VOLTAIRE

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Вольтер

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Содержание

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FANATICISM

SECTION I

Fanaticism is the effect of a false conscience, which makes religion subservient to the caprices of the imagination, and the excesses of the passions.

It arises, in general, from legislators entertaining too narrow views, or from their extending their regulations beyond the limits within which alone they were intended to operate. Their laws are made merely for a select society. When extended by zeal to a whole people, and transferred by ambition from one climate to another, some changes of institution should take place, some accommodation to persons, places, and circumstances. But what, in fact, has been the case? Certain minds, constituted in a great degree like those of the small original flock, have received a system with equal ardor, and become its apostles, and even its martyrs, rather than abate a single iota of its demands. Others, on the contrary, less ardent, or more attached to their prejudices of education, have struggled with energy against the new yoke, and consented to receive it only after considerable softenings and mitigations: hence the schism between rigorists and moderates, by which all are urged on to vehemence and madness – the one party for servitude and the other for freedom.

Let us imagine an immense rotunda, a pantheon, with innumerable altars placed under its dome. Let us figure to ourselves a devotee of every sect, whether at present existing or extinct, at the feet of that divinity which he worships in his own peculiar way, under all the extravagant forms which human imagination has been able to invent. On the right we perceive one stretched on his back upon a mat, absorbed in contemplation, and awaiting the moment when the divine light shall come forth to inform his soul. On the left is a prostrate energumen striking his forehead against the ground, with a view to obtain from it an abundant produce. Here we see a man with the air and manner of a mountebank, dancing over the grave of him whom he invokes. There we observe a penitent, motionless and mute as the statue before which he has bent himself in humiliation. One, on the principle that God will not blush at his own resemblance, displays openly what modesty universally conceals; another, as if the artist would shudder at the sight of his own work, covers with an impenetrable veil his whole person and countenance; another turns his back upon the south, because from that quarter blows the devil's tempest. Another stretches out his arms towards the east, because there God first shows His radiant face. Young women, suffused with tears, bruise and gash their lovely persons under the idea of assuaging the demon of desire, although by means tending in fact rather to strengthen his influence; others again, in opposite attitudes, solicit the approaches of the Divinity. One young man, in order to mortify the most urgent of his feelings, attaches to particular parts of his frame large iron rings, as heavy as he can bear; another checks still more effectually the tempter's violence by inhuman amputation, and suspends the bleeding sacrifice upon the altar.

Let us observe them quit the temple, and, full of the inspiration of their respective deities, spread the terror and delusion over the face of the earth. They divide the world between them; and the four extremities of it are almost instantly in flames: nations obey them, and kings tremble before them. That almost despotic power which the enthusiasm of a single person exercises over a multitude who see or hear him; the ardor communicated to each other by assembled minds; numberless strong and agitating influences acting in such circumstances, augmented by each individual's personal anxiety and distress, require but a short time to operate, in order to produce universal delirium. Only let a

single people be thus fascinated and agitated under the guidance of a few impostors, the seduction will spread with the speed of wild-fire, prodigies will be multiplied beyond calculation, and whole communities be led astray forever. When the human mind has once quitted the luminous track pointed out by nature, it returns to it no more; it wanders round the truth, but never obtains of it more than a few faint glimmerings, which, mingling with the false lights of surrounding superstition, leave it, in fact, in complete and palpable obscurity.

It is dreadful to observe how the opinion that the wrath of heaven might be appeased by human massacre spread, after being once started, through almost every religion; and what various reasons have been given for the sacrifice, as though, in order to preclude, if possible, the escape of any one from extirpation. Sometimes they are enemies who must be immolated to Mars the exterminator. The Scythians slay upon the altars of this deity a hundredth part of their prisoners of war; and from this usage attending victory, we may form some judgment of the justice of war: accordingly, among other nations it was engaged in solely to supply these human sacrifices, so that, having first been instituted, as it would seem, to expiate the horrors of war, they at length came to serve as a justification of them.

Sometimes a barbarous deity requires victims from among the just and good. The Getæ eagerly dispute the honor of personally conveying to Zamolxis the vows and devotions of their country. He whose good fortune has destined him to be the sacrifice is thrown with the greatest violence upon a range of spears, fixed for the purpose. If on falling he receives a mortal wound, it augurs well as to the success of the negotiation and the merit of the envoy; but if he survives the wound, he is a wretch with whom the god would not condescend to hold any communication.

Sometimes children are demanded, and the respective divinities recall the life they had but just imparted: "Justice," says Montaigne, "thirsting for the blood of innocence!" Sometimes the call is for the dearest and nearest blood: the Carthaginians sacrificed their own sons to Saturn, as if Time did not devour them with sufficient speed. Sometimes the demand was for the blood of the most beautiful. That Amestris, who had buried twelve men alive in order to obtain from Pluto, in return for so revolting an offering, a somewhat longer life – that same Amestris further sacrifices to that insatiable divinity twelve daughters of the highest personages in Persia; as the sacrificing priests have always taught men that they ought to offer on the altar the most valuable of their possessions. It is upon this principle that among some nations the first-born were immolated, and that among others they were redeemed by offerings more valuable to the ministers of sacrifice. This it is, unquestionably, which introduced into Europe the practice prevalent for centuries of devoting children to celibacy at the early age of five years, and shutting up in a cloister the brothers of an hereditary prince, just as in Asia the practice is to murder them.

Sometimes it is the purest blood that is demanded. We read of certain Indians, if I recollect rightly, who hospitably entertain all who visit them and make a merit of killing every sensible and virtuous stranger who enters their country, that his talents and virtues may remain with them. Sometimes the blood required is that which is most sacred. With the majority of idolaters, priests perform the office of executioner at the altar; and among the Siberians, it is the practice to kill the priests in order to despatch them to pray in the other world for the fulfilment of the wishes of the people.

But let us turn our attention to other frenzies and other spectacles. All Europe passes into Asia by a road inundated with the blood of Jews, who commit suicide to avoid falling into the hands of their enemies. This epidemic depopulates one-half of the inhabited world: kings, pontiffs, women, the young and the aged, all yield to the influence of the holy madness which, for a series of two hundred years, instigated the slaughter of innumerable nations at the tomb of a god of peace. Then were to be seen lying oracles, and military hermits, monarchs in pulpits, and prelates in camps. All the different states constitute one delirious populace; barriers of mountains and seas are surmounted; legitimate possessions are abandoned to enable their owners to fly to conquests which were no longer, in point of fertility, the land of promise; manners become corrupted under foreign skies; princes, after having

exhausted their respective kingdoms to redeem a country which had never been theirs, complete the ruin of them for their personal ransom; thousands of soldiers, wandering under the banners of many chieftains, acknowledge the authority of none and hasten their defeat by their desertion; and the disease terminates only to be succeeded by a contagion still more horrible and desolating.

The same spirit of fanaticism cherished the rage for distant conquests: scarcely had Europe repaired its losses when the discovery of a new world hastened the ruin of our own. At that terrible injunction, "Go and conquer," America was desolated and its inhabitants exterminated; Africa and Europe were exhausted in vain to repeople it; the poison of money and of pleasure having enervated the species, the world became nearly a desert and appeared likely every day to advance nearer to desolation by the continual wars which were kindled on our continent, from the ambition of extending its power to foreign lands.

Let us now compute the immense number of slaves which fanaticism has made, whether in Asia, where uncircumcision was a mark of infamy, or in Africa, where the Christian name was a crime, or in America, where the pretext of baptism absolutely extinguished the feelings of humanity. Let us compute the thousands who have been seen to perish either on scaffolds in the ages of persecution, or in civil wars by the hands of their fellow citizens, or by their own hands through excessive austerities, and maceration. Let us survey the surface of the earth, and glance at the various standards unfurled and blazing in the name of religion; in Spain against the Moors, in France against the Turks, in Hungary against the Tartars; at the numerous military orders, founded for converting infidels by the point of the sword, and slaughtering one another at the foot of the altar they had come to defend. Let us then look down from the appalling tribunal thus raised on the bodies of the innocent and miserable, in order to judge the living, as God, with a balance widely different, will judge the dead.

In a word, let us contemplate the horrors of fifteen centuries, all frequently renewed in the course of a single one; unarmed men slain at the feet of altars; kings destroyed by the dagger or by poison; a large state reduced to half its extent by the fury of its own citizens; the nation at once the most warlike and the most pacific on the face of the globe, divided in fierce hostility against itself; the sword unsheathed between the sons and the father; usurpers, tyrants, executioners, sacrilegious robbers, and bloodstained parricides violating, under the impulse of religion, every convention divine or human – such is the deadly picture of fanaticism.

SECTION II

If this term has at present any connection with its original meaning it is exceedingly slight.

"*Fanaticus*" was an honorable designation. It signified the minister or benefactor of a temple. According to the dictionary of Trévoux some antiquaries have discovered inscriptions in which Roman citizens of considerable consequence assumed the title of "*fanaticus*."

In Cicero's oration "*pro domo sua*," a passage occurs in which the word "*fanaticus*" appears to me of difficult explanation. The seditious and libertine Clodius, who had brought about the banishment of Cicero for having saved the republic, had not only plundered and demolished the houses of that great man, but in order that Cicero might never be able to return to his city residence he procured the consecration of the land on which it stood; and the priests had erected there a temple to liberty, or rather to slavery, in which Cæsar, Pompey, Crassus, and Clodius then held the republic. Thus in all ages has religion been employed as an instrument in the persecution of great men. When at length, in a happier period, Cicero was recalled, he pleaded before the people in order to obtain the restoration of the ground on which his house had stood, and the rebuilding of the house at the expense of the Roman people. He thus expresses himself in the speech against Clodius (*Oratio pro Domo sua*, chap. xl): "*Adspicite, adspicite, pontifices, hominem religiosum… monete eum, modum quemdam esse religionis; nimium esse superstitiosum non oportere. Quid tibi necesse fuit anili superstitione, homo fanatice, sacrificium, quod aliænæ domi fieret invisere?*"

Does the word "*fanaticus*," as used above, mean senseless, pitiless, abominable fanatic, according to the present acceptation, or does it rather imply the pious, religious man, the frequenter and consecrator of temples? Is it used here in the meaning of decided censure or ironical praise? I do not feel myself competent to determine, but will give a translation of the passage:

"Behold, reverend pontiffs, behold the pious man… suggest to him that even religion itself has its limits, that a man ought not to be so over-scrupulous. What occasion was there for a sacred person, a fanatic like yourself, to have recourse to the superstition of an old woman, in order to assist at a sacrifice performed in another person's house?"

Cicero alludes here to the mysteries of the *Bona Dea*, which had been profaned by Clodius, who, in the disguise of a female, and accompanied by an old woman, had obtained an introduction to them, with a view to an assignation with Cæsar's wife. The passage is, in consequence, evidently ironical.

Cicero calls Clodius a religious man, and the irony requires to be kept up through the whole passage. He employs terms of honorable meaning, more clearly to exhibit Clodius's infamy. It appears to me, therefore, that he uses the word in question, "*fanaticus*" in its respectable sense, as a word conveying the idea of a sacrificer, a pious man, a zealous minister of a temple.

The term might be afterwards applied to those who believed themselves inspired by the gods, who bestowed a somewhat curious gift on the interpreters of their will, by ordaining that, in order to be a prophet, the loss of reason is indispensable.

Les Dieux à leur interprète
Ont fait un étrange don;
Ne peut on être prophète
Sans qu'on perde la raison?

The same dictionary of Trévoux informs us that the old chronicles of France call Clovis fanatic and pagan. The reader would have been pleased to have had the particular chronicles specified. I have not found this epithet applied to Clovis in any of the few books I possess at my house near Mount Krapak, where I now write.

We understand by fanaticism at present a religious madness, gloomy and cruel. It is a malady of the mind, which is taken in the same way as smallpox. Books communicate it much less than meetings and discourses. We seldom get heated while reading in solitude, for our minds are then tranquil and sedate. But when an ardent man of strong imagination addresses himself to weak imaginations, his eyes dart fire, and that fire rapidly spreads; his tones, his gestures, absolutely convulse the nerves of his auditors. He exclaims, "The eye of God is at this moment upon you; sacrifice every mere human possession and feeling; fight the battles of the Lord" – and and they rush to the fight.

Fanaticism is, in reference to superstition, what delirium is to fever, or rage to anger. He who is involved in ecstasies and visions, who takes dreams for realities, and his own imaginations for prophecies, is a fanatical novice of great hope and promise, and will probably soon advance to the highest form, and kill man for the love of God.

Bartholomew Diaz was a fanatical monk. He had a brother at Nuremberg called John Diaz, who was an enthusiastic adherent to the doctrines of Luther, and completely convinced that the pope was Antichrist, and had the sign of the beast. Bartholomew, still more ardently convinced that the pope was god upon earth, quits Rome, determined either to convert or murder his brother; he accordingly murdered him! Here is a perfect case of fanaticism. We have noticed and done justice to this Diaz elsewhere.

Polyeuctes, who went to the temple on a day of solemn festival, to throw down and destroy the statues and ornaments, was a fanatic less horrible than Diaz, but not less foolish. The assassins of

Francis, duke of Guise, of William, prince of Orange, of King Henry III., of King Henry IV., and various others, were equally possessed, equally laboring under morbid fury, with Diaz.

The most striking example of fanaticism is that exhibited on the night of St. Bartholomew, when the people of Paris rushed from house to house to stab, slaughter, throw out of the window, and tear in pieces their fellow citizens not attending mass. Guyon, Patouillet, Chaudon, Nonnotte, and the ex-Jesuit Paulian, are merely fanatics in a corner – contemptible beings whom we do not think of guarding against. They would, however, on a day of St. Bartholomew, perform wonders.

There are some cold-blooded fanatics; such as those judges who sentence men to death for no other crime than that of thinking differently from themselves, and these are so much the more guilty and deserving of the execration of mankind, as, not laboring under madness like the Clements, Châtels, Ravaillacs, and Damiens, they might be deemed capable of listening to reason.

There is no other remedy for this epidemical malady than that spirit of philosophy, which, extending itself from one to another, at length civilizes and softens the manners of men and prevents the access of the disease. For when the disorder has made any progress, we should, without loss of time, fly from the seat of it, and wait till the air has become purified from contagion. Law and religion are not completely efficient against the spiritual pestilence. Religion, indeed, so far from affording proper nutriment to the minds of patients laboring under this infectious and infernal distemper, is converted, by the diseased process of their minds, into poison. These malignant devotees have incessantly before their eyes the example of Ehud, who assassinated the king of Eglon; of Judith, who cut off the head of Holofernes while in bed with him; of Samuel, hewing in pieces King Agag; of Jehoiada the priest, who murdered his queen at the horse-gate. They do not perceive that these instances, which are respectable in antiquity, are in the present day abominable. They derive their fury from religion, decidedly as religion condemns it.

Laws are yet more powerless against these paroxysms of rage. To oppose laws to cases of such a description would be like reading a decree of council to a man in a frenzy. The persons in question are fully convinced that the Holy Spirit which animates and fills them is above all laws; that their own enthusiasm is, in fact, the only law which they are bound to obey.

What can be said in answer to a man who says he will rather obey God than men, and who consequently feels certain of meriting heaven by cutting your throat?

When once fanaticism has gangrened the brain of any man the disease may be regarded as nearly incurable. I have seen Convulsionaries who, while speaking of the miracles of St. Paris, gradually worked themselves up to higher and more vehement degrees of agitation till their eyes became inflamed, their whole frames shook, their countenances became distorted by rage, and had any man contradicted them he would inevitably have been murdered.

Yes, I have seen these wretched Convulsionaries writhing their limbs and foaming at their mouths. They were exclaiming, "We must have blood." They effected the assassination of their king by a lackey, and ended with exclaiming against philosophers.

Fanatics are nearly always under the direction of knaves, who place the dagger in their hands. These knaves resemble Montaigne's "Old Man of the Mountain," who, it is said, made weak persons imagine, under his treatment of them, that they really had experienced the joys of paradise, and promised them a whole eternity of such delights if they would go and assassinate such as he should point out to them. There has been only one religion in the world which has not been polluted by fanaticism and that is the religion of the learned in China. The different sects of ancient philosophers were not merely exempt from this pest of human society, but they were antidotes to it: for the effect of philosophy is to render the soul tranquil, and fanaticism and tranquillity are totally incompatible. That our own holy religion has been so frequently polluted by this infernal fury must be imputed to the foil and madness of mankind. Thus Icarus abused the wings which he received for his benefit. They were given him for his salvation and they insured his destruction:

Ainsi du plumage qu'il eut
Icare pervertit l'usage;
Il le reçut pour son salut,
Il s'en servit pour son dommage.

– BERTAUT, bishop of Séez.

SECTION III

Fanatics do not always fight the battles of the Lord. They do not always assassinate kings and princes. There are tigers among them, but there are more foxes.

What a tissue of frauds, calumnies, and robberies has been woven by fanatics of the court of Rome against fanatics of the court of Calvin, by Jesuits against Jansenists, and *vice versa*! And if you go farther back you will find ecclesiastical history, which is the school of virtues, to be that of atrocities and abominations, which have been employed by every sect against the others. They all have the same bandage over their eyes whether marching out to burn down the cities and towns of their adversaries, to slaughter the inhabitants, or condemn them to judicial execution; or when merely engaged in the comparatively calm occupation of deceiving and defrauding, of acquiring wealth and exercising domination. The same fanaticism blinds them; they think that they are doing good. Every fanatic is a conscientious knave, but a sincere and honest murderer for the good cause.

Read, if you are able, the five or six thousand volumes in which, for a hundred years together, the Jansenists and Molinists have dealt out against each other their reproaches and revilings, their mutual exposures of fraud and knavery, and then judge whether Scapin or Trevelin can be compared with them.

One of the most curious theological knaveries ever practised is, in my opinion, that of a small bishop – the narrative asserts that he was a Biscayan bishop; however, we shall certainly, at some future period find out both his name and his bishopric – whose diocese was partly in Biscay and partly in France.

In the French division of his diocese there was a parish which had formerly been inhabited by some Moors. The lord of the parish or manor was no Mahometan; he was perfectly catholic, as the whole universe should be, for the meaning of catholic is universal. My lord the bishop had some suspicions concerning this unfortunate seigneur, whose whole occupation consisted in doing good, and conceived that in his heart he entertained bad thoughts and sentiments savoring not a little of heresy. He even accused him of having said, in the way of pleasantry, that there were good people in Morocco as well as in Biscay, and that an honest inhabitant of Morocco might absolutely not be a mortal enemy of the Supreme Being, who is the father of all mankind.

The fanatic, upon this, wrote a long letter to the king of France, the paramount sovereign of our little manorial lord. In this letter he entreated his majesty to transfer the manor of this stray and unbelieving sheep either to Lower Brittany or Lower Normandy, according to his good pleasure, that he might be no longer able to diffuse the contagion of heresy among his Biscayan neighbors, by his abominable jests. The king of France and his council smiled, as may naturally be supposed, at the extravagance and folly of the demand.

Our Biscayan pastor learning, some time afterwards, that his French sheep was sick, ordered public notices to be fixed up at the church gates of the canton, prohibiting any one from administering the communion to him, unless he should previously give in a bill of confession, from which it might appear that he was not circumcised; that he condemned with his whole heart the heresy of Mahomet, and every other heresy of the like kind – as, for example, Calvinism and Jansenism; and that in every point he thought like him, the said Biscayan bishop.

Bills of confession were at that time much in fashion. The sick man sent for his parish priest, who was a simple and sottish man, and threatened to have him hanged by the parliament of Bordeaux if he did not instantly administer the viaticum to him. The priest was alarmed, and accordingly celebrated the sacred ordinance, as desired by the patient; who, after the ceremony, declared aloud, before witnesses, that the Biscayan pastor had falsely accused him before the king of being tainted with the Mussulman religion; that he was a sincere Christian, and that the Biscayan was a calumniator. He signed this, after it had been written down, in presence of a notary, and every form required by law was complied with. He soon after became better, and rest and a good conscience speedily completed his recovery.

The Biscayan, quite exasperated that the old patient should have thus exposed and disappointed him, resolved to have his revenge, and thus he set about it.

He procured, fifteen days after the event just mentioned, the fabrication, in his own language or patois, of a profession of faith which the priest pretended to have heard and received. It was signed by the priest and three or four peasants, who had not been present at the ceremony; and the forged instrument was then passed through the necessary and solemn form of verification and registry, as if this form could give it authenticity.

An instrument not signed by the party alone interested, signed by persons unknown, fifteen days after the event, an instrument disavowed by the real and credible witnesses of that event, involved evidently the crime of forgery; and, as the subject of the forgery was a matter of faith, the crime clearly rendered both the priest and the witnesses liable to the galleys in this world, and to hell in the other.

Our lord of the manor, however, who loved a joke, but had no gall or malice in his heart, took compassion both upon the bodies and souls of these conspirators. He declined delivering them over to human justice, and contented himself with giving them up to ridicule. But he declared that after the death of the Biscayan he would, if he survived, have the pleasure of printing an account of all his proceedings and manœuvres on this business, together with the documents and evidences, just to amuse the small number of readers who might like anecdotes of that description; and not, as is often pompously announced, with a view to the instruction of the universe. There are so many authors who address themselves to the universe, who really imagine they attract, and perhaps absorb, the attention of the universe, that he conceived he might not have a dozen readers out of the whole who would attend for a moment to himself. But let us return to fanaticism.

It is this rage for making proselytes, this intensely mad desire which men feel to bring others over to partake of their own peculiar cup or communion, that induced the Jesuit Châtel and the Jesuit Routh to rush with eagerness to the deathbed of the celebrated Montesquieu. These two devoted zealots desired nothing better than to be able to boast that they had persuaded him of the merits of contrition and of sufficing grace. We wrought his conversion, they said. He was, in the main, a worthy soul: he was much attached to the society of Jesus. We had some little difficulty in inducing him to admit certain fundamental truths; but as in these circumstances, in the crisis of life and death, the mind is always most clear and acute, we soon convinced him.

This fanatical eagerness for converting men is so ardent, that the most debauched monk in his convent would even quit his mistress, and walk to the very extremity of the city, for the sake of making a single convert.

We have all seen Father Poisson, a Cordelier of Paris, who impoverished his convent to pay his mistresses, and who was imprisoned in consequence of the depravity of his manners. He was one of the most popular preachers at Paris, and one of the most determined and zealous of converters.

Such also was the celebrated preacher Fantin, at Versailles. The list might be easily enlarged; but it is unnecessary, if not also dangerous, to expose the freaks and freedoms of constituted authorities. You know what happened to Ham for having revealed his father's shame. He became as black as a coal.

Let us merely pray to God, whether rising or lying down, that he would deliver us from fanatics, as the pilgrims of Mecca pray that they may meet with no sour faces on the road.

SECTION IV

Ludlow, who was rather an enthusiast for liberty than a fanatic in religion – that brave man, who hated Cromwell more than he did Charles I., relates that the parliamentary forces were always defeated by the royal army in the beginning of the civil war; just as the regiment of porters (*portes-cochères*) were unable to stand the shock of conflict, in the time of the Fronde against the great Condé. Cromwell said to General Fairfax: "How can you possibly expect a rabble of London porters and apprentices to resist a nobility urged on by the principle, or rather the phantom, of honor? Let us actuate them by a more powerful phantom – fanaticism! Our enemies are fighting only for their king; let us persuade our troops they are fighting for their God.

"Give me a commission, and I will raise a regiment of brother murderers, whom I will pledge myself soon to make invincible fanatics!"

He was as good as his word; he composed his regiment of red-coated brothers, of gloomy religionists, whom he made obedient tigers. Mahomet himself was never better served by soldiers.

But in order to inspire this fanaticism, you must be seconded and supported by the spirit of the times. A French parliament at the present day would attempt in vain to raise a regiment of such porters as we have mentioned; it could, with all its efforts, merely rouse into frenzy a few women of the fish-market.

Only the ablest men have the power to make and to guide fanatics. It is not, however, sufficient to possess the profoundest dissimulation and the most determined intrepidity; everything depends, after these previous requisites are secured, on coming into the world at a proper time.

SECTION V

Geometry then, it seems, is not always connected with clearness and correctness of understanding. Over what precipices do not men fall, notwithstanding their boasted leading-strings of reason! A celebrated Protestant, who was esteemed one of the first mathematicians of the age, and who followed in the train of the Newtons, the Leibnitzes, and Bernouillis, at the beginning of the present century, struck out some very singular corollaries. It is said that with a grain of faith a man may remove mountains; and this man of science, following up the method of pure geometrical analysis, reasoned thus with himself: I have many grains of faith, and can, therefore, remove many mountains. This was the man who made his appearance at London in 1707; and, associating himself with certain men of learning and science, some of whom, moreover, were not deficient in sagacity, they publicly announced that they would raise to life a dead person in any cemetery that might be fixed upon. Their reasoning was uniformly synthetical. They said, genuine disciples must have the power of performing miracles; we are genuine disciples, we therefore shall be able to perform as many as we please. The mere unscientific saints of the Romish church have resuscitated many worthy persons; therefore, *a fortiori*, we, the reformers of the reformed themselves, shall resuscitate as many as we may desire.

These arguments are irrefragable, being constructed according to the most correct form possible. Here we have at a glance the explanation why all antiquity was inundated with prodigies; why the temples of Æsculapius at Epidaurus, and in other cities, were completely filled with *ex-votos*; the roofs adorned with thighs straightened, arms restored, and silver infants: all was miracle.

In short, the famous Protestant geometrician whom I speak of appeared so perfectly sincere; he asserted so confidently that he would raise the dead, and his proposition was put forward with so much plausibility and strenuousness, that the people entertained a very strong impression on the subject, and

Queen Anne was advised to appoint a day, an hour, and a cemetery, such as he should himself select, in which he might have the opportunity of performing his miracle legally, and under the inspection of justice. The holy geometrician chose St. Paul's cathedral for the scene of his exertion: the people ranged themselves in two rows; soldiers were stationed to preserve order both among the living and the dead; the magistrates took their seats; the register procured his record; it was impossible that the new miracles could be verified too completely. A dead body was disinterred agreeably to the holy man's choice and direction; he then prayed, he fell upon his knees, and made the most pious and devout contortions possible; his companions imitated him; the dead body exhibited no sign of animation; it was again deposited in its grave, and the professed resuscitator and his adherents were slightly punished. I afterwards saw one of these misled creatures; he declared to me that one of the party was at the time under the stain of a venial sin, for which the dead person suffered, and but for which the resurrection would have been infallible.

Were it allowable for us to reveal the disgrace of those to whom we owe the sincerest respect, I should observe here, that Newton, the great Newton himself, discovered in the "Apocalypse" that the pope was Antichrist, and made many other similar discoveries. I should also observe that he was a decided Arian. I am aware that this deviation of Newton, compared to that of the other geometrician, is as unity to infinity. But if the exalted Newton imagined that he found the modern history of Europe in the "Apocalypse," we may say: Alas, poor human beings!

It seems as if superstition were an epidemic disease, from which the strongest minds are not always exempt. There are in Turkey persons of great and strong sense, who would undergo empalement for the sake of certain opinions of Abubeker. These principles being once admitted, they reason with great consistency; and the Navaricians, the Radarists, and the Jabarites mutually consign each other to damnation in conformity to very shrewd and subtle argument. They all draw plausible consequences, but they never dare to examine principles.

A report is publicly spread abroad by some person, that there exists a giant seventy feet high; the learned soon after begin to discuss and dispute about the color of his hair, the thickness of his thumb, the measurement of his nails; they exclaim, cabal, and even fight upon the subject. Those who maintain that the little finger of the giant is only fifteen lines in diameter burn those who assert that it is a foot thick. "But, gentlemen," modestly observes a stranger passing by, "does the giant you are disputing about really exist?" "What a horrible doubt!" all the disputants cry out together. "What blasphemy! What absurdity!" A short truce is then brought about to give time for stoning the poor stranger; and, after having duly performed that murderous ceremony, they resume fighting upon the everlasting subject of the nails and little finger.

FANCY

Fancy formerly signified imagination, and the term was used simply to express that faculty of the soul which receives sensible objects.

Descartes and Gassendi, and all the philosophers of their day, say that "the form or images of things are painted in the fancy." But the greater part of abstract terms are, in the course of time, received in a sense different from their original one, like tools which industry applies to new purposes.

Fancy, at present, means "a particular desire, a transient taste"; he has a fancy for going to China; his fancy for gaming and dancing has passed away. An artist paints a fancy portrait, a portrait not taken from any model. To have fancies is to have extraordinary tastes, but of brief duration. Fancy, in this sense, falls a little short of oddity (*bizarrerie*) and caprice.

Caprice may express "a sudden and unreasonable disgust." He had a fancy for music, and capriciously became disgusted with it. Whimsicality gives an idea of inconsistency and bad taste, which fancy does not; he had a fancy for building, but he constructed his house in a whimsical taste.

There are shades of distinction between having fancies and being fantastic; the fantastic is much nearer to the capricious and the whimsical. The word "fantastic" expresses a character unequal and abrupt. The idea of charming or pleasant is excluded from it; whereas there are agreeable fancies.

We sometimes hear used in conversation "odd fancies" (*des fantasies musquées*); but the expression was never understood to mean what the "Dictionary of Trévoux" supposes – "The whims of men of superior rank which one must not venture to condemn;" on the contrary, that expression is used for the very object and purpose of condemning them; and *musquée*, in this connection, is an expletive adding force to the term "fancies," as we say, *Sottise pommée*, *folie fieffée*, to express nonsense and folly.

FASTI

Of the Different Significations of this Word

The Latin word "*fasti*" signifies festivals, and it is in this sense that Ovid treats of it in his poem entitled "The Fasti."

Godeau has composed the Fasti of the church on this model, but with less success. The religion of the Roman Pagans was more calculated for poetry than that of the Christians; to which it may be added, that Ovid was a better poet than Godeau.

The consular fasti were only the list of consuls.

The fasti of the magistrates were the days in which they were permitted to plead; and those on which they did not plead were called *nefasti*, because then they could not plead for justice.

The word "*nefastus*" in this sense does not signify unfortunate; on the contrary, *nefastus* and *nefandus* were the attributes of unfortunate days in another sense, signifying days in which people must not plead; days worthy only to be forgotten; *"ille nefasto te posuit die."*

Besides other fasti, the Romans had their *fasti urbis*, *fasti rustici*, which were calendars of the particular usages, and ceremonies of the city and the country.

On these days of solemnity, every one sought to astonish by the grandeur of his dress, his equipage, or his banquet. This pomp, invisible on other days, was called *fastus*. It expresses magnificence in those who by their station can afford it, but vanity in others.

Though the word "*fastus*" may not be always injurious, the word "pompous" is invariably so. A devotee who makes a parade of his virtue renders humility itself pompous.

FATHERS – MOTHERS – CHILDREN

Their Duties

The "Encyclopædia" has been much exclaimed against in France; because it was produced in France, and has done France honor. In other countries, people have not cried out; on the contrary, they have eagerly set about pirating or spoiling it, because money was to be gained thereby.

But we, who do not, like the encyclopædists of Paris, labor for glory; we, who are not, like them, exposed to envy; we, whose little society lies unnoticed in Hesse, in Würtemberg, in Switzerland, among the Grisons, or at Mount Krapak; and have, therefore, no apprehension of having to dispute with the doctor of the *Comédie Italienne*, or with a doctor of the Sorbonne; we, who sell not our sheets to a bookseller, but are free beings, and lay not black on white until we have examined, to the utmost of our ability, whether the said black may be of service to mankind; we, in short, who love virtue, shall boldly declare what we think.

"Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long – " I would venture to say, "Honor thy father and thy mother, *though this day shall be thy last*."

Tenderly love and joyfully serve the mother who bore you in her womb, fed you at her breast, and patiently endured all that was disgusting in your infancy. Discharge the same duties to your father, who brought you up.

What will future ages say of a Frank, named Louis the Thirteenth, who, at the age of sixteen, began the exercise of his authority with having the door of his mother's apartment walled up, and sending her into exile, without giving the smallest reason for so doing, and solely because it was his favorite's wish?

"But, sir, I must tell you in confidence that my father is a drunkard, who begot me one day by chance, not caring a jot about me; and gave me no education but that of beating me every day when he came home intoxicated. My mother was a coquette, whose only occupation was love-making. But for my nurse, who had taken a liking to me, and who, after the death of her son, received me into her house for charity, I should have died of want."

"Well, then, honor your nurse; and bow to your father and mother when you meet them. It is said in the Vulgate, '*Honora patrem tuum et matrem tuam*' – not *dilige*."

"Very well, sir, I shall love my father and my mother if they do me good; I shall honor them if they do me ill. I have thought so ever since I began to think, and you confirm me in my maxims."

"Fare you well, my child, I see you will prosper, for you have a grain of philosophy in your composition."

"One word more, sir. If my father were to call himself Abraham, and me Isaac, and were to say to me, 'My son, you are tall and strong; carry these fagots to the top of that hill, to burn you with after I have cut off your head; for God ordered me to do so when He came to see me this morning,' – what would you advise me to do in such critical circumstances?"

"Critical, indeed! But what would you do of yourself? for you seem to be no blockhead."

"I own, sir, that I should ask him to produce a written order, and that from regard for himself, I should say to him – 'Father, you are among strangers, who do not allow a man to assassinate his son without an express condition from God, duly signed, sealed and delivered. See what happened to poor Calas, in the half French, half Spanish town of Toulouse. He was broken on the wheel; and the *procureur-général* Riquet decided on having Madame Calas, the mother, burned – all on the bare and very ill-conceived suspicion, that they had hung up their son, Mark Antony Calas, for the love of God. I should fear that his conclusions would be equally prejudicial to the well-being of yourself

and your sister or niece, Madame Sarah, my mother. Once more I say, show me a *lettre de cachet* for cutting my throat, signed by God's own hand, and countersigned by Raphael, Michael, or Beelzebub. If not, father – your most obedient: I will go to Pharaoh of Egypt, or to the king of the desert of Gerar, who both have been in love with my mother, and will certainly be kind to me. Cut my brother Ishmael's throat, if you like; but rely upon it, you shall not cut mine.'"

"Good; this is arguing like a true sage. The 'Encyclopædia' itself could not have reasoned better. I tell you, you will do great things. I admire you for not having said an ill word to your father Abraham – for not having been tempted to beat him. And tell me: had you been that Cram, whom his father, the Frankish King Clothaire, had burned in a barn; a Don Carlos, son of that fox, Philip the Second; a poor Alexis, son of that Czar Peter, half hero, half tiger – "

"Ah, sir, say no more of those horrors; you will make me detest human nature."

FAVOR

Of What is Understood by the Word

Favor, from the Latin word "*favor*," rather signifies a benefit than a recompense.

We earnestly beg a favor; we merit and loudly demand a recompense. The god Favor, according to the Roman mythologists, was the son of Beauty and Fortune. All favor conveys the idea of something gratuitous; he has done me the favor of introducing me, of presenting me, of recommending my friend, of correcting my work. The favor of princes is the effect of their fancy, and of assiduous complaisance. The favor of the people sometimes implies merit, but is more often attributable to lucky accident.

Favor differs much from kindness. That man is in favor with the king, but he has not yet received any kindnesses from him. We say that he has been received into the good graces of a person, not he has been received into favor; though we say to be in favor, because favor is supposed to be an habitual taste; while to receive into grace is to pardon, or, at least, is less than to bestow a favor.

To obtain grace is the effect of a moment; to obtain favor is a work of time. Nevertheless, we say indifferently, do me the kindness and do me the favor, to recommend my friend.

Letters of recommendation were formerly called letters of favor. Severus says, in the tragedy of Polyeuctes:

Je mourrais mille fois plutôt que d'abuser
Des lettres de faveur que j'ai pour l'épouser.

"Letters of favor," though I have to wed her,
I'd rather die a thousand times than use them.

We have the favor and good-will, not the kindness of the prince and the public. We may obtain the favor of our audience by modesty, but it will not be gracious if we are tedious.

This expression "favor," signifies a gratuitous good-will, which we seek to obtain from the prince or the public. Gallantry has extended it to the complaisance of the ladies; and though we do not say that we have the favors of the king, we say that we have the favors of a lady.

The equivalent to this expression is unknown in Asia, where the women possess less influence. Formerly, ribbons, gloves, buckles, and sword-knots given by a lady, were called favors. The earl of Essex wore a glove of Queen Elizabeth's in his hat, which he called the queen's favor.

FAVORITE

This word has sometimes a bounded and sometimes an extended sense. "Favorite" sometimes conveys the idea of power; and sometimes it only signifies a man who pleases his master.

Henry III. had favorites who were only play-things, and he had those who governed the state, as the dukes of Joyeuse and Épernon. A favorite may be compared to a piece of gold, which is valued at whatever the prince pleases.

An ancient writer has asked, "Who ought to be the king's favorite? – the people!" Good poets are called the favorites of the muses, as prosperous men are called the favorites of fortune, because both are supposed to receive these gifts without laboring for them. It is thus, that a fertile and well-situated land is called the favorite of nature.

The woman who pleases the sultan most is called the favorite sultana. Somebody has written the history of favorites; that is to say, the mistresses of the greatest princes.

Several princes in Germany have country houses which they call favorites.

A lady's favorite is now only to be found in romances and stories of the last century.

FEASTS

SECTION I

A poor gentleman of the province of Hagenau, cultivated his small estate, and St. Ragonda, or Radegonda, was the patron of his parish.

Now it happened, on the feast of St. Ragonda, that it was necessary to do something to this poor gentleman's field, without which great loss would be incurred. The master, with all his family, after having devoutly assisted at mass, went to cultivate his land, on which depended the subsistence of his family, while the rector and the other parishioners went to tipple as usual.

The rector, while enjoying his glass, was informed of the enormous offence committed in his parish by this profane laborer, and went, burning with wine and anger, to seek the cultivator. "Sir, you are very insolent and very impious to dare to cultivate your field, instead of going to the tavern like other people." "I agree, sir," replied the gentleman, "that it is necessary to drink to the honor of the saint; but it is also necessary to eat, and my family would die of hunger if I did not labor." "Drink and die, then," said the vicar. "In what law, in what book is it so written?" said the laborer. "In Ovid," replied the vicar. "I think you are mistaken," said the gentleman; "in what part of Ovid have you read that I should go to the tavern rather than cultivate my field on St. Ragonda's day?"

It should be remarked that both the gentleman and the pastor were well educated men. "Read the metamorphoses of the daughters of Minyas," said the vicar. "I have read it," replied the other, "and I maintain that they have no relation to my plough." "How, impious man! do you not remember that the daughters of Minyas were changed into bats for having spun on a feast day?" "The case is very different," replied the gentleman, "these ladies had not rendered any homage to Bacchus. I have been at the mass of St. Ragonda, you can have nothing to say to me; you cannot change me into a bat." "I will do worse," said the priest, "I will fine you." He did so. The poor gentleman was ruined: he quitted the country with his family – went into a strange one – became a Lutheran – and his ground remained uncultivated for several years.

This affair was related to a magistrate of good sense and much piety. These are the reflections which he made upon it:

"They were no doubt innkeepers," said he, "that invented this prodigious number of feasts; the religion of peasants and artisans consists in getting tipsy on the day of a saint, whom they only know by this kind of worship. It is on these days of idleness and debauchery that all crimes are committed; it is these feasts which fill the prisons, and which support the police officers, registers, lieutenants of police, and hangmen; the only excuse for feast-days among us. From this cause Catholic countries are scarcely-cultivated at all; whilst heretics, by daily cultivating their lands, produce abundant crops."

It is all very well that the shoemakers should go in the morning to mass on St. Crispin's day, because *crepido* signifies the upper leather of a shoe; that the brush-makers should honor St. Barbara their patron; that those who have weak eyes should hear the mass of St. Clara: that St. – should be celebrated in many provinces; but after having paid their devoirs to the saints they should become serviceable to men, they should go from the altar to the plough; it is the excess of barbarity, and insupportable slavery, to consecrate our days to idleness and vice. Priests, command, if it be necessary that the saints Roche, Eustace, and Fiacre, be prayed to in the morning; but, magistrates, order your fields to be cultivated as usual. It is labor that is necessary; the greater the industry the more the day is sanctified.

SECTION II

Letter from a Weaver of Lyons to the Gentlemen of the Commission established at Paris, for the Reformation of Religious Orders, printed in the public papers in 1768.

"Gentlemen: I am a silk-weaver, and have worked at Lyons for nineteen years. My wages have increased insensibly; at present I get thirty-five sous per day. My wife, who makes lace, would get fifteen more, if it were possible for her to devote her time to it; but as the cares of the house, illness, or other things, continually hinder her, I reduce her profit to ten sous, which makes forty-five sous daily. If from the year we deduct eighty-two Sundays, or holidays, we shall have two hundred and eighty-four profitable days, which at forty-five sous make six hundred and thirty-nine livres. That is my revenue; the following are my expenses:

"I have eight living children, and my wife is on the point of being confined with the eleventh; for I have lost two. I have been married fifteen years: so that I annually reckon twenty-four livres for the expenses of her confinements and baptisms, one hundred and eight livres for two nurses, having generally two children out at nurse, and sometimes even three. I pay fifty-seven livres rent and fourteen taxes.

"My income is then reduced to four hundred and thirty-six livres, or twenty-five sous three deniers a day, with which I have to clothe and furnish my family, buy wood and candles, and support my wife and six children.

"I look forward to holidays with dismay. I confess that I often almost curse their institution. They could only have been instituted by usurers and innkeepers.

"My father made me study hard in my youth, and wished me to become a monk, showing me in that state a sure asylum against want; but I always thought that every man owes his tribute to society, and that monks are useless drones who live upon the labor of the bees. Notwithstanding, I acknowledge that when I see John C – , with whom I studied, and who was the most idle boy in the college, possessing the first place among the *prémontrés*, I cannot help regretting that I did not listen to my father's advice.

"This is the third holiday in Christmas, I have pawned the little furniture I had, I am in a week's debt with my tradesman, and I want bread – how are we to get over the fourth? This is not all; I have the prospect of four more next week. Great God! Eight holidays in ten days; you cannot have commanded it!

"One year I hoped that rents would diminish by the suppression of one of the monasteries of the Capuchins and Cordeliers. What useless houses in the centre of Lyons are those of the Jacobins, nuns of St. Peter, etc. Why not establish them in the suburbs if they are thought necessary? How many more useful inhabitants would supply their places!

"All these reflections, gentlemen, have induced me to address myself to you who have been chosen by the king for the task of rectifying abuses. I am not the only one who thinks thus. How many laborers in Lyons and other places, how many laborers in the kingdom are reduced to the same extremities as myself? It is evident that every holiday costs the state several millions (livres). These considerations will lead you to take more to heart the interests of the people, which are rather too little attended to.

"I have the honor to be, etc.,
"BOCEN."

This request, which was really presented, will not be misplaced in a work like the present.

SECTION III

The feast given to the Roman people by Julius Cæsar and the emperors who succeeded him are well known. The feast of twenty-two thousand tables served by twenty-two thousand purveyors; the naval fights on artificial lakes, etc., have not, however, been imitated by the Herulian, Lombard, and Frankish chieftains, who would have their festivity equally celebrated.

FERRARA

What we have to say of Ferrara has no relation to literature, but it has a very great one to justice, which is much more necessary than the belles-lettres, and much less cultivated, at least in Italy.

Ferrara was constantly a fief of the empire, like Parma and Placentia. Pope Clement VIII. robbed Cæsar d'Este of it by force of arms, in 1597. The pretext for this tyranny was a very singular one for a man who called himself the humble vicar of Jesus Christ.

Alphonso d'Este, the first of the name, sovereign of Ferrara, Modena, Este, Carpio, and Rovigno, espoused a simple gentlewoman of Ferrara, named Laura Eustochia, by whom he had three children before marriage. These children he solemnly acknowledged in the face of the Church. None of the formalities prescribed by the laws were wanting at this recognition. His successor, Alphonso d'Este, was acknowledged duke of Ferrara; he espoused Julia d'Urbino, the daughter of Francis, duke d'Urbino, by whom he had the unfortunate Cæsar d'Este, the incontestable heir of all the property of all the family, and declared so by the last duke, who died October 27, 1597. Pope Clement VIII., surnamed Aldobrandino, and originally of the family of a merchant of Florence, dared to pretend that the grandmother of Cæsar d'Este was not sufficiently noble, and that the children that she had brought into the world ought to be considered bastards. The first reason is ridiculous and scandalous in a bishop, the second is unwarrantable in every tribunal in Europe. If the duke was not legitimate, he ought to have lost Modena and his other states also; and if there was no flaw in his title, he ought to have kept Ferrara as well as Modena.

The acquisition of Ferrara was too fine a thing for the pope not to procure all the decretals and decisions of those brave theologians, who declare that the pope can render just that which is unjust. Consequently he first excommunicated Cæsar d'Este, and as excommunication necessarily deprives a man of all his property, the common father of the faithful raised his troops against the excommunicated, to rob him of his inheritance in the name of the Church. These troops were defeated, but the duke of Modena soon saw his finances exhausted, and his friends become cool.

To make his case still more deplorable, the king of France, Henry IV., believed himself obliged to take the side of the pope, in order to balance the credit of Philip II. at the court of Rome; in the same manner that good King Louis XII. less excusably dishonored himself by uniting with that monster Alexander VI., and his execrable bastard, the duke of Borgia. The duke was obliged to return, and the pope caused Ferrara to be invaded by Cardinal Aldobrandino, who entered this flourishing city at the head of a thousand horse and five thousand foot soldiers.

It is a great pity that such a man as Henry IV. descended to this unworthiness which is called politic. The Catos, Metelluses, Scipios, and Fabriciuses would not thus have betrayed justice to please a priest – and such a priest!

From this time Ferrara became a desert; its uncultivated soil was covered with standing marshes. This province, under the house of Este, had been one of the finest in Italy; the people always regretted their ancient masters. It is true that the duke was indemnified; he was nominated to a bishopric and a benefice; he was even furnished with some measures of salt from the mines of Servia. But it is no less true that the house of Modena has incontestable and imprescriptable rights to the duchy of Ferrara, of which it was thus shamefully despoiled.

Now, my dear reader, let us suppose that this scene took place at the time in which Jesus Christ appeared to his apostles after his resurrection, and that Simon Barjonas, surnamed Peter, wished to possess himself of the states of this poor duke of Ferrara. Imagine the duke coming to Bethany to demand justice of the Lord Jesus. Our Lord sends immediately for Peter and says to him, "Simon, son of Jonas, I have given thee the keys of heaven, but I have not given thee those of the earth. Because thou hast been told that the heavens surround the globe, and that the contained is in the containing, dost thou imagine that kingdoms here below belong to thee, and that thou hast only to possess thyself

of whatever thou likest? I have already forbidden thee to draw the sword. Thou appearest to me a very strange compound; at one time cutting off the ear of Malchus, and at another even denying me. Be more lenient and decorous, and take neither the property nor the ears of any one for fear of thine own."

FEVER

It is not as a physician, but as a patient, that I wish to say a word or two on fever. We cannot help now and then speaking of our enemies; and this one has been attacking me for more than twenty years; not Fréron himself has been more implacable.

I ask pardon of Sydenham, who defined fever to be "an effort of nature, laboring with all its power to expel the peccant matter." We might thus define smallpox, measles, diarrhœa, vomitings, cutaneous eruptions, and twenty other diseases. But, if this physician defined ill, he practised well. He cured, because he had experience, and he knew how to wait.

Boerhaave says, in his "Aphorisms": "A more frequent opposition, and an increased resistance about the capillary vessels, give an absolute idea of an acute fever." These are the words of a great master; but he sets out with acknowledging that the nature of fever is profoundly hidden.

He does not tell us what that secret principle is which develops itself at regular periods in intermittent fever – what that internal poison is, which, after the lapse of a day, is renewed – where that flame is, which dies and revives at stated moments.

We know fairly well that we are liable to fever after excess, or in unseasonable weather. We know that quinine, judiciously administered, will cure it. This is quite enough; the *how* we do not know.

Every animal that does not perish suddenly dies by fever. The fever seems to be the inevitable effect of the fluids that compose the blood, or that which is in the place of blood. The structure of every animal proves to natural philosophers that it must, at all times, have enjoyed a very short life.

Theologians have held, as have promulgated other opinions. It is not for us to examine this question. The philosophers and physicians have been right *in sensu humano*, and the theologians, *in sensu divino*. It is said in Deuteronomy, xxviii, 22, that if the Jews do not serve the law they shall be smitten "with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning." It is only in Deuteronomy, and in Molière's "Physician in Spite of Himself," that people have been threatened with fever.

It seems impossible that fever should not be an accident natural to an animate body, in which so many fluids circulate; just as it is impossible for an animate body not to be crushed by the falling of a rock.

Blood makes life; it furnishes the viscera, the limbs, the skin, the very extremities of the hairs and nails with the fluids, the humors proper for them.

This blood, by which the animal has life, is formed by the chyle. During pregnancy this chyle is transmitted from the uterus to the child, and, after the child is born, the milk of the nurse produces this same chyle. The greater diversity of aliments it afterwards receives, the more the chyle is liable to be soured. This alone forming the blood, and this blood, composed of so many different humors so subject to corruption, circulating through the whole human body more than five hundred and fifty times in twenty-four hours, with the rapidity of a torrent, it is not only astonishing that fever is not more frequent, it is astonishing that man lives. In every articulation, in every gland, in every passage, there is danger of death; but there are also as many succors as there are dangers. Almost every membrane extends or contracts as occasion requires. All the veins have sluices which open and shut, giving passage to the blood and preventing a return, by which the machine would be destroyed. The blood, rushing through all these canals, purifies itself. It is a river that carries with it a thousand impurities; it discharges itself by perspiration, by transpiration, by all the secretions. Fever is itself a succor; it is a rectification when it does not kill.

Man, by his reason, accelerates the cure by administering bitters, and, above all, by regimen. This reason is an oar with which he may row for some time on the sea of the world when disease does not swallow him up.

It is asked: How is it that nature has abandoned the animals, her work, to so many horrible diseases, almost always accompanied by fever? How and why is it that so many disorders exist with so much order, formation, and destruction everywhere, side by side? This is a difficulty that often gives me a fever, but I beg you will read the letters of Memmius. Then, perhaps, you will be inclined to suspect that the incomprehensible artificer of vegetables, animals, and worlds, having made all for the best, could not have made anything better.

FICTION

Is not a fiction, which teaches new and interesting truths, a fine thing? Do you not admire the Arabian story of the sultan who would not believe that a little time could appear long, and who disputed with his dervish on the nature of duration? The latter to convince him of it, begged him only to plunge his head for a moment into the basin in which he was washing. Immediately the sultan finds himself transported into a frightful desert; he is obliged to labor to get a livelihood; he marries, and has children who grow up and ill treat him; finally he returns to his country and his palace and he there finds the dervish who has caused him to suffer so many evils for five and twenty years. He is about to kill him, and is only appeased when he is assured that all passed in the moment in which, with his eyes shut, he put his head into the water.

You still more admire the fiction of the loves of Dido and Æneas, which caused the mortal hatred between Carthage and Rome, as also that which exhibits in Elysium the destinies of the great men of the Roman Empire.

You also like that of Alcina, in Ariosto, who possesses the dignity of Minerva with the beauty of Venus, who is so charming to the eyes of her lovers, who intoxicates them with voluptuous delights, and unites all the loves and graces, but who, when she is at last reduced to her true self and the enchantment has passed away, is nothing more than a little shrivelled, disgusting, old woman.

As to fictions which represent nothing, teach nothing, and from which nothing results, are they anything more than falsities? And if they are incoherent and heaped together without choice, are they anything better than dreams?

You will possibly tell me that there are ancient fictions which are very incoherent, without ingenuity, and even absurd, which are still admired; but is it not rather owing to the fine images which are scattered over these fictions than to the inventions which introduce them? I will not dispute the point, but if you would be hissed at by all Europe, and afterwards forgotten forever, write fictions similar to those which you admire.

FIERTÉ

Fierté is one of those expressions, which, having been originally employed in an offensive sense, are afterwards used in a favorable one. It is censure when this word signifies high-flown, proud, haughty, and disdainful. It is almost praise when it means the loftiness of a noble mind.

It is a just eulogium on a general who marches towards the enemy with *fierté*. Writers have praised the *fierté* of the gait of Louis XIV.; they should have contented themselves with remarking its nobleness.

Fierté, without dignity, is a merit incompatible with modesty. It is only *fierté* in air and manners which offends; it then displeases, even in kings.

Fierté of manner in society is the expression of pride; *fierté* of soul is greatness. The distinctions are so nice that a proud spirit is deemed blamable, while a proud soul is a theme of praise. By the former is understood one who thinks advantageously of himself while the latter denotes one who entertains elevated sentiments.

Fierté, announced by the exterior, is so great a fault that the weak, who abjectly praise it in the great are obliged to soften it, or rather to extol it, by speaking of "this noble *fierté*." It is not simply vanity, which consists in setting a value upon little things; it is not presumption, which believes itself capable of great ones; it is not disdain, which adds contempt of others to a great opinion of self; but it is intimately allied to all these faults.

This word is used in romances, poetry, and above all, in operas, to express the severity of female modesty. We meet with vain *fierté*, vigorous *fierté*, etc. Poets are, perhaps, more in the right than they imagine. The *fierté* of a woman is not only rigid modesty and love of duty, but the high value which she sets upon her beauty. The *fierté* of the pencil is sometimes spoken of to signify free and fearless touches.

FIGURE

Every one desirous of instruction should read with attention all the articles in the "*Dictionnaire Encyclopédique*," under the head "Figure," viz.:

"Figure of the Earth," by M. d'Alembert – a work both clear and profound, in which we find all that can be known on the subject.

"Figure of Rhetoric," by César Dumarsais – a piece of instruction which teaches at once to think and to write; and, like many other articles, make us regret that young people in general have not a convenient opportunity of reading things so useful.

"Human Figure," as relating to painting and sculpture – an excellent lesson given to every artist, by M. Watelet.

"Figure," in physiology – a very ingenious article, by M. de Caberoles.

"Figure," in arithmetic and in algebra – by M. Mallet.

"Figure," in logic, in metaphysics, and in polite literature, by M. le Chevalier de Jaucourt – a man superior to the philosophers of antiquity, inasmuch as he has preferred retirement, real philosophy, and indefatigable labor, to all the advantages that his birth might have procured him, in a country where birth is set above all beside, excepting money.

Figure or Form of the Earth.

Plato, Aristotle, Eratosthenes, Posidonius, and all the geometricians of Asia, of Egypt, and of Greece, having acknowledged the sphericity of our globe, how did it happen that we, for so long a time, imagined that the earth was a third longer than it was broad, and thence derived the terms "*longitude*" and "*latitude*," which continually bear testimony to our ancient ignorance?

The reverence due to the "Bible," which teaches us so many truths more necessary and more sublime, was the cause of this, our almost universal error. It had been found, in Psalm ciii, that God had stretched the heavens over the earth like a skin; and as a skin is commonly longer than it is wide, the same was concluded of the earth.

St. Athanasius expresses himself as warmly against good astronomers as against the partisans of Arius and Eusebius. "Let us," says he, "stop the mouths of those barbarians, who, speaking without proof, dare to assert that the heavens also extend under the earth." The fathers considered the earth as a great ship, surrounded by water, with the prow to the east, and the stern to the west. We still find, in "Cosmos," a work of the fourth century, a sort of geographical chart, in which the earth has this figure.

Tortato, bishop of Avila, near the close of the fifteenth century, declares in his commentary on Genesis, that the Christian faith is shaken, if the earth is believed to be round. Columbus, Vespucius, and Magellan, not having the fear of excommunication by this learned bishop before their eyes, the earth resumed its rotundity in spite of him.

Then man went from one extreme to the other, and the earth was regarded as a perfect sphere. But the error of the perfect sphere was the mistake of philosophers, while that of a long, flat earth was the blunder of idiots.

When once it began to be clearly known that our globe revolves on its own axis every twenty-four hours, it might have been inferred from that alone that its form could not be absolutely round. Not only does the centrifugal zone considerably raise the waters in the region of the equator, by the motion of the diurnal rotation, but they are moreover elevated about twenty-five feet, twice a day, by the tides; the lands about the equator must then be perfectly inundated. But they are not so; therefore the region of the equator is much more elevated, in proportion, than the rest of the earth: then the earth is a spheroid elevated at the equator, and cannot be a perfect sphere. This proof, simple as it is, had escaped the greatest geniuses: because a universal prejudice rarely permits investigation.

We know that, in 1762, in a voyage to Cayenne, near the line, undertaken by order of Louis XIV., under the auspices of Colbert, the patron of all the arts, Richer, among many other observations, found that the oscillations or vibrations of his timepiece did not continue so frequent as in the latitude of Paris, and that it was absolutely necessary to shorten the pendulum one line and something more than a quarter. Physics and geometry were at that time not nearly so much cultivated as they now are; what man would have believed that an observation so trivial in appearance, a line more or less, could lead to the knowledge of the greatest physical truths? It was first of all discovered that the weight must necessarily be less on the equator than in our latitudes, since weight alone causes the oscillation of a pendulum. Consequently, the weight of bodies being the less the farther they are from the centre of the earth, it was inferred that the region of the equator must be much more elevated than our own – much more remote from the centre; so the earth could not be an exact sphere.

Many philosophers acted, on the occasion of these discoveries, as all men act when an opinion is to be changed – they disputed on Richer's experiment; they pretended that our pendulums made their vibrations more slowly about the equator only because the metal was lengthened by the heat; but it was seen that the heat of the most burning summer lengthens it but one line in thirty feet; and here was an elongation of a line and a quarter, a line and a half, or even two lines, in an iron rod, only three feet and eight lines long.

Some years after MM. Varin, Deshayes, Feuillée, and Couplet, repeated the same experiment on the pendulum, near the equator; and it was always found necessary to shorten it, although the heat was very often less on the line than fifteen or twenty degrees from it. This experiment was again confirmed by the academicians whom Louis XV. sent to Peru; and who were obliged, on the mountains about Quito, where it froze, to shorten the second pendulum about two lines.

About the same time, the academicians who went to measure an arc of the meridian in the north, found that at Pello, within the Polar circle, it was necessary to lengthen the pendulum, in order to have the same oscillations as at Paris: consequently weight is greater at the polar circle than in the latitude of France, as it is greater in our latitude than at the equator. Weight being greater in the north, the north was therefore nearer the centre of the earth than the equator; therefore the earth was flattened at the poles.

Never did reasoning and experiment so fully concur to establish a truth. The celebrated Huygens, by calculating centrifugal forces, had proved that the consequent diminution of weight on the surface of a sphere was not great enough to explain the phenomena, and that therefore the earth must be a spheroid flattened at the poles. Newton, by the principles of attraction, had found nearly the same relations: only it must be observed, that Huygens believed this force inherent in bodies determining them towards the centre of the globe, to be everywhere the same. He had not yet seen the discoveries of Newton; so that he considered the diminution of weight by the theory of centrifugal forces only. The effect of centrifugal forces diminishes the primitive gravity on the equator. The smaller the circles in which this centrifugal force is exercised become, the more it yields to the force of gravity; thus, at the pole itself the centrifugal force being null, must leave the primitive gravity in full action. But this principle of a gravity always equal, falls to nothing before the discovery made by Newton, that a body transported, for instance, to the distance of ten diameters from the centre of the earth, would weigh one hundred times less than at the distance of one diameter.

It is then by the laws of gravitation, combined with those of the centrifugal force, that the real form of the earth must be shown. Newton and Gregory had such confidence in this theory that they did not hesitate to advance that experiments on weight were a surer means of knowing the form of the earth than any geographical measurement.

Louis XIV. had signalized his reign by that meridian which was drawn through France: the illustrious Dominico Cassini had begun it with his son; and had, in 1701, drawn from the feet of the Pyrenees to the observatory a line as straight as it could be drawn, considering the almost insurmountable obstacles which the height of mountains, the changes of refraction in the air, and

the altering of instruments were constantly opposing to the execution of so vast and delicate an undertaking; he had, in 1701, measured six degrees eighteen minutes of that meridian. But, from whatever cause the error might proceed, he had found the degrees towards Paris, that is towards the north, shorter than those towards the Pyrenees and the south. This measurement gave the lie both to the theory of Norwood and to the new theory of the earth flattened at the poles. Yet this new theory was beginning to be so generally received that the academy's secretary did not hesitate, in his history of 1701, to say that the new measurements made in France proved the earth to be a spheroid flattened at the poles. The truth was, that Dominico Cassini's measurement led to a conclusion directly opposite; but, as the figure of the earth had not yet become a question in France, no one at that time was at the trouble of combating this false conclusion. The degrees of the meridian from Collioure to Paris were believed to be exactly measured; and the pole, which from that measurement must necessarily be elongated, was believed to be flattened.

An engineer, named M. de Roubais, astonished at this conclusion, demonstrated that, by the measurements taken in France, the earth must be an oblate spheroid, of which the meridian passing through the poles must be longer than the equator, the poles being elongated. But of all the natural philosophers to whom he addressed his dissertation, not one would have it printed; because it seemed that the academy had pronounced it as too bold in an individual to raise his voice. Some time after the error of 1701 was acknowledged, that which had been said was unsaid; and the earth was lengthened by a just conclusion drawn from a false principle. The meridian was continued in the same principle from Paris to Dunkirk; and the degrees were still found to grow shorter as they approached the north. People were still mistaken respecting the figure of the earth, as they had been concerning the nature of light. About the same time, some mathematicians who were performing the same operations in China were astonished to find a difference among their degrees, which they had expected to find alike; and to discover, after many verifications, that they were shorter towards the north than towards the south. This accordance of the mathematicians of France with those of China was another powerful reason for believing in the oblate spheroid. In France they did still more; they measured parallels to the equator. It is easily understood that on an oblate spheroid our degrees of longitude must be shorter than on a sphere. M. de Cassini found the parallel which passes through St. Malo to be shorter by one thousand and thirty-seven toises than it would have been on a spherical earth.

All these measurements proved that the degrees had been found as it was wished to find them. They overturned, for a time, in France, the demonstrations of Newton and Huygens; and it was no longer doubted that the poles were of a form precisely contrary to that which had at first been attributed to them. In short, nothing at all was known about the matter.

At length, other academicians, who had visited the polar circle in 1736, having found, by new measurements, that the degree was longer there than in France, people doubted between them and the Cassinis. But these doubts were soon after removed: for these same astronomers, returning from the pole, examined afresh the degree to the north of Paris, measured by Picard, in 1677, and found it to be a hundred and twenty-three toises longer than it was according to Picard's measurement. If, then, Picard, with all his precautions, had made his degree one hundred and twenty-three toises too short, it was not at all unlikely that the degrees towards the south had in like manner been found too long. Thus the first error of Picard, having furnished the foundations for the measurements of the meridian, also furnished an excuse for the almost inevitable errors which very good astronomers might have committed in the course of these operations.

Unfortunately, other men of science found that, at the Cape of Good Hope, the degrees of the meridian did not agree with ours. Other measurements, taken in Italy, likewise contradicted those of France, and all were falsified by those of China. People again began to doubt, and to suspect, in my opinion quite reasonably, that the earth had protuberances. As for the English, though they are fond of travelling, they spared themselves the fatigue, and held fast their theory.

The difference between one diameter and the other is not more than five or six of our leagues – a difference immense in the eyes of a disputant, but almost imperceptible to those who consider the measurement of the globe only in reference to the purposes of utility which it may serve. A geographer could scarcely make this difference perceptible on a map; nor would a pilot be able to discover whether he was steering on a spheroid or on a sphere. Yet there have been men bold enough to assert that the lives of navigators depended on this question. Oh quackery! will you spare no degrees – not even those of the meridian?

FIGURED – FIGURATIVE

We say, a truth "figured" by a fable, by a parable; the church "figured" by the young spouse in Solomon's Song; ancient Rome "figured" by Babylon. A figurative style is constituted by metaphorical expressions, figuring the things spoken of – and disfiguring them when the metaphors are not correct.

Ardent imagination, passion, desire – frequently deceived – produce the figurative style. We do not admit it into history, for too many metaphors are hurtful, not only to perspicuity, but also to truth, by saying more or less than the thing itself.

In didactic works, this style should be rejected. It is much more out of place in a sermon than in a funeral oration, because the sermon is a piece of instruction in which the truth is to be announced; while the funeral oration is a declaration in which it is to be exaggerated.

The poetry of enthusiasm, as the epopee and the ode, is that to which this style is best adapted. It is less admissible in tragedy, where the dialogue should be natural as well as elevated; and still less in comedy, where the style must be more simple.

The limits to be set to the figurative style, in each kind, are determined by taste. Baltasar Gracian says, that "our thoughts depart from the vast shores of memory, embark on the sea of imagination, arrive in the harbor of intelligence, and are entered at the custom house of the understanding."

This is precisely the style of Harlequin. He says to his master, "The ball of your commands has rebounded from the racquet of my obedience." Must it not be owned that such is frequently that oriental style which people try to admire? Another fault of the figurative style is the accumulating of incoherent figures. A poet, speaking of some philosophers, has called them:

D'ambitieux pygmées
Qui sur leurs pieds vainement redressés
Et sur des monts d'argumens entassés
De jour en jour superbes Encelades,
Vont redoublant leurs folles escalades.

When philosophers are to be written against, it should be done better. How do ambitious pygmies, reared on their hind legs on mountains of arguments, continue escalades? What a false and ridiculous image! What elaborate dulness!

In an allegory by the same author, entitled the "Liturgy of Cytherea," we find these lines:

De toutes parts, autour de l'inconnue,
Ils vont tomber comme grêle menue,
Moissons des cœurs sur la terre jonchés,
Et des Dieux même à son char attachés.
De par Venus nous venons cette affaire
Si s'en retourne aux cieux dans son sérail,
En ruminant comment il pourra faire
Pour ramener la brebis au bercail.

Here we have harvests of hearts thrown on the ground like small hail; and among these hearts palpitating on the ground, are gods bound to the car of the unknown; while love, sent by Venus, ruminates in his seraglio in heaven, what he shall do to bring back to the fold this lost mutton surrounded by scattered hearts. All this forms a figure at once so false, so puerile, and so incoherent

– so disgusting, so extravagant, so stupidly expressed, that we are astonished that a man, who made good verses of another kind, and was not devoid of taste, could write anything so miserably bad.

Figures, metaphors, are not necessary in an allegory; what has been invented with imagination may be told with simplicity. Plato has more allegories than figures; he often expresses them elegantly and without ostentation.

Nearly all the maxims of the ancient orientals and of the Greeks were in the figurative style. All those sentences are metaphors, or short allegories; and in them the figurative style has great effect in rousing the imagination and impressing the memory.

We know that Pythagoras said, "In the tempest adore the echo," that is, during civil broils retire to the country; and "Stir not the fire with the sword," meaning, do not irritate minds already inflamed. In every language, there are many common proverbs which are in the figurative style.

FIGURE IN THEOLOGY

It is quite certain, and is agreed by the most pious men, that figures and allegories have been carried too far. Some of the fathers of the church regard the piece of red cloth, placed by the courtesan Rahab at her window, for a signal to Joshua's spies, as a figure of the blood of Jesus Christ. This is an error of an order of mind which would find mystery in everything.

Nor can it be denied that St. Ambrose made very bad use of his taste for allegory, when he says, in his book of "Noah and the Ark," that the back door of the ark was a figure of our hinder parts.

All men of sense have asked how it can be proved that these Hebrew words, "*maher, salas-has-has*," (take quick the spoils) are a figure of Jesus Christ? How is Judah, tying his ass to a vine, and washing his cloak in the wine, also a figure of Him. How can Ruth, slipping into bed to Boaz, figure the church, how are Sarah and Rachel the church, and Hagar and Leah the synagogue? How, do the kisses of the Shunamite typify the marriage of the church? A volume might be made of these enigmas, which, to the best theologians of later times, have appeared to be rather far-fetched than edifying.

The danger of this abuse is fully admitted by Abbé Fleury, the author of the "Ecclesiastical History." It is a vestige of rabbinism; a fault into which the learned St. Jerome never fell. It is like oneiromancy, or the explanation of dreams. If a girl sees muddy water, when dreaming, she will be ill-married; if she sees clear water, she will have a good husband; a spider denotes money, etc. In short, will enlightened posterity believe it? The understanding of dreams has, for more than four thousand years, been made a serious study.

Symbolical Figures.

All nations have made use of them, as we have said in the article "emblem." But who began? Was it the Egyptians? It is not likely. We think we have already more than once proved that Egypt is a country quite new, and that many ages were requisite to save the country from inundations, and render it habitable. It is impossible that the Egyptians should have invented the signs of the zodiac, since the figures denoting our seed-time and harvest cannot coincide with theirs. When we cut our corn, their land is covered with water; and when we sow, their reaping time is approaching. Thus the bull of our zodiac and the girl bearing ears of corn cannot have come from Egypt.

Here is also an evident proof of the falsity of the new paradox, that the Chinese are an Egyptian colony. The characters are not the same. The Chinese mark the course of the sun by twenty-eight constellations and the Egyptians, after the Chaldæans, reckoned only twelve, like ourselves.

The figures that denote the planets are in China and in India all different from those of Egypt and of Europe; so are the signs of the metals; so is the method of guiding the hand in writing. Nothing could have been more chimerical than to send the Egyptians to people China.

All these fabulous foundations, laid in fabulous times, have caused an irreparable loss of time to a prodigious multitude of the learned, who have all been bewildered in their laborious researches, which might have been serviceable to mankind if directed to arts of real utility.

Pluche, in his History, or rather his fable, of the Heavens, assures us that Ham, son of Noah, went and reigned in Egypt, where there was nobody to reign over; that his son Menes was the greatest of legislators, and that Thoth was his prime minister.

According to him and his authorities, this Thoth, or somebody else, instituted feasts in honor of the deluge; and the joyful cry of "*Io Bacche*," so famous among the Greeks, was, among the Egyptians, a lamentation. "*Bacche*" came from the Hebrew "*beke*" signifying *sobs*, and that at a time when the Hebrew people did not exist. According to this explanation, "*joy*" means "*sorrow*," and "*to sing*" signifies "*to weep*."

The Iroquois have more sense. They do not take the trouble to inquire what passed on the shores of Lake Ontario some thousand years ago: instead of making systems, they go hunting.

The same authors affirm that the sphinxes, with which Egypt was adorned, signified superabundance, because some interpreters have asserted that the Hebrew word "*spang*" meant an "excess"; as if the Egyptians had taken lessons from the Hebrew tongue, which is, in great part, derived from the Phœnician: besides, what relation has a sphinx to an abundance of water? Future schoolmen will maintain, with greater appearance of reason, that the masks which decorate the keystones of our windows are emblems of our masquerades; and that these fantastic ornaments announced that balls were given in every house to which they were affixed.

Figure, Figurative, Allegorical, Mystical, Topological, Typical, etc.

This is often the art of finding in books everything but what they really contain. For instance, Romulus killing his brother Remus shall signify the death of the duke of Berry, brother of Louis XI.; Regulus, imprisoned at Carthage, shall typify St. Louis captive at Mansurah.

It is very justly remarked in the "Encyclopædia," that many fathers of the church have, perhaps, carried this taste for allegorical figures a little too far; but they are to be reverenced, even in their wanderings. If the holy fathers used and then abused this method, their little excesses of imagination may be pardoned, in consideration of their holy zeal.

The antiquity of the usage may also be pleaded in justification, since it was practised by the earliest philosophers. But it is true that the symbolical figures employed by the fathers are in a different taste.

For example: When St. Augustine wishes to make it appear that the forty-two generations of the genealogy of Jesus are announced by St. Matthew, who gives only forty-one, he says that Jechonias must be counted twice, because Jechonias is a corner-stone belonging to two walls; that these two walls figure the old and the new law; and that Jechonias, being thus the corner-stone, figures Jesus Christ, who is the real corner-stone.

The same saint, in the same sermon, says that the number forty must prevail; and at once abandons Jechonias and his corner-stone, counted as two. The number forty, he says, signifies life; ten, which is perfect beatitude, being multiplied by four, which, being the number of the seasons, figures time.

Again, in the same sermon, he explains why St. Luke gives Jesus Christ seventy-seven ancestors: fifty-six up to the patriarch Abraham, and twenty-one from Abraham up to God himself. It is true that, according to the Hebrew text, there would be but seventy-six; for the Hebrew does not reckon a Cainan, who is interpolated in the Greek translation called "The Septuagint."

Thus said Augustine: "The number seventy-seven figures the abolition of all sins by baptism… the number ten signifies justice and beatitude, resulting from, the creature, which makes seven with the Trinity, which is three: therefore it is that God's commandments are ten in number. The number eleven denotes sin, because it transgresses ten… This number seventy-seven is the product of eleven, figuring sin, multiplied by seven, and not by ten, for seven is the symbol of the creature. Three represents the soul, which is in some sort an image of the Divinity; and four represents the body, on account of its four qualities." In these explanations, we find some trace of the cabalistic mysteries and the quaternary of Pythagoras. This taste was very long in vogue.

St. Augustine goes much further, concerning the dimensions of matter. Breadth is the dilatation of the heart, which performs good works; length is perseverance; depth is the hope of reward. He carries the allegory very far, applying it to the cross, and drawing great consequences therefrom. The use of these figures had passed from the Jews to the Christians long before St. Augustine's time. It is not for us to know within what bounds it was right to stop.

The examples of this fault are innumerable. No one who has studied to advantage will hazard the introduction of such figures, either in the pulpit or in the school. We find no such instances among the Romans or the Greeks, not even in their poets.

In Ovid's "Metamorphoses" themselves, we find only ingenious deductions drawn from fables which are given as fables. Deucalion and Pyrrha threw stones behind them between their legs, and men were produced therefrom. Ovid says:

Inde genus durum sumus, experiensque laborum,
Et documenta damus qua simus origine nati.

Thence we are a hardened and laborious race,
Proving full well our stony origin.

Apollo loves Daphne, but Daphne does not love Apollo. This is because love has two kinds of arrows; the one golden and piercing, the other leaden and blunt. Apollo has received in his heart a golden arrow, Daphne a leaden one.

Ecce sagittifera prompsit duo tela pharetra
Diversorum operum; fugat hoc, facit illud amorem
Quod facit auratum est, et cuspide fulget acuta;
Quod fugat obtusum est, et habet sub arundine plumbum…

Two different shafts he from his quiver draws;
One to repel desire, and one to cause.
One shaft is pointed with refulgent gold,
To bribe the love, and make the lover bold;
One blunt and tipped with lead, whose base allay
Provokes disdain, and drives desire away.

– DRYDEN.

These figures are all ingenious, and deceive no one.

That Venus, the goddess of beauty, should not go unattended by the Graces, is a charming truth. These fables, which were in the mouths of all – these allegories, so natural and attractive – had so much sway over the minds of men, that perhaps the first Christians imitated while they opposed them.

They took up the weapons of mythology to destroy it, but they could not wield them with the same address. They did not reflect that the sacred austerity of our holy religion placed these resources out of their power, and that a Christian hand would have dealt but awkwardly with the lyre of Apollo.

However, the taste for these typical and prophetic figures was so firmly rooted that every prince, every statesman, every pope, every founder of an order, had allegories or allusions taken from the Holy Scriptures applied to him. Satire and flattery rivalled each other in drawing from this source.

When Pope Innocent III. made a bloody crusade against the court of Toulouse, he was told, "*Innocens eris a maledictione*." When the order of the Minimes was established, it appeared that their founder had been foretold in Genesis: "*Minimus cum patre nostro*."

The preacher who preached before John of Austria after the celebrated battle of Lepanto, took for his text, "*Fuit homo missus a Deo, cui nomen erat Johannes*;" A man sent from God, whose name was John; and this allusion was very fine, if all the rest were ridiculous. It is said to have been repeated for John Sobieski, after the deliverance of Vienna; but this latter preacher was nothing more than a plagiarist.

In short, so constant has been this custom that no preacher of the present day has ever failed to take an allegory for his text. One of the most happy instances is the text of the funeral oration over the duke of Candale, delivered before his sister, who was considered a pattern of virtue: "*Die,*

quia soror, mea es, ut mihi bene eveniat propter, te." – "Say, I pray thee, that thou art my sister, that it may be well with me for thy sake."

It is not to be wondered at that the Cordeliers carried these figures rather too far in favor of St. Francis of Assisi, in the famous but little-known book, entitled, "Conformities of St. Francis of Assisi with Jesus Christ." We find in it sixty-four predictions of the coming of St. Francis, some in the Old Testament, others in the New; and each prediction contains three figures, which signify the founding of the Cordeliers. So that these fathers find themselves foretold in the Bible a hundred and ninety-two times.

From Adam down to St. Paul, everything prefigured the blessed Francis of Assisi. The Scriptures were given to announce to the universe the sermons of Francis to the quadrupeds, the fishes, and the birds, the sport he had with a woman of snow, his frolics with the devil, his adventures with brother Elias and brother Pacificus.

These pious reveries, which amounted even to blasphemy, have been condemned. But the Order of St. Francis has not suffered by them, having renounced these extravagancies so common to the barbarous ages.

FINAL CAUSES

SECTION I

Virgil says ("Æneid," book vi. 727):

Mens agitat molem et magno se corpore miscet.

This active mind infused, through all the space
Unites and mingles with the mighty mass.

– DRYDEN.

Virgil said well: and Benedict Spinoza, who has not the brilliancy of Virgil, nor his merit, is compelled to acknowledge an intelligence presiding over all. Had he denied this, I should have said to him: Benedict, you are a fool; you possess intelligence, and you deny it, and to whom do you deny it?

In the year 1770, there appeared a man, in some respects far superior to Spinoza, as eloquent as the Jewish Hollander is dry, less methodical, but infinitely more perspicuous; perhaps equal to him in mathematical science; but without the ridiculous affectation of applying mathematical reasonings to metaphysical and moral subjects. The man I mean is the author of the "System of Nature." He assumed the name of Mirabaud, the secretary of the French Academy. Alas! the worthy secretary was incapable of writing a single page of the book of our formidable opponent. I would recommend all you who are disposed to avail yourselves of your reason and acquire instruction, to read the following eloquent though dangerous passage from the "System of Nature." (Part II. v. 153.)

It is contended that animals furnish us with a convincing evidence that there is some powerful cause of their existence; the admirable adaptation of their different parts, mutually receiving and conferring aid towards accomplishing their functions, and maintaining in health and vigor the entire being, announce to us an artificer uniting power to wisdom. Of the power of nature, it is impossible for us to doubt; she produces all the animals that we see by the help of combinations of that matter, which is in incessant action; the adaptation of the parts of these animals is the result of the necessary laws of their nature, and of their combination. When the adaptation ceases, the animal is necessarily destroyed. What then becomes of the wisdom, the intelligence, or the goodness of that alleged cause, to which was ascribed all the honor of this boasted adaptation? Those animals of so wonderful a structure as to be pronounced the works of an immutable God, do not they undergo incessant changes; and do not they end in decay and destruction? Where is the wisdom, the goodness, the fore-sight, the immutability of an artificer, whose sole object appears to be to derange and destroy the springs of those machines which are proclaimed to be masterpieces of his power and skill? If this God cannot act otherwise than thus, he is neither free nor omnipotent. If his will changes, he is not immutable. If he permits machines, which he has endowed with sensibility, to experience pain, he is deficient in goodness. If he has been unable to render his productions solid and durable, he is deficient in skill. Perceiving as we do the decay and ruin not only of all animals, but of all the other works of deity, we cannot but inevitably conclude, either that everything performed in the course of nature is absolutely necessary – the unavoidable result of its imperative and insuperable laws, or that the artificer who impels her various operations is destitute of plan, of power, of constancy, of skill, and of goodness.

"Man, who considers himself the master-work of the Divinity, supplies us more readily and completely than any other production, with evidence of the incapacity or malignity of his pretended author. In this being, possessed of feeling, intuition, and reason, which considers itself as the perpetual

object of divine partiality, and forms its God on the model of itself, we see a machine more changeable, more frail, more liable to derangement from its extraordinary complication, than that of the coarsest and grossest beings. Beasts, which are destitute of our mental powers and acquirements; plants, which merely vegetate; stones, which are unendowed with sensation, are, in many respects, beings far more favored than man. They are, at least, exempt from distress of mind, from the tortures of thought, and corrosions of care, to which the latter is a victim. Who would not prefer being a mere unintelligent animal, or a senseless stone, when his thoughts revert to the irreparable loss of an object dearly beloved? Would it not be infinitely more desirable to be an inanimate mass, than the gloomy votary and victim of superstition, trembling under the present yoke of his diabolical deity, and anticipating infinite torments in a future existence? Beings destitute of sensation, life, memory, and thought experience no affliction from the idea of what is past, present, or to come; they do not believe there is any danger of incurring eternal torture for inaccurate reasoning; which is believed, however, by many of those favored beings who maintain that the great architect of the world has created the universe for themselves.

"Let us not be told that we have no idea of a work without having that of the artificer distinguished from the work. *Nature is not a work.* She has always existed of herself. Every process takes place in her bosom. She is an immense manufactory, provided with materials, and she forms the instruments by which she acts; all her works are effects of her own energy, and of agents or causes which she frames, contains, and impels. Eternal, uncreated elements – elements indestructible, ever in motion, and combining in exquisite and endless diversity, originate all the beings and all the phenomena that we behold; all the effects, good or evil, that we feel; the order or disorder which we distinguish, merely by different modes in which they affect ourselves; and, in a word, all those wonders which excite our meditation and confound our reasoning. These elements, in order to effect objects thus comprehensive and important, require nothing beyond their own properties, individual or combined, and the motion essential to their very existence; and thus preclude the necessity of recurring to an unknown artificer, in order to arrange, mould, combine, preserve, and dissolve them.

"But, even admitting for a moment, that it is impossible to conceive of the universe without an artificer who formed it, and who preserves and watches over his work, where shall we place that artificer? Shall he be within or without the universe? Is he matter or motion? Or is he mere space, nothingness, vacuity? In each of these cases, he will either be nothing, or he will be comprehended in nature, and subjected to her laws. If he is in nature, I think I see in her only matter in motion, and cannot but thence conclude that the agent impelling her is corporeal and material, and that he is consequently liable to dissolution. If this agent is out of nature, then I have no idea of what place he can occupy, nor of an immaterial being, nor of the manner in which a spirit, without extension, can operate upon the matter from which it is separated. Those unknown tracts of space which imagination has placed beyond the visible world may be considered as having no existence for a being who can scarcely see to the distance of his own feet; the ideal power which inhabits them can never be represented to my mind, unless when my imagination combines at random the fantastic colors which it is always forced to employ in the world on which I am. In this case, I shall merely reproduce in idea what my senses have previously actually perceived; and that God, which I, as it were, compel myself to distinguish from nature, and to place beyond her circuit, will ever, in opposition to all my efforts, necessarily withdraw within it.

"It will be observed and insisted upon by some that if a statue or a watch were shown to a savage who had never seen them, he would inevitably acknowledge that they were the productions of some intelligent agent, more powerful and ingenious than himself; and hence it will be inferred that we are equally bound to acknowledge that the machine of the universe, that man, that the phenomena of nature, are the productions of an agent, whose intelligence and power are far superior to our own.

"I answer, in the first place, that we cannot possibly doubt either the great power or the great skill of nature; we admire her skill as often as we are surprised by the extended, varied and complicated

effects which we find in those of her works that we take the pains to investigate; she is not, however, either more or less skilful in any one of her works than in the rest. We no more comprehend how she could produce a stone or a piece of metal than how she could produce a head organized like that of Newton. We call that man skilful who can perform things which we are unable to perform ourselves. Nature can perform everything; and when anything exists, it is a proof that she was able to make it. Thus, it is only in relation to ourselves that we ever judge nature to be skilful; we compare it in those cases with ourselves; and, as we possess a quality which we call intelligence, by the aid of which we produce works, in which we display our skill, we thence conclude that the works of nature, which must excite our astonishment and admiration, are not in fact hers, but the productions of an artificer, intelligent like ourselves, and whose intelligence we proportion, in our minds, to the degree of astonishment excited in us by his works; that is, in fact, to our own weakness and ignorance."

See the reply to these arguments under the articles on "Atheism" and "God," and in the following section, written long before the "System of Nature."

SECTION II

If a clock is not made in order to tell the time of the day, I will then admit that final causes are nothing but chimeras, and be content to go by the name of a final-cause-finder – in plain language, fool – to the end of my life.

All the parts, however, of that great machine, the world, seem made for one another. Some philosophers affect to deride final causes, which were rejected, they tell us, by Epicurus and Lucretius. But it seems to me that Epicurus and Lucretius rather merit the derision. They tell you that the eye is not made to see; but that, since it was found out that eyes were capable of being used for that purpose, to that purpose they have been applied. According to them, the mouth is not formed to speak and eat, nor the stomach to digest, nor the heart to receive the blood from the veins and impel it through the arteries, nor the feet to walk, nor the ears to hear. Yet, at the same time, these very shrewd and consistent persons admitted that tailors made garments to clothe them, and masons built houses to lodge them; and thus ventured to deny nature – the great existence, the universal intelligence – what they conceded to the most insignificant artificers employed by themselves.

The doctrine of final causes ought certainly to be preserved from being abused. We have already remarked that M. le Prieur, in the "Spectator of Nature," contends in vain that the tides were attached to the ocean to enable ships to enter more easily into their ports, and to preserve the water from corruption; he might just as probably and successfully have urged that legs were made to wear boots, and noses to bear spectacles.

In order to satisfy ourselves of the truth of a final cause, in any particular instance, it is necessary that the effect produced should be uniform and invariably in time and place. Ships have not existed in all times and upon all seas; accordingly, it cannot be said that the ocean was made for ships. It is impossible not to perceive how ridiculous it would be to maintain that nature had toiled on from the very beginning of time to adjust herself to the inventions of our fortuitous and arbitrary arts, all of which are of so late a date in their discovery; but it is perfectly clear that if noses were not made for spectacles, they were made for smelling, and there have been noses ever since there were men. In the same manner, hands, instead of being bestowed for the sake of gloves, are visibly destined for all those uses to which the metacarpus, the phalanges of the fingers, and the movements of the circular muscle of the wrist, render them applicable by us. Cicero, who doubted everything else, had no doubt about final causes.

It appears particularly difficult to suppose that those parts of the human frame by which the perpetuation of the species is conducted should not, in fact, have been intended and destined for that purpose, from their mechanism so truly admirable, and the sensation which nature has connected with it more admirable still. Epicurus would be at least obliged to admit that pleasure is divine, and

that that pleasure is a final cause, in consequence of which beings, endowed with sensibility, but who could never have communicated it to themselves, have been incessantly introduced into the world as others have passed away from it.

This philosopher, Epicurus, was a great man for the age in which he lived. He saw that Descartes denied what Gassendi affirmed and what Newton demonstrated – that motion cannot exist without a vacuum. He conceived the necessity of atoms to serve as constituent parts of invariable species. These are philosophical ideas. Nothing, however, was more respectable than the morality of genuine Epicureans; it consisted in sequestration from public affairs, which are incompatible with wisdom, and in friendship, without which life is but a burden. But as to the rest of the philosophy of Epicurus, it appears not to be more admissible than the grooved or tubular matter of Descartes. It is, as it appears to me, wilfully to shut the eyes and the understanding, and to maintain that there is no design in nature; and if there is design, there is an intelligent cause – there exists a God.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.