

VOLTAIRE

A PHILOSOPHICAL
DICTIONARY, VOLUME
02

Voltaire
A Philosophical
Dictionary, Volume 02

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A Philosophical Dictionary, Volume 02:

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François-Marie Arouet (AKA Voltaire) A Philosophical Dictionary, Volume 02

APPEARANCE

Are all appearances deceitful? Have our senses been given us only to keep us in continual delusion? Is everything error? Do we live in a dream, surrounded by shadowy chimeras? We see the sun setting when he is already below the horizon; before he has yet risen we see him appear. A square tower seems to be round. A straight stick, thrust into the water, seems to be bent.

You see your face in a mirror and the image appears to be behind the glass: it is, however, neither behind nor before it. This glass, which to the sight and the touch is so smooth and even, is no other than an unequal congregation of projections and cavities. The finest and fairest skin is a kind of bristled network, the openings of which are incomparably larger than the threads, and enclose an infinite number of minute hairs. Under this network there are liquors incessantly passing, and from it there issue continual exhalations which cover the whole surface.

What we call large is to an elephant very small, and what we call small is to insects a world. The same motion which would be rapid to a snail would be very slow in the eye of an eagle. This rock, which is impenetrable by steel, is a sieve consisting of more pores than matter, and containing a thousand avenues of prodigious width leading to its centre, in which are lodged multitudes of animals, which may, for aught we know, think themselves the masters of the universe.

Nothing is either as it appears to be, or in the place where we believe it to be. Several philosophers, tired of being constantly deceived by bodies, have in their spleen pronounced that bodies do not exist, and that there is nothing real but our minds. As well might they have concluded that, all appearances being false, and the nature of the soul being as little known as that of the matter, there is no reality in either body or soul. Perhaps it is this despair of knowing anything which has caused some Chinese philosophers to say that nothing is the beginning and the end of all things. This philosophy, so destructive to being, was well known in Molière's time. Doctor Macphurius represents the school; when teaching Sganarelle, he says, "You must not say, 'I am come,' but 'it seems to me that I am come'; for it may seem to you, without such being really the case." But at the present day a comic scene is not an argument, though it is sometimes better than an argument; and there is often as much pleasure in seeking after truth as in laughing at philosophy.

You do not see the network, the cavities, the threads, the

inequalities, the exhalations of that white and delicate skin which you idolize. Animals a thousand times less than a mite discern all these objects which escape your vision; they lodge, feed, and travel about in them, as in an extensive country, and those on the right arm are perfectly ignorant that there are creatures of their own species on the left. If you were so unfortunate as to see what they see, your charming skin would strike you with horror.

The harmony of a concert, to which you listen with delight, must have on certain classes of minute animals the effect of terrible thunder; and perhaps it kills them. We see, touch, hear, feel things only in the way in which they ought to be seen, touched, heard, or felt by ourselves.

All is in due proportion. The laws of optics, which show you an object in the water where it is not, and break a right line, are in entire accordance with those which make the sun appear to you with a diameter of two feet, although it is a million times larger than the earth. To see it in its true dimensions would require an eye collecting his rays at an angle as great as his disk, which is impossible. Our senses, then, assist much more than they deceive us.

Motion, time, hardness, softness, dimensions, distance, approximation, strength, weakness, appearances, of whatever kind, all is relative. And who has created these relations?

A PROPOS

All great successes, of whatever kind, are founded upon things done or said apropos.

Arnold of Brescia, John Huss, and Jerome of Prague did not come quite apropos; the people were not then sufficiently enlightened; the invention of printing had not then laid the abuses complained of before the eyes of every one. But when men began to read – when the populace, who were solicitous to escape purgatory, but at the same time wished not to pay too dear for indulgences, began to open their eyes, the reformers of the sixteenth century came quite apropos, and succeeded.

It has been elsewhere observed that Cromwell under Elizabeth or Charles the Second, or Cardinal de Retz when Louis XIV. governed by himself, would have been very ordinary persons.

Had Cæsar been born in the time of Scipio Africanus he would not have subjugated the Roman commonwealth; nor would Mahomet, could he rise again at the present day, be more than sheriff of Mecca. But if Archimedes and Virgil were restored, one would still be the best mathematician, the other the best poet of his country.

ARABS;

AND, OCCASIONALLY, ON THE BOOK OF JOB

If any one be desirous of obtaining a thorough knowledge of the antiquities of Arabia, it may be presumed that he will gain no more information than about those of Auvergne and Poitou. It is, however, certain, that the Arabs were of some consequence long before Mahomet. The Jews themselves say that Moses married an Arabian woman, and his father-in-law Jethro seems to have been a man of great good sense.

Mecca is considered, and not without reason, as one of the most ancient cities in the world. It is, indeed, a proof of its antiquity that nothing but superstition could occasion the building of a town on such a spot, for it is in a sandy desert, where the water is brackish, so that the people die of hunger and thirst. The country a few miles to the east is the most delightful upon earth, the best watered and the most fertile. There the Arabs should have built, and not at Mecca. But it was enough for some charlatan, some false prophet, to give out his reveries, to make of Mecca a sacred spot and the resort of neighboring nations. Thus it was that the temple of Jupiter Ammon was built in the midst of sands. Arabia extends from northeast to southwest, from the

desert of Jerusalem to Aden or Eden, about the fiftieth degree of north latitude. It is an immense country, about three times as large as Germany. It is very likely that its deserts of sand were brought thither by the waters of the ocean, and that its marine gulfs were once fertile lands.

The belief in this nation's antiquity is favored by the circumstance that no historian speaks of its having been subjugated. It was not subdued even by Alexander, nor by any king of Syria, nor by the Romans. The Arabs, on the contrary, subjugated a hundred nations, from the Indus to the Garonne; and, having afterwards lost their conquests, they retired into their own country and did not mix with any other people.

Having never been subject to nor mixed with other nations it is more than probable that they have preserved their manners and their language. Indeed, Arabic is, in some sense, the mother tongue of all Asia as far as the Indus; or rather, the prevailing tongue, for mother tongues have never existed. Their genius has never changed. They still compose their "Nights' Entertainments," as they did when they imagined one Bac or Bacchus, who passed through the Red Sea with three millions of men, women, and children; who stopped the sun and moon, and made streams of wine issue forth with a blow of his rod, which, when he chose, he changed into a serpent.

A nation so isolated, and whose blood remains unmixed, cannot change its character. The Arabs of the desert have always been given to robbery, and those inhabiting the towns been fond

of fables, poetry, and astronomy. It is said, in the historical preface to the Koran, that when any one of their tribes had a good poet the other tribes never failed to send deputies to that one on which God had vouchsafed to bestow so great a gift.

The tribes assembled every year, by representatives, in an open place named Ocad, where verses were recited, nearly in the same way as is now done at Rome in the garden of the academy of the Arcadii, and this custom continued until the time of Mahomet. In his time, each one posted his verses on the door of the temple of Mecca. Labid, son of Rabia, was regarded as the Homer of Mecca; but, having seen the second chapter of the Koran, which Mahomet had posted, he fell on his knees before him, and said, "O Mahomet, son of Abdallah, son of Motalib, son of Achem, thou art a greater poet than I – thou art doubtless the prophet of God."

The Arabs of Maden, Naïd, and Sanaa were no less generous than those of the desert were addicted to plunder. Among them, one friend was dishonored if he had refused his assistance to another. In their collection of verses, entitled "*Tograid*", it is related that, "one day, in the temple of Mecca, three Arabs were disputing on generosity and friendship, and could not agree as to which, among those who then set the greatest examples of these virtues, deserved the preference. Some were for Abdallah, son of Giafar, uncle to Mahomet; others for Kais, son of Saad; and others for Arabad, of the tribe of As. After a long dispute they agreed to send a friend of Abdallah to him, a friend of Kais to

Kais, and a friend of Arabad to Arabad, to try them all three, and to come and make their report to the assembly.

"Then the friend of Abdallah went and said to him, 'Son of the uncle of Mahomet, I am on a journey and am destitute of everything.' Abdallah was mounted on his camel loaded with gold and silk; he dismounted with all speed, gave him his camel, and returned home on foot.

"The second went and made application to his friend Kais, son of Saad. Kais was still asleep, and one of his domestics asked the traveller what he wanted. The traveller answered that he was the friend of Kais, and needed his assistance. The domestic said to him, 'I will not wake my master; but here are seven thousand pieces of gold, which are all that we at present have in the house. Take also a camel from the stable, and a slave; these will, I think, be sufficient for you until you reach your own house.' When Kais awoke, he chid the domestic for not having given more.

"The third repaired to his friend Arabad, of the tribe of As. Arabad was blind, and was coming out of his house, leaning on two slaves, to pray to God in the temple of Mecca. As soon as he heard his friend's voice, he said to him, 'I possess nothing but my two slaves; I beg that you will take and sell them; I will go to the temple as well as I can, with my stick.'

"The three disputants, having returned to the assembly, faithfully related what had happened. Many praises were bestowed on Abdallah, son of Giafar – on Kais, son of Saad – and on Arabad, of the tribe of As, but the preference was given

to Arabad."

The Arabs have several tales of this kind, but our western nations have none. Our romances are not in this taste. We have, indeed, several which turn upon trick alone, as those of Boccaccio, "*Guzman d'Alfarache*," "*Gil Bias*," etc.

On Job, the Arab.

It is clear that the Arabs at least possessed noble and exalted ideas. Those who are most conversant with the oriental languages think that the Book of Job, which is of the highest antiquity, was composed by an Arab of Idumaea. The most clear and indubitable proof is that the Hebrew translator has left in his translation more than a hundred Arabic words, which, apparently, he did not understand.

Job, the hero of the piece, could not be a Hebrew, for he says, in the forty-second chapter, that having been restored to his former circumstances, he divided his possessions equally among his sons and daughters, which is directly contrary to the Hebrew law.

It is most likely that, if this book had been composed after the period at which we place Moses, the author – who speaks of so many things and is not sparing of examples – would have mentioned some one of the astonishing prodigies worked by Moses, which were, doubtless, known to all the nations of Asia.

In the very first chapter Satan appears before God and asks permission to tempt Job. *Satan* was unknown in the Pentateuch; it was a Chaldæan word; a fresh proof that the Arabian author

was in the neighborhood of Chaldæa.

It has been thought that he might be a Jew because the Hebrew translator has put Jehovah instead of El, or Bel, or Sadai. But what man of the least information does not know that the word Jehovah was common to the Phœnicians, the Syrians, the Egyptians, and every people of the neighboring countries?

A yet stronger proof – one to which there is no reply – is the knowledge of astronomy which appears in the Book of Job. Mention is here made of the constellations which we call Arcturus, Orion, the Pleiades, and even of those of "the chambers of the south." Now, the Hebrews had no knowledge of the sphere; they had not even a term to express astronomy; but the Arabs, like the Chaldæans, have always been famed for their skill in this science.

It does, then, seem to be thoroughly proved that the Book of Job cannot have been written by a Jew, and that it was anterior to all the Jewish books, Philo and Josephus were too prudent to count it among those of the Hebrew canon. It is incontestably an Arabian parable or allegory.

This is not all. We derive from it some knowledge of the customs of the ancient world, and especially of Arabia. Here we read of trading with the Indies; a commerce which the Arabs have in all ages carried on, but which the Jews never even heard of.

Here, too, we see that the art of writing was in great cultivation, and that they already made great books.

It cannot be denied that the commentator Calmet, profound as he is, violates all the rules of logic in pretending that Job announces the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body, when he says:

"For I know that my Redeemer liveth. And though after my skin – worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. But ye should say, Why persecute we him? – seeing the root of the matter is found in me. Be ye afraid of the sword; for wrath bringeth the punishment of the sword, that ye may know there is a judgment."

Can anything be understood by those words, other than his hope of being cured? The immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the body at the last day, are truths so indubitably announced in the New Testament, and so clearly proved by the fathers and the councils, that there is no need to attribute the first knowledge of them to an Arab. These great mysteries are not explained in any passage of the Hebrew Pentateuch; how then can they be explained in a single verse of Job and that in so obscure a manner? Calmet has no better reason for seeing in the words of Job the immortality of the soul, and the general resurrection, than he would have for discovering a disgraceful disease in the malady with which he was afflicted. Neither physics nor logic take the part of this commentator.

As for this allegorical Book of Job: it being manifestly Arabian, we are at liberty to say that it has neither justness, method, nor precision. Yet it is perhaps the most ancient book

that has been written, and the most valuable monument that has been found on this side the Euphrates.

ARARAT

This is a mountain of Armenia, on which the ark rested. The question has long been agitated, whether the deluge was universal – whether it inundated the whole earth without exception, or only the portion of the earth which was then known. Those who have thought that it extended only to the tribes then existing, have founded their opinion on the inutility of flooding unpeopled lands, which reason seems very plausible. As for us, we abide by the Scripture text, without pretending to explain it. But we shall take greater liberty with Berosus, an ancient Chaldæan writer, of whom there are fragments preserved by Abydenus, quoted by Eusebius, and repeated word for word by George Syncellus. From these fragments we find that the Orientals of the borders of the Euxine, in ancient times, made Armenia the abode of their gods. In this they were imitated by the Greeks, who placed their deities on Mount Olympus. Men have always confounded human with divine things. Princes built their citadels on mountains; therefore they were also made the dwelling place of the gods, and became sacred. The summit of Mount Ararat is concealed by mists; therefore the gods hid themselves in those mists, sometimes vouchsafing to appear to mortals in fine weather.

A god of that country, believed to have been Saturn, appeared one day to Xixuter, tenth king of Chaldæa, according to the

computation of Africanus, Abydenus, and Apollodorus, and said to him:

"On the fifteenth day of the month Oesi, mankind shall be destroyed by a deluge. Shut up close all your writings in Sipara, the city of the sun, that the memory of things may not be lost. Build a vessel; enter it with your relatives and friends; take with you birds and beasts; stock it with provisions, and, when you are asked, 'Whither are you going in that vessel?' answer, 'To the gods, to beg their favor for mankind.'"

Xixuter built his vessel, which was two stadii wide, and five long; that it, its width was two hundred and fifty geometrical paces, and its length six hundred and twenty-five. This ship, which was to go upon the Black Sea, was a slow sailer. The flood came. When it had ceased Xixuter let some of his birds fly out, but, finding nothing to eat, they returned to the vessel. A few days afterwards he again set some of his birds at liberty, and they returned with mud in their claws. At last they went and returned no more. Xixuter did likewise: he quitted his ship, which had perched upon a mountain of Armenia, and he was seen no more; the gods took him away.

There is probably something historic in this fable. The Euxine overflowed its banks, and inundated some portions of territory, and the king of Chaldæa hastened to repair the damage. We have in Rabelais tales no less ridiculous, founded on some small portion of truth. The ancient historians are, for the most part, serious Rabelais.

As for Mount Ararat, it has been asserted that it was one of the mountains of Phrygia, and that it was called by a name answering that of ark, because it was enclosed by three rivers.

There are thirty opinions respecting this mountain. How shall we distinguish the true one? That which the monks now call Ararat, was, they say, one of the limits of the terrestrial paradise – a paradise of which we find but few traces. It is a collection of rocks and precipices, covered with eternal snows. Tournefort went thither by order of Louis XIV. to seek for plants. He says that the whole neighborhood is horrible, and the mountain itself still more so; that he found snow four feet thick, and quite crystallized, and that there are perpendicular precipices on every side.

The Dutch traveller, John Struys, pretends that he went thither also. He tells us that he ascended to the very top, to cure a hermit afflicted with a rupture.

"His hermitage," says he, "was so distant from the earth that we did not reach it until the close of the seventh day, though each day we went five leagues." If, in this journey, he was constantly ascending, this Mount Ararat must be thirty-five leagues high. In the time of the Giants' war, a few Ararats piled one upon another would have made the ascent to the moon quite easy. John Struys, moreover, assures us that the hermit whom he cured presented him with a cross made of the wood of Noah's ark. Tournefort had not this advantage.

ARIANISM

The great theological disputes, for twelve hundred years, were all Greek. What would Homer, Sophocles, Demosthenes, Archimedes, have said, had they witnessed the subtle cavillings which have cost so much blood.

Arius has, even at this day, the honor of being regarded as the inventor of his opinion, as Calvin is considered to have been the founder of Calvinism. The pride in being the head of a sect is the second of this world's vanities; for that of conquest is said to be the first. However, it is certain that neither Arius nor Calvin is entitled to the melancholy glory of invention. The quarrel about the Trinity existed long before Arius took part in it, in the disputatious town of Alexandria, where it had been beyond the power of Euclid to make men think calmly and justly. There never was a people more frivolous than the Alexandrians; in this respect they far exceeded even the Parisians.

There must already have been warm disputes about the Trinity; since the patriarch, who composed the "Alexandrian Chronicle," preserved at Oxford, assures us that the party embraced by Arius was supported by two thousand priests.

We will here, for the reader's convenience, give what is said of Arius in a small book which every one may not have at hand: Here is an incomprehensible question, which, for more than sixteen hundred years, has furnished exercise for curiosity,

for sophistic subtlety, for animosity, for the spirit of cabal, for the fury of dominion, for the rage of persecution, for blind and sanguinary fanaticism, for barbarous credulity, and which has produced more horrors than the ambition of princes, which ambition has occasioned very many. Is Jesus the Word? If He be the Word, did He emanate from God in time or before time? If He emanated from God, is He coeternal and consubstantial with Him, or is He of a similar substance? Is He distinct from Him, or is He not? Is He made or begotten? Can He beget in his turn? Has He paternity? or productive virtue without paternity? Is the Holy Ghost made? or begotten? or produced? or proceeding from the Father? or proceeding from the Son? or proceeding from both? Can He beget? can He produce? is His hypostasis consubstantial with the hypostasis of the Father and the Son? and how is it that, having the same nature – the same essence as the Father and the Son, He cannot do the same things done by these persons who are Himself?

These questions, so far above reason, certainly needed the decision of an infallible church. The Christians sophisticated, cavilled, hated, and excommunicated one another, for some of these dogmas inaccessible to human intellect, before the time of Arius and Athanasius. The Egyptian Greeks were remarkably clever; they would split a hair into four, but on this occasion they split it only into three. Alexandros, bishop of Alexandria, thought proper to preach that God, being necessarily individual – single – a monad in the strictest sense of the word, this monad is triune.

The priest Arius, whom we call Arius, was quite scandalized by Alexandros's monad, and explained the thing in quite a different way. He cavilled in part like the priest Sabellius, who had cavilled like the Phrygian Praxeas, who was a great caviller. Alexandros quickly assembled a small council of those of his own opinion, and excommunicated his priest. Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia, took the part of Arius. Thus the whole Church was in a flame.

The Emperor Constantine was a villain; I confess it – a parricide, who had smothered his wife in a bath, cut his son's throat, assassinated his father-in-law, his brother-in-law, and his nephew; I cannot deny it – a man puffed up with pride and immersed in pleasure; granted – a detestable tyrant, like his children; *transeat*– but he was a man of sense. He would not have obtained the empire, and subdued all his rivals, had he not reasoned justly.

When he saw the flames of civil war lighted among the scholastic brains, he sent the celebrated Bishop Osius with dissuasive letters to the two belligerent parties. "You are great fools," he expressly tells them in this letter, "to quarrel about things which you do not understand. It is unworthy the gravity of your ministry to make so much noise about so trifling a matter."

By "so trifling a matter," Constantine meant not what regards the Divinity, but the incomprehensible manner in which they were striving to explain the nature of the Divinity. The Arabian patriarch, who wrote the history of the Church of Alexandria,

makes Osius, on presenting the emperor's letter, speak in nearly the following words:

"My brethren, Christianity is just beginning to enjoy the blessings of peace, and you would plunge it into eternal discord. The emperor has but too much reason to tell you that you quarrel about a very trifling matter. Certainly, had the object of the dispute been essential, Jesus Christ, whom we all acknowledge as our legislator, would have mentioned it. God would not have sent His Son on earth, to return without teaching us our catechism. Whatever He has not expressly told us is the work of men and error is their portion. Jesus has commanded you to love one another, and you begin by hating one another and stirring up discord in the empire. Pride alone has given birth to these disputes, and Jesus, your Master, has commanded you to be humble. Not one among you can know whether Jesus is made or begotten. And in what does His nature concern you, provided your own is to be just and reasonable? What has the vain science of words to do with the morality which should guide your actions? You cloud our doctrines with mysteries – you, who were designed to strengthen religion by your virtues. Would you leave the Christian religion a mass of sophistry? Did Christ come for this? Cease to dispute, humble yourselves, edify one another, clothe the naked, feed the hungry, and pacify the quarrels of families, instead of giving scandal to the whole empire by your dissensions."

But Osius addressed an obstinate audience. The Council

of Nice was assembled and the Roman Empire was torn by a spiritual civil war. This war brought on others and mutual persecution has continued from age to age, unto this day.

The melancholy part of the affair was that as soon as the council was ended the persecution began; but Constantine, when he opened it, did not yet know how he should act, nor upon whom the persecution should fall. He was not a Christian, though he was at the head of the Christians. Baptism alone then constituted Christianity, and he had not been baptized; he had even rebuilt the Temple of Concord at Rome. It was, doubtless, perfectly indifferent to him whether Alexander of Alexandria, or Eusebius of Nicomedia, and the priest Arius, were right or wrong; it is quite evident, from the letter given above, that he had a profound contempt for the dispute.

But there happened that which always happens and always will happen in every court. The enemies of those who were afterwards named Arians accused Eusebius of Nicomedia of having formerly taken part with Licinius against the emperor. "I have proofs of it," said Constantine in his letter to the Church of Nicomedia, "from the priests and deacons in his train whom I have taken," etc.

Thus, from the time of the first great council, intrigue, cabal, and persecution were established, together with the tenets of the Church, without the power to derogate from their sanctity. Constantine gave the chapels of those who did not believe in the consubstantiality to those who did believe in it; confiscated the

property of the dissenters to his own profit, and used his despotic power to exile Arius and his partisans, who were not then the strongest. It has even been said that of his own private authority he condemned to death whosoever should not burn the writings of Arius; but this is not true. Constantine, prodigal as he was of human blood, did not carry his cruelty to so mad and absurd an excess as to order his executioners to assassinate the man who should keep an heretical book, while he suffered the heresiarch to live.

At court everything soon changes. Several non-consubstantial bishops, with some of the eunuchs and the women, spoke in favor of Arius, and obtained the reversal of the *lettre de cachet*. The same thing has repeatedly happened in our modern courts on similar occasions.

The celebrated Eusebius, bishop of Cæsarea, known by his writings, which evince no great discernment, strongly accused Eustatius, bishop of Antioch, of being a Sabellian; and Eustatius accused Eusebius of being an Arian. A council was assembled at Antioch; Eusebius gained his cause; Eustatius was displaced; and the See of Antioch was offered to Eusebius, who would not accept it; the two parties armed against each other, and this was the prelude to controversial warfare. Constantine, who had banished Arius for not believing in the consubstantial Son, now banished Eustatius for believing in Him; nor are such revolutions uncommon.

St. Athanasius was then bishop of Alexandria. He would

not admit Arius, whom the emperor had sent thither, into the town, saying that "Arius was excommunicated; that an excommunicated man ought no longer to have either home or country; that he could neither eat nor sleep anywhere; and that it was better to obey God than man." A new council was forthwith held at Tyre, and new *lettres de cachet* were issued. Athanasius was removed by the Tyrian fathers and banished to Trèves. Thus Arius, and Athanasius, his greatest enemy, were condemned in turn by a man who was not yet a Christian:

The two factions alike employed artifice, fraud, and calumny, according to the old and eternal usage. Constantine left them to dispute and cabal, for he had other occupations. It was at that time that this *good prince* assassinated his son, his wife, and his nephew, the young Licinius, the hope of the empire, who was not yet twelve years old.

Under Constantine, Arius' party was constantly victorious. The opposite party has unblushingly written that one day St. Macarius, one of the most ardent followers of Athanasius, knowing that Arius was on the way to the cathedral of Constantinople, followed by several of his brethren, prayed so ardently to God to confound this heresiarch that God could not resist the prayer; and immediately all Arius' bowels passed through his fundament – which is impossible. But at length Arius died.

Constantine followed him a year afterwards, and it is said he died of leprosy. Julian, in his "Cæsars," says that baptism, which

this emperor received a few hours before his death, cured no one of this distemper.

As his children reigned after him the flattery of the Roman people, who had long been slaves, was carried to such an excess that those of the old religion made him a god, and those of the new made him a saint. His feast was long kept, together with that of his mother.

After his death, the troubles caused by the single word "consubstantial" agitated the empire with renewed violence. Constantius, son and successor to Constantine, imitated all his father's cruelties, and, like him, held councils – which councils anathematized one another. Athanasius went over all Europe and Asia to support his party, but the Eusebians overwhelmed him. Banishment, imprisonment, tumult, murder, and assassination signalized the close of the reign of Constantius. Julian, the Church's mortal enemy, did his utmost to restore peace to the Church, but was unsuccessful. Jovian, and after him Valentinian, gave entire liberty of conscience, but the two parties accepted it only as the liberty to exercise their hatred and their fury.

Theodosius declared for the Council of Nice, but the Empress Justina, who reigned in Italy, Illyria, and Africa, as guardian of the young Valentinian, proscribed the great Council of Nice; and soon after the Goths, Vandals, and Burgundians, who spread themselves over so many provinces, finding Arianism established in them, embraced it in order to govern the conquered nations by the religion of those nations.

But the Nicæan faith having been received by the Gauls, their conqueror, Clovis, followed that communion for the very same reason that the other barbarians had professed the faith of Arius.

In Italy, the great Theodoric kept peace between the two parties, and at last the Nicæan formula prevailed in the east and in the west. Arianism reappeared about the middle of the sixteenth century, favored by the religious disputes which then divided Europe; and it reappeared, armed with new strength and a still greater incredulity. Forty gentlemen of Vicenza formed an academy, in which such tenets only were established as appeared necessary to make men Christians. Jesus was acknowledged as the Word, as Saviour, and as Judge; but His divinity, His consubstantiality, and even the Trinity, were denied.

Of these dogmatizers, the principal were Lælius Socinus, Ochin, Pazuta, and Gentilis, who were joined by Servetus. The unfortunate dispute of the latter with Calvin is well known; they carried on for some time an interchange of abuse by letter. Servetus was so imprudent as to pass through Geneva, on his way to Germany. Calvin was cowardly enough to have him arrested, and barbarous enough to have him condemned to be roasted by a slow fire – the same punishment which Calvin himself had narrowly escaped in France. Nearly all the theologians of that time were by turns persecuting and persecuted, executioners and victims.

The same Calvin solicited the death of Gentilis at Geneva. He found five advocates to subscribe that Gentilis deserved to perish

in the flames. Such horrors were worthy of that abominable age. Gentilis was put in prison, and was on the point of being burned like Servetus, but he was better advised than the Spaniard; he retracted, bestowed the most ridiculous praises on Calvin, and was saved. But he had afterwards the ill fortune, through not having made terms with a bailiff of the canton of Berne, to be arrested as an Arian. There were witnesses who deposed that he had said that the words *trinity*, *essence*, *hypostasis* were not to be found in the Scriptures, and on this deposition the judges, who were as ignorant of the meaning of *hypostasis* as himself, condemned him, without at all arguing the question, to lose his head.

Faustus Socinus, nephew to Lælius Socinus, and his companions were more fortunate in Germany. They penetrated into Silesia and Poland, founded churches there, wrote, preached, and were successful, but at length, their religion being divested of almost every mystery, and a philosophical and peaceful, rather than a militant sect, they were abandoned; and the Jesuits, who had more influence, persecuted and dispersed them.

The remains of this sect in Poland, Germany, and Holland keep quiet and concealed; but in England the sect has reappeared with greater strength and éclat. The great Newton and Locke embraced it. Samuel Clarke, the celebrated rector of St. James, and author of an excellent book on the existence of God, openly declared himself an Arian, and his disciples are very numerous. He would never attend his parish church on the day when the

Athanasian Creed was recited. In the course of this work will be seen the subtleties which all these obstinate persons, who were not so much Christians as philosophers, opposed to the purity of the Catholic faith.

Although among the theologians of London there was a large flock of Arians, the public mind there has been more occupied by the great mathematical truths discovered by Newton, and the metaphysical wisdom of Locke. Disputes on consubstantiality appear very dull to philosophers. The same thing happened to Newton in England as to Corneille in France, whose "*Pertharite*," "*Théodore*," and "*Recueil de Vers*" were forgotten, while "*Cinna*" was alone thought of. Newton was looked upon as God's interpreter, in the calculation of fluxions, the laws of gravitation, and the nature of light. On his death, his pall was borne by the peers and the chancellor of the realm, and his remains were laid near the tombs of the kings – than whom he is more revered. Servetus, who is said to have discovered the circulation of the blood, was roasted by a slow fire, in a little town of the Allobroges, ruled by a theologian of Picardy.

ARISTEAS

Shall men forever be deceived in the most indifferent as well as the most serious things? A pretended Aristeas would make us believe that he had the Old Testament translated into Greek for the use of Ptolemy Philadelphus – just as the Duke de Montausier had commentaries written on the best Latin authors for the dauphin, who made no use of them.

According to this Aristeas, Ptolemy, burning with desire to be acquainted with the Jewish books, and to know those laws which the meanest Jew in Alexandria could have translated for fifty crowns, determined to send a solemn embassy to the high-priest of the Jews of Jerusalem; to deliver a hundred and twenty thousand Jewish slaves, whom his father, Ptolemy Soter, had made prisoners in Judæa, and in order to assist them in performing the journey agreeably, to give them about forty crowns each of our money – amounting in the whole to fourteen millions four hundred thousand of our livres, or about five hundred and seventy-six thousand pounds.

Ptolemy did not content himself with this unheard-of liberality. He sent to the temple a large table of massive gold, enriched all over with precious stones, and had engraved upon it a chart of the Meander, a river of Phrygia, the course of which river was marked with rubies and emeralds. It is obvious how charming such a chart of the Meander must have been to the

Jews. This table was loaded with two immense golden vases, still more richly worked. He also gave thirty other golden and an infinite number of silver vases. Never was a book so dearly paid for; the whole Vatican library might be had for a less amount.

Eleazar, the pretended high-priest of Jerusalem, sent ambassadors in his turn, who presented only a letter written upon fine vellum in characters of gold. It was an act worthy of the Jews, to give a bit of parchment for about thirty millions of livres. Ptolemy was so much delighted with Eleazar's style that he shed tears of joy.

The ambassador dined with the king and the chief priests of Egypt. When grace was to be said, the Egyptians yielded the honor to the Jews. With these ambassadors came seventy-two interpreters, six from each of the twelve tribes, who had all learned Greek perfectly at Jerusalem. It is really a pity that of these twelve tribes ten were entirely lost, and had disappeared from the face of the earth so many ages before; but Eleazar, the high-priest, found them again, on purpose to send translators to Ptolemy.

The seventy-two interpreters were shut up in the island of Pharos. Each of them completed his translation in seventy-two days, and all the translations were found to be word for word alike. This is called the Septuagint or translation of the seventy, though it should have been called the translation of the seventy-two.

As soon as the king had received these books he worshipped

them – he was so good a Jew. Each interpreter received three talents of gold, and there were sent to the high-sacrificer – in return for his parchment – ten couches of silver, a crown of gold, censers and cups of gold, a vase of thirty talents of silver – that is, of the weight of about sixty thousand crowns – with ten purple robes, and a hundred pieces of the finest linen.

Nearly all this fine story is faithfully repeated by the historian Josephus, who never exaggerates anything. St. Justin improves upon Josephus. He says that Ptolemy applied to King Herod, and not to the high-priest Eleazar. He makes Ptolemy send two ambassadors to Herod – which adds much to the marvellousness of the tale, for we know that Herod was not born until long after the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus.

It is needless to point out the profusion of anachronisms in these and all such romances, or the swarm of contradictions and enormous blunders into which the Jewish author falls in every sentence; yet this fable was regarded for ages as an incontestable truth; and, the better to exercise the credulity of the human mind, every writer who repeated it added or retrenched in his own way, so that, to believe it all, it was necessary to believe it in a hundred different ways. Some smile at these absurdities which whole nations have swallowed, while others sigh over the imposture. The infinite diversity of these falsehoods multiplies the followers of Democritus and Heraclitus.

ARISTOTLE

It is not to be believed that Alexander's preceptor, chosen by Philip, was wrong-headed and pedantic. Philip was assuredly a judge, being himself well informed, and the rival of Demosthenes in eloquence.

Aristotle's Logic.

Aristotle's logic – his art of reasoning – is so much the more to be esteemed as he had to deal with the Greeks, who were continually holding captious arguments, from which fault his master Plato was even less exempt than others.

Take, for example, the article by which, in the "*Phædon*" Plato proves the immortality of the soul:

"Do you not say that death is the opposite of life? Yes. And that they spring from each other? Yes. What, then, is it that springs from the living? The dead. And what from the dead? The living. It is, then, from the dead that all living creatures arise. Consequently, souls exist after death in the infernal regions."

Sure and unerring rules were wanted to unravel this extraordinary nonsense, which, through Plato's reputation, fascinated the minds of men. It was necessary to show that Plato gave a loose meaning to all his words.

Death does not spring from life, but the living man ceases to live. The living springs not from the dead, but from a living man who subsequently dies. Consequently, the conclusion that

all living things spring from dead ones is ridiculous.

From this conclusion you draw another, which is no way included in the premises, that souls are in the infernal regions after death. It should first have been proved that dead bodies are in the infernal regions, and that the souls accompany them.

There is not a correct word in your argument. You should have said – That which thinks has no parts; that which has no parts is indestructible: therefore, the thinking faculty in us, having no parts, is indestructible. Or – the body dies because it is divisible; the soul is indivisible; therefore it does not die. Then you would at least have been understood.

It is the same with all the captious reasonings of the Greeks. A master taught rhetoric to his disciple on condition that he should pay him after the first cause that he gained. The disciple intended never to pay him. He commenced an action against his master, saying: "I will never pay you anything, for, if I lose my cause I was not to pay you until I had gained it, and if I gain it my demand is that I may not pay you."

The master retorted, saying: "If you lose you must pay; if you gain you must also pay; for our bargain is that you shall pay me after the first cause that you have gained."

It is evident that all this turns on an ambiguity. Aristotle teaches how to remove it, by putting the necessary terms in the argument:

A sum is not due until the day appointed for its payment. The day appointed is that when a cause shall have been gained. No

cause has yet been gained. Therefore the day appointed has not yet arrived. Therefore the disciple does not yet owe anything.

But *not yet* does not mean *never*. So that the disciple instituted a ridiculous action. The master, too, had no right to demand anything, since the day appointed had not arrived. He must wait until the disciple had pleaded some other cause.

Suppose a conquering people were to stipulate that they would restore to the conquered only one-half of their ships; then, having sawed them in two, and having thus given back the exact half, were to pretend that they had fulfilled the treaty. It is evident that this would be a very criminal equivocation.

Aristotle did, then, render a great service to mankind by preventing all ambiguity; for this it is which causes all misunderstandings in philosophy, in theology, and in public affairs. The pretext for the unfortunate war of 1756 was an equivocation respecting Acadia.

It is true that natural good sense, combined with the habit of reasoning, may dispense with Aristotle's rules. A man who has a good ear and voice may sing well without musical rules, but it is better to know them.

His Physics.

They are but little understood, but it is more than probable that Aristotle understood himself, and was understood in his own time. We are strangers to the language of the Greeks; we do not attach to the same words the same ideas.

For instance, when he says, in his seventh chapter, that the

principles of bodies are matter, privation, and form, he seems to talk egregious nonsense; but such is not the case. Matter, with him, is the first principle of everything – the subject of everything – indifferent to everything. Form is essential to its becoming any certain thing. Privation is that which distinguishes any being from all those things which are not in it. Matter may, indifferently, become a rose or an apple; but, when it is an apple or a rose it is deprived of all that would make it silver or lead. Perhaps this truth was not worth the trouble of repeating; but we have nothing here but what is quite intelligible, and nothing at all impertinent.

The "act of that which is in power" also seems a ridiculous phrase, though it is no more so than the one just noticed. Matter may become whatever you will – fire, earth, water, vapor, metal, mineral, animal, tree, flower. This is all that is meant by the expression, *act in power*. So that there was nothing ridiculous to the Greeks in saying that motion was an act of power, since matter may be moved; and it is very likely that Aristotle understood thereby that motion was not essential to matter.

Aristotle's physics must necessarily have been very bad in detail. This was common to all philosophers until the time when the Galileos, the Torricellis, the Guerickes, the Drebels, and the Academy del Cimento began to make experiments. Natural philosophy is a mine which cannot be explored without instruments that were unknown to the ancients. They remained on the brink of the abyss, and reasoned upon without seeing its

contents.

Aristotle's Treatise on Animals.

His researches relative to animals formed, on the contrary, the best book of antiquity, because here Aristotle made use of his eyes. Alexander furnished him with all the rare animals of Europe, Asia, and Africa. This was one fruit of his conquests. In this way that hero spent immense sums, which at this day would terrify all the guardians of the royal treasury, and which should immortalize Alexander's glory, of which we have already spoken.

At the present day a hero, when he has the misfortune to make war, can scarcely give any encouragement to the sciences; he must borrow money of a Jew, and consult other Jews in order to make the substance of his subjects flow into his coffer of the Danaides, whence it escapes through a thousand openings. Alexander sent to Aristotle elephants, rhinoceroses, tigers, lions, crocodiles, gazelles, eagles, ostriches, etc.; and we, when by chance a rare animal is brought to our fairs, go and admire it for sixpence, and it dies before we know anything about it.

Of the Eternal World.

Aristotle expressly maintains, in his book on heaven, chap. xi., that the world is eternal. This was the opinion of all antiquity, excepting the Epicureans. He admitted a God – a first mover – and defined Him to be "one, eternal, immovable, indivisible, without qualities."

He must, therefore, have regarded the world as emanating from God, as the light emanates from the sun, and is co-existent

with it. About the celestial spheres he was as ignorant as all the rest of the philosophers. Copernicus was not yet come.

His Metaphysics.

God being the first mover, He gives motion to the soul. But what is God, and what is the soul, according to him? The soul is an *entelechia*. "It is," says he, "a principle and an act – a nourishing, feeling, and reasoning power." This can only mean that we have the faculties of nourishing ourselves, of feeling, and of reasoning. The Greeks no more knew what an *entelechia* was than do the South Sea islanders; nor have our doctors any more knowledge of what a soul is.

His Morals.

Aristotle's morals, like all others, are good, for there are not two systems of morality. Those of Confucius, of Zoroaster, of Pythagoras, of Aristotle, of Epictetus, of Antoninus, are absolutely the same. God has placed in every breast the knowledge of good, with some inclination for evil.

Aristotle says that to be virtuous three things are necessary – nature, reason, and habit; and nothing is more true. Without a good disposition, virtue is too difficult; reason strengthens it; and habit renders good actions as familiar as a daily exercise to which one is accustomed.

He enumerates all the virtues, and does not fail to place friendship among them. He distinguishes friendship between equals, between relatives, between guests, and between lovers. Friendship springing from the rights of hospitality is no longer

known among us. That which, among the ancients, was the sacred bond of society is, with us, nothing but an innkeeper's reckoning; and as for lovers, it is very rarely nowadays that virtue has anything to do with love. We think we owe nothing to a woman to whom we have a thousand times promised everything.

It is a melancholy reflection that our first thinkers have never ranked friendship among the virtues – have rarely recommended friendship; but, on the contrary, have often seemed to breathe enmity, like tyrants, who dread all associations.

It is, moreover, with very good reason that Aristotle places all the virtues between the two extremes. He was, perhaps, the first who assigned them this place. He expressly says that piety is the medium between atheism and superstition.

His Rhetoric.

It was probably his rules for rhetoric and poetry that Cicero and Quintilian had in view. Cicero, in his "Orator" says that "no one had more science, sagacity, invention, or judgment." Quintilian goes so far as to praise, not only the extent of his knowledge, but also the suavity of his elocution —*suavitatem eloquendi*.

Aristotle would have an orator well informed respecting laws, finances, treaties, fortresses, garrisons, provisions, and merchandise. The orators in the parliaments of England, the diets of Poland, the states of Sweden, the *pregadi* of Venice, etc., would not find these lessons of Aristotle unprofitable; to other nations, perhaps, they would be so. He would have his orator

know the passions and manners of men, and the humors of every condition.

I think there is not a single nicety of the art which has escaped him. He particularly commends the citing of instances where public affairs are spoken of; nothing has so great an effect on the minds of men.

What he says on this subject proves that he wrote his "Rhetoric" long before Alexander was appointed captain-general of the Greeks against the great king.

"If," says he, "any one had to prove to the Greeks that it is to their interest to oppose the enterprises of the king of Persia, and to prevent him from making himself master of Egypt, he should first remind them that Darius Ochus would not attack Greece until Egypt was in his power; he should remark that Xerxes had pursued the same course; he should add that it was not to be doubted that Darius Codomannus would do the same; and that, therefore, they must not suffer him to take possession of Egypt."

He even permits, in speeches delivered to great assemblies, the introduction of parables and fables; they always strike the multitude. He relates some ingenious ones, which are of the highest antiquity, as the horse that implored the assistance of man to avenge himself on the stag, and became a slave through having sought a protector.

It may be remarked that, in the second book, where he treats of arguing from the greater to the less, he gives an example which plainly shows what was the opinion of Greece, and probably of

Asia, respecting the extent of the power of the gods.

"If," says he, "it be true that the gods themselves, enlightened as they are, cannot know everything, much less can men." This passage clearly proves that omniscience was not then attributed to the Divinity. It was conceived that the gods could not know what was not; the future was not, therefore it seemed impossible that they should know it. This is the opinion of the Socinians at the present day.

But to return to Aristotle's "Rhetoric." What I shall chiefly remark on in his book on elocution and diction is the good sense with which he condemns those who would be poets in prose. He would have pathos, but he banishes bombast, and proscribes useless epithets. Indeed, Demosthenes and Cicero, who followed his precepts, never affected the poetic style in their speeches. "The style," says Aristotle, "must always be conformable to the subject."

Nothing can be more misplaced than to speak of physics poetically, and lavish figure and ornament where there should be only method, clearness, and truth. It is the quackery of a man who would pass off false systems under cover of an empty noise of words. Weak minds are caught by the bait, and strong minds disdain it.

Among us the funeral oration has taken possession of the poetic style in prose; but this branch of oratory, consisting almost entirely of exaggeration, seems privileged to borrow the ornaments of poetry.

The writers of romances have sometimes taken this licence. La Calprenède was, I think, the first who thus transposed the limits of the arts, and abused this facility. The author of "Telemachus" was pardoned through consideration for Homer, whom he imitated, though he could not make verses, and still more in consideration of his morality, in which he infinitely surpasses Homer, who has none at all. But he owed his popularity chiefly to the criticism on the pride of Louis XIV. and the harshness of Louvois, which, it was thought, were discoverable in "Telemachus."

Be this as it may, nothing can be a better proof of Aristotle's good sense and good taste than his having assigned to everything its proper place.

Aristotle on Poetry.

Where, in our modern nations, shall we find a natural philosopher, a geometrician, a metaphysician, or even a moralist who has spoken well on the subject of poetry? They teem with the names of Homer, Virgil, Sophocles, Ariosto, Tasso, and so many others who have charmed the world by the harmonious productions of their genius, but they feel not their beauties; or if they feel them they would annihilate them.

How ridiculous is it in Pascal to say: "As we say poetical beauty, we should likewise say geometrical beauty, and medicinal beauty. Yet we do not say so, and the reason is that we well know what is the object of geometry, and what is the object of medicine, but we do not know in what the peculiar charm

– which is the object of poetry – consists. We know not what that natural model is which must be imitated; and for want of this knowledge we have invented certain fantastic terms, as age of gold, wonder of the age, fatal wreath, fair star, etc. And this jargon we call poetic beauty."

The pitifulness of this passage is sufficiently obvious. We know that there is nothing beautiful in a medicine, nor in the properties of a triangle; and that we apply the term "beautiful" only to that which raises admiration in our minds and gives pleasure to our senses. Thus reasons Aristotle; and Pascal here reasons very ill. Fatal wreath, fair star, have never been poetic beauties. If he wished to know what is poetic beauty, he had only to read.

Nicole wrote against the stage, about which he had not a single idea; and was seconded by one Dubois, who was as ignorant of the *belles lettres* as himself.

Even Montesquieu, in his amusing "Persian Letters," has the petty vanity to think that Homer and Virgil are nothing in comparison with one who imitates with spirit and success Dufrenoy's "*Siamois*," and fills his book with bold assertions, without which it would not have been read. "What," says he, "are epic poems? I know them not. I despise the lyric as much as I esteem the tragic poets." He should not, however, have despised Pindar and Horace quite so much. Aristotle did not despise Pindar.

Descartes did, it is true, write for Queen Christina a little

divertissement in verse, which was quite worthy of his *matière cannellée*.

Malebranche could not distinguish Corneille's "*Qu'il mourût*" from a line of Jodèle's or Garnier's.

What a man, then, was Aristotle, who traced the rules of tragedy with the same hand with which he had laid down those of dialectics, of morals, of politics, and lifted, as far as he found it possible, the great veil of nature!

To his fourth chapter on poetry Boileau is indebted for these fine lines:

*Il n'est point de serpent, ni de monstre odieux
Qui, par l'art imité, ne puisse plaire aux yeux.
D'un pinceau délicat l'artifice agréable
Du plus affreux objet fait un objet aimable;
Ainsi, pour nous charmer, la tragédie eut pleurs
D'Edipe tout-sanglant fit parler les douleurs.*

Each horrid shape, each object of affright,
Nice imitation teaches to delight;
So does the skilful painter's pleasing art
Attractions to the darkest form impart;
So does the tragic Muse, dissolved in tears.
With tales of woe and sorrow charm our ears.

Aristotle says: "Imitation and harmony have produced poetry. We see terrible animals, dead or dying men, in a picture, with pleasure – objects which in nature would inspire us only with fear

and sorrow. The better they are imitated the more complete is our satisfaction."

This fourth chapter of Aristotle's reappears almost entire in Horace and Boileau. The laws which he gives in the following chapters are at this day those of our good writers, excepting only what relates to the choruses and music. His idea that tragedy was instituted to purify the passions has been warmly combated; but if he meant, as I believe he did, that an incestuous love might be subdued by witnessing the misfortune of Phædra, or anger be repressed by beholding the melancholy example of Ajax, there is no longer any difficulty.

This philosopher expressly commands that there be always the heroic in tragedy and the ridiculous in comedy. This is a rule from which it is, perhaps, now becoming too customary to depart.

ARMS – ARMIES

It is worthy of consideration that there have been and still are, upon the earth societies without armies. The Brahmins, who long governed nearly all the great Indian Chersonesus; the primitives, called Quakers, who governed Pennsylvania; some American tribes, some in the centre of Africa, the Samoyedes, the Laplanders, the Kamchadales, have never marched with colors flying to destroy their neighbors.

The Brahmins were the most considerable of all these pacific nations; their caste, which is so ancient, which is still existing, and compared with which all other institutions are quite recent, is a prodigy which cannot be sufficiently admired. Their religion and their policy always concurred in abstaining from the shedding of blood, even of that of the meanest animal. Where such is the regime, subjugation is easy; they have been subjugated, but have not changed.

The Pennsylvanians never had an army; they always held war in abhorrence.

Several of the American tribes did not know what an army was until the Spaniards came to exterminate them all. The people on the borders of the Icy Sea are ignorant alike of armies, of the god of armies, of battalions, and of squadrons.

Besides these populations, the priests and monks do not bear arms in any country – at least when they observe the laws of their

institution.

It is only among Christians that there have been religious societies established for the purpose of fighting – as the Knights Templars, the Knights of St. John, the Knights of the Teutonic Order, the Knights Swordbearers. These religious orders were instituted in imitation of the Levites, who fought like the rest of the Jewish tribes.

Neither armies nor arms were the same in antiquity as at present. The Egyptians hardly ever had cavalry. It would have been of little use in a country intersected by canals, inundated during five months of the year, and miry during five more. The inhabitants of a great part of Asia used chariots of war.

They are mentioned in the annals of China. Confucius says that in his time each governor of a province furnished to the emperor a thousand war chariots, each drawn by four horses. The Greeks and Trojans fought in chariots drawn by two horses.

Cavalry and chariots were unknown to the Jews in a mountainous tract, where their first king, when he was elected, had nothing but she-asses. Thirty sons of Jair, princes of thirty cities, according to the text (Judges, x, 4), rode each upon an ass. Saul, afterwards king of Judah, had only she-asses; and the sons of David all fled upon mules when Absalom had slain his brother Amnon. Absalom was mounted on a mule in the battle which he fought against his father's troops; which proves, according to the Jewish historians, either that mares were beginning to be used in Palestine, or that they were already rich enough there to buy

mules from the neighboring country.

The Greeks made but little use of cavalry. It was chiefly with the Macedonian phalanx that Alexander gained the battles which laid Persia at his feet. It was the Roman infantry that subjugated the greater part of the world. At the battle of Pharsalia, Cæsar had but one thousand horsemen.

It is not known at what time the Indians and the Africans first began to march elephants at the head of their armies. We cannot read without surprise of Hannibal's elephants crossing the Alps, which were much harder to pass then than they are now.

There have long been disputes about the disposition of the Greek and Roman armies, their arms, and their evolutions. Each one has given his plan of the battles of Zama and Pharsalia.

The commentator Calmet, a Benedictine, has printed three great volumes of his "Dictionary of the Bible," in which, the better to explain God's commandments, are inserted a hundred engravings, where you see plans of battles and sieges in copper-plate. The God of the Jews was the God of armies, but Calmet was not His secretary; he cannot have known, but by revelation, how the armies of the Amalekites, the Moabites, the Syrians, and the Philistines were arranged on the days of general murder. These plates of carnage, designed at a venture, made his hook five or six louis dearer, but made it no better.

It is a great question whether the Franks, whom the Jesuit Daniel calls French by anticipation, used bows and arrows in their armies, and whether they had helmets and cuirasses.

Supposing that they went to combat almost naked, and armed, as they are said to have been, with only a small carpenter's ax, a sword, and a knife, we must infer that the Romans, masters of Gaul, so easily conquered by Clovis, had lost all their ancient valor, and that the Gauls were as willing to be subject to a small number of Franks as to a small number of Romans. Warlike accoutrements have since changed, as everything else changes.

In the days of knights, squires, and varlets, the armed forces of Germany, France, Italy, England, and Spain consisted almost entirely of horsemen, who, as well as their horses, were covered with steel. The infantry performed the functions rather of pioneers than of soldiers. But the English always had good archers among their foot, which contributed, in a great measure, to their gaining almost every battle.

Who would believe that armies nowadays do but make experiments in natural philosophy? A soldier would be much astonished if some learned man were to say to him:

"My friend, you are a better machinist than Archimedes. Five parts of saltpetre, one of sulphur, and one of *carbo ligneus* have been separately prepared. Your saltpetre dissolved, well filtered, well evaporated, well crystallized, well turned, well dried, has been incorporated with the yellow purified sulphur. These two ingredients, mixed with powdered charcoal, have, by means of a little vinegar, or solution of sal-ammoniac, or urine, formed large balls, which balls have been reduced *in pulverem pyrium* by a mill. The effect of this mixture is a dilatation, which is nearly

as four thousand to unity; and the lead in your barrel exhibits another effect, which is the product of its bulk multiplied by its velocity.

"The first who discovered a part of this mathematical secret was a Benedictine named Roger Bacon. The invention was perfected, in Germany, in the fourteenth century, by another Benedictine named Schwartz. So that you owe to two monks the art of being an excellent murderer, when you aim well, and your powder is good.

"Du Cange has in vain pretended that, in 1338, the registers of the *Chambre des Comptes*, at Paris, mention a bill paid for gunpowder. Do not believe it. It was artillery which is there spoken of – a name attached to ancient as well as to modern warlike machines.

"Gunpowder entirely superseded the Greek fire, of which the Moors still made use. In fine, you are the depository of an art, which not only imitates the thunder, but is also much more terrible."

There is, however, nothing but truth in this speech. Two monks have, in reality, changed the face of the earth.

Before cannon were known, the northern nations had subjugated nearly the whole hemisphere, and could come again, like famishing wolves, to seize upon the lands as their ancestors had done.

In all armies, the victory, and consequently the fate of kingdoms, was decided by bodily strength and agility – a sort

of sanguinary fury – a desperate struggle, man to man. Intrepid men took towns by scaling their walls. During the decline of the Roman Empire there was hardly more discipline in the armies of the North than among carnivorous beasts rushing on their prey.

Now a single frontier fortress would suffice to stop the armies of Genghis or Attila. It is not long since a victorious army of Russians were unavoidably consumed before Custrin, which is nothing more than a little fortress in a marsh.

In battle, the weakest in body may, with well-directed artillery, prevail against the stoutest. At the battle of Fontenoy a few cannon were sufficient to compel the retreat of the whole English column, though it had been master of the field.

The combatants no longer close. The soldier has no longer that ardor, that impetuosity, which is redoubled in the heat of action, when the fight is hand to hand. Strength, skill, and even the temper of the weapons, are useless. Rarely is a charge with the bayonet made in the course of a war, though the bayonet is the most terrible of weapons.

In a plain, frequently surrounded by redoubts furnished with heavy artillery, two armies advance in silence, each division taking with it flying artillery. The first lines lire at one another and after one another: they are victims presented in turn to the bullets. Squadrons at the wings are often exposed to a cannonading while waiting for the general's orders. They who first tire of this manœuvre, which gives no scope for the display of impetuous bravery, disperse and quit the field; and are rallied,

if possible, a few miles off. The victorious enemies besiege a town, which sometimes costs them more men, money, and time than they would have lost by several battles. The progress made is rarely rapid; and at the end of five or six years, both sides, being equally exhausted, are compelled to make peace.

Thus, at all events, the invention of artillery and the new mode of warfare have established among the respective powers an equality which secures mankind from devastations like those of former times, and thereby renders war less fatal in its consequences, though it is still prodigiously so.

The Greeks in all ages, the Romans in the time of Sulla, and the other nations of the west and south, had no standing army; every citizen was a soldier, and enrolled himself in time of war. It is, at this day, precisely the same in Switzerland. Go through the whole country, and you will not find a battalion, except at the time of the reviews. If it goes to war, you all at once see eighty thousand men in arms.

Those who usurped the supreme power after Sulla always had a permanent force, paid with the money of the citizens, to keep the citizens in subjection, much more than to subjugate other nations. The bishop of Rome himself keeps a small army in his pay. Who, in the time of the apostles, would have said that the servant of the servants of God should have regiments, and have them in Rome?

Nothing is so much feared in England as a great standing army. The janissaries have raised the sultans to greatness, but

they have also strangled them. The sultans would have avoided the rope, if instead of these large bodies of troops, they had established small ones.

AROT AND MAROT

WITH A SHORT REVIEW OF THE KORAN

This article may serve to show how much the most learned men may be deceived, and to develop some useful truths. In the "*Dictionnaire Encyclopédique*" there is the following passage concerning Arot and Marot:

"These are the names of two angels, who, the impostor Mahomet said, had been sent from God to teach man, and to order him to abstain from murder, false judgments, and excesses of every kind. This false prophet adds that a very beautiful woman, having invited these two angels to her table, made them drink wine, with which being heated, they solicited her as lovers; that she feigned to yield to their passion, provided they would first teach her the words by pronouncing which they said it was easy to ascend to heaven; that having obtained from them what she asked, she would not keep her promise; and that she was then taken up into heaven, where, having related to God what had passed, she was changed into the morning star called Lucifer or Aurora, and the angels were severely punished. Hence it was, according to Mahomet, that God took occasion to forbid wine to men."

It would be in vain to seek in the Koran for a single word of this absurd story and pretended reason for Mahomet's forbidding his followers the use of wine. He forbids it only in the second and fifth chapters.

"They will question thee about wine and strong liquors: thou shalt answer, that it is a great sin. The just, who believe and do good works, must not be reproached with having drunk, and played at games of chance, before games of chance were forbidden."

It is averred by all the Mahometans that their prophet forbade wine and liquors solely to preserve their health and prevent quarrels, in the burning climate of Arabia. The use of any fermented liquor soon affects the head, and may destroy both health and reason.

The fable of Arot and Marot descending from heaven, and wanting to lie with an Arab woman, after drinking wine with her, is not in any Mahometan author. It is to be found only among the impostures which various Christian writers, more indiscreet than enlightened, have printed against the Mussulman religion, through a zeal which is not according to knowledge. The names of Arot and Marot are in no part of the Koran. It is one Sylburgius who says, in an old book which nobody reads, that he anathematizes the angels Arot, Marot, Safah, and Merwah.

Observe, kind reader, that Safah and Merwah are two little hills near Mecca; so that our learned Sylburgius has taken two hills for two angels. Thus it was with every writer on

Mahometanism among us, almost without exception, until the intelligent Reland gave us clear ideas of the Mussulman belief, and the learned Sale, after living twenty-four years in and about Arabia, at length enlightened us by his faithful translation of the Koran, and his most instructive preface.

Gagnier himself, notwithstanding his Arabic professorship at Oxford, has been pleased to put forth a few falsehoods concerning Mahomet, as if we had need of lies to maintain the truth of our religion against a false prophet. He gives us at full length Mahomet's journey through the seven heavens on the mare Alborac, and even ventures to cite the fifty-third sura or chapter; but neither in this fifty-third sura, nor in any other, is there so much as an allusion to this pretended journey through the heavens.

This strange story is related by Abulfeda, seven hundred years after Mahomet. It is taken, he says, from ancient manuscripts which were current in Mahomet's time. But it is evident that they were not Mahomet's; for, after his death, Abubeker gathered together all the leaves of the Koran, in the presence of all the chiefs of tribes, and nothing was inserted in the collection that did not appear to be authentic.

Besides, the chapter concerning the journey to heaven, not only is not in the Koran, but is in a very different style, and is at least four times as long as any of the received chapters. Compare all the other chapters of the Koran with this, and you will find a prodigious difference. It begins thus:

"One night, I fell asleep between the two hills of Safah and Merwah. That night was very dark, but so still that the dogs were not heard to bark, nor the cocks to crow. All at once, the angel Gabriel appeared before me in the form in which the Most High God created him. His skin was white as snow. His fair hair, admirably disposed, fell in ringlets over his shoulders; his forehead was clear, majestic, and serene, his teeth beautiful and shining, and his legs of a saffron hue; his garments were glittering with pearls, and with thread of pure gold. On his forehead was a plate of gold, on which were written two lines, brilliant and dazzling with light; in the first were these words, 'There is no God but God'; and in the second these, 'Mahomet is God's Apostle.' On beholding this, I remained the most astonished and confused of men. I observed about him seventy thousand little boxes or bags of musk and saffron. He had five hundred pairs of wings; and the distance from one wing to another was five hundred years' journey.

"Thus did Gabriel appear before me. He touched me, and said, 'Arise, thou sleeper!' I was seized with fear and trembling, and starting up, said to him, 'Who art thou?' He answered, 'God have mercy upon thee! I am thy brother Gabriel.' 'O my dearly beloved Gabriel,' said I, 'I ask thy pardon; is it a revelation of something new, or is it some afflicting threat that thou bringest me?' 'It is something new,' returned he; 'rise, my dearly beloved, and tie thy mantle over thy shoulders; thou wilt have need of it, for thou must this night pay a visit to thy Lord.' So saying, Gabriel, taking

my hand, raised me from the ground, and having mounted me on the mare Alborac, led her himself by the bridle."

In fine, it is averred by the Mussulmans that this chapter, which has no authenticity, was imagined by Abu-Horairah, who is said to have been contemporary with the prophet. What should we say of a Turk who should come and insult our religion by telling us that we reckon among our sacred books the letters of St. Paul to Seneca, and Seneca's letters to St. Paul; the acts of Pilate; the life of Pilate's wife; the letters of the pretended King Abgarus to Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ's answer to the same; the story of St. Peter's challenge to Simon the magician; the predictions of the sibyls; the testament of the twelve patriarchs; and so many other books of the same kind?

We should answer the Turk by saying that he was very ill informed and that not one of these works was regarded as authentic. The Turk will make the same answer to us, when to confound him we reproach him with Mahomet's journey to the seven heavens. He will tell us that this is nothing more than a pious fraud of latter times, and that this journey is not in the Koran. Assuredly I am not here comparing truth with error – Christianity with Mahometanism – the Gospel with the Koran; but false tradition with false tradition – abuse with abuse – absurdity with absurdity.

This absurdity has been carried to such a length that Grotius charges Mahomet with having said that God's hands are cold, for he has felt them; that God is carried about in a chair; and that, in

Noah's ark, the rat was produced from the elephant's dung, and the cat from the lion's breath.

Grotius reproaches Mahomet with having imagined that Jesus Christ was taken up into heaven instead of suffering execution. He forgets that there were entire heretical communions of primitive Christians who spread this opinion, which was preserved in Syria and Arabia until Mahomet's time.

How many times has it been repeated that Mahomet had accustomed a pigeon to eat grain out of his ear, and made his followers believe that this pigeon brought him messages from God?

Is it not enough for us that we are persuaded of the falseness of his sect, and invincibly convinced by faith of the truth of our own, without losing our time in calumniating the Mahometans, who have established themselves from Mount Caucasus to Mount Atlas, and from the confines of Epirus to the extremities of India? We are incessantly writing bad books against them, of which they know nothing. We cry out that their religion has been embraced by so many nations only because it flatters the senses. But where is the sensuality in ordering abstinence from the wine and liquors in which we indulge to such excess; in pronouncing to every one an indispensable command to give to the poor each year two and a half per cent, of his income, to fast with the greatest rigor, to undergo a painful operation in the earliest stage of puberty, to make, over arid sands a pilgrimage of sometimes five hundred leagues, and to pray to God five times a day, even

when in the field?

But, say you, they are allowed four wives in this world, and in the next they will have celestial brides. Grotius expressly says: "It must have required a great share of stupidity to admit reveries so gross and disgusting."

We agree with Grotius that the Mahometans have been prodigal of reveries. The man who was constantly receiving the chapters of his Koran from the angel Gabriel was worse than a visionary; he was an impostor, who supported his seductions by his courage; but certainly there is nothing either stupid or sensual in reducing to four the unlimited number of wives whom the princes, the satraps, the nabobs, and the omrahs of the East kept in their seraglios. It is said that Solomon had three hundred wives and seven hundred concubines. The Arabs, like the Jews, were at liberty to marry two sisters; Mahomet was the first who forbade these marriages. Where, then, is the grossness?

And with regard to the celestial brides, where is the impurity? Certes, there is nothing impure in marriage, which is acknowledged to have been ordained on earth, and blessed by God Himself. The incomprehensible mystery of generation is the seal of the Eternal Being. It is the clearest mark of His power that He has created pleasure, and through that very pleasure perpetuated all sensible beings.

If we consult our reason alone it will tell us that it is very likely that the Eternal Being, who does nothing in vain, will not cause us to rise again with our organs to no purpose. It will not be

unworthy of the Divine Majesty to feed us with delicious fruits if he cause us to rise again with stomachs to receive them. The Holy Scriptures inform us that, in the beginning, God placed the first man and the first woman in a paradise of delights. They were then in a state of innocence and glory, incapable of experiencing disease or death. This is nearly the state in which the just will be when, after their resurrection, they shall be for all eternity what our first parents were for a few days. Those, then, must be pardoned, who have thought that, having a body, that body will be constantly satisfied. Our fathers of the Church had no other idea of the heavenly Jerusalem. St. Irenæus says, "There each vine shall bear ten thousand branches, each branch ten thousand clusters, and each cluster ten thousand grapes."

Several fathers of the Church have, indeed, thought that the blessed in heaven would enjoy all their senses. St. Thomas says that the sense of seeing will be infinitely perfect; that the elements will be so too; that the surface of the earth will be transparent as glass, the water like crystal, the air like the heavens, and the fire like the stars. St. Augustine, in his "Christian Doctrine," says that the sense of hearing will enjoy the pleasures of singing and of speech.

One of our great Italian theologians, named Piazza, in his "Dissertation on Paradise," informs us that the elect will forever sing and play the guitar: "They will have," says he, "three nobilities – three advantages, viz.: desire without excitement, caresses without wantonness, and voluptuousness

without excess" —"*tres nobilitates; illecebra sine titillatione, blanditia sine mollitudine, et voluptas sine exuberantia.*"

St. Thomas assures us that the smell of the glorified bodies will be perfect, and will not be diminished by perspiration. "*Corporibus gloriosi serit odor ultima perfectione, nullo modo per humidum repressus.*" This question has been profoundly treated by a great many other doctors.

Suarez, in his "Wisdom," thus expresses himself concerning taste: "It is not difficult for God purposely to make some rapid humor act on the organ of taste." "*Non est Deo difficile facere ut sapidus humor sit intra organum gustus, qui sensum illum intentionaliter afficere.*"

And, to conclude, St. Prosper, recapitulating the whole, pronounces that the blessed shall find gratification without satiety, and enjoy health without disease. "*Saturitas sine fastidio, et tota sanitas sine morbo.*"

It is not then so much to be wondered at that the Mahometans have admitted the use of the five senses in their paradise. They say that the first beatitude will be the union with God; but this does not exclude the rest. Mahomet's paradise is a fable; but; once more be it observed, there is in it neither contradiction nor impurity.

Philosophy requires clear and precise ideas, which Grotius had not. He quotes a great deal, and makes a show of reasoning which will not bear a close examination. The unjust imputations cast on the Mahometans would suffice to make a very large

book. They have subjugated one of the largest and most beautiful countries upon earth; to drive them from it would have been a finer exploit than to abuse them.

The empress of Russia supplies a great example. She takes from them Azov and Tangarok, Moldavia, Wallachia, and Georgia; she pushes her conquests to the ramparts of Erzerum; she sends against them fleets from the remotest parts of the Baltic, and others covering the Euxine; but she does not say in her manifestos that a pigeon whispered in Mahomet's ear.

ART OF POETRY

A MAN

A man of almost universal learning – a man even of genius, who joins philosophy with imagination, uses, in his excellent article "Encyclopedia," these remarkable words: "If we except this Perrault, and some others, whose merits the versifier Boileau was not capable of appreciating."

This philosopher is right in doing justice to Claude Perrault, the learned translator of Vitruvius, a man useful in more arts than one, and to whom we are indebted for the fine front of the Louvre and for other great monuments; but justice should also be rendered to Boileau. Had he been only a versifier, he would scarcely have been known; he would not have been one of the few great men who will hand down the age of Louis XIV. to posterity. His tart satires, his fine epistles, and above all, his art of poetry, are masterpieces of reasoning as well as poetry — "*sapere est principium et fons.*" The art of versifying is, indeed, prodigiously difficult, especially in our language, where alexandrines follow one another two by two; where it is rare to avoid monotony; where it is absolutely necessary to rhyme; where noble and pleasing rhymes are too limited in number; and where

a word out of its place, or a harsh syllable, is sufficient to spoil a happy thought. It is like dancing in fetters on a rope; the greatest success is of itself nothing.

Boileau's art of poetry is to be admired, because he always says true and useful things in a pleasing manner, because he always gives both precept and example, and because he is varied, passing with perfect ease, and without ever failing in purity of language, "From grave to gay, from lively to severe."

His reputation among men of taste is proved by the fact that his verses are known by heart; and to philosophers it must be pleasing to find that he is almost always in the right.

As we have spoken of the preference which may sometimes be given to the moderns over the ancients, we will here venture to presume that Boileau's art of poetry is superior to that of Horace. Method is certainly a beauty in a didactic poem; and Horace has no method. We do not mention this as a reproach; for his poem is a familiar epistle to the Pisos, and not a regular work like the "Georgics": but there is this additional merit in Boileau, a merit for which philosophers should give him credit.

The Latin art of poetry does not seem nearly so finely labored as the French. Horace expresses himself, almost throughout, in the free and familiar tone of his other epistles. He displays an extreme clearness of understanding and a refined taste, in verses which are happy and spirited, but often without connection, and sometimes destitute of harmony; he has not the elegance and correctness of Virgil. His work is good, but Boileau's appears to

be still better: and, if we except the tragedies of Racine, which have the superior merit of treating the passions and surmounting all the difficulties of the stage, Despréaux's "Art of Poetry" is, indisputably, the poem that does most honor to the French language.

It is lamentable when philosophers are enemies to poetry. Literature should be like the house of Mæcenas — "*est locus unicuique suus.*" The author of the "Persian Letters" — so easy to write and among which some are very pretty, others very bold, others indifferent, and others frivolous — this author, I say, though otherwise much to be recommended, yet having never been able to make verses, although he possesses imagination and often superiority of style, makes himself amends by saying that "contempt is heaped upon poetry," that "lyric poetry is harmonious extravagance." Thus do men often seek to depreciate the talents which they cannot attain.

"We cannot reach it," says Montaigne; "let us revenge ourselves by speaking ill of it." But Montaigne, Montesquieu's predecessor and master in imagination and philosophy, thought very differently of poetry.

Had Montesquieu been as just as he was witty, he could not but have felt that several of our fine odes and good operas are worth infinitely more than the pleasantries of Rica to Usbeck, imitated from Dufrénoy's "*Siamois*," and the details of what passed in Usbeck's seraglio at Ispahan.

We shall speak more fully of this too frequent injustice, in the

article on "Criticism."

ARTS – FINE ARTS

[ARTICLE DEDICATED TO THE KING OF PRUSSIA.]

Sire: The small society of amateurs, a part of whom are laboring at these rhapsodies at Mount Krapak, will say nothing to your majesty on the art of war. It is heroic, or – it may be – an abominable art. If there were anything fine in it, we would tell your majesty, without fear of contradiction, that you are the finest man in Europe.

You know, sire, the four ages of the arts. Almost everything sprung up and was brought to perfection under Louis XIV.; after which many of these arts, banished from France, went to embellish and enrich the rest of Europe, at the fatal period of the destruction of the celebrated edict of Henry IV. – pronounced *irrevocable*, yet so easily revoked. Thus, the greatest injury which Louis XIV. could do to himself did good to other princes against his will: this is proved by what you have said in your history of Brandenburg.

If that monarch were known only from his banishment of six or seven hundred thousand useful citizens – from his irruption into Holland, whence he was soon forced to retreat – from his

greatness, which stayed him at the bank, while his troops were swimming across the Rhine; if there were no other monuments of his glory than the prologues to his operas, followed by the battle of Hochstet, his person and his reign would go down to posterity with but little *éclat*. But the encouragement of all the fine arts by his taste and munificence; the conferring of so many benefits on the literary men of other countries; the rise of his kingdom's commerce at his voice; the establishment of so many manufactories; the building of so many fine citadels; the construction of so many admirable ports; the union of the two seas by immense labor, etc., still oblige Europe to regard Louis XIV. and his age with respect.

And, above all, those great men, unique in every branch of art and science, whom nature then produced at one time, will render his reign eternally memorable. The age was greater than Louis XIV., but it shed its glory upon him.

Emulation in art has changed the face of the continent, from the Pyrenees to the icy sea. There is hardly a prince in Germany who has not made useful and glorious establishments.

What have the Turks done for glory? Nothing. They have ravaged three empires and twenty kingdoms; but any one city of ancient Greece will always have a greater reputation than all the Ottoman cities together.

See what has been done in the course of a few years at St. Petersburg, which was a bog at the beginning of the seventeenth century. All the arts are there assembled, while in the country of

Orpheus, Linus, and Homer, they are annihilated.

That the Recent Birth of the Arts does not Prove the Recent Formation of the Globe.

All philosophers have thought matter eternal; but the arts appear to be new. Even the art of making bread is of recent origin. The first Romans ate boiled grain; those conquerors of so many nations had neither windmills nor watermills. This truth seems, at first sight, to controvert the doctrine of the antiquity of the globe as it now is, or to suppose terrible revolutions in it. Irruptions of barbarians can hardly annihilate arts which have become necessary. Suppose that an army of negroes were to come upon us, like locusts, from the mountains of southern Africa, through Monomotapa, Monoëmugi, etc., traversing Abyssinia, Nubia, Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor, and all Europe, ravaging and overturning everything in its way; there would still be a few bakers, tailors, shoemakers, and carpenters left; the necessary arts would revive; luxury alone would be annihilated. Such was the case at the fall of the Roman Empire; even the art of writing became very rare; nearly all those arts which contributed to render life agreeable were for a long time extinct. Now, we are inventing new ones every day.

From all this, no well-grounded inference can be drawn against the antiquity of the globe. For, supposing that a flood of barbarians had entirely swept away the arts of writing and making bread; supposing even that we had had bread, or pens, ink, and paper, only for ten years – the country which could exist

for ten years without eating bread or writing down its thoughts could exist for an age, or a hundred thousand ages, without these helps.

It is quite clear that man and the other animals can very well subsist without bakers, without romance-writers, and without divines, as witness America, and as witness also three-fourths of our own continent. The recent birth of the arts among us does not prove the recent formation of the globe, as was pretended by Epicurus, one of our predecessors in reverie, who supposed that, by chance, the declination of atoms one day formed our earth. Pomponatius used to say: "*Se il mondo non é eterno, per tutti santi é molto vecchio*"— "If this world be not eternal, by all the saints, it is very old."

Slight Inconveniences Attached to the Arts.

Those who handle lead and quicksilver are subject to dangerous colics, and very serious affections of the nerves. Those who use pen and ink are attacked by vermin, which they have continually to shake off; these vermin are some ex-Jesuits, who employ themselves in manufacturing libels. You, Sire, do not know this race of animals; they are driven from your states, as well as from those of the empress of Russia, the king of Sweden, and the king of Denmark, my other protectors. The ex-Jesuits Polian and Nonotte, who like me cultivate the fine arts, persecute me even unto Mount Krapak, crushing me under the weight of their reputation, and that of their genius, the specific gravity of which is still greater. Unless your majesty vouchsafe to assist me

against these great men, I am undone.

ASMODEUS

No one at all versed in antiquity is ignorant that the Jews knew nothing of the angels but what they gleaned from the Persians and Chaldæans, during captivity. It was they, who, according to Calmet, taught them that there are seven principal angels before the throne of the Lord. They also taught them the names of the devils. He whom we call Asmodeus, was named Hashmodaï or Chammadaï. "We know," says Calmet, "that there are various sorts of devils, some of them princes and master-demons, the rest subalterns."

How was it that this Hashmodaï was sufficiently powerful to twist the necks of seven young men who successively espoused the beautiful Sarah, a native of Rages, fifteen leagues from Ecbatana? The Medes must have been seven times as great as the Persians. The good principle gives a husband to this maiden; and behold! the bad principle, this king of demons, Hashmodaï, destroys the work of the beneficent principle seven times in succession.

But Sarah was a Jewess, daughter of the Jew Raguel, and a captive in the country of Ecbatana. How could a Median demon have such power over Jewish bodies? It has been thought that Asmodeus or Chammadaï was a Jew likewise; that he was the old serpent which had seduced Eve; and that he was passionately fond of women, sometimes seducing them, and

sometimes killing their husbands through an excess of love and jealousy.

Indeed the Greek version of the Book of Tobit gives us to understand that Asmodeus was in love with Sarah — "*oti daimonion philei autein.*" It was the opinion of all the learned of antiquity that the genii, whether good or evil, had a great inclination for our virgins, and the fairies for our youths. Even the Scriptures, accommodating themselves to our weakness, and condescending to speak in the language of the vulgar, say, figuratively, that "the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose."

But the angel Raphael, the conductor of young Tobit, gives him a reason more worthy of his ministry, and better calculated to enlighten the person whom he is guiding. He tells him that Sarah's seven husbands were given up to the cruelty of Asmodeus, only because, like horses or mules, they had married her for their pleasure alone. "Her husband," says the angel, "must observe continence with her for three days, during which time they must pray to God together."

This instruction would seem to have been quite sufficient to keep off Asmodeus; but Raphael adds that it is also necessary to have the heart of a fish grilled over burning coals. Why, then, was not this infallible secret afterwards resorted to in order to drive the devil from the bodies of women? Why did the apostles, who were sent on purpose to cast out devils never lay a fish's heart upon the gridiron? Why was not this expedient made use of in

the affair of Martha Brossier; that of the nuns of Loudun; that of the mistresses of Urban Gandier; that of La Cadière; that of Father Girard; and those of a thousand other demoniacs in the times when there were demoniacs?

The Greeks and Romans, who had so many philters wherewith to make themselves beloved, had others to cure love; they employed herbs and roots. The *agnus castus* had great reputation. The moderns have administered it to young nuns, on whom it has had but little effect. Apollo, long ago, complained to Daphne that, physician as he was, he had never yet met with a simple that would cure love:

Heu mihi! quod nullis amor est medicabilis herbis.

What balm can heal the wounds that love has made?

The smoke of sulphur was tried; but Ovid, who was a great master, declares that this recipe was useless:

Nec fugiat viro sulphure victus amor.

Sulphur – believe me – drives not love away.

The smoke from the heart or liver of a fish was more efficacious against Asmodeus. The reverend father Calmet is consequently in great trouble, being unable to comprehend how this fumigation could act upon a pure spirit. But he might have taken courage from the recollection that all the ancients gave bodies to the angels and demons. They were very slender bodies;

as light as the small particles that rise from a broiled fish; they were like smoke; and the smoke from a fried fish acted upon them by sympathy.

Not only did Asmodeus flee, but Gabriel went and chained him in Upper Egypt, where he still is. He dwells in a grotto near the city of Saata or Taata. Paul Lucas saw and spoke to him. They cut this serpent in pieces, and the pieces immediately joined again. To this fact Calmet cites the testimony of Paul Lucas, which testimony I must also cite. It is thought that Paul Lucas's theory may be joined with that of the vampires, in the next compilation of the Abbé Guyon.

ASPHALTUS

ASPHALTIC LAKE. – SODOM

Asphaltus is a Chaldæan word, signifying a species of bitumen. There is a great deal of it in the countries watered by the Euphrates; it is also to be found in Europe, but of a bad quality. An experiment was made by covering the tops of the watch-houses on each side of one of the gates of Geneva; the covering did not last a year, and the mine has been abandoned. However, when mixed with rosin, it may be used for lining cisterns; perhaps it will some day be applied to a more useful purpose.

The real asphaltus is that which was obtained in the vicinity of Babylon, and with which it is said that the Greek fire was fed. Several lakes are full of asphaltus, or a bitumen resembling it, as others are strongly impregnated with nitre. There is a great lake of nitre in the desert of Egypt, which extends from lake Mœris to the entrance of the Delta; and it has no other name than the Nitre Lake.

The Lake Asphaltites, known by the name of Sodom, was long famed for its bitumen; but the Turks now make no use of it, either because the mine under the water is diminished, because its quality is altered, or because there is too much difficulty

in drawing it from under the water. Oily particles of it, and sometimes large masses, separate and float on the surface; these are gathered together, mixed up, and sold for balm of Mecca.

Flavius Josephus, who was of that country, says that, in his time, there were no fish in the lake of Sodom, and the water was so light that the heaviest bodies would not go to the bottom. It seems that he meant to say so heavy instead of so light. It would appear that he had not made the experiment. After all, a stagnant water, impregnated with salts and compact matter, its specific matter being then greater than that of the body of a man or a beast, might force it to float. Josephus's error consists in assigning a false cause to a phenomenon which may be perfectly true.

As for the want of fish, it is not incredible. It is, however, likely that this lake, which is fifty or sixty miles long, is not all asphaltic, and that while receiving the waters of the Jordan it also receives the fishes of that river; but perhaps the Jordan, too, is without fish, and they are to be found only in the upper lake of Tiberias.

Josephus adds, that the trees which grow on the borders of the Dead Sea bear fruits of the most beautiful appearance, but which fall into dust if you attempt to taste them. This is less probable; and disposes one to believe that Josephus either had not been on the spot, for has exaggerated according to his own and his countrymen's custom. No soil seems more calculated to produce good as well as beautiful fruits than a salt and sulphurous one,

like that of Naples, of Catania, and of Sodom.

The Holy Scriptures speak of five cities being destroyed by fire from heaven. On this occasion natural philosophy bears testimony in favor of the Old Testament, although the latter has no need of it, and they are sometimes at variance. We have instances of earthquakes, accompanied by thunder and lightning, which have destroyed much more considerable towns than Sodom and Gomorrah.

But the River Jordan necessarily discharging itself into this lake without an outlet, this Dead Sea, in the same manner as the Caspian, must have existed as long as there has been a River Jordan; therefore, these towns could never stand on the spot now occupied by the lake of Sodom. The Scripture, too, says nothing at all about this ground being changed into a lake; it says quite the contrary: "Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire, from the Lord out of heaven. And Abraham got up early in the morning, and he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld; and lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace."

These five towns, Sodom, Gomorrah, Zeboin, Adamah, and Segor, must then have been situated on the borders of the Dead Sea. How, it will be asked, in a desert so uninhabitable as it now is, where there are to be found only a few hordes of plundering Arabs, could there be five cities, so opulent as to be immersed in luxury, and even in those shameful pleasures which are the last

effect of the refinement of the debauchery attached to wealth?

It may be answered that the country was then much better.

Other critics will say – how could five towns exist at the extremities of a lake, the water of which, before their destruction, was not potable? The Scripture itself informs us that all this land was asphaltic before the burning of Sodom: "And the vale of Sodom was full of slime-pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled and fell there."

Another objection is also stated. Isaiah and Jeremiah say that Sodom and Gomorrah shall never be rebuilt; but Stephen, the geographer, speaks of Sodom and Gomorrah on the coast of the Dead Sea; and the "History of the Councils" mentions bishops of Sodom and Segor. To this it may be answered that God filled these towns, when rebuilt, with less guilty inhabitants; for at that time there was no bishop *in partibus*.

But, it will be said, with what water could these new inhabitants quench their thirst? All the wells are brackish; you find asphaltus and corrosive salt on first striking a spade into the ground.

It will be answered that some Arabs still subsist there, and may be habituated to drinking very bad water; that the Sodom and Gomorrah of the Eastern Empire were wretched hamlets, and that at that time there were many bishops whose whole diocese consisted in a poor village. It may also be said that the people who colonized these villages prepared the asphaltus, and carried on a useful trade in it.

The arid and burning desert, extending from Segor to the territory of Jerusalem, produces balm and aromatic herbs for the same reason that it supplies naphtha, corrosive salt and sulphur.

It is said that petrification takes place in this desert with astonishing rapidity; and this, according to some natural philosophers, makes the petrification of Lot's wife Edith a very plausible story.

But it is said that this woman, "having looked back, became a pillar of salt." This, then, was not a natural petrification, operated by asphaltus and salt, but an evident miracle. Flavius Josephus says that he saw this pillar. St. Justin and St. Irenæus speak of it as a prodigy, which in their time was still existing.

These testimonies have been looked upon as ridiculous fables. It would, however, be very natural for some Jews to amuse themselves with cutting a heap of asphaltus into a rude figure, and calling it Lot's wife. I have seen cisterns of asphaltus, very well made, which may last a long time. But it must be owned that St. Irenæus goes a little too far when he says that Lot's wife remained in the country of Sodom no longer in corruptible flesh, but as a permanent statue of salt, her feminine nature still producing the ordinary effect: "*Uxor remansit in Sodomis, jam non caro corruptibilis sed statua salis semper manens, et per naturalia ea quæ sunt consuetudinis hominis ostendens.*"

St. Irenæus does not seem to express himself with all the precision of a good naturalist when he says Lot's wife is no longer of corruptible flesh, but still retains her feminine nature.

In the poem of Sodom, attributed to Tertullian, this is expressed with still greater energy:

Dicitur et vivens alio sub corpore se us,
Mirifice solito dispungere sanguine menses.

This was translated by a poet of the time of Henry II., in his Gallic style:

La femme à Loth, quoique sel devenue,
Est femme encore; car elle a sa menstree.

The land of aromatics was also the land of fables. Into the deserts of Arabia Petraea the ancient mythologists pretend that Myrrha, the granddaughter of a statue, fled after committing incest with her father, as Lot's daughters did with theirs, and that she was metamorphosed into the tree that bears myrrh. Other profound mythologists assure us that she fled into Arabia Felix; and this opinion is as well supported as the other.

Be this as it may, not one of our travellers has yet thought fit to examine the soil of Sodom, with its asphaltus, its salt, its trees and their fruits, to weigh the water of the lake, to analyze it, to ascertain whether bodies of greater specific gravity than common water float upon its surface, and to give us a faithful account of the natural history of the country. Our pilgrims to Jerusalem do not care to go and make these researches; this desert has become infested by wandering Arabs, who range as

far as Damascus, and retire into the caverns of the mountains, the authority of the pasha of Damascus having hitherto been inadequate to repress them. Thus the curious have but little information about anything concerning the Asphaltic Lake.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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