chastisement as would have followed his conviction. Thus, according to the sect of lawyers which the judge may have embraced, an innocent man may be acquitted or condemned.

It is a great abuse in jurisprudence that people often assume as law the reveries and errors – sometimes cruel ones – of men destitute of all authority, who have laid down their own opinions as laws. In the reign of Louis XIV., two edicts were published in France, which apply equally to the whole kingdom. In the first, which refers to civil causes, the judges are forbidden to condemn in any suit, on default, when the demand is not proved; but in the second, which regulates criminal proceedings, it is not laid down that, in the absence of proof, the accused shall be acquitted. Singular circumstance! The law declares that a man proceeded against for a sum of money shall not be condemned, on default, unless the debt be proved; but, in cases affecting life, the profession is divided with respect to condemning a person for contumacy when the crime is not proved; and the law does

not solve the difficulty.

Example Taken from the Condemnation of a Whole Family.

The following is an account of what happened to an unfortunate family, at the time when the mad fraternities of pretended penitents, in white robes and masks, had erected, in one of the principal churches of Toulouse, a superb monument to a young Protestant, who had destroyed himself, but who they pretended had been murdered by his father and mother for having abjured the reformed religion; at the time when the whole family of this Protestant, then revered as a martyr, were in irons, and a whole population, intoxicated by a superstition equally senseless and cruel, awaited with devout impatience the delight of seeing five or six persons of unblemished integrity expire on the rack or at the stake. At this dreadful period there resided near Castres a respectable man, also of the Protestant religion, of the name of Sirven, who exercised in that province the profession of a feudist. This man had three daughters. A woman who superintended the household of the bishop of Castres, proposed to bring to him Sirven's second daughter, called Elizabeth, in order to make her a Catholic, apostolical and Roman. She is, in fact, brought. She is by him secluded with the female Jesuits, denominated the "lady teachers," or the "black ladies." They instruct her in what they know; they find her capacity weak, and impose upon her penances in order to inculcate doctrines which, with gentleness, she might have been taught. She becomes imbecile; the "black ladies" expel her; she returns to her parents;

her mother, on making her change her linen, perceives that her person is covered with contusions; her imbecility increases; she becomes melancholy mad; she escapes one day from the house, while her father is some miles distant, publicly occupied in his business, at the seat of a neighboring nobleman. In short, twenty days after the flight of Elizabeth, some children find her drowned in a well, on January 4, 1761.

This was precisely the time when they were preparing to break Calas on the wheel at Toulouse. The word "parricide," and what is worse, "Huguenot," flies from mouth to mouth throughout the province. It was not doubted that Sirven, his wife, and his two daughters, had drowned the third, on a principle of religion.

It was the universal opinion that the Protestant religion positively required fathers and mothers to destroy such of their children as might wish to become Catholics. This opinion had taken such deep root in the minds even of magistrates themselves, hurried on unfortunately by the public clamor, that the Council and Church of Geneva were obliged to contradict the fatal error, and to send to the parliament of Toulouse an attestation upon oath that not only did Protestants not destroy their children, but that they were left masters of their whole property when they quitted their sect for another. It is known that, notwithstanding this attestation, Calas was broken on the wheel.

A country magistrate of the name of Londes, assisted by graduates as sagacious as himself, became eager to make every preparation for following up the example which had been

furnished at Toulouse. A village doctor, equally enlightened with the magistrate, boldly affirmed, on inspecting the body after the expiration of eighteen days, that the young woman had been strangled, and afterwards thrown into the well. On this deposition the magistrate issued a warrant to apprehend the father, mother, and the two daughters. The family, justly terrified at the catastrophe of Calas, and agreeably to the advice of their friends, betook themselves instantly to flight; they travelled amidst snow during a rigorous winter, and, toiling over mountain after mountain, at length arrived at those of Switzerland. The daughter, who was married and pregnant, was prematurely delivered amidst surrounding ice.

The first intelligence this family received, after reaching a place of safety, was that the father and mother were condemned to be hanged; the two daughters to remain under the gallows during the execution of their mother, and to be reconducted by the executioner out of the territory, under pain of being hanged if they returned. Such is the lesson given to contumacy!

This judgment was equally absurd and abominable. If the father, in concert with his wife, had strangled his daughter, he ought to have been broken on the wheel, like Calas, and the mother to have been burned – at least, after having been strangled – because the practice of breaking women on the wheel is not yet the custom in the country of this judge. To limit the punishment to hanging in such a case, was an acknowledgment that the crime was not proved, and that in the doubt the halter was adopted

to compromise for want of evidence. This sentence was equally repugnant to law and reason. The mother died of a broken heart, and the whole family, their property having been confiscated, would have perished through want, unless they had met with assistance.

We stop here to inquire whether there be any law and any reason that can justify such a sentence? We ask the judge, "What madness has urged you to condemn a father and a mother?" "It was because they fled," he replies. "Miserable wretch, would you have had them remain to glut your insensate fury? Of what consequence could it be, whether they appeared in chains to plead before you, or whether in a distant land they lifted up their hands in an appeal to heaven against you? Could you not see the truth, which ought to have struck you, as well during their absence? Could you not see that the father was a league distant from his daughter, in the midst of twenty persons, when the unfortunate young woman withdrew from her mother's protection? Could you be ignorant that the whole family were in search of her for twenty days and nights?" To this you answer by the words, contumacy, contumacy. What! because a man is absent, therefore must he be condemned to be hanged, though his innocence be manifest? It is the jurisprudence of a fool and a monster. And the life, the property, and the honor of citizens, are to depend upon this code of Iroquois!

The Sirven family for more than eight years dragged on their misfortunes, far from their native country. At length,

the sanguinary superstition which disgraced Languedoc having been somewhat mitigated, and men's minds becoming more enlightened, those who had befriended the Sirvens during their exile, advised them to return and demand justice from the parliament of Toulouse itself, now that the blood of Calas no longer smoked, and many repented of having ever shed it. The Sirvens were justified.

Erudimini, qui judicatis terram.

Be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

CROMWELL

SECTION I

Cromwell is described as a man who was an impostor all his life. I can scarcely believe it. I conceive that he was first an enthusiast, and that he afterwards made his fanaticism instrumental to his greatness. An ardent novice at twenty often becomes an accomplished rogue at forty. In the great game of human life, men begin with being dupes, and end in becoming knaves. A statesman engages as his almoner a monk, entirely made up of the details of his convent, devout, credulous, awkward, perfectly new to the world; he acquires information, polish, finesse, and supplants his master.

Cromwell knew not, at first, whether he should become a churchman or a soldier. He partly became both. In 1622 he made a campaign in the army of the prince of Orange, Frederick Henry, a great man and the brother of two great men; and, on his return to England, engaged in the service of Bishop Williams, and was the chaplain of his lordship, while the bishop passed for his wife's gallant. His principles were puritanical, which led him to cordially hate a bishop, and not to be partial to kingship. He was dismissed from the family of Bishop Williams because he

was a Puritan; and thence the origin of his fortune. The English Parliament declared against monarchy and against episcopacy; some friends whom he had in that parliament procured him a country living. He might be said only now to have commenced his existence; he was more than forty before he acquired any distinction. He was master of the sacred Scriptures, disputed on the authority of priests and deacons, wrote some bad sermons, and some lampoons; but he was unknown. I have seen one of his sermons, which is insipid enough, and pretty much resembles the holdings forth of the Quakers; it is impossible to discover in it any trace of that power by which he afterwards swayed parliaments. The truth is, he was better fitted for the State than for the Church. It was principally in his tone and in his air that his eloquence consisted. An inclination of that hand which had gained so many battles, and killed so many royalists, was more persuasive than the periods of Cicero. It must be acknowledged that it was his incomparable valor that brought him into notice, and which conducted him gradually to the summit of greatness.

He commenced by throwing himself, as a volunteer and a soldier of fortune, into the town of Hull, besieged, by the king. He there performed some brilliant and valuable services, for which he received a gratuity of about six thousand francs from the parliament. The present, bestowed by parliament upon an adventurer, made it clear that the rebel party must prevail. The king could not give to his general officers what the parliament gave to volunteers. With money and fanaticism, everything must

in the end be mastered. Cromwell was made colonel. His great talents for war became then so conspicuous that, when the parliament created the earl of Manchester general of its forces, Cromwell was appointed lieutenant-general, without his having passed through the intervening ranks. Never did any man appear more worthy of command. Never was seen more activity and skill, more daring and more resources, than in Cromwell. He is wounded at the battle of York, and, while undergoing the first dressing, is informed that his commander, the earl of Manchester, is retreating, and the battle lost. He hastens to find the earl; discovers him flying, with some officers; catches him by the arm, and, in a firm and dignified tone, he exclaims: "My lord, you mistake; the enemy has not taken that road." He reconducts him to the field of battle; rallies, during the night, more than twelve thousand men; harangues them in the name of God; cites Moses, Gideon, and Joshua; renews the battle at daybreak against the victorious royalist army, and completely defeats it. Such a man must either perish or obtain the mastery. Almost all the officers of his army were enthusiasts, who carried the New Testament on their saddle-bows. In the army, as in the parliament, nothing was spoken of but Babylon destroyed, building up the worship of Jerusalem, and breaking the image. Cromwell, among so many madmen, was no longer one himself, and thought it better to govern than to be governed by them. The habit of preaching, as by inspiration, remained with him. Figure to yourself a fakir, who, after putting an iron girdle round his

loins in penance, takes it off to drub the ears of other fakirs. Such was Cromwell. He becomes as intriguing as he was intrepid. He associates with all the colonels of the army, and thus forms among the troops a republic which forces the commander to resign. Another commander is appointed, and him he disgusts. He governs the army, and through it he governs the parliament; which he at last compels to make him commander. All this is much; but the essential point is that he wins all the battles he fights in England, Scotland, and Ireland; and wins them, not consulting his own security while the fight rages, but always charging the enemy, rallying his troops, presenting himself everywhere, frequently wounded, killing with his own hands many royalist officers, like the fiercest soldier in the ranks.

In the midst of this dreadful war Cromwell made love; he went, with the Bible under his arm, to an assignation with the wife of his major-general, Lambert. She loved the earl of Holland, who served in the king's army. Cromwell took him prisoner in battle, and had the pleasure of bringing his rival to the block. It was his maxim to shed the blood of every important enemy, in the field or by the hand of the executioner. He always increased his power by always daring to abuse it; the profoundness of his plans never lessened his ferocious impetuosity. He went to the House of Commons, and drove all the members out, one after another, making them defile before him. As they passed, each was obliged to make a profound reverence; one of them was passing on with his head covered;

Cromwell seized his hat and threw it down. "Learn," said he, "to respect me."

When he had outraged all kings by beheading his own legitimate king, and he began himself to reign, he sent his portrait to one crowned head, Christina, queen of Sweden. Marvel, a celebrated English poet, who wrote excellent Latin verses, accompanied his portrait with six lines, in which he introduces Cromwell himself speaking; Cromwell corrected these two last verses:

At tibi submittit frontem reverentior umbra,
Non sunt hi vultus regibus usque truces.

The spirit of the whole six verses may be given thus:

*Les armes à la main j'ai défendu les lois;
D'un peuple audacieux j'ai vengé la querelle.
Regardez sans frémir cette image fidèle:
Mon front n'est pas toujours l'épouvante des rois.*

'Twas mine by arms t'uphold my country's laws;
My sword maintained a lofty people's cause;
With less of fear these faithful outlines trace,
Menace of kings not always clouds my face.

This queen was the first to acknowledge him after he became protector of the three kingdoms. Almost all the sovereigns of Europe sent ambassadors *to their brother Cromwell*— to that

domestic of a bishop, who had just brought to the scaffold a sovereign related to them. They emulously courted his alliance. Cardinal Mazarin, in order to please him, banished from France the two sons of Charles I., the two grandsons of Henry IV., and the two cousins-german of Louis XIV. France conquered Dunkirk for him, and the keys of it were delivered into his possession. After his death, Louis XIV. and his whole court went into mourning, except mademoiselle, who dared to appear in the circle in colors, and alone to maintain the honor of her race.

No king was ever more absolute than Cromwell. He would observe "that he had preferred governing under the name of protector rather than under that of king, because the English were aware of the limits of the prerogative of a king of England, but knew not the extent of that of a protector." This was knowing mankind, who are governed by opinion, and whose opinion depends upon a name. He had conceived a profound contempt for the religion to which he owed his success. An anecdote, preserved in the St. John family, sufficiently proves the slight regard he attached to that instrument which had produced such mighty effects in his hands. He was drinking once in company with Ireton, Fleetwood, and St. John, great grandfather of the celebrated Lord Bolingbroke; a bottle of wine was to be uncorked, and the corkscrew fell under the table; they all looked for it, and were unable to find it. In the meantime a deputation from the Presbyterian churches awaited in the ante-chamber, and an usher announced them. "Tell them," said Cromwell,

"that I have retired, and *that I am seeking the Lord*." This was the expression employed by the fanatics for going to prayers. Having dismissed the troop of divines, he thus addressed his companions: "Those fellows think we are seeking the Lord, while we are only seeking a corkscrew."

There is scarcely any example in Europe of a man who, from so low a beginning, raised himself to such eminence. But with all his great talents, what did he consider absolutely essential to his happiness? Power he obtained; but was he happy? He had lived in poverty and disquiet till the age of forty-three; he afterwards plunged into blood, passed his life in trouble, and died prematurely, at the age of fifty-seven. With this life let any one compare that of a Newton, who lived fourscore years, always tranquil, always honored, always the light of all thinking beings; beholding every day an accession to his fame, his character, his fortune; completely free both from care and remorse; and let him decide whose was the happier lot.

O curas hominum! O quantim est in rebus inane!
O human cares! O mortal toil how vain!

SECTION II

Oliver Cromwell was regarded with admiration by the Puritans and Independents of England; he is still their hero. But

Richard Cromwell, his son, is the man for me. The first was a fanatic who in the present day would be hissed down in the House of Commons, on uttering any one of the unintelligible absurdities which he delivered with such confidence before other fanatics who listened to him with open mouth and staring eyes, in the name of the Lord. If he were to say that they must seek the Lord, and fight the battles of the Lord – if he were to introduce the Jewish jargon into the parliament of England, to the eternal disgrace of the human understanding, he would be much more likely to be conducted to Bedlam than to be appointed the commander of armies.

Brave he unquestionably was – and so are wolves; there are even some monkeys as fierce as tigers. From a fanatic he became an able politician; in other words, from a wolf he became a fox, and the knave, craftily mounting from the first steps where the mad enthusiasm of the times had placed him, to the summit of greatness, walked over the heads of the prostrated fanatics. He reigned, but he lived in the horrors of alarm and had neither cheerful days nor tranquil nights. The consolations of friendship and society never approached him. He died prematurely, more deserving, beyond a doubt, of public execution than the monarch whom, from a window of his own palace, he caused to be led out to the scaffold.

Richard Cromwell, on the contrary, was gentle and prudent and refused to keep his father's power at the expense of the lives of three or four factious persons whom he might have sacrificed

to his ambition. He preferred becoming a private individual to being an assassin with supreme power. He relinquished the protectorship without regret, to live as a subject; and in the tranquillity of a country life he enjoyed health and possessed his soul in peace for ninety years, beloved by his neighbors, to whom he was a peacemaker and a father.

Say, reader, had you to choose between the destiny of the father and that of the son, which would you prefer?

CUISSAGE

Dion Cassius, that flatterer of Augustus and detractor from Cicero, because Cicero was the friend of liberty – that dry and diffuse writer and gazetteer of popular rumors, Dion Cassius, reports that certain senators were of opinion that in order to recompense Cæsar for all the evil which he had brought upon the commonwealth it would be right, at the age of fifty-seven, to allow him to honor with his favors all the ladies who took his fancy. Men are still found who credit this absurdity. Even the author of the "Spirit of Laws" takes it for a truth and speaks of it as of a decree which would have passed the Roman senate but for the modesty of the dictator, who suspected that he was not altogether prepared for the accession of so much good fortune. But if the Roman emperors attained not this right by a *senatus-consultum*, duly founded upon a *plebiscitum*, it is very likely that they fully enjoyed it by the courtesy of the ladies. The Marcus Aureliuses and the Julians, to be sure, exercised not this right, but all the rest extended it as widely as they were able.

It is astonishing that in Christian Europe a kind of feudal law for a long time existed, or at least it was deemed a customary usage, to regard the virginity of a female vassal as the property of the lord. The first night of the nuptials of the daughter of his *villein* belonged to him without dispute.

This right was established in the same manner as that of

walking with a falcon on the fist, and of being saluted with incense at mass. The lords, indeed, did not enact that the *wives* of their villeins belonged to them; they confined themselves to the daughters, the reason of which is obvious. Girls are bashful and sometimes might exhibit reluctance. This, however, yielded at once to the majesty of the laws, when the condescending baron deemed them worthy the honor of personally enforcing their practice.

It is asserted that this curious jurisprudence commenced in Scotland, and I willingly believe that the Scotch lords had a still more absolute power over their clans than even the German and French barons over their vassals.

It is undoubted that some abbots and bishops enjoyed this privilege in their quality of temporal lords, and it is not very long since that these prelates compounded their prerogative for acknowledgments in money, to which they have just as much right as to the virginity of the girls.

But let it be well remarked that this excess of tyranny was never sanctioned by any public law. If a lord or a prelate had cited before a regular tribunal a girl affianced to one of his vassals, in claim of her quit-rent, he would doubtless have lost his cause and costs.

Let us seize this occasion to rest assured that no partially civilized people ever established formal laws against morals; I do not believe that a single instance of it can be furnished. Abuses creep in and are borne: they pass as customs and travellers

mistake them for fundamental laws. It is said that in Asia greasy Mahometan saints march in procession entirely naked and that devout females crowd round them to kiss what is not worthy to be named, but I defy any one to discover a passage in the Koran which justifies this brutality.

The phallus, which the Egyptians carry in procession, may be quoted in order to confound me, as well as the idol Juggernaut, of the Indians. I reply that these ceremonies war no more against morals than circumcision at the age of eight days. In some of our towns the holy foreskin has been borne in procession, and it is preserved yet in certain sacristies without this piece of drollery causing the least disturbance in families. Still, I am convinced that no council or act of parliament ever ordained this homage to the holy foreskin.

I call a public law which deprives me of my property, which takes away my wife and gives her to another, a law against morals; and I am certain that such a law is impossible. Some travellers maintain that in Lapland husbands, out of politeness, make an offer of their wives. Out of still greater politeness, I believe them; but I nevertheless assert, that they never found this rule of good manners in the legal code of Lapland, any more than in the constitutions of Germany, in the ordinances of the king of France, or in the "Statutes at Large" of England, any positive law, adjudging the right of *cuissage* to the barons. Absurd and barbarous laws may be found everywhere; formal laws against morals nowhere.

CURATE (OF THE COUNTRY)

A curate – but why do I say a curate? – even an imam, a talapoin, or brahmin ought to have the means of living decently. The priest in every country ought to be supported by the altar since he serves the public. Some fanatic rogue may assert that I place the curate and the brahmin on the same level and associate truth with imposture; but I compare only the services rendered to society, the labor, and the recompense.

I maintain that whoever exercises a laborious function ought to be well paid by his fellow-citizens. I do not assert that he ought to amass riches, sup with Lucullus, or be as insolent as Clodius. I pity the case of a country curate who is obliged to dispute a sheaf of corn with his parishioner; to plead against him; to exact from him the tenth of his peas and beans; to be hated and to hate, and to consume his miserable life in miserable quarrels which engross the mind as much as they embitter it.

I still more pity the inconsistent lot of a curate, whom monks, claiming the great tithes, audaciously reward with a salary of forty ducats per annum for undertaking, throughout the year, the labor of visiting for three miles round his abode, by day and by night, in hail, rain, or snow, the most disagreeable and often the most useless functions, while the abbot or great tithe-holder drinks his rich wine of Volney, Beaune, or Chambertin, eats his partridges and pheasants, sleeps upon his down bed with a fair

neighbor, and builds a palace. The disproportion is too great.

It has been taken for granted since the days of Charlemagne that the clergy, besides their own lands, ought to possess a tenth of the lands of other people, which tenth is at least a quarter, computing the expense of culture. To establish this payment it is claimed on a principle of divine right. Did God descend on earth to give a quarter of His property to the abbey of Monte Cassino, to the abbey of St. Denis, to the abbey of Fulda? Not that I know, but it has been discovered that formerly, in the desert of Ethan, Horeb, and Kadesh Barnea, the Levites were favored with forty-eight cities and a tenth of all which the earth produced besides.

Very well, great tithe-holders, go to Kadesh Barnea and inhabit the forty-eight cities in that uninhabitable desert. Take the tenth of the flints which the land produces there, and great good may they do you. But Abraham having combated for Sodom, gave a tenth of the spoil to Melchizedek, priest and king of Salem. Very good, combat you also for Sodom, but, like Melchizedek, take not from me the produce of the corn which I have sowed.

In a Christian country containing twelve hundred thousand square leagues throughout the whole of the North, in part of Germany, in Holland, and in Switzerland, the clergy are paid with money from the public treasury. The tribunals resound not there with lawsuits between landlords and priests, between the great and the little tithe-holders, between the pastor, plaintiff, and the flock defendants, in consequence of the third Council of

the Lateran, of which the said flocks defendant have never heard a syllable.

The king of Naples this year (1772) has just abolished tithes in one of his provinces: the clergy are better paid and the province blesses him. The Egyptian priests, it is said, claimed not this tenth, but then, it is observed that they possessed a third part of the land of Egypt as their own. Oh, stupendous miracle! oh, thing most difficult to be conceived, that possessing one-third of the country they did not quickly acquire the other two!

Believe not, dear reader, that the Jews, who were a stiff-necked people, never complained of the extortion of the tenths, or tithe. Give yourself the trouble to consult the Talmud of Babylon, and if you understand not the Chaldæan, read the translation, with notes of Gilbert Gaumin, the whole of which was printed by the care of Fabricius. You will there peruse the adventure of a poor widow with the High Priest Aaron, and learn how the quarrel of this widow became the cause of the quarrel of Koran, Dathan, and Abiram, on the one side, and Aaron on the other.

"A widow possessed only a single sheep which she wished to shear. Aaron came and took the wool for himself: 'It belongs to me,' said he, 'according to the law, thou shalt give the first of the wool to God.' The widow, in tears, implored the protection of Koran. Koran applied to Aaron but his entreaties were fruitless. Aaron replies that the wool belongs to him. Koran gives some money to the widow and retires, filled with indignation.

"Some time after, the sheep produces a lamb. Aaron returns and carries away the lamb. The widow runs weeping again to Koran, who in vain implores Aaron. The high priest answers, 'It is written in the law, every first-born male in thy flock belongs to God.' He eats the lamb and Koran again retires in a rage.

"The widow, in despair, kills her sheep; Aaron returns once more and takes away the shoulder and the breast. Koran again complains. Aaron replies: 'It is written, thou shalt give unto the priests the shoulder, the two cheeks, and the maw.'

"The widow could no longer contain her affliction and said, 'Anathema,' to the sheep, upon which Aaron observed, 'It is written, all that is anathema (cursed) in Israel belongs to thee;' and took away the sheep altogether."

What is not so pleasant, yet very remarkable, is that in a suit between the clergy of Rheims and the citizens, this instance from the Talmud was cited by the advocate of the citizens. Gaumin asserts that he witnessed it. In the meantime it may be answered that the tithe-holders do not take *all* from the people, the tax-gatherers will not suffer it. To every one his share is just.

CURIOSITY

*Suave, mari magno turbantibus aequora ventis,
E terra magnum alterius spectare laborem;
Non quia vexari quemquam est jucunda voluptas,
Sed quibus ipse malis careas, quia cernere suave est.
Suave etiam belli certamina magna tueri
Per campos instructa tua sine parte pericli;
Sed nil dulcius est, bene quam munita tenere
Edita doctrina sapientum templa serena
Despicere unde queas alios, passimque videre
Errare, atque viam palantes quaerere vitae,
Certare ingenio, contendere nobilitate,
Noctes atque dies niti praestante labore
Ad summas emergere opes, rerumque potiri.
O miseras hominum mentes! O pectora caeca!*

'Tis pleasant, when the seas are rough, to stand
And view another's danger, safe at land;
Not 'cause he's troubled, but 'tis sweet to see
Those cares and fears, from which ourselves are free;
Tis also pleasant to behold from far
How troops engage, secure ourselves from war.
But, above all, 'tis pleasantest to get
The top of high philosophy, and set
On the calm, peaceful, nourishing head of it;

Whence we may view, deep, wondrous deep below,
How poor mistaken mortals wandering go,
Seeking the path to happiness; some aim
At learning, not nobility, or fame;
Others, with cares and dangers vie each hour
To reach the top of wealth and sovereign power.
Blind, wretched man, in what dark paths of strife
We walk this little journey of our life.

– CREECH'S *Lucretius*.

I ask your pardon, Lucretius! I suspect that you are here as mistaken in morals as you are always mistaken in physics. In my opinion it is curiosity alone that induces people to hasten to the shore to see a vessel in danger of being overwhelmed in a tempest. The case has happened to myself, and I solemnly assure you that my pleasure, mingled as it was with uneasiness and distress, did not at all arise from reflection, nor originate in any secret comparison between my own security and the danger of the unfortunate crew. I was moved by curiosity and pity.

At the battle of Fontenoy little boys and girls climbed up the surrounding trees to have a view of the slaughter. Ladies ordered seats to be placed for them on a bastion of the city of Liege that they might enjoy the spectacle at the battle of Rocoux.

When I said, "Happy they who view in peace the gathering storm," the happiness I had in view consists in tranquillity and the search of truth, and not in seeing the sufferings of thinking beings, oppressed by fanatics or hypocrites under persecution for

having sought it.

Could we suppose an angel flying on six beautiful wings from the height of the Empyrean, setting out to take a view through some loophole of hell of the torments and contortions of the damned, and congratulating himself on feeling nothing of their inconceivable agonies, such an angel would much resemble the character of Beelzebub.

I know nothing of the nature of angels because I am only a man; divines alone are acquainted with them; but, as a man, I think, from my own experience and also from that of all my brother drivellers, that people do not flock to any spectacle, of whatever kind, but from pure curiosity.

This seems to me so true that if the exhibition be ever so admirable men at last get tired of it. The Parisian public scarcely go any longer to see "*Tartuffe*" the most masterly of Molière's masterpieces. Why is it? Because they have gone often; because they have it by heart. It is the same with "*Andromache*."

Perrin Dandin is unfortunately right when he proposes to the young Isabella to take her to see the method of "putting to the torture;" it serves, he says, to pass away an hour or two. If this anticipation of the execution, frequently more cruel than the execution itself, were a public spectacle, the whole city of Toulouse would have rushed in crowds to behold the venerable Calas twice suffering those execrable torments, at the instance of the attorney-general. Penitents, black, white, and gray, married women, girls, stewards of the floral games, students, lackeys,

female servants, girls of the town, doctors of the canon law would have been all squeezed together. At Paris we must have been almost suffocated in order to see the unfortunate General Lally pass along in a dung cart, with a six-inch gag in his mouth.

But if these tragedies of cannibals, which are sometimes performed before the most frivolous of nations, and the one most ignorant in general of the principles of jurisprudence and equity; if the spectacles, like those of St. Bartholomew, exhibited by tigers to monkeys and the copies of it on a smaller scale were renewed every day, men would soon desert such a country; they would fly from it with horror; they would abandon forever the infernal land where such barbarities were common.

When little boys and girls pluck the feathers from their sparrows it is merely from the impulse of curiosity, as when they dissect the dresses of their dolls. It is this passion alone which produces the immense attendance at public executions. "Strange eagerness," as some tragic author remarks, "to behold the wretched."

I remember being in Paris when Damiens suffered a death the most elaborate and frightful that can be conceived. All the windows in the city which bore upon the spot were engaged at a high price by ladies, not one of whom, assuredly, made the consoling reflection that her own breasts were not torn by pincers; that melted lead and boiling pitch were not poured upon wounds of her own, and that her own limbs, dislocated and bleeding, were not drawn asunder by four horses. One of the

executioners judged more correctly than Lucretius, for, when one of the academicians of Paris tried to get within the enclosure to examine what was passing more closely, and was forced back by one of the guards, "Let the gentleman go in," said he, "he is an amateur." That is to say, he is inquisitive; it is not through malice that he comes here; it is not from any reflex consideration of self to revel in the pleasure of not being himself quartered; it is only from curiosity, as men go to see experiments in natural philosophy.

Curiosity is natural to man, to monkeys, and to little dogs. Take a little dog with you in your carriage, he will continually be putting up his paws against the door to see what is passing. A monkey searches everywhere, and has the air of examining everything. As to men, you know how they are constituted: Rome, London, Paris, all pass their time in inquiring what's the news?

CUSTOMS – USAGES

There are, it is said, one hundred and forty-four customs in France which possess the force of law.

These laws are almost all different in different places. A man that travels in this country changes his law almost as often as he changes his horses. The majority of these customs were not reduced to writing until the time of Charles VII., the reason of which probably was that few people knew how to write. They then copied a part of the customs of a part of Ponthieu, but this great work was not aided by the Picards until Charles VIII. There were but sixteen digests in the time of Louis XII., but our jurisprudence is so improved there are now but few customs which have not a variety of commentators, all of whom are of different opinions. There are already twenty-six upon the customs of Paris. The judges know not which to prefer, but, to put them at their ease the custom of Paris has been just turned into verse. It was in this manner that the Delphian pythoness of old declared her oracles.

Weights and measures differ as much as customs, so that which is correct in the faubourg of Montmartre, is otherwise in the abbey of St. Denis. The Lord pity us!

CYRUS

Many learned men, and Rollin among the number, in an age in which reason is cultivated, have assured us that Javan, who is supposed to be the father of the Greeks, was the grandson of Noah. I believe it precisely as I believe that Persius was the founder of the kingdom of Persia and Niger of Nigritia. The only thing which grieves me is that the Greeks have never known anything of Noah, the venerable author of their race. I have elsewhere noted my astonishment and chagrin that our father Adam should be absolutely unknown to everybody from Japan to the Strait of Le Maire, except to a small people to whom he was known too late. The science of genealogy is doubtless in the highest degree certain, but exceedingly difficult.

It is neither upon Javan, upon Noah, nor upon Adam that my doubts fall at present; it is upon Cyrus, and I seek not which of the fables in regard to him is preferable, that of Herodotus, of Ctesias, of Xenophon, of Diodorus, or of Justin, all of which contradict one another. Neither do I ask why it is obstinately determined to give the name of Cyrus to a barbarian called Khosrou, and those of Cyropolis and Persepolis to cities that never bore them.

I drop all that has been said of the grand Cyrus, including the romance of that name, and the travels which the Scottish Ramsay made him undertake, and simply inquire into some instructions

of his to the Jews, of which that people make mention.

I remark, in the first place, that no author has said a word of the Jews in the history of Cyrus, and that the Jews alone venture to notice themselves, in speaking of this prince.

They resemble, in some degree, certain people, who, alluding to individuals of a rank superior to their own say, we know the gentlemen but the gentlemen know not us. It is the same with Alexander in the narratives of the Jews. No historian of Alexander has mixed up his name with that of the Jews, but Josephus fails not to assert that Alexander came to pay his respects at Jerusalem; that he worshipped, I know not what Jewish pontiff, called Jaddus, who had formerly predicted to him the conquest of Persia in a dream. Petty people are often visionary in this way: the great dream less of their greatness.

When Tarik conquered Spain the vanquished said they had foretold it. They would have said the same thing to Genghis, to Tamerlane, and to Mahomet II.

God forbid that I should compare the Jewish prophets to the predictors of good fortune, who pay their court to conquerors by foretelling them that which has come to pass. I merely observe that the Jews produce some testimony from their nation in respect to the actions of Cyrus about one hundred and sixty years before he was born.

It is said, in the forty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, "Thus saith the Lord to His anointed – His Christ – Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden to subdue nations before him, and I will loosen the

loins of kings to open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gates shall not be shut. I will go before thee and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of brass and cut in sunder the bars of iron. And I will give thee the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places that thou mayest know that I the Lord, who call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel," etc.

Some learned men have scarcely been able to digest the fact of the Lord honoring with the name of His Christ an idolater of the religion of Zoroaster. They even dare to say that the Jews, in the manner of all the weak who flatter the powerful, invented predictions in favor of Cyrus.

These learned persons respect Daniel no more than Isaiah, but treat all the prophecies attributed to the latter with similar contempt to that manifested by St. Jerome for the adventures of Susannah, of Bel and the Dragon, and of the three children in the fiery furnace.

The sages in question seem not to be penetrated with sufficient esteem for the prophets. Many of them even pretend that to see clearly the future is metaphysically impossible. To see that which is not, say they, is a contradiction in terms, and as the future exists not, it consequently cannot be seen. They add that frauds of this nature abound in all nations, and, finally, that everything is to be doubted which is recorded in ancient history.

They observe that if there was ever a formal prophecy it is that of the discovery of America in the tragedy of Seneca:

Venient annis
Sæcula seris quibus oceanus
Vinculo rerum laxet, et ingens
Pateat tellus...

A time may arrive when ocean will loosen the chains of nature and lay open a vast world. The four stars of the southern pole are advanced still more clearly in Dante, yet no one takes either Seneca or Dante for diviners.

As to Cyrus, it is difficult to know whether he died nobly or had his head cut off by Tomyris, but I am anxious, I confess, that the learned men may be right who claim the head of Cyrus was cut off. It is not amiss that these illustrious robbers on the highway of nations who pillage and deluge the earth with blood, should be occasionally chastised.

Cyrus has always been the subject of remark, Xenophon began and, unfortunately, Ramsay ended. Lastly, to show the sad fate which sometimes attends heroes, Danchet has made him the subject of a tragedy.

This tragedy is entirely unknown; the "Cyropædia" of Xenophon is more popular because it is in Greek. The "Travels of Cyrus" are less so, although printed in French and English, and wonderfully erudite.

The pleasantry of the romance entitled "The Travels of Cyrus," consists in its discovery of a Messiah everywhere – at Memphis, at Babylon, at Ecbatana, and at Tyre, as at Jerusalem,

and as much in Plato as in the gospel. The author having been a Quaker, an Anabaptist, an Anglican, and a Presbyterian, had finally become a *Fénelonist* at Cambray, under the illustrious author of "Telemachus." Having since been made preceptor to the child of a great nobleman, he thought himself born to instruct and govern the universe, and, in consequence, gives lessons to Cyrus in order to render him at once the best king and the most orthodox theologian in existence. These two rare qualities appear to lack the grace of congruity.

Ramsay leads his pupil to the school of Zoroaster and then to that of the young Jew, Daniel, the greatest philosopher who ever existed. He not only explained dreams, which is the acme of human science, but discovered and interpreted even such as had been forgotten, which none but he could ever accomplish. It might be expected that Daniel would present the beautiful Susannah to the prince, it being in the natural manner of romance, but he did nothing of the kind.

Cyrus, in return, has some very long conversations with Nebuchadnezzar while he was an ox, during which transformation Ramsay makes Nebuchadnezzar ruminate like a profound theologian.

How astonishing that the prince for whom this work was composed preferred the chase and the opera to perusing it!

DANTE

You wish to become acquainted with Dante. The Italians call him divine, but it is a mysterious divinity; few men understand his oracles, and although there are commentators, that may be an additional reason why he is little comprehended. His reputation will last because he is little read. Twenty pointed things in him are known by rote, which spare people the trouble of being acquainted with the remainder.

The divine Dante was an unfortunate person. Imagine not that he was divine in his own day; no one is a prophet at home. It is true he was a prior – not a prior of monks, but a prior of Florence, that is to say, one of its senators.

He was born in 1260, when the arts began to flourish in his native land. Florence, like Athens, abounded in greatness, wit, levity, inconstancy, and faction. The white faction was in great credit; it was called after a Signora Bianca. The opposing party was called the blacks, in contradistinction. These two parties sufficed not for the Florentines; they had also Guelphs and Ghibellines. The greater part of the whites were Ghibellines, attached to the party of the emperors; the blacks, on the other hand, sided with the Guelphs, the partisans of the popes.

All these factions loved liberty, but did all they could to destroy it. Pope Boniface VIII. wished to profit by these divisions in order to annihilate the power of the emperors in Italy. He

declared Charles de Valois, brother of Philip the Fair, king of France, his vicar in Italy. The vicar came well armed and chased away the whites and the Ghibellines and made himself detested by blacks and Guelphs. Dante was a white and a Ghibelline; he was driven away among the first and his house razed to the ground. We may judge if he could be for the remainder of his life, favorable towards the French interest and to the popes. It is said, however, that he took a journey to Paris, and, to relieve his chagrin turned theologian and disputed vigorously in the schools. It is added that the emperor Henry VIII. did nothing for him, Ghibelline as he was, and that he repaired to Frederick of Aragon, king of Sicily, and returned as poor as he went. He subsequently died in poverty at Ravenna at the age of fifty-six. It was during these various peregrinations that he composed his divine comedy of "Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise."

[Voltaire here enters into a description of the "*Inferno*," which it is unnecessary to insert, after the various translations into English. The conclusion, however, exhibiting our author's usual vivacity, is retained.]

Is all this in the comic style? No. In the heroic manner? No. What then is the taste of this poem? An exceedingly wild one, but it contains verses so happy and piquant that it has not lain dormant for four centuries and never will be laid aside. A poem, moreover, which puts popes into hell excites attention, and the sagacity of commentators is exhausted in correctly ascertaining who it is that Dante has damned, it being, of course, of the first

consequence not to be deceived in a matter so important.

A chair and a lecture have been founded with a view to the exposition of this classic author. You ask me why the Inquisition acquiesces. I reply that in Italy the Inquisition understands raillery and knows that raillery in verse never does any harm.

DAVID

We are called upon to reverence David as a prophet, as a king, as the ancestor of the holy spouse of Mary, as a man who merited the mercy of God from his penitence.

I will boldly assert that the article on "David," which raised up so many enemies to Bayle, the first author of a dictionary of facts and of reasonings, deserves not the strange noise which was made about it. It was not David that people were anxious to defend, but Bayle whom they were solicitous to destroy. Certain preachers of Holland, his mortal enemies, were so far blinded by their enmity as to blame him for having praised popes whom he thought meritorious, and for having refuted the unjust calumny with which they had been assailed.

This absurd and shameful piece of injustice was signed by a dozen theologians on Dec. 20, 1698, in the same consistory in which they pretended to take up the defence of King David. A great proof that the condemnation of Bayle arose from personal feeling is supplied by the fact of that which happened in 1761, to Mr. Peter Anet, in London. The doctors Chandler and Palmer, having delivered funeral sermons on the death of King George II., in which they compared him to King David, Mr. Anet, who did not regard this comparison as honorable to the deceased monarch, published his famous dissertation entitled, "The History of the Man after God's Own Heart." In that work

he makes it clear that George II., a king much more powerful than David, did not fall into the errors of the Jewish sovereign, and consequently could not display the penitence which was the origin of the comparison.

He follows, step by step, the Books of Kings, examines the conduct of David with more severity than Bayle, and on it finds an opinion that the Holy Spirit does not praise actions of the nature of those attributed to David. The English author, in fact, judges the king of Judah upon the notions of justice and injustice which prevail at the present time.

He cannot approve of the assembly of a band of robbers by David to the amount of four hundred; of his being armed with the sword of Goliath, by the high priest Abimelech, from whom he received hallowed bread.

He could not think well of the expedition of David against the farmer, Nabal, in order to destroy his abode with fire and sword, because Nabal refused contributions to his troop of robbers; or of the death of Nabal a few days afterwards, whose widow David immediately espoused.

He condemned his conduct to King Achish, the possessor of a few villages in the district of Gath. David, at the head of five or six hundred banditti, made inroads upon the allies of his benefactor Achish. He pillaged the whole of them, massacred all the inhabitants, men, women, and children at the breast. And why the children at the breast? For fear, says the text, these children should carry the news to King Achish, who was deceived

into a belief that these expeditions were undertaken against the Israelites, by an absolute lie on the part of David.

Again, Saul loses a battle and wishes his armor-bearer to slay him, who refuses; he wounds himself, but not effectually, and at his own desire a young man despatches him, who, carrying the news to David, is massacred for his pains.

Ishbosheth succeeds his father, Saul, and David makes war upon him. Finally Ishbosheth is assassinated.

David, possessed of the sole dominion, surprised the little town or village of Rabbah and put all the inhabitants to death by the most extraordinary devices – sawing them asunder, destroying them with harrows and axes of iron, and burning them in brick-kilns.

After these expeditions there was a famine in the country for three years. In fact, from this mode of making war, countries must necessarily be badly cultivated. The Lord was consulted as to the causes of the famine. The answer was easy. In a country which produces corn with difficulty, when laborers are baked in brick-kilns and sawed into pieces, few people remain to cultivate the earth. The Lord, however, replied that it was because Saul had formerly slain some Gibeonites.

What is David's speedy remedy? He assembles the Gibeonites, informs them that Saul had committed a great sin in making war upon them, and that Saul not being like him, a man after God's own heart, it would be proper to punish him in his posterity. He therefore makes them a present of seven

grandsons of Saul to be hanged, who were accordingly hanged because there had been a famine.

Mr. Anet is so just as not to insist upon the adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband, as these crimes were pardoned in consequence of the repentance of David. They were horrible and abominable, but being remitted by the Lord, the English author also absolves from them.

No one complained in England of the author, and the parliament took little interest in the history of a kinglet of a petty district in Syria.

Let justice be done to Father Calmet; he has kept within bounds in his dictionary of the Bible, in the article on "David." "We pretend not," said he, "to approve of the conduct of David, but it is to be believed that this excess of cruelty was committed before his repentance on the score of Bathsheba." Possibly he repented of all his crimes at the same time, which were sufficiently numerous.

Let us here ask what appears to us to be an important question. May we not exhibit a portion of contempt in the article on "David," and treat of his person and glory with the respect due to the sacred books? It is to the interest of mankind that crime should in no case be sanctified. What signifies what *he* is called, who massacres the wives and children of his allies; who hangs the grandchildren of his king; who saws his unhappy captives in two, tears them to pieces with harrows, or burns them in brick-kilns? These actions we judge, and not the letters which compose the

name of the criminal. His name neither augments nor diminishes the criminality.

The more David is revered after his reconciliation with God, the more are his previous qualities condemnable.

If a young peasant, in searching after she-asses finds a kingdom it is no common affair. If another peasant cures his king of insanity by a tune on the harp that is still more extraordinary. But when this petty player on the harp becomes king because he meets a village priest in secret, who pours a bottle of olive oil on his head, the affair is more marvellous still.

I know nothing either of the writers of these marvels, or of the time in which they were written, but I am certain that it was neither Polybius nor Tacitus.

I shall not speak here of the murder of Uriah, and of the adultery with Bathsheba, these facts being sufficiently well known. The ways of God are not the ways of men, since He permitted the descent of Jesus Christ from this very Bathsheba, everything being rendered pure by so holy a mystery.

I ask not now how Jurieu had the audacity to persecute the wise Bayle for not approving all the actions of the good King David. I only inquire why a man like Jurieu is suffered to molest a man like Bayle.

DECRETALS

These are letters of the popes which regulate points of doctrine and discipline and which have the force of law in the Latin church.

Besides the genuine ones collected by Denis le Petit, there is a collection of false ones, the author of which, as well as the date, is unknown. It was an archbishop of Mentz called Riculphus who circulated it in France about the end of the eighth century; he had also brought to Worms an epistle of Pope Gregory, which had never before been heard of, but no vestige of the latter is at present remaining, while the false decretals, as we shall see, have met with the greatest success for eight centuries.

This collection bears the name of Isidore Mercator, and comprehends an infinite number of decrees falsely ascribed to the popes, from Clement I. down to Siricius. The false donation of Constantine; the Council of Rome under Sylvester; the letter of Athanasius to Mark; that of Anastasius to the bishops of Germany and Burgundy; that of Sixtus III. to the Orientals; that of Leo. I. relating to the privileges of the rural bishops; that of John I. to the archbishop Zachariah; one of Boniface II. to Eulalia of Alexandria; one of John III. to the bishops of France and Burgundy; one of Gregory, containing a privilege of the monastery of St. Médard; one from the same to Felix, bishop of Messina, and many others.

The object of the author was to extend the authority of the pope and the bishops. With this view, he lays it down as a principle that they can be definitely judged only by the pope, and he often repeats this maxim that not only every bishop but every priest, and, generally, every oppressed individual may, in any stage of a cause, appeal directly to the pope. He likewise considers it as an incontestable principle that no council, not even a provincial one, may be held without the permission of the pope.

These decretals, favoring the impunity of bishops, and still more the ambitious pretensions of the popes, were eagerly adopted by them both. In 861, Rotade, bishop of Soissons, being deprived of episcopal communion in a provincial council on account of disobedience, appeals to the pope. Hincmar of Rheims, his metropolitan, notwithstanding his appeal, deposes him in another council under the pretext that he had afterwards renounced it, and submitted himself to the judgment of the bishops.

Pope Nicholas I. being informed of this affair, wrote to Hincmar, and blamed his proceedings. "You ought," says he, "to honor the memory of St. Peter, and await our judgment, even although Rotade had not appealed." And in another letter on the same matter, he threatens Hincmar with excommunication, if he does not restore Rotade. That pope did more. Rotade having arrived at Rome, he declared him acquitted in a council held on Christmas eve, 864; and dismissed him to his see with letters. That which he addressed to all the bishops is worthy of notice,

and is as follows:

"What you say is absurd, that Rotade, after having appealed to the holy see, changed his language and submitted himself anew to your judgment. Even although he had done so, it would have been your duty to set him right, and teach him that an appeal never lies from a superior judge to an inferior one. But even although he had not appealed to the holy see, you ought by no means to depose a bishop without our participation, in prejudice of so many decretals of our predecessors; for, if it be by their judgment that the writings of other doctors are approved or rejected, how much more should that be respected which they have themselves written, to decide on points of doctrine and discipline. Some tell you that these decretals are not in the book of canons; yet those same persons, when they find them favorable to their designs, use both without distinction, and reject them only to lessen the power of the holy see. If the decretals of the ancient popes are to be rejected because they are not contained in the book of canons, the writings of St. Gregory, and the rest of the fathers, must, on the same principle, be rejected also, and even the Holy Scriptures themselves."

"You say," the pope continues, "that judgments upon bishops are not among the higher causes; we maintain that they are high in proportion as bishops hold a high rank in the church. Will you assert that it is only metropolitan affairs which constitute the higher causes? But metropolitans are not of a different order from bishops, and we do not demand different witnesses or

judges in the one case, from what are usual in the other; we therefore require that causes which involve either should be reserved for us. And, finally, can anyone be found so utterly unreasonable as to say that all other churches ought to preserve their privileges, and that the Roman Church alone should lose hers?" He concludes with ordering them to receive and replace Rotade.

Pope Adrian, the successor of Nicholas I., seems to have been no less zealous in a similar case relating to Hincmar of Laon. That prelate had rendered himself hateful both to the clergy and people of his diocese, by various acts of injustice and violence. Having been accused before the Council of Verberie – at which Hincmar of Rheims, his uncle and metropolitan, presided – he appealed to the pope, and demanded permission to go to Rome. This was refused him. The process against him was merely suspended, and the affair went no farther. But upon new matters of complaint brought against him by Charles the Bald and Hincmar of Rheims, he was cited at first before the Council of Attigny, where he appeared, and soon afterwards fled; and then before the Council of Douzy, where he renewed his appeal, and was deposed. The council wrote to the pope a synodal letter, on Sept. 6, 871, to request of him a confirmation of the acts which they sent him; but Adrian, far from acquiescing in the judgment of the council, expressed in the strongest terms his disapprobation of the condemnation of Hincmar; maintaining that, since Hincmar declared before the council that he appealed

to the holy see, they ought not to have pronounced any sentence of condemnation upon him. Such were the terms used by that pope, in his letter to the bishops of the council, as also in that which he wrote to the king.

The following is the vigorous answer sent by Charles to Adrian: "Your letters say, 'We will and ordain, by apostolical authority, that Hincmar of Laon shall come to Rome and present himself before us, resting upon your supremacy.'

"We wonder where the writer of this letter discovered that a king, whose duty it is to chastise the guilty and be the avenger of crimes, should send to Rome a criminal convicted according to legal forms, and more especially one who, before his deposition, was found guilty, in three councils, of enterprises against the public peace; and who, after his deposition, persisted in his disobedience.

"We are compelled further to tell you, that we, kings of France, born of a royal race, have never yet passed for the deputies of bishops, but for sovereigns of the earth. And, as St. Leon and the Roman council have said, kings and emperors, whom God has appointed to govern the world, have permitted bishops to regulate their affairs according to their ordinances, but they have never been the stewards of bishops; and if you search the records of your predecessors, you will not find that they have ever written to persons in our exalted situation as you have done in the present instance."

He then adduces two letters of St. Gregory, to show with

what modesty he wrote, not only to the kings of France, but to the exarchs of Italy. "Finally," he concludes, "I beg that you will never more send to me, or to the bishops of my kingdom, similar letters, if you wish that we should give to what you write that honor and respect which we would willingly grant it." The bishops of the Council of Douzy answered the pope nearly in the same strain; and, although we have not the entire letter, it appears that their object in it was to prove that Hincmar's appeal ought not to be decided at Rome, but in France, by judges delegated conformably to the canons of the Council of Sardis.

These examples are sufficient to show how the popes extended their jurisdiction by the instrumentality of these false decretals; and although Hincmar of Rheims objected to Adrian, that, not being included in the book of canons, they could not subvert the discipline established by the canons – which occasioned his being accused, before Pope John VIII., of not admitting the decretals of the popes – he constantly cited these decretals as authorities, in his letters and other writings, and his example was followed by many bishops. At first, those only were admitted which were not contrary to the more recent canons, and afterwards there was less and less scruple.

The councils themselves made use of them. Thus, in that of Rheims, held in 992, the bishops availed themselves of the decretals of Anacletus, of Julius, of Damasus, and other popes, in the cause of Arnoul. Succeeding councils imitated that of Rheims. The popes Gregory VII., Urban II., Pascal II.,

Urban III., and Alexander III. supported the maxims they found in them, persuaded that they constituted the discipline of the flourishing age of the church. Finally, the compilers of the canons – Bouchard of Worms, Yves of Chartres, and Gratian – introduced them into their collection. After they became publicly taught in the schools, and commented upon, all the polemical and scholastic divines, and all the expositors of the canon law, eagerly laid hold of these false decretals to confirm the Catholic dogmas, or to establish points of discipline, and scattered them profusely through their works.

It was not till the sixteenth century that the first suspicions of their authenticity were excited. Erasmus, and many others with him, called them in question upon the following grounds:

1. The decretals contained in the collection of Isidore are not in that of Denis le Petit, who cited none of the decretals of the popes before the time of Siricius. Yet he informs us that he took extreme care in collecting them. They could not, therefore, have escaped him, if they had existed in the archives of the see of Rome, where he resided. If they were unknown to the holy see, to which they were favorable, they were so to the whole church. The fathers and councils of the first eight centuries have made no mention of them. But how can this universal silence be reconciled with their authenticity?

2. These decretals do not all correspond with the state of things existing at the time in which they are supposed to have been written. Not a word is said of the heresies of the three

first centuries, nor of other ecclesiastical affairs with which the genuine works of the same period are filled. This proves that they were fabricated afterwards.

3. Their dates are almost always false. Their author generally follows the chronology of the pontifical book, which, by Baronius's own confession, is very incorrect. This is a presumptive evidence that the collection was not composed till after the pontifical book.

4. These decretals, in all the citations of Scripture passages which they contain, use the version known by the name of "Vulgate," made, or at least revised, by St. Jerome. They are, therefore, of later date than St. Jerome.

Finally, they are all written in the same style, which is very barbarous; and, in that respect, corresponding to the ignorance of the eighth century: but it is not by any means probable that all the different popes, whose names they bear, affected that uniformity of style. It may be concluded with confidence, that all the decretals are from the same hand.

Besides these general reasons, each of the documents which form Isidore's collection carries with it marks of forgery peculiar to itself, and none of which have escaped the keen criticism of David Blondel, to whom we are principally indebted for the light thrown at the present day on this compilation, now no longer known but as "The False Decretals"; but the usages introduced in consequence of it exist not the less through a considerable portion of Europe.

DELUGE (UNIVERSAL)

We begin with observing that we are believers in the universal deluge, because it is recorded in the holy Hebrew Scriptures transmitted to Christians. We consider it as a miracle:

1. Because all the facts by which God condescends to interfere in the sacred books are so many miracles.

2. Because the sea could not rise fifteen cubits, or one-and-twenty standard feet and a half, above the highest mountains, without leaving its bed dry, and, at the same time, violating all the laws of gravity and the equilibrium of fluids, which would evidently require a miracle.

3. Because, even although it might rise to the height mentioned, the ark could not have contained, according to known physical laws, all the living things of the earth, together with their food, for so long a time; considering that lions, tigers, panthers, leopards, ounces, rhinoceroses, bears, wolves, hyenas, eagles, hawks, kites, vultures, falcons, and all carnivorous animals, which feed on flesh alone, would have died of hunger, even after having devoured all the other species.

There was printed some time ago, in an appendix to Pascal's "Thoughts," a dissertation of a merchant of Rouen, called Le Peletier, in which he proposes a plan for building a vessel in which all kinds of animals might be included and maintained for the space of a year. It is clear that this merchant never

superintended even a poultry-yard. We cannot but look upon M. Le Peletier, the architect of the ark, as a visionary, who knew nothing about menageries; and upon the deluge as an adorable miracle, fearful, and incomprehensible to the feeble reason of M. Le Peletier, as well as to our own.

4. Because the physical impossibility of a universal deluge, by natural means, can be strictly demonstrated. The demonstration is as follows: All the seas cover half the globe. A common measure of their depths near the shores, and in the open ocean, is assumed to be five hundred feet.

In order that they might cover both hemispheres to the depth of five hundred feet, not only would an ocean of that depth be necessary over all the land, but a new sea would, in addition, be required to envelop the ocean at present existing, without which the laws of hydrostatics would occasion the dispersion of that other new mass of water five hundred feet deep, which should remain covering the land. Thus, then, two new oceans are requisite to cover the terraqueous globe merely to the depth of five hundred feet.

Supposing the mountains to be only twenty thousand feet high, forty oceans, each five hundred feet in height, would be required to accumulate on each other, merely in order to equal the height of the mountains. Every successive ocean would contain all the others, and the last of them all would have a circumference containing forty times that of the first.

In order to form this mass of water, it would be necessary

to create it out of nothing. In order to withdraw it, it would be necessary to annihilate it. The event of the deluge, then, is a double miracle, and the greatest that has ever manifested the power of the eternal Sovereign of all worlds.

We are exceedingly surprised that some learned men have attributed to this deluge some small shell found in many parts of our continent. We are still more surprised at what we find under the article on "Deluge," in the grand "Encyclopædia." An author is quoted in it, who says things so very profound that they may be considered as chimerical. This is the first characteristic of Pluche. He proves the possibility of the deluge by the history of the giants who made war against the gods!

Briareus, according to him, is clearly the deluge, for it signifies "the loss of serenity": and in what language does it signify this loss? – in Hebrew. But *Briareus* is a Greek word, which means "robust": it is not a Hebrew word. Even if, by chance, it had been so, we should beware of imitating Bochart, who derives so many Greek, Latin, and even French words from the Hebrew idiom. The Greeks certainly knew no more of the Jewish idiom than of the language of the Chinese.

The giant Othus is also in Hebrew, according to Pluche, "the derangement of the seasons." But it is also a Greek word, which does not signify anything, at least, that I know; and even if it did, what, let me ask, could it have to do with the Hebrew?

Porphyryon is "a shaking of the earth," in Hebrew; but in Greek, it is porphyry. This has nothing to do with the deluge.

Mimos is "a great rain"; for once, he does mention a name which may bear upon the deluge. But in Greek *mimos* means mimic, comedian. There are no means of tracing the deluge of such an origin. *Enceladus* is another proof of the deluge in Hebrew; for, according to Pluche, it is the fountain of time; but, unluckily, in Greek it is "noise."

Ephialtes, another demonstration of the deluge in Hebrew; for *ephialtes*, which signifies leaper, oppressor, incubus, in Greek is, according to Pluche, "a vast accumulation of clouds."

But the Greeks, having taken everything from the Hebrews, with whom they were unacquainted, clearly gave to their giants all those names which Pluche extracts from the Hebrew as well as he can, and all as a memorial of the deluge.

Such is the reasoning of Pluche. It is he who cites the author of the article on "Deluge" without refuting him. Does he speak seriously, or does he jest? I do not know. All I know is, that there is scarcely a single system to be found at which one can forbear jesting.

I have some apprehension that the article in the grand "Encyclopædia," attributed to M. Boulanger, is not serious. In that case, we ask whether it is philosophical. Philosophy is so often deceived, that we shall not venture to decide against M. Boulanger.

Still less shall we venture to ask what was that abyss which was broken up, or what were the cataracts of heaven which were opened. Isaac Vossius denies the universality of the deluge:

"*Hoc est pie nugari.*" Calmet maintains it; informing us, that bodies have no weight in air, but in consequence of their being compressed by air. Calmet was not much of a natural philosopher, and the weight of the air has nothing to do with the deluge. Let us content ourselves with reading and respecting everything in the Bible, without comprehending a single word of it.

I do not comprehend how God created a race of men in order to drown them, and then substituted in their room a race still viler than the first.

How seven pairs of all kinds of clean animals should come from the four quarters of the globe, together with two pairs of unclean ones, without the wolves devouring the sheep on the way, or the kites the pigeons, etc.

How eight persons could keep in order, feed, and water, such an immense number of inmates, shut up in an ark for nearly two years; for, after the cessation of the deluge, it would be necessary to have food for all these passengers for another year, in consequence of the herbage being so scanty.

I am not like M. Le Peletier. I admire everything, and explain nothing.

DEMOCRACY

Le pire des états, c'est l'état populaire.

That sway is worst, in which the people rule.

Such is the opinion which Cinna gave Augustus. But on the other hand, Maximus maintains, that

Le pire des états, c'est l'état monarchique.

That sway is worst, in which a monarch rules.

Bayle, in his "Philosophical Dictionary," after having repeatedly advocated both sides of the question, gives, under the article on "Pericles," a most disgusting picture of democracy, and more particularly that of Athens.

A republican, who is a stanch partisan of democracy, and one of our "proposers of questions," sends us his refutation of Bayle and his apology for Athens. We will adduce his reasons. It is the privilege of every writer to judge the living and the dead; he who thus sits in judgment will be himself judged by others, who, in their turn, will be judged also; and thus, from age to age, all sentences are, according to circumstances, reversed or reformed.

Bayle, then, after some common-place observations, uses these words: "A man would look in vain into the history of

Macedon for as much tyranny as he finds in the history of Athens."

Perhaps Bayle was discontented with Holland when he thus wrote; and probably my republican friend, who refutes him, is contented with his little democratic city "for the present."

It is difficult to weigh, in an exquisitely nice balance, the iniquities of the republic of Athens and of the court of Macedon. We still upbraid the Athenians with the banishment of Cimon, Aristides, Themistocles, and Alcibiades, and the sentences of death upon Phocion and Socrates; sentences similar in absurdity and cruelty to those of some of our own tribunals.

In short, what we can never pardon in the Athenians is the execution of their six victorious generals, condemned because they had not time to bury their dead after the victory, and because they were prevented from doing so by a tempest. The sentence is at once so ridiculous and barbarous, it bears such a stamp of superstition and ingratitude, that those of the Inquisition, those delivered against Urbain Grandier, against the wife of Marshal d'Ancre, against Montrin, and against innumerable sorcerers and witches, etc., are not, in fact, fooleries more atrocious.

It is in vain to say, in excuse of the Athenians, that they believed, like Homer before them, that the souls of the dead were always wandering, unless they had received the honors of sepulture or burning. A folly is no excuse for a barbarity.

A dreadful evil, indeed, for the souls of a few Greeks to ramble for a week or two on the shores of the ocean! The evil

is, in consigning living men to the executioner; living men who have won a battle for you; living men, to whom you ought to be devoutly grateful.

Thus, then, are the Athenians convicted of having been at once the most silly and the most barbarous judges in the world. But we must now place in the balance the crimes of the court of Macedon; we shall see that that court far exceeds Athens in point of tyranny and atrocity.

There is ordinarily no comparison to be made between the crimes of the great, who are always ambitious, and those of the people, who never desire, and who never can desire, anything but liberty and equality. These two sentiments, "liberty and equality," do not *necessarily* lead to calumny, rapine, assassination, poisoning, and devastation of the lands of neighbors; but, the towering ambition and thirst for power of the great precipitate them head-long into every species of crime in all periods and all places.

In this same Macedon, the virtue of which Bayle opposes to that of Athens, we see nothing but a tissue of tremendous crimes for a series of two hundred years.

It is Ptolemy, the uncle of Alexander the Great, who assassinates his brother Alexander to usurp the kingdom. It is Philip, his brother, who spends his life in guilt and perjury, and ends it by a stab from Pausanias.

Olympias orders Queen Cleopatra and her son to be thrown into a furnace of molten brass. She assassinates Aridæus.

Antigonus assassinates Eumenes. Antigonus Gonatas, his son, poisons the governor of the citadel of Corinth, marries his widow, expels her, and takes possession of the citadel. Philip, his grandson, poisons Demetrius, and defiles the whole of Macedon with murders. Perseus kills his wife with his own hand, and poisons his brother. These perfidies and cruelties are authenticated in history.

Thus, then, for two centuries, the madness of despotism converts Macedon into a theatre for every crime; and in the same space of time you see the popular government of Athens stained only by five or six acts of judicial iniquity, five or six certainly atrocious judgments, of which the people in every instance repented, and for which they made, as far as they could, honorable expiation (*amende honorable*.) They asked pardon of Socrates after his death, and erected to his memory the small temple called *Socrateion*. They asked pardon of Phocion, and raised a statue to his honor. They asked pardon of the six generals, so ridiculously condemned and so basely executed. They confined in chains the principal accuser, who, with difficulty, escaped from public vengeance. The Athenian people, therefore, appear to have had good natural dispositions, connected, as they were, with great versatility and frivolity. In what despotic state has the injustice of precipitate decrees ever been thus ingenuously acknowledged and deplored?

Bayle, then, is for this once in the wrong. My republican has reason on his side. Popular government, therefore, is in itself

iniquitous, and less abominable than monarchical despotism.

The great vice of democracy is certainly not tyranny and cruelty. There have been republicans in mountainous regions wild and ferocious; but they were made so, not by the spirit of republicanism, but by nature. The North American savages were entirely republican; but they were republics of bears.

The radical vice of a civilized republic is expressed by the Turkish fable of the dragon with many heads, and the dragon with many tails. The multitude of heads become injurious, and the multitude of tails obey one single head, which wants to devour all.

Democracy seems to suit only a very small country; and even that fortunately situated. Small as it may be, it will commit many faults, because it will be composed of men. Discord will prevail in it, as in a convent of monks; but there will be no St. Bartholomews there, no Irish massacre, no Sicilian vespers, no Inquisition, no condemnation to the galleys for having taken water from the ocean without paying for it; at least, unless it be a republic of devils, established in some corner of hell.

After having taken the side of my Swiss friend against the dexterous fencing-master, Bayle, I will add: That the Athenians were warriors like the Swiss, and as polite as the Parisians were under Louis XIV.; that they excelled in every art requiring genius or execution, like the Florentine in time of the Medici; that they were the masters of the Romans in the sciences and in eloquence, even in the days of Cicero; that this same people, insignificant in

number, who scarcely possessed anything of territory, and who, at the present day, consist only of a band of ignorant slaves, a hundred times less numerous than the Jews, and deprived of all but their name, yet bear away the palm from Roman power, by their ancient reputation, which triumphs at once over time and degradation.

Europe has seen a republic, ten times smaller than Athens, attract its attention for the space of one hundred and fifty years, and its name placed by the side of that of Rome, even while she still commanded kings; while she condemned one Henry, a sovereign of France, and absolved and scourged another Henry, the first man of his age; even while Venice retained her ancient splendor, and the republic of the seven United Provinces was astonishing Europe and the Indies, by its successful establishment and extensive commerce.

This almost imperceptible ant-hill could not be crushed by the royal demon of the South, and the monarch of two worlds, nor by the intrigues of the Vatican, which put in motion one-half of Europe. It resisted by words and by arms; and with the help of a Picard who wrote, and a small number of Swiss who fought for it, it became at length established and triumphant, and was enabled to say, "Rome and I." She kept all minds divided between the rich pontiffs who succeeded to the Scipios —*Romanos rerum dominos*— and the poor inhabitants of a corner of the world long unknown in a country of poverty and *goîtres*.

The main point was, to decide how Europe should think on

the subject of certain questions which no one understood. It was the conflict of the human mind. The Calvins, the Bezas, and Turetins, were the Demostheneses, Platos, and Aristotles, of the day.

The absurdity of the greater part of the controversial questions which bound down the attention of Europe, having at length been acknowledged, this small republic turned our consideration to what appears of solid consequence – the acquisition of wealth. The system of law, more chimerical and less baleful than that of the supralapsarians and the sublapsarians, occupied with arithmetical calculations those who could no longer gain celebrity as partisans of the doctrine of crucified divinity. They became rich, but were no longer famous.

It is thought at present there is no republic, except in Europe. I am mistaken if I have not somewhere made the remark myself; it must, however, have been a great inadvertence. The Spaniards found in America the republic of Tlascala perfectly well established. Every part of that continent which has not been subjugated is still republican. In the whole of that vast territory, when it was first discovered, there existed no more than two kingdoms; and this may well be considered as a proof that republican government is the most natural. Men must have obtained considerable refinement, and have tried many experiments, before they submit to the government of a single individual.

In Africa, the Hottentots, the Kaffirs, and many communities

of negroes, are democracies. It is pretended that the countries in which the greater part of the negroes are sold are governed by kings. Tripoli, Tunis, and Algiers are republics of soldiers and pirates. There are similar ones in India. The Mahrattas, and many other Indian hordes, have no kings: they elect chiefs when they go on their expeditions of plunder.

Such are also many of the hordes of Tartars. Even the Turkish Empire has long been a republic of janissaries, who have frequently strangled their sultan, when their sultan did not decimate them. We are every day asked, whether a republican or a kingly government is to be preferred? The dispute always ends in agreeing that the government of men is exceedingly difficult. The Jews had God himself for their master; yet observe the events of their history. They have almost always been trampled upon and enslaved; and, nationally, what a wretched figure do they make at present!

DEMONIACS

Hypochondriacal and epileptic persons, and women laboring under hysterical affections, have always been considered the victims of evil spirits, malignant demons and divine vengeance. We have seen that this disease was called the sacred disease; and that while the physicians were ignorant, the priests of antiquity obtained everywhere the care and management of such diseases.

When the symptoms were very complicated, the patient was supposed to be possessed with many demons – a demon of madness, one of luxury, one of avarice, one of obstinacy, one of short-sightedness, one of deafness; and the exorciser could not easily miss finding a demon of foolery created, with another of knavery.

The Jews expelled devils from the bodies of the possessed, by the application of the root *barath*, and a certain formula of words; our Saviour expelled them by a divine virtue; he communicated that virtue to his apostles, but it is now greatly impaired.

A short time since, an attempt was made to renew the history of St. Paulin. That saint saw on the roof of a church a poor demoniac, who walked under, or rather upon, this roof or ceiling, with his head below and his feet above, nearly in the manner of a fly. St. Paulin clearly perceived that the man was possessed, and sent several leagues off for some relics of St. Felix of Nola, which were applied to the patient as blisters. The demon who supported

the man against the roof instantly fled, and the demoniac fell down upon the pavement.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.