



The Gregg Press Science Fiction Series
David G. Hartwell, *Editor*

Memoirs of the Year
2500 (*two thousand five hundred*)

LOUIS-SEBASTIEN/MERCIER

Geschwister-Scholl-Institut
für Politische Wissenschaft
der Universität München
Bibliothek

Inv.-Nr. 81923 MT

With a New Introduction by
MARY ELIZABETH BOWEN

GREGG PRESS

A DIVISION OF G. K. HALL & CO., BOSTON, 1977

This is a complete photographic reprint of a work first published in Philadelphia by Thomas Dobson in 1795. The trim size of the original hardcover edition was 4 by 6½ inches.

Introduction copyright © 1977 by G.K. Hall & Co.

Frontispiece illustration by Richard Powers

Printed on permanent/durable acid-free paper and bound in the United States of America.

Republished in 1977 by Gregg Press, A Division of G. K. Hall & Co., 70 Lincoln Street, Boston, Massachusetts, 02111.

First Printing, June 1977

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Mercier, Louis Sébastien, 1740-1814.
Memoirs of the year 2500.

(The Gregg Press science fiction series)
Translation of L'an deux mille quatre cent quarante.

Reprint of the 1795 ed. printed by T. Dobson, Philadelphia.

I. Title.
[PZ3.M536Me10] [PQ2007.M6] 843'.6 77-6804
ISBN 0-8398-2380-0

Introduction

LITERARY GENRES—the utopia, for example—are sets of conventions authors adopt in writing. Within these conventions, a text has its own freedom, but some works, by changing conventions, extend the possibilities within a genre. Louis-Sébastien Mercier's *Mémoires de l'An 2440* (1770)¹ did this. Before Mercier, utopias had been located in space, at some distant place on earth, or on an island found by sea voyagers blown off course. But Mercier put his utopia at an exact date in the future, in Paris, a place familiar to all. The change in one convention necessitated a change in another, the means of getting there. Instead of travelling by foot or on ship, the narrator travels in a dream, for Mercier knew no other way to travel through time, and the dream voyage had been a convention of medieval allegorical literature.

The reason for this change lies in the slow normalization and acceptance, in the 17th and 18th centuries in England and Europe, of the idea of human progress. To Condorcet, for example, in the *Esquisse d'un Tableau Historique du Progrès de l'Esprit Humain* (1793-94), history was a tale of ever more perfect societies and ideas, of steady upward evolution. But conceptions like Condorcet's had not always been in the air. To the Greeks, there was no linear progress, only cycles of birth, growth, and decline, as in organic nature. Plato's *Republic* may have been the progenitor of all utopias, but it had few of the genre's conventions, for there is no claim made that its ideal state exists anywhere but in the minds of those engaged in the

dialogue, or in the world of pure forms. No journey can be made, since it is impossible to reach the ideal from the real world anyhow, unless—and this is said with some irony—philosophers become kings. Had Plato told of a journey to the ideal state, we might have a utopia. Atlantis, described in the *Critias*, is the closest we come to one—but no voyager ever went there, and all we know of it is through myth. Atlantis, an island that sank into the sea at the height of its perfection, reminded the Greeks that the past had been better than the present, that history was in a phase of decline.

In the 17th century, we have Sir Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1624), the first utopian society intended as a blueprint for change: Bensalem, where scientists are the philosopher kings. Not surprisingly, at the center of Bacon's philosophy is the idea of upward linear progress, of a body of truth which men would slowly build up by working together over the ages, of truths that would dramatically improve man's life on earth. St. Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) on the other hand, was not meant as a blueprint for change; while its features implicitly criticize 16th-century European society, More wished that men would make changes in their present lives, if they could, and in the light of utopian ideals rather than in exact imitation of them. Still, both Bacon and More placed their utopias firmly in the present, albeit in remote places.

With Mercier, the possibility that an utopia could be placed in the future became a part of the genre. Edward Bellamy would write *Looking Backward* (1888) "in the belief that the Golden Age lies before us and not behind us, and that it is not far away."² And then George Orwell would satirize the belief in progress and in human perfectibility in *1984* (1949), an antiutopia, or dystopia.

L'An 2440 bears on its title page a quotation from Leibniz that captures the faith in progress: "Le temps présent est gros de l'avenir" ("The present is pregnant with the future"). And the Paris into which the narrator awakens delights him, as it would have delighted the 18th-century *philosophes*, its intellectual progenitors, as the realization of their fondest hopes for mankind. For Paris in 2440 is truly the heavenly city realized on earth. As the narrator walks about it with his guide, he observes a society which, from its public buildings to its mar-

ketplace, from its prisons to its churches, in its customs, laws, and everyday practices, is the embodiment of those rational ideals an optimistic age had formulated.

Mercier's title is paradoxical, for the *mémoire* is usually about the past. A walk around Paris, an evening's dinner and theatre, the reading of the newspapers—these are the elements of the travel narrative, but here is a dream voyage. Yet Mercier's dream has brought him into such a relationship with the future that he can write about it as if it were the past, which in fact it is, having already been experienced. The paradox is only a seeming one.

Both worlds—the framing world in which a man falls asleep, dreams, and wakes up, and the world inside the dream, the Paris of the future—are very real worlds. They are not fantasy: even in the dream everything seems naturalistic. The 700-year-old man attracts a great deal of comment until a "man of letters" (later to be his guide) jokingly suggests that the visitor may have found the philosopher's stone, and quiets the crowd's wonderment. But of the two worlds, the present is the drearier; the world of the future has a crystal sharpness, the clarity of wish fulfilled in dream.

Yet in spite of the Age of Reason flavor of its future, *L'An 2440* is, in its frame and in many of its most striking passages, a Romantic work. The sleeper awakens in a world happier than the present, and at the end is expelled from his paradise by a snake's bite. He tells us in the "Introduction" that he prefers escape into dreams over waiting out the wearisome processes of history, and while he may plead for progress, he is dismayed by its pace: "O my dear countrymen, whom I have so often heard groan under that load of abuses, of which we are wearied with complaining, when will our dreams be realized? Let us then sleep on; for in that must we place our felicity."³ Events around him only weaken his faith in progress. The Paris seen in his dream is but a wish.

Rather than the dreamer's vision being realized, Paris is more likely to vanish entirely, like the great cities of past civilizations. Louis XIV, found in tears amidst the ruins of Versailles, cries, "The Divine Justice has again illumined the torch of my days, to make me contemplate more nearly my deplorable enterprise. How transient are the moments of

pride!" (p.360). The world will not progress; all empires, over man and nature, will collapse. Man's efforts will end in a catastrophe that destroys all civilization, and rather than shining on a utopian city, the narrator says, the "sun is more like to cast a gloomy light on a formless mass of ashes, and of ruins" (p. xi).

Mercier makes clear the source of this Romanticism: the English. A set piece in *L'An 2440*, an imitation of Edward Young's *Night Thoughts*, has the narrator wander into a graveyard at night. During the sudden dark caused by an eclipse of the moon, he stumbles into an open grave: "I seemed to hear the voice of all the dead that hailed my arrival; an icy trembling seized me; a cold sweat came over me; I sunk into a lethargic slumber" (p. 165). He asks himself why he did not die in that peaceful state, and cries out that the future life is preferable to the present. But just then the moon comes out of eclipse, and he revives, and climbs out of the grave.

Is this despair only the narrator's, an overlay, or is it Mercier's own? Does it seriously question the faith that "le temps présent est gros de l'avenir"? The answer does not lie in some telling aspect of characterization within the work. We know that the narrator is a lover of the English: he admires their rationality and perhaps their Puritan revolution. The guide, a "man of letters," seems faceless, on the other hand; his predominant attitudes are profound admiration of his own age, pity for those who suffered the wrongs of the past, and some kindness for his visitor.

What is Mercier's attitude toward progress, if distinct from the narrator's or the guide's, in *L'An 2440*? He rarely addresses the reader directly. The "Epistle Dedicatory" is addressed to the future, and the whole account of the vision is spoken by the narrator to the intruder who has awakened him from his dream. He recounts the previous night's conversation with an Englishman, paraphrasing the man's criticisms of French society. The rest of the narrative is the dream-voyage. When Mercier does address the reader directly, it is either in the "Introduction," as above, in which he says he prefers dreaming over a life of suffering in the real world, or in the footnotes, which lash out at contemporary abuses in anger, directly and topically. Thus does Mercier save his own voice for two occa-

sions: for direct social criticism, or for a Romantic world-weariness similar to but less intense than the dream vision frame. In the former, belief in progress is a living faith; in the latter, that faith is tempered with impatience and even thorough despair. They are contradictory. Which is Mercier?

Indeed, between 18th-century optimism and Romantic weariness and catastrophism, Mercier would never walk an entirely straight path. At one point, he seems finally to have reconciled the poet's role to a shaken faith in progress as he predicts the ruin of Paris:

Escape, my book, escape whether the flames or the hordes; tell future generations what Paris was; and say that I fulfilled my duty as a citizen, that I did not let go by in silence the secret poisons that bring cities into the throes of sickness, and soon to their death convulsions.⁴

His social commitment will serve no real purpose in the face of future destruction, but it is a simple duty that he paints Paris as it was, and as it could be.

And yet, later in his life, Mercier claimed with unambivalent pride that *L'An 2440* had predicted and perhaps aided the Revolution. He speaks of his solace in having been, from the first moment of his career, the herald, friend, and collaborator of the Revolution, and of his belief that posterity will benefit from the present sufferings of France:

It is that feeling which, from the first line of *Rêve s'il en fut jamais* to the last line of *Le Nouveau Paris*, has sustained, encouraged, and fortified the author, and has caused him not to abandon his pen except in the dark night of the dungeon; and that in fact has given him the epitaph that he engraves now on his tomb, and hopes will become that of his contemporaries:

Men of all lands, envy my fate;
Born a subject, I die free and a republican.⁵

Here, Mercier sees the chain of works from *L'An 2440* through *Tableau de Paris* (1781-1790) and *Le Nouveau Paris* (1799-1800) as being linked by the goal of social criticism, of creating blueprints for change, goads to action. As the portrayer of the society around him, he can serve as its conscience, recalling to memory that which must be changed; if he paints

more misery than happiness, it is because his portrait is faithful. The visionary who returns from a dream prophesies revolution and spurs it by portraying a better world to serve as a model for change in this one.

These contradictions in Mercier's view of his role as an author underlie *L'An 2440*, and were never entirely resolved. But the full answer to the question of Mercier's belief in human progress does not lie in any one work or even in them all; rather, it lies in both the works and in the age, in the interaction between him and his times. For almost all of his writing, which spanned 50 years, was allied in some way with his politics. He produced essays and treatises, over 30 plays, many volumes of sketches of Paris, and a dictionary of neologisms. On the eve of the Revolution he chose self-imposed exile in Switzerland to continue publishing the 12 volumes of his sketches of Paris, which had been criticized as subversive. When he returned, he became an editor of *Annales patriotiques*, a journal which propagated revolutionary ideas.

When Louis-Sébastien Mercier was born in Paris, in 1740, France was ruled by Louis XV; when he died there, in 1814, it was the age of Napoleon. His power as an author flourished with the coming of the Revolution. He was of the *bourgeoisie*, the "Third Estate," the class that supplied the revolution with leadership and ideas; his father, Jean-Louis, was a prosperous *armurier*, a furbisher of arms. It would not have been unusual, a half-century earlier, had he attempted to ally himself through literary success with the aristocracy. Instead, Mercier was a revolutionary in his writing and in his politics. He was deputy from Seine-et-Oise to the Convention, a moderate Girondin, one who opposed the killing of Louis XVI. He was sent to prison for his criticism of the Montagne, but later sat on the Council des Cinq-Cents. Mercier remained a *républicain* under the Empire, taking up the teaching profession that he had abandoned during his youth.

His mother was Elizabeth-Andrée Le Pas, the daughter of a wealthy merchant. A brother, Charles-André, was born shortly after Louis-Sébastien; another died in infancy. When Mercier was three his mother died, leaving his father a widow for the second time; soon, however, he acquired a stepmother and half sister. Mercier was usually silent about his family life, but we

know he had a wife and three daughters, and he speaks of his brother, Charles-André, in terms of warmest affection in the dedication of one of his early essays.

His education was careful and expensive. Monsieur Cupis, his dancing teacher, was the object of an early satire; here Mercier speaks of the genesis of his vocation as an author.

When he came to give me my first minuet lesson, he was sixty and I was ten, and I was as tall as he was. He took out a little pocket violin, held out his arm, and made me make a leg; but instead of teaching me to dance, he taught me to laugh . . . That evening, I described him from top to bottom to my friends; without him, I would never have been an author.⁶

At the age of 20 he was a member of a group of young *littérateurs* at the Collège des Quatre Nations at the University of Paris, and began his literary career by writing a group of *héroïdes*, Ovidian imitations, a popular form at the time (for example, *Hécube à Phyrus*, 1760). These have not attained the immortality which Mercier's manuscript couplet, reported by the sympathetic biographer, Léon Béclard, would imply he himself attributed to them:

Demosthenes, I think, was the son of an armorer,
And although my name is common, I rhyme in steel.⁷

He also tried essays and translations and became for a time professor of rhetoric at the College of Bordeaux. When he returned to Paris in 1767 he published a play, *L'Homme sauvage*, about the inhabitants of the new world; in 1768, *Les songes philosophiques* appeared; and in 1769, *Les contes moraux*—all evidence of his immersion in the ideas and forms of his time. *L'Homme sauvage* was influenced by Rousseau and the Abbé Prévost, and *Les songes* is an optimistic, almost religious appreciation of philosophy, a collection of dreams, often allegorical, on such subjects as tyranny, optimism, and a happy world, all of which show an almost limitless belief in human perfectibility. Based in a form made popular by Marmontel, *Les contes moraux* offers stories designed to paint virtue in attractive colors and vice in disagreeable ones. But even the sympathetic Béclard writes that although by the age of 30

Mercier had published more than a dozen works, they are of no interest other than to shed light on what was to come.

Mercier's best subjects were the heirs of M. Cupis: the people around him and his society. His most important works are the *Mémoires de l'an 2440: rêve s'il en fut jamais* (1770), here reprinted in its English translation as *Memoirs of the Year 2500*; his theory of *drame* and his plays; and the many volumes of *Tableau de Paris*, continued into the time of the Revolution in *Le Nouveau Paris*. Three of these, *L'An 2440*, *Tableau* and *Le Nouveau Paris*, show the evolution of his ideas of progress.

In *L'An 2440*, Mercier began to put his strongest literary skills to work. All is vivid, all thoroughly felt in his dreamt future world. The visitor notes first the general demeanor of the Parisians, their attitudes towards one another. They are at peace with each other and with themselves. Mercier gives us an acute sense of the city as the microcosm of civilized society, and Paris as the premier of cities. Thus, Paris is the world, and the Paris of 2440 is the new world, the world of the future.⁸

In this future, traffic progresses smoothly because the carriages go in one direction on one side of the street; on the opposite, in the other. The innovation is symbolic: there is no fighting for precedence, and men are happier because of rational planning. The sovereign goes among the people and is well loved, like Henry IV. Clothes are simple, not ornate or cumbersome, and not worn as a show of pride. Indeed, people seem purged of vanity as well as of anger and aggression. A simple hat, embroidered with the name of its wearer, is enough to reward the outstanding citizen. Gone are the aristocracy's extravagances and jealous fighting for rank.

Paris has a new face: the Pont Neuf has been renamed to honor Henry IV, and the public buildings centered around it, in their dignity and solemnity, testify to a well-planned government. The houses of the poor that had disgraced the bridges have vanished, as has the Bastille; on its ruins stands a temple to Clemency. Mercier's Collège des Quâtre Nations has been redesigned: modern languages have replaced the ancient, history is banned, poetry allowed only in the later years, and science begun early. At the Hospital for Inoculations, doctors practice the art of preserving health with natural remedies

and teach temperate living. A legal code has been written by men of ability, who, inspired by a love for the human race, have undertaken an entire reformulation of the laws. Punishments now fit crimes: a mere robber is not put to death; rather, criminals are exposed in fetters and their crimes written on a sign above them to instruct the public in the outcome of such wrongdoings.

Religion is rational. Men worship in a temple whose dome is not stone, but of the clearest glass, so that nature's many aspects may remind worshipers of the Supreme Being's creative power. The prelates, along with the ministers of peace—men whose greatest motivation is to become useful members of society—serve the public in tasks from the most menial to the most heroic.

The "Communion of the Two Infinities" is rational theology's ceremony of baptism: when a young man has been observed to have reached maturity of mind, he is taken to an observatory where, through a telescope and then through a microscope, he communes with the infinite heavens above and the infinite worlds below. The vastness of creation stretches before him, and he is cured of all sinful ambition, pride, and of all the petty hatreds they engender. "Young man, behold the God of the universe" is the command, and he looks through a telescope, "the moral cannon that has lain in ruins all those superstitions and phantasms that tormented the human race" (p. 113). Then, he looks through a microscope and prays, "Feeble beings as we are, placed between two infinities, oppressed on every side by the force of divine greatness, let us adore in silence the same hand that has illumined so many suns and impressed with life these imperceptible atoms" (p. 115).

Are there atheists in this society? No, his guide explains; if there were, they would be quickly put through a course in experimental physics, a science whose laws are so surprising, so remote, and at the same time so simple, that once they are known, he who would deny an intelligent Creator would be regarded as a stupid wretch, a being totally perverse, and a cause of mourning to the whole nation.

Politics and economics are just and rational. An heroic avenger, to whom there is a monument in the city, has brought liberty to the whole world, restoring to oppressed men of all

nations the unalienable rights they had held in the state of nature. In economics, the rights of the consumer and the producer are balanced by the state; public granaries store excess grain; "labor has no longer an ugly and forbidding aspect, as it no longer resembles slavery; a gentle voice invites them [the peasants] to their duty, and all becomes easy, even agreeable" (p. 137). There is no class of idle citizens which impedes the health of the state: each does work; each has time for amusement; and no one rank is crushed to support another.

In describing theatres, the guide sets forth ideas that Mercier would later promulgate in his essay on *drame*.⁹ The stage is a public school of taste and morality, serves and is supported by the state. Dramatists improve human nature by representing virtue. The two plays the visitor sees are about the fall of Charles I and the avenging Cromwell, and another about Henry IV, who is incessantly revered. Prelates attend the theatre, for it teaches virtue, not vice, and upon leaving, no prostitutes accost the theatregoer.

In the King's library, culture has been sifted and reduced to its essentials. All those authors who bury their thoughts under a mass of words have been burned, along with those judged frivolous, useless, or dangerous. Among the Greeks, Homer, Sophocles, Euripides, Demosthenes, Plato, and Plutarch remain—Herodotus, Sappho, Anacreon, and Aristophanes have perished in flames. Among the Latins are Virgil, Pliny, and Livy—Lucretius is gone. Among the English, Milton, Shakespeare, Pope, Young, and Richardson; the Italians, Tasso; the French, Descartes, Charron, and Montaigne—Malebranche, Nicole, Arnauld, and Bourdaloue, as well as Bossuet, are burned. Corneille, Racine, and Molière are saved, but their commentators burned, and of Rousseau only his epistles and allegories remain. Voltaire is much reduced, and the *Encyclopédie* is done on a different plan, with the arts and sciences preserved intact instead of being reduced to entries as in a dictionary.

The government is a constitutional monarchy. The king watches over the execution of the laws, but the legislative power is lodged in the assembled states. The senate administers, and is responsible to the king; the king and senate are responsible to the assembled states, which govern by majority

vote and are elected every two years. There are no *lettres de cachet* (writs by which a prisoner is held without trial); they are ranked with torture. "We have conciliated that which seemed almost incompatible, the good of the nation with that of individuals" (p. 268). People are not oppressed with taxes, but willingly pay a fiftieth of their income, and sometimes give more.

Marriage customs are reformed. Dowries do not exist so that fathers are not impoverished by their daughters, and marriages are made irrespective of financial gain. Thus, women depend entirely on their husbands for finances, as well as for their status. They have no desire other than to be wives and mothers, and are thoroughly faithful and obedient. The classes may mix in marriage, for love alone is the basis for vows. Divorces are allowed, for the reason that people marry to be happy and should not remain so if the union is a cause of unhappiness. Women function as the bearers of the ideals of the society: a mother instructs her son in piety when he is young, telling him that there is one Almighty Being who has framed the creation, that He is good, and that He cares for and loves His creatures.

In the evening, the visitor has dinner with a family. "Liberty, gaiety, a decent familiarity, dilated the heart and glowed in the front of every guest" (p. 324). No one covets anyone else's food, nor is envious of another's place at the table.¹⁰

Reading the gazettes after the theatre, the visitor scans the news of the world. China has become less tyrannical: the people are not as slothful and fraudulent as they once had been for the greatest pains have been taken to educate them. They have been inspired with notions of honor; they are no longer crushed by an oppressive upper class; and they revere Confucius. Japan is opened to trade, and suicide is no longer considered a virtue. In Persia, the sacred books are read, and no mention is made of warlike Omar or Ali. And from Tahiti in the South Seas: Bougainville, it is recalled, had brought back a South Sea islander with him. But, the journal reads (a passage in Diderot has a native warning his people along similar lines), a Frenchman decided not to return to France with his ship but stayed to warn the Tahitians of the dangers Europeans would pose to their civilization, when, with their return, hatred and

vengeance would take the place of love. The Tahitians reacted by electing the Frenchman their leader, and killed anyone who came from Europe. Only recently they decided that Europe is no longer ambitious to invade them and allowed visitors. Mercier combines the starkest prejudice in his attitudes towards the East, where a complete reversal is necessary to gain progress, with the belief that European civilization is corrupt and would destroy the South Sea paradise "where reign the manners of a golden age" (p. 338).

His attitude towards the West is that slow progress will inevitably work through existing institutions. In Mexico Montezuma's descendants rule. The Americas are governed by separate monarchs as separate nations in a manner similar to the German empire. In Russia, Catherine the Great, who had patronized Diderot, is venerated as a great lawgiver who made the land prosper; and in Rome, the Pope is engaged in writing a set of rational beliefs and rules to replace the Catholic religion. London is vastly expanded; Paris is no longer a city of luxury for the few, but of moderate plenty for the many.

Science in Mercier's utopia is heavily influenced by Bacon's *New Atlantis*. The King's Cabinet is a vast museum of nature in the center of which is a capacious dome which contains busts of inventors of such useful objects as the plane, the pulley, the saw. Four wings radiate outwards: the first holds all the vegetable kingdom, cedar to hyssop; the second, the kingdom of air animals, from the eagle to the fly; the third, land animals, from the elephant to the ant; and the fourth, water animals, from the whale to the gudgeon. In the middle of the dome are the sports of nature, monsters of every kind. As had Bacon, the guide speaks of the secrets revealed in nature's anomalies: "For Nature, the moment she abandons her ordinary laws, discovers an intelligence still more profound than when she adheres strictly to them" (p. 215). On all sides, long beds of earth reveal its interior strata. At an optical cabinet a perpetually changing scene passes in front of the viewer: landscapes, prospects, palaces, rainbows, meteors; a cabinet of sounds imitates all the wild creatures. Scientists have gathered medicinal agents from the earth, experimented with them and found a cure for the plague. They have made artificial torrents and cataracts that produce the effect of great

motion; they have made aromatic baths to rejuvenate the bodies of those grown rigid with age. They have recovered the art of embalming, made malleable glass, and found the Tyrean purple.¹¹

The rational and progressive world Mercier's narrator encounters in *L'An 2440* bears little resemblance to the 18th-century world that Mercier observed and described in *Tableau de Paris (Sketches of Paris)*, whose first volumes were published anonymously beginning in 1781.¹² Aptly described by one translator as "the waiting city," Paris in *Tableau* is a city which stands in stark contrast, in every way, with the Paris of 2440. Streets are crowded, dirty, and poorly lit at night; dress is extravagant and uncomfortable; modes of fashion are as outlandish as they are fleeting; and Parisians are careworn and troubled. The aristocracy plagues the shopkeepers with unpaid bills, and shopkeepers in turn overcharge their customers. Bicêtre, a hospital and prison, is a

horrible ulcer on the body politic; large, deep, and oozing, that you cannot look at without turning away. From the air of the place that you smell from half a mile away, everything tells you that you are approaching a place of forcible detainment, a refuge of misery, of degradation, of misfortune.¹³

La Bastille is the state prison; Charenton, the one for the insane; Saint-Lazare; the Saltpetrière for women—would it not be better for the public if detention in one of these did not depend upon the will of one magistrate alone?

Mercier, in a footnote in *L'An 2440*, had described an actual ward in Bicêtre where 500 men were confined together and food brought to them on the point of a bayonet. He remarks in *Le Tableau* that he may have had a part in rousing the public to its horrors, for it no longer existed in 1781.

Doctors are no better than Moliere's portraits of them—above argument and reason, clouded in a protective veil of professional mystery, they dispense professional optimism hand in hand with medical theories from the Dark Ages.

The Pont Neuf is the heart of the city. Recruiters for the army assault all young men who pass by; oranges and lemons

are hawked in the middle of the bridge. An Englishman once, on a bet, walked the Pont Neuf for two hours crying "New six-franc écus for twenty sous!" but no one bought; some examined them and declared them to be false; most walked on, with the disdainful smiles of those above such trickery.

The Paris of *Tableau* is a teeming melange of classes, riddled with inequities and ripe for revolution:

Out of the same window, one can see the man who makes shoes to have bread, and the man who makes clothes to have shoes, and the man who, having both shoes and clothes, torments himself over having the wherewithal to buy a painting. One sees the butcher and the apothecary, the midwife and the gravedigger, the blacksmith and the jeweller, all who work to go, in turn, to the butcher, the apothecary, the midwife, and the wineseller.¹⁴

Civil government is corrupt. The police are either spies commissioned to report on particular people, or those who do the work of arrest and pursuit. Parisians are ignorant of any way of life that is better, so the king rules as he pleases, and the people have a short memory for abuses. They admire the liberty of Americans, but never think of civil war to acquire it for themselves. Mercier is calling for revolution.

The stage lacks seriousness; tragedy and comedy are corrupt and decadent, and the *Comédie Italienne*, chartered to present moral plays, has descended into vaudeville.

The Collège des Quatre Nations is the most handsome, rich, and populous of the colleges in the University of Paris, but at the same time the poorest in capable professors and well-taught students. In the library, half the books are religious polemics; Racine and Corneille only recently appeared there, and a student wishing to read modern literature would be soundly disappointed.

Marriages are made for money, and women, once sacrificed on that altar, become outrageous coquettes who think nothing of breaking their vows; otherwise, they remain unmarried, living with sisters or friends on annuities bought with their dowries.

Paris is a place of stark contradictions—vast luxury in the face of grinding poverty, exploitation and death; desperate boredom among the rich and crushing dejection among the

poor—it is the home of a multitude of lives, all perversions of the noble possibilities of human nature caused by a corrupt society.

In 1789 came the Revolution that Mercier had anticipated, and he chronicled it in his next work, *Paris pendant la révolution; ou, le nouveau Paris (Paris During the Revolution; or The New Paris, 1789–1798)*. Intended as a supplement to *Tableau*, it is less discursive and more condensed, as much a history of events as a portrait of social life; it is also more direct in its political opinions.

But is this "New Paris" any closer to the Paris of 2440? The excesses of terror have only replaced the excesses of wealth. Mercier paints the guillotining of Louis XVI as the death of a king who had betrayed his nation, who would not be the ruler of a free people, who had conspired to bring foreigners onto French soil to regain his despotic power. He deserved to die, but still he is a half-god in the eyes of many, especially the potentates of Europe, and his death will be cause for quarrel with France. At the guillotine, as his blood runs, the cries of 8000 armed men ring in the air. The executioner sells packets of his hair; someone buys the ribbon that held it; everyone carries off some bloody fragment, marching off as if coming away from a party. The thirst for blood is unquenchable. Even those who are about to die feel it: one day two young girls convicted of assassination are guillotined, and they go to their deaths as if to a festival, singing a bawdy song while the crowd applauds.

Divorce is now legal, as it had been in *L'An 2440*—after an absence of six months from each other, either spouse may win a divorce and be free to marry again without delay. Debauched, ambitious and unprincipled men satisfy their desires, their resentments, their avarice. There is no longer any respect for vows or for proprieties.

Paris is a city at war, full of the sound of drums and the sight of blue uniforms. Instead of playing in the gardens of churches, children make patrols with sticks and paper grenadier's hats. Citizen is on guard against citizen, trusting no one. Paper money abounds, but the value of it changes so rapidly that loans are not worth collecting. Parliament, clergy, and nobility

are gone, and there is no one to enforce civil order. Paris is ripe for a dictator, a dictator who would bring on a long and terrible conflict, against whom the people would be powerless.

As a result of these excesses, the slogans of the Revolution lose moral weight: on a wall someone has written "Fraternité ou la mort" ("Fraternity or death"); beneath this phrase another has scrawled, "Sois mon frère, ou je te tue" ("Be my brother or I will kill you").

As conditions change, so does Mercier's tone. No longer the painter of the vast tableau regarding his subject from a distance, he has become shrill, journalistic, cynical and even more direct. His opinions at the end of his life seem eccentric: he opposes removing the remains of Descartes (whom he had once eulogized) to the Pantheon, and he attacks Rousseau (whom he had once edited). He writes a diatribe against the theories of Copernicus and Newton, substituting outrageous theories of his own, in obvious rebellion against the spirit of a classical age that has passed, an age which had so deeply misled men with its faith in progress.¹⁵

The same faith in progress, which had earlier led Mercier to project his ideal society into an exact date in the future, made the Revolution seem naive. It is not the slowness of progress but the intractability of human nature that is the issue.

Louis-Sébastien Mercier never enjoyed a great reputation, nor has posterity been willing to reverse the judgement. Among his contemporaries, he was thought of as too prolific ("the mortal enemy of the blank page"), of having, with Réstif de la Bretonne and Cubières, formed a triumvirate of bad taste. Nonetheless, he was acknowledged to have had some influence, and of having, now and then, written "une belle page." Among biographers, Charles Monselet classed him among "the forgotten and the despised," and Gustave Desnoiresterres, introducing *Tableau de Paris*, only praised him faintly for his ideas, for a utopia "more ingenious than practicable." Léon Béclard wrote an extremely sympathetic biography, but its 796 pages cover only the first 49 years of Mercier's life, up to the Revolution; Béclard died before he could complete the whole work.

Since then, Mercier has fared better.¹⁶ Among literary historians, he has received appreciation for certain aspects of his work: W. W. Pusey has studied the influence in Germany of his plays and his theory of the drama, and H. Temple Patterson and Henry Majewski have discussed him as a preromantic. Recently, Raymond Trousson, in a French edition of *L'An 2440*, defends Mercier on the basis of his influence on other authors, even while he makes no attempt to reverse Mercier's reputation as being prolix, diffuse and lacking in original ideas; but Trousson does argue strongly for the importance of *L'An 2440* as the first dream vision utopia located in time rather than in place.

Mercier was not a truly great intellect nor an imaginative writer. Perhaps this was because he found himself caught up in the ideas and ideologies of two ages, unable to make a synthesis, his career a constant rebellion against ideas he himself could never entirely cast off.

What is the contemporary reader's reaction to *L'An 2440*? In many ways we have attained 2440 and beyond: in our roads and public buildings; in religion, marriage, and the frame of our government; and in our science and medicine. In others we have not: in the arts and in economics. Much of Mercier's utopia might make us uncomfortable were it realized. But in spite of the fact that we have already reached the level of Mercier's future in many things, our discontent with the present makes us feel that "progress"—desired change in the sphere of material and intellectual culture—rests uneasily on the surface of a human nature that we have only little penetrated, but penetrated enough to shatter the myth of human perfectibility.

Let us consider two cases. In *L'An 2440* a man has killed a rival for the love of his betrothed. We know that at a young age he had the nation's laws read to him and that he copied them down, so that he acted in full knowledge of the consequences of his act. He confesses his guilt before the judges, who give him the choice of ignominy or death. He chooses death; his friends and relatives embrace him; he is clothed in a white garment face his end. But in *Tableau*, two young girls go to the

guillotine singing couplets from a bawdy song, and the crowd cheers when their heads fall.

Is it a simple transformation of the shape of society that would make the first scene possible? Can society ever be framed so that man can develop his "inherent" virtue, as can the noble savage? In *L'An 2440* Mercier expresses a belief in the nobility of man's nature: society corrupts him, and the society of 2440 will free him from corruption. His faith was shaken by the events of the Revolution and Mercier could not continue to believe in the perfectibility of man through improvements in society. In the end, with him, our attention is turned to moral, not material, progress, and we are left with a final question: is it possible?

Mary Elizabeth Bowen
Columbia University

REFERENCES

1. Begun in 1768, *Mémoires de l'An 2440: rêve s'il en fût jamais* appeared anonymously in 1770 from an Amsterdam publisher. It was prohibited, placed on the Index, and banned in Spain during the Inquisition. But despite efforts to suppress *L'An 2440* as we shall refer to Mercier's work here), it was widely read. It went through nine editions in French during its first decade of publication, and it was translated into English by William Hooper, M.D. under the title *Memoirs of the Year Two Thousand Five Hundred* (London, 1772). In 1786 Mercier published a definitive edition, augmented to three times its original length and prefaced by a short disclaimer of its imitators. The first edition signed by Mercier appeared in 1799 (*L'An VII*) after the Revolution. The English edition enjoyed a similar popularity, although Dr. Hooper never incorporated Mercier's additions, nor did he change the apparently intentional mistranslation of Mercier's title (2440 rounded off to 2500). Another English translation was made by Harriot Augusta Freeman, entitled *Astraea's Return; or, The Halcyon Days of France in the Year 2440: A Dream* (London, 1787), an expanded version. Hooper's translation was re-edited in 1799, and a new, corrected edition, prefixed with an account of the author, was published in Liverpool in 1802. There were American editions of both English translations: of Hooper's in 1795 (the first American edition, reprinted here) and in 1799, and of Freeman's in 1797. Most recently, the French version has been edited by Raymond Trousson and published by Ducros in Bordeaux in 1971.
2. Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward* (New York: New American Library, 1960), p. 222. The utopia set in the future is the imaginative ancestor of futurology, a discipline attempting rational extrapolation from the present. At the other end of the spectrum is the fantastic voyage—such as Cyrano de Bergerac's *Voyage to the Moon* (1657—which intends no comment at all upon

the real world, but plays with the possibilities of other worlds and creations.

3. *Memoirs of the Year Two Thousand Five Hundred* (Philadelphia: Printed by Thomas Dobson, 1795), p. 2. All future references to this text, which is reproduced in this edition, are given in parentheses following the quotation.

4. From *Le Tableau de Paris* (1781–90) as quoted by Henry Majewski in *The Preromantic Imagination of L.-S. Mercier* (New York: Humanities Press, 1971), p. 36. Majewski's study is a thorough and sensitive treatment of the preromantic elements in Mercier's work. The translation is mine.

5. *Paris pendant la Révolution, ou Le Nouveau Paris* (Paris: Poulet-Malassis, 1862), p. 20. The translation is mine.

6. Gustave Desnoiresterres, ed., *Tableau de Paris par L.-S. Mercier, Etude sur la vie et les ouvrages de Mercier* (Paris: Bachelin-Deflorenne et Cie, 1885), pp. 353–54. The translation is mine.

7. Léon Béclard, *Sébastien Mercier: Sa vie, Son Oeuvre, Son Temps* (Paris: B. Champion, 1903), p. 2. The translation is mine.

8. Later, in the opening paragraph of the *Tableau* (Desnoiresterres, p. 9), he would write: "One can come to a complete knowledge of the human race by studying the people who gather in this immense capital."

9. Mercier's *Traité du Théâtre, ou nouvel essai sur l'art dramatique* (1773), which was influenced by Diderot's ideas on the introduction of the middle classes into the drama, would echo ideas expressed in *L'An 2440*. It is an attack on French classical traditions and the great playwrights of the 17th century. To Mercier tragedy has been in decline since Corneille. Racine, though a fine poet, is too feminine and not moral enough; Molière is immoral, so Mercier turns to Diderot and Marmontel. The *genre sérieux*, or *drame*, must replace the old degenerate tragedy. It is to be bourgeois in subject and treatment; it should reveal the fine moments of human life in the family; composed for the people, it must attempt to reconcile the inhuman differences that inequalities of wealth have placed among citizens. It must have purpose: to give instruction, cultivate reason, and enlighten a slumbering nation. Prose is preferable to poetry, and unity of action must be kept, although unity of time may be extended to three days. Shakespeare was, thus, Mercier's hero.

Mercier's plays, thirty-one in number, carry out his theories. They have generally received brief and chilling dismissal in literary histories, although widely translated and considerable in their influence outside France, especially in Germany. If their critical reputation has not been high, it may in part be because of Mercier's quarrel with the Comédie Française, which, offended by some of his opinions, had refused to perform his plays, although it had accepted one.

Mercier's plays receive sympathetic treatment in Eleanor F. Jourdain, *Dramatic Theory and Practice in France, 1690–1808* (London: Longmans, Green, 1921), pp. 84–92. See also articles on the theatre in 18th-century France in *Etudes Littéraires*, 1, ii (August 1968), especially Raymond Guy-Crosier's "Louis-Sébastien Mercier et le théâtre," pp. 251–79.

10. Mercier is attempting to portray natural man in a society which frees his innate tendencies towards love, family bonds, and social harmony. Reports brought back from the South Seas by travellers such as Antoine Bougainville, who had explored the Archipelago of Oceania, including Tahiti, from 1766 to

1769, had aroused much contemporary interest. In 1771, Bougainville published an account of his travels, and in 1772, Diderot wrote a fictionalized *Supplément à la Voyage de Bougainville*, circulated in manuscript but not published until after the Revolution. In this, a Tahitian, Orou, offers the chaplain of the ship his daughter, but the chaplain protests. Orou explains the simple, open conventions of the Tahitians: procreation is encouraged, marriages are made for love and dissolved when a couple finds occupying the same hut no longer agreeable; children are supported by the state, as are the aged. Réstif de la Bretonne, a friend of Mercier's, would write *La Découverte australe par un Homme-volant, ou le Dédale Français* (1781), a voyage to a society in which marriage is governed by a set of rational rules governing who marries whom, and when. Mercier's Paris of 2440 is a Paris freed of the social forces which disturb man's natural tendencies towards love and fellowship; there is no complex set of rules, but marriage and the family flourish.

11. The philosophy of science is Baconian: nature's secrets will yield up to patient labor, and the work of many can build an immense empire, greater than any one man could conquer alone. The aim of the undertaking is to provide man with a means to improve his state on earth. Another aspect of their creed: they confine a certain number of secrets to a few sages, for there is knowledge which, good in itself, may nonetheless be abused in its application. The human mind is not yet strong enough to make use of the most rare and powerful discoveries without danger, and so the scientists must guard these secrets in trust for mankind.

12. The anonymous volumes were attacked. Mercier declared his authorship and went to Switzerland, where he continued to publish until the coming of the Revolution drew him back to Paris in 1788.

13. Desnoiresterres, ed., *Tableau*, p. 138.

14. Desnoiresterres, ed., *Tableau*, pp. 12-13.

15. Mercier ended his career in open revolt against the ideals of French classicism. His *Néologie ou Vocabulaire des mots nouveaux ou à renouveler* (1801) has been called "the door through which the rational neology of the eighteenth century opens into the literary imagination of the nineteenth." At the beginning of the 18th century, the French language was thought to have attained a state of perfection by writers, academicians, and grammarians. The language of Corneille and Racine was stable and conservative, but the language in which political and social questions were discussed kept on changing, with no regard for the strictures of the purists. It was not until its 4th edition in 1762 that the *Dictionnaire* of the Academy admitted that "neology is an art." The neological movement of the eighteenth century was in reaction to this excessive purification of language. Its characteristics were regret at the loss of old words, the desire to enrich the language with them, and to add new words. Sometimes this improvement of language was made parallel with progress in the arts and sciences.

Mercier may have begun his *Néologie* as early as 1791. In any case, it was published three years after the fifth edition of the *Dictionnaire de L'Academie*, in open and mocking defiance of it. Mercier's principles are to renew words gone out of usage, to extend language, to reinforce it, as it develops. Language, he believes, belongs to those who use it; thus, his hostility to those academics who would claim a special right over it.

In the introduction to the *Néologie*, Mercier speaks almost mystically of "la pensée," the only reality, independent of all that surrounds it, sufficient in and of itself in its own emanation.

Thus, it is his task in the *Néologie* to open up "la pensée" to new points of view through new words and expressions of all kinds. See Mario Mormile, *La "Néologie" Revolutionnaire de Louis-Sébastien Mercier* (Rome: Bulzoni Editore, 1973).

16. See W. W. Pusey, *Louis-Sébastien Mercier in Germany: His Vogue and Influence in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939); H. Temple Patterson, *Poetic Genesis: S. Mercier into Victor Hugo* (Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century, v. 11; Geneva: Institut et Musée Voltaire, 1960), which refers to an unpublished "Bibliographie critique des ouvrages de Louis-Sébastien Mercier," typescript, 1925; Henry Majewski, *op. cit.*; and Raymond Trousson, ed., *L'An Deux Mille Quatre Cent Quarante: Rêve s'il en fût jamais* (Bordeaux: Ducros, 1971).

MEMOIRS

OF

THE YEAR

Two Thousand Five Hundred.

LE TEMS PRESENT EST GROS DE L'AVENIR.

Leibnitz.

Tranflated from the French,

By W. HOOPER, M. A.

PHILADELPHIA,

PRINTED BY THOMAS DOBSON,

AT THE STONE-HOUSE, N^o 41, SOUTH SECOND-STREET.

M.DCC.XCV.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE title of this work in the original is The Year Two Thousand Four Hundred and Forty; but as there appears no reason for fixing it to any particular year, we have for the sake of a round number, called it The Year Two Thousand Five Hundred. It may be proper to add, that this is the only alteration made by the translator. Though the scene of this narrative lies in Paris, yet the reflections in general may be applied, by changing the names of places and persons, to almost all the capital cities of Europe. Who the author of this work is, we will not pretend to determine; perhaps the reader will be satisfied with finding that he is a man of sense, of taste, and learning, of a lively imagination, a strong spirit of liberty, and, what is worth them all, a warm benevolence of heart.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE	
<i>Introduction</i>	I	
CHAP. I. <i>Reflections on Paris, by an old Englishman</i>	3	
II. <i>I am seven hundred and sixty years old</i>	11	
III. <i>I purchase a suit of ready-made clothes</i>	14	
IV. <i>The Porters of Paris</i>	17	
V. <i>The Carriages</i>	20	
VI. <i>The embroidered Hat</i>	23	
VII. <i>The Bridge re-baptised</i>	26	
VIII. <i>The new Paris</i>	28	
IX. <i>The Petitions</i>	41	
X. <i>The Man with a Mask</i>	44	
XI. <i>The New Testaments</i>	47	
XII. <i>The College of Quatre Nations</i>	50	
XIII. <i>Where is the Sorbonne?</i>	58	
XIV. <i>The Hospital for Inoculation</i>	63	
A 2		CHAP.

CONTENTS.

CHAP.		Page.
XV.	<i>Theology and Jurisprudence</i>	65
XVI.	<i>Execution of a Criminal</i>	72
XVII.	<i>Not so far off as we thought</i>	86
XVIII.	<i>The Ministers of Peace</i>	92
XIX.	<i>The Temple</i>	97
XX.	<i>The Prelate</i>	111
XXI.	<i>The Communion of the two In-</i> <i>finites</i>	113
XXII.	<i>A remarkable Monument</i>	124
XXIII.	<i>The Bread, the Wine, &c.</i>	129
XXIV.	<i>The Prince a Publican</i>	140
XXV.	<i>The Theatre</i>	144
XXVI.	<i>The Lamps</i>	153
XXVII.	<i>A Funeral</i>	157
	<i>An Eclipse of the Moon.</i>	161
XXVIII.	<i>The King's Library</i>	167
XXIX.	<i>The Men of Letters</i>	192
XXX.	<i>The Academy of Science</i>	199
XXXI.	<i>The King's Cabinet</i>	214
XXXII.	<i>The Academy of Painting</i>	235
XXXIII.	<i>Emblematical Paintings</i>	241
XXXIV.	<i>Sculpture and Engraving</i>	247
XXXV.	<i>The Hall of Audience</i>	252
XXXVI.	<i>The Form of Government</i>	256
XXXVII.	<i>The Heir to the Throne</i>	272
XXXVIII.	<i>The Women</i>	284

CHAP.

CONTENTS.

CHAP.		Page.
XXXIX.	<i>The Taxes</i>	298
XL.	<i>On Commerce</i>	311
XLI.	<i>The Evening</i>	317
XLII.	<i>The Gazettes</i>	328
XLIII.	<i>Funeral Oration of a Peasant</i>	355
XLIV.	<i>Versailles</i>	359

EPISTLE DEDICATORY

To the Year

TWO THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED.

AUGUST and venerable Year! thou who art to bring felicity upon the earth! thou, alas! that I have only in a dream beheld, when thou shalt rise from out the bosom of eternity, thy sun shall enlighten them who will tread upon my ashes, and upon those of thirty generations, successively cut off, and plunged in the profound abyss of death. The kings that now sit upon the throne shall be no more; their posterity shall be no more. Then shalt thou judge the departed monarch, and the writer who lived in subjection to his power. The names of the friends, the defenders of humanity, shall live and be honoured, their glory shall be pure and radiant; but that vile herd of kings, who have been, in every sense, the tormentors of mankind, still more deeply plunged

plunged in oblivion than in the regions of death, can only escape from infamy by the favour of inanity.

The thought survives the man, and forms his most glorious possession; the thought rises from his tomb, assumes an immutable body, becomes immortal. While the thunders of despotism fall and vanish, the pen of the writer, bounding over the interval of time, absolves or punishes the masters of the universe.

I have exercised that authority which nature gave me; I have cited before my solitary reason the laws, the customs, and abuses of the country in which I have lived obscure and unknown. I have felt that virtuous hatred which is due to oppression from a being of humanity; I have detested, pursued with infamy to the utmost of my power, opposed all tyranny. But, alas! August and Venerable Year, perhaps to little purpose, when contemplating thee, have I animated, exalted my ideas; they may appear in thy eyes the mere conceptions of servitude. Forgive me; the genius of my age surrounds and oppresses me. Stupidity now reigns; the tranquility of my country resembles that of the grave. I see nought around me but coloured carcases, who move and talk, but in whom the active principle of life has never produced the least emotion. Even now,
the

the voice of philosophy, wearied and dejected, cries in the midst of mankind as in the centre of a boundless desert.

Oh! could I but divide the term of my existence, with what pleasure would I instantly descend to the grave! with what joy should I part from the gloomy, wretched aspects of my co-temporaries, to awake in the midst of those fair days that thou shalt bring forth; that blissful period, when man shall have regained his courage, his liberty, his independence, and his virtue! How happy, could I but behold thee otherwise than in a dream! Haste! thou age so desired, thou object of my earnest wishes! Come, and pour down happiness upon the earth! But what do I say? Delivered from the illusions of a pleasing dream, I fear, alas! I fear, that thy sun is more like to cast a gloomy light on a formless mass of ashes, and of ruins.

MEMOIRS

OF THE

Year Two Thousand Five Hundred.

INTRODUCTION.

THAT all should be well is the wish of the philosopher. By that term, which doubtless has been abused, I mean that sagacious and virtuous being, who desires the general happiness, in consequence of those determinate ideas of order and harmony that he entertains. Evil is disgusting to the sight of the wise man; he therefore declaims against it; he is accused of ill-nature; but wrongfully; he knows that evil abounds on the earth; but, at the same time, he has constantly present to his mind that beautiful and striking perfection, which might and ought to result from the conduct of a rational being.

In effect, what should prevent us from hoping, that, after running round the wide-extended circle of their follies, guided by their passions, men, jaded and disgusted, may not return to the pure lights of reason? Why may not the human race resemble an individual? Touchy, hasty, thoughtless, in youth; gentle,
B patient,

patient, prudent, in age*. The man who argues thus imposes on himself the duty of being just.

But do we know what is perfection? Can it appertain to a weak and limited being? Is it not that great secret hid from us by the present life? Must we not put off mortality ere we can comprehend that sublime enigma?

In the mean time, let us endeavour to render this life tolerable; or, if that be too much, let us at least dream that it is so. For me, concentered with Plato, I dream like him. O my dear countrymen, whom I have so often heard groan under that load of abuses, of which we are wearied with complaining, when will our dreams be realised? Let us then sleep on; for in that must we place our felicity.

* Was this world created merely for that small number of men who now inhabit the surface of the earth? What are all the beings that ever existed, in comparison of those that God can create? Other generations will behold the same sun, occupy the place we now possess, and push us so far back into antiquity, that there shall not remain of us either footsteps or remembrance.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

*REFLECTIONS ON PARIS BY AN OLD ENGLISH-
MAN.*

THOU troublesome friend, why didst thou wake me? Ah! what injury hast thou done me! Thou hast snatched me from a dream, whose sweet illusions were to me more desirable than the importunate light of truth. How pleasing was the deceit! Would that I were plunged in it for the remainder of my days! But, alas! I am again surrounded by that frightful chaos from which I thought myself delivered. Sit down, and listen to me, while my mind is yet filled with the objects by which it was but now enrapt.

Late last night, I conversed with that old Englishman, whose soul is so free. You know that I love the man truly English; we no where find better friends; among no other people do we meet with men of a character so steadfast and so generous; that spirit of liberty with which they are animated gives them a degree of force and constancy rarely to be met with among other nations.

Your nation, he said, is filled with abuses strange as multifarious; they are neither to be numbered or conceived; the mind is there lost. Nothing is to

B 2

me

me so surprising as that repose, that apparent calm, which broods over the horrid jars of so many intestine troubles. Your capital is an incredible compound*; the hideous monster is the receptacle of extreme opulence and excessive misery; their contest is eternal. How amazing that this devouring body, which is consuming in every part, can subsist in its horrid inequality †.

In your kingdom, all things are made subservient to the capital; cities, nay, whole provinces, are sacrificed to it. Alas! what is it but a diamond in the midst of a dunghill! what an inconceivable jumble of sense and stupidity, of genius and folly, of grandeur and baseness! I left England with precipitation; I flew with hopes of arriving at that bright centre, where men, by uniting their mutual talents, had

* The whole kingdom is in Paris. France resembles a rickety child, whose juices seem only to encrease and nourish the head, while the body remains weak and emaciated. This sort of children have frequently more wit than others; but they are generally short lived.

† The manner in which it exists is still more astonishing: It is not uncommon to see a man, who cannot live upon one hundred thousand livres (¶) a year, borrow money of another, who lives at his ease on a hundredth part of the money.

(¶) The livre is equal to ten-pence halfpenny, consequently the French crown of six livres is equal to five shillings and three-pence, and the louis-d'or of twenty four livres equal to our guinea.

had established the throne of all the pleasures, surrounded by ease and complacency. But, heavens! how cruelly were my hopes destroyed! On this spot, where all things abound, I behold wretches perishing for want; in the midst of so many sagacious laws, a thousand crimes are committed; among so many regulations of the police, all is disorder; nothing to be seen but shackles, embarrassments, and practices contrary to the public good.

The throngs of people are every moment in danger of being crushed by the innumerable quantity of carriages, in which are borne at their ease those who are infinitely less valuable than they whom they splash, and threaten to destroy. I tremble when I hear the precipitate tread of horses in the midst of a crowd of the aged and infirm, of children, and teeming women. In reality, nothing is more insulting to human nature than that cruel indifference, with which they regard the dangers that each moment produces*.

Your affairs compel you to frequent a quarter of the town, where there exhales a fœtid and mortal vapour: thousands of mankind are forced to breathe that poisoned air †. Your churches afford more oc-

* Ye original inhabitants of the earth, could you have thought that a city would ever exist, where they should, without concern, drive over the unfortunate passengers at so much per leg and per arm!

† The cemetery of the church called the Innocents, serves twenty-two parishes; they have interred the dead there

caſion for ſcandal than inſtruction; they are made the high road for paſſengers, and ſometimes ſomething worſe; you are not ſuffered to ſeat yourſelf there but by virtue of money; a ſhameful monopoly in a ſacred place, where all men, when in the preſence of the Supreme Being, ſhould ſurely be regarded as equals.

When you would copy after the Greeks and Romans, you have not even the ability to ſupport their manner, which was pure and noble; you diſfigure it, you deſtroy it, by a puerile longing after what you call pretty. You have ſome dramas that are maſter-pieces; but, if on reading them, I find a deſire to ſee them repreſented, I no longer know them. You have three ſmall, dark, and dirty theatres*; in one you are, at a great expence, magnificently ſtunned while you gapingly admire a heap of ridiculous machinery; in another, you are forced to laugh, when you

for a thouſand years paſt. A place for this purpoſe ſhould ſurely have been choſen without the walls; on the contrary, it is placed in the centre of the city; and leſt it ſhould not be ſufficiently frequented as it ſhould ſeem, they have ſurrounded it with ſhops. It is a grave always open, always filling, always empty. Our delicate ladies there walk over the mouldering bones of millions of their forefathers to purchaſe pompons and other baubles.

* The French and Italian comedies, or theatres, and the opera. The epithets here uſed are applicable enough to the two comedies; but ſurely the opera rather merits thoſe of grand and elegant.

you ſhould weep; nature is never conſulted; and beſides that your tragic actors are beneath all criticiſm, you there find ſome impertinent companion, who is alone ſufficient to baniſh the moſt perfect illuſion; with regard to the third, they are a ſet of buffoons; who ſometimes quaver the drolleries of Momus, and ſometimes ſhriek an inſipid air. I prefer theſe, however, to your dull French comedians, becauſe they are more natural, and conſequently more pleaſing, and becauſe they afford the public rather more entertainment*. But I muſt confeſs at the ſame time; that a man ought to have an uncommon ſhare of leiſure, to amuſe himſelf with the wretched trifles they exhibit.

It affects me with an indignant pity, to ſee ſuch people as theſe, who are ſupported by a fort of contribution from each ſpectator, impudently crowd their judges together in a ſcanty pit, where, continually on their feet, and preſſing againſt each other, they ſuffer a thouſand tortures; and where they are not permitted to complain, though on the point of being ſuffocated†. A people, who even in their entertainments,

* There is an eſſential difference between the French and Italian comedies; the firſt are fully perſuaded that they are perſons of merit, and in conſequence are inſolent; the ſecond are directed entirely by mercenary motives; the one, from ſelf-conceit, ſhew a want of due reſpect for the public; the others ſtrive to pleaſe it from a principle of avarice.

† There are no ſeats in the pit at any of the French theatres; and as thoſe that are behind are continually endeavouring to get forward, and thoſe before endeavour to keep their

ſtation

can endure so troublesome a servitude, show to what degree of slavery they may be reduced. Thus, all those pleasures boasted of at a distance are, on a near approach, but troubles; and we must walk over the heads of the multitude, if we would breathe at our ease.

As I do not find myself endowed with that barbarous courage, adieu; I shall be gone. You may boast of your fine buildings that are falling into ruins; show with admiration your Louvre, whose aspect does you more disgrace than honour, especially when surrounded by so many gaudy baubles, which cost you more to support than it did to erect your public monuments.

But all this is yet nothing. If I should dwell on the horrible disproportion of fortunes; if I should explain the secret causes from whence it proceeds: if I were to describe your manners, without tender and polite, within haughty and cruel*; if I should paint the indigence of the unfortunate, and the impossibility of redress, while they preserve their probity;

station, they are in constant agitation, not much unlike the mob at a lord mayor's show: to mend the matter, there are six of the king's guards posted in the pit, three on each side; and if any one offers to cry out, one of the guards, if it be his will and pleasure, takes him immediately into custody.

* If we except the financiers, who are in general cruel and unpolite, the rest of the rich have but one of those two faults; they either politely suffer you to die of hunger or they roughly give you some relief.

bity; if I should enumerate the riches a bad man has acquired, and the degrees of respect that is shown him, in proportion as he becomes more depraved*;—this would take up too much time. Good night. To-morrow will I leave you; I say, to-morrow; for I can no longer live in a city so full of misery, and that has so many opportunities of preventing it.

I am disgusted with Paris as with London. All great cities resemble each other. Rousseau has very well said, "It seems as if the more laws men make for their happiness, when united in one body, the more depraved they become, and the more they augment the sum of their miseries." One would, however, reasonably imagine the contrary; but too many are interested in opposing the general good. I will search out some village, where in a pure air, with tranquil pleasures, I may deplore the lot of the wretched inhabitants of those fastuous prisons they call cities†.

It

* Formerly, though they did not assist the virtuous man, they, however, esteemed him. It is now no longer so. I remember the reply of a princess to her intendant; his wages were six hundred livres, and he complained he was not sufficiently paid. How then did your predecessor manage? said the princess; he was but ten years in my service, and retired with an estate of twenty thousand livres a year. Madam, he robbed you, replied the intendant. Very well, says the princess, then do you rob me too.

† Amidst the torrent of modes, projects, and amusements, of which one destroys the other, and none lasts, the minds of the great are lost, deprived of enjoyment, and become as incapable of perceiving the great and beautiful, as they are of producing it.

It was to little purpose that I reminded him of the old proverb, 'Paris was not built in a day;' that all was now perfection in comparison of past ages. Perhaps, a few years hence, I said, there will be nothing left for you to desire; if they shall accomplish, in their full extent, the different projects that have been proposed. Ah! he replied, there is the foible of your nation; projects for ever! And can you regard them? You are a Frenchman, my friend; and with all your good sense you have an attachment to the soil. But, be it so; when all those projects are accomplished, I will come again to see you; till then will I find another dwelling-place; I like not to inhabit amidst so many unhappy and discontented mortals, whose very suffering looks pierce my heart*.

I know that it would be easy to remedy the most pressing evils; but, believe me, they will never be remedied; the means are too simple to be regarded. I am convinced that they will avoid them; I am convinced also, that they will repeat amongst you the sacred word Humanity, with much affectation, only to avoid performing the duties it implies†. It is a long time since you erred through ignorance, and therefore you will never reform Adieu.

* There is no one establishment in France that does not tend to the detriment of the nation.

† Accursed be the writer who flatters the age in which he lives, and helps to deceive it; who lulls it with the history of its ancient heroes, and virtues that are no more; palliates the evils that undermine and devour it; and, like a subtle mountebank, talks of its florid complexion, while the gangrene

CHAP. II.

*I AM SEVEN HUNDRED AND SIXTY YEARS
OLD.*

IT was midnight when my old Englishman left me. I began to be weary; I fastened my door, and retired to rest. When I had closed my eye-lids, I dreamed that ages had passed since I laid down to rest, and that I was awake*. I rose, and found a weight oppress me to which I was not accustomed; my hands trembled, and my feet stumbled; when I looked in the glass, I could scarce recollect my visage; I went to bed with black hair and a florid complexion; but when I rose, my forehead was furrowed with wrinkles, and my hair was white; I saw two prominent bones under my eyes and a long nose; a colour pale and wan was spread over all my countenance; when I attempted to walk, I was forced to support

grene is preying upon its members. The writer of fortitude will never avail himself of these dangerous deceits. He cries, O my countrymen, you by no means resemble your fathers; you are polite and cruel; you have only the appearance of humanity; base and faithless, you have not even the courage to commit great crimes; yours are all mean and dastardly, like yourselves.

* When the mind is much affected with any object, it readily returns in sleep. There are astonishing circumstances attending dreams. This, as will appear by the sequel, is not very extravagant.

support myself by my cane; I did not find, however, that I had any ill-nature, the too common companion of old age.

As I went out, I saw a public place, which to me was unknown; they had just erected a pyramidal column, which attracted the regard of the curious. I advanced towards it, and read distinctly, The year of grace MMD. the characters were engraved on marble, in letters of gold. At first, I imagined that my eyes deceived me, or rather, that it was an error of the artist's; but I had scarce made the reflection, when the surprise became still greater; for, directing my looks towards two or three edicts of the sovereign fixed to the wall, which I have always been curious to read, I saw the same date, MMD. fairly printed on all of them. Ha! I said to myself, I am then become old indeed, without perceiving it. What! have I slept seven hundred and thirty-two years*.

All things were changed; all those places that were so well known to me presented a different face, and appeared to be recently embellished; I lost myself amidst grand and beautiful streets, that were built in straight lines; I entered a spacious square, formed by the terminations of four streets, where there reigned such perfect order, that I found not the least embarrassment, nor heard any of those confused and whimsical cries that formerly rent my ears; I saw no carriages ready to crush me; the gouty might

4

* This work was begun in 1768.

have walked there commodiously; the city had an animated aspect, but without trouble or confusion.

I was so amazed, that I did not at first observe the passengers stop and regard me from head to foot with the utmost astonishment. They shrugged the shoulder and smiled, as we used to do, when we met a mask; in fact, my dress might well appear original and grotesque, when compared with theirs.

A citizen (whom I after found to be a man of learning) approached me, and said politely, but with a fixed gravity, "Good old man, to what purpose is this disguise? Do you intend to remind us of the ridiculous customs of a whimsical age? We have no inclination to imitate them. Lay aside this idle frolick." What mean you? I replied; I am not disguised; I wear the same dress that I wore yesterday; it is your columns and your edicts that counterfeit. You seem to acknowledge another sovereign than Lewis XV. I know not what is your design; but I esteem it dangerous; and so I tell you; masquerades of this sort are not to be countenanced; men must not carry their folly to such extent. You are, however, very free impostors; for you cannot imagine that any thing can convince a man against the evidence of his own mind.

Whether he thought that I was delirious, or that my great age made me dote, or whatever other suspicion he might have, he asked me in what year I was born. In 1740, I replied.—"Indeed! why then

C

you

you are seven hundred and sixty years of age. We should be astonished at nothing," he said to the crowd that surrounded me; "Enoch and Elias are not yet dead; Mathusalem and some others have lived nine hundred years; Nicolas Flamel traverses the earth like a wandering Jew; and perhaps this gentleman has found the immortal elixir, or the philosopher's stone." On pronouncing the last words he smiled; and every one pressed toward me with a very particular complacency and respect. They seemed all eager to interrogate me; but discretion held them mute; they contented themselves with saying, in a low voice, "A man of the age of Lewis XV. Oh! what a curiosity!"

CHAP. III.

I PURCHASE A SUIT OF READY-MADE
CLOTHES.

I BEGAN to be anxious for my safety. The man of letters said to me, "I see you are confounded, and therefore willingly offer to be your guide. But let us begin, I entreat you, by entering the first cloth-shop we shall come to; for," he frankly added, "I cannot be your companion, if you are not decently dressed.

"You must allow, for example, that, in a well-regulated city, where the government forbids all duels, and answers for the life of every individual,
it

it is useless, not to say indecent, to wear a murdering weapon by your side, to put a sword on when you go to pray to God, or to visit the ladies or your friends. A foldier can do no more in a town that is besieged*. In your age, there were still some remains of the Gothic chivalry; it was a mark of honour to wear at all times an offensive weapon; and I have read, in an author of your days, that an old man would parade with a sword that he could no longer use.

"How girding and troublesome is your dress; your shoulders and arms are imprisoned; your body is pressed together; your breast is constrained, you can scarce breathe; and, why, I beseech you, do you expose your legs and thighs to the inclemency of the seasons? Each age produces new modes; but either I am much deceived, or our dress is both agreeable and salutary. Observe it."

In fact, the manner in which he was dressed, though new to me, had nothing in it disgusting. His hat† had not the dark and gloomy colour, nor the troublesome corners of our's; there remained

* In Paris, every man who is not a servant, or in trade, wears a sword, if he can find money to purchase one, which he may do there for a few shillings.

† If I were to write a history of France, I should pay a particular regard to the chapter of hats. This little subject, treated with care, would be curious and interesting. I would contrast the English and French; and show, that

nothing but the cap or body of the hat, which was surrounded by a sort of cape, that rolled up, or was extended, as the season required

His hair, neatly combed, formed a knot behind his head, and a slight tinge of powder left the natural colour visible *. Far distant from the plastered pyramid of scented pomatum; or those staring wings, that give a frightful aspect to the wearer; or those immoveable buckles, that destroy the grace of the flowing curls. His neck was not tightly bound with muslin †; but surrounded with a cravat more or less warm, according to the season. His arms enjoyed their full liberty in sleeves moderately large; and his body, neatly enclosed in a sort of vest, was covered with a cloak, in form of a gown, salutary in the cold and rainy seasons.

Round his waist he wore a long fash that had a graceful look, and preserved an equal warmth. He had

when the former wore a large, the latter wore a small hat, and the reverse.

* There are at present three or four hundred methods of dressing the hair of a man of fashion. O, how profound are the arts! Who can pretend to pursue them through all their details!

† The neck-pieces that are now worn are of more service than the superficial observer may imagine. The town air, high living, and other matters, make us look pale. Now, those necks, by driving the blood up into the face, restore us to a natural complexion.

had none of those garters that bind the hams and restrain the circulation. He wore a long stocking, that reached from the foot to the waist; and an easy shoe, in form of a buskin, inclosed his foot.

He carried me into a shop, where I was to change my dress: I sat down in a chair; but it was not one of those that are hard stuffed, and fatigue instead of refreshing; it was a sort of small alcove, lined with mat, and turned on a pivot, according to the direction of the body. I could scarce think that I was in a tradesman's shop; for it was quite light, and I heard no prating about honour and conscience.

CHAP. IV.

THE PORTERS OF PARIS *.

MY guide became every moment more familiar; he agreed for the price of my new dress, which came to a louis-d'or. When I gave it the shop-keeper, he promised to keep it as an antiquity. They paid ready money at every shop; for those people, lovers of a scrupulous probity, knew not the meaning of the word *credit*, which, on one side or

* The porters of Paris carry their burdens in a long basket strapped over their shoulders, and reaches down to the waist; and of these there are near as many women as men.

the other serves as a veil to an industrious fraud. The art of contracting debts and not paying them was no longer the science of the beau-monde*.

When I came out, the crowd still surrounded me; but there was nothing either jeering or insulting in their behaviour; merely a buzz from every side; "That's the man who is seven hundred and sixty years old. How unfortunate must he have been in the first part of his life †.

I was

* When Charles VII. king of France, was at Bourges, he ordered a pair of boots to be made for him. As they were trying on, his intendant entered, and said to the shoemaker, 'Take away your boots; we cannot pay for them for some time; his majesty can wear his old ones a month longer.' The king commended the intendant; and he deserved to have such a man in his service. What will some young rake say to this, who, while he is trying on his boots, laughs within himself, to think how he shall trick the poor workman. He despises the man whom he has defrauded, and spends the money in debauchery. It were happy, if the baseness of his soul was imprinted on his front; on that front which blushes not, when he turns down the corner of each street to shun the eye of a creditor. I could wish, that every man in Paris, who was dressed beyond his station, should be obliged, under a severe penalty, to carry his tailor's receipt in his pocket.

† He who is in possession of the subsidies and finances of a state is despotic in the full extent of the term; and if he does not make all bend before him, it is because it is not always for his interest to exert all his power.

I was astonished to find so much elegance, and so little embarrassment in the streets. One would have said it was the Fete-Dieu*. The city, however, appeared to be extremely populous.

There was in each street a guard that preserved the public order, and directed the course of the carriages, and of the porters; it took particular care to procure a free passage for the latter, whose burdens were proportioned to their strength. You heard not here a wretch panting for breath, covered with sweat, his eyes red with straining, and his head bent down, groan under a load that would have charged a beast of burden, among a humane people; the rich were not permitted to sport with humanity, by virtue of a few pieces of money; nor did you see the weak and delicate sex, born to perform the soft and pleasing duties of life, transformed into beasts of burden; in the public markets, bending under weights to which their strength was unequal, and accusing the cruel insensibility of those men who were the tranquil spectators of their labours. Restored to their proper station, the women attended to those duties only, which the Creator has enjoined them, to bear children, and be the consolation of those who protect them from the evils of life.

CHAP.

* This feast, which is in the month of June, is at Paris, the greatest in the year; the shops are not only shut, but every house is hung with tapestry, from the first floor to the ground; all the streets through which the several processions pass are swept and strewed with flowers: and no carriages are suffered to pass.

CHAP. V.

THE CARRIAGES.

I OBSERVED, that all who went took the right hand, and all who came the left *. This simple method of avoiding obstruction has been lately discovered; so true it is, that all useful inventions are produced by time †. By this regulation all obstructions are avoided, and every passage is left free. From the public festivals, where the greatest concourse of people resort, to enjoy an entertainment of which they are naturally fond, and of which it would be unjust to deprive them, each one returns to his home without detriment or danger. I saw not there that ridiculous and turbulent sight of an innumerable number of coaches entangled with each other, and the whole body remain immovable for three hours together; while the gilded fop, the helpless wretch who suffers himself to be drawn along, forgetting that he has legs, cries out from the coach-window, and laments that he is not able to advance ‡.

The

* A stranger can by no means conceive what it is that in France occasions a perpetual movement among the people, who, from morning to evening, are absent from their houses, frequently without any business, though in an incomprehensible agitation.

† This method, I am informed, has been long used in the imperial city of Vienna.

‡ This droll sight of a number of carriages intended for expedition, blocked up for a long time by each other, while
the

The greatest quantity of people form a circulation that is free, easy, and perfectly regular. I met a hundred carriages loaded with provisions or moveables for one coach, and even in that there was only a man who appeared to be infirm. What are become, I said, of those carriages completely gilt, painted, and varnished, that in my time crowded the streets of Paris? Have you then no farmers of taxes, no court-zans *, no petits maitres? Formerly those three despicable tribes insulted the public, and vied with each other in attracting the regard of the honest citizen, who fled with precipitation before them, lest he should be crushed by their chariot-wheels. The nobility of my days regarded the streets of Paris as the lists of the Olympic games, and placed their glory in the havock they made with their horses; then it was, "let him save himself that can."

"Those sort of courses," he replied, "are no longer permitted. Just sumptuary laws have suppressed that barbarous luxury, which served only to propagate a race of lackies and horses †. The
favourites

the masters are fretting and the coachmen swearing, affords some satisfaction to the persecuted foot passenger.

* We have seen a superb carriage, drawn by six horses, sumptuously harnessed, through two rows of wondering artificers, who bare-headed saluted a—strumpet.

† Those expensive fops, who parade with a crowd of valets, have been justly compared to certain insects, who, though they have many feet are remarkably slow in motion.

favourites of fortune no longer indulge in that criminal luxury so injurious to the poor. The nobles of our day use their own legs, and therefore have mere money and less of the gout.

“ You see, however, some coaches; they belong to ancient magistrates, or to men distinguished by their services, and bending under the weight of years. It is permitted to them only to roll slowly over the pavement, where the lowest citizen is respected. Should one of these have the misfortune to lame any passenger, he would instantly descend from his coach, place the injured person in it, and at his own expence, provide him with a carriage for the remainder of his days. But this never happens; they who are permitted to have coaches are men of merit, who think it no disgrace to let their horses give place to a citizen.

“ Our sovereign himself frequently goes on foot amongst us; sometimes he even honours our dwellings with his presence; and almost always, when tired with walking, rests himself in the shop of some artisan*; he loves to observe that natural equality which ought to reign among men; he meets in our eyes with nothing but love and gratitude; our acclamations proceed from the heart, and his heart receives them with complacency; he is a second Henry IV. he has the same dignity of soul, the same

* This was a frequent practice of the late Stanislaus king of Poland, in the latter part of his life.

benevolence of temper, the same noble simplicity; but he is more fortunate: the public ways receive from his footsteps a sacred impression that every one reveres; none dare breed riot; they are ashamed to cause the least disorder. “ If the king should come by,” they say; that sole reflection would, I believe, stop a civil war. How powerful is example, when it proceeds from the first person in the nation! how does it affect! what command it has over all men! it becomes an inviolable law.”

CHAP. VI.

THE EMBROIDERED HAT.

THINGS seem to me somewhat to be changed, I said to my guide; I observe that every one is dressed in a simple modest manner; and in all our walk, I have not seen either gold clothes or laced ruffles. In my time, a puerile and destructive luxury had turned all their brains; a body without a soul was covered with lace; and the automaton then resembled a man.—“ That is the very reason which induced us to despise that ancient livery of pride; our eyes are not confined to the surface. When a man is known to excel in his art, he has no need of a rich habit, nor of magnificent apartments, to recommend him; he wants not admirers to extol him, or protectors to support him; his actions speak, and each citizen is desirous that he should receive the recompence

recompence of his merit; they who pursue the same career are the first to solicit in his favour; each one presents a petition, in which the services that he has rendered the state are displayed in the strongest colours.

“ Our monarch fails not to invite to his court the man who is dear to his people; he endeavours to receive instruction from him; for he does not imagine that all knowledge was given him at his birth; he profits by the lucid instructions of him that has made some grand object the constant subject of his enquiry; he presents that man with a hat, on which the wearers name is embroidered; and that distinction far outweighs those ribbands, blue, red, and yellow, with which were formerly dressed up, men that were absolutely unknown to their country*.

“ You will readily believe, that an infamous character dare not present itself before a public that would immediately discover the deceit. Whoever bears one of these honourable hats has free access to all places; at all times, he is admitted to the foot of the throne; that is a fundamental law: therefore, when

* The vanity of the ancients consisted in deriving their origin from the gods; some laboured to prove themselves the nephews of Neptune, the grandsons of Venus, the cousins Germans of Mars; others, more modest, contented themselves with being descended from some river, nymph, or naiad. Our modern coxcombs have a more gloomy ambition; they would derive their descent from the depths of obscurity.

when a prince or a duke has done nothing to obtain the embroidered hat, he enjoys his wealth but is entitled to no honours; he is regarded with the same indifference as an obscure citizen, who mixes and is lost in the crowd.

“ Both policy and reason authorize this distinction; it can be displeasing to those only who find themselves incapable of ever attaining it. Man is not sufficiently perfect to do good merely for the sake of good. This sort of nobility, as you will easily believe, is personal only, not hereditary; nor is it venal. At the age of twenty-one, the son of an illustrious citizen presents himself before a tribunal, who determine whether he shall enjoy the prerogatives of his father. From his past conduct, and sometimes from the hopes that he gives, they confirm the honour that appertains to a citizen dear to his country; but if the son of Achilles be a base Thersites, we turn our eyes from him, that he may not have the shame of blushing before us; he descends into an oblivion, as deep as his father's glory was exalted.

“ In your time, they punished vice, but they assigned no recompence to virtue; a very imperfect legislation. Among us, the man of courage, who has saved the life of a citizen*, who has prevented

D

some

* It is astonishing that they allot no reward to the man who has saved the life of another, perhaps, at the risk of his own. An ordinance of the police gives ten crowns to the waterman who takes up a drowned body, but nothing to him who saves a citizen in imminent danger of drowning

some public calamity, who has performed some act of great utility, wears the embroidered hat, and his respectable name exposed to the public view, gives him precedence to the man of wealth, though it were equal to that of Midas or Plutus*." That, I replied, is highly just. In my time, they gave, indeed, a red hat, which they fetched from beyond the seas; but it implied no merit in the wearer; it was a mere instance of ambition: and I know not well on what pretence they obtained it.

CHAP. VII.

THE BRIDGE RE-BAPTISED.

WHEN our conversation is interesting, the length of the way becomes imperceptible. I no longer felt the weight of age, being quite re-juvenated by the sight of so many new objects. But what did I discover! O heavens, what a prospect! I found myself on the borders of the Seine, where my enchanted sight beheld a long extent of the most beautiful buildings; the Louvre was finished; and the

* When an extreme thirst for wealth possesses every breast, the glow and spirit of virtue vanishes, and government can only reward by large premiums, those who were formerly satisfied with titles of honour. Monarchs should therefore create that species of wealth; but, as we said, it will be current only while the minds of men are susceptible of noble impressions.

the space that was between that and the palace of the Thuilleries formed an immense place, where they celebrated the public shews; a new gallery corresponded to the old one of Perrault, which was still beheld with admiration. These two august monuments, thus united, formed the most magnificent palace in the universe. All the artists of distinguished merit resided in this palace, and formed the most respectable part of the attendants of a monarch, who valued nothing so much as patronizing those arts that gave birth to the glory and happiness of his empire. I saw a superb public place that was capable of containing the whole body of the citizens; a temple was in front; it was the temple of Justice; the architecture of that building corresponded with the dignity of the object.

Is that the Pont-Neuf? I cried. How it is decorated!—"What mean you by the Pont-Neuf? We have given it another name; and many others have we changed, to give them such as were more apposite or significant; for nothing has a greater influence on the people than the use of just and expressive terms. Behold the bridge of Henry IV. As it forms a communication between the two parts of the city, it could not bear a more respectable title. In each of the semicircles, we have placed the statues of those great men, who, like him, were the friends of mankind, and fought nothing but the good of their country. We have not hesitated to place beside him the chancellor L'Hopital, Sully, Jeannin, and Colbert. What a treatise on morality! What public lecture is

so eloquent, so persuasive, as this range of heroes, whose figures, though dumb, yet expressive, tell to every one how great and desirable it is to obtain the public esteem. Your age had not the glory to perform such an action."—Alas! my age found the greatest difficulties in the smallest enterprizes; they made the most extraordinary preparatives to announce with pomp an abortion; a grain of sand stopped the movement of the most boasted springs; in speculation, they erected the most noble fabrics; the tongue and the pen seemed to be the universal instruments. All things have their time. Our age was that of innumerable projects; yours is that of execution. I congratulate you on your felicity, and rejoice to think that I have lived so long.

CHAP. VIII.

THE NEW PARIS.

ON turning my sight toward that part where stood the bridge formerly called Pont-au-Change, I saw that it was no longer loaded with wretched hovels*; my view extended with pleasure along the vast course

* The thousands of men that resort to the same spot, who dwell in houses of seven stories, who crowd together in narrow streets, who incessantly labour an exhausted soil, while nature sets before them a vast and pleasant country, is an object in the eye of a philosopher, highly astonishing.

The

course of the Seine, and the prospect, strictly regular, was further graced by novelty.

These, indeed, are admirable improvements!—" 'Tis true; yet 'tis pity, that they should remind us of a fatal accident caused by your negligence."—How our negligence? if you please.—" History relates that you talked perpetually of pulling down those miserable houses, without performing it. On a certain day, therefore, when your magistrates preceded a sumptuous feast with a fire-work, in order to commemorate the anniversary of some saint, to whom, doubtless, France had great obligations; the firing of the cannon, the petards, and mines, overthrew the ruined houses built on those old bridges; they tottered and fell on the wretched inhabitants; the fall of one was the ruin of another; a thousand citizens perished; and the magistrates, to whom appertained the revenues of the houses, cursed not only the fire-work, but the very feast.

" The succeeding years they made not so much noise about nothing; the money that sprung up in the air, or caused dangerous indigestions, was employed

The rich repair thither to increase their power, and prevent an abuse of their power by that power itself. The poor cheat, flatter, and set themselves to sale. They who do not succeed are hanged; the others become persons of consequence. It is easy to conceive, that in this perpetual and brutal conflict of interests, the duties of the man and of the citizen are scarce longer to be found,

D 3

ployed in forming a capital for the restoring and maintaining of bridges; they regretted the not having observed this method before; but it was the fate of your age to disregard their follies, though enormous, till they were completely finished.

“ Let us walk, if you please, this way; you will see some demolitions that we have made, I think, not improperly. The two wings of the *Quatre Nations** no longer spoil one of the finest quays, and perpetuate the vindictive temper of a cardinal. We have placed the town house opposite to the Louvre. When we give any public entertainment, we think justly that it is intended for the people; the place is spacious; no one is injured by the fire-works, or by the brutality of the soldiers, who, they say, in your time, (can it be believed?) sometimes wounded the citizens, and wounded them with impunity †.

“ You see that we have placed the statue of the several kings that succeeded yours on the middle of each bridge. This range of monarchs, elevated with-
out

* A college of that name, nearly opposite the Louvre, founded by cardinal Mazarine, for the education of sixty pupils of four nations, which are Italy, Germany, Flanders, and Roussillon, a county in the Pyrenees, between Languedoc and Catalonia.

† This is what I have seen, and of which I here publicly accuse the magistrates, who ought to be more solicitous for the life of one citizen than for twenty public fire-works.

out pomp, in the centre of Paris, affords a grand and interesting prospect over the river that adorns and refreshes the city, and of which they appear to be the tutelary deities. Thus placed, like the good Henry IV. they have a more popular air than when inclosed in squares, where the eye is bounded*. These, grand and natural, were erected without any great expence; our kings, after their decease, did not impose that last tribute, which in your age oppressed the subject, already exhausted.”

I observe, with great satisfaction, that you have taken away the slaves that were chained to the feet of the statues of our kings †; that you have obliterated every fastuous inscription ‡; and though that gross flattery is of all others the least dangerous, you have carefully avoided even the appearance of falsehood and ostentation.

They

* The houses of the farmers of the public taxes, for the most part, encircle the statues of our kings; so that they cannot, even after their death, avoid being surrounded by scoundrels.

† Lewis XIV. used to say, that of all the governments in the world, that of the Grand Turk pleased him most, A greater instance of pride and ignorance cannot be produced.

‡ This evidently refers to the outré statue of Lewis XIV. in the Place des Victoires, and to the bombastic inscription on the pedestal, which calls him, “ the immortal man.” It is but justice to the Parisians to add, that they are in general disgusted with the one and the other.

They tell me that the Bastille has been totally demolished by a prince who did not think himself a god among men, but held the Judge of kings in due reverence. They say, moreover, that on the ruins of that hideous castle (so properly called the Place of Vengeance, and of a royal vengeance) they have erected a temple to Clemency; that no citizen is snatched from society, without his process being first publicly made; that a *lettre de cachet* is a term unknown to the people, and serves only to exercise the curiosity of those who busy themselves with investigating the antiquated terms of barbarous ages. There had been, they added, a treatise composed, intitled, "A Parallel between a *Lettre de Cachet* and the Asiatic Bow String."

We arrived insensibly at the Thuilleries, where every one was admitted; and it now appeared to me more charming than ever*. They made me no demand for a seat in that royal garden. We found ourselves at the Place of Lewis XV. My guide, taking me by the hand, said, with a smile, "You must have seen the inauguration of this equestrian statue." —Yes; I was then young, and no less curious than at present.—"But, do you know," he said, "that it is a chief-d'œuvre worthy of our age? We still constantly admire it; and when we survey the perspective of the palace, it appears, especially by the setting sun,
crowned

* To refuse the common people an entrance into this garden seems to me a wanton insult, and of a higher degree than is commonly imagined.

crowned by the most illustrious rays. These magnificent vistas form a happy enclosure; and he who projected the plan was, by no means, destitute of taste; he had the sagacity to foresee the effect they would one day produce. I have read, however, that, in your day there were men as jealous as ignorant, who vented their censure against this statue and place, which they ought to have admired*. If, at this time, there should be a man stupid enough to utter such absurdities, he would certainly be treated with the highest contempt."

I continued my entertaining walk; but the detail would be too long; beside, in recollecting a dream, something is always lost. The corner of every street presented a beautiful fountain, from which there flowed a pure and limpid stream that fell into a shell, whose surface resembled the beaten silver, and the transparency of the water invited the thirsty passers to a salutary refreshment. The clear stream that fell from the fountain, as it flowed through the streets, plentifully washed the pavement.

"Behold the project of your M. Desparcieux, member of the academy of sciences, completely accomplished. See how every house is furnished with
that

* It is only in France, that the art of keeping silence is not regarded as a merit. A Frenchman is not more easily known by his countenance and his accent than by the levity with which he talks and determines on all subjects; he never knows how to say, "I understand nothing of that."

that which is of all things the most useful, the most necessary. What elegance to our dwellings, what refreshment to the air, is derived from this single circumstance.

“ We no longer erect those dangerous chimnies which threatened to crush each passenger by their fall; our roofs have not that Gothic declivity, from which a gust of wind could blow the tiles into the most frequented streets.”—We ascended to the top of one of their houses by a luminous stair-case. What a pleasure was it to me, who love the free air and an extensive prospect, to find the tops of the houses ornamented with pots of flowers, and covered with sweet-scented arbours; the summit of each house offered such a terras, and as they were all of an equal height, they formed together one vast and delightful garden; so that the whole city, when viewed from the top of some tower, appeared to be crowned with verdure, fruits, and flowers.

I need not tell you, that the Hotel Dieu was no longer inclosed in the centre of the city. If any stranger or citizen falls sick, when distant from his country or his family, we do not, they said, imprison him as they did in your time, in a noisome bed, between a corpse and one expiring in agonies, to breathe the noxious vapours from the dead and the dying, and convert a simple indisposition into a cruel disease. We have divided that hospital into twenty distinct houses, which are placed at the different extremities of the city. By that means, the foul air which ex-

haled

haled from that horrid gulph * is dispersed, and no longer dangerous to the capital. The sick, moreover, are not driven to those hospitals by extreme indigence; they do not go thither already struck with the idea of death, and merely to secure an interment; but because they there find more ready and efficacious succour than in their own habitations. You there no longer see that horrid mixture, that shocking confusion, which announced a place of vengeance rather than of charity. Each patient has a separate bed, and can expire without reviling the human race. They have scrutinized the accounts of the directors. O shame! O grief! O incredible guilt! that men should enrich themselves with the substance of the poor, find happiness in the miseries of their fellow-creatures, drive a gainful bargain with death!—But no more; the time for these iniquities is past; the asylum of the wretched is regarded as the temple where the Divinity pours his sacred influence with the

the

* Six thousand wretches are crowded together in the wards of the Hotel Dieu, where the air has no circulation. The arm of the river, which flows by it, receives all its filth, and abounds with the seeds of corruption, is drank by one half of the city. In that part of the river which washes the quay Pelletier, and between the two bridges, a great number of dyers pour in their dregs three times a week. I have seen the water retain a dingy hue for more than six hours after. The arch that composes the quay de Gevres is the sink of pestilence; the inhabitants of all that part of the town drink an infected water, and breathe empoisoned air. The money that is so prodigally spent in fire works would be sufficient to rid the city of this curse.

the greatest complacency; those enormous abuses are all corrected, and the poor sick mortal has now nothing to encounter but his disease, and, oppressed by that alone, he suffers in silence*.

“Learned and humane physicians here assiduously examine each particular patient; not pronounce sentence of death, by promiscuously dictating general precepts. By their discerning and attentive conduct, health is soon restored. The physicians we rank among the most respectable of our citizens. In fact,
what

* I have sometimes walked with slow and solitary steps through the wards of the Hotel Dieu at Paris. What place more proper to meditate on the fate of man? I have seen there inhuman avarice decorated with the name of public charity; I have seen the dying crowded closer together than they ought to have been in the grave, precipitate the death of their miserable companions; I have seen their pangs and their tears regarded with a general unconcern; the sword of death struck on the right and on the left, and not a sigh was heard: one would have thought that they were killing beasts in a slaughter-house. I have seen men so hardened by this sight, as to wonder that any one should be affected. A few days after, I have been at the opera. What a profuse amusement! Decorations, actors, musicians! an enormous expence to procure a pompous entertainment! What will posterity say, when they shall be told that two so different places could subsist in the same city. How, alas! can they exist on the same spot? Does not the one necessarily exclude the other? A short time after the royal academy of music overwhelmed my soul; the first stroke of the bow brought before my eyes the mournful bed of those dying wretches.

what employment more amiable, more illustrious, more worthy of a virtuous and sagacious being, than to preserve the delicate thread of our days, by nature frail and fleeting, but by art rendered strong and durable?”—But your general hospital, where is that situated?—“We have no general hospital*, no Bicetre†, no places of confinement, or rather distraction. A sound body has no need of the cautery. Luxury, in your time, had gangrened the vital parts of your constitution; your political body was covered with ulcers; and, instead of gently healing those shameful sores, you added to them fresh malignity.
You

* The Hospital General of Paris is a sort of general work-house. It is said to contain ten or eleven thousand persons.

† In the prison of the Bicetre, there is a room called the Salle de Force, that is a type of the infernal regions. Six hundred wretches, crowded together, oppressed by their miseries, by a foul air, by the vermin that devour them, by despair, and by a rancour still more cruel, live in the fermentation of a stifled rage: it is the punishment of Mezentius a thousand times multiplied (§). The magistrates are deaf to the cries of these unhappy people. We have seen them murder their gaolers, the surgeons, the very priest that attended them, with the sole view of being delivered from that place and expiring with more freedom on the scaffold. It has been justly remarked, that death would be a less barbarous punishment than what they suffer. O ye inhuman magistrates! iron-hearted wretches, unworthy the name of men! you offend against humanity

§ Vide Virg. Æn. lib. viii. ver. 483.

You thought to have extinguished vice by cruelty ; inhuman because you were incapable of forming just laws *.

“ You found it more easy to torment the guilty and unfortunate than to prevent disorder and misery. Your barbarous violence has only served to harden the hearts of criminals, and to make them more desperate. And what have you gained by this conduct ? Tears, distracted cries, and curses. You seem to have modelled your places of confinement after your
idea

still more than those you punish ! No band of ruffians in the midst of their ferocity, ever exercised cruelties like yours. Dare to seem still more inhuman, but execute more speedy justice ; set fire to their prison, and burn them all alive ; you will spare them the greater misery of attending your determinations in their horrible slavery : but, alas ! you seem only anxious to protract it.

Might not each of these unhappy men, have a heavy weight fixed to his foot, and be sent to till the ground ? No ; they are the victims of an arbitrary power that you would conceal from every eye.—I understand you.

* Yes, magistrates, it is your ignorance, your idleness, and precipitation, that cause despair among the poor. You imprison a man for a mere trifle, and place him by the side of a miscreant : you corrupt, you poison his mind, and then leave him, forgot, amidst a herd of abandoned wretches ; but he does not forget your injustice : as you observe no proportion between the crime and the punishment, he imitates your example, and all things become to him equal.

idea of that horrible dwelling you called the infernal regions, where the ministers of vengeance accumulate tortures, for the horrid pleasure of inflicting a lasting punishment on beings full of agony and imploring mercy.

“ To conclude, for to enumerate all would take up too much time, you even knew not how to employ your beggars ; the utmost discernment of your government consisted in shutting them up, and leaving them to perish with hunger. These wretches, who expired by a slow death in a corner of the kingdom, have notwithstanding made us hear their groans ; we have not been deaf to their obscure complaints ; they have pierced through a series of seven ages ; and your base tyranny in that instance has recalled a thousand others.”

I held down my head, and was unable to reply ; for I had been a witness to these cruelties, which I could only lament, for more was not in my power *. After a short silence, said I, Ah ! do not renew the wounds of my heart. God has avenged the evil they did to mankind ; he has punished the hardness of their hearts ; you know—But let us pursue our walk. You have, I think, suffered one of our political evils to subsist : Paris appears to me as populous as in my time ; and it was then proved, that the head

E 2

was

† I have satisfied my heart, and executed justice, in announcing this invasion of humanity, this horrid outrage that will scarce be believed : but, alas ! it nevertheless subsists.

was three times too large for the body.—“ I am well pleased to inform you,” replied my guide, “ that the number of inhabitants in the kingdom is doubled; that all the lands are cultivated; and consequently the head bears now a just proportion to the members. This great city constantly produces as many men of the first rank, men of learning, of useful industry, and refined genius, as all the other cities of France together.”—But one word more, of too much importance to be forgot: Do you place your magazines of powder in the centre of the city?—“ We are far from that imprudence. Nature produces sufficient explosions. We need not construct those that are artificial, and would be a hundred times more dangerous*.

CHAP.

* There are magazines of powder in the centre of almost every town. The lightning, and a thousand other unforeseen, nay, unknown incidents, may blow them up. A thousand terrible examples (a thing scarce credible) have not been sufficient to correct even to this hour, the weakness of mankind. The loss of two thousand five hundred people, who perished in the ruins at Brescia, will perhaps render our governors attentive to an evil, which may justly be called the work of their hands, as it is in their power so easily to prevent it.

CHAP. IX.

THE PETITIONS.

I OBSERVED several officers, habited with the ensigns of their rank, who came to receive the complaints of the people, and make a faithful report of them to the chief magistrates. Every thing that regarded the administration of the police was treated with the greatest dispatch; justice was rendered to the injured; and every one blessed the administrators*. I poured forth my praises on this wise and prudent government. But, gentlemen, I said, you are not entitled to all the glory of this institution. In my days, the city began to be well governed. A vigilant police watched over every rank and all transactions. One of those who maintained it in the greatest order, deserves to be named with eulogy amidst you. We read, among his judicious ordinances, that for abolishing those ridiculous and heavy signs which disfigured the city, and endangered the passengers; that for completing, or rather inventing, of lamps; and for the admirable plan of a speedy supply of water, by which the inhabitants have

* When a minister of state, by his bad management, puts the monarchy in danger, or when a general sheds the blood of the subjects to no purpose, and shamefully loses a battle, his punishment is known; he is forbid to come into the monarch's presence. Thus crimes that may ruin the nation are treated as mere trifles.

have been preserved from those fires which were formerly so frequent*.

“It is true,” they replied, “that magistrate was indefatigable, and equal to the duties of his office, extensive as they were. But the police had not then received its full perfection; spies were then the principal agents of a government weak, restless, and mutinous†. They were moreover very frequently employed in a criminal curiosity, rather than in what strictly regarded the public utility; all their discoveries, so artfully procured, frequently produced nothing more than a false light that deceived the magistrate. What was worse, this corps of informers, seduced by bribes, became a corrupted mass that infected society; all the pleasures of conversation were banished‡; men could no longer open their hearts

* If this author thinks the fires in Paris frequent, where there is scarce a house burned in a year, and where no one ever thought it worth while to erect an office of insurance, what would he say to those at London? In fact the French houses are so constructed as not easily to be burned.

† The quantity of spies in Paris is incredible; besides a great number who make it their sole business, almost all that large corps, who by day clean shoes, and at night carry a falot, that is, a farthing candle in a paper lantern, are of that honourable order.

‡ All such frivolous and capricious regulations, all those refinements in the police, can impose on them only who have never studied the heart of man. Such rigid restrictions produce

hearts to each other; they were reduced to the cruel alternative of imprudence or hypocrisy. In vain did the soul struggle to express its ideas of patriotism; it dared not declare its sentiments; saw the snare that was spread, and pierced with grief, returned cold and solitary to its secret abode. In a word, men were then incessantly obliged to disguise their words, their looks, and actions. O! how distracting to the generous soul, who saw the monsters of his country smile while they preyed upon it; who saw, and dared not point them out*.”

CHAP.

produce a hateful subordination, secured by bands on which very little dependence can be placed.

* We have not yet had a Juvenal. What age ever more deserved such a satirist? Juvenal was not a selfish wretch, like the flatterer Horace, or the insipid Boileau; he had a firm soul, that thoroughly detested vice, frankly declared war against it, and pursued it when sheltered under the purple. Who now dare assume that sublime and generous task? Who now has fortitude sufficient to render up his soul to truth, and say to his age, “I leave thee the testament that virtue hath dictated to me; read and blush: it is thus I bid thee farewell.”

CHAP. X.

THE MAN WITH A MASK.

BUT, pray, who is that man that passes with a mask on his face? How fast he walks, or rather flies!—"It is an author that has wrote a bad book. When I say bad, I speak not of the defects of judgment or style; an excellent work may be made by the aid of plain strong sense alone*; I only mean that he has published dangerous principles such as are inconsistent with sound morality, that universal morality which speaks to every heart. By way of reparation, he wears a mask, in order to hide his shame, till he has effaced it by writing something more rational and beneficial to society. He is daily visited by two worthy citizens, who combat his erroneous opinions with the arms of eloquence and complacency, hear his objections, confute them, and will engage him to retract when he shall be convinced. Then he will be re-established; he will even acquire from the confession of his errors a greater glory; for what is more commendable than to abjure our faults†, and to embrace new lights with a noble sincerity?"—But was his book well received?

* Nothing is more true; for even the homily of some country curate is of more solid utility, than a book artfully filled with truths and sophisms.

† All things are demonstrative in theory; even error has its geometry.

received?—"What private person, I beseech you, can dare to judge of a book against the opinion of the public? Who can say what can be the influence of a particular sentiment in a particular circumstance? Each author answers personally for what he writes, and never conceals his name. It is the public that marks him with disgrace, if he oppose those sacred principles which serve as the basis to the conduct and probity of man. He must of himself likewise support any new truth that he advances, and that is proper to suppress some abuse. In a word, the public voice is the sole judge in these cases; and it is to that alone regard is paid. Every author, as a public man, is to be judged by the general voice, and not by the caprice of a single critic, who rarely has a discernment sufficiently just, and knowledge sufficiently extensive, to determine, what will appear to the body of the people truly deserving of praise or blame.

"It has been abundantly proved, that the liberty of the press is the true measure of the liberty of the people*. The one cannot be attacked without injury to the other. Our thoughts ought to be perfectly free; to bridle them, or stifle them in their sanctuary, is the crime of leze humanity. What can I call my own, if my thoughts are not mine?"

In my time, I replied, men in power feared nothing so much as the pen of an able writer; their souls, proud and guilty, trembled in their inmost recesses,

* This is equivalent to a mathematical demonstration.

recesses, when equity boldly plucked off the veil that covered their shame*. Therefore, instead of protecting that public censure, which, well administered, would have been the strongest check to vice and folly, they obliged all writings to pass through a sieve; and one which was so close that frequently the most valuable parts were left behind. The flights of genius were in subjection to the cruel sheers of mediocrity, who clip its wings without mercy†. They began to laugh. "It must have been a droll fight," they said, "to see men gravely employed in cutting a thought in two, and weighing of syllables. It is wonderful that you produced any thing good, when so shackled. How is it possible to dance with grace and ease, when loaded with heavy fetters?—Our best writers took the most natural means to shake them off. Fear debases the mind, and the man who is animated with the love of humanity should have a noble

* In a drama, intitled *The Marriage of a King's Son*, a minister of justice, a court scoundrel, says to his valet, speaking of philosophical writers, "This sort of people are dangerous; we cannot countenance the least act of injustice but they will remark it. It is in vain that we hide our faces under an artful mask from the most discerning passenger. These men have a manner of saying, *en passant*, I know you."—Messieurs Philosophers, I hope you will learn that it is dangerous to know a man of my sort. I will not be known by you.

† One half of those they call royal censors cannot be ranked among men of letters, not even those of the lowest class; for it may be literally said of them, that they know not how to read.

noble and dauntless spirit. You may now write against all that offends you," they replied, "for we have no sieves, nor sheers, nor manacles; yet very few absurdities are published, because they would of themselves perish among their kindred dirt. Our government is far above all invective; it fears not the keenest pens; it would accuse itself by fearing them. Its conduct is just and sincere; we can only extol it; and when the interest of our country requires, every man, in his particular station, becomes an author, without pretending to an exclusive right to that title."

CHAP. XI.

THE NEW TESTAMENTS.

O HEAVENS! What is it you tell me! All the world authors! Why your walls will catch fire like gunpowder, and blow into the air. Mercy on us! A whole nation of authors!—"Yes; but without ill-nature, pride or disdain. Every man writes the thoughts that occur in his brightest moments; at a certain age, he collects the most judicious reflections that he has made in the course of his days; in his last years, he forms them into a book, greater or less according to his talent for reflection, and mode of expression. This book is the soul of the deceased. On the day of his funeral, it is read aloud;

aloud; and that is his eulogy. Our children collect with reverence all the reflections of their forefathers, and meditate on them. These are our funeral urns; and seem to us more valuable than your sumptuous mausoleums, your tombs covered with wretched inscriptions, dictated by pride, and executed by baseness.

“ We thus make it a duty to leave our descendants a faithful image of our lives. An honourable remembrance is the sole property that can remain to us on the earth*; and we do not neglect it. These immortal lessons that we leave our posterity make us still more beloved by them. Portraits and statues preserve the body’s semblance only. Why not represent the soul, and the virtuous sentiments by which it was affected? They are multiplied by the animated expression that affection excites; the history of our thoughts and of our actions instruct our families; they learn, by the choice and comparison of thoughts, to improve their manner of thinking and judging. Observe, moreover, that the predominant writers, the men of genius, in every age, are the fons that attract the mass of ideas, and cause them to circulate. It is they that give the first movements; and as their generous hearts burn with the love of humanity, all other hearts obey that sublime and victorious voice, which has laid tyranny and super-
stition

* Cicero frequently asked himself what they would say of him after his death. The man who has no regard to reputation, will neglect the means of acquiring it.

stition in the dust.”—Gentlemen, permit me, I entreat you, to defend my age, at least in those points in which it deserves commendation. We had, I think, amongst us, some men of virtue and of genius.—“ Yes, barbarians! but they were either disregarded or persecuted by you. We have thought ourselves obliged to make an expiatory reparation to their offended names; we have erected their statues in the public places, where they receive our homage as well as that of foreigners. Under the right foot of each is placed the ignoble head of some Zoilus or tyrant; under the buskin of Corneille, for example, you will see the head of Richelieu*. Yes, there were in your time men of amazing talents; and we are unable to account for the foolish brutal rage of their persecutors; they seem to have proportioned their rancour to the degree of sublimity those eagles attained; but they are consigned to the opprobrium which deserves to be their eternal inheritance.”

On saying these words, he conducted me towards a place where the statues of those great men were erected. There I saw Corneille, Moliere, Fontaine, Montesquieu, Rousseau*, Buffon, Voltaire, Mirabeau,

* I heartily wish the author had informed us on whose heads stood the feet of Rousseau, Voltaire, and others whose names are ranked with these. We should certainly have heard of heads mitred and unmitred, in an uneasy situation; but every one has his day.

† The author of *Emilius* is here meant, and not that frothy poet, void of Ideas, who had no other talent than
F that

beau, &c. All these celebrated writers are then known to you?—"Their names form our children's alphabet; and when they attain the age of rationality, we put into their hands your famous Encyclopedic Dictionary, which we have carefully digested."—You surprise me! the Encyclopedia! an elementary book! O what a flight you must have taken toward the higher sciences! and how do I burn to receive instruction from you! Let me behold your treasures, and enjoy in one instant the accumulated labours of six glorious centuries.

CHAP. XII.

THE COLLEGE OF QUATRE NATIONS*.

DO you teach your children Greek and Latin? In my time they tortured them with those languages. Do you consecrate ten years, the most precious and pleasing of their lives, in giving them a superficial tincture of two dead languages they will never speak?—"We know better how to employ their time. The Greek language is doubtless very venerable, on account of its antiquity; but we have
Homer,

that of arranging words, and giving them a fictitious pomp, under which he hid the sterility of his invention, and the torpid state of his genius.

* See the note * on page 30.

Homer, Plato, and Sophocles perfectly translated*, whatever some pedants may have said of the impossibility of expressing their beauties. As to the Latin language, which, being more modern, must in consequence be less excellent. It has died a natural death."—How is that?—"The French language has prevailed universally. They at first made such finished translations as almost rendered it superfluous to have recourse to the originals; and they have since composed such works as are worthy to efface those of the ancients. These new poems are incomparably more useful, and more interesting to us, more relative to our manners, to our government, to our progress in philosophical knowledge and in politics, and lastly to that moral view of which we should never lose sight. The two antiquated languages, of which we shall say more hereafter, are now used by a few learned men only. We read Livy almost in the same manner as we do the Alcoran."—I perceive the college, however, still bears on its front, in large characters, *Ecole des Quatre Nations*.—"We have preserved this building, and even its name, in order to apply it to better purposes. There are now four classes in this college,
who

* Instead of giving us dissertations on the head of Anubis, on Osiris, and a thousand useless rhapsodies, why do not the members of the Royal Academy of Inscriptions employ their time in translating the Greek authors, whom they pretend to understand so well? Demosthenes is scarce known to us. That would be of more utility than to know what sort of pins the Roman ladies wore in their head-dress, the form of their-necklace, and whether the clasps of their gowns were round or oval.

who are taught Italian, English, German and Spanish. Enriched with the treasures of these living languages, we do not in the least envy the ancients. This last nation, which contained within itself the seeds of grandeur, that nothing could destroy, has been suddenly enlightened by one of those powerful strokes, that it is impossible to expect or foresee; the revolution has been as sudden as happy, because the light fell at first on the head; whereas, in other states, that has been almost always plunged in darkness.

Stupidity and pedantry are banished from this college; and strangers have been invited thither to facilitate the pronunciation of the languages there taught. The best authors in each of them have been translated. From this mutual correspondence masses of light have been reciprocally reflected. Another advantage arises from this, which is, that as the commerce of thoughts is extended, natural prejudices are insensibly extinguished; men have been convinced that a few particular customs ought not to destroy that universal reason which speaks from one end of the world to the other; and that their thoughts were in reality very near the same on those subjects, that have occasioned such long and warm disputes."— But what does the university, that eldest daughter of our kings?—"She is become a cast-off mistress. That old maiden, after receiving the last sighs of a fastidious and affected language, would have passed it on the world for new, blooming, and enchanting. She transposed the periods, mangled the hemistichs, and in a barbarous and slovenly jargon, pretended to revive the

the language of the Augustan age. It was at last perceived, that her discordant voice was near exhausted, and that she brought a yawning upon the court, the city, and especially on her disciples. By an arret of the French academy, she was ordered to appear before their tribunal, to give an account of the good she had done for the four last centuries; during which she had been supported, honoured, and pensioned. She would have pleaded her cause in her ludicrous idiom, which certainly the Latins themselves would never have understood; for of the French she was totally ignorant; she therefore dared not to hazard herself before her judges.

"The academy took pity on her embarrassment; she was charitably ordered to remain silent. They had afterwards the humanity to teach her the language of the nation; and from that time despoiled of her cowl, her crabbed looks, and her ferule, she has applied herself solely to the teaching of that fine language, which the French academy is every day improving; and which, less timid, less scrupulous, corrects it, without always diminishing its force."— And the military academy, what is become of that?—"It has suffered the destiny of all the rest of the colleges. It contained every other abuse besides those that were peculiar to its institution. Men are not made as they make soldiers."—Pardon me, if I trespass on your indulgence; but this point is of too much importance to be abandoned. In my youth, they talked of nothing but education. Each pedant made his book, and well it was, if merely stupid. The best

of them all, the most simple, the most rational, and, at the same time, the most profound, was burned by the hands of the common hangman, and decried by those who understood no more of it than that hangman's deputy. Inform me, I entreat you, what method you pursue in the forming of men?—"Men are rather formed by the wise lenity of our government than by any other institution. But to confine ourselves to the culture of the mind: while we familiarize our children with the letters, we bring them acquainted with the operations of algebra. That art is simple, of general utility, and not more difficult to learn than it is to read; even the shadow of difficulty has been removed; the algebraic characters no longer pass among the vulgar for those of magic*. We have found that this science habituates the mind to consider matters rigorously as they are: and that this mode of reasoning is of the highest importance when applied to the sciences.

They formerly taught youth a multiplicity of knowledge that in no degree conduced to the happiness

* Soon after the art of printing was known at Paris, some one undertook to print Euclid's Elements. The workman employed, seeing it contain a number of squares, circles, triangles, &c. imagined that it was a book of sorcery, intended for raising the devil, who, for ought he knew, might fetch him away in the midst of his work; he therefore declined it; but his master insisted on his persevering. The poor fellow, believing that they were determined on his destruction, was so terrified, that, deaf to reason and his confessor, he died of the fright a few days after.

ness of life. We have selected those objects only that will give them true and useful ideas; they were instructed universally in two dead languages, which were imagined to contain every sort of science, but which could not give them the least idea of those men with whom they were to live. We content ourselves with teaching them the national language, and even permit them to modify it after their own taste; for we do not wish to form grammarians, but men of eloquence. The style resembles the man; and the man of genius ought to have a correspondent idiom; very different from the nomenclature, the only resource of weak minds, whose memories are treacherous.

We teach them little history, because history is the disgrace of humanity, every page being crowded with crimes and follies. God forbid that we should set before their eyes such examples of rapine and ambition. By the pedantry of history, kings have been raised to gods. We teach our children a logic more certain, and ideas more just. Those frigid chronologists, those nomenclatures of every age, all those romantic or debased writers, who have been the first to bow down before their idols, are obliterated, together with the panegyrics of the princes of the earth*. What! when the time is so short and rapid, shall we employ our children in crowding their memories with a number

* From Pharamond to Henry IV. we can scarce name two kings, I will not say who knew how to reign, but who knew how to employ that good sense in their administration that a private person observes in the œconomy of his family.

ber of names, of dates, of facts, and genealogical trees? What wretched trifling, when the vast fields of morality and physics lie open before us! It is to no purpose to say that history furnishes examples of instruction to succeeding ages; they are pernicious and infamous examples*, that serve merely to encourage arbitrary power, and to render it more haughty and more cruel, by shewing that men have in all ages bowed the neck like slaves; by exposing the fruitless efforts of liberty, expiring under the attacks of men who founded a modern tyranny on that of the ancients. If a man of an amiable, virtuous character arose, his cotemporaries were monsters, by whom all his efforts were rendered abortive. This picture of virtue trampled under foot is doubtless very just; but at the same time, it is highly dangerous to be exposed. It is only for the man of determined resolution to behold such a representation without terror; and he feels a secret joy in reflecting on the transient triumph of vice, and the eternal reward that is the portion of virtue. But from children such pictures should be concealed; they should be made to contract a placid habit, with notions of order and equity, which should, so to speak, compose the substance

* The scene changes in history, it is true, but for the most part to introduce new evils; for kings are followed by an indissoluble chain of calamities. A monarch, on his advancement to the throne, thinks he does not reign, if he pursue the ancient plans; the old systems that have cost so much blood, must be abolished, and new ones established; these agree not with the former, and at the same time are not less prejudicial.

stance of their minds. We do not teach them an idle morality that consists in frivolous questions, but one that is practicable and may be applied to all their actions, that speaks by images, that forms their hearts to humanity, to courage, and to sacrifice self-interest, or, to say all in one word, to generosity.

“ We have a sufficient contempt for metaphysics, those gloomy regions where every one erects a system of chimeras, and always to no purpose. It is from thence they have drawn imperfect images of the divinity, have disfigured his essence by refining on his attributes, and have confounded human reason by placing it on a slippery and moveable point, from whence it is continually ready to fall into doubt. It is by physics, that key to nature, that living and palpable science, we are enabled to run through the labyrinth of this marvellous assemblage of beings, and to perceive the wisdom and power of the Creator; that science properly investigated, delivers us from an infinity of errors, and the unformed mass of prejudices give place to that pure light which it spreads over all objects.

“ At a certain age we permit a young man to read the poets. Those of the present day know how to unite wisdom with enthusiasm; they do not deceive reason by a cadence and harmony of words, and find themselves led, as it were against their inclination, into the false and the capricious; nor do they amuse themselves with dressing of puppets, with spinning of counters, or shaking the cap and bells. They are the

the recorders of those great actions that illustrate humanity; their heroes are taken from all nations where are to be found courage and virtue; that false and venal clarion which vauntingly flattered the colosses of the earth, is totally destroyed. Poetry has preserved that veridical trumpet only, which can be found through a long series of ages, because it declares, so to say, the judgment of posterity. Formed by such models, our children acquire just ideas of true greatness; and the plow, the shuttle, and the hammer are become more brilliant objects than the sceptre, the diadem, and the imperial robe."

CHAP XIII.

WHERE IS THE SORBONNE?

IN what language then dispute the doctors of the Sorbonne? Have they still their ludicrous pride, their long gowns, and their furred hoods?—"There are now no disputations at the Sorbonne; for since the French language has been every where used, that troop of wranglers has disappeared. The roofs, thank heaven, no longer echo to barbarous terms, though still less extravagant than the absurdities they were intended to express. We discovered that the seats on which these whimsical doctors sat, were formed of a certain wood, whose baneful quality disordered the best formed head, and taught it to sophisticate
methodi-

methodically."—O! that I had been born in your age! Those miserable manufacturers of syllogisms were the persecutors of my younger days. I thought myself for a long time destitute of all ability, because I could not understand their arguments. But what have you done with the palace erected by that cardinal* who made wretched verses with enthusiasm, and cut off worthy heads with all the coolness possible?—"That large building contains several spacious apartments, where they now pursue a course of studies far more useful to humanity. They there dissect all sorts of dead bodies; sagacious anatomists search in the recesses of the dead, the means of diminishing the physical evils of the living. Instead of analysing ridiculous propositions, they endeavour to discover the secret origin of those maladies that torment us; and the deceased thus contribute to the good of their posterity. Such are the doctors now honoured, ennobled, and pensioned by the state. Surgery is moreover now united with physic, and the latter is no longer at variance with itself."

O happy prodigy! they talk of the animosity of contending beauties, of the jealous fury of poets, and of the rancour of painters; but those are tender passions in comparison of that hatred which in my time inflamed

* O cruel Richlieu, thou rueful author of all our miseries, how I hate thee! How doth thy name distract my ear! After having dethroned Lewis XIII. it was thou that established an arbitrary power in France. Since that period this nation has never performed any great action; and what can be expected from a people of slaves?

inflamed the sons of Esculapius. We have seen more than once, as a certain droll expressed it, physic on the point of calling surgery to its aid.

“All is now changed; friends, and not rivals, they now form one body only; they afford each other mutual assistance, and their operations, thus united, sometimes appear almost miraculous. The physician does not disdain to practise himself the operations that, he thinks necessary; when he prescribes any remedies, he does not leave the care of preparing them to a subaltern, who, by negligence or ignorance might render them mortal; but judges with his own eyes of the quality, the quantity and manner of compounding them; a matter of the greatest importance, as on that the cure absolutely depends. The sick man does not now see by his bedside three practitioners who ludicrously contemn each other, dispute, sneer, and watch for some blunder of their rivals, with which they might divert themselves at their leisure. A physician is no longer a compound of the most opposite principles; the patient’s stomach is not now the spot where the poisons of the south encounter those of the north; the beneficent juice of plants, natives of our soil, and adapted to our temperaments, dissipate each noxious humour without destroying our entrails.

“This art is esteemed above all others; for they have now banished the systematic spirit and that blind rotation of practice, which was as destructive to mankind as the rapacity of kings and the cruelty of their

their ministers.”—I am charmed to hear that matters are thus; your physicians appear to me highly amiable, as they are no longer avaricious and cruel empirics, sometimes addicted to a dangerous rotation of practice, and sometimes, by making barbarous experiments, prolong the sufferings of the sick, whom they at last assassinate without remorse. But, pray, to what floor will they go up?—“To every floor where there is any one in want of their assistance.”—That’s wonderful: in my time, the most eminent among them would never go higher than the first floor and as certain fine ladies admit no visitors that do not wear laced ruffles, so they would cure no patients that did not keep an equipage.—“A physician among us, who should be guilty of such inhumanity, would stamp an indelible disgrace on his character. Every one has a right to send for them; they seek only to restore health to the sick; and if he be not able which is rarely the case, to offer a sufficient gratuity, the state then provides it. Every month a register is made of the sick that die or are cured; the names of the dead are always followed by those of their physicians; and each one is to give an account of his prescriptions, and justify his manner of treating the sick. This detail is laborious; but the life of a man appears to us of too much importance to omit any means of preserving it; and the physicians themselves are interested in observing this sagacious law.

“They have rendered their art more simple, and divested themselves of many branches of science that

are absolutely foreign to the art of healing. You thought unjustly, that a physician's head should contain every science possible; that he should be a complete master of anatomy, chemistry, botany and the mathematics; and though each of these arts require the whole life of a man, yet your physicians were in no esteem unless they were besides men of taste, wit, and humour. Ours confine themselves to a thorough knowledge of diseases, to a critical discernment of their several divisions, and of the symptoms that attend them, and more particularly to the distinguishing of the temperaments in general, and that of each patient in particular. They use scarce any of those remedies called precious, or of secret and mysterious compositions; they find a small number of medicines sufficient; they have discovered that nature acts uniformly in the vegetation of plants and in the nutrition of animals. Behold the gardener, they say; he is desirous that the sap, that is, the universal spirit, circulate equally in every part of the tree. The diseases of the plant arise from the glutinous state of that wonderful fluid. In like manner, all the disorders that afflict the human race proceed from the coagulation of the blood and humours; restore them to their natural dilution, and as soon as the circulation attains its just course, health begins to be restored*. This being premised, there is no need of a very extensive knowledge to attain these ends, for they

* This is not strictly true; if it were, whenever the fluids were sufficiently diluted, the body would be in health, which, unhappily, is by no means the case.

they present themselves to us. We consider all the odoriferous plants as universal remedies, seeing they abound in volatile salts, which are in the highest degree proper to dilute the viscous blood. These are the most precious gifts of nature for the preservation of health. We administer them to all the sick, and have constantly found them to effect a cure*."

CHAP. XIV.

THE HOSPITAL FOR INOCULATION.

PRAY, tell me what building is that I see, which stands by itself, at a distance in the fields?—
 "It is the hospital for inoculation; a practice opposed in your days; as were all the good things, that were offered to you. You must have been egregiously obstinate, when such manifest and repeated experiments were not able to convince you for your own good. Had it not been for some ladies, more anxious for beauty than life, and some princes not very desirous of resigning their scepters into the hands
 of

* Though there is scarce any disease that may not be cured by the juice of plants, properly prepared, yet as the most efficacious remedies we know are obtained from minerals, it would be as extravagant totally to reject them as to exclude the others.

of Plato, you would never have ventured on that happy discovery. Success has fairly crowned it, the homely dames were obliged to remain silent, and they who had no diadems were nevertheless desirous of remaining some time longer here below.

“ Sooner or later truth will prevail over the most extractable spirits. We now practise inoculation, as they did in your time in China, Turkey and England. We are far from proscribing salutary aids because they are new; we have not, as you had, a rage for disputation, merely for the sake of making a figure in the eye of the public. Thanks to our industry, and to a spirit of inquiry, we have discovered many admirable secrets, which I have not now time to explain to you. A profound study of those wonderful simples which you trod under foot, has taught us the art of curing the consumption, the phthisic, the dropsy, and other disorders, which your remedies, of whose virtues you had little knowledge, commonly made worse; the hygiæna* especially is so clearly investigated, that each one is able to take care of his own health. We do not depend entirely on the physician, how skillful soever he may be. We apply ourselves to the study of our own temperaments, and not leave it to be guessed at by a stranger on the first sight. Temperance, moreover, that true restorative and conservative elixir, contributes to form bodies healthful and vigorous, and that contain minds pure and strong as their blood.

CHAP.

* The art of Preserving health.

CHAP. XV.

THEOLOGY AND JURISPRUDENCE.

HAPPY mortals! you have then no theologians among you*? I see none of those mighty volumes that seemed to be the pillars of our libraries, those ponderous folios, that none but the printer, I should imagine, ever read. Theology, however, is a sublime science, and—“ As our only contemplation on the Supreme Being is to praise and adore him in silence, without disputing on his divine attributes, which are for ever inscrutable, we have determined never more to write on that topic; so much too sublime for our intelligence. It is the soul that communicates with God, and it has no need of foreign aids to raise itself up to him†.

“ All

* We should not here confound the moralists with the theologians; the former are the benefactors, the latter the opprobrium and scourge of mankind¶.

† Let us descend into ourselves, and ask our own minds, from whence they receive perception and thought? they will reveal to us their happy dependence; they will attest that Supreme intelligence, from which they are nothing more than feeble emanations. When the mind reflects on its own nature, it cannot divest itself of the idea of that God of whom it is the offspring and image; it cannot doubt of its heavenly origin. This is a truth of perception that has been common to all people. The man of sensibility will be

“All the volumes of theology, as well as those of jurisprudence, are confined by large bars of iron in the subterraneous apartments of the library; and if we should have a war with any neighbouring nation, instead of attacking them with our cannon, we shall send these pestiferous works among them: we preserve these volcanoes of inflammable matter merely for the destruction of our enemies, which they will certainly effect, by means of their subtle poisons, that seize at once the head and the heart.”

To live without theology, I can easily enough conceive; but how without law, I can by no means comprehend.—“We have a jurisprudence; but different from yours, which was both Gothic and capricious. You still bore the marks of your ancient servitude; you adopted laws that were made neither for your customs nor your climate. As almost every individual became, by degrees, enlightened, they have reformed those abuses, that made of the sanctuary of justice a den of thieves. We are astonished how that foul monster, that destroyed the widow and the orphan, could triumph so long unpunished; nor can we conceive how it was possible for a pettifogger to pass the streets of the city without being stoned by those he had brought to desperation.

“The

struck with the prospect of nature, and without difficulty acknowledge a munificent God, who has in store for us other bounties. The man void of sensibility will not join to our praises the hymn of his admiration. The heart that never loved was that of the first atheist.

“The potent arm which bears the sword of justice has smote that enormous body, but void of soul, in which were united the avidity of the wolf, the cunning of the fox, and the croaking of the raven, Their own subalterns, whom they made to perish by famine and vexation were the first to reveal their iniquities, and to arm against them. Themis commanded, and the herd disappeared. Such was the tragical end of those rapacious vermin, who destroyed whole families by blotting of paper.”

But in my time they pretended, that without their aid a considerable part of the citizens would remain idle at the tribunals, and that the courts of justice themselves might possibly become the theatres of licence and disorder.—“They were certainly the proprietors of stamped paper, who talked in that manner.”—But how can causes be decided without the aid of attorneys?—“O, our causes are decided in the best manner imaginable. We have reserved the order of counsellors, who know the dignity and excellence of their institution, and being still more disinterested, they have become more respectable. It is they who take upon them to explain clearly and concisely the cause of complaint, and that without vehemence or exaggeration. We do not now see a pleader, by labouring a tedious insipid brief, though stuffed with invectives, heat himself to a degree that costs him his life. The bad man can find no advocate among these defenders of equity; their honour is answerable for the cause they undertake; they oblige the guilty, by refusing to defend them, to appear

pear trembling and endeavour to excuse themselves before a court where they have no advocate.

“Every man now enjoys the primitive right of pleading his own cause. They never suffer a process to have time sufficient to become perplexed; they are investigated and determined in their origin; the longest time that is allowed for the developing any cause, when it is obscure, is that of a year; the judges, moreover, never receive any presents; they became ashamed of that disgraceful privilege, by which, at first, they received but trifles, but, at last, exacted the most enormous sums*; they were sensible that they thereby gave examples of rapacity; and that if there be any case in which interest ought not to prevail, it is in that important and awful instance where man pronounces in the sacred name of justice.”—I find that you have made amazing alterations in our laws.—“Your laws! Stop there. How could you give that title to an indigested mass of contradictory customs, to those old shattered papers that contained nothing but ideas without connection and grotesque precedencies? How could you adopt that barbarous mass, in which there was neither plan, nor validity, nor object; that consisted merely of a disgusting compilation, where genius and perseverance were absorbed in a noisome abyss? There have arisen

*It consisted at first of some boxes of sweat-meats; but now the boxes must be filled with pieces of gold; so dainty is the present taste of those august senators, and fathers of their country.

men of ability, of a love for the human race, and of courage sufficient to induce them to undertake an entire reformation, and of that capricious mass to form a regular and just body of laws.

“Our kings have given all their attention to this immense project, in which so many thousands were interested. It has been acknowledged that legislation was the first of studies. The names of Lycurgus, Solon, and those who have followed their steps, are of all others the most respectable. The luminous point proceeded from the utmost north; and, as if nature would humble our pride, it was a woman who began that important revolution*.

“Justice has spoken by the voice of nature, sovereign legislator, mother of virtue, and of all that is good upon the earth; founded on reason and humanity, her precepts are wise, clear, concise, and few. All general causes have been foreseen and included in the laws. Particular cases have been derived from them, as the branches that spring from a fertile trunk; and equity, more sagacious than law itself, has applied practical justice to every event.

“These new laws are above all things thrifty of human blood; the punishment is proportioned to the crime; we have discarded you captious interrogatories,

* They privately burned at Paris an entire impression of the code of Catharine II. except a single copy, that I by chance, saved from the flames.

tories, and the tortures of confession, worthy of the tribunal of the inquisition; and those horrid punishments calculated for a nation of cannibals. We do not put a robber to death, because we know that it would be injustice to murder him who has never murdered any one; all the riches on the earth is not equal to the life of a man; we punish him by the loss of his liberty; blood is rarely spilt; and when we are forced to shed it, as a terror to bad men, it is done with the greatest solemnity. A minister, for example, who abuses the confidence of his sovereign, by employing the power with which he is entrusted against the people, can find no pardon*. He does not, however, languish in a dungeon; the punishment attends the crime; and if a doubt arises, we chuse rather to shew him mercy than to run the horrid risk of keeping an innocent man longer in prison.

“ A criminal, when seized, is exposed in fetters, that he may be a public and striking example of the vigilance of justice. Over the place of his confinement there continually remains a writing which explains the cause of it. We do not confine men, while

* A droll picture that of the rise of a minister. This is advanced to administration by means of a polite copy of verses; that, after having lighted the lamps, is preferred to command a fleet, and imagines that lamps and ships are to be trimmed in the same manner; another, while his father still holds the yard, governs the finances, &c. It seems as if there was a determination to put these only at the head of affairs who knew nothing of the matter.

while living, in the darkness of the tomb, a fruitless punishment, and more horrible than death itself! It is in the public eye our prisoners suffer the shame of their chastisement. Every citizen knows why this man is condemned to imprisonment, and that to labour at the public works. He whom three chastisements does not reform, is marked, not on the shoulder, but the forehead, and banished for ever from his country.”

Inform me, I entreat you, about the *lettres de cachet*; what is become of that ready and infallible expedient, which cut short all difficulties, and was so convenient to pride, revenge and persecution?—“ If you ask this question seriously,” replied my guide, in a severe tone, “ you offer an insult to our monarch, to the nation, and myself. The torture and the *lettre de cachet** are ranked together, and only remain to pollute the pages of your history.”

CHAP.

* A citizen is suddenly snatched from his family, from his friends, and society; a piece of paper becomes an invincible thunder-bolt. An order for banishment or imprisonment is dispatched in the king's name, and proceeds merely from his will and pleasure; it has no other authenticity than the signature of a minister. Intendants and bishops have in their possession *lettres de cachet*, and have nothing to do but put in the name of any one they wish to destroy; the place is left vacant. We have seen the wretched grow old in prison, forgot by their persecutors, while the king has never been informed of their crime, of their misery, or even of their existence.

II

CHAP. XVI.

EXECUTION OF A CRIMINAL.

THE repeated mournful sounds of a dreadful clarion suddenly struck my ear, and seemed to murmur to the air the names of misery and death; the drums of the city guard went slowly round, beating the alarm; and these ominous sounds, repeated by the mind, filled it with a profound horror. I saw the citizens come forth with doleful aspects; each one addressed his neighbour, and lifting his eyes to heaven, wept, and showed all the tokens of the most piercing grief. I asked one of them, why tolled the funeral bells, and what accident had happened?

“One that is most terrible,” he replied, with a groan. “Justice this day is forced to condemn a citizen to lose his life, of which he has rendered himself unworthy, by embruing his murdering hands in his brother’s blood. More than thirty years have passed since the sun beheld a crime like this. Before the day is finished, he must expire. O, what tears have I shed for the fury that drove him to such a blind vengeance! Have you heard the particulars of

It were to be wished, that all the parliaments in the kingdom would unite against this monstrous abuse of power, and one that has no foundation in our laws. This important cause once agitated, would become that of the nation; and despotism would be deprived of its most formidable weapon.

of the crime that was committed the night before the last? O grief! is it not enough that we have lost one worthy citizen; but must another suffer death?”—He sighed bitterly.—“Hear, hear the story of that direful event, which has spread over us an universal lamentation.

“One of our fellow-citizens, of a fiery disposition, from his birth remarkable for passion, though otherwise a man of merit, was on the point of being married to a young woman whom he loved to distraction. Her temper was as gentle as that of her lover was impetuous; she flattered herself, however with being able to soften his manners; but the many fallies of wrath that escaped him, notwithstanding all his care to conceal them, made her tremble for the direful consequences that might proceed from a union with a man of his violent temper. Every woman, by our law, is absolute mistress of her person; she therefore determined, from a fear of being miserable, to marry another, who was of a character more conformable to her own. The torch of these nuptials set fire to the rage of an implacable heart, which in the tenderest years had never known moderation. He gave many private challenges to his happy rival, who despised them; for he knew there was more bravery in disdain than in yielding to the impulse of passion, in a manner that both our laws and reason proscribe. The enraged man, listening to nothing but jealousy, rencountered the other, the day before yesterday, in a private path without the city, and on his refusing again to combat with him, he seized a branch of a tree, and laid

him dead at his feet. After this horrid act, the inhuman wretch dared to come amongst us; but his crime was already engraved on his front; we no sooner saw him, than we discovered that he was criminal, though then ignorant of the nature of his offence. But soon we saw several citizens, their cheeks wet with tears, who bore, with solemn steps, to the foot of the throne of justice, the bloody corpse that cried for vengeance.

“ At the age of fourteen, they read to us the laws of our country. Every one is obliged to write them with his own hand, and to make oath that he will observe them*. These laws command us to inform the police of all those infractions that offend against the order of society; but they intend those matters only that cause a real detriment. We renew this sacred oath every ten years; and without being busy informers, religiously watch over the preservation of our venerable laws.

“ Yesterday they published the monitory, which is an act entirely civil. Whoever should delay to declare

* It is scarce to be believed, that the most important of our laws, as well civil as criminal, are unknown to the greatest part of the nation. It would be extremely easy to imprint them with a character of majesty; but they are only published to thunder on the guilty, and not to excite the citizen to virtue. The sacred code of the laws is wrote in a dry and barbarous language, and sleeps among the dust of the rolls. Would it not be proper to clothe it with the charms of eloquence, and by that means render it respectable to the multitude?

declare what he knew would be branded with infamy. By this means it is that homicide is soon discovered. None but a villain, for a long time familiarized with guilt, can coolly deny the crime he has just committed; and of this sort of monsters our nation is purged; they no longer terrify us, but in the histories of past ages.

“ Obey, with me, the voice of justice, that calls all the people to be witnesses of its awful decrees. It is the day of its triumph; and, fatal as it is, we receive it with applause. You will not see a wretch who has been plunged for six months in a dungeon, his eyes dazzled by the light of the sun, his bones broken by a previous and secret punishment more horrible than that he is going to suffer*, advance with hideous and dying looks, towards a scaffold erected in an obscure nook. In your time, the criminal, judged in the secrecy of a prison, was sometimes broke on the wheel in the silence of the night, at the door of some sleeping citizen; who waking with terror at the cries
of

* Wretched is the state that refines on its penal laws. Is not the punishment of death sufficient; but must man add to its horror? Can he be called a magistrate who interrogates with torturing machines, and gradually crushes a wretch by a slow progression of the most horrid pangs? who, ingenious in his tortures, stops death, when, gentle, and charitable, it advances to deliver the victim? Here nature revolts. But if you would be more fully convinced of the inutility of the torture, see the admirable Treatise on Crimes and Punishments. I defy any man to produce one solid reason in favour of that barbarous law.

of the excruciated wretch, was uncertain whether he was suffering under the iron bar of an executioner, or the sword of an assassin. We have none of those tortures that are shocking to nature; we have a regard to humanity even with them who have offended against it. In your age, they seemed not to be content with merely putting a man to death, so little effect the tragic scenes had upon you, all horrible as they were, and multiplied in cold blood. The guilty, far from being dragged along in a manner that is disgraceful to justice, is not even fettered. Alas! why should he be loaded with chains, when he freely delivers himself up to death? Justice has full power to condemn him to death, but not to charge him with marks of slavery. You will see him walk freely in the midst of some soldiers, who surround him merely to keep off the multitude. We have no fear that he will a second time disgrace himself by endeavouring to fly from the terrible voice that accuses him. Whither should he fly? What country, what people would receive among them an assassin*? and how could he ever efface that horrid mark which the hand of the Divinity imprints on the front of a murderer; the tempest of remorse is there painted in glaring characters; and the eye accustomed

* They say that Europe is civilized; and yet a man who has committed a murder, or made a fraudulent bankruptcy, can retire to London, Madrid, Lisbon, Vienna, &c. and there peaceably enjoy the fruits of his iniquity. Among so many puerile treaties, can they not stipulate, that the murderer shall no where find an asylum? Is not every state and every man interested in his punishment? But monarchs will as soon agree on the destruction of the Jesuits.

accustomed to the aspect of virtue will easily distinguish the physiognomy of guilt. How, in short, can he ever be free who feels the immense weight that presses upon his heart?"

We arrived at a spacious place that surrounded the palace of justice. Along the front of the hall of audience there ran a large flight of steps. It was on this kind of amphitheatre that the senate assembled on public affairs, in the sight of the people; it was under their inspection that it chose to transact the most important affairs of the nation; the numerous body of citizens there assembled inspired them with sentiments worthy of the august concerns committed to their care. The death of a citizen was a calamity to the state. The judges failed not to give their sentence all that solemnity, all that importance it deserved. The order of advocates were on one side, constantly ready to plead for the innocent, but silent in the cause of the guilty. On the other side, the prelate, accompanied by the pastors, bare-headed, silently invoked the God of Mercy, and edified the people, spread in crowds over all the place*.

The

* Our form of justice does not command awe, but excites disgust. It is an odious and shocking sight to see a man take off his laced hat, lay down his sword on the scaffold, mount the ladder in a suit of silk or lace, and dance indecently on the body of the wretch that is hanging. Why not give the executioner that formidable aspect he ought to shew? To what purpose is this cold barbarity? The laws thereby lose their dignity, and the punishment its terror.

H 3

The

The criminal appeared; he was dressed in a bloody shirt; he beat his breast, and shewed all the marks of a sincere repentance. His visage, however, expressed nothing of that dreadful embarrassment so unbecoming

The judge is still more sprucely powdered than the hangman. Shall I here declare the sensations that I have felt? I have trembled, not for the criminal's offence, but for the horrid unconcern of all those that surrounded him. There has been none but that generous man who reconciled the unfortunate sinner to the Supreme Being, who assisted him in drinking the cup of death, that appeared to me to have any remains of humanity. Do we only wish to destroy mankind? Are we ignorant of the art of terrifying the imagination without violence to humanity? Learn at length, thoughtless and cruel men, learn to be judges, learn how to prevent crimes; conciliate what is owing to the law with what is owing to man. I have not the power to speak here of those artful tortures that some criminals have suffered, who seem to have been reserved, so to say, for a privileged punishment. O disgrace to my country! the eyes of that sex which seems made for pity remained the longest fixed on that scene of horrors. Let us draw the curtain. What can I say to those who understand me not? ¶

¶ The author here evidently refers to what is improperly called the breaking on the wheel; for the criminal is stretched naked, except a cloth that goes round his waist, upon two planks, in the form of what is called St. Andrew's cross; and then the executioner with an iron bar, breaks all the bones of his arms, his legs, and thighs. A cruel punishment, the reader will say; but it is trifling to what he has to suffer; for he is then laid, with his face upward, on a small wheel, about as wide as the length of his body only, and is trussed up like a fowl for the spit; his broken legs and thighs are brought

back

becoming a man, who ought to know how to die when necessity calls, and especially when he merits death. They made him pass by a sort of cage, where, they told me, the body of the murdered man was exposed. On his near approach, he was seized with such violent remorse, that they suffered him to retire. He approached the judges, and put one knee to the ground, to kiss the sacred volume of the law. It was

back to his arms, and he is bound round with cords, hard as a merchant binds a bale of goods that is to go a long voyage, till the ropes cut into the flesh, and thus left, with his head hanging backwards off the wheel, to expire by agonies; while the gay, polite Parisians throng from every quarter to behold a sight that is a disgrace to their capital, to their country, and to mankind; and while the softer sex, as the author says, gaze from the windows with insatiable curiosity. This punishment shews how strong the powers of life are in some men; what tortures human nature is capable of sustaining. One would imagine that a man could live but a very short time in such a situation; but the wretch I saw, who was young, and of a vigorous constitution, was placed on the wheel about six in the evening; at four the next morning he complained of thirst, and drink was given him; about an hour after he expired.

On reviewing this note, it occurred to me that the hard binding with ropes may be humanely intended to shorten the criminal's tortures by stopping the circulation; so when the executioner jumps on the shoulders of the man that is hanging he certainly intends, and does, in many instances, shorten his sufferings. Doubtless too, a great part of the spectators are carried to these executions by a desire to sympathize in the criminal's sufferings; as, when a ship is in distress, the fond mother flies to the sea shore, and while she strains her infant to her breast, commiserates their calamity, though utterly unable to relieve them.

was then opened to him, and they read, with a loud voice, the sentence relative to homicides; they placed the book before him, that he might read it; he then fell on his knees, and confessed his guilt. The head of the senate, mounting a platform that was prepared for him, read his condemnation with a strong and majestic voice. All the counsellors, as well as the advocates, who were standing, then sat down, by which they declared that no one of them would undertake his defence.

When the head of the senate had done reading, he deigned to stretch out his hand to the criminal, and raise him up; he then said, "nothing now remains for you but to die with firmness, and obtain your pardon of God and of men. We do not hate you; we grieve for you, and your memory will not be held in detestation by us. Obey the law with cheerfulness, and revere its salutary rigour. Our tears bear witness that affection will take place in our hearts, when justice shall have accomplished her fatal decrees. Death is less dreadful than ignominy. Submit to the one, to avoid the other. It is still in your power to choose. If you will live, you may; but it must be in disgrace, and loaded with our indignation. You will behold the sun constantly upbraiding you with having deprived your fellow-being of his genial and brilliant rays; to you they will be hateful, as they will only discover those disdainful looks with which all men regard an assassin. You will bear about with you every where the load of your remorse, and the eternal shame of having refused to submit

submit to that just law which has condemned you. Do justice to society and condemn yourself*.

The criminal bowed his head; by which he declared that he judged himself deserving of death †. He immediately prepared to submit with constancy and with that resignation which, in our last moments, is so highly becoming of humanity ‡. He was no longer regarded as guilty; the body of pastors surrounded him; the prelate taking off the bloody shirt, clothed him in a white vestment, which was the token of his reconciliation with mankind, and gave him

* They who are invested with a power that gives them authority over mankind ought to take great heed how they treat them merely according to their own demerits; they should regard every criminal as a wretch more or less insane; they should therefore treat them as beings, who, by some unknown cause, have been led out of the right path. Even when the judge pronounces condemnation with majesty, he should secretly lament that he cannot screen the criminal from punishment. To terrify vice by the most awful apparatus of justice, and privately to reclaim the guilty, should be the two grand points of criminal jurisprudence.

† Propitious conscience, thou equitable and ready judge, be never absent from me! Tell me constantly that I cannot do the least injury to another without receiving the counter-stroke; that I must necessarily wound myself, when I wound another.

‡ Agesilaus seeing a malefactor endure punishment with unconcern, "O wicked man," he said, "to make so bad a use of fortitude."

him the kiss of peace. His friends and relations crowded to embrace him; he appeared satisfied by receiving their caresses, and by being vested with that garment which was a proof of the pardon he received from his country. Those testimonies of friendship took from him the horrors of approaching death. The prelate, advancing towards the people, seized that moment to make a nervous and pathetic discourse on the danger of passion; it was so eloquent, so just and affecting, that every heart was filled with admiration and terror. Each one resolved to watch carefully over his temper and to stifle those seeds of resentment, which increase in a manner unknown to ourselves, and soon produce the most unbridled passions.

During this interval, a deputy from the senate bore the sentence of death to the monarch, that he might sign it with his own hand; for no one could be put to death without his consent, as in him resided the power of the sword. That good father would gladly have spared the life of the criminal*; but, in that moment he sacrificed the earnest desire of his heart to the necessity of an exemplary justice.

The deputy returned. Then again the bells of the city began their funeral tolls, the drums repeated their

* I am sorry that our kings have renounced that ancient and wise custom. When they sign so many papers why should they neglect one of the most august privileges of their crown?

their mournful march, and those deploring sounds meeting in the air with the groans of the numerous people one would have thought that the city was on the brink of an universal destruction. The friends and relations of the unfortunate man going to meet his death, gave him the last embrace; the prelate invoked with a loud voice, the forgiveness of the Supreme Being, and the vaulted roof of heaven resounded with the supplications of the whole people, who cried, with one mighty voice, "*O Almighty God, receive his soul! O God of Mercy, forgive him, even as we forgive him!*"

They conducted him, with slow steps, to the cage I have mentioned, still surrounded by his friends. Six fusileers, their faces covered with crape, advanced; the head of the senate gave the signal, by holding up the book of the law; they fired and the soul disappeared*. They took up the dead body. His crime being fully expiated by his punishment, he was again received into the class of citizens; his name, that had been effaced, was inscribed again in the public register, with the names of those who had died the same day. This people had not the cruelty to pursue the memory of a man even to his tomb; and to reflect on a whole innocent family the crime of an individual;

* I have frequently heard it debated, whether the person of an executioner be infamous. I have always been concerned when they have given it in his favour, and could never have a respect for those who ranked him with the class of other citizens. I may be wrong, but such is my opinion.

individual* ; they did not find pleasure in dishonouring, without a cause, useful citizens, and make men miserable, for the satisfaction of making them humble. His body was carried to be burned without the city, with his fellow-citizens, who, the preceding day, had paid the inevitable debt to nature ; his relations had no other grief to encounter than that which arose from the loss of a friend. The same evening, a place of trust and honour becoming vacant, the king conferred it on the brother of the criminal ; and every one applauded a choice that was dictated by equity and beneficence.

With a heart full of tenderness and commiseration, I said, O, how is humanity respected among you ! The death of a citizen is the cause of universal mourning to his country.—“ It is because our laws,” they replied, “ are wise and humane ; they are calculated more for reformation than for chastisement ; the way to intimidate vice is not to render punishment common, but formidable ; it is our study to prevent crimes ; we send the refractory to places of solitude, where they are attended by those who endeavour to bring them to repentance, who operate by degrees on their hardened hearts, and gradually display the refined charms of virtue, to whose attractions the most depraved of mortals are not insensible. Does the physician at the first attack of a violent fever
abandon

* Base and despicable prejudice, that confounds all notions of justice, is contrary to reason, and only calculated for a weak or wicked people.

abandon his patient ? Why, therefore, should we desert the guilty who may yet be recovered ? There are few hearts so corrupted, as not to be restored by perseverance ; and a little blood properly poured forth, cements our tranquility and our happiness.

“ Your penal laws were all made in favour of the rich ; all fell on the head of the poor ; gold was become the god of nations ; edicts and gibbets surrounded all possessions ; and tyranny, with sword in hand, bartered the days, the sweat and blood of the unfortunate ; it made no distinction in chastisements, and thereby taught the people to make none in crimes ; it punished the least offence as the most infamous villainy. What was the consequence ? The multiplying of laws multiplied crimes, and the offenders became as inhuman as their judges. Legislation, when it attempted to unite the members of society, drew the bands so tight as to throw it into convulsions ; and, instead of maintaining, destroyed the connections ; mournful humanity sent forth the cry of grief, and saw too late, that the tortures of the executioner never inspire virtue*.

CHAP.

* When we examine the validity of that right which human societies have assumed of punishing with death, we are terrified at the imperceptible point which separates equity from injustice. It is to little purpose here that we accumulate arguments ; all our lights serve but to lead us astray ; we must return to the law of nature only, which has far more regard than our institutions, for the life of a man ;

CHAP. XVII.

NOT SO FAR OFF AS WE THOUGHT.

WE conversed a long time on this important subject; but as we became earnestly engaged, and our debate wanted that serenity which is so necessary in an inquiry after truth, I thus bluntly interrupted my

that teaches us, that the law of retaliation is, of all others, the most conformable to right reason. Among rising governments, which have yet the signature of nature, there is scarce any crime punished with death. In the case of murder there is no doubt; for nature tells us that we should arm ourselves against assassins ¶; but in case of robbery, the inhumanity of inflicting death is notorious; it is a punishment that bears no proportion to the crime; and the voice of millions of men, worshippers of gold, can never make that authentic, which is in its nature invalid. It will be said, "The robber made a contract with me to be punished with death if he invaded my property;" but no man has a right to make such a contract as it is unjust, barbarous, and senseless; unjust, as his life is not his own; barbarous, as no proportion is observed; and senseless, as it is incomparably more eligible that two men live, than that one of them should enjoy some exclusive or superfluous property.

This note, says the author, is taken from a good novel, intitled *The Vicar of Wakefield*.

¶ Notwithstanding what is here said, this position certainly admits of doubt, at least. The ends of punishment are three; to redress the injured, to reform the offender, and to deter others.

NOT SO FAR OFF AS WE THOUGHT. 87

my learned companion: Tell me, I beseech you, what is become of the Molinists and Janfenists? He answered me with a loud burst of laughter; I could get nothing else from him. But, pray, answer me, I said; here stood the Capuchins, there the Cordeliers, a little farther on the Carmelites. What is become of those frocked gentry, with their sandals, their beards, and their disciplines?

"We no longer fatten, in our state," he replied, "a set of automatons, as troublesome to themselves as to others, who make a foolish vow never to be men, and hold no connection with those that are. We thought them, however, more worthy of pity than reproach. Engaged from the most tender age, in a state of which they were ignorant, it was the laws that were culpable, in permitting them blindly to prostitute that liberty of which they knew not the value. Those reclusé beings, whose mansions of retreat were erected with pomp in the midst of a tumultuous city, perceived, and gave themselves up by degrees to the charms of society; when they beheld happy fathers, united brethren, and tranquil families, they regretted their not being able to participate

others. Now, neither the murdered, nor his representative, can receive any redress from the death of the offender; and with regard to the other two ends, I think it will appear, upon a close inspection, that there are many continued punishments, without having recourse to barbarities, that would be far more efficacious. We cannot be too cautious in depriving our fellow-creatures of that which God alone can give, and which, it seems to me, he alone has the right to take away.

dipate of that happiness. They sighed in secret over that fatal moment, when they abjured a life of all others the most pleasing, and cursed each other like galley-slaves at the oar* ; while they longed for the hour that should open their prison doors. It was not far distant ; the yoke was thrown off without danger or difficulty ; for the hour was then come : just as we see the ripe fruit fall from the branch by the least touch †. Issuing forth in crowds, with the highest demonstrations of joy, they became, all slaves as they had been, instantly men.

“ Those robust monks ‡, in whom seemed to be revived the vigour of the pristine ages of the world, their

* All those religious houses, where men are crowded together, teem with intestine wars ; they are serpents that prey upon each other in obscurity. A monk is a cold and morose animal ; the ambition of advancing himself in his corps makes him selfish ; he has leisure sufficient to reflect on his plan, and his concentered ambition has a gloomy turn ; when he once gets the command, he is by nature rough and inexorable.

† In matters of public administration, there should be no violent shock ; nothing is more dangerous. Reason and time produce the greatest events, and fix on them an indelible stamp.

‡ Luther, thundering with his fiery eloquence against the monastic vows, asserts, that it was as impossible to keep that of continence as to change our sex ¶.

¶ Luther, it is like, judged from himself. There are however, great numbers of men, who, from an ill-natured constitution, are under no sort of temptation to break the vow of continence from women.

their fronts glowing with love and joy, espoused those panting doves, those sanctified virgins, who, under the monastic veil, had more than once sighed for a state less holy and more pleasing* ; they performed the devoirs of Hymen with an edifying fervour, and the

* What a cruel superstition, to confine in a sacred prison so many young beauties, who conceal all the fires permitted to their sex, which an eternal confinement redoubles, and even to the producing those conflicts they have with each other ¶. To have a just sensation of all the miseries of a heart that devours itself, we should be in its place. Timid, credulous, abused, intoxicated by a pompous enthusiasm, a girl believes for a long time, that God and religion absorb all her thoughts ; in the midst of the transports of her zeal, nature awakens in her heart that invincible, and to her unknown, power, and makes her submit to its imperious yoke. These fires, once lighted up, make havock among her senses ; she burns in the calm of her retreat ; she combats, but her constancy is overcome ; she blushes and desires ; she looks round her, and finds herself surrounded with insurmountable barriers, while all her being is carried with violence toward an ideal object, that her heated imagination has adorned with fresh charms. From that moment, adieu repose. She was born for a happy fertility ; an eternal chain confines her, and condemns her to sterility and misery. She then discovers, that the law has deceived her ;

¶ As this passage may appear obscure, and as I know not well how to make it more explicit ; I shall here give the words of the original. “ Quelle cruelle superstition enchaîne dans une prison sacrée tant des jeune beautés, qui recèlent tous les feux permis à leu sexe, que redouble encore une clôture éternelle, et jusqu’ aux combats qu’elles se livrent, ”

produced an offspring worthy of so fair a lineage; their happy and rosy husbands were no longer solicitous for the canonization of some rotten bones; they contented themselves with being good fathers and good citizens; and, I firmly believe, are as likely to go to heaven after death, as if they had made a purgatory of the present life.

“It is true, that, at the time it happened, this reformation appeared to the bishop of Rome something extraordinary; but he soon had serious affairs of his own to manage.”—Who do you call the bishop of Rome?—“Him whom you called pope; but as I observed before, we have changed many Gothic terms; we no longer know what are canonicates, bulls, benefices, and bishoprics of an immense revenue* ; we do not go to kiss the slipper of the successor of an
apostle,

her; that the yoke which destroys liberty is not the yoke of God; and that the religion, to which she is irrevocably bound, is the enemy of nature and of reason. But to what purpose are her sorrows and complaints? Her tears and her sighs are lost in the silence of the night; the burning poison that ferments in her veins destroys her beauty, corrupts her blood, and leads her, with precipitate steps, to the grave; glad thither to descend, she opens herself the tomb, where all her griefs are lost in peaceful slumbers.

* I cannot see without horror, ecclesiastic princes, surrounded by all the pomp of luxury, smile disdainfully at public miseries, and presume to talk of morals and religion in their dull mandates, wrote by some curate's journeyman, and which insult common sense with scandalous effrontery.

apostle, to whom his master gave no other examples than those of humility; and as that apostle recommended poverty, as well by his example as his precept, we no longer send our pure gold so necessary to the state, to purchase indulgences, of which that good magician was very liberal. All these matters gave him at first some disgust; for we do not love to part with our privileges, even though they be somewhat illegitimate; but he soon found that his true heritage was in heaven; that his kingdom was not of this world; and that all earthly riches were vanities, as are all things beneath the sun.

“Time, whose invisible and silent hand undermines the loftiest towers, has laid that superb and incredible monument of human credulity in the dust*; it fell without tumult; its strength was in opinion; opinion changed, and all exhaled in smoke. So we sometimes behold nothing but a transient vapour, where late was seen a tremendous conflagration.

“A prince worthy to govern, rules over that part of Italy, and that ancient Rome has again beheld her Cæsars: by that word I refer to Titus and Marcus Aurelius, not to those monsters who bore a human face. That fine country is reanimated since it has been cleansed from those lazy vermin that throve in filth.

* The mufti, among the Turks, extends his infallibility even to historic facts. He thought proper, in the reign of Amurat, to declare all those heretics who did not believe that the sultan went into Hungary.

filth. That kingdom now holds its proper rank, bears a lively and expressive aspect, after having been wrapped up, for more than seventeen centuries, in ridiculous and superstitious rags, which stopped its breath, and deprived it of all power of utterance."

CHAP. XVIII.

THE MINISTERS OF PEACE.

PROCEED, thou charming instructor! This revolution, you say, was made in the most peaceful and happy manner.—“It was the work of philosophy; it acted without noise, and, like nature, with a force the more certain, as it was insensible.”—But I have many difficulties to propose; there must be a religion.—“Without doubt,” he replied with warmth. “Alas! where is the man so ungrateful as to remain dumb in the midst of the miracles of creation, under this brilliant firmament of heaven? We adore the Supreme Being; but the worship we render him causes no disorder nor debate; we have but few ministers, and they are wise, experienced, and friends to toleration; they are free from the spirit of faction, and therefore more beloved and respected; they are only solicitous to lift up pure hands toward the throne of the Father of mankind; they are beneficent to all, in imitation of God, abundant in goodness; the spirit of peace and concord animates their

their actions as well as their precepts; they are therefore universally beloved. We have, moreover, a holy prelate, who lives with his pastors, as with his brethren, and his equals. These functions are not assumed by any, till they are forty years of age; for not till then are the turbulent passions at rest; and reason, so slow in man, exerts its peaceful empire. Their exemplary life displays the highest degree of human virtue; it is they that comfort the afflicted; that point out to the unhappy a merciful God, who watches over them, and will one day recompense their sufferings. They search out poverty when concealed under the cloak of shame, and administer relief without compelling it to blush; they reconcile adverse tempers by the words of gentleness and peace; the most inveterate enemies embrace in their presence, and all the ulcers of their hearts become instantly healed. In a word, they fulfil all the duties of men who presume to speak in the name of an Eternal Master.”

I am highly pleased to hear of ministers like those, I replied; but have you a set of men peculiarly consecrated to repeat at all hours of the day, with a nasal twang, canticles, psalms, and hymns? Does any one among you aspire to canonization? How do you celebrate that rite? Who are your saints?—“Our saints! You doubtless mean those who pursue the highest degree of perfection, who are elevated above human weakness. Yes; we have men of that celestial temper; but you will easily believe that they do not lead an obscure and solitary life; that they do not

not make a merit of fasting, of chanting bad Latin, or of remaining dumb and stupid all their days ; it is in the fight of the world that they display the fortitude, the constancy of their souls ; they charge themselves, by choice, with the most painful labours, and such as are disgusting to other men ; they think that good and charitable works are to the Deity more grateful than prayer alone.

If men, for example, are wanting to clean the streets, or repair the highways, they readily offer themselves ; they undertake the most dangerous as well as the meanest employments, as to carry water through the flames to extinguish a fire, and walk over the burning planks ; or to plunge into a river, to save the life of a man ready to perish, &c. These generous victims to the public good are filled, animated by an active spirit, by the grand and sublime idea of being useful members of society, and of alleviating the miseries of others. They make a duty of these occupations with as much pleasure as if they were perfectly easy and engaging ; their actions are altogether directed by humanity and the love of their country, and never by self-interest. Some constantly attend the bed of the sick, and administer relief ; while others descend into the mines, and perform all the laborious offices of those regions, so that you would take them to be slaves bowing under the iron yoke of some tyrant ; but the design of their beneficent souls is to please the Eternal by serving their brethren. Insensible to present miseries, they look forward to that reward which God has in store for them,

them, as they do not sacrifice the pleasures of this world to a capricious bigotry, but to a real utility.

“ It is needless to tell you that we respect them during their lives and after deaths ; and as our most lively acknowledgments would be insufficient, we leave it to the Author of all good to discharge that immense debt, being persuaded that he alone knows the just measure of merited rewards.

“ Such are the saints that we venerate, without supposing any thing more than that they have extended human nature, of which they are the glory, to its highest perfection : they perform no other miracles than those I have mentioned. The martyrs to Christianity had certainly their merit ; it was doubtless very commendable to brave the tyrants of the mind ; to suffer the most horrible deaths, rather than sacrifice those sentiments that the head and the heart had adopted. But how much more true greatness is there in rendering ourselves the perpetual benefactors to afflicted humanity, to dry up every tear, and stop or prevent the effusion of a single drop of blood*.”

“ These

* A counsellor of parliament, in the last century, gave all his fortune to the poor, and then went about begging for them. He met a farmer-general in the street ; he attacked and followed him, saying, “ Give me something for my poor people, something for my poor people.” The tax gatherer refused ; and replied in the usual tone, “ I have nothing for them ; Sir, I have nothing for them.” The counsellor

“ These wonderful men do not offer their manner of living as a model to others ; they do not glory in their heroism ; they do not debase themselves to be exalted by the public ; and least of all do they rail at the defects of their neighbours, but are much more solicitous to procure them happy lives by their innumerable labours. When one of these exalted souls rejoins that All-perfect Being, from whom it is an emanation, we do not enclose the corpse in a metal still more worthless ; we write the history of his life, and endeavour to imitate it at least in some degree.”— The farther I advance, the more unexpected alterations I perceive.—“ You will yet see many others. If a great number of pens did not attest the same matters, we should certainly call in doubt the history of your age. Was it possible ? Could the servants of the altar be riotous, caballers, persecutors ? Could a set of miserable reptiles hate and persecute each other during the short space of their lives, because they chanced to think differently on certain vain subtilties, or matters that are by their nature incomprehensible ? Those weak wretches, it seems, had the audacity to found the designs of the Almighty, and to make them quadrate with their ignorance, their pride, and their folly.

“ I have

counsellor would not quit him ; he argued and entreated ; he followed him quite to his hotel, and up to his apartment, continually interceding for his poor people. The brutal hoarder of millions, at last enraged, gave him a blow on the ear. “ Very well,” said the counsellor, “ that is something for me and my poor people.”

I

“ I have read, that they who had the least charity, and consequently the least religion, were they that preached to others ; that the number of those who bore that lucrative habit, the pledge of a continued idleness, was become incredible ; and, to conclude, that they lived in an infamous celibacy *. They say, moreover, that your churches resembled the public market-place ; that they were equally offensive to the sight and the smell ; and that your ceremonies were calculated rather to distract the mind, than to elevate it to God—But I hear the sacred trump, whose pleasing sounds announce the hour of prayer. Come with me, and behold our religion ; let us go to the neighbouring temple, and offer our thanks to the Creator, for having once more beheld the rising sun.”

CHAP. XIX.

THE TEMPLE.

WE turned the corner of a street, and I perceived in the midst of a spacious place a circular temple crowned with a magnificent dome. This edifice, supported by a single range of columns, had four grand portals ; on the front of each was written, *The Temple of God*. Time had already imprinted a venerable

* What a leprosy in a state is a numerous clergy, that make a public profession to know no wives but those of other men !

K

venerable complexion on its walls, from which it received an additional majesty. When I arrived at the door of this temple, what was my surprize, to read the four following lines in large characters.

*Loin de rein decider sur cet Etre Suprême
Gardons, en l'adorant, un silence profond;
Sa nature est immense et l'esprit s'y confond;
Pour savoir ce qu'il est, il faut etre lui-même.*

In awful silence let us God adore,
Nor ever dare his nature to explore;
To search those boundless powers, by man were vain,
Which nought but boundless wisdom can explain.

O, by the way, I said in a low voice, you cannot assert that this is of your age.—“It is no commendation to yours,” he replied, “for your theologians should have stopped there.” This reply, which seems to have proceeded from the Divinity itself, has lain confounded among verses, of which very little account was made: I know, not, however, if there be any more excellent, for the sense they contain; and, I think, they are here very properly applied.

We followed the people, who, with thoughtful looks, and tranquil, modest steps, advanced toward the interior part of the temple. They all took their seats, in turn, on rows of stools; the men separate from the women. The altar was in the centre; it was totally unadorned, and each one could distinguish the priest who burned the incense. At the moment he pronounced the sacred hymns, the choir
of

of assistants alternately elevated their voice; their sweet and gentle sounds expressed the awful sentiments of their hearts; they seemed filled with the Divine Majesty. There were no paintings, no statues, no allegorical figures to be seen*; the sacred name of God, a thousand times repeated, and in different languages, was spread over all the walls; all declared the unity of the Godhead; all foreign ornaments were rigorously banished; in a word, God alone possessed his temple.

When I lifted my eyes to the summit of this temple, I saw the face of heaven; for the dome was not covered with stone, but the clearest glass. Sometimes a serene and lucid sky announced the complacency of the Creator; sometimes dark clouds, that poured down in torrents, recalled to the mind the dark vale of life, and told us that this dull earth is but a place of exile; the thunder announced, how terrible is God, when offended; and the calm that succeeded to the flashing lightnings declared, that contrition unarms his avenging hand; but when the breath of spring poured down its balmy streams, then every heart was impressed with that salutary and comfortable truth, that the treasures of the divine clemency are inexhaustible. Thus the seasons and the elements, whose voice is so eloquent to those who can comprehend it, spoke to this discerning people,

K 2 and

* The Protestants are in the right; all those works of men dispose the people to idolatry. To express an invisible and present Deity, the temple should contain him alone.

and displayed to them the Author of the universe under all his various relations*.

There were here no discordant sounds; even the voice of the infant was taught to join the majestic choir; there was no profane or frisky music; the organ alone, which was far from being clamorous, was accompanied by the voice of the numerous people, and seemed the song of immortals, who joined these public orisons; no one entered or went out during the time of prayer; no burly Swifs, no troublesome beggar, interrupted the adoration of the faithful supplicants; the whole people were struck with a religious and profound awe; many lay prostrate, their faces against the earth. In the midst of this universal silent meditation, I was seized with a sacred terror; it seemed as if the Divinity had descended into the temple and filled it with his invisible presence.

There were boxes to receive alms; but they were placed in obscure nooks. This people could perform acts of charity without ostentation. During the time of adoration, the silence was so religiously observed, that the sanctity of the place, joined to the idea of the Supreme Being, pierced every heart with a profound and affecting impression.

The

* A savage wandering through the woods, contemplating heaven and earth, and discovering, so to say, the only Master that he knows, comes nearer to the true religion than the Carthusian, buried in his cell, and conversing with none but the phantoms of a heated imagination.

The exhortation of the pastor to his flock was simple, natural, and eloquent; but more from the matter than the style. He talked of God only to make him beloved by men, and to recommend humanity, gentleness, and patience; he did not endeavour to display his wit, when it was his business to affect the heart; it was a father that conversed with his children on those matters that were most eligible for them to pursue. These precepts had the greater effect, as they proceeded from the mouth of a man whose character was perfectly amiable. I could never have been tired; for this discourse consisted not of pompous declamation, or vague characters, or far-fetched figures, and still less of scraps of poetry mixed with the prose, by which it commonly becomes yet more insipid*.

“It is thus,” said my guide, “that every morning we make a public prayer; it lasts an hour, and the rest of the day the doors remain shut. We have scarce any religious feasts; but we have those that are civil, which relax the people without making them

* What, in our preachers, gives me the greatest disgust, is, that they have no fixed principle with regard to morals; they draw their ideas from their text, and not from the heart. To-day they are moderate and rational; to-morrow persecutors and enthusiasts. They offer nothing but words; and it is of little concern to them whether they contradict themselves or not, provided they make out their three points. I have heard one of them pillage the Encyclopaedia, and declaim against the encyclopaedists.

them licentious. On no day should man remain idle; by the example of nature, which never quits its operations, he ought never to reproach himself with having been quite inactive. Repose, however, is not idleness. Total inaction is a real damage to our country; and cessation from labour is in fact a diminutive of death. The time determined for prayer is sufficient to elevate the mind to God; long offices produce inattention and disgust; and all private prayers have less merit than those that excite the public devotion.

“ Let me recite to you the form of prayer used among us. Every one repeats it, and meditates on every sentiment it contains.

“ Thou one, uncreated Being! the wise Creator of this vast universe! since thy goodness hath presented it as a spectacle to man, since so weak a creature hath received from thee the precious gift of reflecting on this great and beautiful work, suffer not, that after the manner of the brute, he pass over the surface of this globe, without rendering homage to thy omnipotence and thy wisdom. We extol thy glorious works; we bless thy sovereign hand; we adore thee as our Judge; but we love thee as the universal Father of beings. Yes, thy goodness is equal to thy power; all things declare it; but, above all, our own hearts. If some transient evils here afflict us, it is, doubtless, because they are inevitable; moreover, it is thy pleasure, and that is to us sufficient;
we

we submit with confidence, and rely on thy infinite goodness, far from complaining, we offer up our thanks for thy having created us to know thee.

“ May every one adore thee after his own manner, according to the most affectionate, and most animated dictates of his heart. We do not wish to set bounds to his zeal. Thou hast deigned to speak to us, by the voice of nature only; all our devotion is confined to the adoring of thee, in blessing thy name, in crying toward thy throne, that we are weak, miserable, limited creatures, and have for ever need of thy supporting arm.

“ If we deceive ourselves, if any other worship, ancient or modern, is more pleasing in thy sight than ours, O vouchsafe to open our eyes, and dissipate the clouds that hang over our minds; we will faithfully obey thy precepts. But if thou art satisfied with this feeble homage, which we know to be due to thy power, and to thy truly paternal tenderness; give us the constancy to persevere in these sentiments of adoration with which we are inflamed. Preserver of human kind! thou, who with thy complacent regards embracest the whole human race, grant that charity may, in like manner, embrace the hearts of all the inhabitants of this earth, that they may all love like brethren, and pour forth to thee one song of love, adoration and thanksgiving!

“ We do not presume to pray for long life; whether thou takest us from this earth, or permittest us here
to

to remain, we shall never be absent from thy fight; we ask for virtue only, lest we should offend against thy impenetrable decrees; but, humble and totally resigned to thy will, vouchsafe, whether we pass by a gentle or painful death, vouchsafe to draw us toward thee, the source of eternal happiness. Our hearts pant after thy presence. May this mortal vestment fall off, and may we fly to behold thy glory! What we now see of thy greatness makes us long for a more extensive prospect. Thou hast done too much for man to refuse freedom to his thoughts; he therefore offers up his ardent vows to thee, because, as thy creature, he knows himself born to receive thy favours."

But, my dear Sir, I said, your religion if you will permit me to declare it, is, in a manner, the same with that of the ancient patriarchs, who adored God in spirit and in truth, on the tops of the mountains. — "Right; you have justly expressed it; our religion is that of Enoch, of Elias, and Adam, and therefore, is at least the most ancient. It is with religion as with laws; the most simple are the best. Adore God, love thy neighbour; hearken to that conscience, that judge which continually attends thee; never stifle that secret and celestial voice; all the rest is imposture, fraud, falsehood*. Our priests do not pretend to a particular inspiration from God; they call themselves our equals; they acknowledge, that,
like

* Our Author cannot refrain from reflecting on the impostures of the Romish church.

like us, they walk in darkness; they follow, however, that luminous point which God hath been pleased to set before us, and shew it to their brethren without despotism, and without ostentation. Cherish a pure morality, free from dogmatic principles, and you will banish atheism, fanaticism, and superstition. We have found this happy method, for which we return our sincere thanks to the Author of every good."

You adore a God; but do you admit of the immortality of the soul? What is your opinion of that great and impenetrable secret? All philosophers have endeavoured to resolve it; the wise man and the fool have passed their judgment; systems the most diversified, the most poetic, have been erected on that famous doctrine; it seems above all things to have excited the attention of legislators. What is the opinion of your age concerning it?

"We need but look round us," he replied, "to know that there is a God; we need but look into ourselves to know that there is something within us, which lives, which perceives, which thinks, which wills, and determines. We believe that the soul is distinct from matter, that it is intelligent by its nature. We reason but little on this subject; we love to believe all that elevates human nature; the system which exalts it most is to us the most pleasing; and we cannot think that ideas which do honour to the creatures of the Almighty God can ever be false. To adopt the most sublime plan is not to deceive ourselves, but to attain the true end. Incredulity is nothing but weakness,

weakness, and boldness of thought is the faith of an intelligent being. Why should we creep towards inanity, when we find that we have wings by which we can ascend to the Most High, and when there is nothing which contradicts that noble daring. If it were possible that we could deceive ourselves, man would have conceived of an order of things more excellent than that which exists; the sovereign power would then become limited, I had almost said his goodness.

“We believe that all souls are equal by their essence, but different by their qualities. The soul of a man and that of a brute are equally immaterial; but one has advanced a step farther than the other toward perfection; and it is that which constitutes its present state, which, however, is at all times liable to change.

“We suppose, moreover, that all the stars and all the planets are inhabited, but that nothing which is contained in one is to be found in another. This boundless magnificence, this infinite assemblage of various worlds, this glorious circle of existence, seems necessary in the vast plan of creation. These suns, then, these worlds so fair, so grand, so diversified, appear to us habitations all prepared for man; they circulate, they correspond, and are subordinate to each other. The human soul ascends to all these worlds, as by a gradual and brilliant ladder, that leads, at every step, to the highest degree of perfection. In this journey it forgets nothing it has seen,
or

or has learnt; it preserves the magazine of its ideas, which are its most valuable treasure, and by which it is constantly attended. When it launches forth to some sublime discovery, it soars above the peopled worlds already explored, and mounts in proportion to the knowledge and virtue it has acquired. The soul of Newton has flown, by its native vigour, over all the worlds that it once weighed. It would be unjust to suppose that death had power to extinguish that mighty genius. Such a destruction would be more afflicting, more inconceivable, than that of the whole material universe. It would be equally absurd to suppose, that his soul should be placed on a level with that of an ignorant or stupid being. In fact, it were to no purpose for a man to improve his mind, if it were not capable of elevation, either by contemplation, or by the exercise of virtue: but an internal sense, more powerful than all objections, says to him, *Exert all thy powers, and despise death; it depends on thyself to conquer, and to augment thy life, which is thought.*

“For those groveling souls that are plunged in the filth of vice, or of sloth, they will return to the point from whence they parted, or be yet more degraded; they have been for a long time attached to the rueful borders of inanity, have inclined toward senseless matter, and have formed a vile and brutal race; while the generous souls have soared toward the divine and eternal light, they have plunged into that darkness, where scarce is seen one pale ray of existence. A monarch, at his decease, becomes a mole;
mole;

mole; a minister, a venomous serpent, inhabiting some filthy marsh; while the writer he disdained, or rather could not comprehend, hath obtained a glorious rank among intelligent beings, the friends of humanity.

“Pythagoras discovered this equality of souls; he discerned the transmigration from one body to another; but it was in the same circle, and never extended beyond this globe. Our metempsychosis is more rational, and superior to the ancient. To those noble and generous souls, who have made the happiness of their brethren the rule of their conduct, death opens a glorious and brilliant career. What think you of our system?”—I am charmed with it; it is in no wise inconsistent either with the power or goodness of God. This progressive march, this ascent to different worlds, to the various revolving spheres, all the work of his hands, seems to me perfectly agreeable to the dignity of that Sovereign, who lays open all his dominions to the eye formed to survey them.—“Yes, my brother,” he replied, with rapture; “what prospect so interesting as the sight of all those worlds, that will enrich our souls with millions of novelties, by which they will incessantly advance toward perfection, and become more sublime, in proportion as they approach the Supreme Being; will know him more perfectly, will love him with more enlightened ardour, and at last plunge into the ocean of his immensity. O my soul, rejoice! thou canst not pass but from wonder to wonder; a prospect perpetually new, perpetually miraculous, at-

tends thee. How great are thy hopes? Thou shalt run through the immense scene of nature, till thou art lost in God, from whom thou derivest thy lofty origin.”—But the wicked, I said, they who have sinned against the laws of nature, have shut their hearts against the cry of pity, that have murdered the innocent, and reigned for themselves alone, what will become of them? Though I love not vengeance, yet I could with my own hands erect a hell for the punishment of certain inexorable souls, who, by pouring down tortures on the weak and the innocent, have made my blood boil with indignation.—“It is not for our weakness, constantly subordinate to so many passions, to say in what manner God will punish them. This, however, is certain; the wicked must feel the weight of justice; banished far from his sight will be every perfidious and cruel being, and all those that are indifferent to the misfortunes of others. Never shall the soul of Socrates, or Marcus Aurelius rencounter that of Nero. This we may venture to affirm; but it is not for us to fix the weights that shall enter the eternal balance. We believe, however, that those crimes which have not entirely obliterated the sentiments of humanity, that the heart which is not become totally insensible, that even kings, who have not thought themselves Gods, may become purified, by improving their natures during a long course of years; they will descend into those globes where physical evils predominating will be the useful scourge to make them sensible of their dependence, and of the need they have of clemency, and may serve to obliterate the prestiges

of their former pride. If they humble themselves under the hand that corrects them, if they follow the lights of reason, if they become sensible how far distant they are from the state they might enjoy, if they make some efforts to obtain it, then their pilgrimage will be greatly abridged; they will die in the prime of life, and will be lamented; while, smiling with great complacency on their rueful habitation, they will lament the lot of those who are compelled to remain after them upon an unhappy planet, from whence they are delivered. Thus it is, that they who fear death know not what they fear; their terrors are the offspring of their ignorance; and that ignorance is the first punishment of their crimes.

“Perhaps too, the most criminal will be deprived of the precious sensation of liberty: they will not be annihilated; for the idea of annihilation is repugnant to the nature of the human soul: there can be no annihilation under a creating, preserving, and restoring God. Let not the wicked man flatter himself with that resource, he will be for ever exposed to the all-piercing eye; persecutors of every kind will yet wretchedly subsist, but in the lowest class of existence; they will be incessantly subject to fresh tortures, that will renew their slavery and their misery; but the duration of their punishment God alone can determine.”

“THERE goes a living saint. That man you see in a plain purple robe, who supports himself by a stick, and whose gait and aspect discover neither ostentation nor affected modesty, is our prelate.”—How! your prelate on foot.—“Yes, in imitation of the first apostles. They have, however, lately given him a chair; but of that he makes no use, except from absolute necessity. His revenue flows almost entirely into the bosom of the poor; and when he bestows his donations, he does not first inquire if the man be of his particular opinion; it is sufficient for him that they are men, and that they are miserable; he is not opinionated, fanatic, inflexible, or persecutive; he does not abuse his sacred authority to place himself on a level with the throne; his aspect is constantly serene; the image of a gentle, uniform, and peaceful mind, that never knows warmth or solicitude, but in doing good. He frequently says to those he meets, ‘My friends, charity, as St. Paul says, goes before faith; be beneficent, and you have accomplished the law. Reprove your neighbour, if he err; but without pride, without bitterness. Persecute no man on account of belief; and take heed how you prefer yourself, in the bottom of your heart, to him that you have seen commit a fault; for to-morrow you will, perhaps be even more criminal.’

‘ Preach by example only. Reckon not among the
 ‘ number of your enemies the man who disposeth
 ‘ absolutely of his thoughts. Fanaticism, in its cruel
 ‘ perseverance, hath already caused too much evil,
 ‘ not to be dreaded, and prevented, even in its least
 ‘ appearances. That monster seems at first to flatter
 ‘ human pride, and to aggrandise the soul to which
 ‘ it hath access; but it soon hath recourse to fraud,
 ‘ to perfidy, and to cruelty; it tramples under foot
 ‘ every virtue, and becomes the most terrible scourge
 ‘ to humanity.’

But who, I said, is that magistrate, with a venerable port, that stops him, and with whom he converses with so much friendship?—“That is one of the fathers of his country; he is the head of the senate, who takes our prelate to dine with him. During their temperate and short repast, frequent mention will be made of the poor, the widow, and the orphan, and of the means of relieving their misfortunes. Such is the interest that unites them, and which they treat with the most lively zeal; they never enter into vain discussions of those antique and ludicrous prerogatives, which exercised, in so puerile a manner, the grave heads of your times.”

CHAP.

CHAP. XXI.

THE COMMUNION OF THE TWO INFINITES.

BUT who is that young man that I see surrounded by a busy crowd? What joy is expressed in all his motions! How his visage glows? What happiness has befallen him? From whence comes he?—“He comes from being initiated,” my guide gravely replied; “though we have but few ceremonies, yet we have one that answers to what in your time, they called the *first communion*. We observe with a watchful eye, the genius, the character, and most secret actions of a young man. When we perceive that he searches out solitary places for reflection; when we surprisè him with a melting eye; gazing earnestly on the vaulted roof of heaven, contemplating, in a sweet ecstacy, the azure curtain that seems ready to be drawn from before him, then there is no time to lose; then reason appears to have attained its full maturity, and he is become capable of receiving to advantage a display of the wonders of creation.

We make choice of a serene night, when the starry host shine forth in their fullest lustre. Accompanied by his friends and relations, the young man is conducted to our observatory; his eye is instantly applied to a telescope*; we cause Saturn, Jupiter, Mars,
 all

* The telescope is the moral cannon that has laid in ruins all those superstitions and phantoms that tormented the human

all the mighty bodies that float in order amidst the ethereal space, to pass before him; we open to him, fo to say, the infinite abyss; all those radiant globes press in crowds upon his astonished sight; then a venerable pastor says to him, with an awful, majestic voice, 'Young man, behold the God of the universe, ' who reveals himself to thee in the midst of his works; ' adore the God of these worlds, whose extensive ' power exceeds not only the sight of man, but even ' his imagination; adore that Creator, whose resplendent majesty is impressed on the front of these stars ' that obey his laws. When thou beholdest these ' prodigies, the works of his hand, think with what ' bounty* he is able to reward the heart that is devoted to him. Remember, that among his stupendous

man race. It seems as if our reason has been enlarged in proportion to the immeasurable space that has been discovered and traversed by the sight.

* Montequieu somewhere says, that the pictures we draw of hell are finished; but that when we would speak of eternal happiness, we know not what to promise the good folks. This thought is an abuse of that lively wit he sometimes applies improperly. Let any sensible man reflect but a moment on the number of keen and delicate pleasures that proceed from the mind. How far do they surpass those of the senses! and what is the body without the mind? What are our sensations when we chance to fall into a profound and delicious reverie, where the imagination roves without restraint, and creates to itself exquisite and variegated delights that have no resemblance to any material pleasures? Why cannot the power of the Creator increase and prolong

' pendous works, man, endowed with the faculty of ' perceiving and discerning them, holds the first ' rank; and that, as the child of God, he ought to ' venerate that respectable title.'

The scene is then changed; a microscope is brought, and a new universe, more astonishing, more wonderful than the former, is displayed before him. Those animated points that his eye for the first time beholds, that move in their inconceivable exility, and are endowed with the same organs as the giants of the earth, present to him a new attribute of the intelligence of the Creator.

The pastor then proceeds in the same tone: ' Feeble ' beings as we are, placed between two infinities, ' oppressed on every side by the force of the divine ' greatness, let us adore in silence the same hand that ' has illumined so many suns, and impressed with life ' these imperceptible atoms. That sight, doubtless, ' which has composed the delicate structure of the ' heart, the nerves, the minutest fibres of an emmet, ' can easily penetrate the inmost recesses of our hearts. ' What thought so hidden as to be concealed from ' that almighty eye, to which the lacinal way appears ' no more than the horn of a mite? Let us render ' our thoughts all worthy to be known by God, to ' whom

prolong that happy state? Is not that ecstacy which fills the soul of the just man, when meditating on his future state, a type of his future pleasure, when the veil shall be taken away, and he shall range over the vast plan of the universe.

‘whom they are ever exposed. How oft in the course of the day, may the soul mount towards the Supreme, and be strengthened by his presence! Alas! the whole course of our lives cannot be better employed than in forming, at the bottom of our hearts, an eternal hymn of praise, and acts of thanksgiving.’

“The young man remains agitated and astonished by the double impression that he receives almost at the same instant; he weeps with joy; he cannot satisfy his ardent curiosity; he is transported at every advance he makes in these two worlds; his words are nothing but a long hymn of admiration; his heart pants with surprise and awe. At these moments, with what energy, with what sincerity does he adore the Being of beings! How is he filled with the divine presence! How does the telescope extend, ennoble his ideas, and render him worthy to be an inhabitant of this wonderful universe? He is cured of his terrestrial ambition, and of the little hatreds that it engenders; he respects all men as animated with the same breath of life; he is the brother of all that the Creator has formed*.

“His glory, from that hour, is to reap in the heaven store of wonders; he appears to himself of more consequence, since he has been endowed with the capacity

* They endeavoured to ridicule a faint, who said, “Feed on, thou ewe, my sister; leap for joy, ye fish that are my brethren.” This faint was much more estimable than his fellows; he was, indeed, a philosopher.

capacity of understanding these great truths; he says to himself, God is manifest to me; my eye has visited Saturn, the star Sirius, and those suns that crowd the milky way; I find that my being is more noble than I imagined, since the Supreme has vouchsafed to establish a relation between my nihilty and his greatness. O! how happy am I to have received life and intelligence! I begin to see what will be the lot of the virtuous man. O most bountiful God! grant that I may eternally love and adore thee!

“He returns many times to feast on these sublime objects. From that day he is initiated to the rank of thinking beings; but he religiously keeps the secret, that others, who have not yet attained the age to enjoy such prodigies, may feel the same degree of pleasure and surprise. On the day consecrated to the praise of the Creator, it is an affecting sight to see on our observatory the numerous adorers of God falling on their knees, the eye applied to the telescopes, and the spirit in prayer, sending forth their souls with their sight, towards the Fabricator of these stupendous miracles*. We then sing certain hymns, composed in the vulgar tongue, by the first writers of

* If to-morrow the finger of the Almighty should write these words upon the clouds, in letters of fire, *Mortals, adore a God!* doubtless, every one would fall on his knees in adoration. Alas! thoughtless, stupid mortals! Is it necessary that God speak to thee in French, Chinese, or Arabic? What are the innumerable stars, rolling in vacuity, but sacred characters intelligible to every eye, and that manifestly declare a God, who reveals himself to us?

of our nation; they are in every mouth, and describe the wisdom and munificence of the Divinity. We cannot conceive how a whole people could formerly invoke God in a language they did not understand: that people must either have been very absurd, or have burned with a most devouring zeal.

“Frequently, among us, a young man, giving way to his transports, expresses to all the assembly the sentiments with which his heart is filled*; he communicates his enthusiasm to the most frigid tempers; divine love inflames and invigorates his expressions. The Eternal then seems to descend in the midst of us, to listen to his children, who entertain each other with his sacred cares and his paternal goodness. Our philosophers and astronomers are eager, on those days of festivity to reveal their choicest discoveries; as heralds of the Divinity, they make us sensible of his presence, even in those objects that appear to us the most inanimate. All things are filled with God they say, and all things reveal him †. We there-

* When a young man is seized with the enthusiasm of virtue, even though it should be false or dangerous, we should be cautious how we undeceive him. Leave him to himself; he will discover his error. Should you endeavour to correct him, you may, by one word, chance to destroy his soul's health.

† The exterior worship of the ancients consisted of feasts, of hymns, and dances, together with a very few dogmas. The Divinity was not regarded by them as a solitary being, armed with thunder-bolts; he vouchsafed to communicate him-

therefore doubt, whether, in all the extent of the kingdom, it is possible to find one atheist*. It is not fear that keeps him silent; we should think him too much worthy of pity to inflict any other punishment on him than shame; we should only banish him from amongst us, if he became an enemy to the public good, and obstinately determined to oppose a palpable, comfortable, and salutary truth †; but first we should enjoin him to go through an assiduous course of experimental physics. It would not be possible for him to oppose the evidence of that demonstrative science; it has discovered relations so surprising, so remote, and, at the same time, so simple, when once they are known; there are so many accumulated wonders that lay hid in its bosom, and which are now exposed to open day; in a word, nature is now so elucidated, even in its minutest parts, that he who should

himself, and to render his presence visible. They thought they did him more honour by feasts than by tears and lamentation. The legislature that is best acquainted with the human heart will always lead it to virtue by the road of pleasure.

* It is for the atheist to prove that the notion of a God is contradictory, and that it is impossible there should be such a being; it is the duty of him that denies to produce his reasons.

† When they tell me of the atheistic mandarins of China, who preach the most admirable morality, and devote themselves entirely to the public good, I will not give the lie to the history, but I will say, that of all things in the world, it appears to me the most incredible.

should deny an intelligent Creator would not only be regarded as a stupid wretch, but as a being totally perverse; and to find such a one among us would be a cause of mourning to the whole nation*.

“But, thank heaven! as no one in our city has the miserable folly to desire to distinguish himself by notions that are extravagant, and diametrically opposite to the universal judgment of mankind, we are all of one opinion on that important point; and that being settled, you will readily believe, that principles of the purest morality are easily deduced, supported, as they are on that unshaken basis †.

“They thought, in your age, that it was impossible to possess the people with a religion purely spiritual; that was a grievous error; many of your philosophers reviled human nature on that false supposition. The idea of a God devoid of every imperfection was not, however, so difficult to conceive. It is proper to repeat here once more, ‘That it is the soul that perceives God.’ Why should falsehood be more natural to man than truth? It would have been sufficient for your age to have banished those impostors that trafficked in sacred things, who pretended to be mediators

* The omnipresence of a great and bountiful God ennobles the frame of nature, and spreads every where a certain vivifying and animated air, which a sceptic and desponding doctrine can never give.

† “I fear God,” said a certain person; “and after God, I fear none but the man who does not fear him.”

mediators between God and man, and who diffused prejudices even more vile than the gold by which they were rewarded. In a word, idolatry, that ancient monster, whom the painters, the statuaries, and poets, have, to the misfortune and blinding of mankind, rivalled each other with deifying, has been overthrown by our triumphant hands.

“That there is but one God, an uncreated spiritual Being, is the basis of our religion. There needs but one sun to enlighten the universe; there needs but one luminous idea to enlighten human reason; all those foreign and factitious aids, with which they would assist the mind, serve only to confound it; they sometimes give it, we confess, an energy that the simple truth does not always show; but that is a state of intoxication which becomes dangerous. A religious spirit has produced superstition; particular forms of adoration have been prescribed; and the liberty of mankind, being attacked in its most valuable privilege, has justly revolted. We abhor that sort of tyranny; we ask nothing of the heart that it does acknowledge; but is it possible for any one to oppose those luminous and affecting impressions that are offered him merely for his own happiness?

“It is to offend against the infinitely perfect Being, to calumniate human reason, or to represent it as an uncertain and false guide. That divine law, which speaks from one end of the world to the other, is far preferable to all factitious religions invented by priests, whose fatal effects prove them to be false; they form a tottering edifice that is in perpetual need

of fresh props. The natural law is an unshaken tower, from whence issue, not discord, but peace, and unanimity*. Those impostors, who have made God speak according to the particular passions, have caused the most horrid actions to pass for virtues; and by proclaiming a barbarous God, those wretches have driven many men of tender feelings into atheism, who naturally became more desirous of destroying the idea of a vindictive being, than of displaying it to mankind†.

We

* The natural law, so simple and so pure, speaks an uniform language to all nations; it is intelligible to every sensible being; it is not surrounded by shadows and mysteries; it is animated; it is graven on every heart in indelible characters; its decrees are secure from the revolutions of the earth, from the injuries of time, and from the caprice of custom; every virtuous man is one of its priests; errors and vices are its victims; the universe is its temple; and God is the only Divinity it adores. These things have been said a thousand times; but it is good still to repeat them. Yes, morality is the only religion necessary to man; when he is rational, then he is religious; when he is useful, then he is virtuous. Every man perceives, when he seriously examines his own heart, when he considers his own situation, what he owes to himself and to others.

† It is by crushing men by the weight of terrors, it is by confounding their understanding, that most legislators have made slaves, and have flattered themselves with keeping them eternally under their yoke. The hell that some Christians have imagined, is, without doubt, the most injurious blasphemy that ever was offered to the divine justice and mercy. Evil ever makes a stronger impression on men than good;

“We, on the contrary, it is on the goodness of the Creator, so manifestly expressed, that we elevate our hearts towards him. The shadows of this low world, the transient evils that afflict us, even death itself, cannot terrify us. All these are doubtless useful, necessary, and even tend to produce our greater felicity. Our knowledge is bounded, and therefore cannot comprehend the designs of the Omniscient. If the whole universe were to pass away, what should we fear, seeing, whatever happens, we must necessarily fall under the protection of God.”

CHAP.

good; therefore, a malevolent divinity strikes the imagination more strongly than one that is beneficent. For this reason it is that a gloomy, mournful aspect prevails in all the religions of the world; they dispose mankind to melancholy; the name of God perpetually renews in them a sense of terror. A filial confidence, a respectful hope, would do far more honour to the Author of every good; and with this genuine Christianity perfectly accords; it conveys no idea of punishment for wickedness but that of parental chastisement, the object of which is to reform and fit the sufferer for felicity.

CHAP. XXII.

A REMARKABLE MONUMENT.

AS I came out of the temple, they conducted me to a place not far distant, to see a monument lately erected. It was of marble; it excited my curiosity, and inspired me with a desire to see through that veil of emblems with which it was surrounded. They would not explain it; but left me the pleasure and reputation of the discovery.

A commanding figure attracted my regard; by the sweet majesty of its countenance, by the dignity of its stature, and by the attributes of peace and concord, I saw that it was sacred Humanity. It was surrounded by other kneeling statues, representing women in the attitude of grief and remorse. Alas! this emblem was not difficult to explain; they represented the nations demanding pardon of Humanity for the cruel wounds they had given her during the last twenty centuries. France, on her knees, implored pardon for the horrible night of St. Bartholomew, for the cruel revocation of the edict of Nantes, and for the persecution of those sages that sprung upon her bosom. How, with her gentle aspect, could she ever commit such foul crimes! England abjured her fanaticism, her two roses, and stretched out her hand to philosophy; she promised to shed no blood but that of tyrants*. Holland detested the parties

* She has kept her word.

parties of Gomar and Arminius, and the punishment of the virtuous Barneveldt. Germany concealed her haughty front, and saw with horror the history of her intestine divisions, and of her frantic theologic rage, that was so remarkably contrasted by the natural coldness of her constitution. Poland beheld, with indignation those despicable confederates, who, in my days, tore her entrails, and renewed the atrocities of the croisades. Spain, still more criminal than her sisters, groaned at the thought of having covered the new continent* with thirty-five millions of carcases, with having pursued the deplorable remains of a thousand nations into the depths of forests, and into the caverns of rocks, and having taught animals, less ferocious than themselves, to drink human blood. Spain may sigh and supplicate her fill, but never ought to hope for pardon; the punishment of so many wretches condemned to the mines ought for ever to be urged against her† The statuary had represented

* The Europeans in the new world: what a book yet unwrote!

† When I think on those wretched beings who enjoy nought of human nature but grief, buried alive in the entrails of the earth, sighing after that sun which they have had the misfortune once to see, but shall never more behold, who groan in their horrid dungeons each time they breathe, and who know that they shall never escape from that frightful night, but to enter into the eternal darkness of the grave; then a shivering runs through all my frame, I seem to descend into their infernal regions, I breathe with

represented several mutilated slaves, who, looking up to heaven, cried for vengeance. We retired with terror; we seemed to hear their cries. The figure of Spain was composed of a marble veined with blood; and those frightful streaks are as indelible as the the memory of her crimes*.

At a distance, was seen the figure of Italy, the original cause of so many evils, the first source of those furies that have covered the two worlds. She was prostrate, her face against the earth; she stifled with her feet the flaming torch of excommunication; she seemed fearful to solicit her pardon. I would have examined her aspect more closely; but, on a near approach, I found a thunder-bolt that lately fell had blackened her visage and destroyed all her features.

Radiant Humanity raised her pathetic front amidst all these humble and humiliated figures. I remarked that the statuary had given her the features of that free and courageous nation, who broke the chains of tyrants;

them the stench of the torches that illumine their hideous dwellings; I see that gold, the idol of mankind, in its true aspect; and something tells me, that Providence ought to attach to that metal, the source of so many barbarities, the chastisement of those innumerable evils that it causes, even before it sees the day.

* Twenty millions of men have fallen by the sword of Spaniards, and the kingdom of Spain contains scarce seven millions.

tyrants; the hat of the great Tell* adorned her head, and formed the most respectable diadem that ever bound the brows of a monarch†. She smiled upon august Philosophy, her sister, whose pure hands were spread towards heaven, by whom she was regarded with the highest complacency.

In going from this place, I observed toward the right, on a magnificent pedestal, the figure of a negroe; his head was bare, his arm extended, his eye fierce, his attitude noble and commanding; round him were spread the broken relics of twenty scepters; and at his feet I read these words: *To the Avenger of the New World.*

I cried out with surprize and joy.—“Yes,” they said, with equal rapture; “nature has at last produced

* William Tell, the famous Swiss, who was commanded by Griser, governor of Switzerland for the emperor Albertus, to shoot an apple off his son's head, standing at a considerable distance, which he did without hurting the child. He was one of the principal persons concerned in the revolution which happened in that country, in the year 1307.

† If Plato was to revisit the earth, he would certainly regard with admiration the Helvetic republics. The Swiss have excelled in that which constitutes the essence of a republic, which is, to preserve its own liberties without attempting any thing against that of others. Good faith, candour, a love of labour, an alliance with all nations, unknown in history, strength and courage supported in the midst of a profound peace, notwithstanding the difference of religions, are what may serve as a model to all nations, and make them blush at their follies.

duced this wonderful man, this immortal man, who was to deliver a world from the most outrageous, the most inveterate and atrocious tyranny. His sagacity, his valour, his patience, his fortitude, and virtuous vengeance, have been rewarded; he has broke afunder the chains of all his countrymen. So vast a number of slaves, oppressed by the most odious servitude, seemed but to wait his signal to become so many heroes. Not the torrent that breaks the dykes, nor the bursting thunder, have a more sudden, or more violent effect. At the same instant, they poured forth the blood of all their tyrants; French, Spanish, English, Dutch, and Portuguese, all became a prey to the sword, to fire, and poison. The soil of America drank with avidity that blood for which it had so long thirsted; and the bones of their ancestors, cowardly butchered, seem to rise up and leap for joy.

“The natives have reassumed their unalienable rights, as they were those of nature. This heroic avenger has given liberty to a world, of which he is the titular deity; and the other world has decreed him crowns and homages. He came like the storm which extends itself over some criminal city that the thunder is ready to destroy; he was the exterminating angel, to whom God resigned his sword of justice; he was shown by this example, that sooner or later, cruelty will be punished; and that Providence keeps in reserve such mighty souls, to send them upon the earth, that they might restore that equilibrium which the iniquity of ferocious ambition had destroyed*.

* This hero doubtless, would have spared those generous quakers, who have lately given their slaves their liberty;
a me.

CHAP. XXIII.

THE BREAD, THE WINE, &c.

I WAS so pleased with my conductor, that I was fearful every instant lest he should quit me. The hour for dinner had been rung; as I was far distant from my lodging, and as all my acquaintance were dead, I was looking out for some tavern, where I* might civilly invite him to dine, and acknowledge his complaisance at least; but was continually at a loss, for we passed through several streets without seeing one place of entertainment.

What is become, I said, of all those taverns, all those eating-houses, that, united and divided in the same employ, were continually at variance with each other*, that swarmed at every corner, and formerly peopled

a memorable and affecting epoch, at which I shed tears of joy, and that makes me detest those Christians who do not imitate them.

* He that turns the spit must not lay the cloth, and he that lays the cloth must not turn the spit. It would be curious to examine the bye-laws of the several communities of the good city of Paris. The parliament sat gravely for several days, in order to fix the invariable rights of a roasting cook. A remarkable cause of this kind has lately occurred. The company of booksellers of Paris pretend, that the genius of a Montefquieu, a Corneille, &c. belongs of right

peopled the city?—"That was one of the abuses your age suffered to subsist; they tolerated a mortal sophistication that killed the citizens when in perfect health. The poor, that is to say, three parts of the town, not being able to procure the natural wines, compelled by thirst, and by the necessity of repairing their exhausted strength after labour, drank a flow poison in that detestable liquor, whose daily use concealed the perfidy; their nerves were weakened, their entrails dried up. "What could you expect? The duty was become so excessive, that it greatly surpassed the price of the commodity. One would have imagined that wine was forbid by the law, or that the foil of France was become that of England. Of but little consequence was it that a whole city was poisoned, provided the farmers of the taxes were able to advance in their contracts every year*. The taxes must

right to them; that whatever proceeds from the brain of a philosopher forms a part of their patrimony; that all human learning, when once stamped upon paper, becomes a commodity in which no man has a right to deal but themselves; and that the author of the work can reap no sort of advantage from it, but what they please to grant him. These extraordinary pretensions have been publicly exposed in a printed memoir. M. Linguet, a man of letters, of eloquence, and of a fruitful genius, has poured down ridicule in great plenty on those ludicrous venders of books; but, alas, the force of the ridicule falls on the wretched legislation of the commerce of France.

* A peasant had an ass that carried panniers, which his master filled with apples to the brim. The poor animal, though

must be raised, the price of wine must be enormously enhanced, to satisfy the horrible avarice of the farmer-general; and as the great people were not affected by this secret poison, it was very indifferent to them how fast the scum of the earth disappeared, for so they called the labouring part of the nation. "How was it possible that they could willingly turn their eyes from a murderous abuse, and one that was so fatal to society? What! could they publicly sell poison in your city, and the magistraté give himself no concern about it? O barbarous people! Among us, the crime of the cheating adulterator is capital; the poisoner would be put to death; but we have swept away those vile tax-gatherers, who corrupted every commodity they touched. Our wines arrive in the public market as nature has formed them, and the citizen of Paris, rich or poor, drinks in a salutary liquor,

though heavily laden, trod on with obedient and patient steps. At a small distance from his village, the clown saw some ripe apples that hung over the path. "O, says he, you can carry these, as you carry the others so well." The ass, as patient as his master was rapacious, redoubled his efforts, but his strength was unequal to his obedience. They had not gone far before the clown saw an apple lie upon the ground. "O, for this one, he said, one can never make any difference." The poor beast was unable to reply; but his strength was exhausted, he sunk, and died under his burden.

Now, the moral is this. The peasant is the prince, and the ass is the people: but they must be a very pacific, ass-like people indeed, who will suffer themselves to be crushed to death: if they have any spirit, they will die first.

quor, a health to his king, to the king that he loves, and by whom he is both beloved and esteemed."—And the bread, is that dear?—"It is constantly at the same price* ; for we have wisely established public granaries, always full of corn, in case of necessity; and which we do not imprudently sell to strangers, to buy it again twice as dear three months after. They have balanced the interest of the grower and the consumer, and both have therein found their account. Exportation is not forbid, as it is highly useful; but it is confined to judicious bounds. A man of ability and integrity watches over this equilibrium, and shuts the ports, when it inclines too much to one side*. Besides, canals are now cut through the

* The best method to diminish the vices of a people is to render them easy and content. Necessity begets three-fourths of their crimes. The people, among whom reigns plenty, are not pestered with thieves or murderers. The first maxim that a king should learn is, that the good manners of a people depend upon a competency of provisions.

† We make the finest speculations in the world; We calculate, we write, we are immersed in political ideas, and never were errors so multiplied. Common sense would certainly set these matters in a much clearer light. We are become barbarians and sceptics, with the pretended balance of reason in our hands. Let us again become men. It is the heart, and not the head, that forms great and generous actions. Henry IV. was the best of kings, not because he had more extensive views than others, but because being sincerely the friend of man, his heart dictated those measures that secured their happiness. What an unhappy age is that, when they only reason about it.

the kingdom; we have joined the Saon to the Moselle and the Loire, and have thus formed a new junction between the two seas infinitely more useful than the ancient. Commerce spreads its treasures from Amsterdam to Nantes, and from Rouen to Marseilles; we have formed a canal in Provence, which was wanted by that fine country, favoured by the most benign regards of the sun. In vain, did a zealous citizen offer you his discoveries and his labour; while you maintained a number of trifling workmen at a great expence, you suffered that great man to attend for twenty years in a forced inactivity. In a word, our lands are so well cultivated, the rank of a husbandman is become so reputable, and such order and liberty reign throughout the country, that if any man in power should abuse it, by committing a monopoly, justice, who lifts her balance over the palace of the king, would immediately bridle his temerity. Justice is no longer an empty name, as it was in your age; her sword descends on every guilty head; and examples of this sort should be calculated more to intimidate the great than the common people, as they are a hundred times more disposed to fraud, to rapine, and oppression of every kind."—Inform me more particularly, I entreat you, of this important matter. It seems you have adopted the prudent method of magazing your corn; that is wisely done; you are thereby sure to prevent a public calamity. My age committed grievous errors in this matter; they were skillful in calculations; but they never made allowance for the horrid quantity of abuses. Writers, who had good designs, supposed a just regulation,

gulation, because with that all things run on perfectly easy. O, how they argued about the famous law of exportation*! and while they were busied in their fine disputations, how the people suffered by famine

* This famous law, which was to have been the signal of public felicity, has been the signal of famine. It has destroyed the good effects of the most fruitful harvests; it has devoured the poor at the door of the granaries that cracked with the weight of corn. A mortal scourge, unknown to the nation, has rendered its own soil a stranger, and has displayed the most horrid depravation of humanity; man has shown himself the most cruel enemy to man. Terrible example, and as dangerous as the scourge itself! In a word, the law has consecrated private inhumanity. I am very ready to suppose great benevolence in those writers, who have been the supporters of this law; perhaps it may one day do good; but it must be eternally reproached with having caused, though undesignedly, the death of thousands of men, and the miseries of those that death has spared. They were too precipitate; they foresaw all, except the avarice of man, so strongly excited by that dangerous allurements. It is a syphon (as M. Linguet has emphatically expressed it) that has been put into the hands of commerce, and by which it has sucked out the substance of the people. The public clamour should take place of the public gazettes. We have heard the cries of grief; therefore the institution is bad. That the evil proceeds from a local cause is no argument; it should be foreseen and prevented; it should be remembered, that an article of the utmost necessity ought not to be abandoned to fortuitous events; that so great a novelty, in a vast kingdom, would give it a shock that would certainly oppress the weakest part. The oeconomists, however, promised themselves the contrary. They must avow, that they have been misled, even by a desire to
serve

famine! "Thank Providence who has watched over this kingdom, or you would have fed on the grass of the field; but it had pity on you, and pardoned you, because you knew not what you did. How prolific is error!

"There is one profession, which is common to almost all the inhabitants, which is that of agriculture,
taken

serve the public; that they had not sufficiently matured their project; that they had considered it separately only, whereas in the political œconomy all things are connected. It is not sufficient to be calculators; they should be statesmen; they should consider what will be destroyed or altered by the passions, and what effect the weight of the rich will have on the poor. They have considered the object from three points of view only, and have omitted that which was of the utmost importance, that which related to the labouring part of the people, and who compose three fourths of the nation. The price of their daily labour is not increased, and the avarice of the farmers-general holds them in a still greater dependence; they are not able to appease the cries of their children by redoubling their labours. The dearth of bread has been the thermometer of other provisions, and each private person has found himself less rich by one half. This law, therefore, has only served as a screen to increase legally the most horrid monopolies; it has been turned against the nation whom it was to have made flourish. Sigh, writers! and though you have followed the generous notions of a heart truly patriotic, learn how dangerous it is not to know your age and mankind, and to give them a wholesome gift which they may turn into a poison. It remains for you now to comfort the sick, to point out their remedy, and, if it be possible, to save them from destruction. *Hic labor, hoc opus.*

taken in its fullest extent. The women, as weak, are destined to cares purely domestic, never laboured the land; their hands prepared the wool, the flax, &c. Man would blush to load them with any laborious employ.

“ Three things are held in peculiar honour among us; to be the father of a child, to cultivate a field, and to build a house. The culture of the land is also moderate; the husbandman does not toil from early dawn till after sun-set, bear all the heat of the day, and exhausted sink, imploring in vain a small portion of what springs from the labour of his hands. Can there be a destiny more distressful, more horrid, than that of the poor peasant, who finds his labours continually increasing, and fills with groans the short space of his days? What slavery is not preferable to the eternal struggle against those vile tyrants who continually pillage their huts, by imposing taxes on extreme indigence? The excess of contempt, with which they are treated, makes them insensible even to despair; and, in his deplorable condition, the oppressed, degraded villager, while he ploughs the heavy land, bows down his head, and finds no difference between himself and his ox.

“ Our fertile plains resound with songs of joy; the father of each family sets the example: the task is easy; and when it is done, joy begins; the intervals of repose render their labour more vigorous; and it is constantly attended by sports or rural dances. Formerly, they went to the towns in search of pleasure;

fore; now they find it in the villages, where each one bears a smiling visage. Labour has no longer an ugly and forbidding aspect, as it no longer resembles slavery; a gentle voice invites them to their duty, and all becomes easy, and even agreeable. In short, as we have not that number of idle subjects, which, like stagnating humours, impedes the circulation of the body politic, each individual has time for pleasing amusement, and no one rank is crushed to support another.

“ You will easily conceive, therefore, that having no monks, nor priests, nor numerous domestics, nor useless valets, nor workmen employed in childish luxuries, a few hours of labour are sufficient for the public wants. Our lands produce plenteous crops of every kind; what is superfluous we send to foreigners, and receive in return other commodities.

“ You will find our markets abundant in all things necessary to life; pulse, fruits, fowls, fish, &c. The rich do not, by their extravagance, oppress the poor; far from us is the fear of not having a sufficiency; we never practice the insatiable avidity of procuring three times more than we can consume; we regard dissipation with horror.

“ If nature, during one year, treats us with rigour, the scarcity does not cost the lives of thousands; the granaries are opened, and the wise precautions of man, softens the inclemency of the air and the wrath of heaven. A food that is meagre, dry, badly pre-

pared, and of unwholesome juices, does not enter the stomach of the man accustomed to hard labour; the rich do not separate the finest flour, and leave to others the bran only; such an outrage would be regarded as a shameful crime; if we should know that a single man languished for want, we should all regard ourselves as culpable; every man would lament his crime with tears.

“The poorest subject, therefore, is free from all apprehensions of want; famine, like a threatening spectre, does not call the labourer from his straw, while he is drowning his griefs for a few minutes in sleep. He rises without sorrowfully regarding the dawning day. When he would appease the sensations of hunger, he is not fearful of conveying, with his food, poison into his veins.

“They who are in possession of riches employ them in making new and useful experiments; such as serve more clearly to investigate a science, or carry an art toward perfection; they erect majestic edifices; they are distinguished by honourable enterprizes; their fortune does not flow into the lap of a foul concubine, or upon an iniquitous table, where roll three dice; their wealth takes a form, a consistence that is respectable in the pleased eyes of the citizens. The darts of envy, therefore, never attack their possessions; we bless those generous hands, which, as depositaries of the gifts of Providence, have fulfilled its views, by erecting such useful monuments.

“But

“But when we consider the wealthy of your age, the scavengers' carts, I think, did not contain matter more vile than their souls; gold in their hands, baseness in their hearts, they formed a kind of conspiracy against the poor; they rioted in the labour, the care, and pains of a numerous, unfortunate people; they regarded with unconcern the sweat of their brows, and those terrors that made them see an old age abandoned to want; their violence became justice; the laws were only exerted to sanctify their robberies. As a fire destroys all that is near it, so they destroyed all that joined to their lands; and if they were robbed but of an apple, they raised incessant clamours, and death alone could expiate so enormous a crime.” —What could I reply? I held down my head; and falling into a profound reverie, I walked concentrated in my thoughts.—“You will have other subjects for reflection,” said my guide; “remark (as your eyes are fixed on the ground) that the blood of animals does not flow in the streets and awake the idea of carnage; the air is freed from that cadaverous scent, which engendered so many diseases. A clean appearance is the most certain sign of public order and harmony; it reigns in every part. From a salutary, and I will venture to say, moral precaution, we have established slaughter-houses out of the town. If nature has condemned us to eat the flesh of animals, we should at least spare ourselves the sight of their death. The trade of a butcher is followed by foreigners driven from their country, they are protected by the law; but we do not rank them in the class of citizens; no one of us exercises that sanguinary and
cruel

cruel art; we are fearful lest it should insensibly accustom our brethren to lose the natural impression of pity, which, you know, is the most amiable and most worthy present nature has given us*.

CHAP. XXIV.

THE PRINCE A PUBLICAN.

“YOU are desirous to dine,” said my guide; “for the walk has procured you an appetite. Very well; let us enter this public house.”—I stopped short. You do not observe, I said, this is some nobleman’s gate; there are his arms; it is a prince that lives here.—“Aye, certainly, he is a prince; for he always keeps three open tables; one for himself and his family, another for strangers, and a third for the necessitous.”—“Are there many such tables kept in town.”—“Yes, by all the princes.”—“You must then have a great number of idle parasites.”—“Not at all; for when any one makes a practice of it,

* The Banians eat nothing that has had life; they are even fearful of killing the least insect; they throw rice and beans into the river, and grain upon the earth for the nourishment of the fish and birds. When they meet a hunter or fisher, they pray him earnestly to desist from his enterprise; and if he be deaf to their prayers, they offer him money for his gun or nets; and if that will not do, they trouble the waters, and cry with all their strength to drive away the birds. History of Voyages.

it, and is not a stranger, he is marked; the censors of the city inquire into his abilities, and assign him an employment; or if he be found fit for nothing but to eat, he is banished the city, as in the republic of bees, they drive all those from the hive who are only able to consume the common stock.”—You have then censors?—“Yes; or they rather merit another name; they are monitors that bear about the torch of reason, and cure indocile or rebellious spirits, by employing sometimes the eloquence of the heart, and sometimes gentleness and address.

“These tables are intended for the aged, the sick, teeming women, orphans, and strangers. Every one sits down without shame, and without hesitation; they there find a wholesome, light, and plentiful repast. This prince, who respects humanity, does not display a luxury as offensive as it is fastuous; he does not employ three hundred men in providing a dinner for twelve persons; his table does not represent the decorations of an opera; he does not glory in what is a real disgrace, in a senseless, monstrous profusion*; when he dines, it is sufficient that he has an appetite; he thinks, it would be to make a god of himself, to have a hundred dishes served up to him,

* When we see the print of Gargantua, that has a mouth as large as an oven, and swallows at one meal twelve hundred pounds of bread, twenty oxen, a hundred sheep, six hundred fowls, fifteen hundred hares, two thousand quails, a thousand barrels of wine, six thousand peaches, &c. &c. who does not say, “That is the mouth of a king?”

him, which, like the ancient idols he could not taste."

While we were conversing, we crossed two courts, and entered a very long hall, which was that for strangers. One table, already served in several places, ran the whole length of the hall. They honoured my great age with an armed chair; they gave us a nourishing soup, some pulse, a few wild fowl, and some fruit, all plainly dressed*.

This, I said, is admirable. O, how excellently are riches employed, when they feed the hungry! I find this way of thinking far more noble, and more worthy of their rank. . . . All passed with the greatest order; a decent and animated conversation gave an additional pleasure to this public table. The prince appeared; he gave his orders on one side and the other, in a noble and affable manner; he came smiling to me, and inquired about the age I lived in; he conjured me to be sincere. Alas! I said, your distant ancestors were not so generous as you are; they passed their days in hunting* and at table;

*I have seen a king, entering the hotel of a prince, through a large court filled with wretches, who cried, with a languishing voice, "Give us some bread?" and after hearing their cries, without making any reply, the king and the prince have sat down to a dinner that cost near a millioin of livres.

* The chase should be regarded as an ignoble, wretched diversion; we should never kill any animals but from necessity;

table; if they killed hares, it was from idleness, and not to feed those who had fed them; they never raised their minds to any great and useful work; they expended millions in dogs and valets, in horses and flatterers. In a word, they followed the trade of courtiers; they abandoned the cause of their country.

Every one lifted up his hands in amazement: I had the greatest difficulty to make them believe it.— "History," they said, "does not tell us this; on the contrary——" Ah! I replied, the historians were still more criminal than the princes.

C H A P.

fity; and of all employments, it is surely the most ungrateful. I always read with a repeated attention what Montaigne, Rousseau, and other philosophers have wrote on the chase. I love those good Indians who respect even the blood of animals. The natural dispositions of men are painted in the sort of pleasures they pursue; and what a wretched pleasure to bring down a bloody partridge from the air! to massacre a number of hares under their feet! to follow twenty howling dogs, and see them tear a poor animal! He is weak, he is innocent, he is timidity itself; a free inhabitant of the forest, he falls into the cruel jaws of his enemies, while man pursues, and pierces his heart with a javelin; the barbarian smiles to see his beautiful sides besmeared with blood, and the fruitless tears stream from his eyes. A diversion like this must take its source from a heart naturally insensible; and the character of a hunter is that of an indifference prompt to change into cruelty.

CHAP. XXV.

THE THEATRE.

AFTER dinner, they proposed going to the play. I always loved the theatre, and shall love it a thousand years hence, if I should live so long. My heart bounded with joy. What play is it? Which of all your dramas is reckoned the master-piece by the people? Shall I see the Persian, Grecian, Roman, or French drefs? Will they dethrone some stupid tyrant, or stab some weak unguarded wretch? Shall I see a conspiracy or some ghost ascend from the tomb at the found of thunder? But, gentlemen, have you any good actors? they have been at all times as scarce as great poets.—“Why, yes, they take pains; they study; they suffer themselves to be instructed by the best authors, that they may not wretchedly murder the sense; they are docile, though less illiterate than those of your day. You could scarce, they say, produce one tolerable actor or actresses; the rest were all worthy of the booths on the Boulevards*. You had a small miserable theatre in a city that rivalled Rome and Athens; and that theatre was miserably governed. The comedian, to whom

* The Boulevards are a part of the ancient ramparts of Paris, which in the summer months are lined with a great number of coffee and music houses, puppet shews, conjurers, wild beasts, rope dancers, and every other kind of low diversion.

whom a fortune was given that he was far from meriting, had the insolent pride to harass the man of genius, who found himself obliged to resign to him his long-laboured piece*. These men did not blush to refuse, or play with regret, the best dramas, while those they received with rapture bore, by that very testimony, the marks of sudden reprobation. To conclude, our actors do not interest the public with the quarrels of their dirty, miserable barn.

“We have four theatres, in the middle of the four quarters of the city. They are supported by the government; for they are made public schools of taste and morality. We have discovered all that influence which the ascendancy of genius has over sensible

* In France, the government is monarchical and the theatre republican¶. By their present manner of proceeding, the dramatic art will not be soon brought to perfection. I will venture to affirm, that every piece of any excellence will be proscribed by the government. Authors write tragedies on antique subjects; we must have romances, and not representations capable of affecting and instructing the nation; lull us with some old story of a cock and a bull; but do not describe modern events, and least of all such men as now exist.

¶ There are no managers, or at least separate proprietors, at either of the theatres of Paris. The whole company make one body, and divide the profits among them.

sensible minds*. Genius has produced the most wonderful effects, without labour and without violence. It is in the hands of the great poets that are deposited, so to say, the hearts of their fellow-citizens, and which they modify after their own pleasure. How criminal are they, when they produce dangerous principles! but how short is our most lively acknowledgment, when they combat vice and support humanity! Our dramatic authors have no other view than the improvement of human nature; they all strive to elevate and strengthen the mind, and to render

* At the fair, and on the ramparts, they give the people pieces that are gross, ridiculous, and obscene, when it were so easy to give them such as are elegant, pleasing, instructive, and adapted to their capacities; but it is of little concern to those that govern, whether the body be poisoned at the public house, by adulterated wine poured into pewter vessels, or the mind corrupted at the fair by wretched farces. If the lessons for theft that are given by the buffoon Nicolet, and which are regarded as strokes of wit, are followed, a gibbet is presently erected. There is even a sentence of the police that expressly condemns the people to see licentious exhibitions, and that forbids the players of the Boulevards to perform any thing that is rational, and that out of regard to the respectable privileges of the king's comedians. It is in a polite age; it was in the year 1767, that this sentence was published. With what contempt do they treat the poor people! How is their instruction neglected, as if there were reason to fear their acquiring any just lights! It is true, that, in return, they cull, with the greatest nicety, the verses that are to be pronounced on the French theatre.

render it independent and virtuous. The good citizens themselves ready and assiduous in promoting those chef-d'oeuvres that affect, interest, and endow the heart with that salutary emotion that disposes it to compassion; the characteristic of true greatness*.

“We arrived at a spacious place, in the midst of which was situate an edifice of a majestic composition. On the top of the front were placed several allegorical figures. On the right was Thalia, plucking off the mask with which vice had covered her visage, and with her finger pointing to her deformity. On the left, Melpomene, armed with a poignard, opened the breast of a tyrant, and exposed to every eye the serpents that devoured his heart.

The inside of the theatre formed an advanced semicircle; so that the spectators were all commodiously distributed. Every one was seated; and when I recollected,

* What force, what effect, what certain triumph, would not our theatre have, if government, instead of regarding it as an asylum for idlers, would consider it as the school of virtue and of the duties of a citizen! But what have men of the greatest genius amongst us done? they have taken their subjects from the Greeks, the Romans, Persians, &c. they have presented us with foreign, or rather factitious manners. Harmonious poets, faithless painters, they have drawn ideal pictures; with their heroes, their tumid verses, their monotony of passions, and their five acts, they have depraved the dramatic art; which is nothing more than a simple, faithful, animated painting of the manners of our cotemporaries.

collected the fatigue I had formerly suffered to see a play, I found this people more prudent, more attentive to the convenience of their fellow-citizens; they had not the insolent avidity to cram in more persons than the house would conveniently hold; there were some places always left empty for strangers; the company was brilliant; the ladies were elegantly dressed, and decently disposed.

The performance opened with a symphony adapted to the piece that was to be represented. Are we at the opera? I exclaimed; this music is sublime.—“We have found the mean of uniting, without confusion, the two exhibitions in one, or rather of reviving the alliance of poetry and music that was formed by the ancients. During the interacts of our dramas, they entertain the audience with animated songs, that paint the sentiments, and dispose the mind for the enjoyment of what is going to be offered. Far from us is banished all effeminate, capricious, or noisy music, that speaks not to the heart. Your opera was a grotesque, monstrous composition. We have reserved all of it that was good. In your own time it was far from being secure from the just reproach of men of sense and taste*; but now”

As he said these words, the curtain rose. The scene was at Touloufe; I saw its capitol, its magistrates,

* The opera cannot but be very dangerous; but there is no spectacle so expensive to government: it is even the only one about which it is interested.

trates, the judges, the executioner, and the fanatic people. The family of the unfortunate Calas appeared, and drew tears from my eyes. The old man came forward with his hoary locks, his tranquil firmness, his gentle heroism: I saw the fatal destiny mark his innocent head with all the appearance of criminality. What most affected me was the truth that ran through this drama. They had been very cautious not to disfigure this pathetic subject by improbabilities, or by the monotony of our rhiming verses; the poet, in following the steps of this cruel event, had attached himself to those incidents only which the deplorable situation of each victim produced, or rather he had borrowed their language; for all the art consists in faithfully repeating the voice of nature. At the end of the tragedy, they pointed me out: “There is the man,” they said, “who was cotemporary to that unhappy age; he heard the cries of the unbridled populace, excited by this David! He was a witness to the fury of that absurd fanaticism!”—I wrapped myself up in my cloak; I hid my face, while I blushed for the age in which I was born. They gave out for the next day, the tragedy of Cromwell, or the Death of Charles I.* and all the people appeared highly pleased. “That piece,” they said, “was a chef-d’oeuvre; the cause of kings and of the people, had never been represented with that force, that eloquence, and truth. Cromwell

was

* On what are you dreaming, tragedians? While such a subject offers itself, you tell us about Persians and Greeks; you give us romances in rhyme; ah! give us Cromwell.

was an avenger, a hero worthy of the sceptre he caused to fall from the hand of one that was perfidious and criminal towards the state. Kings," said they, "whose hearts are disposed to injustice, can never read that drama without blanching their haughty fronts."

They announced for the second piece, *The Hunting-Match of Henry IV.* His name is constantly adored; future good kings have not been able to efface his memory. This piece does not show that the man disfigures the hero. The conqueror of the league never appeared to me so great as at that instant, when, to save trouble to his hosts, his victorious arm bore a pile of dishes. The people clapped their hands with transport; and by applauding the great and beneficent mind of that monarch they heaped commendations on their own king.

I came away highly satisfied. These actors, I said to my guide, are excellent; they have souls, they feel, they express; they have nothing constrained, affected, gigantic, or outré; even the very assistants perform their parts; in fact, that is extraordinary.—“It is,” he replied, “on the theatre as in common life; every one places his glory in acting well his part, which, how low soever it may be, becomes honourable to him who therein excels. Declamation is regarded as an estimable and important art by our government. Heirs of your capital works, we perform them to a perfection that would astonish you; we know how to do honour to that which genius has traced.

O, what

O, what art is more pleasing than that which paints all the combinations of sentiments by the looks, the voice, and the gesture! What an harmonious and affecting whole! and what energy does it borrow from simplicity!”—You have then divested yourselves of great prejudices? I doubt whether you regard the profession of a comedian as base.—“It has ceased to be so, since they have been men of principle. There are prejudices that are dangerous, and others that are useful. In your time, it was doubtless proper to bridle that seducing and dangerous disposition, that led youth to a profession, of which licentiousness was the basis. But all is changed; wise regulations, by making the players forget themselves, has enabled them to recover the path to honour; they are entered into the class of citizens. But lately our prelate besought the king to give the embroidered hat to a comedian by whom he had been remarkably affected.”—How! does your good prelate go to the play?—“Why not, since the theatre is become the school of manners, of virtue, and sentiment? They write, that the father of the Christians amused himself highly, in the temple of God, with listening to the equivocal voices of mutilated wretches; we never hear such deplorable accents; they must afflict at once the ear and the heart. How was it possible for men to listen to such cruel music? It is far more eligible, I think, to see the admirable tragedy of Mahomet performed, where the heart of an ambitious villain is laid bare, where the furies of fanaticism are so energetically expressed, as to make uninstructed souls that have any disposition to it, tremble.

“There

“There goes the pastor of this quarter, who, as he returns, is reasoning with his children on the tragedy of Calas. He enlightens their understanding and their taste; he abhors fanaticism; and when he thinks on that foul rage, which like an epidemic distemper, desolated one half of Europe for twelve centuries, he thanks heaven for having arrived so late in the world. At certain times of the year, we enjoy a pleasure, which to you was absolutely unknown; we have revived the pantomime art, so pleasing to the ancients. How many organs has nature given to man! and how many resources has that intelligent being to express the almost infinite number of his sensations! All is countenance with these eloquent men; they talk as clearly to us with their fingers as you can with your tongue. Hippocrates formerly said, that the pulse discovered a ruling Deity. Our expert pantomimes shew what magnificence Providence has used in forming the human head.”—O, I have nothing to say; all is perfection!—“How is that? Much yet remains to be done ere we attain perfection. We are freed from that barbarism in which you was plunged; some heads were soon enlightened; but the nation in general was inconsequent and puerile; it is by degrees that minds are formed; more remains to be done than we have yet accomplished we are scarce yet half-way up the ladder; patience and resignation produce all things; but much I fear, that absolute good is not of this world. It is, however, by constantly pursuing it, I imagine, that we are enabled to render matters, at least, tolerable.”

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVI.

THE LAMPS.

WE came out of the theatre without trouble or confusion; the passages were numerous and convenient. I beheld the streets perfectly light; the lamps were placed against the walls; and their united lustre left no shade; nor did they cast a reverberated glare that was dangerous to the sight; the opticians did not promote the interest of the oculists. I saw not at any corner those prostitutes, who, with their feet in the kennel, their painted faces, and looks as bold as their gestures, invited the passenger in a brutal smile, to an entertainment as insipid as grofs. All those places of debauchery, where men went to degrade their nature, and to make themselves contemptible in their own eyes, were no longer tolerated; for every vicious institution has its fellow; they are all connected; unhappily for man, there is no truth better proved than this that is so fatal*.

I observed

* It is a great misfortune to any city to be pestered with a number of prostitutes; the youth exhaust their strength, or perish in a base or criminal debauchery; or when totally enervated, they marry, and suffer their young deluded wives to languish by their sides; as Colardeau says. “They resemble those mournful lights that burn by the dead, but are unable to warm their ashes.”

*Semblables a ces flambeaux, a ces lugubres feux,
Qui brulent près des mort, sans echauffer leur cendre.*

I observed that there were guards who preserved the public security, and prevented any one from disturbing the hours of repose.—“ You there see,” said my guide, “ the only sort of soldiers for which we have any occasion ; we have no devouring army to maintain in time of peace. Those mastiffs, which we formerly nourished, that they might, when commanded, fly upon the stranger, were well nigh devouring the children of the house ; but the torch of war, once extinguished, will never more be relumed ; the sovereigns of the earth have deigned to hear the voice of philosophy* ; connected by the strongest bands,

* Charles XII. was in the hands of a governor void of ability ; he mounts the throne, at an age when we are full of sensations, and those that make the first impressions appear immutable truths ; every idea seems good, because we know not which to prefer. In this pernicious state of activity and ignorance, he reads *Quintus Curtius* ; he there sees the character of a conquering monarch pompously described and proposed as a model, which he adopts ; he no longer finds any thing but war that can make a prince illustrious ; he arms ; he advances ; some success confirms him in his flattering passion ; he lays waste countries, destroys cities, ravages provinces and states, breaks down thrones ; he immortalizes his folly and his vanity. Suppose that he had been, taught in early youth, that a king should aim at nothing but the peace and prosperity of his subjects ; that his true glory consists in their love ; that a peaceful heroism, which supports the laws and the arts, far out-weighs a warlike heroism ; suppose, in short, that they had given him just ideas of that tacit covenant which a people necessarily make with their king ; that they had pointed

bands, by those of interest, which they have discovered after so many ages of error ; reason has taken possession of their minds ; they have attentively considered that duty which the health and tranquility of their people imposes on them ; they place their glory in good government, preferring the pleasure of making a small number happy to the frantic ambition of ruling over countries desolated, or filled with ulcerated hearts, to whom the power of a conqueror must for ever be odious. These kings, by common consent, have fixed bounds to their dominions, and such as nature itself seems to have assigned, in separating them by seas, by forests, or mountains ; they have learned that a kingdom of but small extent is susceptible of the best form of government. The fates of each nation dictated the general treaty, and it was confirmed by an unanimous voice ; that which an age of iron, and dirt, and that which a man without virtue called the dream of a pedant, has been realized among the most enlightened and discerning of mankind. Those ancient prejudices, not less dangerous, that divided men on account of their belief, are also abolished. We regard all men as our friends and brethren. The Indian and the Chinese

led out to him the conquerors blatted by the tears of their cotemporaries, and by the hatred of posterity : his innate love of glory would have been carried toward useful objects ; he would have employed his abilities in polishing his people and establishing their happiness ; he would not have ravaged Poland, but have governed Sweden. Thus, one false idea, taking possession of the mind of a monarch, carries him away from his true interest, and is the cause of misery to millions of people.

Chinese are our countrymen, when they once set foot on our land. We teach our children to regard all mankind as composing one and the same family, assembled under the eye of one common father. This manner of thinking must be the best, because it has prevailed with inconceivable rapidity. Excellent works, wrote by men of sublime genius, have served as so many torches to illumine a thousand others. Men, by encreasing their knowledge, have learned to love and esteem each other. The English, as our nearest neighbours, are become our intimate allies; two generous people no longer hate each other by foolishly espousing the private animosities of their rulers. Our learning and arts unite us in a communication equally advantageous. The English, for example, full of reflection, have improved the French, who abound in levity; and we Frenchmen have dissipated surprisngly the melancholy humour of the English; thus the mutual exchange has produced a fruitful source of conveniences, of pleasures, and of new ideas, happily received and adopted. It is printing* that, by enlightening mankind, has produced this grand revolution."

I sprung

* It has another excellence; it is the formidable bridle to arbitrary power, by making public its least encroachments, by suffering nothing to be concealed, and by eternizing the vices and even the weakness of kings. One remarkable act of injustice is by this means echoed through all the nations of the earth, and rouses every free and sensible mind. The friend to virtue will cherish this art; but the bad man must tremble, when he sees the press ready to publish his iniquities to all ages and all nations.

I sprung with joy to embrace the man who told me these gladfome tidings. O heaven! I cried with transport, then mankind are at last become worthy of thy regard; they have discovered that their real strength is in their union. I shall die content, since my eyes now behold what they have so ardently desired. How sweet it is when we abandon life, to be surrounded by happy mortals who meet each other like brothers, who, after a long voyage, are going to rejoin the author of their days!

C H A P. XXVII.

THE FUNERAL.

I SAW a carriage covered with white cloth, preceded by instruments of music, and crowned with triumphant palms. It was conducted by men clothed in light blue, with laurels in their hands.—What carriage is that? I said.—“It is the chariot of victory,” they replied. “They that have quitted this life; that have triumphed over human miseries, those happy men that have rejoined the supreme Being, the source of all good, are regarded as conquerors; we hold them as sacred; we bear their bodies with respect to the place that is to be their eternal residence. We sing the hymn on the contempt of death. Instead of those grim skulls that crowned your tombs, you here will see heads with a smiling air; it is with

P

that

that aspect we regard death. No one weeps over the insensible ashes. We weep for ourselves; not for them. We constantly adore the hand of Providence, that has taken them from the world. As we must submit to the irrevocable law of nature, why should we not freely embrace that peaceful state, which cannot but improve our being*.

This corpse is going to be reduced to ashes at three miles from the city; furnaces constantly burning for that purpose, consume our mortal remains. Two dukes and a prince are enclosed in that chariot with a common citizen. By death all are levelled; and we then restore that equality which nature has observed among her children. This wise custom diminishes, in the minds of the people, the dread of death, at the same time that it humbles the pride of the great. They then are only great in proportion to their virtue; the rest, dignities, riches, honours, are all effaced. The corruptible matter that composed their bodies is not them; it goes to be mixt with the ashes of their equals; we annex no other idea to the perishable carcase.

We erect no pompous tombs, decorated with false, tumid, and puerile epitaphs†. Our kings, after their decease,

* He that is in great fear of death, if he be not of a constitution remarkably timorous, is certainly a bad man.

† O death, I bless thy power! It is thou that fellest the tyrants of the earth; that bridlest cruelty and ambition;
it

decease, do not fill their spacious palaces with an imaginary terror; they are no more flattered at their deaths than during their lives. When they leave the earth, their icy hands do not snatch from us a part of our subsistence; they die without involving a city in ruin*.

To prevent all accidents, no dead body is removed till the visitor has fixed on it the seal of death. This visitor is a man of known ability, who remarks, at the same time, the age, sex, and the disease of the deceased; they print in the public papers the name of the physician by whom he was attended. If in the book of reflection, that each man, as I have said, leaves at his death, there be any thing truly great or useful, they are selected and published, and that is the only funeral oration in use amongst us.

It

it is thou that layest in the dust those that the world had flattered, and that treated mankind with contempt; they fall, and we breathe. Without thee our miseries would be eternal. O, death! Who holdest in awe the inexorable and the triumphant, who piercest the guilty souls with terror; thou hope of the unfortunate; at length extend thy arm over the persecutors of my country. And you, devouring insects, that people the sepulchres, our friends, our avengers, come in crowds to receive the carcases of those that have fattened by their crimes.

* To that funeral pomp which ostentatiously conveys a king to an obscure cavern, to those mournful ceremonies, to those numerous emblems of public grief, of universal mourning, what is there wanting?—One sincere tear.

It is a salutary belief received amongst us, that the spirit has the liberty of frequenting those places that were dear to it; that it delights in beholding those it loved; that it hangs in silence over their heads, contemplating the lively sorrow of friendship; that it does not lose that sympathy, that tenderness which formerly united it to sensible hearts; that it finds a pleasure in their presence, and in protecting them from those dangers that surround their tender frames. These benign manes correspond to your guardian angels. This opinion so pleasing and consolatory, inspires us with a confidence, as well in undertaking as executing, that was unknown to you; who, far, from enjoying these delightful conceptions, filled your imaginations with gloomy and frightful chimeras.

You can easily perceive with what a profound veneration such an opinion inspires a young man, who having lately lost his father, believes that he is still a witness of his most secret actions. He talks to him in solitude; he becomes animated by that awful presence which enjoins him to virtuous actions; and if he finds himself tempted to evil, he says, "My father sees me! My father hears me*!"

The young man dries up his tears, because the horrible idea of inanity does not afflict his soul; it seems to

* An opinion like this should seem superfluous to him who knows, that the great Father of the universe is perpetually present to all his actions; but, alas, the human mind seems incapable of retaining that great idea for any long time together.

to him that the shades of his ancestors only wait for his coming that they may advance together toward the eternal abode. And who can deny himself the hopes of immortality! Were it even an illusion, would it not be pleasing and awful to us?

I think it will not be improper to add here the following reflections, as they correspond with the preceding chapter, and may serve to explain it. They are in the manner of Young, though composed in French.

AN ECLIPSE OF THE MOON.

(It is a Solitary that speaks.)

I INHABIT a small country house, that contributes not a little to my happiness. It has two different prospects. One is extended over fertile plains, where grows that precious grain that is the nourishment of man. The other, more confined, presents the last asylum of the human race; the term that bounds its pride; a narrow space, where the hand of death lays up, with equal care, its peaceful victims.

The prospect of this cemetery far from producing gloomy ideas, the children of a vulgar terror, rouses in my mind wise and useful reflections. There I no longer hear the tumult of the town, which confounds the mind. Attended by none but august melancholy, I am filled with important objects. I look, with an eye, serene and immoveable, on that tomb where man sleeps to rise again; when he shall acknowledge

the munificence of nature, and justify the eternal Wisdom.

The pompous glare of day to me seems dull; I wait the dawn of night, and that sweet obscurity, which lending its charms to silence, aids the soaring of sublimest thought. Then, while the bird of night sending forth a mournful cry, beats the thick darkness with her heavy wing, I seize my lyre. All hail! majestic shades! while from my eyes you hide the transient scenes of this low world, to nobler fights exalt my soul; let me behold that radiant throne, where sits resplendent Truth!

My ear pursues the solitary bird; soon she settles on the scattered bones; and with her beating wing rolls, with a hollow sound, that scull where lately dwelt ambition, pride, and projects bold and vain. Then to some cold stone she flies, where ostentation graved those names that time hath quite effaced; and then to poverty's fair hillock, crowned with flowers.

Dust of proud man! that never more shall see this earth, to empty titles dar'st thou still pretend? O miserable pride in death's domain! See, where the coffin, with its threefold sides, forbids the mouldering bones to mingle with their kindred dust.

Approach, proud mortal! to yonder tombs direct thy sight. Say, what imports a name to that which knows no name! A false epitaph exposes to the day that

that wretched praise, which were far better in oblivion's shade concealed; even as the gaudy streamer for a moment floats, and then the vessel follows, by the waves devoured.

O! far more happy he, that not vain pyramids hath built, but in the path of honour and of virtue constant trod. He joyful looks to heaven; and when this fragile frame dissolves, where swarms of pains distract the immortal soul, he gladly meets that stroke, which fills the sinner with dismay. By oft reflecting on the bright example of the expiring just, we also learn to die.

He dies, the just man dies: he sees those tears that not for him, but for ourselves we shed. His brethren surround the mournful bed: Of those delightful truths they talk, with which his soul was filled, and of that Power Divine to him revealed so clear. The immortal curtain seemed to rise before his dying sight. . . . He raised his radiant head, stretched forth his friendly hand, he smiled, and then expired.

But thou, vile sinner! thou who in successful villainy hast lived, far different thy end shall be, thou horrid tyrant! Then agonizing, pale, to thee shall death present a dreadful aspect; of his bitter cup shalt thou drink deep, drink in all its horrors. Thou canst not lift thy eyes to heaven, nor fix them on the earth; for well thou knowest that both renounce, that both reject thee. Expire in terrors, that thou mayest no longer live in hatred!

That

That moment dire, which turns the sinner pale,
 the good man placid views; to nature's fixed decrees
 he tranquil yields; these tombs regards as vessels
 formed to purge, by fire, the purer gold from every
 dross; the mortal frame dissolves, and to the blissful
 regions flies the soul refined. Then why regard with
 dread those cold remains that once confined the soul?
 They rather should remind us of its happy flight.
 The antique temple somewhat of its pristine majesty
 preserves, even when in ruins hurled.

Penetrated with a sacred respect for the ruins of
 humanity, I descended to that earth strewed with
 the holy ashes of my brethren. The calm, the silence,
 the cold immobility, all said to me, *They sleep*. I
 advanced, I avoided treading upon the grave of a
 friend but just filled up; I recollected myself, that I
 might revere his memory; I stopped; I listened at-
 tentively, as wishing to catch some of those sounds
 which might chance to escape from that celestial har-
 mony he now enjoys in the heavens. The planet of
 the night, in her full lustre, poured her silver beams
 upon the mournful scene. I lifted my eyes toward
 the firmament of heaven. They roll, those worlds
 innumerable, those flaming suns so profusely spread
 through all the ethereal space. Then again my sight
 was fixed on that silent grave, where perish the eyes,
 the tongue, the heart of him with whom I had con-
 versed on these sublime wonders, and who extolled
 the Author of these transcendent miracles.

Suddenly there came on an eclipse of the moon,
 which I had not foreseen. I was not even sensible
 of

of it till the darkness began to surround me. I could
 then discern a small shining space only that the shadow
 hastened to cover. A profound darkness stopped
 my steps; I could no longer discover any object; I
 lost the path; I turned a hundred times; the gate
 seemed to shun me; the clouds gathered; the winds
 whistled; I heard a distant thunder; it arrived with
 uproar on the wings of the lightning; my mind
 was confounded; I shivered; I stumbled over the
 scattered bones; terror precipitated my steps; I came
 to a tomb just opened to receive the dead; I fell in;
 the grave received me living; I found myself buried
 in the humid entrails of the earth; I seemed to hear
 the voice of all the dead that hailed my arrival; an
 icy trembling seized me; a cold sweat came over me;
 I sunk into a lethargic slumber.

Why did I not die in that peaceful state? I was
 already entombed; the curtain that conceals eternity
 was drawn up. I do not regard this life with
 horror; I know how to enjoy it; I endeavour to
 render it useful; but all cries out from the bottom
 of my heart, that the future life is preferable to the
 present.

I recovered, however, my sensations. A faint
 light began to brighten the starry vault; some scat-
 tering rays pierced through the clouds; by degrees
 they became more bright; they dispersed, and I per-
 ceived the moon half disengaged from the shadow;
 at length it shone with all its former lustre; that
 solitary planet pursued its course. My spirits return-
 ed,

ed, and I sprung from the grave. The freshness of the air, the serenity of the sky, the blushing rays of the morning, all re-animated me, and dissipated those terrors that night had produced.

I then regarded with a smile, the grave that had received me into its bosom. What was there frightful in it? It was the earth from whence I sprung, and that demanded, after a time, the portion of clay it had lent me. I then saw none of those phantoms that the darkness had impressed on my credulous imagination. It is that, that alone, which produces inauspicious images. I expected, in this accident, to have known what was death. I fell into the grave with the terror of that which is, perhaps the sole support against the troubles of this life; but there I only experienced a gentle and, in some degree, even a pleasing slumber. If this scene was terrible, it lasted but a moment; it scarce existed for me. I awaked to the brightness of a serene and pleasing day. I have banished a childish terror, and joy has taken possession of my whole heart. So after that transient sleep, which men call death, we shall awake to behold the splendor of that eternal sun, that by elucidating the immense system of beings, shall discover to us the folly of our timorous prejudices, and an inexhaustible and unknown source of felicity, whose course nothing can ever interrupt.

Therefore, mortal, that thou mayest dread nothing, be virtuous! Whilst thou passest through the short path of life, put thy heart in a condition to say to thee,

thee, "Fear nothing; advance under the eye of a God, that is the universal father of mankind; instead of regarding him with terror, adore his bounty, and rely on his clemency; have the confidence of a son that loves, and not the terror of a slave that trembles, because he is guilty."

CHAP. XXVIII.

THE KING'S LIBRARY.

AN unlucky door, placed near to my pillow, by creaking on its hinges, totally disconcerted my ideas. I lost sight of my guide, and of the city; but as the mind is continually agitated by the scene that has once made a strong impression, I happily returned to my dream. I was now quite alone; it was broad day; and by a natural propensity I found myself in the king's library; but more than once was I under the necessity of assuring myself that it was so.

In the room of those four galleries of an immense length, and which contained many thousands of volumes, I could only find one small closet, in which were several books that seemed to me far from voluminous. Surprised at so great a change, I ventured to ask if some fatal conflagration had not devoured that rich collection.—"Yes," they replied, "It was
" a

“a conflagration; but by our hands was it design-
edly illumined.”—Perhaps I have forgot to tell
you, that these are the most affable people in the
world; that they shew a very particular regard for
age; and that they do not reply to enquiries, in the
manner of the French, by answering with a question.
The Librarian who was a man of real learning,
presented himself to me; and well considering all the
objections, as well as reproaches that I made, he gave
me the following account. “Convinced, by the
most strict observation that the mind is embarrassed
by a thousand extrinsic difficulties, we were sensible
that a numerous library was the seat of the greatest
extravagancies and the most idle chimeras. In your
time, to the disgrace of reason, men first wrote and
then thought.—We follow the opposite course; and
have therefore destroyed all those authors who buried
their thoughts under a monstrous heap of words or
phrases

“Nothing leads the mind farther astray than bad
books; for the first notions being adopted without
attention, the second become precipitate conclusions;
and men thus go on from prejudice to prejudice, and
from error to error. What remained for us to do,
but to rebuild the structure of human knowledge?
This project appeared of infinite labour; but, in fact,
we found it only necessary to destroy those useless
fabrics that hid from us the true point of view; as
the Louvre became a new building by sweeping away
the ruins that surrounded it. The sciences, amidst
this labyrinth of books, were in a perpetual circula-
tion,

tion, returning incessantly to the same point; and
the exaggerated idea of their riches served only to
conceal their real indigence.

“In fact, what did that multitude of volumes con-
tain? For the most part, nothing more than perpe-
tual repetitions of the same thing. Philosophy
presented itself to us under the image of a statue,
always celebrated, always copied, but never embel-
lished; it appeared still more perfect in the original.
It seemed to degenerate in all the copies of silver
and gold that have since been made of it; doubtless,
it was more beautiful when carved in wood by a
hand almost savage, than when covered with extrinsic
ornaments. Since men, from a wretched indolence,
have given themselves up to the opinion of others,
they have necessarily become more servile imitators,
destitute of invention and originality. What im-
mense projects, what sublime speculations, have been
extinguished by the breath of opinion! Time has
brought down to us nothing but those empty, glaring
notions that have been applauded by the multitude,
while it has swallowed up those strong and bold
thoughts, which were too simple to please the
vulgar.

“As our days are short, and ought not to be con-
sumed in a puerile philosophy, we have given a de-
cisive stroke to the miserable controversies of the
schools.”—What have you done? Proceed if you
please.—“By an unanimous consent, we brought
together, on a vast plain, all those books which we
judged

judged either frivolous, useless, or dangerous; of these we formed a pyramid, that resembled, in height and bulk, an enormous tower; it was certainly another Babel. Journals crowned this strange edifice; and it was covered, on all sides, with ordinances of bishops, remonstrances of parliaments, petitions, and funeral orations; it was composed of five or six hundred thousand commentators, of eight hundred thousand volumes of law, of fifty thousand dictionaries, of a hundred thousand poems, of sixteen hundred thousand voyages and travels, and of a millard* of romances. This tremendous mass was set on fire, and offered as an expiatory sacrifice to veracity, to good sense, and true taste. The flames greedily devoured the follies of mankind, as well ancient as modern; the fire continued long. Some authors saw themselves burning alive; their cries, however, could not extinguish the flames. We found notwithstanding, amidst the embers, some page of the works of P——, of De la H——, of the abbé A——; for they were so extremely frigid, that the fire could have no effect on them.

“ We have therefore done from an enlightened zeal, what the barbarians once did from one that was blind: however, as we are neither unjust, nor like the Saracens, who heated their baths with the chief d'oeuvres of literature, we have made an election; those of the greatest judgment amongst us have extracted the substance of thousands of volumes, which

* A thousand millions.

which they have included in a small duodecimo; not unlike those skillful chemists, who concentrate the virtues of many plants in a small phial, and cast aside the refuse*.

“ We have abridged what seemed of most importance; the best have been reprinted; and the whole corrected according to the true principles of morality. Our compilers are a set of men estimable and dear to the nation; to knowledge they have added taste; and as they are capable of producing, they have made a judicious selection. We have remarked, to speak justly, that it appertains to the ages of philosophy only, to produce a small number of works. In yours, when real knowledge was not sufficiently established, it was necessary to bring together a great number of materials. The labourer must work before the architect.

“ At

* On this globe, all is revolution: the minds of men vary to an infinity the national character, alter books, and make them no longer to be known. Is there any one author, if he reflects, that can reasonably indulge himself in the hope of not being despised by the next generation? Do we not deride our ancestors? Can we say what progress our children may make? Have we any idea of the secrets that may suddenly spring from out of the bosom of nature? Do we completely know the extent of the human understanding? Where is the work that is founded on a real knowledge of the human heart, on the nature of things, on right reason? Does not our physics present us an ocean with whose coasts we are yet scarce acquainted? How ridiculous, therefore, is that pride, which ignorantly pretends to prescribe the bounds of any art.

Q 2

“At the beginning, each science is treated in parts; every one applies his attention to that portion which has fallen to his lot. By this method the smallest details are observed; nothing can escape. It was necessary for you to make an innumerable quantity of books; it is our business to collect the scattered parts. The ignorant babble eternally; the learned and sagacious speak little, but well.

“This closet, that you see, contains those books that have escaped the flames. Their number is small; but by their merit they have obtained the approbation of our age.”

I approached with curiosity: and on examining the first division, I found that of the Greeks, they had preserved Homer, Sophocles, Euripides, Demosthenes, Plato, and particularly our friend Plutarch; but they had burned Herodotus, Sappho, Anacreon, and the vile Aristophanes. I would have defended in some degree the cause of Anacreon; but I was answered by the best reasons in the world, though such as I shall not here mention, because they would not be intelligible to the present age.

In the second division appropriated to the Latin authors, I found Virgil, Pliny, and Titus Livy* entire; but they had burned Lucretius, except some poetic passages, because his physics they found false,

* I have lately read this historian again; and I am convinced, that the virtue of the Romans consisted in sacrificing the human race on the altar of their country. As citizens, they are to be applauded; as men, to be abhorred. and

and his morals dangerous. They had destroyed the tedious pleadings of Cicero, an able rhetor rather than a man of eloquence; but they had preserved his philosophic works, one of the most precious productions of antiquity. Sallust also remained. Ovid and Horace* were purged; the odes of the latter appeared far inferior to his Epistles. Seneca was reduced to one fourth part. Tacitus was preserved; but, as his writings breath a dark vapour that blackens the human race, and as we ought not to nourish a base idea of mankind, for tyrants are not of their number, the reading of this profound author was permitted to those only whose hearts were well formed. Catullus and Petronius had vanished in smoke. Quintilian was reduced to a volume of the smallest size.

The third division contained the English authors, and here I found the greatest number of volumes. Here I saw all those philosophers that warlike, mercant, and politic isle hath produced; Milton, Shakespeare, Pope, Young†, and Richardson, here still

* This writer had all the delicacy, all the flowers of wit, every possible urbanity; he has, nevertheless, been too much admired in every age. His muse inspires a voluptuous repose, a lethargic slumber, a pliant and dangerous indifference; it therefore, must please the courtier and effeminate mind, whose whole morality is confined to the present moment, and to the enjoyment of soft and solitary pleasures.

† M. Tourneur had published a translation of this poet, which has had the greatest and most determined success. Even

still enjoyed their full renown; their creative genius knew no restraint, while we are obliged to measure all our words; the fruitful energy of those free souls was

ry one has read this moral work; (*the author must here allude to the Night Thought*;) every one admires that sublime language, which elevates, cheers, and captivates the soul; because it is founded on great truths, presents great objects only, and derives all its dignity from their real grandeur. For my own part, I have never read any thing so original, so new, nor even so interesting. I admire that profound sentiment, which, though always the same, yet has an infinity of connexions and diversities; it is a stream by which I am borne down; I am pleased with those strong and lively images whose boldness correspond with the subject to which they are applied. We there see, moreover, the most demonstrative proofs of the immortality of the soul; in no part is the mind so much struck as in this; the poet attacks the heart, subdues it, and deprives it of all power of contradiction; such is the magic of expression, the force of eloquence, that it leaves a poignant sensation in the mind.

Young is in the right; in my judgment, (though in the translator's note, censure has extorted a different opinion) when he asserts, that, without the prospect of eternity and future rewards, virtue would be but a name, a chimera: *Aut virtus nomen inane est, aut decus et pretium recte petit experiens vir.* What is that good from which there results no good, either in this world or in the other? What good results, in this world, from virtue to suffering innocence? Ask of a dying Brutus, a Cato, a Socrates. You there see stoicism at its last proof, and there it fairly discovers the vanity of the sect. I remember, and ever shall remember, a striking expression of J. J. Rousseau to a friend of mine. He was speaking of a proposition made to him of making his

was the admiration of a difficult age. That futile reproach we make them, of their want of taste, was disregarded by men, who, charmed with just and strong ideas, could read with assiduity, and knew how

his fortune by a means that was disgraceful, but of a nature to be kept secret. "Sir," he said, "thank God, I am not a materialist; if I were, I should not be worth more than all of them are. I know of no reward, but that which is attached to virtue."

I freely confess, that I am not more worthy than Rousseau; and would to God, that I were as worthy! but, if I thought myself altogether mortal, I would instantly become my own deity; I would make all things subservient to my divinity, that is, to myself: I would practise what they call virtue, when it promoted my pleasure; and, in like manner, vice. I would rob to day, to give to my friend or mistress; quarrel with, and rob them to-morrow, to gratify some trifling pleasure; and in all this I should act very consequentially, because I should always do that which is agreeable to my divinity; whereas, by loving virtue for the sake of a reward, and that reward not being attached to arbitrary actions, I am obliged to govern myself, not by momentary inclination, but by that invariable rule which the Eternal Legislator and Remunerator has prescribed. It will therefore frequently happen, that I must do what I ought, though not what I please; and, if my liberty decides for that which is right, in opposition to a contrary inclination, then I do that which I would, not that with which I am pleased. If it had been the will of God to direct us by a love for goodness only, he would have given us a rational mind, without having added the sensibility of the heart; but he guides us by the prospect of rewards, because he has made us liable to passions and affections.

how to meditate on what they had read. They had, however, cut off from the philosophers those dangerous sceptics who would have shaken the foundations of morality; that virtuous people, influenced by what they felt, disdained such vain subtilities; for no argument could convince them that virtue was a chimera.

In the fourth division were the Italian authors. The Jerusalem Delivered, that most beautiful of all poems, was at the head of them. They had, however, burned a whole library of criticisms against that enchanting poem. The celebrated Treatise on Crimes and Punishments had received all the perfection of which that important work was susceptible. I was agreeably surpris'd to see a number of judicious and philosophic works, which had arose from out the bosom of that nation. They had broke that talisman which seem'd to promise a perpetuity of ignorance and superstition amongst them.

At last, I came to the French writers. I hastily seized the first three volumes; they were Descartes, Montaigne, and Charron. Montaigne had suffered some retrenchment; but as he is the philosopher, who of all others was the best acquainted with human nature, his writings were preserved, though all his ideas are not absolutely irreproachable. The visionary Mallebranche, the gloomy Nicole, the un pitying Arnauld, and the cruel Bourdaloue, they had burned. All that related to scholastic disputes was so completely destroyed, that when I spoke of
the

the Provençal Letters and the destruction of the Jesuits, the learned librarian made a very great anachronism, of which I informed him, and received a candid acknowledgment. I could never meet with those Provençal Letters, nor the most modern history of that grand affair; they talked of the Jesuits, as we at this day do of the Druids.

Into an oblivion, from whence they should never come forth, were cast that crowd of theologians called fathers of the church, writers the most sophistical, the most whimsical, obscure, and irrational, that were ever diametrically oppos'd to Locke or Clerke. "They seem," said the librarian, "to have set bounds to human infanity."

I search'd for, I examined the authors of my acquaintance. Heavens! what destruction! what mighty works evaporated in smoke! Where is that famous Bouffet, who, in my time, figur'd in fourteen quarto volumes? I was answer'd, "They are all vanished."—What! that eagle who soared to the highest regions of the air, that genius—"What, in conscience could we preserve? That he had genius we allow*; but to a wretched use did he apply it.

We

* What benefit might not human reason have received from such men as Luther, Calvin, Melancton, Erasmus, Bouffet, Paschal, Arnauld, Nicole, &c. if they had employed their genius in attacking the errors of the human mind, in improving morality, legislation and physics, instead of opposing or establishing ridiculous dogmas!

We have adopted the maxim of Montaigne: *Let us not inquire who is the most learned, but who is the best learned.* The universal history of that Bouffet was nothing more than a miserable skeleton of chronology*. It had beside, a turn so affected, and there were so many reflections of immoderate length, that accompanied that meagre production, that we can scarce think it was read for more than half a century.—But, at least, his Funeral Orations—“We are highly incensed against them; they breathe the miserable language of servitude and adulation. Shall a minister of the God of peace, of the God of truth; mount the pulpit to extol a gloomy politician, an avaricious statesman, a mean woman, a blood-thirsty hero; and agitated like a poet with the description of a battle, never utter one sigh when thinking on that horrid scourge that desolates the earth. At that moment, he has no thought of maintaining the laws of humanity, of declaring to an ambitious monarch, by the sacred voice of religion, strong and terrible truths; he rather wishes to hear it said, *That man talks well; he makes the encomiums of the dead, while their*
ashes

* To give an air of truth to chronology, they have formed certain epochs; and on this delusive foundation they have erected that imaginary science, which has been entirely directed by caprice. They know not to what period they should refer the principal revolutions of the world, and yet they would fix the age in which each king reigned. The greatest errors rest secure by means of chronological calculations. They set out, for example, from the foundation of Rome; and that foundation is supported by probabilities, or rather suppositions.

ashes are yet warm. With much better reason would he give a good dose of incense to monarchs that are still living.

“We are no friends to Bouffet; for he was not only a man proud and obdurate, a courtier fawning and ambitious, but to him also we owe those funeral orations, which have since multiplied like funeral torches, and which, like them, exhale a noxious vapour as they pass. This species of flattery appears to us the most odious, futile, and dangerous of all others; for it is at once false, stupid, and shameless, and constantly contradicts the public voice, which echoes against those walls where the orator, whilst pompously declaiming, inwardly laughs at those false colours with which he has dressed out his idol.

“Behold his rival, his gentle and modest conqueror, the amiable, the pathetic Fenelon. His *Telemachus* and other works we have carefully preserved, because in them we find a rare and happy agreement between reason and sensibility*. To have composed

* The French academy have proposed his eulogy as the next prize for eloquence; but if the work be what it ought to be, the academy cannot crown the discourse. Why give subjects that cannot be treated in their full extent? I admire, however, this species of writing, where, by investigating the genius of a great man, the art itself is investigated and exemplified. We have had excellent works of this kind, and especially those of M. Thomas, which is
the

composed the *Telemachus* at the court of Lewis XIV. appears to us an admirable, astonishing virtue. Certainly that monarch did not comprehend the book: and that is the most favourable supposition we can make for his honour. Doubtless, that work required a more extensive knowledge, a more profound penetration; but, with all its simplicity, what force, what truth, what dignity is there displayed! We have placed next to his, the works of the good abbé St. Pierre, whose pen was weak, but his heart sublime. Seven ages have given to his great and beautiful ideas a just maturity. His contemporaries regarded him as a visionary: his dreams, however, have become realities."

Among the French poets, I found Corneille, Racine, and Moliere; but their commentators were burned*. I asked a question of the librarian, that will probably be asked seven centuries hence. To which

the most instructive book we can put into the hands of a young man, and from which he may draw at once useful knowledge and a rational love for glory.

* They are the works of envy or ignorance. These commentators, with their zeal for the laws of grammar, excite my pity. The worst destiny that can attend any man of genius, either living or dead, is to be judged by pedantism, which sees nothing, and feels nothing. These wretched critics, who creep from word to word, resemble those purblind mortals, who miserably pore over every stroke of a picture of Le Seuer or Poussin, instead of embracing the whole at one view.

which of the three do you give the preference?—"We understand but little of Moliere," he replied; "the manners that he painted are past; he seems to us to have attacked ridicule more than vice, and you had more vicious than ridiculous qualities*. For the two tragedians, whose colours are more durable, I know not how a man of your age can ask the question. He who excelled all others in painting the human heart, who elevated and enlarged the mind to the greatest degree; he who was the best acquainted with the shocks of passion and the depths of policy, had doubtless more genius than his harmonious rival†, who, with a style more correct and flowing, had less of force and concision, who had not the piercing view, nor the elevation, nor the fire, nor the argument, nor the amazing diversity of characters, of the other. Add to this the moral aim, constantly marked in Corneille, and which drove mankind towards the element of every virtue, towards

* It is not true, as advanced in the eulogy on Moliere, that the cure of the ridiculous is more easy than that of the vicious. But, if it were, to which disorder of the human heart should we first apply remedies? Shall the poet become an accomplice in the general perversity, and be the first to adopt those miserable compact, which bad men make the better to disguise their villainy? Unhappy is he who does not see the full effect that an excellent drama can produce, who is ignorant of the sublimity of that science which can unite all hearts in one.

† Corneille has frequently an original air of freedom and simplicity, and even something more natural than Racine.

wards liberty. Racine, after effeminating his heroes, effeminated the spectators*. Taste is the art of elevating low subjects; and in this Corneille was inferior to Racine. Time, that sovereign judge, who equally destroys both eulogies and censures, time has declared; and has placed a wide distance between them; the one is a genius of the first order; the other, some few passages borrowed from the Greek excepted, is nothing more than a fine writer, as was observed in his own age. In your time, men had no longer the same energy; they required finished works, and the great has ever a certain roughness attending it; style was then become the principal merit, as is constantly the case with those nations that are enfeebled and corrupted."

I here found the terrible Crebillon, who has painted crimes in all those frightful colours by which they are characterised. This people sometimes read his works, but never suffer them to be acted.

It is easy to be imagined, that I recollected my friend Fontaine, equally beloved and constantly read.

* Racine and Boileau were two dastardly courtiers, who approached their monarch with the awe of two tradesmen of the Rue St. Dennis. It was not so that Horace frequented Augustus. Nothing can be more mean than the letters of these two poets, in raptures to find themselves at the court. It is difficult to conceive of more miserable productions. Racine at last died of chagrin, because Louis XIV. cast a contemptuous look at him in the public walks.

read*. Moliere, that just judge of merit, presented this first of moral poets with immortality. Fable, it is true, is the allegorical language of a slave, who dares not talk to his master; but at the same time, as it moderates that severity which there may be in truth, it must constantly be highly valuable in a world exposed to all sorts of tyrants. Satire is, perhaps, the weapon of despair alone.

How far has this age placed that inimitable fabulist above Boileau†, who, (as the abbé Costard says) made himself the dictator of Parnassus, and who, void of invention, force, grace, and sentiment, was nothing more than a tame and scrupulous versifier. They had preserved several other fables, among which were some by La Motte, and those of Nivernois‡.

The

* Fontaine was the confidant of nature, and merited, by pre-eminence, the title of poet. I am surpris'd at the audacity of those who have since wrote fables with the presumption of imitating him.

† The critic who only endeavours to depreciate an author, instead of explaining him, discovers his own vanity, ignorance, and jealousy. His malignity will not let him clearly discern the good and bad parts of a book. Criticism belongs to them only whose judgment and candour are not, in any degree, infected by personal interest. Critic, know thyself; and if thou wouldst form a right judgment of any work, remember, that depending on thy own lights only, thou canst judge of nothing.

‡ Seven hundred years hence, it will not be remembered, perhaps, that this charming fabulist was a duke, and

wards liberty. Racine, after effeminating his heroes, effeminated the spectators*. Taste is the art of elevating low subjects; and in this Corneille was inferior to Racine. Time, that sovereign judge, who equally destroys both eulogies and censures, time has declared; and has placed a wide distance between them; the one is a genius of the first order; the other, some few passages borrowed from the Greek excepted, is nothing more than a fine writer, as was observed in his own age. In your time, men had no longer the same energy; they required finished works, and the great has ever a certain roughness attending it; style was then become the principal merit, as is constantly the case with those nations that are enfeebled and corrupted."

I here found the terrible Crébillon, who has painted crimes in all those frightful colours by which they are characterised. This people sometimes read his works, but never suffer them to be acted.

It is easy to be imagined, that I recollected my friend Fontaine, equally beloved and constantly read.

* Racine and Boileau were two dastardly courtiers, who approached their monarch with the awe of two tradesmen of the Rue St. Dennis. It was not so that Horace frequented Augustus. Nothing can be more mean than the letters of these two poets, in raptures to find themselves at the court. It is difficult to conceive of more miserable productions. Racine at last died of chagrin, because Louis XIV. cast a contemptuous look at him in the public walks.

read*. Moliere, that just judge of merit, presented this first of moral poets with immortality. Fable, it is true, is the allegorical language of a slave, who dares not talk to his master; but at the same time, as it moderates that severity which there may be in truth, it must constantly be highly valuable in a world exposed to all sorts of tyrants. Satire is, perhaps, the weapon of despair alone.

How far has this age placed that inimitable fabulist above Boileau†, who, (as the abbé Costard says) made himself the dictator of Parnassus, and who, void of invention, force, grace, and sentiment, was nothing more than a tame and scrupulous versifier. They had preserved several other fables, among which were some by La Motte, and those of Nivernois‡.

The

* Fontaine was the confidant of nature, and merited, by pre-eminence, the title of poet. I am surpris'd at the audacity of those who have since wrote fables with the presumption of imitating him.

† The critic who only endeavours to depreciate an author, instead of explaining him, discovers his own vanity, ignorance, and jealousy. His malignity will not let him clearly discern the good and bad parts of a book. Criticism belongs to them only whose judgment and candour are not, in any degree, infected by personal interest. Critic, know thyself; and if thou wouldst form a right judgment of any work, remember, that depending on thy own lights only, thou canst judge of nothing.

‡ Seven hundred years hence, it will not be remembered, perhaps, that this charming fabulist was a duke, and

The poet Rousseau made a diminutive figure: they had preserved some of his odes and cantatas, but all his gloomy epistles, his tedious and dry allegories, his Mandragora, his epigrams, the work of a depraved heart, had all, it is easy to imagine, perished in those flames they had long deserved. I cannot here enumerate all the salutary mutilations that had been made in many works otherwise justly renowned. I saw none of those frivolous poets, who flattered themselves that the taste of their age, which diffused over the most serious subjects that false varnish of wit which debases reason, would have preserved them*. All these fallies of a light and giddy imagination, reduced to their just value, were evaporated, like those sparks that shine with the greater lustre only to be the sooner extinguished. All those writers of romances, whether historic, moral or political, where scattered truths are only to be met with by chance; and those in which the object is not considered in all its different points of view; and lastly, those who led astray by a prejudice for a particular system, had followed their own ideas only; all these authors, I say, deluded by the absence or presence of genius, had disappeared, or had undergone the pruning knife of a judicious critic, which is far from being

wore a blue ribband, but doubtless that he was a sprightly philosopher.

* When Hercules saw the statue of his favourite Adonis, in the temple of Venus, he cried out, "There is no divinity in thee." The same may be said of all those polished, delicate, ingenious, and effeminate works.

being a fatal instrument*. Sagacity and a love of order had presided over this new structure; as in those thick forests where the branches, intertwined with each other, conceal all the paths, and where there reigns an eternal and noxious shade; if the industry of man bears the hatchet and the flame, the genial rays of the sun enter, the flowery paths recreate the sight, and we traverse each route without fear or disgust. I perceived in a corner a curious book which seemed to me judiciously composed, and was intitled, *Usurped Reputations*. It contained the reasons that determined the extinction of many books, and of the contempt that was cast on the pen of certain writers, who were nevertheless admired in their own age. The same book redressed the wrongs of the cotemporaries of great men, when their adversaries were unjust, jealous, or blinded by some other passion†. I chanced to lay my hand on a Voltaire. O heavens! I cried, to what a size is he shrunk! Where are those twenty-six quarto volumes that flowed from his brilliant, exhaustless pen? If that celebrated writer

* It would be a work worthy of a man of sound judgment, to form a rational and comprehensive catalogue of the best books in every science, and to point out the manner of reading them, and those passages that are most worthy of attention.

† There still remains a good book to be wrote, though already done; *Great Events from little Causes*. But, where is the man who can discover the real clue; I will mention another, very proper for the present age, *The Placemen who become Persecutors to serve the Baseness of those they despise*; and one more, *The Crimes of Sovereigns*.

ter could come again upon the earth, how would he be astonished!—"We have been obliged to burn a large portion," was replied. "You know that fine genius paid a tribute somewhat too large to human frailty. He precipitated his ideas, he gave them not time to ripen. He preferred whatever had the character of boldness, to a slow discussion of the truth. Rarely had his writings any depth. He was a rapid swallow that glanced with grace and ease along the surface of a large river, where he drank, and dipped his wings as he skimmed along. He was at once a man of genius and of wit. We cannot refuse him the first, the most noble and amiable of virtues, the love of humanity. He has combated with ardour for the interest of man. He not only detested, but rendered detestable, persecution and tyranny of every kind. He brought a rational and affecting morality on the stage. He has painted heroism in its proper colours. In a word, he was the greatest poet of the French nation. We have preserved his *Epopæe*; for, though the plan be trifling, yet the name of Henry IV. has rendered it immortal. We are, above all, captivated with his beautiful tragedies, in which there shines a pencil so facile, so various and so just. We have also preserved all his prose pieces, where he is not ridiculous, too severe, or improperly satirical; it is there he is truly original*." But you know, that toward the fifteen
last

* I am charmed with the painter of nature, who lets his pencil run freely over the cloth, who prefers a certain easy and bold liberty, that gives a lustre to his colours; to that frigid precision, that tame regularity, which constantly re-minds

last years of his life, he had only a few remaining ideas which he represented under a hundred different faces. He perpetually retailed the same subject. He engaged in controversies with those he ought to have despised. He had the misfortune to write insipid and gross reflections against J. J. Rousseau; a furious jealousy so far transported him, that he even wrote without judgment. We were obliged to burn those wretched performances, which would have dishonoured him to the most distant posterity; still more jealous of his glory than he was himself, we have been obliged to destroy one moiety of that great man to preserve the other."

I am

minds me of the art and its subterfuges. O, how brilliant is the writer who gives himself up entirely to his genius, who indulges in voluntary negligences, and shews, with a light hand, happy and variegated touches; who deigns to have foibles, is pleased with a certain irregularity, and never so engaging as when in disorder! Behold the man of superlative genius. A tedious symmetry can please none but fops. Every man of a lively imagination wishes that we would aid him with our wings. It is to this happy vivacity, which rouses the minds, that we owe the crowd of readers. Like the elementary fire, the writer should be for ever in action. But this secret is communicated only to the few. The numbers labour, sweat, make a thousand efforts to obtain a jejune perfection. He who is born to write in a bold, rapid, brilliant style, above all rules, with the same stroke of his pen expresses his idea and imprints it with pleasure on the heart of his reader. Behold Voltaire, who, like a stag, bounds over the plains of literature, while some pretended imitator, some congealed copyist, such as La H***, comes, like a tortoise, creeping after.

I am charmed, I cried, to find, that you have preserved J. J. Rousseau entire. What a work is the *Emilius**! What a sensibility of soul is diffused over that beautiful romance, the new *Eloisa*! What bold, comprehensive, and penetrative ideas in his letters to *De la Montagne*! What vigor, what fire in his other works! With what thought does he inspire his reader! Every particular appears to me worthy to be read.—“So we have judged,” replied the librarian. “There must have been a very mean and cruel pride in your age. In fact, you must not have understood him; your trifling disposition would not permit you to pursue his arguments. He had reason to despise you. Your philosophers themselves were of the vulgar people. But I think we are agreed concerning this philosopher; it is therefore needless to say more.”

In turning over the books of the last division, I saw with pleasure many works formerly dear to my nation. *L'Esprit des Loix*; *L'Histoire Naturelle*; the book *De l'Esprit* commented in some parts †. Nor had they excluded the friend of man, the *Belisarius*; the works of *Linguet*; the eloquent harangues of
Thomas

* What insipidities have been printed against this immortal work! How can a man dare to write when he knows not even how to read.

† The spider draws poison from the same rose whence the bee extracts honey; so a bad man frequently nourishes his malignity from the same book whence the good man derives the greatest consolation.

*Thomas**, *St. Servan*, *Dupaty*, *Le Tourneur*, and the discourser of *Phocion*. I distinguished the numerous and philosophic works that the age of *Louis XV.* had produced †. The *Encyclopedia* was formed on a new and more happy plan. Instead of that wretched practice of reducing all things to a dictionary, that is, of mincing the several sciences, they had preserved each art entire. With a single glance of the eye you saw all their different parts. This work contained vast and exact drafts that followed each other in a regular order, and were connected in a simple and pleasing manner. All that had been written against the Christian religion was burned, as books that were become absolutely useless.

I inquired for the historians, and the librarian said, “We assign that province in part to our painters. Facts have a philosophical certainty, which is to be expressed by the pencil. What is history? In reality nothing more than the knowledge of facts. The reflections and inferences appertain to the historian, and not to the science itself. The facts, however, are innumerable. What popular reports; what superannuated fables; what endless details! The transactions

* There is at present no tribune for harangues; eloquence however is not dead. It still speaks, sometimes thunders; and though it cannot rouse us to virtuous sentiments, yet, at least, it confounds us with shame.

† The philosopher who is employed in examining the nature of man, of policy and manners, diffuses useful lights over the community; his detractors are either fools, or malignant citizens.

tions of each age are the most interesting of all others for the cotemporaries; and of all ages, those of the present only are not to be investigated. They have wrote laboriously of ancient and foreign history, but have turned their attention from present facts*. The spirit of conjecture is displayed at the expence of accuracy. Many have to little known their own weakness, that several single pens have attempted an universal history, more romantic than the good Indians, who allowed at least four elephants to support the world. In a word, history has been so disfigured, so stuffed with falsehoods and puerile reflections, that a romance to every judicious mind, is more eligible than those collections of facts, where, as on a boundless ocean, we sail without a compass†.

“We have made a slight extract, painting each age in strong characters, and describing those persons

* This is natural enough in France, where there is so much danger in writing on recent facts; but, to our good fortune, it is not so here.

† When we reflect on the nature of the human mind, we must be convinced of the impossibility of a real ancient history. The modern is more probable; but between probability and truth there is almost as great a distance, as between truth and falsehood. Moreover, we learn nothing from modern histories. Each historian accomodates the facts to his ideas, almost in the same manner as a cook does the dishes to his palate; we must dine in the taste of the cook: we must read in the humour of the historian.

sons only who have had a real influence on the destiny of empires*. We have omitted those reigns where there were nothing to be seen but wars and cruelties. They ought to be concealed; for nothing should be presented that will not do honour to humanity. It is perhaps dangerous to preserve all the excesses to which vice has been extended. The number of the guilty seems to palliate the crime; and the fewer outrages we see, the less we are tempted to commit them. We have treated human nature like that son who revered his father, and covered with a veil the disorders of ebriety.”

I approached the librarian, and asked in a low voice, for the age of Louis XV. which might serve as a continuation to that of Louis XIV. by Voltaire. I found that it had been composed in the twentieth century. Never have I read any thing more curious, more singular and astonishing. The historian, from a regard to the extravagance of the circumstances, had not sacrificed any detail. My curiosity, my astonishment redoubled at every page. I was taught to reform many of my ideas; and to know, that the age in which we live, is, of all others, the most distant from

* To say the reign of Charles VI. or Louis XIII. is a misnomer, and must mislead the unattentive reader. A monarch, who has no influence on the age in which he lives, as is frequently the case, should be ranked in the class of common men, and we should say, for example, after the death of Henry IV. *We shall now describe the age of Richelieu, &c.*

from us. I laughed, I admired greatly; but I wept at least as much. . . . I can say no more here; the events of the present day are like fruit that should not be tasted till it is ripe*.

CHAP. XXIX.

THE MEN OF LETTERS.

AS I went out of the library, a stranger accosted me, and we entered into conversation. It was concerning men of letters. I have known but few in my time, I said, but those I have known were gentle, modest, friendly, and full of probity. If they had defects, they redeemed them by so many valuable properties, that a man must be incapable of friendship who had not an attachment to them. Envy, ignorance, and calumny have disfigured the characters of authors; for every public man is exposed to the brutal discourse of the vulgar, who, however ignorant they may be, pronounce boldly†. The great, as destitute, for the most part

* Time produces all things. Those secrets which are thought to be completely concealed will offer themselves to the public, as the rivers run into the sea. To our children all will be known.

† A man of this class, who is incapable of writing a single line, but has a talent for verbal satire, in consequence of

part, of talents as of virtue, are jealous of their attracting the regard of the nation, and pretend to despise them*. Writers have also frequently to combat with the contemptible taste of the public, who, the more it is enriched by their works, becomes the more sparing of its applause, and sometimes abandoning works

of ridiculing authors and gratifying malignity, becomes at last persuaded, that he is himself a man of taste and ingenuity; but he is miserably deceived, both in judging of himself and of others.

* It is not to the most powerful monarchs, nor to the most opulent princes, nor to the chief rulers of a nation, that most states owe their splendor, force and glory. It is private persons, who have made the most astonishing improvements in the arts, in sciences, and even in the art of government. Who measured the earth? Who discovered the system of the heavens? Who invented those curious manufactures with which we are cloathed? Who has laid open the secrets of natural history? Who has explored the intricacies of chemistry, anatomy, and botany? Certainly private persons; who, in the eye of the wise man, must eclipse the pretenders to greatness, those proud dwarfs, who cherish nothing but their own vanity. In effect, it is no kings, ministers, persons invested with authority that govern the world. No, it is those men of superior genius, who cry to their cotemporaries, with their bold and irresistible voice, *Banish those wretched prejudices; pursue more elevated thoughts, despise what thou hast foolishly respected, and respect that which, through ignorance, thou hast despised; profit by thy past follies, and learn better to distinguish the rights of mankind; adopt the ideas that I have set before thee. Thy route is clearly traced, march! And I will answer for thy success.*

works of genius, run gaping after some wretched buffoonery. In a word, they have need of the greatest fortitude to support themselves in a career, where the pride of mankind offers them a thousand indignities. They have, however, braved both the insolence and disdain of the great, and the ignorant attacks of the vulgar. A just renown, by blasting their enemies, has crowned their noble efforts with success.

“ I acknowledge this portrait to be just,” my interlocutor politely replied. “ Men of letters are become the most respectable of citizens. Every one feels how desirable it is to be dissolved in tenderness ; it is the most lively pleasure the mind can enjoy. It is to them, therefore, that the state has confided the care of developing this principle of virtue. By exhibiting majestic, terrible, and tender pictures, and by improving the sensibility of mankind, they dispose them to all those great qualities that proceed from it. “ We find,” he continued, “ that the writers of your age, as to what concerns morality, and grand and useful pursuits, have far surpassed those of the age of Lewis XIV. They have freely painted the faults of kings, the misfortunes of the people, the ravages of the passions, the efforts of virtue, and even the success of vice ; faithful to their vocation*, they have had the intrepidity to insult those

* The famous Locusta, skilful in the art of preparing subtle poisons, was lodged by Nero in his palace ; and so desirous

those bloody trophies which fervility and error had consecrated to tyranny. Never was the cause of humanity more strongly pleaded ; and though they have lost it by an inconceivable fatality, yet these dauntless advocates remain not the less covered with glory.

“ All the streams of light that have issued from these vigorous and undaunted souls, are preserved and transmitted from age to age* : like a seed that is for a long time trod under foot, but being suddenly transported by a favourable wind to some place of shelter,

desirous was he of preserving a woman so useful to his designs, that he appointed guards to attend her. It was she who composed the cup by which Britannicus perished. When the poison had blackened the visage of that unfortunate prince, Nero caused it to be spread over with white paint, so that it appeared with the paleness of a natural death ; but, as they bore it to the tomb, a sudden and copious shower of rain washed off the paint, and exposed what the tyrant thought he had safely concealed. I find in this fact an allegory sufficiently just. Princes fondly cherish faithful monsters ; and either from stupidity, or contempt of the laws, or a confidence in their own power, they think to conceal their real qualities from the public ; but soon history, the sudden shower, washes off the false colours, and all their vices stand full exposed to view.

* Men of common capacities, and they who have not fathomed the depths of government beyond a certain point, are very far from being able to discover the connections of speculation and science with the riches and happiness of a nation.

shelter, it springs up, increases, becomes a tree, whose spreading branches present both ornament and refuge.

“ If, better informed of the nature of true greatness, we despise the pomp and ostentation of power; if we turn our eyes towards those objects that are worthy the research of men; we shall find that it is to letters we owe it*. Our writers have still surpassed yours in courage; if a prince deviates from the laws, they revive the renowned tribunal of the Chinese; they engrave his name on a dreadful plate of brass, by which his disgrace is eternally recorded. History in their hands is the rock to false glory, the sentence passed on illustrious criminals, the crucible from which the hero exhales, if he has not been a man.

“ How ought the princes of the earth, who complain that all who approach them are affected by constraint

* We may assert, with a degree of certainty, that the new lights, which are every day discovered, descending by degrees in almost every state, will, by a sure method annihilate the present capricious jumble of laws, and substitute others more natural and more just; the judgment of the public will have a powerful and penetrating voice that will change the face of nations; it will be printing that will render this great service to humanity. Let us therefore continue to print; and let every one from the highest to the lowest, read; but, at the same time, let us print that only which is true and useful; and let us well meditate before we write.

straint and dissimulation, to be confounded! Have they not always with them those dumb but independent and intrepid orators, who can, without offence, instruct them, and who from their thrones, have neither favours to expect nor disgrace to fear*? We ought to render that justice to those noble writers, to acknowledge that there is no race of men who have better fulfilled their destination. Some have overthrown superstition, others supported the rights of the people. These have dug the fruitful mine of morality, those displayed virtue under the figure of an indulgent sensibility†. We have forgot the foibles which they might have as private persons; we see that mass of light only which they have formed and aggran-

* The Prometheus of Eschylus contains a beautiful and clear allegory. It is that of an arbitrary monarch crushing a man of genius; for having brought down fire from heaven, with which he enlightened mankind, he is fixed to the summit of a rock; being slowly scorched by the sun's rays, the colour of his body is changed; the nymphs of the woods and fields surround him with lamentations but are unable to assist him; the Furies load him with irons that eat into his flesh; but a remorse for having been virtuous can never enter his heart.

† How great the recompence to an author who is the friend of truth and virtue, when, as we read, we drop the burning tear upon his book, and, at the same moment draw from the bottom of the heart the struggling sigh; then close the book, and, lifting our eyes to heaven, form ardent virtuous resolutions! This, doubtless, is the most brilliant reward that any writer ought to wish. What, to this, are the discordant shouts of applause, as empty as they are transitory, as envied as they are uncertain.

aggrandised, that moral sun, which can never be extinguished but with the grand luminary of the universe."

How glad should I be to enjoy the presence of those great men! for I have ever had a strong attraction towards writers of real merit; I love to see them, but still more to hear their discourse.—"It happens right luckily; to-day they open the academy, in order to receive a man of letters."—In the room, doubtless, of one that deceased.—"What say you? Must merit wait till death has destroyed his fellow, that he may supply his place? No; the number of our academicians is not fixed; every talent receives the crown of its reward; there are sufficient to recompense them all*."

CHAP.

* An author who is not much influenced by personal motives, will not give himself great concern to think that he is a writer of merit in an ignorant age; if he be more desirous of the progress of human knowledge, than of gratifying his own vanity, instead of being afflicted, he will rejoice that he cannot launch forth from his obscurity.

CHAP. XXX.

THE ACADEMY OF SCIENCE.

WE advanced toward the academy. It still preserved that name; but how different its situation from that where it was formerly held! It no longer made a part of the palace of the king. How wonderful are the revolutions of ages! A pope now sits in the place of the Cæsars! ignorance and superstition inhabit Athens! the fine arts have flown to Russia! Would it have been believed in my time, that a mountain marked with ridicule for merely affording nurture to a few asses by its thistles, should become the just image of the ancient Parnassus, the seat of genius, the habitation of renowned writers? They would have abolished the name of Montmartre*, but from a complaisance to received prejudices.

This august spot, clothed on all sides by venerable woods, is consecrated to solitude; an express law forbids the approach of all discordant noise. The earth has produced fresh beds of stone to form the foundations of this noble asylum. On this mount, blessed with the most genial rays of the sun, are nourished fair trees, whose towering summits sometimes embrace

* The hill Montmartre is on the north side of Paris, and almost adjoining to it. They say, that on its summit there was once a temple dedicated to Mars, from which it took its name.

brace each other, and sometimes at distance keep, to afford the exploring eye a prospect of the face of heaven.

As I mounted with my guide, I observed, here and there, elegant hermitages distinct from each other. I asked who inhabited those flowery spots, half concealed by the woods, and half exposed to view, whose aspect appeared so engaging.—“ You shall soon know,” was replied; “ let us now hasten; the hour approaches.” In fact, I saw a great number of persons arrive from every side, not in coaches, but on foot. Their conversation seemed to be highly pleasing and animated. We entered an edifice sufficiently large, but decorated with great simplicity. I observed no Swifs, armed with a heavy halberd, at the door of the tranquil sanctuary of the Muses; there was nothing to forbid entrance amidst a crowd of worthy men*.

The hall was remarkably sonorous; so that the most feeble academic voice might be heard at the greatest distance. The order that there reigned was not less remarkable; several rows of benches surrounded the hall; for they knew that the ear should be at its ease in an academy, as the eye in the saloon of a painter

* I have ever been highly curious to see a man of genius, and have thought that I discovered in his port, his actions, the air of his head, his countenance, and aspect, something that distinguished him from the common race of men. The science of physiognomy still remains to be properly investigated.

a painter. I considered every object at my leisure. The number of academic seats was not ridiculously fixed; but what seemed most singular was, that, on the back of each chair a scroll was displayed, on which were distinctly wrote the titles of that academician who chose it for his seat; every one might place himself in an armed chair without any other previous ceremony than that of displaying the scroll that contained the title of his works. It is easy to conceive, that no one offered to display a *charte blanche*, as was done in my day, by bishops, marshals, and preceptors*; still less would they dare to expose to the severe public eye the title of a work of mean merit, or a fervile imitation; it must be a work that points out some new discovery in the arts, or, at least, that excels all others on the same subject†.

My

* We have seen on the Boulevards, (*the old ramparts of Paris which now serve for recreation,*) an automaton that articulated sounds, and the people flock to admire it. How many automata, with human faces, do we see at court, at the bar, in the academies, who owe their speech to the breath of invisible agents; when they cease, the machines remain dumb.

† There are no longer any means left to distinguish ourselves, they say. Wretches! that hunt after smoke, the path of virtue still lies before you; there you will find but few competitors; but that is not the sort of glory that you seek. I understand you; you would become the subject of popular discourse. I sigh for you, and for the human race.

My guide pulled me by the sleeve—"You seem astonished; let me increase your wonder. Those charming habitations which you observed on ascending the mountain, form the retreats of those who are struck by an unknown power that commands them to write. Our academicians are Carthusians*; it is in solitude that genius displays its powers, forsakes the beaten path, and discovers unknown regions. When does enthusiasm spring forth? When the author descends into himself, when he investigates his own soul, that profound mind, of whose value the possessor is not unfrequently ignorant. What inspirers are retreat and friendship†! What more is necessary to those who search for nature and truth? Where do we hear their sublime voice? In the tumult of cities, amidst that crowd of low pursuits, that, unknown to ourselves, besiege the heart? No; it is amidst the rural scenes that the soul rejuvenates; it is there that it contemplates the majesty of the universe, that majesty, eloquent, and all-gracious; the thought strikes, the expression glows; the image and its splendor become widely extended, like the horizon that surrounds us.

"In

* Let him who would acquire a strength of mind, assiduously exert its powers; the greatest sluggard is ever the greatest slave.

† Man has much longer time to live with the mind than with the senses; he would therefore act wisely to depend for his pleasures on the former rather than on the latter.

"In your days, the men of letters frequented the circles to amuse the coquettes, and obtain an equivocal smile; they sacrificed all that was bold and manly to the superstitious empire of fashion; they divested the soul of its real nature, to please the age. Instead of looking forward to an august series of ages, they rendered themselves slaves to a momentary taste. In a word, they pursued ingenious falsehoods; they stifled that inward voice which cries, *Be severe as the time that flies; be inexorable as posterity.*

"These academics, moreover, here enjoy that happy mediocrity*, which, amongst us, constitutes sovereign wealth. We do not offer to interrupt them, either with a desire to discover the least movements of their minds, or from a vanity of being admitted to their company. We revere their time, as we do the hallowed bread of the indigent; but attentive to their desires, at the least signal they find them gratified."—If that be the case, you must have sufficient employment. Are there not those who assume the rank to cover their idleness or real weakness?—"No; this region is so strongly illuminated, that the least spot is easily discovered. Imposture dare not here intrude; it can never bear the look of a man of genius, whose piercing eye nought can deceive. For those whom presumption may bring hither,

* The great man is modest; the man of mediocrity displays his indifferent advantages; so the majestic river glides silently along, while the rivulet runs chattering over the rugged pebbles.

hither*, there are persons of a benign temper, who effectually dissuade them from a project that cannot redound to their honour. In a word, the law enjoins . . ."—Our conversation was interrupted by a sudden general silence in the assembly. My whole soul flew to my ear, when I beheld one of the academicians prepare to read a manuscript which he held in his hand, and with a grace by no means insignificant.

O ungrateful memory, how could I reproach thee? Why didst thou desert me? Would that I could repeat the persuasive discourse pronounced by that academic! The force, the method, the flowing periods have escaped me; but the impression on my mind can never be effaced. No; never was I so enraptured. The visage of each auditor reflected those sentiments with which I was agitated; it was one of the most delicious enjoyments my heart ever felt. What depths! what images! what truths! what a noble flame! how sublime a tone! The orator declaimed against envy†, described the sources of that
fatal

* There is no object that may not be viewed from a hundred different stations; but there is only one from whence it can be justly beheld; and if that is not chosen, genius and labour become useless.

† How I pity the envious and jealous mind, that glances over the valuable parts of a work, and knows not how to enjoy them. By analogy it dwells on those parts only that are imperfect. The man of letters who by an habitual exercise

fatal passion, its horrible effects, the infamy it has cast on the laurels that have crowned many great men; all its vile, unjust, detestable qualities were so strongly painted, that while we deplored the fate of its blind, unhappy victims, we trembled lest our own hearts should be infected by its poison. The mirror was so properly presented before each particular character, their meanness exposed in such various and ridiculous lights, the human heart displayed in a manner so new, so refined, so striking, that it was impossible not to know them; and when knowing, not to form the design of abjuring that miserable weakness. The fear of bearing some resemblance to that frightful monster, Envy, produced a happy effect. I saw, O instructive sight! O moment unheard of in the annals of literature! I saw the members of that assembly regard each other with a tender and sympathizing look; I saw them mutually open their arms, embrace, and cry with joy; their bosoms resting and panting against each other; I saw (will it be believed?) the authors dispersed about the room imitate the affectionate transports of the academicians, and convinced of the talents of their brethren, swear an unalterable, eternal friendship; I saw the tears of affection and benevolence flow from every eye. They were a company of brothers, who substituted
that

exercise of reason and taste, improves the one and the other, and incessantly creates to himself new joys, is of all men the most happy—if he can divest himself of jealousy or of an over sensibility.

that honourable applause in the room of our stupid clapping of hands*.

After the full enjoyment of those delicious moments; after each one had expressed the various sensations that he had felt, and those strokes by which he was most strongly affected; and after frequently repeating the vows of endless friendship, another member of this august society arose with a smiling air; an applauding murmur run through the hall, for he was esteemed a Socratic railer†. He raised his voice, and said,

‘ GENTLEMEN,

‘ Many reasons have induced me to offer you to-day a short, but, I think, curious extract of what our academy was in its infancy, that is, about the eighteenth century. The cardinal who was our founder‡, and whom our predecessors have so extravagantly

* When at the theatre or the academy, an affecting or sublime passage strikes the assembly, instead of that sigh from the bottom of the heart, and the silent emotions, I hear those clappings redoubled till they shake the roof, I say to myself, these people have no feeling; they are men of wood that strike two boards together.

† As a malignant raillery is the fruit of an iniquitous disposition, so an ingenious pleasantry is the fruit of wisdom. A sprightly temper and graceful manner were the most triumphant arms of Socrates.

‡ Cardinal Richelieu.

‘ extravagantly extolled, and to whom they attributed, in our establishment, the most profound designs, would never have formed this institution, (let us confess it) if he had not himself made wretched verses which he idolized, and which he was desirous that we should celebrate. That cardinal, I say, at the time he invited the authors to form one body, discovered his despotic temper, when he made them subject to rules ever unknown to genius. Our founder had so imperfect an idea of what such a society ought to be, that he limited the number of members to forty; so that Corneille and Molière might have waited at the door to the end of their days. This cardinal imagined, moreover, that genius would naturally remain in obscurity, if titles and dignities did not rouse it from its inanity. When he formed this strange judgment, surely, he could think of such rhimers only as Colletet and his colleagues, whom he supported out of mere vanity.

‘ From thence it became an established custom, that they who had money in the room of merit, and titles instead of genius, seated themselves by those whose names had been celebrated by fame throughout all Europe. He was himself the first example, and he was but too well imitated. When those great men who drew the attention of their own age, and whose regards were fixed on that of posterity, had covered with glory the place where they held their assemblies, the gilt and titled idiots besieged the door; nay, almost presumed to declare, that

T 2

‘ they

‘ they reflected honour on the society by their paltry
 ‘ ribbons, and, in fact, believed, or pretended to be-
 ‘ lieve, that, by seating themselves by men of genius,
 ‘ they actually resembled them.

‘ Then were seen marshals, as well victorious as
 ‘ beaten, mitred heads that had never made a man-
 ‘ date, men of the long robe, preceptors, and finan-
 ‘ ciers, who pretended to the title of men of genius;
 ‘ and though they were nothing more than the deco-
 ‘ rations of the theatre, really believed themselves
 ‘ to be capital performers. Some eight or ten among
 ‘ the forty shone by their own lustre; the rest had
 ‘ only a borrowed light; yet it was necessary to
 ‘ wait for the death of an academician in order to
 ‘ fill his place, and which, nevertheless, for the most
 ‘ part, still remained empty.

‘ What could be more ludicrous than to see that
 ‘ academy, whose renown was spread over all the
 ‘ capital, hold its assemblies in a small, close, mean
 ‘ room? There, in several armed chairs, that were
 ‘ formerly red, were seen, from time to time, a
 ‘ number of indolent wretches, carelessly seated,
 ‘ weighing of syllables, or carefully culling the words
 ‘ out of some piece of prose or poetry, in order, at
 ‘ last, to applaud the most unmeaning among them.
 ‘ But, on the other hand, pray remark it, gentlemen,
 ‘ they never erred in calculating the number of coun-
 ‘ ters that each gained by the absence of his brethren.
 ‘ Can you believe that they gave the conqueror a
 ‘ gold medal in the room of a branch of oak, and
 ‘ that

‘ that on it there was engraved this ridiculous inscrip-
 ‘ tion: *A l' immortalité?* Alas! that immortality passed
 ‘ the next day into the goldsmith's crucible; and
 ‘ that was the most real advantage the victorious
 ‘ champion obtained.

‘ Could you imagine, that those little victories
 ‘ sometimes turned the conquerors brains, so great
 ‘ was their ridiculous vanity*? and that the judges
 ‘ exercised scarce any other function than that of dis-
 ‘ tributing those useless prizes, about which no one
 ‘ even ever made inquiry?

‘ The place of their assembly was open to none
 ‘ but authors; and they were admitted by tickets
 ‘ only. In the morning was performed a musical
 ‘ mass; then a trembling priest pronounced the pa-
 ‘ negyric of Lewis IX. (I know not very well why)
 ‘ extolling him for more than an hour, though he
 ‘ was

* Except the university prizes, which give rise to a foolish
 pride in childish heads, I know of nothing more pernicious
 than the medals of our literary academies. The conqueror
 really thinks himself a person of consequence, and is ruined
 for the remainder of his days; he disdains every one who
 has not been crowned with so rare and illustrious a laurel.
 See in the *Mercur de France*, for the month of September,
 1769, page 184, an instance of the most ridiculous egotism.
 A very diminutive author informs the public, that when
 he was at college, he performed his theme better than his
 colleagues; he glories in it, and imagines that he main-
 tains the same rank in the republic of letters.—*Risum tene-
 atis, amici?*

‘ was certainly a bad sovereign*. Then the orator
 ‘ declaimed on the croisades, which highly inflamed
 ‘ the archbishop’s bile, who interdicted the priestly
 ‘ orator, for his temerity in displaying good sense.
 ‘ In the evening was another eulogy; but as that
 ‘ was on a profane subject the archbishop hap-
 ‘ pily did not concern himself with the doctrine it
 ‘ contained.

‘ It is proper to remark, that the place where
 ‘ they displayed their wit was guarded by fusileers
 ‘ and gigantic Swifs, who understood no French.
 ‘ Nothing was more comic than the contrast between
 ‘ the meagre figure of the man of letters, and the
 ‘ enormous blustering stature of the Swifs. This
 ‘ was called a *public assembly*. The public, it is true,
 ‘ were there; but it was at the door; a poor ac-
 ‘ knowledgment for their complaisance. In the mean
 ‘ time, the sole liberty that remained to the nation
 ‘ was to pronounce absolutely on prose or verse, to
 ‘ condemn one author, applaud another, and some-
 ‘ times laugh at them all.

‘ The academic rage, however, possessed every
 ‘ brain; every one would be a royal censor†, and
 ‘ then

* The first penal edict against particular sentiments or
 opinions was denounced by Lewis IX. vulgarly called
 St. Lewis.

† Royal censor! I never hear that word without
 laughter. We Frenchmen know not how ridiculous we
 are, nor what right we give posterity to regard us with pity.

‘ then an academicien. They calculated the lives of
 ‘ all the members of the academy remarked the de-
 ‘ gree of vigour that their stomachs discovered at
 ‘ table; death seemed to the candidates to be flow in
 ‘ his approach; the cry was, They are immortal!
 ‘ When a new member was chosen, some one mut-
 ‘ tered softly, Ah! when shall I make thy eulogy at
 ‘ the bottom of the long table, standing with my hat
 ‘ on, and declare thee to be a great man as well as
 ‘ Lewis XIV. and the chancellor Seguier, while you
 ‘ sleep profoundly under your tomb-stone decorated
 ‘ with a curious epitaph.

‘ The men of money at last so far prevailed in a
 ‘ golden age, that they completely banished the men
 ‘ of letters; so that in the following generation, mes-
 ‘ sieurs the farmers-general, were in possession of the
 ‘ forty armed chairs, where they snored as much at
 ‘ their ease as their predecessors; and were still more
 ‘ dextrous in dividing the counters. From thence
 ‘ it was that the old proverb arose, *There is no enter-
 ‘ ing the academy without an equipage*.

‘ The men of letters, unable to regain their usurped
 ‘ dominion, and drove to despair conspired in form.
 ‘ They had recourse to their usual weapons, epi-
 ‘ grams, songs, and vaudevilles*; they exhausted all
 ‘ the arrows from the quiver of satire; but, alas! all
 ‘ their attacks were fruitless; the hearts of their ad-
 ‘ versaries

* Poor arms! which even are now prohibited, and which
 the insolent pride of the great at once seeks after and
 dreads.

‘verfaries were become fo callous as to be no longer
 ‘penetrable, even by the piercing ftrokes of ridicule;
 ‘all the bon mots of meffieurs the authors would
 ‘have been thrown away but for the aid of a violent
 ‘indigeftion, that furprifed the academicians on a
 ‘certain day, when affembled at a fplendid feaft.
 ‘Thofe three divinities, Apollo, Pluto, and the god
 ‘of the digeftive faculty, quarrelled with each other;
 ‘Indigeftion attacking them under the double title
 ‘of financiers and academics, destroyed them almoft
 ‘all; the men of letters again entered their ancient
 ‘dominion, and the academy was faved. . . .”

There was an univerfal burft of laughter in the
 affembly. Some of them asked me in a low voice,
 if the account was juft. Yes, I replied, for the moft
 part; but when we look down on paff times from
 the fummit of feven hundred years, it is doubtlefs
 eafy to give a ridiculous turn to what then exifted.
 For the reft, the academy agreed, even in my time,
 that each member who compofed it was of more
 worth than the institution itfelf. Nothing can be
 added to that confeffion. The misfortune is, that
 when men meet in affemblies, their heads contract, as
 Montefquieu faid, who ought to know.

I paffed into an apartment that contained the por-
 traits of the academicians, as well ancient as modern;
 I took particular notice of thofe that fucceeded the
 academics now living; but, to avoid offence, I fhall
 not name them.

Helas!

*Helas! la verité fi fouverent eft cruelle,
 On l'aime, et les humains font malheureux par elle.*

VOLT.

Alas! the truth we love, though oft we find
 Her cruel, and a foe to human kind.

I cannot, however, refrain from relating a fact
 that will certainly give great pleafure to every gene-
 rous mind, that loves juftice and detefts tyranny;
 which is, that the portrait of the abbé St. Pierre was
 reinstated in its rank with all the honours due to fuch
 exemplary virtue. They had effaced the turpitude
 of which the academy had rendered itfelf culpable,
 while it bowed the neck to a yoke of a fervitude it
 ought never to have known. They had placed this
 ineftimable and virtuous writer between Fenelon and
 Montefquieu. I gave the praifes due to this noble
 equity. I faw no portrait of Richelieu, nor of Chri-
 ftina, nor of —, nor —, nor —, which, though
 but paintings, had been for ever difcarded.

As I defcended the mountain, I caft my eyes many
 times on thofe lovely groves where dwelt the men of
 brilliant genius, who, in filence, and in the contem-
 plation of nature, laboured to form the hearts of
 their countrymen to virtue, to the love of the true
 and beautiful; when foftly I faid: Would that I could
 render myfelf worthy of this academy!

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXI.

THE KING'S CABINET.

NOT far from this enchanting spot, I beheld a vast temple that struck me with awe and admiration. On its frontispiece was wrote *An abridgement of the universe*. "You see," said my guide, "the king's cabinet, though the edifice belongs not to him, but to the state. We give it that title merely as a mark of the respect we bear his person. Our sovereign, moreover, after the manner of the ancient kings, exercises medicine, surgery, and the arts. The happy time is returned when men in power, who are provided with the necessary means for performing experiments, are charmed with the glory of making discoveries of importance to mankind, and are anxious to carry the sciences to that degree of perfection which attends their influence and their zeal. The most considerable persons in the nation employ their opulence in discovering the secrets of nature; and gold, formerly the source of vice and the wages of sloth, rewards those labours that are subservient to humanity.

On entering, I was struck with a pleasing surprize. This temple was the animated palace of nature; all her productions were here collected with a profusion that was completely regular. The temple consisted of four wings of an immense extent, in the centre of which

which was the most capacious dome my eyes ever beheld.

In different parts were placed marble statues, with these inscriptions: To the inventor of the saw, To the inventor of the plane, the screw, the pulley, the capstane, the crane, &c. &c. All the different sorts of animals, vegetables, and minerals were placed under the four wings, and were visible by one glance of the eye. What an immense and astonishing assemblage!

Under the first wing were seen all from the cedar to the hyssop.

Under the second from the eagle to the fly,

Under the third, from the elephant to the ant.

Under the fourth, from the whale to the gudgeon

In the middle of the dome were the sports of nature. Monsters of every kind. Productions enormous, unknown, singular in their gender. For Nature, the moment she abandons her ordinary laws, discovers an intelligence still more profound than when she adheres strictly to them. On the sides were seen complete portions of matter taken from the mines which presented the secret laboratories, where nature prepares those metals that man has rendered sometimes useful, sometimes dangerous. Long beds of matter skilfully taken up, and artfully placed, showed the interior face of the earth, and the order observed

observed in the different strata of stone, clays, and loam, there deposited*.

How

* What follows was wrote me by a friend. " I have
 " now a greater taste than ever for the quarries. I think
 " it will make me dwell among the minerals and petrifica-
 " tions, and, perhaps, prepare me a tomb in the bowels of
 " the earth. I have descended near nine hundred feet into
 " her bosom, hard by ****, much concerned that I could
 " go no farther, I would have printed my footsteps on her
 " kernel, and have there enquired concerning the different
 " nations that had sojourned on her surface; would have
 " asked, if among the infinite number of her children, any
 " one had ever acknowledged, her benefactions? If at the
 " spot where I meditate, far from the light of day, she had
 " ever produced nourishing fruits? And if a people, or
 " a throne had been there; and how many beds, formed
 " of the ruins of mankind, she concealed from the depth of
 " this abyfs to the last point of her diameter? I would have
 " entreated her to let me read all the catastrophies that she
 " had suffered; and I should have bathed them with my
 " tears, when I had learnt all the disasters from which she
 " had not been able to defend her numerous family; dis-
 " asters engraved on incontestible medals, but whose re-
 " membrance is utterly effaced; disasters that will again
 " return when she shall bury in her sides the present gene-
 " ration, who shall in their turn be trod under foot by gene-
 " rations without number, who perhaps will have no other
 " resemblance to them than the participation of the same
 " misfortunes. Then, in the midst of my grief, as just as
 " humane, I should have formed cruel and charitable
 " vows; I should have wished that she would have swal-
 " lowed up every animal existence; that she would have
 " snatched every being endowed with sensibility, from the
 " light of the sun; all of whose favours are insufficient to
 " repair

I

How great was my astonishment, when, instead of a parcel of dry bones, I saw the complete whale, the monstrous hippopotamus, the terrible crocodile; &c.
 They

" repair the oppression of tyrants, who divide and consume
 " her amongst them.

" This globe, which bears so many wretches, would
 " then roll in an universal and happy silence; it would pre-
 " sent to the sun's rays no unfortunate being compelled
 " to curse it. No cry of lamentation would arise from this
 " planet; it would then traverse the heavens with a tranquil
 " majesty. Her children, sleeping in one common tomb,
 " would suffer her to obey the laws of the creation, while
 " they were no longer the victims of destructive laws, that
 " fall on the head of man as on the meanest grain of sand;
 " and death surrounding this double hemisphere with his
 " peaceful shadow, would perhaps present an appearance
 " more striking than the blustering reign of this vain glo-
 " rious life, that draws after it a long series of crimes, an
 " inundation of misfortunes, and a terror even of its very
 " dissolution."

I replied to this friend, that I did not join with him in the last wish; that physical evils were of all others the most supportable; that they were transient, and besides, inevitable; and we had nothing to do but submit; but that it was in a man's own power to defend himself from those unhappy passions, that torment and disgrace him. I answered him in conformity to the principles that are sufficiently explained in the course of this work. I thought it but just, however, to preserve this extract, as it abounds with a strong sensibility ¶.

¶ That there is a considerable degree of sensibility, and some ingenuity in this extract, cannot be denied; but at the same

U

time,

They had followed the arrangement, the degradations and varieties that nature has observed in her productions. The eye thus traced without labour the chain of beings, from the greatest to the least. We there saw the lion, the tyger, the panther, in the fierce attitudes by which they are characterised; the voracious animals were represented as darting on their prey; even the energy of their motion seemed in a manner to be preserved, as well as the creative breath by which they were animated. The more gentle, or more subtle, had lost nothing of their physiognomy. Labour, cunning, and patience, art had closely imitated. The natural history of each animal was engraved under it, and the attendants explained verbally, what would have been too long to be read.

That scale of beings, so contested in our day, and which many philosophers had judiciously supposed, was here confirmed by the clearest evidence. We saw distinctly that the several species touch; that they run, so to speak, into each other; that by the delicate and sensible connections between the mere stone and the plant, the plant and the animal, the animal and man, there remained no interstices. That their growth, duration, and destruction, were determined
by

time, it has certainly the air of a philosophic rant. The writer seems to have not believed, or at least not sufficiently regarded, the doctrine of a future state. Would it have been unworthy the wisdom and goodness of God, to have created this earth for the existence of one man only, if, after a short duration here, he were to inherit a glorious immortality?

by the same causes. It was moreover remarked, that nature in all her operations, tended with energy to the formation of man; and that labouring patiently, and even at a distance, that important work, she endeavoured, by various essays, to arrive at the gradual term of his perfection, which seemed to be the utmost effort of her power.

This cabinet was by no means a chaos, an undigested mass, where the objects, either widely scattered, or heaped together, afforded no determinate idea. The gradations were skilfully disposed and preserved. But what most of all favoured the arrangement, was, that they had discovered a preparation, which preserved the several subjects from those insects that spring from corruption.

I found myself oppressed by the weight of so many miracles. My eye embraced all the luxury of nature. How at that moment did I reverence its author! What homage did I render to his power, his wisdom, and what is even still more precious, his goodness! How important a being does man appear, when ranging amongst these wonders, collected by his hands; and which seem created for him, as he alone has the power of discerning their various properties. That line so justly proportioned, those connections, those seeming vacuities, but constantly filled; that gradual order, that plan which admits of no intermediate; after surveying the heavens, what sight is more magnificent on the earth, which itself, at the

same time, is but an atom*? By what wonderful perseverance, I said, have you been able to perform so great a work?

“It is the work of many kings,” they replied; “All jealous of honouring the title of an intelligent being; a sublime and generous passion, supported by a constant ardor, has inspired them with the curiosity of plucking off the veil from the bosom of nature. Instead of counting battles gained, towns taken by assault, injustice, and bloody conquests; they say of our kings, he made such a discovery in the ocean of beings; he accomplished such a project for the good of

* It must be confessed, that the history of nature is nothing more than that of our own weakness. The little that we know discovers the extent of our ignorance. Physics are to us what an occult science was to the ancients. We cannot contest some parts of it, but we can deny the whole. What axiom is there peculiar to it? The project of a natural history is highly commendable, but it is somewhat fastuous. A man spends his whole life in discovering the least property of a mineral, and dies before he has exhausted the subject. The immensity of objects, animals, trees, and plants, is sufficient to awe the capacity of a single man. But ought it to discourage him? No; it is here that audacity is virtue, obstinacy wisdom, and presumption utility. We should watch nature so closely, that she may at last, by surprise, discover her secret; to find it out seems not impossible to the human mind, provided the chain of observations be not interrupted, and that each philosopher be more anxious for the perfection of science than for his own glory; a rare, but necessary sacrifice, and one that points out the real friend to man.

of mankind. They no longer spend a hundred million of livres for the destruction of their brethren in one campaign; but employ it in augmenting their real riches; in the encouragement of genius and industry, and by encreasing their force, complete the general happiness.”

There have been secrets discovered in all ages, by men in appearance the most stupid. Many of them have like lightning shone for a moment only. We are sensible, however, that nothing is lost we wish to save. All is laid up in the bosom of nature; we need but search; it is vast, it presents a thousand resources. Nothing is annihilated in the order of beings. By perpetually agitating the mass of ideas, the most unexpected rencounters arise*. Fully convinced of the possi-

* When we regard the point from which men have set out in their philosophical inquiries, and that to which they are now arrived, it must be confessed, that, with all our machines, we do not sufficiently extend the force of the human mind. Man, left to himself, seems more strong, than with all those foreign helps. The more we acquire, the more indolent we become, the infinite number of experiments has served scarce any other purpose than to consecrate error. Content with seeing, we have thought that we touched the extremity, and have disdained to seek further. Our philosophers glide over a thousand important objects, of which they ought to give the solution. Experimental philosophy has become an exhibition, a sort of public legerdemain. If the experiment that has been promised is tardy or disobedient, the operator frequently corrects it with a touch of his finger. What do we now see? Uncon-

possibility of the most astonishing discoveries, we have not lingered in the pursuit.

We leave nothing to chance; that word, totally void of meaning is banished from our language. Chance is a synonymous word with ignorance. Sagacity, labour, and patience, are the instruments by which nature is compelled to discover her most hidden treasures. Men have learnt to derive every possible advantage from the gifts they have received. By perceiving the degree to which they could ascend, they have been stimulated by glory to pursue the boundless career that is set before them. The life of a single man, it is said is too short; it is true; and what have we done? we have united the force of each individual; they have acquired an immense empire; the one finished what the other began. The chain was never interrupted, but each link closely connected with that which went before; thus it has been extended through several centuries, and this chain of ideas

netted, useless discoveries; dogmatical philosophers, who sacrifice all to their systems; retailers of words, who confound the vulgar, and excite pity on the man who can take the polished covering from off their jargon. The memoirs of the academy of sciences present a multitude of facts, of surprising observations; but all those observations resemble a relation of some unknown people, where one man only has been, and where no one can go again. We must believe the traveller and the philosopher, even though they should have deceived themselves; nor can we draw any utility from their relations, on account of the distance of the country, and the difficulty of applying their observations to any real objects.

ideas and of successive labour, may one day surround and embrace the universe. It is not merely a personal glory, but the interest of the human race, scarce thought of in your days, that supports the most difficult enterprises.

“We no longer amuse ourselves with vain systems*. Thanks to heaven (and to your folly they are all exhausted. The torch of experience alone directs our steps. Our end is to know the secret causes of each appearance, and to extend the dominion of man, by providing him with the means of executing all those labours that can aggrandise his existence.

“We have certain hermits, (of one order only) who live in the forests; but it is to herbalife, which they do by choice, and from a natural propensity. On certain stated days they repair hither, to communicate their valuable discoveries.

“We have erected towers on the summits of several mountains, where they make observations that are continually increasing, and that confirm each other. We have formed artificial torrents and cataracts, by which

* Let the fabricators of systems, physical and metaphysical, explain to me the following incident. Father Mabillon was, in his younger days, an idiot. When he was six and twenty, he fell with his head against a stone stair-case. He was trepaned, and became a new man; endowed with a lively imagination, an amazing memory, and a zeal for study rarely equalled.

which is acquired a force sufficient to produce the greatest effects by motion*. We have established aromatic baths, to rejuvenate the bodies of those who are grown rigid by age; for God has not created so many salutary plants, and given the knowledge of their virtues to man, but to consign to his vigilance the care of preserving his health, and extending the fragile and precious thread of his days.

“ Our public walks, which among you seemed calculated for pleasure only, pay us an useful tribute. They are formed of fruit-trees, that delight the view, and embalm the air with their odours. They have taken place of the lime, the barren chestnut, and the stunted elm. We engraft, and render prolific, wild trees, that our labours may correspond with the blissful liberality of nature, who only waits for that master's hand, to whom the Creator, so to say, has submitted them.

“ We have menageries of large extent, for all sorts of animals; and have found in the depths of the forests, several species that were altogether unknown
to

* The most brilliant and expensive undertakings are not the most to be admired, if they are erected merely for ostentation. The machine that raises the water which supplies the gardens of Marley, is not, in the eyes of a wise man, of so much consequence as a single wheel, turned by a rivulet, that grinds the corn for several villages, or aids the labour of the manufacturer. Genius may be powerful, but it is only great when useful to mankind.

to you. We mix these tribes to see the effects they will produce. The discoveries we have here made are astonishing, and highly useful, for the species has sometimes increased to twice the common size. To conclude, we have remarked, that our pains bestowed on nature, have rarely been ineffectual.

“ We have also recovered many secrets that were lost to you, merely for want of perseverance in the search; for you were more solicitous to heap up a great number of words in the form of a book, than to recover, by dint of application, extraordinary inventions. We now possess, as did the ancients, malleable glass; the transparent stone; the Tyrian purple, with which the imperial robes were dyed; the mirror of Archimides*; the Ægyptian art of embalming; the machine by which they erected their obelisks; the cloth in which their bodies were consumed on the funeral pile; the art of liquifying stones; the inextinguishable lamps, and even the Appian sauce.

“ Walk into these gardens, where botany has received all the perfection of which it was susceptible. †.
Your

* If the moderns have not precisely this mirror, they have something very like it.

† Thou, who wanderest over the fields, while thinking on the vessel that plows the waves, and bears thy treasure; stop, short-sighted wretch! Thou treadest upon an obscure, but salutary herb, that would communicate health and joy

Your blind philosophers complained that the earth was replete with poisons, we have discovered, that they are the most efficacious remedies that can be employed. Providence has here been justified, as it would be in every instance, but for the weakness of our knowledge. We now no longer hear complaints upon the earth; no mournful voice cries out, "All is evil!" We say, that in the sight of God, "All is good!" Even the effects of these poisons we not only foresee, but know how to prevent.

"We have extracted from plants certain penetrating and benign juices, which, by insinuating themselves into the pores of the skin, mix with our fluids, establish the temperament, and render the body more healthful, more supple and robust. We have discovered the secret of dissolving the stone without burning the entrails. We now cure the phthisis, and every other disorder formerly deemed incurable*. But the most excellent of all our enterprises

to thy heart; a treasure far more valuable than all thy ship contains. After having pursued a thousand chimeras, end thy labours like J. J. Rousseau, by herbalizing.

* It is shameful for a man to declare that he has a secret useful to the human race, and reserve it for the advantage of himself and his family. Alas! What recompence would he have? Wretch! Thou mayest pass through the midst of thy brethren, and say to thyself, "These beings are indebted to me for a part of their health and felicity!" But thou art not possessed of that noble pride, nor affected by that

prizes was, the exterminating that dreadful hydra, that cruel and shameful plague, which attacked the source of life and pleasure. The human race was on the brink of destruction when we discovered that happy specific, which has preserved its being and its pleasure, still more precious*. In the course of our walk, the Buffon of that age joined demonstration to words, by pointing out to me the objects of nature, and adding his own reflections."

But what most of all surprised me, was an optical cabinet, where they had assembled all the properties of light. It was a perpetual scene of magic. They caused to pass before my eyes landscapes, prospects, palaces, rainbows, meteors, luminous cyphers, imaginary seas; and which were more striking than even the realities; it was the region of enchantment. The prospect of creation rising out of inanity could not have given me a sensation more exquisite and astonishing.

They presented me with a microscope, by the aid of which, I perceived new beings that had escaped the piercing sight of our observers. So simple and wonderful was the art, that the eye was never fatigued.

that benevolent idea! Go, get gold, thou miscreant! and debar thy soul of that enjoyment. Thou executest justice, thou punishest thyself.

* I am concerned when I hear any one jest on this terrible scourge. We should never mention it without tears, and not in this instance, imitate the buffoon Voltaire.

fatigued. Every advance they made, satisfied the most ardent curiosity; the stronger avidity it appeared to have, the more numerous were the objects that presented themselves. O! How great does man here appear? I more than once exclaimed, and how pitiful, comparatively, were they, whom, in my time, they called great*.

What related to acoustics was not less miraculous. They had acquired the art of imitating all the articulations of the human voice, of the cries of animals, and the various notes of birds. By touching certain springs we seemed to be instantly transported to some wild forest; where we heard the roarings of the lion, the tyger and the bear, who seemed to be in conflict with each other. The noise rent the ear. You would have said that the echo, still more terrible, repeated at a distance those horrid and barbarous cries. But soon the songs of nightingales succeeded to those discordant sounds. By their harmonious organs each

* A voluminous work might be compiled of the several questions, natural, moral, and metaphysical, that present themselves in crowds to the mind, and about which the man of genius knows no more than the fool; and we might reply in one word to all these metaphysical, moral, and natural questions; but it should be that of the profound logograph or enigma, which surrounds us. I do not despair but that they will one day discover it. I expect every thing from the human mind, when it shall know its own faculties, and unite them; and when it shall regard its intelligence as a power that ought to penetrate all that is, and subject all that it contemplates.

each particle of the air became melodious; the ear discerned even the tremblings of their amorous wings, and those tender and enchanting sounds which the voice of man can never perfectly imitate. To the intoxication of pleasure was joined the sweet surprise, and the voluptuous sensation that arose from this happy union, seized every heart.

This people, who had constantly a moral aim even in the prodigies of art, had happily deduced an advantage from this surprising invention. When a young prince talked of combats, or discovered a warlike disposition*, they conducted him to a room which they properly named, the Hell. The artist immediately put the springs in motion, and saluted his ear with all the horrors of a battle, the cries of rage and of grief; the lamentations of the dying; the sounds of terror; the bellowing of that hideous thunder which is the signal of destruction and bears the execrable sound of death. If nature did not then prevail on his mind, if he did not send forth a cry of horror, if his countenance remained unmoved and placid,

* Ye mighty potentates, who divide the globe among you, and are furnished with cannons, mortars, and numerous weapons, which are displayed by the dazzling ranks of those armies you send to conquer a province or exterminate a kingdom, I know not how it is, but amidst all your waving ensigns, you appear to me mean and wretched. The Romans, in their public games, diverted themselves with the pigmies, whom they made to combat each other, but little thought that they were in the eye of a wise man, what the dwarfs appeared to them.

placid, he was confined to that room the remainder of his days. Every morning, however, they repeated a piece of this music, that he might be satisfied without the destruction of the human race.

The director of this cabinet, to my great surprize, exhibited all his infernal opera, without acquainting me of his intention. O heavens! mercy! mercy! I cried with all my strength, stopping my ears. O spare me, spare me! He stopped the exhibition.—“How!” he said, “does not this please you?”—None but a demon, I replied, can be pleased with such an horrid uproar.—“This, however, was in your time a very common diversion, which the kings and princes of Europe all enjoyed, as they did the chace*, which, as has been very justly remarked, is the true picture of war†. Your poets moreover extolled

* Among the many calamities that now oppress Europe, that which I find the most advantageous is the depopulation. Since men must be miserable, there are the fewer to suffer. If this reflection be cruel, let it fall on them from whom it proceeds.

† How strange and deplorable is the constitution of our political world! Eight or ten crowned heads hold the human race in chains; they correspond, they afford each other mutual aid, they keep them in their royal hands to gripe them at their pleasure, even till they produce convulsive motions. This conspiracy is not covered with a veil, but is open, public, and conducted by ambassadors. Our complaints no longer reach their lofty ears. Look around through Europe; it is no other than a vast arsenal, where

toll'd them for having frightened all the birds from the sky for ten leagues round, and for sagaciously providing provender for the ravens; but, above all things,

where thousands of barrels of powder want only a single spark of fire to set them in combustion. Frequently it is the hand of a hair-brained minister that puts them in explosion; he sets fire at once to the north and the south, to the two extremities of the earth. What an immense quantity of cannons, mortars, muskets, balls, bullets, swords, balloons, &c. of murdering slaves, obedient to the whip of discipline, attend the orders of a cabinet, to display its bloody parade! Geometry itself has profaned its divine attributes by assisting the fury sometimes of ambitious, and sometimes capricious sovereigns. With what precision do they destroy an army, bombard a camp, besiege or burn a city! I have seen academicians in cool blood consult on the charging a cannon. Alas! gentlemen, stay till you have at least a principality. What imports it you whose name governs in any particular country? Your patriotism is a false virtue, and dangerous to humanity. Let us examine a little into the signification of the word *patriot*. To have an attachment to any state, it is necessary to be a member of that state. Now, if you except two or three republics, there is, properly speaking, no such thing as a country. Why should the Englishman be my enemy? I am connected to him by commerce, by the arts, and by every other relation possible; there is no natural antipathy between us. Why, therefore, would you, that by passing certain limits, I should separate my interest from that of other men? What we call patriotism is a phantasy invented by kings, and destructive to mankind; for, if my nation were three times less than it is, I should have three times as many more to hate; my affections therefore must depend on the variable limits of dominions; in the course of the same year, I must destroy my neighbour,

things, those poets were extremely fond of describing a battle."—Oh! I entreat you, speak no more of the epidemic disease which then afflicted the human race. Alas! they were all seized with the symptoms of rage and folly; cowardly kings, from their fastuous thrones, gave the word for murder; and the passive herd, guarded by one dog only, ran cheerfully to the slaughter. How was it possible to reclaim them at that time of illusion? how break the magic talisman? A little club, a ribband red or blue, a small enamelled cross, communicated every where a spirit of intoxication and fury. Others became possessed by the mere sight of a cockade, or a few doits. The cure necessarily required time; but I was fully convinced, that, sooner or later, the lenient balm of philosophy would cicatrize all those shameful wounds*.

The

and befriends with him that I endeavoured to massacre the day before; so that, in fact, I only maintain the rights of a capricious master, who would hold my soul in subjection. No; in my judgment, Europe should form but one vast state; and I dare to wish that it may be united under one government. All things properly considered, it would be highly advantageous. Then I could be in reality a patriot; but at the present day, what is it we call liberty? "Nothing more," (says a certain writer) "than the heroism of slavery."

* What a sight! two hundred thousand men spread over a vast country, and only wait for the signal to cut each other's throats, to massacre one another in the face of the sun and amidst the flowers of the spring. It is not hatred that excites

They conducted me to the cabinet of the mathematics. It appeared richly stored, and in the most perfect order. They had banished from this science all that resembled the sport of children, all that was merely dry and trifling speculation, or that surpassed the bounds of the human capacity. I saw machines of every kind that were proper to assist the arm of man, and such as contained much greater powers than are known to us; they were adapted to all sorts of motions; and by the aid of these, the heaviest weights were managed with facility.—"You have seen," they said, "those obelisks, those triumphal arches, those palaces, and other stately buildings that astonish the sight. They are not the produce of mere strength, of numbers, or dexterity: it is by the aid of finished machines, that they have been constructed." In a word, I here found the greatest variety of the most accurate instruments for the use of geometry, astronomy, and the other sciences.

All they who had attempted experiments that were new, bold, masterly, and that promised great utility, even though they did not succeed (for instruction may be gained from disappointment) had their busts erected, and decorated with their proper attributes.

They

excites them: no; they are commanded by kings to murder each other. If this cruel event had never happened but once, would not they who had not been witnesses to it, have had a just right to doubt its veracity? This thought is M. Gaillard's.

They whispered, moreover, that many remarkable, and even wonderful secrets, were confided to the care of a small number of their sages? for there are matters, good in themselves, that may be abused in their application*. The human mind, in their opinion, was not yet sufficiently strong to make use of the most rare or most powerful discoveries without danger †.

C H A P.

* King Ezechias (as the Scripture informs us) suppressed a book that treated of the virtues of plants, for fear that, by making a wrong use of it, they should even create diseases. The fact is curious, and affords matter for much reflection.

† What a horrible day was that for the human race, when a monk formed of salt-petre a murdering powder! Ariosto tells us, that the devil having invented a carabine, touched by pity, threw it into a river. Alas! There is no longer any asylum upon the earth; courage now is useless; the artillery is in the hands of a small number of men, and renders them absolute masters of our existence.

C H A P. XXXII.

THE ACADEMY OF PAINTING.

AS the arts among this people are connected not only in a figurative, but in a real sense; before I had gone many steps I found myself at the academy of painting. I entered several large saloons, adorned with the works of the greatest masters, each of which afforded a moral and instructive treatise. There was no longer seen that perpetual mythology, a thousand times repeated, which though ingenious in the infancy of the art, was now become disgusting. The most pleasing objects lose at last their charms: repetition is the language of a dunce. Thus it had happened to all those gross flatteries, with which the fawning painters had deified Lewis XIV. Time, like truth, had devoured all the lying canvas; as it had sent to their proper place the insipid verses of Boileau, and the prologues of Quinault, the arts were forbid to falsify*. There, moreover, no longer existed any
of

* When I see, in the gallery of Versailles, Lewis XIV. with a thunderbolt in his hand, seated upon the azure clouds, like an avenging deity, the disdainful pity I feel for the pencil of Le Brun is almost reflected on the art: but when I consider that the painting survives both the thundering god, and the artist who created him, I smile.

The first time Lewis XIV. saw a Teniers, he turned away his head with an air of disdain, and ordered it to be removed

of that order of men they called connoisseurs, who directed the artist with a golden ingot in their hands. Genius was free, followed its own laws, and no longer debased itself.

Among these moral paintings there were seen no brutal battles, no shameful debaucheries of the fabulous gods, much less sovereigns surrounded by virtues of which they were remarkably deficient. Such subjects only as were proper to inspire sentiments of dignity and virtue were here exhibited. All the pagan divinities, equally absurd and scandalous, were avoided by the precious pencil, now destined to commemorate the most important actions; by which is meant those that give a noble idea of man; such as clemency, generosity, perseverance, courage, and a disdain of luxury.

I found that they had exhibited all those important subjects that deserve to pass down to posterity; the greatness of soul conspicuous in certain sovereigns was in particular immortalized. I saw Henry IV. nourishing the city he besieged; Sully slowly counting out a sum of money, that was destined for his master's pleasures; Lewis XIV. on his death-bed, crying out, "I now find I have been too fond of war;" Trajan tearing his vestment to bind up the wounds of an unhappy

removed from the apartment. If that monarch was disgusted with those good folks that dance and sing; if he preferred the furious trooper cowering through the dust and smoke of a camp, the complexion of his mind is manifest.

unhappy man; Marcus Aurelius descending from his horse, during a hasty enterprize, to receive the petition of a poor woman. Titus distributing food and remedies to the sick. St. Hilaire stretching out his arm and showing his son, who wept, Tureane feated amidst the dust; the generous Fabius putting on the chains of a galley-slave in the room of his father, &c. I saw no gloomy or cruel subjects. No beggarly courtiers here said with a sneer, "Even the painters now preach!" Every one acknowledged their merit, in having selected the most sublime objects in human nature, that is, grand representations of the subjects of history. They had wisely determined that nothing was more important. All the arts had made, so to say, a wonderful association in favour of humanity. This happy agreement had thrown a greater lustre on the sacred effigy of virtue; it was become more adorable, and its aspect, always charming, afforded a public instruction, as just as it was striking. Alas! how is it possible to resist the power of the fine arts, when with one voice they extol and dignify the free and noble citizen?

All these pictures attracted the eye, as well by the execution as by the design. These painters had united the Flemish colouring with the Italian drawing; or rather they had, by a profound study, surpassed them. Honours, the only riches of the great man, at once animated and rewarded his labours. Nature seemed to appear as in a mirror. The friend of virtue was unable to contemplate these beautiful paintings without the tender sigh of pleasure. The guilty dared not

not to look upon them; they feared lest these animated figures should assume a voice, accuse, and confound them.

They told me that these pictures were exhibited to the people; strangers were also admitted; for they practised not that mean tyranny which excludes all who come from beyond a certain limit. Every year they proposed four subjects, that the artist might have time to give his work a due degree of perfection. The most finished easily obtained the suffrage of the people; for attention was paid to the general voice, which is commonly that of equity itself. The others, however, were sure to receive their due portion of praise. They were far from the injustice of discouraging the scholar. The established masters were void of that unworthy and base jealousy which banished Poussin far from his country, and caused Le Seur to perish in the flower of his day. They had divested themselves of that dangerous and fatal prejudice, which, in my time, permitted no scholar to follow any other manner than that of his master. They did not make insipid copyists of those who, directed by good precepts and then left to themselves, would have attained the height of their profession. The disciple, in a word, did not bend under a yoke that rendered him spiritless; nor pace, with slow and trembling steps, after a capricious master, and one too, whom he was obliged to flatter. If he proved to be a man of genius, he went before him, and his preceptor was the first to glory in his advancement.

There

There were several academies of drawing, painting, sculpture, and practical geometry. These arts, dangerous in my age, because they encouraged luxury, pride, cupidity, and debauchery, were now become highly useful, as they were only employed to inspire sentiments of virtue, and to give to the city that majesty, those charms, that noble and simple taste, which by a secret connection elevates the minds of the people.

These schools were open to the public. The disciples worked under its auspices. Every one was permitted to declare his opinion. This did not, however, prevent the authorized directors from making a proper inspection. But no scholar was considered as dependent on any particular master, but as related to them all in general. By avoiding the appearance of a despotic power, so fatal to a masterly and free genius, they were enabled to produce artists who had surpassed the chef-d'œuvres of antiquity. Their paintings were so highly finished, that the remains of Raphael and Rubens were no longer sought after, but by some obstinate and opinionated antiquaries.

It is needless to say that all the arts and professions were equally free. It is only in a weak, barbarous, and tyrannic age, that fetters are given to industry; that a sum of money is required of him who would labour in any profession, instead of affording him a recompence. All those little ludicrous corporations serve no other purpose, by collecting a number of people together, but to ferment their passions to a
more

more violent degree. A multitude of indeterminable incidents arise from that bondage, which necessarily render them enemies to each other. So in a prison, men, when chained together, communicate their rancour and their vices. By endeavouring to prevent private interests, they have rendered it more active, which is just the contrary to what a wise legislature should pursue. A thousand disorders proceed from this perpetual constraint, by which men are prevented from exercising their particular talents. From hence spring idleness and fraud. The misfortune arises from the impotence of those who would relieve themselves from that deplorable state in which they are held by an arm of brass, and which nothing but gold can relax. The monarch, to enjoy a trifling tribute, has destroyed the most sacred liberty, and choaked up all the sources of spirit and industry.

Among these people, well instructed in the rights of mankind, each one followed that particular employ to which his genius led him; the sure pledge of success. They who had no propensity to the fine arts, applied themselves to more attainable professions; for no mediocrity is allowed in works of genius. The glory of the nation appears to be affected by those talents, which distinguish not only men, but empires.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIII.

EMBLEMATICAL PAINTINGS.

I ENTERED a separate apartment, where they had represented the several ages. To each of them was given, besides its natural physiognomy, those features by which it was distinguished from its brethren. The age of ignorance was clothed in a black and mournful robe. Her eyes were red and gloomy, and in her hand she bore a torch. At a distance was seen a funeral pile, before which stood priests covered with a long veil, and human victims, their eyes concealed by bandages, who were devoted to the flames.

Further on I saw a wild enthusiast, without any other merit than that of a heated imagination, with which he fired those of his fellow citizens, not less inflammable; and by thundering forth the name of the deity, he drew after him a croud of people, as a docile herd run after the voice of the shepherd. Even kings quitted their thrones, abandoned their depopulated states, and believing they heard a voice from heaven, sacrificed themselves, their crowns, and their subjects, in the midst of vast deserts. In the background was seen Superstition striding over the heads of mankind, and shaking her murdering torch. Gigantic monster! her feet touched the two extremities of the earth, and her arm, holding the palm of martyrdom, was extended to the clouds.

Y

Another

Another less ardent but more contemplative, was devoted to mystery and allegory, and wrapt up in the marvellous; was constantly surrounded by enigmas, and endeavouring to thicken the shades by which he was enveloped. There were seen the Platonic years, numbers of Pythagoras, the verses of the sibyls, the powerful charms of magic, and those prestiges, sometimes ingenious and sometimes insipid, that the mind of man has created.

Another held in his hand an astrolabe, attentively regarded the calendar, and calculated the hours fortunate and unfortunate. A cold and silent gravity was imprinted on his protracted visage. He turned pale at the conjunction of two stars. The present hour was nothing to him, and the future was his executioner. His religion was directed by the ridiculous jargon of astrology, and he embraced that phantom as an immoveable column.

Then appeared a figure covered with armour; his head was enclosed in a brazen helmet, and in his hand he bore a lance. He breathed nothing but single combat. The soul of this hero was more hardened than the steel that covered him. It was by arms alone that right, opinion, justice, and truth, were to be decided. In the back ground were seen the field of combat, judges and heralds supported the vanquished, or rather the guilty.

In another part was seen a figure totally burlesque. A Gothic architect, erecting columns that had no proportion

proportion to the weight they supported, and which were charged with ridiculous ornaments; and those he thought a refinement in building, unknown to the Greeks or Romans. The same irregularity was conspicuous in his logic, which consisted of abstract ideas, and perpetual chicanery. At a distance were seen a sort of sleep-walkers, who talked and acted with their eyes open, but, plunged in a long dream, never connected two ideas, unless by chance.

Thus every age successively presented itself; but the detail would be here too long. I stood for some time regarding the eighteenth century, induced by my ancient connection with it. It was represented by the painter under the figure of a woman. A number of borrowed and costly ornaments loaded her proud and delicate head. Her neck, her arms, and breast, were covered with pearls and diamonds. Her eyes were bright and sparkling, but a somewhat affected smile gave an air of grimace to her mouth. Her cheeks were covered with a flaming red. Art appeared to be mixed with her words, as with her looks; they were alluring but not true. She held in each hand a long rose-coloured ribband, which seemed ornaments, but concealed two iron chains, by which she was strongly bound. She had, however, liberty enough to gesticulate, to prance, and gambol, and this she did to excess, in order, (as it should seem) to disguise her slavery, or at least to make it more easy and pleasing. I examined her figure with attention, and tracing the drapery of her vestment, I perceived that her pompous robe was at the bottom

in tatters, and covered with dirt. Her naked feet were plunged in a kind of bog; her lower extremities were as hideous as her head was brilliant. She appeared in this dress not much unlike one of those strumpets who walk the streets at the beginning of the night. I discovered behind her a number of children, with meagre livid aspects, who cried to their mother while they devoured a morsel of black bread. She endeavoured to hide them with her robe, but between the tatters those wretched infants still appeared. At a distance in the picture were seen superb palaces, buildings of marble, parterres artfully laid out, vast forests peopled with deer, where the horn resounded from afar. But the country, half uncultivated, was filled with wretched peasants, who harassed by fatigue, sunk under their burthens: then appeared men who forced away part of them to the wars, and took from the rest their beds and their kettles*.

The

* Tyranny is a dangerous tree which should be rooted out as soon as planted. The beauty of this tree is deceitful. While young it appears crowned with flowers and laurels, but is secretly nourished by blood. It soon grows, spreads its branches, and lifts its lofty head. It covers all that surrounds it with a fastuous and deadly shade. The neighbouring fruits and flowers perish, deprived of the beneficent rays of the sun, which it intercepts. It compels the earth to nourish none but itself. It at last becomes like that venomous tree, whose sweet fruit is poison, and that changes the drops of rain which distil from its leaves into a corrosive fluid, that gives the weary traveller at once sleep and death. In the mean time its trunk becomes knotty, its sap is changed
into

The characters of the different nations were expressed with equal fidelity. By colours variegated with a thousand mixtures, by a gloomy and melancholy countenance, was distinguished the jealous and vindictive Italian. In the same picture his thoughtful looks disappeared in the midst of a concert; the painter had seized with remarkable address, that crisis to make him become supple in an instant. The back ground contained a representation of the droll jests of pantomimes.

The Englishman, in an attitude rather haughty than majestic, standing upon the point of a rock, commanded the ocean, and gave to a vessel the signal to visit the new world, and bring him back its treasures. His bold looks declared that his private liberty was equal to that of the public. Contending fleets, growling under the strokes of the tempest, afforded his ear sweet harmony. His hand was constantly ready to seize the sword of civil war, and with a smile he looked stedfast at a scaffold, on which fell a head and a crown.

The German, under a sky that flashed with lightning, was deaf to the roaring of the elements: it was hard to say whether he braved them, or was insensible. His eagles tore each other by his side, which to him was mere diversion. Wrapped up in himself

Y 3

he

into hard wood, and the branches of its brazen root are extended; the ax of liberty becomes blunt, and can make no impression on it.

he beheld his destiny with a philosophic or insensible eye.

The Frenchman full of noble and elevated graces, presented a refined aspect. His figure was not original, but his manner was great. Imagination and judgment were expressed in his countenance; he smiled with an address that seemed to approach deceit. There ran through the whole of his figure much uniformity. His colours were pleasing, but there was nothing of that boldness, nor of that fine effect of lights, which were admired in the other pictures. The sight was fatigued by a multiplicity of details, that reciprocally injured each other. An innumerable crowd bore little drums, which they were continually beating, and thought they imitated the roaring of cannon: It was a passion, as busy and boisterous, as it was weak and transient.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIV.

SCULPTURE AND ENGRAVING.

SCULPTURE, not less pleasing than her elder sister, displayed in turn all the wonders of her art, which was no longer prostituted to those impudent sons of wealth, who debased it by executing representations of their venal figures, or some other subject equally despicable. The artist, provided for by the government, consecrated his talent to merit and virtue only. There was not here seen, as in our apartments, by the side of the king's bust, the vile tax-gatherer who deceived and defrauded him, presenting without shame his base physiognomy. Does a man, by advancing himself in a career of memorable actions become worthy of the regard of posterity? Does another perform some great and valiant exploit? The animated artist then charges himself with the public acknowledgment; he meditates in private one of the most masterly performances of his days, and, without adding the portrait of the author, he presently produces his work and obtains permission to immortalize himself with the hero; his labour strikes every eye, and has no need of a frigid commentary. The sculptor was expressly forbid those subjects that did not speak to the mind, and consequently the fine marble, or other matters equally valuable, were no longer wasted.

All those licentious subjects that loaded our chimney pieces were strictly prohibited. Men of merit had
had

had no conception of our legislation, when they read in history that in an age which so frequently pronounced the words Religion and Morality, the father of a family should exhibit scenes of debauchery to the eyes of his children, under pretence that they were master-pieces of art; that they should expose objects capable of heating the most tranquil imagination, and of filling young minds, open to every impression, with disorderly ideas; they were grieved at this public and criminal practice of depraving the mind before it was completely formed*.

An

* Among other public abuses proposed to be redressed, may be ranked those licentious shews that offend not only against sound morals but good sense, equally respectable. When speaking of the theatres, we forget to mention the tumblers and rope-dancers; but the disposition of a work is of no great moment, provided the author there includes all his ideas. I shall, like Montaigne, turn back upon every occasion; I disregard the censure of the critics; I flatter myself, that, at least, I shall not be, like them, disgustful. To return then to the tumblers and rope-dancers, so common and so shocking; should they be tolerated by humane magistrates? After having employed all their time in exercises equally astonishing and frivolous, they risk their lives in public, and tell a thousand spectators, that the death of a man is a matter of very little consequence. The attitudes of these performers are beside indecent, and offend both the eye and the heart. They perhaps also accustom minds not yet formed, to find no pleasure but in that which is attended with danger, and to think that the life of a man may make part of our diversions. It will be said, that this is moralizing on very trifling subjects; but I have remarked that these wretched performances.

An artist, to whom I applied for information, carefully explained to me all these great changes. He told me, that in the nineteenth century there was a great scarcity of marble, so that they were obliged to have recourse to the heap of financiers, tax-gatherers, and secretaries busts, which were so many blocks in part ready prepared; they were therefore easily reformed, and became finished pieces.

I passed into the last gallery, not less curious than the others for the multiplicity of pieces it contained. There was assembled an universal collection of drawings and engravings. Notwithstanding the great improvements in the last art, they had preserved the works of the preceding ages; for it is not with prints as with books; a book must be either good or bad; whereas a print, which presents itself to the eye only, may always serve as an object of comparison.

This gallery, which owed its origin to the age of Lewis XV. was now very differently disposed. It was no longer a small room, in the midst of which was a small table that could scarce contain a dozen artists, and where you might go ten times before you found a vacant place. That closet, moreover, was open only on certain days, in the whole scarce a tenth part of the year, and which small portion was liable to be abridged at any time by the caprice of

performances have much more influence on the multitude than all those arts that have some appearance of rationality.

of the director. These galleries were open every day, and committed to the care of polite assistants, who were punctually paid, that they might serve the public with the same punctuality. In this spacious room, you were sure to find a print of each painting and sculpture contained in the other galleries; it presented an abridgment of those chef-d'œuvres, which they had laboured to immortalize, and to diffuse to the greatest degree possible.

Engraving is as fruitful and happy as printing; it has the advantage of multiplying its impression, as printing does its copies; and by that means every private person, every stranger, may procure a rival copy of a painting. All the inhabitants decorate, without jealousy, their walls with these interesting subjects, which represent examples of virtue and heroism. We no longer see those pretended connoisseurs, no less futile than ignorant, who pursue an imaginary perfection at the expence of their ease and their wealth, constantly liable to be duped, and to which they were remarkably disposed.

I ran over with avidity those voluminous works in which the engraver had described, with so much facility and precision, not only the contours, but the colours of nature; all the paintings were expressed to perfection; but what had most engaged their attention were those objects that relate to the arts and sciences. The plates of the *Encyclopædia* had been entirely re-engraved, and they had more carefully attended to that rigorous precision which is their chief merit,

merit, as the least error is of the highest consequence. I observed a magnificent course of natural philosophy treated in the same manner; and as that science is, in a peculiar manner, the object of the senses, it is by the figures relative to it, that, perhaps, we attain just ideas of all its parts. An art that affords so many useful subjects is deserving of high esteem, and they had here given it fresh marks of consideration.

I observed, that all was executed in true taste; that they followed the manner of Gerrard Audran, and which they had improved by carrying it to the highest degree of perfection possible. The flourishes in books were no longer called cochins; and many other like miserable phrases were abolished*.

The engravers had desisted from the use of that pernicious glass, which destroyed their sight entirely. The connoisseurs of this age were no admirers of those little points in which all the merit of modern engraving consists; they preferred large, free, regular strokes, that expressed every thing with certain touches that were just and nobly designed. The engraver readily consulted the painter, who, in his turn, avoided affecting the caprice of a master. They esteemed one another, they lived together as friends and equals, and were far from reflecting the faults of any work on each other. Engraving was, moreover,

* M. Voltaire should be satisfied before-hand; he, who has so long pleaded for this important reformation.

moreover, become of great advantage to the state, by the commerce of prints with foreigners, so that of these artists it may be said, that under their propitious hands copper becomes gold.

CHAP. XXXV.

THE HALL OF AUDIENCE.

I COULD not quit these rich galleries without the greatest regret; but my insatiable curiosity, that would leave nothing unseen, carried me into the centre of the city. I saw a great multitude, composed of each sex, and of every age, that flocked with precipitation toward a portal that was magnificently decorated. I heard from different parts, "Let us make haste! our good king has, perhaps, already mounted his throne; we shall scarce see him ascend it to-day."—I followed the crowd, but was much astonished to find that there were no ferocious guards to beat back the thronging people. I came to a most spacious hall, supported by many columns; I advanced, and at last came near to the monarch's throne. No; It is impossible to conceive an idea of royal majesty more pleasing, more august, more graceful and engaging. I was melted, even to tears. I saw no thundering Jupiter, no terrible apparatus, no instruments of vengeance. Four figures of white marble, representing fortitude, temperance, justice,

I

and

and clemency, supported a plain armed chair of white ivory, which was elevated merely to extend the voice. The chair was crowned with a canopy, supported by a hand, the arm of which seemed to come out of the vaulted roof. On each side of the throne there were two tables; on one side was engraved the law of the state, and the limits of the royal authority; and on the other, the duties of kings and of subjects. In front was a woman suckling a child; a faithful emblem of royalty. The first step to the throne, was in the form of a tomb. Upon it was wrote in large characters, ETERNITY. Under this step reposed the embalmed body of the last monarch, there to remain till displaced by his son. From thence he cried to his heirs, that they were all mortal; that the dream of royalty was near finished; that then nothing would remain to them but their renown.

This vast place was already filled with people, when I saw the monarch approach, clothed in a blue mantle that gracefully flowed behind him; his forehead was bound with a branch of olive, that was his diadem; he never appeared in public without this respectable ornament, which was revered by others and by himself. There were loud acclamations when he mounted the throne, and he did not appear insensible to the cries of joy. Scarce was he seated, when an awful silence was spread over the whole assembly. I listened with attention. His ministers read to him, with a loud voice, an account of every thing remarkable that had passed since the last audience. If the truth had been disguised, the peo-

Z

ple

ple were there to confound the detractor. Their demands were not forgot. An account was rendered of the execution of orders before given. This reading always concluded with the daily price of provisions and merchandize. The monarch hears, and approves by a nod, or refers the matter to a more minute examination. But if from the bottom of the hall there should be heard a voice complaining, or condemning any one article, though it were that of the meanest citizen, he is brought forward to a little circle formed before the throne; there he explains his ideas*; and if he appear to be right, he is attended to, applauded, and thanked; the sovereign regards him with a favourable aspect; but if, on the contrary, he advances nothing to the purpose, or what appears plainly to be founded on private advantage, he is dismissed with disgrace, and the hoots of the people follow him to the door. Every man may present himself without any other apprehension than that of incurring the public derision, if what he propose be unjust or self-interested.

Two

* It is one of the greatest misfortunes in France, that the police and administration of all affairs is directed entirely by the magistrates, by men invested with a place and a title, who never deign to consult (at least on the part of the public) private persons that are frequently endowed with knowledge and sagacity to an eminent degree. The most worthy and accomplished citizen cannot display his useful talents and the dignity of his sentiments, unless possessed of a public employment; he must stifle his noble designs, be a witness to the most flagrant abuses, and be silent.

Two principal officers of the crown accompany the monarch in all public ceremonies, and walk by his side; the one carries, on the point of a spear, an ear of corn, and the other a branch of the vine*, which serve constantly to remind him that they are the two supports of the state and the throne. He is followed by the pantler of the crown, bearing a basket of loaves, which he distributes to every one that asks. This basket is the sure thermometer of the public distress; and when it is found empty, the ministers are dismissed and punished; the basket, however, constantly remains full, and declares the public prosperity.

This august session is held every week, and lasts three hours. I went from the hall with a heart filled with complacency, and with the profoundest respect for this monarch, whom I loved as a father, and revered as a protecting divinity.

I conversed with several persons on all that I had seen and heard; they were surpris'd at my astonishment; all these things seem'd to them quite simple and natural.—“Why,” said one of them, “will you have the rashness to compare the present time to an extravagant and capricious age; that entertained false ideas of the most simple matters, when pride

* The emperor Tai-sung walking in the country, and seeing a number of peasants at work, said to his son, who attended him, “Without the sweat and labour of these men, neither you nor I should have any empire.”

pride was greatness, when splendor and ostentation were all, and when virtue was regarded as a phantom, the mere imagination of dreaming philosophers*.”

CHAP. XXXVI.

THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT.

MAY I ask what is the present form of government? Is it monarchical, democratic, or aristocratic?—“It is neither of them; it is rational, and made for man. Monarchy is no more. Monarchical governments, as you knew, though to little purpose, lose themselves in despotism, as the rivers are lost in the bosom of the ocean; and despotism soon sinks under

* We should pay a respect to popular prejudices! is the language of narrow and pusillaninous souls, to whom the mere existence of a law is sufficient to make it sacred. Does the man of virtue, to whom alone it belongs to love or hate, acknowledge this criminal moderation? No; he charges himself with the public vengeance, his right is founded on his genius, and the justice of his cause on the acknowledgment of posterity.

† The genius of a nation does not depend on the atmosphere that surrounds it; the climate is not the physical cause of its grandeur or debasement. Force and courage belong to all the people of the earth; but the causes that put

under its own weight*. This has been all literally accomplished, and never was there a more certain prophecy.

“When

put them in motion and sustain them, are derived from certain circumstances, that are sometimes sudden, sometimes slow in their operations; but, sooner or later, they never fail to arrive. Happy are the people who, by information or by instinct, seize the crisis!

* Would you know what are the general principles that habitually prevail in the councils of a monarch? here follows the substance of what is there done. Taxes of every kind should be multiplied, for the prince can never be rich enough, considering that he is obliged to maintain armies and the officers of his household, who ought, by all means, to be extremely magnificent. If the people complain of these loads they do wrong, and must be curbed.

No injustice can be done them, for in reality they have nothing but what the good will of the prince gives them, and which he may take again whenever he shall think fit, especially if the interest or splendor of his crown require it. Beside, it is notorious, that a people at their ease, and in the midst of plenty, become less laborious, and may become insolent. We should therefore retrench their prosperity that we may add to their submission. The poverty of the subject is for ever the strongest rampart of a monarch; and the poorer the individuals are, the more obedient the nation will be. Once taught to submit, they will perform it by habit, which is the most certain method of being obeyed. It is not sufficient that they merely submit, they should be taught to believe that the spirit of wisdom here presides in the highest perfection and submit accordingly, without

Z 3 daring

“ When we consider the lights that have been acquired, it would doubtless be a disgrace to the human race, to have measured the distance between the sun and the earth, to have weighed the heavenly orbs, and not to have discovered those simple and efficacious laws by which mankind should be governed. It is true, that pride, luxury, and self interest produce a thousand obstacles; but how glorious is it to discover the means of making those private passions subservient to the general good! The vessel that plows the ocean commands the elements at the same moment that it is obedient to their empire; submissive to a double impulse, it incessantly re-acts against them. You there see, perhaps, the most lively image
of

daring to dispute about the decrees that proceed from our infallible knowledge.

If a philosopher should have access to this prince, and advancing to the midst of his council, should say to him, “ Take heed how you give credit to these evil counsellors; you are surrounded by the enemies of your family: your grandeur and security are founded less on an arbitrary power than on the love of your people. If they are unhappy they will the more ardently wish for a revolution, and will shake either your throne or that of your children. The people are immortal but you must pass away. The majesty of the throne resides more in a truly paternal tenderness, than in an unlimited power; that power is violent, and contrary to the order of nature. By being more moderate, you will become more potent. Set an example of justice, and know that it is by morality alone that a prince becomes powerful and respectable.” This philosopher would certainly be taken for an enthusiast, and perhaps they would not even vouchsafe to punish him for his virtue.

of a state; borne up by tempestuous passions, it receives from them its movements, and at the same time resists the storm. “ The art of the pilot is all.” Your political light was nothing more than a crepuscle; and you wretchedly complained of the Author of nature, at the same time that he had given you both intelligence and strength for government. There only wanted a loud voice to rouse the multitude from their lethargy. If oppression thundered on your heads, you ought to have accused your own weakness only. Liberty and happiness appertain to those who dare to seize them. All is revolution in this world; the most happy of all has had its point of maturity, and we have gathered its fruits*.

“ Freed from oppression, we have taken care not to place all the strength and springs of government, all the rights and attributes of power, in the hands of one man †. Instructed by the misfortunes of past
ages,

* In certain states it is an epoch that becomes necessary; an epoch terrible and bloody, but the signal of liberty. It is of a civil war that I speak. It is that calls forth all the men of exalted genius, some to attack, and others to defend liberty. A civil war displays the most hidden talents. Men of wonderful abilities arise, and appear worthy to command the human race. It is a horrid remedy! But in the stupor of a state when the minds of men are plunged in a deep lethargy, it becomes necessary.

† A despotic government is nothing more than a league between a sovereign and a small number of favourite subjects, in order to cheat and plunder the rest. In that case
the

ages, we are become less imprudent. If Socrates or Marcus Aurelius should again visit the earth, we should not confide to them, an arbitrary power; not from a mistrust, but from a fear of depreciating the sacred character of a free citizen. Is not the law the voice of the general will of the people? And how can we dare to commit so important a deposit to a single man? Has he not his unguarded moments? And, even supposing him to be free from them, shall men resign that liberty which is their most valuable inheritance*.

“ We

the monarch or he that represents him, divides and destroys society, becomes a separate and central body, that lights up every passion as it lifts, and sets them in motion for its personal interest. He creates justice and injustice, his humour becomes a law, and his favour the measure of public esteem. This system is too violent to be durable. Justice, on the contrary, is a barrier that equally protects the subject and the prince. Liberty alone can form animated citizens, the only citizens, in fact, among rational beings. A king is never powerful but at the head of a free and contented people. The nation once debased, the throne sinks.

* Liberty begets miracles, it triumphs over nature, it causes harvests to grow upon rocks; it gives a smiling air to the most doleful regions; it enlightens the peasant, and makes him more penetrative than the proud slaves of the most polished court. Other climates, the most finished works of the creation, delivered up to servitude, exhibit nothing but desolated lands, pale and dejected visages, that dare not lift their eyes to heaven. Choose then, man! be happy or miserable; if yet it be in thy power to choose: fear tyranny, detest slavery, arm thyself, live free, or die.

“ We have experienced how contrary an absolute sovereignty is to the true interest of a nation. The art of raising refined tributes, all the powers of that terrible machine progressively multiplied; the embarrassment of the laws, one opposing another; chicanery devouring the possessions of individuals; the cities crowded by privileged tyrants; the venality of offices; ministers and intendants treating the different parts of the kingdom as conquered countries; a subtle hardness of heart that justifies inhumanity; royal officers, who are in no degree responsible to the people, and who insult them, instead of listening to their complaints; such was the effect of that vigilant despotism which collected every intelligence, to employ it to a bad purpose; not unlike those burning glasses that collect the sun's rays, to destroy such objects as are presented to them. When we passed through France, that fine kingdom which nature has favoured with her propitious regards, what did we behold? Districts desolated by tax gatherers; cities become boroughs, and boroughs villages; the people pale and meagre; in a word, beggars instead of inhabitants. All these evils were known; but evident principles were avoided to embrace a system of dissipation*, and the shadows that were raised, authorized the general depredation.

“ Can

* An intendant of the province, desirous of giving the ****, who was going to Soissons, an idea of the abundance that reigned in France, caused the fruit-trees of the country round about to be dug up, and planted in the streets of the city,

“ Can you believe it? The revolution was effected without trouble, and by the heroism of one great man. A philosophic prince, worthy of a throne, because he regarded it with indifference; more solicitous for the happiness of mankind than for the phantom of power, distrusting posterity, and distrusting himself, offered to put the estates of the nation in possession of their ancient prerogatives; he was sensible that in an extensive kingdom there should be an union of the different provinces in order to its being well governed; as in the human body beside the general circulation, each part has one that is peculiarly adapted to itself; so each province, while it obeys the general laws, modifies those that are peculiar to it, agreeable to its soil, its position, its commerce and respective interests. Hence all lives, all flourish. The provinces are no longer devoted to serve the court and ornament the capital*. A blind order from

city, by digging up the pavement. These trees he decorated with garlands of gilt paper. This intendant was, without knowing it, a very great painter.

* From error and ignorance spring all the evils that oppress humanity. Man is wicked only because he mistakes his true interest. In speculative physics, in astronomy, and mathematics, we may err without any real detriment; but politics will not admit of the least error. There are vices in government more destructive than natural plagues. An error of this kind depopulates and impoverishes a kingdom. If the most severe, the most profound speculation is ever necessary, it is in those public and problematic cases, where reasons of equal weight hold the judgment in equilibrium.

Nothing

from the throne, does not carry troubles into those parts where the king's eye has never penetrated. Each province is the guardian of its own security and its own happiness; its principle of life is not too far distant from it; it is within itself, always ready to assist the whole, and to remedy evils that may arise. The present succours are left to those who are intrusted in its welfare, and will not palliate the cure, much less will they rejoice at those incidents that may weaken their country.

“ The absolute sovereignty is now abolished; the chief magistrate preserves the name of king; but he does not foolishly attempt to bear all that burden which oppressed his ancestors. The legislative power of the kingdom is lodged in the states assembled. The administration of affairs, as well political as civil,

Nothing is then more dangerous than the tricks of office; they produce inconceivable errors; and the state is not sensible of its condition till arrived on the brink of ruin. We cannot, therefore, be too clear in the complicated art of government, as the least deviation is a line that constantly recedes as it increases, and produces an immense error. The laws have been hitherto nothing more than palliatives, that have been turned into general remedies; they are, as has been very justly said, the offspring of necessity, and not of philosophy; it belongs to the latter to correct their defects. But what courage, what zeal, what love of humanity must he have, who, from such a chaos, shall form a regular system! But, at the same time, where is the man that would be more dear to the human race? Let him remember, that it is of all objects the most important; that the happiness of mankind, and consequently their virtues, are therein highly interested.

civil, is assigned to the senate; and the monarch, armed with the sword of justice, watches over the execution of the laws. He proposes every useful establishment. The senate is responsible to the king, and the king and senate are responsible to the states; which are assembled every two years. All is there decided by the majority of voices. The enacting of new laws, the filling of vacant posts, and the redressing of grievances, appertain to them; particular, or unforeseen cases are left to the wisdom of the monarch.

“He is happy*, and his throne is fixed upon a basis the more solid, as his crown is guaranteed by the liberty of the nation†. Those souls, that would have

* M. d’Alembert says, that a king who does his duty is of all men the most miserable; and that he who does it not, is of all others the most to be pitied. But why is the king who does his duty the most miserable? Is it from the multiplicity of his labours? No; a happy labour is a real pleasure. Does he make no account of that inward satisfaction which arises from a consciousness of having promoted the happiness of mankind? Does he not believe that virtue is its own reward? Beloved by all except the wicked, can the heart of such a king be insensible to pleasure? Who has not felt the satisfaction that results from doing good? The king who does not fulfil his duty is the most to be pitied. Nothing more true, especially if he be sensible to remorse and infamy; if he be not, he is still more to be pitied. Nothing more just than this last proposition.

* It is good in every state, even in a republic, to have a limited chief. It is a sort of spectre, that drives away all

I

projects

have been but mean, owe their virtue to that internal source of greatness. The citizen is not separated from the state; he is incorporated with it*, and, in return, he shows with what zeal he exerts himself, in all that can interest its glory.

“Every act published by the senate, explains, in a few words, its origin and its design. We cannot conceive how it was possible in your age, that pretended so much discernment, for magistrates to dare, in their surly pride, to publish dogmatic arrests, like the decrees of the theologians. As if the law was not the public reason, or it was not necessary that the people should be instructed, in order to their more ready obedience. Those ancient magistrates, who called themselves the fathers of their country, must have been ignorant of the great art of persuasion; that art which acts so powerfully, and without labour; or rather, they must have had no fixed point of view, no determinate course, but sometimes riotous and seditious, and sometimes creeping slaves, they flattered or harassed the throne: by turns

projects from the mind of the ambitious. Royalty in this case is like a scare-crow in a field, that prevents the birds from feeding upon the corn.

* They who have said, that in a monarchy, the king is the depository of the will of the people, have asserted an absurdity. There is, in fact, nothing more ridiculous, than for intelligent beings, like men, to say to one or more, “Will for us,” the people have always said to their monarch; “Act for us,” after you have clearly understood what is our will.

A a

turns wrangling for trifles, and selling the people for a bribe.

“ You will readily believe that we have discarded those magistrates, accustomed from their youth to all that insensibility which is necessary coolly to dispose of the property, the honour, and lives of their fellow-citizens. Bold in defence of their meanest privileges, careless of what concerned the public welfare, they sunk at last into a perpetual indolence, and even spared others the trouble of corrupting them. Very different are our magistrates; the title of fathers of their country, with which we honour them, they merit in the fullest extent of the term.

“ The reins of government are now committed to wise and resolute hands, that pursue a regular plan. The laws reign, and no man is above them; which was a horrid evil in your Gothic government. The general good of the nation is founded on the security of each individual. No one fears man, but the laws; the sovereign himself is sensible that they hang over his head*. His vigilance renders the senators more

* Every government where one man alone is above the laws, and can violate them with impunity, must be iniquitous and unhappy. In vain has a man of genius employed all his talents to make us acquiesce in the principles of an Asiatic government: they offer too great violence to human nature. Behold the proud vessel that plows the ocean, there needs but an imperceptible passage to admit the water and cause her perdition. So one man that is above the law, may

attentive to their several duties; the confidence he reposes in them softens their labours, and his authority gives the necessary force and activity to their decisions. Thus the sceptre, which oppressed your kings, is light in the hands of our monarch. He is not a victim pompously decorated, and incessantly a sacrifice to the exigencies of the state; he bears that burthen only which is proportioned to the limited strength he has received from nature.

“ We have a prince that fears the Almighty, that is pious and just, whose heart is devoted to God and his country, who dreads the divine vengeance, and the censure of posterity, and who regards a good conscience, and a spotless fame, as the highest degree of felicity. It is not so much great talents, or
an

may cause those acts of injustice and iniquity to enter a state, which, by an inevitable effect, will hasten its ruin. What matters it whether we perish by one or many? The misfortune is the same. What imports it whether tyranny have a hundred arms, or one only, that extends itself over the whole empire; if it fall on every individual, if it spring out fresh at the very instant it is cut off? Beside, it is not despotism that terrifies and confounds; it is its propagation. The viziers, the pachas, &c. imitate their masters; they devour others while they expect to be devoured. In the government of Europe, their shocks, the simultaneous reaction of their several bodies, affords moments of equilibrium, during which the people breathe; the limits of their respective powers, perpetually disordered, holds the place of liberty; and the phantom is, at least consolatory to those who cannot attain the reality.

an extensive knowledge, that does good, as the sincere desire of an upright heart that loves it, and wishes to accomplish it. Frequently the boasted genius of a monarch, far from advancing the happiness of a kingdom, is exerted in destroying its liberties.

“ We have conciliated what seemed almost incompatible, the good of the nation with that of individuals. They even pretended that the general happiness of a state was necessarily distinct from that of some of its members. We have not espoused that barbarous policy, founded either on an ignorance of just laws, or on a contempt of the poorest, but most useful men in the state. There were cruel and detestable laws that supposed men to be wicked; but we are much disposed to believe that they have only become so since the institution of those laws: Arbitrary power has griped the human heart, and by its irritation has rendered it enflamed and ulcerated.

“ Our monarch has every necessary power and opportunity to do good, but is prevented from doing evil. We represent the nation to him always in a favourable light; we display its valour, its fidelity toward its prince, and its hatred of a foreign yoke.

“ There are censors who have the right of expelling from about the prince all who are inclined to
irreligion,

irreligion, to licentiousness, to falsehood, and to that baneful art of covering virtue with ridicule*. We do not admit amongst us that class of men, who, under the title of nobility (which, to render it completely ridiculous, was venal) crawled about the throne, and would follow no other profession than that of a soldier or courtiers; who lived in idleness, fed their pride with old parchments, and displayed a deplorable spectacle of equal vanity and misery. Your grenadiers shed their blood with as much intrepidity as the most noble among them, without rating it at so high a price. Such a denomination, moreover, in our republic would give offence to the other orders of the state. Our citizens are all equal; the only distinctions we know are those which naturally arise among men from their virtue, their genius, and industry†.

“ Besides

* I am much inclined to believe that sovereigns are almost always the most honest men in their courts. The soul of Narcissus was still more foul than that of Nero.

† Why cannot the French suffer a republican government? Who in this kingdom is ignorant of the pre-eminence of the noblesse, founded on the institution itself, and confirmed by the custom of many ages? Yet when under the reign of John, the third estate rose from their abject condition, they took their seat in the assembly of the nation; that haughty and barbarous noblesse beheld it without commotion, associate with the orders of the kingdom, though the times were still filled with prejudices of the police of the fiefs, and the profession of arms. The honour of the French nation, a principle ever active, and superior to the

“ Besides all those ramparts, those barriers, and precautions used to prevent the monarch from forgetting, in time of public calamities, what he owes to the poor, he observes every year a solemn fast, which continues for three days, during which time he suffers continual hunger and thirst, and sleeps upon the ground. This severe and salutary fast imprints on his heart the most tender commiseration towards the necessitous. Our sovereign, it is true, has no need of this penance to remind him; but it is a law of the state, a sacred law, constantly followed and respected. By the example of our monarch, every man who has any connection with government, makes it his duty to feel what is want; and is from thence more disposed to assist those who are obliged to submit to the imperious and cruel law of extreme necessity*.”

But

wisest institutions, may therefore one day become the soul of a republic; especially when a taste for philosophy, a knowledge of political laws, and the experience of so many evils, shall have destroyed that levity, that indiscretion which blasts those brilliant qualities that would make the French the first people in the universe; if they would well consider, ripen, and support their projects.

* In the front of a philosopher's hermitage there was a rich and lofty mountain, favoured with the most benign regards of the sun. It was covered with beautiful pastures, with golden grain, with cedars and aromatic plants. Birds, the most pleasing to the sight, and delicious to the taste, fanned the air in flocks with their wings, and filled it with their harmonious warblings. The bounding deer peopled the

But, I said that these changes must have been long, laborious, and difficult. What efforts you must have made!—The philosopher with a pleasing smile, replied, “ Good is not more difficult than evil. The human passions are frightful obstacles; but when the mind is once convinced of its true interest, the man becomes just and faithful. It seems to me that a single person might govern the world, if the hearts of men were disposed to toleration and equity. Notwithstanding the common inconsequence of those of your

the woods. Some genial lakes produced in their silver waters the trout, the perch, and dace. Three hundred families were spread over this mountain, and there found a blest abode, in the midst of peace and plenty, and in the bosom of those virtues they constantly practised: each morn and eve they sent their grateful thanks to heaven. But behold the indolent and voluptuous Osman mounts the throne, and all these families are presently ruined, driven from their abodes, and become vagabonds upon the earth. The beautiful mountain was seized by his vizier, a noble robber, who feasted his dogs, his concubines, and his flatterers with the plunder of the unhappy people. Osman one day losing himself in the chase, met the philosopher, whose hut had escaped that torrent which had swept all else before it. The philosopher recollected the monarch, without his suspecting it: he treated him with a noble courtesy. They talked of the present times.—“ Alas! said the sage old man, we knew what pleasure was some ten years since; but now all suffers; extreme poverty has drove the poor from their habitations; wrings their souls, and each day sees them go drooping to the grave, oppressed by extreme misery.”—“ Pray tell me, said the monarch, what is that misery?” The philosopher sighed, remained silent, and set the prince in the way to his palace.

your age, it was foreseen that reason would one day make a great progress; its effects have become visible, and the happy principles of a wise government have been the first fruits of its reformation."



CHAP. XXXVII.

THE HEIR TO THE THRONE.

MORE inquisitive than was ever the bailiff of Huron*, I continued to exercise the patience of my companions. I have seen the monarch on his throne, but I forgot to ask, Gentlemen, where was the king's son; whom in my time they called the dauphin. One of the most polite among them replied:

"As we are convinced that it is on the education of the great that depends the happiness of the people, and that virtue is learned as vice is communicated, we watch with the greatest assiduity over the early years of our princes. The heir to the throne is not at court, where some flatterers would dare to persuade him that he is something more than other men, and that they are less than insects. His high destiny is

* The Huron, or the Candid Man, a romance by Voltaire, and one of the best his pen has produced. The Huron confined in the Bastille with a Jesuit, is of all things in the world the most happily imagined.

is carefully concealed from him. When he is born, a royal mark is imprinted on his shoulder, by which he is afterwards known. He is placed in the hands of those whose discreet fidelity has been as well proved as their probity. They take a solemn oath before the Supreme Being never to reveal to the prince that he is one day to be king: a tremendous oath, and which they never dare to violate.

"As soon as he comes out of the hands of the women he is inured to exercise; and regard is had to his natural education, which should always precede the moral. He is clothed like the son of a common peasant; he is accustomed to the plainest meats; and is early taught sobriety; he will be the better able hereafter to teach economy by his own example, and to know that a false prodigality ruins a state, and dishonours those that promote it. He travels, successively through all the provinces; they explain to him the various labours of the husbandman, the different manufactures, and the productions of the several soils; he sees all things with his own eyes; he enters the hut of the ploughman, eats at his table, assists in his labours, and learns to respect him. He converses freely with every man he meets; his character is suffered to display itself freely, while he thinks himself as far distant from the throne as he is near to it.

"Many kings have become tyrants, not because they had bad hearts, but because they never knew the
real

real state of the common people of their country*. If we were to abandon a young prince to the flattering idea of a certain power, perhaps even with a virtuous mind, considering the unhappy disposition of the human heart, he would at last endeavour to extend the limits of his authority †. For in that it is that many princes unhappily make the royal grandeur to consist; and consequently their interest is always at variance with that of the people.

“When the prince has attained the age of twenty years, or sooner, if his mind appears to be early formed, he is conducted to the hall of audience; he mixes with the crowd as a common spectator; all the orders of the state are then present, and all have received their instructions. On a sudden the king rises,

* Prejudice constantly attends the throne, ready to pour its errors into the ears of kings. Timorous Truth is in doubt of obtaining a victory over them, and waits for the signal to approach; but she speaks so strange a language, that they turn to those deceitful phantoms that are masters of the common dialect. Kings! learn the severe philosophic language of truth! It is in vain that you seek her, if you understand her not.

† Men have a natural disposition to arbitrary power, as nothing is more convenient than to be obeyed by merely moving the tongue. Every one has heard of that sultan who commanded his attendants to amuse him with entertaining stories, on pain of being strangled. Other monarchs hold pretty much the same language, when they say to the people, Divert me, and die with hunger.

rises; and calls the young man three times by his name; the crowds of people open; astonished, he advances with timid steps toward the throne, and trembling mounts the steps; the king embraces him, and declares him in the sight of all the people to be his son. “Heaven,” he says with an affecting and majestic voice, “Heaven has destined thee to bear the burden of royalty; we have laboured for twenty years to render thee worthy of it; do not frustrate the hopes of this great people that you see before you. My son, I expect from you the same zeal that I have shown for this nation.” What a crisis! what a crowd of ideas press upon his mind! The monarch then shows him the tomb where rests the preceding king; that tomb on which is engraved in large characters, ETERNITY. He proceeds with the same awful voice; “My son, all has been done for this moment. You now stand on the ashes of your grandfather; in you he is to revive; swear to be just as he was. I shall soon descend to supply his place; but remember that I shall accuse you from this tomb if you abuse your power. Ah! my dear son, the eyes of the Almighty and of this nation are upon you; no one thought can be concealed. If any incitements to ambition or pride reign at this moment in your heart, there is yet time to avoid their effects; renounce the diadem, descend from the throne, and mix again with the people; you will be greater and more respectable as a common citizen, than as a vain and dastardly monarch. Let not the chimera of authority flatter your young heart, but the great and pleasing
“idea

“idea of being really useful to mankind; I promise you for recompence the love of this people that surrounds us; of my affection, the esteem of the world, and the assistance of the Monarch of the universe; it is he that is King, my son, we are only his agents, that are sent upon the earth to accomplish his great designs*.”

“The young prince is surpris'd and affected, his visage is covered with a modest shame; he dares not look upon that great assembly, whose regards are eagerly fixed on him. His tears begin to flow; he weeps at the prospect of his extensive duties; but soon an heroic spirit possesses him; he is taught that a great man ought to sacrifice himself for the good of mankind; and that as nature has not prepared for man a happiness without alloy, it is by that benign power which the nation has deposited with him, that he is enabled to do that for them which nature has refused. That noble idea penetrates, animates, inflames him; the oaths are administered to him by his father; he calls the sacred ashes of his grandfather to witness his sincerity; he adores the Supreme Being;

* Garnier causes it to be said to Nabuchodonosor, puffed up with his power and his victories, “Who is that God who commands the rain, the winds and the tempests? Over whom reigns he? Over the seas, the rocks, &c.” To which he replies, “Insensible subjects! I command over men; I am the only God of this earth where we dwell.

*Insensibles sujets! moi je commande aux hommes;
Je suis l'unique Dieu de la terre ou nous sommes.*

ing; he is crowned. The orders of the state salute him, and the people with transports of joy cry out, “O thou that art taken from amongst us, whom we have so long and so nearly beheld, may the pretences of greatness never make thee forget who thou art, and who we are*.”

“He cannot mount the throne, till the age of two and twenty; for it is repugnant to common sense, that a nation should be governed by an infant king. For a like reason the king lays down the sceptre at the age of seventy years, because the art of governing requires an activity of body, and a certain sensibility, which unlucky age extinguishes in the human mind †. Beside, we are fearful lest habit should produce in his mind that concentrated ambition they call avarice, which is the last and most rueful passion that

* The Greeks and Romans experienced sensations far more poignant than ours. A religion altogether sensible; those frequent occurrences that concerned the grand interest of the republic; a state dignity that was awful without being fastidious; the acclamations of the people; the assemblies of the nation, and the public harangues; what an inexhaustible source of pleasures! When compared with those people, we seem but to languish, or scarce to exist.

† How pleasing is it when years have whitened our heads, to be able to retire, and reflect on those acts of humanity and beneficence that we have performed in the course of our days! Of all that we now are there will then nought remain but the sensation of having been virtuous, or the shame and torment of vice.

that man has to encounter*. The inheritance is in the line direct, and the septuagenary monarch still serves the state by his councils, or by the example of his past virtues. The time between the public acknowledgment of the prince, and the day of his majority, is still subject to new proofs. They constantly talk to him by strong and sensible images. If they would prove, that kings are not otherwise formed than common men; that they have not a hair more on their heads; that they are equally weak at their entrance into this world; equal in infirmities, and equal in the sight of God, and that the suffrage of the people is the sole basis of their grandeur; they introduce by way of diversion, a young porter of his size and age, and they wrestle together; though the king's son be vigorous, he is commonly overcome; the other continues the attack till the prince is forced to own the defeat. They raise him up, and say to him, "You see that no man by the law of nature ought to submit to another, that no man is born a slave; that monarchs are born men, and not kings; in a word, that the human race were not created for the pleasure of some particular families. That even the Almighty, according to the natural law, would not govern by force, but over the free-will. To endeavour therefore to make men slaves, is to act with temerity

* Prodigality is equally to be feared. A young prince will sometimes refuse, because he has that in him which may atone for refusal; but the old man constantly contents, because he has nothing to supply the vacuity of the want of liberality.

temerity toward the supreme Being, and to exercise tyranny over the race of mankind." The young man who had conquered, then bows before him, and says, "I may be stronger than you, but there is
 "neither right nor glory in that; true strength is
 "equity, and true glory greatness of mind. I render
 "you homage as my sovereign, and the depository
 "of the force of every individual; when any one
 "would tyrannize over me, it is to you I must fly
 "for succour; you will then hear and save me from
 "the unjust and powerful."

"If the young prince commits any remarkable fault or imprudence, the next day he sees it in the public papers*; he is sometimes astonished and offended. They answer him coolly, "It is a faithful and vigilant tribunal, that records each day the actions of princes. Posterity will know and judge all that you have said and done; it depends on yourself to make them speak honourably of you." If the young prince reflect, and acknowledge his fault, then the papers of the next day declare that token of a happy character, and give to the noble action all the eulogy it deserves†.

"But

* I could wish that a prince had sometimes the curiosity to know what the people think of him; he would learn enough in a quarter of an hour to afford him matter of reflection all the rest of his life.

† You say, "I fear not the sword of man. I am brave." But you deceive yourself. To be truly brave you must fear

“ But what they most strongly recommend, and impress on him by multiplied images, is a horror of that vain pageantry, which has destroyed so many states, and dishonoured so many sovereigns*. Those gilded palaces, say they, are like the decorations of a theatre, where paper appears to be massy gold. The child imagines that it beholds a real palace. Be not a child. Pomp and ostentation are abuses, introduced by pride and policy. They display that parade to inspire the greater respect and fear. By that means the subject contracts a servile disposition, and becomes accustomed to the yoke. But is a king ever debased by putting himself on a level with his subjects? What are those incessant empty shews, in comparison with that open and affable manner that attracts the affections of all the people to his person? The wants of a monarch are not less than those of the meanest of his subjects. There is no difference between his stomach and that of a clown, says J. J. Rousseau. If he would taste the purest of all pleasures, let him taste that of being beloved, and let him render himself worthy of it†.

“ To

fear neither their tongues nor their pens. But in this case, the greatest kings of the earth have ever been the greatest poltroons. The Gazette of Amsterdam prevented Louis XIV. from sleeping.

* That luxury, which is the cause of the destruction of states, and that tramples under foot every virtue, takes its source from corrupted hearts, and which all others copy after.

† Duke *** of Wirtemberg, the first of that name, was dining with a sovereign prince, his neighbour, and some othe

“ To conclude: there passes no day on which he is not reminded of the existence of a supreme Being; whose eye constantly surveys this world; of the duty that he owes him, of a reverence for his providence, and a confidence in his infinite wisdom. The most horrid of all beings is without doubt an atheistical king: I had far rather be in a vessel tossed by the tempest, and directed by a drunken pilot; I should at least have a chance to be saved.

“ It is not till the age of twenty-two that he is permitted to marry. He takes a native of our country to his throne. He does not send in quest of a foreign wife, who frequently brings from her country a disposition, which being widely different from the manners of our nation, bastardizes the blood of France, and causes us to be governed by Spaniards or Italians, rather than by the descendants of our brave ancestors. Our king does not offer that insult to a whole nation, to imagine that beauty and virtue are to be found in a foreign soil only. She who, in the course of his journeys, has touched his heart, and has loved him without a diadem, mounts the throne with

other petty potentates, each of whom was talking of his forces and power. After hearing all their pretensions, the Duke said, “ I do not envy any one of you that power which God has given you, but there is one thing of which I can boast; which is, that in my little state I can walk at all hours alone, and in security. I ramble among the woods, I lay me down to sleep under some tree, quite unconcerned, for I fear neither the sword of a robber, nor of an injured subject.

B b 3

with her lover, and becomes dear and respectable to the nation, as well from her own virtues, as for having been able to please a hero. Beside the advantage of inspiring all the young women with a love of wisdom and virtue, by setting before them a recompence worthy of their efforts, we hereby avoid all those family wars, that are absolutely foreign to the interest of the state, and that have so often desolated Europe*.

“ On the day of his marriage, instead of foolishly squandering money in pompous and tiresome feasts, in senseless and gaudy shews, in fire-works, and other expences equally extravagant and disgusting, the prince erects some public monument, as a bridge, an aqueduct, a public road, a canal, or a theatre. This monument bears his name. We remember his benefaction, while those irrational profusions are forgot, or only remembered by the horrid accidents they occasioned†. The people, satisfied with the generosity

* Most of our wars have proceeded, as every one knows, from those alliances that are pretended to be political. If indeed Europe and Africa could espouse Asia and America, well and good.

† Shall I here recall the horrible night of the 30th of March, 1770? It will eternally accuse our police, that is favourable to the rich alone, and that protects the barbarous luxury of carriages‡. It was by them that horrid disaster

‡ Carriages are far more dangerous in Paris than London, as they drive much faster, and there is no separate path for foot passengers.

rosity of their prince, are under no temptation to whisper to each other that ancient fable, in which the poor frog laments in his marsh the sight of the nuptials of the sun*.

CHAP.

was occasioned. But if this dreadful accident has produced no strict ordinance by which the citizens may walk the streets without danger, what are we to expect of other evils that are more deeply rooted, and more difficult to remedy? Near eight hundred persons perished by being crowded together, and six weeks after it was not mentioned.

* I met, in a piece of poetry, with these verses:

*Ces rois enorgueillis de leur grandeur suprême,
Ce sont des mendiants que couvre un diadème.*

“ These puffed-up monarchs, with their mighty grandeur, are nothing more than beggars covered with a crown.” In fact, they are craving incessantly: it is the people that pay for the robes of the pompous bride; for the feasts, the fire-works, the embroidery of the nuptial bed, &c. and when the royal babe is born, each one of its cries is metamorphosed into a new tax.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

THE WOMEN.

MY affable and polite instructor continued in the same free manner.—“ You should know that our women have no other portion than their virtue and their charms; they are, therefore, interested in improving their moral faculties. By this stroke of legislation we have destroyed the hydra, Coquetry, so fruitful of contention, of vices and ridicule.—” How! no portion? the women bring nothing with them? and who will marry them?—“ Women have no portion, because they are by nature dependant on that sex from whom they derive their strength and glory, and that nothing may withhold them from that legitimate empire, which is constantly less terrible than the yoke they give themselves in their fatal liberty. Besides, the consequence is the same; a man who marries a wife without any fortune, is enabled to dispose of his daughters without emptying his purse. We never see a girl proud of her fortune, who seems to do her husband a favour by accepting him*. Every man is bound to provide for his wife; and

* An Athenian lady asked a Lacedemonian, what portion she brought her husband? “ Chastity,” she replied¶.

¶ It is no uncommon thing for a modern lady to bring her husband this portion, though she may chance to dispose of it afterwards for her own private emolument.

and she, depending entirely on her husband, is the better disposed to fidelity and obedience. The law being universal, no one can complain. The women have no other distinction than what is reflected on them by their husbands. Constantly submissive to the duties that their sex requires, their honour is to observe the strict laws that result from them, by which alone they can secure their happiness.

“ Every citizen that has not defamed himself, though he should be of the lowest class, may claim a daughter of the highest, provided she consent, and there be no seduction or disproportion of age. Every one resumes the primitive equality of nature in forming a contract so pure, so free, and so necessary to our happiness, as is that of matrimony. There ends the bounds of paternal power*, and that of civil authority. Our marriages are fortunate, because interest, which corrupts all things, does not foil

* How indecent, how monstrous is it, to see a father appeal to twenty tribunals, animated by a barbarous pride that will not let him give his daughter to a man, because he had secretly destined her for another. He dares, in this case, to cite civil ordinances, while he forgets the most sacred laws of nature, which forbids him to oppress an unfortunate daughter, over whom he has no legitimate authority, but what may conduce to her happiness. It is a remarkable and melancholy circumstance, that in this age the number of bad parents has exceeded that of unnatural children. Where is the source of this evil? Alas! in our laws.

foil their amiable bands. You cannot easily imagine how many vices and foibles, such as slander, jealousy, idleness, the pride of excelling a rival, crimes of every kind, have been banished by this simple law*. Women, instead of exercising their vanity, have cultivated their minds; and in lieu of riches, have furnished themselves with gentleness, modesty, and patience. Music and dancing no longer form their principal accomplishments; they have vouchsafed to learn the arts of œconomy, of pleasing their husbands, and educating their children. That extreme inequality of rank and fortune, the most destructive vice in every political society, is here no longer seen; the meanest citizen has no reason to blush at his condition; he associates with the highest, who disdains not his connection. The law has equalled mankind to the greatest degree in its power; instead of creating those injurious distinctions, that produce nothing but pride on one side, and hatred on the other, it has been solicitous to destroy all those obstacles that might divide the children of the same mother.

“Our wives are, what were those of the ancient Gauls, sincere and amiable companions whom we respect and consult on all occasions. They do not affect that miserable jargon so much in vogue among you

* Nature has destined women to domestic employments, and to cares every where of the same kind. They have much less variety in their characters than have men; almost all women resemble each other; they have but one end, and which they manifest in every country by similar effects.

you, and which they called wit*. They do not busy themselves with assigning the rank due to the several sorts of genius; they are content with good sense, a qualification far preferable to those artificial flashes that are the wretched amusements of idleness. Love, the fruitful source of the most excellent virtues, presides over, and guards the interest of our country. The more happiness we enjoy in her bosom, the more dear she becomes. Judge then what is our attachment to her. The women, doubtless, make a part of this felicity. Instead of those empty and fastidious pleasures, which they pursued from vanity, they now enjoy all our tenderness and esteem, and find a felicity more solid and more pure in the possession of our hearts, than in those transient pleasures, whose very pursuit was attended with anxiety. Charged with the care of superintending the first years of our children, they have no other preceptors; for being more sagacious and vigilant than they were in your days, they are more sensible of the delicious pleasure of being mothers in the full extent of the term.”

But, I said, notwithstanding all your improvements, man is still man, liable to weakness, humour, and disgust.

* A woman shews very little discretion, who is desirous of shewing her wit upon every occasion. She ought, on the contrary, to use all her art to conceal it. In fact, what is it we men look after? Innocence, candour, simplicity, truth, an interesting timidity. A woman that displays her wit seems to say to you, “Sir, address yourself to me; I am a woman of wit; I shall be more perfidious, perverse, and artful than another.”

disgust. If Discord, with her torch, should take the place of Hymen, what do you then? Are divorces permitted*?—“Doublets, when they are founded on

* Nicholas I. erecting himself into the reformer of the laws divine, natural, and civil, abrogated divorces in the ninth century. They were then in use among all the people of the earth, authorised by Jews and Christians. How strange is the lot of human kind? One man alone has deprived them of a precious liberty; of a civil contract has made a sacred indissoluble chain, and for ever fomented domestic variance. Many past ages have given to that foolish and whimsical law an inviolable sanction; and those intestine wars that distract the domestic œconomy and promote the depopulation of states, are the fruits of the caprice of a pontiff. It is evident, that were divorces permitted, marriages would be more happy¶. We should be less fearful of forming a contract, when we knew that it could not bind us to misery. The wife would be more attentive and submissive. The durability of the band depending on the will of the parties bound, would become more strong. Population, moreover, being far below its true standard, it is to the

¶ There are no divorces permitted in France, not even in case of the most flagrant adultery. “They,” says the lordly priest, “whom God,” that is, I and my church, “has put together, no man can put asunder.” The only resource for the husband is to petition the king; and if, by great chance, he have interest sufficient, the wife is sent to a convent; where she will pass her time disagreeably enough, if she be not able to bribe the Cerberus at the door, which they say, is not unfrequently done. I remember a lady of the first quality, who was sent to a monastery, and early the next morning, the good abbess came to her bed-side, and gave her a long lecture on the subject of incontinence.—The gallant all the while lay snug under the bed clothes.

I

on legitimate reasons; as when both parties, for example, solicit a divorce at the same time; an incompatibility of humours is sufficient to dissolve the band. People marry only to be happy. It is a contract of which peace and mutual regard should be the end. We are not so senseless as to force two people to live together, whose hearts are estranged from each other, and thereby to renew the punishment of the cruel Mezentius, who fastened a living body to a loathsome carcase. A divorce is the only eligible remedy, as it at least renders to society two persons that are lost by their connection with each other. But (would you believe it?) the greater the facility is, the more averse they are to profit by it, as there is a sort of dishonour in not being able to bear together the troubles of a transient life. Our women, virtuous by principle, are delighted with domestic pleasures. We are always happy when our duty coincides with our desires; nothing is then difficult, all things bear a pleasing aspect.”

O how

the indissolubility of marriages that we ought to attribute the secret cause of that evil which undermines the catholic monarchies. If it should be tolerated for any considerable time longer, and celibacy should continue to prevail among them, (the fruit of a wretched administration) together with the ecclesiastic celibacy which seems to be of right divine, they will have none but enervated troops to oppose the numerous, healthful, and robust armies of those people who permit divorces. The fewer single people there are in a state, the more chaste, happy, and fruitful marriages will be. The diminution of the human race necessarily tends to the total ruin of an empire.

C c

O how unfortunate I am to be so old! I exclaimed; I would immediately marry one of these amiable women. Ours were so haughty and insolent, and, for the most part so faithless, so badly educated, that marriage was regarded as an egregious folly. Coquetry, with an immoderate love of pleasure, and an absolute unconcern for every thing but themselves, composed the character of a woman of my time. They derided all sort of sensibility, and had scarce any humanity but towards their gallants. Every taste but that of luxury was in a manner a stranger to their minds. I speak not of modesty, for that was esteemed ridiculous. Therefore, a prudent man being to choose of two evils, preferred celibacy as the least. The difficulty of bringing a child up, was an argument not less strong. Men avoided giving children to a state that would load them with distress. So the generous elephant, once made captive, refuses to indulge himself in the most pleasing instinct, that he may not entail slavery on his posterity. The husband himself, in the midst of his anxiety, watched an opportunity of getting rid of a child, as we endeavour to drive away a voracious animal. Human beings fled from each other, as their union necessarily redoubled their misery; the wretched virgins, fixed to the soil where they were born, languished like flowers, that, scorched by the sun, turn pale, and drop from their stalks; the greater part carried with them, even to the grave, the desire of being wives; disgust and anxiety embittered every moment of their days; and they could not procure any atonement for that privation, but by the risk of their honour, and the

loss

loss of their health. In short, the number of single persons was become frightfully great; and, to complete the misery, reason seemed to justify that outrage to humanity*. But proceed, that you may comfort me by describing a pleasing picture of your manners? How were you able, to drive away that plague, which threatened to devour the human race?

My guide raised his voice, and, with an animated dignity, said, lifting his eyes to heaven, "O God, if man is unhappy, it is by his own fault; it is because he shuns society, and confines all his cares to himself. Our industry is consumed on futile objects; and those that would enrich us we neglect. By forming man for society, Providence has placed by our misfortunes those aids that are destined to relieve them. What stronger obligation is there than mutually to assist each other? Is it not the general desire of mankind? Why then does he so frequently mistake his interest?"

"I repeat

* A taste for celibacy will begin to prevail when a government is become as bad as it possibly can be. The citizen detached from the most pleasing connection, will insensibly detach himself from the love of life itself; suicide will be frequent; the art of living will become so painful, that existence itself will be a burden. Men can bear all the physical evils united; but the political evils are a hundred times more horrible, because they are not necessary. Man curses that society which ought to alleviate his pains and break his fetters. They reckoned at Paris, in the year 1769, one hundred and forty-seven persons who put an end to their own lives.

“ I repeat it; our women are wives and mothers; and from those two virtues all others are derived. They would dishonour themselves, were they to daub their faces with paint, or stuff their heads with snuff, or debauch their stomach with drams; if they were to sit up all night, or sing licentious songs, or practise the least indecency with men. They have more certain attractions; gentleness, modesty, the native graces, and that noble decency, which are their inheritance, and their true glory*.

“ They suckle their own children without thinking it a labour; and as it is done without affectation, their milk is pure and plentiful. The body of the child is early invigorated; he is taught to swim, to hurl, and to carry burdens. The bodily education appears to us of importance; we form his constitution before we exercise his mind, which should not be that of a parrot, but that of a man.

“ His mother watches over the morning of his rising thoughts; she reflects on the method to be pursued in forming his mind to virtue; how she shall turn his sensibility into humanity, his pride into greatness of soul, and his curiosity into a knowledge of sublime truths. She meditates on those engaging fables she shall use, not to conceal the truth, but to render

* While the women govern in France, while all things are made to conform to their taste, while they judge of the genius and merit of men, the French will never have that stability, that sage economy, that gravity, nor that nervous character which becomes free men.

render it more amiable; that its lustre may not dazzle the weakness of his inexperienced mind; she carefully weighs all her words and actions, that no one of them may make a bad impression on his heart. Thus she preserves him from that breath of vice, by which the flower of innocence is so suddenly withered.

“ Education differs among us according to the station the child is hereafter to hold in society; for though we are delivered from the yoke of pedantry, it would be still ridiculous to teach him what he must hereafter forget. Each art is unfathomable, and to excel in it requires our whole attention. The mind of man, notwithstanding all those aids recently discovered, miracles apart, is not able to embrace more than one object; it is sufficient for him to attach himself strongly to that, without attempting excursions that cannot but distract him. It was the ridicule of your age to endeavour to be universal; we regard it as a madness.

“ In a more advanced age, when his mind is able to distinguish those connections by which he is united to society, then instead of that futile knowledge with which ~~the~~ the minds of youth are indiscriminately loaded, his mother with that natural and tender eloquence peculiar to women, teaches him what are manners, decency, virtue. She makes choice of that season, when nature, dressed in all her splendor, speaks to the most insensible heart, when the genial breath of spring has decorated the groves, the fields, and

forests, with all their ornaments. "My son," she says, pressing him to her maternal bosom*, "behold these verdant fields, these trees adorned with spreading branches; it is not long since, that, deprived of all their ornaments, they were congealed by that cold which pierces the inward parts of the earth; but there is a gracious Being, who is our common Parent, and who never abandons his children; he dwells in heaven, and from thence beholds, with the kindness of a father, all his creatures. At the moment that he smiles, the sun darts its rays, the trees flourish, the earth is crowned with flowers, and with herbs for the nourishment of those beasts whose milk we drink. And why do we so love the Lord? Hear, O my child! it is because he is powerful and good; all that you see is the work of his hands, and all this is nothing to what is concealed from you. Eternity, for which every immortal soul was created, will afford thee an endless procession of joy and wonder. His power and goodness know no bounds; he loves us, because we are his children; from day to day he will show us greater kindness, if we are virtuous, that is, if we obey his laws. O! my son, how can we but adore and bless his name!" At these words, the mother and the child fall prostrate, and their united prayers ascend together to the throne of the Almighty

"It

* Cebes represents imposture as sitting at the gate that leads to life, and obliging all who present themselves to drink of the cup of error. That cup is superstition. Happy are they who only taste it, and then throw the vessel away.

"It is thus that she possesses him with the idea of a God, that she nourishes his soul with the milk of truth, and that she says to herself, "I will fulfil the will of the Creator who has committed him to my care. I will be severe to those baneful passions that may injure his happiness; to the tenderness of a mother I will unite the unwearied vigilance of a friend."

"You have seen at what age he is initiated to the communion of the two infinities. Such is our education; it is, as you see, altogether sentimental; we detest that jeering wit, which was the most terrible scourge of your age; it dried up, it burned all it touched; its buffooneries were the source of all your vices. But, if a frivolous disposition be so dangerous, what is reason itself without sentiment? A meagre frame, without colour, without grace, and almost without life. What are new, and even profound ideas, if they have nothing animating and affecting? What need have I of a cold truth that chills my blood? It loses its force and its effect. It is in the heart that truth displays its charms and its power. We cherish that eloquence which abounds in lively and striking pictures; it is that gives wings of fire to our thought; it sees and strikes the object; it becomes attached to it, because the pleasure of being affected is joined to that of being enlightened*.

"Our

* We reckon more on exterior manners, that is, upon custom, than on any thing else, for which reason it is that we

“Our philosophy, therefore, is not severe; and why should it be so? Why not crown it with flowers? Are disgusting or mournful ideas more honourable to virtue than those that are pleasing and salutary? We think, that pleasure, proceeding from a beneficent hand, is not sent upon earth to make us shun its approach. Pleasure is not a monster; it is, as Young says, virtue under a gayer title. Far from endeavouring to destroy the passions, the invisible movers of our being, we regard them as precious gifts that we should carefully economise. Happy is the man endowed with strong passions; they form his glory, his grandeur, and his opulence. A wise man among us cultivates his mind, discards his prejudices, and acquires useful and agreeable sciences. All the arts that can extend his judgment and render it more discerning, are exercised and improved by his mind; that done, he attends to the voice of nature only,

we neglect education. The ancients treated each subject in a manner altogether sentimental, and threw on the sciences I know not what allurements, the secret of which is lost to us. The genius of the moderns is constantly defective for want of sentiment. The most happy talents are become callous under the serule of pedantry. Is there in the world a more ridiculous institution than that of our colleges, when we compare their dry and lifeless maxims with the public education the Greeks gave their youth, ornamenting wisdom with all those attractions which charm that tender age? Our preceptors appear like savage masters; it is no wonder, therefore, that their disciples are the first to avoid and fly from them.

only, subject to the law of reason, and reason directs him to happiness*.

* The warmth of the passions is not the cause of our irregularities; the furious, ungovernable courser, that runs away with the bad rider, that throws and tramples him under foot, is obedient to the bridle under the direction of a skilful master; and gains the prize in a glorious course. The weakness of passions discovers a poverty of nature. What, in fact, is that heavy, silent citizen, whose insipid soul is void of all sensibility; who is peaceful, because he is incapable of action; who vegetates, and suffers himself to be easily led by the magistrate, because he has no desires? Is he a man, or a statue? Place by him a man full of lively sentiments, who rides upon the impetuosity of his passions. He tears off the veil from the sciences; he will commit faults, and he will display his genius. An enemy to repose, and thirsting after knowledge, he will draw from the commotions of the world a luminous and sublime spirit that will enlighten his country; he will afford, perhaps, occasion for censure; but he will have exerted all the energy of his soul; the spots in his character will disappear, because he will be greatly useful to mankind.

CHAP. XXXIX.

THE TAXES *.

TELL me, I beseech you, how are your public taxes levied? for let the legislature be as perfect as it may, taxes, I think, must always be paid.

* My friends hear this apologue. Toward the beginning of the world there was a vast forest of citron trees, that bore the most beautiful, large and pleasant fruit. The branches bent under their burthens, and the air far round was embalmed with their fragrant odour. The impetuous winds chanced to blow down several citrons, and to break some of the branches: certain travellers passing that way, quenched their thirst with the juice of the fruit, and cast away the rind. This accident induced the race of citron-trees to choose guardians, who were to drive away passengers, and to inclose the forest with high walls, to oppose the fury of the winds. These guardians appeared at first faithful and disinterested, but they soon found that such hard labour produced a violent thirst; they therefore made this proposition to the citrons: "Gentlemen, we are ready to perish by thirst in labouring for you; permit us to make a small incision in each of you, that we may have a drop of liquor to refresh our parched throats; you will not be poorer, and we and our children shall thereby acquire fresh strength for your service."

The credulous citrons thought this request not unreasonable, and submitted to the imperceptible contribution. But what was the consequence? When the incision was once made, the hands of messieurs, the guardians, pressed them

paid. As a full answer, the worthy man, my conductor took me by the hand, and led me to a spacious place, formed by the termination of four streets. I observed a strong chest that was twelve feet high; it was supported on four wheels; there was a small opening at top, which was secured from the rain by a kind of awning; on this chest was wrote, *Tribute due to the King representing the state*. Hard by was another chest, of a smaller size, with these words; *Free gifts*. I saw several people, with easy, cheerful, contented looks, throw sealed packets into the chest, as in our days they threw letters into the post-office. I was so astonished at this easy manner of paying taxes, that I made a thousand ridiculous inquiries: they therefore regarded me as a poor old man that was come from a far distant country; yet their indulgent affability would never suffer me to wait for a reply. I confess that it is only in a dream a man can

them every day more closely. They at last found that citron juice was necessary in all their food; they observed too that the closer they pressed the fruit, the more juice it yielded. The citrons seeing themselves thus profusely bled, thought to have reduced their contribution to the primitive stipulation; but the guardians, grown more strong, disregarding all their complaint, put them in the press; and when nothing else remained, they forced a juice from the rinds, by the aid of terrible machines. They at last bathed themselves in the juice of citrons. The beautiful forest was soon despoiled; the race of citrons became extinct; and their tyrants, habituated to that refreshing liquor, by their prodigality had totally deprived themselves of it. They all fell sick, and died of the putrid fever. Amen, so be it.

can expect to meet with people so extremely complaisant. O, what a loyal nation!

“ That large coffer you see, they said, is our receiver-general of the finances. It is there that every citizen deposits his contribution for the support of the state. We are there obliged to deposit the fiftieth part of our annual income. He that has no property, or what is only just sufficient for his maintenance, is exempt* ; for why should we take bread from

* Hear what the labourer, the inhabitant of the country, in short, the people, should say to their sovereigns. “ We have raised you over us, we have engaged our lives and properties to support the splendor of your throne, and the security of your person. You have promised, in return, to procure us abundance, and to protect us from alarms. Who would have believed that, under your government, joy should have fled from us, and that our feasts should be turned into mourning ; that fear and terror should have succeeded to a pleasing confidence ! Formerly our verdant fields smiled upon us, and promised to repay our labours. Now the sweat of our brows produces fruit for strangers. Our villages, that once we were pleased with improving, now fall into ruins : our old men and children know not where to lay their heads. Our complaints are lost in the air, and each day a more cruel poverty succeeds to that we yesterday deplored. The appearance of humanity is scarce left us, and the animals that crop the grass are far less miserable.

The most heavy strokes have fell upon our heads. We are despised by the man in power, who will not allow us to have any sensation of honour ; he comes to molest our

I

huts,

from him whose daily labour is but sufficient for his maintenance ? In the other coffer are the voluntary offerings, intended for useful designs, for the execution

huts, and to seduce the innocence of our daughters : he snatches them from us, and they become a prey to brutal lust. In vain do we implore the aid of justice ; justice turns from us, it is deaf to our cries, and only ready to assist them that oppress us.

The parade of magnificence insults our misery, and renders it still more insupportable. They drink our blood, and forbid us to complain. The hardened wretch, surrounded by an insolent luxury, prides himself on the works that our hands have erected. While he thirsts for gold, our industry is forgot ; he regards us as slaves, because we are not riotous nor revengeful.

Those incessant wants that surround us have corrupted the purity of our manners : perfidy and rapine have crept in amongst us ; for the necessities of life commonly overcome virtue. But who has given us examples of rapine ? Who has extinguished in our hearts that source of candour which made us dear to each other ? Who has caused our misery, the mother of our vices ? Many of our inhabitants have refused to give existence to children that must be a prey to famine in the cradle. Others, in their despair, have blasphemed against Providence. Who are the real authors of all our crimes ?

May our complaints pierce through that vapour by which thrones are surrounded ! May kings rouse from their lethargy, and remember that they might have been born in our station, and that their children may one day descend to it ! Attached to our country, or rather forming the most

D d

essential

tion of such projects as have been approved by the public. This sometimes is richer than the other; for we love liberality in our gifts, and no other motive is necessary to excite it than equity and a love for the state. Whenever our king sends forth an useful edict, that merits the public approbation, we run in crowds to the chest with our marks of acknowledgment; he has but to propose, and we furnish him

essential part of it, we do not wish to be exempt from contributing to its support. All we wish is a man of equity, who will estimate the degree of our force, and not crush us by a burden, which, if proportioned to our strength, we should bear with pleasure. Then tranquil and rich in our oeconomy, contented with our lot, we should behold the grandeur of others without repining at our humble station.

More than the moiety of our days is already past. Our hearts are more than half delivered of their grief: we have but a little time to live. Our prayers are more for our country than for ourselves. It is we that support it: but if oppression shall continually increase, we must sink; our country will be overthrown, and by its fall it will crush our tyrants. We do not wish for this fruitless and rueful vengeance. What solace can the miseries of others afford us, when surrounded by the grave? We speak to you, O sovereigns! If you be yet men, if your hearts be not totally hardened, you will yet remember that we know how to die; and that the death by which we shall soon all be swallowed up, will one day be to you far more dreadful than to us.

This note is taken, in part, from a book intitled *Les Hommes*.

him with the means of accomplishing every important project. There is a similar trunk in every quarter of the city, and in every city in the provinces, which receives the contributions of the country, that is, of the farmer at his ease, for the labourer, whose property is in his arms and his hands, pays nothing. The beef and the hogs are likewise exempt from that odious tax, which was first laid on the head of the Jews*, and which you paid without being sensible of your servile state."

How! I said, do you leave it to the good-will of the people to pay their taxes? there must be then a great number that pay nothing, without your knowing it.—“Not at all; your fears are vain. In the first place, we give with a free will; our tribute is not by compulsion, but founded on reason and equity. There is scarce a man amongst us who does not esteem it a point of honour to discharge the most sacred and most legitimate of all debts. Beside, if a man in condition to pay should dare to neglect it, you there see the table on which the name of the head of every family is engraved, by which we should soon see who had not thrown in his packet, on which should be his seal. In that case he covers himself with

* The Jews in France are at this day liable to pay a tax on entering a town, in the same manner as oxen and hogs; there seems something whimsical in connecting them with the last mentioned animals; it is however certainly far more infamous for a nation that pretends to humanity to impose a tax on any people on account of their religion, than it is for them to pay it when compelled.

with an eternal infamy, and we regard him as you regard a thief; the appellation of a bad citizen follows him to the grave.

“ Examples of this sort are very rare, for the free gifts frequently amount to more than the tribute. We know that by giving a part to the state, we render a benefit to ourselves, and that if we would enjoy certain conveniences, we must make a previous advance. But what are words, when we can teach by example? You shall presently see much better than I can explain to you. It is to-day that there arrives from every part, the just tribute of a faithful people to a beneficent monarch, who considers himself merely as the depository of the gifts they offer.

“ Let us repair to the king's palace; the deputies of each province are by this time near arrived.” In fact, we had gone but a short way before I saw men drawing small cars, on which were placed chests covered with laurels. They broke the seals of those coffers, and put them in the balance, by which, allowing for the weight of the chest, they found the just quantity of silver that each contained; and as all the payments were made in silver, they knew the exact produce of the whole, which was publicly declared by sound of trumpet. After the general examination, an account in writing was fixed up for public inspection, and by that each one knew the revenue of the state. The money was then placed in the royal treasury, under the care of the comptroller of the finances.

This

This was a day of rejoicing; they wore garlands of flowers, and cried, “ Long live the king.” They came in procession before each car of tribute. The deputies of the several provinces saluted each other, and made reciprocal presents. They drank to the health of the monarch by the sound of cannon, which were answered by those of the capitol, as expressing the thanks of the sovereign. The whole people appeared on that day as one family. The king presented himself in the midst of this joyful people; he replied to the acclamations of his subjects by those tender and affable regards, that inspire confidence, and render love for love: he disdained the art of treating politically with a people whom he regarded as his children. His visits did not distress the citizens, as they cost them nothing but cries of joy*, the

* I once saw a prince make his public entry into a foreign city. The cannon proclaimed his approach. He was magnificently dressed, and drawn in a gilded car, loaded with pages and lacquies. The horses neighed and bounded as if they had drawn the chariot of felicity. All the windows were thrown up, the roofs were covered, and the streets crowded with the multitudes. The cavalry brandished their sabres, and the infantry exercised their muskets. The air resounded with the echo of the trumpets. The poet strung his lyre, and the orator attended his descent from the chariot. The prince arrives; he is conducted to the palace, and his presence inspires an awful joy. I was at a window, and saw all that passed, which afforded me some singular reflections. Walking in the streets a few days after, I was surprised to meet this prince on foot, alone, and in disguise. No one took any notice of him, but treated him as a vulgar person. At that moment there arrived a mountebank,

the most brilliant and most flattering of all receptions: They did not desist from their labours, on the contrary, every citizen was proud of appearing before his king in the occupation he had embraced.

An intendant, invested with all the necessary marks of power, went into every province, received their petitions, examined himself the abuses, and bore directly to the foot of the throne the complaint of the subject. He visited indiscriminately every town, and where any abuse was abolished, they erected a pyramid in commemoration. What history more instructive than these moral monuments, which asserted that the sovereign really applied himself to the art of governing. These intendants set off and arrive incognito, they are perpetually disguised, and made their informations secretly; they are spies, but they act for the good of their country*.

But

seated in a sort of chaise, drawn by a number of large dogs, with a monkey for their postilion. The windows were all thrown up, the people shouted, and all their looks were fixed on the mountebank; the prince himself, attracted by the crowd, became one of his admirers. I looked attentively at him, and methought I heard him say to himself, "The empty acclamations of the multitude shall never more dazzle my mind with a foolish pride. It is not this man the people throng to see, but his strange equipage. It was not I that attracted their regards, but my valets, my horses, the richness of my dress, and the splendor of my gilded chariot."

* In Turkey, and at present in France, a governor is as much master as the most absolute monarch; it is that which causes

But your comptroller of the finances, I said, must be a man of wonderful integrity*. You remember the fable: the faithful dog, directed by temperance, carried his master's dinner, without ever offering to touch it, but freely to eat his part at last, when invited by example. Your officer must have a double virtue constantly to defend, and never dare to touch it! "Be assured he builds no palace or villa. He does not advance his distant cousins, or ancient valets, to the first posts in the government. He does not scatter his wealth as if all the revenue of the kingdom was at his disposal†. Beside, all these in whose hands the public treasure is deposited cannot make use of money on any pretence whatever. It would be high treason to receive from them a single piece of coin. They pay some particular expences by notes signed with the king's own hand. The states pro-

causes the misery of the people. This sort of civil administration is of all others the most deplorable.

* Fonquet said, "I have all the money, and the tariff of all the virtues in the kingdom."

† After the ministers, the financiers, the monopolizers, have sacrificed their reputation for probity to a desire of enriching themselves; after they have submitted to become odious, they do not even think of making a good use of their plunder; they endeavour to cover their original meanness under a pompous appearance. They intoxicate themselves with dissipations in order to drown the remembrance of what they have been, and what they have done, even this is not the greatest evil, for by their ostentatious wealth they corrupt those who behold it with envy.

provide for all their expences; but they have not the least property*. They can neither buy, nor sell, nor build. Their lodgings, their tables, their diversions, are all charged to the state. They enter a draper's shop, order such cloth as they want, and depart; the tradesman enters in his book; delivered such a day, to such a depository of the state, so much; the state pays it: and so of every other profession. You will easily imagine, that if a comptroller of the finances has any modesty he will make a moderate use of this privilege; and if he should even abuse it, we shall still be gainers, compared with what the comptrollers cost you. We have likewise suppressed the registers, which served only to screen the robberies of the nation, and to make them authentic by a method that may be called legitimate."

And who is your prime minister? "Can you ask it? The king himself. Can royalty be transferred? The

* The interior vices, that prepare the ruin of a state, are, that enormous dissipation of the public treasure; those extravagant gifts bestowed on subjects without merit; those fastuous prodigalities unknown to the most lawless usurpers. We may observe in history, that the most subtle tyrants have been the most prodigal. I have somewhere read, that Augustus, the master of the world, maintained an army of 40 legions for 12 millions per annum. This surely affords matter for reflection.

† The general history of wars may be called, *The history of the private passions of ministers*. One of these, by his insidious negotiations, sets a distant and tranquil empire in flames, merely to revenge some trifling offence he has personally received.

the general; the judge, the statesman, may then act by their proxies. In case of sickness, or when on a journey, or engaged in some particular business, if the monarch charges any one with the accomplishment of his orders, it is perhaps his friend only; there is no motive but that which can induce a man to charge himself voluntarily with such a burden; and our esteem alone gives him the momentary power. Animated and recompensed by friendship, he knows, like Sully and Amboise, how to speak the truth to his master, and the more faithfully to serve him; sometimes to oppose him. He combats his passions: He loves the man while he has at heart the glory of the monarch*. By bearing part in his labours, he acquires a share of the veneration of his country, doubtless the most honourable inheritance he can leave his descendants; and that alone of which he is jealous."

When we talked of taxes, I forgot to ask, if you have periodical lotteries, where, in my time, the poor people deposited all their little hoards? "Certainly not. We do not so abuse the credulous hope of man; we do not levy on the indigent part of our people a tax

* Fidelity does not consist in that servile obedience to the will of another, which is represented by the emblem of a dog, who every where follows, continually flatters, and implicitly obeys the orders of an unjust or tyrannic master. It seems to me, that true fidelity is an exact observance of the laws of reason and justice, rather than a servile submission. Sully appears to me faithful when he tore the promise of marriage that Henry IV. had made.

tax so ingeniously cruel. The wretched, who weary of the present, lives on expectation only, carries the price of his labour and watchings to that fatal wheel, from whence he is in continual hope that Fortune will visit him; but is constantly deluded by that cruel goddess. The urgent desire of happiness prevents him from reasoning; and though the fraud be palpable, as the heart is dead to hope before life dies, every one imagines that at last he shall be successful. It is the savings of the indigent that have built those superb edifices, to which they go begging their bread. It is to them those altars owe their luxury, to which they are hardly admitted. For ever a stranger, for ever repulsed, the poor are not permitted to sit on the stone they have paid for carving; pompous priests richly endowed, live under those roofs, that in equity; at least, ought to afford them an asylum."

CHAP.

CHAP. XL.

ON COMMERCE.

IT seems, by what you have told me, that France has no longer any colonies in the new world; that each part of America forms a separate kingdom though united under one spirit of legislation? "We should be highly ridiculous to send our dear fellow citizens two thousand leagues from us. Why should we thus estrange ourselves from our brethren? Our climate is at least as good as that of America. Every necessary production is here common, and by nature excellent. The colonies were to France what a country-house is to a private person: the house in the country, sooner or later, ruins that in town.

"We have a commerce, but it consists merely in the exchange of superfluities among ourselves. We have prudently banished three natural poisons, of which you made perpetual use; snuff, coffee, and tea. You stuffed your heads with a villanous powder, that deprived you Frenchmen of what little memory you had. You burned your stomach with liquors that destroyed it by encreasing its action. Those nervous disorders so common among you were owing to the effeminate liquor which carried off the nourishing juice of the animal life. We cultivate an interior commerce only, of which we find the good effects; founded principally on agriculture, it distributes the most necessary aliments; it satisfies the wants of man, but not his pride.

"No

“No man blushes to till his own ground, and to improve it to the highest degree possible. Our monarch himself has several acres which are cultivated under his own eye. We have not among us any of those titled gentry, whose only pursuit was idleness.

“Foreign traffic was the real father of that destructive luxury, which produced in its turn that horrid inequality of fortunes, which caused all the wealth of the nation to pass into a few hands. Because a woman could carry in her ears the patrimony of ten families, the peasant was forced to sell the land of his ancestors, and to fly, with tears, from that soil where he found nought but misery and disgrace: for those insatiable monsters, who had accumulated the gold, even derided the misfortunes of those they had plundered*. We began by destroying those
great

I smile with indignant pity when I see so many fine projects offered for the improvement of agriculture and population, while the taxes continually increasing, rob the people of the sweat of their brow; and the price of corn is augmented by the monopoly of those who have all the money of the kingdom in their hands. Must we for ever cry to those proud and obdurate ears. “Give us a full and unbounded liberty of commerce and navigation, and a diminution of taxes.” These are the only means of nourishing the people, and preventing that depopulation which we see already begun. But, alas! patriotism is a contraband virtue. The man who lives for himself alone, who thinks of nought but himself, who is silent, and turns away his eyes for fear of horror, he is the good citizen; they even praise his prudence and moderation. For my own part, I cannot
remain

great companies, that absorbed all the fortunes of individuals, annihilated the generous boldness of a nation, and gave as deadly a blow to morality as to the state.

“It may be very agreeable to sip chocolate, to breathe the odour of spices, to eat sugar and ananas, to drink Barbadoes water, and to be clothed in the gaudy stuffs of India. But are these sensations sufficiently voluptuous to close our eyes against the crowd of unheard of evils that your luxury engendered in the two hemispheres? You violated the most sacred ties of blood and nature on the coast of Guinea. You armed the father against the son, while you pretended to the name of Christians and of men. Blind barbarians! You have been but too well convinced by a fatal experience. A thirst for gold extolled by every heart; amiable moderation banished by avidity; justice and virtue regarded as chimeras; avarice pale, and restless, plowing the waves, and peopling with carcases the depths of the ocean; a whole race of men bought and sold, treated as the vilest animals; kings become merchants, covering the seas with blood for the flag of a frigate: Gold,

to

remain silent, I must declare what I have seen. It is into most of the provinces of France that we must go to see the people completely miserable. It is now, in 1770, three winters together that we have seen bread dear. The last year one half of the peasants had need of public charity, and this winter will complete their ruin; for they who have lived till now selling their effects, have nothing left to sell. These poor people have a patience that makes me admire the force of the laws and of education.

E c

to conclude, flowing from the mines of Peru like a flaming river, and running into Europe, burned up every where in its course the roots of happiness, and was then for ever lost on the eastern world, where superstition buried in the earth, on one side, what avarice had painfully drawn from it, on the other. Behold a faithful picture of the advantages that foreign commerce produced to the world.

“ Our vessels do not make the tour of the globe, to bring back cochineal and indigo. Know you where are our mines? Where is our Peru? In labour and assiduity. All that promotes ease and convenience, that directly tends to assist nature, is cultivated with the greatest care. All that belongs to pomp, to ostentation and vanity, to a puerile desire of an exclusive possession of what is merely the work of fancy, is severely prohibited. We have cast into the sea those deceitful diamonds, those dangerous pearls, and all those whimsical stones that rendered the heart, like, them impenetrable. You thought yourselves highly ingenious in the refinements of luxury, but your pursuits were merely after superfluities, after the shadow of greatness; you were not even voluptuous. Your futile and miserable inventions were confined to a day. You were nothing more than children fond of glaring objects, incapable of satisfying your real wants. Ignorant of the art of happiness, you fatigued yourselves, far from the object of your pursuits, and mistook, at every step, the image for the reality.

“ When

“ When our vessels leave their harbours, they take not thunder with them, to seize on the vast extent of waters, a fugitive prey that forms a point scarce perceptible to the sight. The echo of the waves bears not to heaven the hideous cries of furious wretches that dispute, at the expence of life itself, a passage over the immense and vacant ocean. We visit distant nations, but instead of the productions of their lands, we bring home the most useful discoveries relative to their legislature, their physical life, and their manners. Our vessels serve to connect our astronomical knowledge; more than three hundred observatories erected on this globe are ready to mark the least alteration that occurs in the heavens. The earth is the post where watches the centinel of the firmament who never sleeps. Astronomy is become an important science, as it proclaims, with a majestic voice, the glory of the Creator, and the dignity of that thinking being who has proceeded from his hands. But now we talk of commerce, let us not forget the most extraordinary kind that ever existed. You ought to be very rich,” he said, “ for in your youth, doubtless, you placed out money on annuities, especially on survivorships, as did one half of Paris. An invention of wonderful ingenuity was that sort of lottery, where they played at life and death, and the winnings were to go to the longest liver! You should have a most plentiful annuity! They renounced father and mother, brother and sister, all friends and relations, to double their revenue. They made the king their heir, then slept in a profound indolence, and lived only for themselves.”—Ah! why do you

E e 2

tell

tell me of these matters? Those rueful edicts that completed our corruption, and dissolved connections, till then held sacred; that barbarous refinement which publickly consecrated self-love, that detached the citizens from each other, and made them solitary and lifeless beings, drew tears from my eyes, when I reflected on the future condition of the state. I saw private fortunes melt away, and the excessive mass of opulence swell by their dissolution; but the fatal blow that was given to morals affected me still more deeply; no longer any connection between hearts that ought to be devoted to each other; they gave to interest a keener sword; interest of itself already so formidable; the sovereign authority laid those barriers at its feet, that it would never have dared to attack of itself.—“Good old man,” said my guide, “you have done well to sleep, or you would have seen the annuitants and the state punished for their mutual imprudence. Politics, since that period, has made no such solecism; it does not now ruin, but unite and enrich the citizens.”

C H A P.

C H A P. XLI.

THE EVENING.

THE sun was going down. My guide invited me to go with him to the house of one of his friends, where he was to sup. I did not want much intreaty. I had not yet seen the inside of their houses, and that, in my judgment, is the most interesting sight in every city. In reading history, I pass over many passages, but am ever curious in examining the detail of domestic life: that once done, I have no need to learn the rest; I can form a natural conjecture.

On entering, I found none of those petty apartments that seem to be cells for lunatics, whose walls are scarce six inches thick, and where they freeze in winter, and scorch in summer. The rooms were large and sonorous; you might walk at your ease. A solid roof guarded them from the piercing cold and the burning rays of the sun; these houses, moreover, did not grow old with those that built them.

I entered the saloon, and presently distinguished the master of the house. He saluted me without grimace or reserve*. His wife and children behaved in

* How false and diminutive is our politeness! And how odious and insulting is that assumed by the great! It is a

in his presence in a free but respectful manner; and monsieur, or the eldest son, did not give me a specimen of his wit by ridiculing his father; neither his mother, nor his grand-mother would have been charmed with such witticisms*. His sisters were neither affectedly polite, nor totally insensible; they received us in a graceful manner, and resumed their several employments; they did not watch all my motions, nor did my great age and broken voice make them once smile; they displayed none of that unnatural complaisance, which is so contrary to true politeness. This room was not decorated with twenty brittle, tasteless baubles. There was no gilding, varnishing, porcelain†, or wretched figures. In their place was a lively tapestry, pleasing to the sight, and some finished prints; a remarkable neatness graced this saloon, that of itself was elegant and lightsome.

We

mask more hideous than the most ugly of all faces. All those reverences, those affected gesticulations, are insufferable to a real man. The false brilliancy of our manners is more disgusting than the grossest behaviour of a clown.

* There is a licentiousness of the mind which is far more dangerous than that of the senses; and it is at this time the principal vice that infects the youth of our capital.

† What a miserable luxury is that of porcelain! A cat, a brush with the sleeve, may destroy in a moment more than the produce of twenty acres.

We joined conversation, but there was no sport- ing with paradoxes*; that execrable wit, which was the plague of the age I lived in, did not give false colours to things that were by nature perfectly simple. No one maintained the direct contrary of what was asserted by another, merely to display his talents†. These people talked from principle, and did not

* Conversation animates the encounter of ideas, brings forth the treasures of the mind, and is one of the greatest pleasures of life: it is moreover that of all others I most highly enjoy. But in the world, I have remarked, that instead of nourishing, strengthening, and elevating the mind, it enervates and degrades it. All things are now become problematical. By an abuse of reason, the very existence of objects is in a manner destroyed. We meet with panegyrics on the most enormous abuses. All things are justified. They embrace, unknown to themselves, a thousand puerile and extravagant ideas.—Their minds become distorted by the collision of opposite opinions. There is, I know not what poison, that insinuates itself, mounts to the head, and clouds your primitive ideas, which are commonly the most just. Avarice, ambition, and luxury, have so subtle a logic, that after hearing them, you have no longer your former abhorrence for those by whom they are practised; they all prove themselves to be innocent. We must quickly fly to solitude to regain a vigorous abhorrence of vice. The world makes us familiar with those crimes it applauds, and affects us with its delusive spirit. By too much frequenting men, we become less men; we receive from them a false light that leads us astray. It is by shutting the door that we recollect ourselves, that we perceive the pure light of truth, which never shines among the multitude.

† The decrees of idleness are as unjust as those of vanity.

ont contradict themselves twenty times in a quarter of an hour. The spirit of this conversation was not directed by starts, and without being profuse or dull, they did not pass, in the same breath, from the birth of a prince to the drowning of a dog.

The young people did not affect a childish manner, a drawing or lisping language, nor a proud careless aspect and attitude*. I heard no licentious proposal, nor did any one declaim in a gloomy, tedious, heavy manner, against those consolatory truths, that are the delight and comfort of sensible minds†. The women did not affect a tone by turns languishing and imperious; they were decent, reserved, modest, and engaged in an easy suitable employment; idleness had no charms for them; they did not rise at noon because they were to do nothing at night. I was highly pleased with their not proposing cards; that insipid diversion, invented to amuse an idiot monarch, and which is constantly pleasing to the numerous herd of dunces, who are thereby enabled to conceal their profound ignorance, had disappeared from

* A pretty fellow in France must be slender, weakly, and not have more than twelve ounces of flesh on his bones; he should likewise have a pain in his stomach, and a very poor state of health. A man that is strong and hearty is a hideous creature. It becomes the Swifs and porters only, to have a masculine figure and a florid state of health.

† Pyrrhonism supposes sometimes more prejudices than a natural disposition to receive the appearances of truth.

from among a people who knew too well how to improve the moments of life to waste them in a practice at once so dull and fastidious*. I saw none of those green tables, on which men ruin themselves unpitied. Avarice did not molest these honest citizens, even in the moments consecrated to leisure. They did not make a fatigue of what should be a mere relaxation†. If they played, it was at draughts, or chess, those ancient and studious games, that offer an infinite variety of combinations to the mind. There were also other games they called mathematical recreations, and with which even their children were acquainted.

I observed that each one followed his inclination without being remarked by the rest of the company.

* With our author's leave, card-playing is not always a proper employment for dunces; for though cards are frequently, indeed commonly, introduced to supply a dearth of conversation, yet there are several games that require a strong exertion of all the faculties of the mind. No dunce, no man of indifferent capacity, ever played the game of piquet or ombre well.

† I dread the approach of winter, not for the severity of the season, but because it brings with it a wretched thirst for gaming. That season is the most fatal to morals, and the most insupportable to philosophy. It is then those noisy and insipid assemblies start up; where all the futile passions exercise their ridiculous empire. The taste for trifles then dictates the mode. All the men, metamorphosed into effeminate slaves, are subordinate to the caprice of the women, for whom, at the very time, they have neither esteem nor affection.

company. There were no female spies, who, by censuring others, discharged themselves of that foul humour which rankles their souls, and which they frequently owe as much to their deformity as their folly. These conversed, those turned over a book of prints, one examined the pictures, and another amused himself with a book in a corner. They formed no circle to communicate a gaping that runs all round. In a room adjoining was a concert; it was that of sweet flutes united with the human voice. The clanging harpsicord, and the monotonous fiddle, here yielded to the enchanting powers of a fine woman; what instrument can have greater effect upon the heart? The improved harmonica, however, seemed to dispute the prize; it breathed the most pure, full, and melodious sounds that can charm the ear. It was a ravishing and celestial music, that is far from being rivalled by the clamour of our operas, where the man of taste and sensibility seeks for the consonance of unity, but seeks in vain.

I was highly charmed. They did not remain continually seated, nailed to a chair, and obliged to maintain an eternal conversation about nothing, and that too with the utmost solemnity*. The women were not continually wrangling about metaphysics; and if they spoke about poetry, of dramas, or authors, they constantly acknowledged themselves, notwith-

* In common conversation we meet with two circumstances equally disagreeable, to have nothing to say, and yet be forced to talk; or to have something to say when the conversation is over.

notwithstanding their great abilities, unequal to the subject*.

They desired me to walk into an adjoining room, where supper was prepared. I looked at the clock with surprize, it was not yet seven. Come, Sir, said the master of the house, taking me by the hand, we do not pass our nights by the light of wax candles. We think the sun so beautiful, that it is to us a pleasure to see its first rays dart on the horizon. We do not go to bed with a loaded stomach, to experience broken slumbers attended by fantastic dreams. We carefully guard our health, as on that the serenity of the mind depends †. We are moreover fond of gay and pleasing dreams ‡.

There

* A woman never thinks closely but when she meditates on the lessons of a favourite gallant ¶; and how many men are there like women?

¶ This is certainly not just; our author, as a Frenchman, should have remembered the name of Dacier, and not have expressed himself in such unlimited terms.

† Health is to happiness, what the dew of heaven is to the fruits of the earth.

‡ Happy are they who enjoy the sensation of health; that tranquil state of body, that equilibrium, that perfect agreement of all the humours, that happy disposition of all the organs, by which their strength and agility are supported. That general perfect health is of itself a high enjoyment. It is not rapturous; granted: but as it alone surpasses all other pleasures, it gives that contentment to the mind, that
internal

There was a general silence. The father of the family blessed the food that was set before us. This graceful and holy custom was revived; and it appeared to me important, as perpetually reminding us of that gratitude we owe to God, who incessantly supplies us with subsistence. I was more busy in examining the table than in eating. I shall not dwell on the neatness and elegance that there prevailed. The domestics sat at the bottom of the table, and eat with their masters; they had therefore the more respect for them; they received by this means lessons of probity, which they laid up in their hearts; they thereby became more enlightened, and were not coarse or insolent, as they were not longer regarded as base. Liberty, gaiety, a decent familiarity, dilated the heart and glowed in the front of every guest. Every one had his mess placed before him; no one crowded his neighbour; no one coveted a dish that was distant from him; he would have been reckoned a glutton, who was not content with his portion, for it was quite sufficient. Many people eat excessively more from habit than real appetite*. They had learned

internal and delicious calm, which makes existence dear to us, enables us to admire the face of nature, and render grateful thanks to the Author of our being. Not to be sick, is alone a soothing pleasure. I readily call him a philosopher, who, sensible of the dangers, of excess, and the advantages of moderation, knows how to bridle his appetites, and live without pain: how important a secret!

* Anatomy demonstrates, that our organs of pleasure are covered with small pyramidal eminences. The less obtuse

learned to correct that fault without a sumptuary law.

None of the meats I tasted had any discernable seasoning, for which I was not sorry. I found a flavour in them, a natural salt which seemed to me delicious. I saw none of those refined dishes that pass through the hands of several sophisticators, of those ragouts, those inflammatory sauces, rarified in small, but costly dishes; which hasten the destruction of the human race, at the same time that they burn up the entrails. These were not a voracious people, who devour more than the magnificence of nature, with all her genera-
tive

tude they are made by frequent use, the more sensible and elastic they remain, and the more ready to recover their tone. Nature, a tender and careful mother, has so constructed them, that they preserve their spring to advanced age, when their requisite subtilty, their due asperity is not destroyed. It depends therefore on man to reserve pleasure for every age of life. But what does the intemperate wretch? He destroys this precious organism: he vitiates that delicate sensation, by making those parts flat and hard; he reduces a being almost celestial, and endowed with pleasures peculiar to himself, to the rank of a wretched automaton. What animal, in matters of enjoyment has been more favoured than man? Who but he can contemplate the firmament, distinguish the pleasing forms and colours of the minutest bodies, breathe the most grateful odours, and comprehend all the various inflections of the voice, receive rapturous pleasure from paintings, eloquence, and poetry, and plunge with the greatest delight into the depths of algebra and geometry, &c. ? He who said that man was an abridgment of the universe, asserted a great and pleasing truth. Man appears to be connected with all that exists.

tive faculties, can produce. If ever luxury be odious, that of the table is the most detestable; for if the rich, by an abuse of their wealth, dissipate the nourishing fruits of the earth, the poor must necessarily pay the dearer for them, and, what is worse, frequently not have a competency*.

The herbs and fruits were all of the season; they knew not the secret of producing wretched cherries in the midst of the winter; they were not solicitous for the first produce, but left nature to ripen her fruits. The palate was thereby better pleased, and the body better nourished. They gave us a desert of some excellent fruit and some old wine; but none of those coloured liquors distilled from brandy, so much in use in my time; they were as severely prohibited as arsenic. This people were sensible, that there was no pleasure in procuring a slow and cruel death.

The master of the house said to me with a smile, "You must certainly think this a pitiful desert; here are neither trees, nor castles, nor wind-mills, nor any other figures of confectionary †; that ridiculous ex-

travagance

* The unfeeling man is precisely him whom the world calls a man of taste.

† O France! O my country! wouldst thou know wherein thy true glory now consists, thy real pre-eminence over other nations? Hear: thou excellest in the invention of fashions; they are adopted in the extremities of the North, in all the courts of Germany, even within the Seraglio; in a word, by all the four parts of the earth. Thy cooks, thy confectioners are the most excellent in the universe; and every nation in Europe admires thy dancers.

travagance which could not produce the least real pleasure, was formerly the delight of those great children that were become dotards. Your magistrates, who, at least ought to have given examples of frugality, and not authorised by their practice, an insolent and pitiful luxury; those magistrates, they say, those fathers of the people, at the commencement of every parliament, were in extasies at the sight of grotesque figures made of sugar; from whence we may easily judge of the emulation of other ranks to excel the men of the long robe."—You can have but an imperfect idea of our industry, I replied; in my time, they exhibited, on a table ten feet wide, an opera of sweetmeats, with all its machines, decorations, orchestra, actors, and dancers, with the shifting of the scenes, in the same manner as at the theatre of the Palais-Royal. During the exhibition, the whole people besieged the door, to enjoy the great happiness of a glimpse of this superb desert, the whole expence of which they certainly paid. The poor people admired the wonderful magnificence of their princes, and thought themselves very insignificant, when compared with such greatness. . . . The whole company laughed heartily; we rose from table with gaiety; we rendered thanks to God; and no one complained of vapours or indigestion.

CHAP. XLII.

THE GAZETTES.

ON returning to the former room, I saw lying on the table large sheets of paper, twice as long as the English news-papers. I eagerly seized these printed sheets, and found that they were intitled, News public and private. As nothing can equal the surprize I felt on reading every page, determined as I was never more to be surprized, I shall here transcribe those articles that struck me most, as near as my memory will permit.

* * *

From PEKIN, the . . .

They represented before the emperor the tragedy of Cinna. The clemency of Augustus, with the beauty and dignity of the other characters, made a great impression on all the audience.

O what an impudent lying gazette is here ! I said to the person who stood next me. Read . . . "Nay," he replied very coolly, "there is nothing more likely. I myself have seen the Orphan of China represented at Pekin. You must know, that I am a mandarin, and that I love letters as much as justice. I have traversed the Royal Canal* ; I arrived here
in

* The Royal Canal divides China, from north to south, for the space of six hundred leagues. It is joined by lakes, rivers,

in about four months, and amused myself by the way. I was anxious to see that Paris, of which I had heard so much, and to inform myself of a thousand things, which it is absolutely necessary to see, clearly to comprehend. The French language has been common at Pekia for these two centuries past; and, on my return, I shall take with me several good books that I intend to translate."—You do not then, Mr. Mandarin, still use your hieroglyphic language, and have abrogated that extraordinary law, which forbade any one of you to leave the empire?—"It was quite necessary to change our language and adopt more simple characters, if we would maintain a correspondence with you. This was not more difficult than it is to learn algebra or geometry. Our emperor has repealed the law that forbade travelling, as he very rightly judged, that you did not all resemble those priests whom we named demi-diables, from their attempts to allumine the torch of discord even in our distant country. If I do not mistake the epoch, a more close and intimate connection was formed on account of certain copperplates which you had engraved.

rivers, &c. This empire abounds with like canals, many of which run ten leagues in a straight line; they supply most of the cities with provisions. Their bridges have a boldness and magnificence superior to any thing of the kind that Europe can produce. And we, weak, trifling, pitiful in all our public works, we employ our ingenuity, labour, and wonderful knowledge, in ornamenting objects of mere vanity, in erecting magnificent bawbles; almost all that we call master-pieces of art are nothing more than the sports of children.

graved. That art was then new to us, and highly admired. We have since almost equalled you."—O, I understand you; the designs of those plates represented battles; they were sent to us by that poetic monarch to whom Voltaire addressed a beautiful ode; and our king having charged his best artists with their execution, sent them as a present to *The charming emperor of China*.—"Right. Since that time the intercourse has been established, and by degrees the sciences have passed from one country to the other, like bills of exchange. The opinions of one man have become those of the universe. It is printing, that noble invention, which has propagated this light. The tyrants of human reason, with their hundred hands, have not been able to stop its invincible course. Nothing can be more rapid than that salutary motion given to the moral world by the sun of arts; it has surrounded every object with a pure and durable splendor.

"The bastinado is no longer practised in China; and the mandarins do not now resemble the heads of a college; the common people are not slothful and fraudulent, as the greatest pains has been taken to improve their minds; ignominious punishments no longer crush them to the earth; they have been inspired with notions of honour. We constantly venerate Confucius, who was almost cotemporary with your Socrates, and who, like him, did not subtilize on the principal of Beings, but contented himself with declaring that nothing is hid from him, and that he will punish vice and reward virtue. Our Confucius had

had one advantage over the Grecian sage; he did not boldly attack those religious prejudices, which, for want of a more noble support, were the basis of the morals of the people; he waited patiently, till truth, without tumult and labour, should exert its own power. In short, it was he, who proved that a monarch must necessarily be a philosopher to govern his people justly. Our emperor still holds the plow; but it is not an act of vain œconomy or puerile ostentation. . . ."

Urged by a desire to read and hear at the same time, while I listened on one side, my eye, not less curious, ran over the pages of this gazette. I read as follows.

* * *

JEDDO, the capital of Japan, the . . .

The descendants of the great Taico, who caused Dairi, to be regarded as an impotent, though revered idol, have just translated the Spirit of Laws, and the Treatise on Crimes and Punishments.

The venerable Amida has been conducted through all the streets; but no one offered himself to be crushed by his chariot-wheels.

A free entrance is granted at Japan; and every one there eagerly profits by the arts of foreigners. Suicide is no longer a virtue among these people; they

they have discovered that it was the consequence of despair, or of a foolish and criminal infensibility.

* * *

PERSIA, the . . .

The king of Persia has dined with his brothers, who have remarkable fine eyes. They assist in the government of the empire; their principal employment is to read the dispatches. The sacred books of Zoroaster and Sadder are constantly read and respected; but there is now no mention made of Omar, or of Ali.

* * *

MEXICO, the . . .

This city has completely regained the ancient splendor it enjoyed under the august government of princes descended from the renowned Montezuma. Our emperor, on his advancement to the throne, rebuilt the palace in the form it had in the days of his ancestors. The Indians no longer go bare-foot and without linen. They have erected in the great square the statue of Gatimozin, extended on the burning coals; and under it are wrote these words, *And I, am I on a bed of reeds?*

Pray tell me, I said to the Mandarin, is it then forbid to name the empire of New Spain? He replied "When the avenger of the New World had drove
away

away the tyrants, (the talents of Mahomet and Cæsar united would not have nearly equalled those of that wonderful man) this formidable deliverer contented himself with being a legislator. He laid down the sword, to display to the nations the sacred code of the laws. You can form no idea of so transcendent a genius; his powerful eloquence resembled the voice of the divinity descended upon the earth. America was divided into two empires; that of North America contains Mexico, Canada, the Antilles, Jamaica, and St. Domingo; to that of South America belongs Peru, Paraguay, Chili, the land of Magellan, and the country of the Amazons; but each of these kingdoms has a separate monarch, who is himself subject to a general law, almost in the same manner as, in your time, the flourishing empire of Germany, while divided into various monarchies, formed but one body under one general sovereign.

" Thus the blood of Montezuma, for a long time obscured and concealed, again mounted the throne. All these monarchs are patriot princes, who have no other object than the maintenance of public liberty. This great man, this renowned legislator, this negro, in whom nature had exerted all her force, has inspired them with his great and virtuous spirit. These vast states repose and flourish in a perfect concord, the slow, but infallible work of reason. The ravages of the ancient world, their cruel and childlike wars, the rivers of blood idly wasted, and the shame for having caused them; in a word, the folly of ambition,
plainly

plainly demonstrated, has been sufficient to induce the new continent to make peace with the titular deity of their country. In our days a war would dishonour a state, as robbery dishonours a private person." I continued to read and listen.

* * *

PARAGUAY, from the city of the Assumption, the . . .

We have just held a solemn feast, in memory of the abolition of that disgraceful slavery to which this nation had been reduced, under the despotic empire of the Jesuits. For six centuries past, we have regarded it as a special favour of Providence that enabled us to drive out those wolf-foxes from their last retreat. This nation, however, is not ingrate, for it acknowledges the advantage of being raised from wretchedness and instructed in agriculture and the arts by those Jesuits. Happy, if they had contented themselves with instructing mankind, and giving them sacred laws of morality.

* * *

From PHILADELPHIA, the capital of Pennsylvania, the . . .

This province, where humanity, faith, liberty, concord, and equality, have taken refuge for more than eight hundred years, is covered with the most elegant and flourishing cities. Virtue has performed more here than courage has among other nations.

Those

Those generous quakers*, the most virtuous of mankind, by affording to the world a people that are all brethren, have served as a model to hearts that have become humanized by their example. We know that they have been able, from the time of their origin, to give mankind a thousand examples of generosity and beneficence. It is well known that they were the first who refused to shed the blood of man; and that they regard war as a weak and barbarous frenzy. It is they that have undeceived those nations who were the miserable victims of the quarrels of their kings. They have just published their annual exhortation, in which are contained those practical virtues, which set to their faith the seal of perfection.

MOROCCO,

* How can the princes of the North refrain from covering themselves with immortal glory by banishing slavery from their dominions, by restoring to the labourer of the land at least his personal liberty? How can they be deaf to the cry of humanity, which constantly excites them to that act of glorious beneficence? By what motive can they be induced to hold in an odious servitude, and one that is contrary to their real interest, the most industrious part of their subjects, when they have before their eyes the example of those quakers who have given liberty to all their negro slaves? How is it possible for them not to be sensible, that their subjects will be more faithful by being more free: and that they must cease to be slaves ere they can become men.

* * *

MOROCCO, the . . .

We have discovered a comet that is going toward the sun. This is the three hundred and fifty-first that has been observed since the erecting of our observatory. The observations made in the interior parts of Africa, correspond exactly with ours.

They have put to death an inhabitant who had assaulted a Frenchman, in conformity to the ordinance of our sovereign, whose will it is that every stranger shall be regarded as a brother who is come to visit his intimate friends.

* * *

SIAM, the . . .

Our navigation makes a most astonishing progress. We have launched six vessels of three decks, which are destined for long voyages.

Our king presents himself to all that desire to behold his august person. There is not a more affable monarch existing, especially when he resorts to the pagod of the great Sommonacodom.

The white elephant is kept at the menagery, but merely as an object of curiosity, as he is perfect in the exercise of the riding-school.

From

I

* * *

From the COAST of MALABAR, the . . .

The widow . . . who is young, handsome, and adorned with every accomplishment, has sincerely deplored the death of her husband, who was burned alone; and after mourning, more in her heart than in her dress, has been re-married to a young man, by whom she is also tenderly beloved. This new connection has rendered her still more respectable to all her fellow-citizens.

* * *

From the LAND of MAGELLAN, the . . .

The twenty fortunate islands, who lived, without knowing it, in all the innocence and happiness of the first ages, are lately united; they now form an association truly fraternal and reciprocally useful.

* * *

From the LAND of PAFOS, the . . .*

As we advance into this fifth part of the world, our discoveries become every day more extensive and interesting. We are surpris'd at its riches, fertility, and its numerous inhabitants, who here live in continual peace. They may justly disdain our arts; their morality is still more admirable than their physics.

The

* The land of Pafos is four thousand leagues distant from Paris.

G g

The sun, in all these immense regions, more extensive than Asia and Africa united, beholds not one unfortunate being; while Europe, so diminutive, so poor, and divided into so many parts, has almost hardened her soil with human bones.

* * *

From the Island of TAÏTÎ in the South Sea, the . . .

When M. Bougainville discovered this happy island where reign the manners of the golden age, he did not fail to take possession of it in the name of his master. He at last re-embarked and took with him a Taitian, who in 1770 attracted the curiosity of Paris for a week. It was not then known that a Frenchman induced by the beauty of the climate, the candour of its inhabitants, and still more by the misery which threatened that innocent people, concealed himself at the time his comrades embarked. The vessel had no sooner disappeared, than he presented himself to the people; he assembled them in a large plain, and made the following speech:

“ I have chose to remain among you for my own
 “ happiness, and for yours. Receive me as a bro-
 “ ther; you will see that I deserve that title, as I
 “ offer to save you from the most horrid calamity. O
 “ happy people, who live in all the simplicity of
 “ nature! little do you think of the miseries that
 “ threaten you! These strangers you have enter-
 “ tained, and who seemed so polite, whom you have
 “ loaded with civilities and presents, and whom at
 “ this

“ this moment I betray, if it be treachery to prevent
 “ the ruin of a virtuous people; these strangers, my
 “ countrymen, will soon return, and bring with them
 “ all those plagues that afflict other countries; they
 “ will infect you with poisons and maladies of which
 “ you have no conception; they will load you with
 “ fetters; and, by their cruel arguments they will
 “ prove it to be for your advantage. Behold this
 “ pyramid they have erected, which declares, that
 “ this land is already dependent on them, and marks
 “ you as the subjects of a monarch, of whose very
 “ name you are ignorant. You are all destined to
 “ obey new laws. They will strip the harvest from
 “ your lands, will despoil your trees of their fruit,
 “ and seize on your persons. That happy equality
 “ which reigns among you will be abolished. Per-
 “ haps, your blood will bathe those flowers that now
 “ bend under the weight of your innocent embraces.
 “ Love is the god of this island; it is consecrated, so
 “ to say, to his worship. Hatred and vengeance will
 “ take his place. You are yet even ignorant of the
 “ use of arms; they will teach you what is war, mur-
 “ der, and slavery. . . .”

At these words, the people turned pale, and remained fixed in astonishment. Thus a company of children, interrupted in the midst of their pleasing sports, will be seized with terror, when a dreadful voice shall tell them the world is at an end, and make them sensible of calamities that their tranquil minds had never conceived.

The orator continued, " People, whom I love, and for whom my heart yearns! There is yet a way to preserve your liberty and your happiness. Let every stranger that lands on your coast be sacrificed to the safety of your country. The decree is cruel; but the love of your children and of your posterity should make you embrace it. You would be more shocked, were I to relate to you the horrid cruelties that the Europeans have exercised toward people, who, like you, were weak and innocent. Guard yourselves against the contagious breath that proceeds from their lips; even their very smiles are signals of the miseries with which they intend to overwhelm you."

The heads of the nation assembled, and by an unanimous voice invested him with the chief authority who had been their general benefactor, by preserving them from such horrible calamities. The decree of death against every stranger was executed with a virtuous and patriotic rigour; as it was formerly in Taurida, by a people in appearance as innocent, but jealous of forming any connection with nations who were skilful in arts, but at the same time, cruel and tyrannic.

They write, that this law has been lately abolished, because by repeated informations they have learned that Europe is no longer the enemy of the other three parts of the globe; that it does not now attack the liberty of peaceful nations far distant from it; that it is not shamefully jealous of the power of its several
love.

sovereigns; that it is ambitious of forming friends, and not making slaves; that its vessels go in search of examples of simple and refined manners, and not of contemptible riches, &c. &c. &c.

* * *

PETERSBURGH, the

The most noble of all titles is that of legislator. A sovereign then approaches nearest to the Divinity, when he gives sagacious and durable laws to a nation. We still repeat with rapture the august name of Catharine II. We no longer talk of her conquests and her triumphs, but of her laws. Her ambition was to dissipate the darkness of ignorance, and to substitute, in the room of barbarous customs, laws dictated by humanity. More happy, more glorious than Peter the Great, because more humane, she applied herself, notwithstanding all opposite examples, to make her people flourishing and happy; which they were, in defiance of public and domestic storms that shook her throne. By her courage, she was enabled to fortify a crown that the universe beheld with pleasure on her brow. We must go very far back into antiquity to find a legislator of equal dignity and sagacity. —The chains that bound the labourers of the land were broken. She raised her front, and saw them with delight exalted to the rank of men. The fabricators of luxury no longer found their professions more lucrative or more honourable. The genius of humanity cried aloud to all the inhabitants of the North, *Men! be free; and remember future generations,*
G g 3 that

that it is to a woman you owe all the happiness you enjoy.

At the last numbering of the inhabitants of all the Russias, they amounted to forty-five millions of people. In 1769, they counted only fourteen millions; but, by the sagacity of the legislator, her humane code of laws, and the throne of her successors being firmly established by their generosity and affability, the population of this empire is become equal to its extent, which is greater than that of Augustus or Alexander. The constitution of government, moreover, is no longer military; the sovereign calls himself only autocrate, the universe in general is too enlightened to bear the former odious government.

* * *

WARSAW, the

An anarchy the most absurd and injurious to the rights of man, who is born free, and the most oppressive to the people, no longer troubles Poland. The renowned Catherine II. had formerly a wonderful influence over the affairs of this kingdom; and they still remember with gratitude, that it was she

* He who had said fourscore years since, that at Peterburgh they would, at this time, follow our modes, our perukes, our coifs, and comic operas, would certainly have passed for a madman. We must patiently consent to be called fools, when we publish ideas that extend beyond the horizon of the vulgar. All things in Europe tend to a sudden revolution.

she who gave to the peasant his personal liberty, and the property of his effects. The king died at six last night: his son mounted the throne in peace the same evening, and received the homage of all the palatine nobles.

* * *

CONSTANTINOPLE, the

It was a great happiness for the world when the Turk, in the eighteenth century, was driven out of Europe. Every friend to humanity rejoiced at the fall of that baneful empire, where the monster Despotism was caressed by the infamous bashaws, who only prostrated themselves before him, that they might exceed his horrid oppressions. The sons, a long time exiled, re-entered the possessions of their fathers, not dejected, but triumphant, robust, in a state to improve them. The usurpers of the throne of the Constantines sunk into the bogs of their ancient marshes; and those barriers that Superstition, and its inseparable and dreadful colleague, Tyranny, had placed against reason and the arts, from the rivers Save and the Danube, to the borders of the ancient Tanais, were broke down by a people of the North, with the iron hand that supported them. Philosophy again appeared in her original sanctuary, and the country of Themistocles and Miltiades again embraced the statue of Liberty: It rose as bold and noble as in those fair days when it shone in all its splendor, and with a power extended over all its original domain. There was no more seen a Sardanapalus sleeping,
oppressed

oppressed by the weight of barbarities, caused by a vizier and a bow-string, while his vast dominions, despoiled and languishing, were plunged in the sleep of death.

The animating breath of liberty now gives them fresh vigour. It has a creative spirit that produces prodigies unknown to slavish nations. The dominions of the Grand Signior were at first possessed by his neighbours; but two centuries after they formed a republic, that commerce renders flourishing and formidable

They had given a grand masquerade, where formerly was the *seraglio*; the most delicious wines, and every other refreshment, was there provided, with a profusion that did not in the least interfere with the most refined delicacy. The following evening they represented the tragedy of Mahomet, in the theatre built on the ruins of the ancient mosque called *St. Sophia*.

* * *

*ROME, &c. . . . **

The emperor of Italy has received at the Capitol, the visit of the bishop of Rome, who very respectfully offered

* How execrable is the name of Rome to my ears! How fatal has been that city to the universe! From its first foundation, owing to a handful of ruffians, how faithful has it been

offered up his prayers to heaven for the preservation of that monarch's days, and the prosperity of his dominions.

been to its original institution. Where shall we find a more voracious, subtle, and inhuman ambition? It hath extended the chains of oppression over the whole known world. Neither strength, nor valour, nor the most heroic virtues, has been able to preserve mankind from slavery. What demon has presided over its conquests, and precipitated the flight of its eagles! O, fatal republic! What monstrous despotism has ever had such detestable effects! O Rome, how I hate thee! What a people are they who go about the earth destroying the liberties of others, and at last destroy their own! What a people were they, who, when surrounded by all the arts, could enjoy the entertainment of gladiators, fix a curious eye on the wretch whose blood gushed forth, and required the victim to assume an unconcern for death, to give the lie to nature in his last moments, by appearing delighted with the applause of myriads of barbarous hands! What a people were they, who, after having assumed an unjust dominion over the universe, could suffer, without complaining, so many emperors to rule them with a rod of iron, and who shewed a fervility as base as their tyranny had been arrogant. But all this was trifling. A superstition, the most absurd and most ridiculous, assumed in its turn, the throne of despotic power, and had for her ministers Ignorance and Barbarity. After Rome had devoured mankind in the name of its country, it devoured them in the name of God. Then blood was shed for the chimerical service of heaven, a cruelty of which the world had produced no instance. Rome was the infectious gulf from whence exhaled those fatal opinions that divided mankind, and armed them against each other for phantoms. Soon it engendered, under the name of pontiffs, who called themselves the vicars of God, the most odious monsters. When compared with those tygers that bore the keys and the triple crown, Caligula, Nero, and Domitian, were but vulgar

dominions*. The bishop returned on foot, with all the humility of a true servant of God. All those beautiful

vulgar villians. The people, as if struck by a petrifying rod, vegetated a thousand years under a despotic theocracy. The sacerdotal empire covered all, concealed all in its darkness. Human beings no longer existed but to obey the decrees of a deified mortal. He spoke, and his voice was the commanding thunder. Then were seen croisades, a tribunal of inquisitors, proscriptions, anathemas, excommunications: invisible thunders, that were hurled to the ends of the earth. Those Christians, with faith and rancour in their hearts, were not able to satisfy themselves with murders: a new world, a world entire, was necessary to glut their rage. They would compel mankind by force to adopt their chimeras. It was the image of the cross that was the signal for those horrible devastations: wherever it appeared, blood flowed in torrents: and even at this day the same religion authorizes the slavery of wretches, who search, in the entrails of the earth, that gold of which Rome is the most shameless idolater.

Thou city of seven hills! what swarms of calamities have issued from thine infernal womb! What art thou! Whence derivest thou thy power over this unhappy globe? Has the maleficent Arimanis, the origin of evil, fixed his seat within thy walls? Art thou the gate at which misfortunes enter? Do thy foundations touch the roof of hell? When will that fatal talisman be broken, which, though it has lost somewhat of its power, is still so baneful to mankind? O Rome, how I hate thee! May at least the memory of thy iniquities remain! may it constitute thy infamy, and never be effaced! and may every heart, burning with just indignation, be filled, like mine, with horror at thy name!

* The throne of despotic power is fixed on the altar, which only supports it to swallow it up.

beautiful antique monuments that were cast into the Tyber, where they have lain buried for so many years, have been lately taken up and placed in different parts of Rome. They have found means of recovering them without infecting the air with any dangerous exhalation.

The bishop of Rome is continually employed in forming a code of rational and affecting morality. He has published the Catechism of human reason. He particularly applies himself in furnishing a new degree of evidence to those truths that are of real importance to man. He keeps a register of all generous, charitable, and illustrious actions; he makes them public, and characterises every species of virtue. Judge of kings and of nations, by virtue of his ardent love for humanity, he reigns by that invisible empire which invests him with the spirit of wisdom, of justice, and truth. He softens, he conciliates the differences of mankind. His bulls, wrote in all languages, announce not obscure, useless dogmas, or sentences of eternal divisions, but expatiate on the attributes of the Divinity, of his universal presence, of the life to come, and the sublimity of virtue. The Chinese, the Japanese, the inhabitants of Surinam and Kamchatka, read them with edification.

* * *

NAPLES, the ...

Our academy of belles lettres has given the prize to a candidate named ——. The subject was, an exact determination of what cardinals were in the eighteenth

eighteenth century, the principles and manners of that extraordinary sort of men; what passed in the prison of the conclave, and the precise time when they became again what they were in the infancy of Christianity. The successful author has fully satisfied the inquiries of the academy. He has even given a description of the cap and red hat. This dissertation is not less entertaining than elaborate.

They have represented at a booth in the fair, the farce of St. Januarius, which was formerly treated in so serious a manner. All the world knows that his blood was supposed to liquify every year. They have parodied this ridiculous story in a manner highly comic.

The treasures of our Lady of Loretto*, that used to be employed in feeding and clothing the poor, have been lately applied to the constructing an aqueduct, as there are no longer any poor. The riches
of

* For fifteen centuries past we have seen scarce any other public buildings in all Europe than Gothic churches, with high pointed steeples. The pictures we there see offer very few subjects but what are hideous and disgusting. But what monasteries richly endowed! What opulent universities! What asylums open to idleness and a theological jargon. It was, however, at the time the people were in the greatest poverty, that the secret was found of erecting these sumptuous cathedrals and monasteries. How flourishing would those nations have been, if they had employed in aqueducts and canals, those immense sums that were squandered away in enriching priests and nuns?

of the ancient cathedral of Toledo, destroyed in the year 1867, ought to be applied to the same purpose. See on this subject the learned dissertations of—, in 1999.

* * *

MADRID, the . . .

Enacted, that no person shall take the name of Dominic, as it is that of the barbarian who formerly established the inquisition*. Enacted, that the name of Philip II. shall be erased from the list of the Spanish monarchs.

The spirit of industry is every day more manifest, by the useful discoveries they make in all the arts. The academy of sciences have just given a new system of electricity, founded on more than twenty thousand separate experiments.

* * *

LONDON, the . . .

This city is three times as large as it was in the eighteenth century. The whole strength of the nation
may

* Every mind in which fanaticism has not stifled all sentiments of humanity, must be distracted with indignation and pity on the thought of those barbarities, those studied tortures that religious fury has incited men to invent. The stories of Cannibals and Anthropophagi are less horrible. Torquemada, inquisitor of Spain, boasted of having destroyed, by fire and sword, more than fifty thousand heretics. We every where find bloody traces of that religious ferocity. Is that the divine law which calls itself the support of politics and morality!

may reside, without any ill consequence, in the capital, as commerce is the soul of it, and the commerce of a republican people does not draw after it those fatal evils that attend a monarchy. England constantly maintains its ancient system. It is good, because it enriches, not the monarch, but the people; from whence arises that equality which prevents excessive opulence and excessive misery.

The English are constantly the first people in Europe. They enjoy the ancient glory of having offered to their neighbours, an example of that form of government which becomes men jealous of their rights and their happiness.

They no longer regard the anniversary of the death of Charles I. They are more perfect in their politics. A new statue of Cromwell has been lately erected; the colours of the marble are so intimately blended, that it is hard to say whether it be black or white. The assemblies of the people will be hereafter held in the presence of this statue, as that great man was the real author of their happy and immutable constitution*.

The

* J. J. Rousseau attributes the strength, the splendor, and liberty of England, to the destruction of those wolves with which it was formerly infested. Happy nation! It has drove away wolves a thousand times more dangerous, and such as still desolate other countries.

* *Many objects look best at a distance; it would be happy for us if we could see our country from the same point of light with this foreigner.*

i

The Scotch and Irish have presented a petition to parliament, that the names of Scotland and Ireland may be abolished, and that they may make but one body, spirit, and name, with the English, as they are one by that patriotic spirit with which they are animated.

* * *

VIENNA, the

Austria, who has ever provided Europe with a race of amiable princesses, announces that she now has seven marriageable beauties, who will espouse those princes of the earth that have given the fairest proofs of tenderness for their people.

* * *

From the HAGUE, the

This laborious people, who have made a garden of a soil the most marshy and barren, who have brought all the productions scattered over the earth to a spot that scarcely produces a flint, are incessantly exercising their surprising industry, and showing the world, what fortitude, patience, and perseverance can perform. An extreme thirst for gold no longer prevails among them. This republic has become more powerful by discovering those snares that were secretly intended to destroy it. They found that it was more easy to set bounds to the enraged ocean, than to resist an insidious metal; and they now defend

H h 2

send themselves with as much resolution against luxury as against the assaults of the sea.

* * *

PARIS, the . . .

Twelve vessels, of six hundred tons each, are arrived at this capital, and have brought plenty of provisions. We now eat fish without paying ten times their original value. The new bed of the Seine, dug from Rouen to this city, requiring some reparations, they have assigned the sum of a million and a half of livres, to be taken from the public treasury. That sum will be sufficient, as they make no use of registers or undertakers.

A most devouring, insolent, puerile, capricious and enormous luxury, no longer reigns on the borders of the Seine; but one that promotes industry, that creates new commodities, and adds to our conveniences; an useful and necessary luxury, so easy to be distinguished, and which ought never to be confounded with that of pride and ostentation, which insults the station of the common people, and tends to render it wretched by its effects and example*

The

* When shall we cease to see that monstrous inequality of fortunes, that excessive opulence, which produces so much extreme indigence, and is the source of all our crimes! When shall we cease to see the poor labourer, unable to relieve himself by his industry, from a misery in which he is held by the very laws of his country! Another stretch-

They have repaired the statue of Voltaire, which the literati, the most distinguished by their talents and their probity, erected while he was yet living. His right foot is placed on the ignoble front of F***; but as the public contempt has much disfigured the face of that Zoilus, they would repair it in a manner that shall shew all senseless critics the fate that will attend them. As they have not preserved the portrait of that scribler, who wrote a periodical work for bread; they want to know the head of what base, envious and malignant animal they shall put in its stead?

The Parisians have now just notions of their natural, civil, and political rights. They no longer stupidly imagine that they have assigned to another the property of their persons and effects. They are still fond of bon mots, of songs and vaudevilles; but they have learned, at the same time, to give a solidity to those pleasantries.

* * *

I turned and returned these loose sheets; I still sought something curious. I looked for the article Versailles,

stretching forth a trembling hand, fearful at once of the looks and the repulse of his fellow-mortal! When shall we cease to see those monsters, that turn away their heads, and refuse him a morsel of bread! When will those very men cease to famish a city, by making the provisions as dear as in a town that is besieged! But the finances are exhausted, commerce in general sinks, the nation is harassed with miseries; all suffers, and the manners of people consequently suffer a horrid depravation. Alas! alas!

H h 3

Verfailles, but my eager fight could never find it. The master of the house perceived my embarrassment, and asked me what I sought. The most interesting article in the world, I replied; news from the place where the court commonly resides; in short, the article of Versailles; so particular, so various, and interesting in the French gazette*. He smiled and said; "I know not what is become of the French gazette, ours is that of truth, and is never guilty of the sin of omission. Our monarch constantly resides in the capital. He is surrounded by the regards of the people. His ear is constantly open to their cries. He does not hide himself in a sort of desert, surrounded by a herd of gilded slaves. He resides in the centre of his dominions, as the sun in the centre of the universe. That, moreover, is a bridle that holds him within the course of his duty. He has no other way to learn all that he ought to know, than by that universal voice which pierces directly to his throne. To check that voice would be to rebel against the laws; for the monarch is made for the people, and not the people for the monarch.

CHAP.

* How severe a scourge is printing, when it tells a whole nation, that, on such a day, such a man put on at court the habit of a slave! That another dishonoured himself with all the pomp imaginable! And that a third had at length obtained the reward of his infamous conduct! What a collection of insipidities! What a grovelling wretched style?

CHAP. XLIII.

THE FUNERAL ORATION OF A PEASANT.

CURIOUS to see what was become of that Versailles where I had formerly beheld on one side, the splendor of a king in the highest degree of ostentation; and on the other a race of clerks, insolent scribblers, extending their impertinent idleness to the highest degree possible. I dreamt that like Joshua, I stopped the course of the sun, as it was hastily declining; it stood still at my prayer, as at that of the Jewish general; and my intention was, I think, less criminal than his.

I was on the road in a carriage, that was not a *pot-de-chambre**. Passing by a village I saw a company of peasants, their eyes dejected and wet with tears, who were entering a temple. The sight struck me; I ordered the carriage to stop, and followed them in. I saw in the middle of the temple the corpse of an old man, in the habit of a peasant, whose white hairs hung down to the ground. The pastor of the village mounted a small eminence, and said:

" My fellow countrymen,

" The man you here see was for ninety years a benefactor to man kind. He was the son of a husband-
" man;

* This is the name given to the hackney coaches that go between Paris and the court. They are commonly filled with valets, that go to Versailles in search of plunder, and may therefore properly be said to carry the dregs of France.

“ man, and in infancy his feeble hands attempted
 “ to guide the plough. As soon as his legs could
 “ support him he followed his father in the furrows.
 “ When years had given him that strength for which
 “ he long wished, he said to his father, Cease from
 “ your labours: and from that time, each rising sun
 “ has seen him till the ground, sow, plant, and reap
 “ the harvest. He has cultivated more than two
 “ thousand acres of fresh land. He has planted the
 “ vine in all the country round about; and to him
 “ you owe those fruit trees that nourish your village,
 “ and afford you shelter from the sun. It was not
 “ avarice that made him unwearied in his labours;
 “ no, it was the love of industry for which he was
 “ wont to say, man was born; and the great and
 “ sacred belief that God regarded him when culti-
 “ vating his lands for the nourishment of his chil-
 “ dren.

“ He married, and had twenty-five children. He
 “ formed them all to labour and to virtue, and they
 “ have all maintained an unblemished character. He
 “ has taken care to marry them properly, and led
 “ them with a smiling aspect to the altar. All his
 “ grand-children have been brought up in his house;
 “ and you know what a pure, unalterable joy dwells
 “ upon their countenances. All these brethren love
 “ one another, because he loved them, and made
 “ them see what pleasure he found in loving them.

“ On days of rejoicing, he was the first to sound
 “ the rural instruments; and his looks, his voice,
 and

“ and gesture, you know, were the signals for univer-
 “ sal mirth. You cannot but remember his gaiety,
 “ the lively effect of a peaceful mind, and his speeches
 “ full of sense and wit; for he had the gift of exer-
 “ cising an ingenious raillery without giving offence.
 “ He cherished order, from an internal sense he had
 “ of virtue. Whom has he ever refused to serve?
 “ When did he shew himself unconcerned at public
 “ or private misfortunes? When was he indifferent
 “ in his country's cause? His heart was devoted to
 “ it; in his conversation he constantly wished for its
 “ prosperity.

“ When age had bent his body, and his legs trem-
 “ bled under him, you have seen him mount to the
 “ summit of a hill, and give lessons of experience to
 “ the young husbandmen. His memory was the
 “ faithful depository of observations made during the
 “ course of fourscore successive years, on the changes
 “ of the several seasons. Such a tree, planted by
 “ his hand, in such a year, recalled to his memory
 “ the favour or the wrath of heaven. He had by
 “ heart what other men forget, the fruitful harvests,
 “ the deaths and legacies to the poor. He seemed
 “ to be endowed with a prophetic spirit, and when
 “ he meditated by the light of the moon, he knew
 “ with what seeds to enrich his garden. The even-
 “ ing before his death he said, My children, I am
 “ drawing nigh to that Being, who is the Author
 “ of all good, whom I have always adored, and in
 “ whom I trust. To-morrow prune your pear-trees,
 “ and

“and at the setting of the sun, bury me at the head
“of my grounds.

“You are now, children, going to place him there,
“and ought to imitate his example. But, before
“you inter these white hairs, which have so long
“attracted respect, behold with reverence his hard-
“ened hands; behold the honourable marks of his
“long labours.”

The orator then held up one of his cold hands. It had acquired twice the usual size by continual labour, and seemed to be invulnerable to the point of the briar, or the edges of the flint. He then respectfully kissed the hand, and all the company followed his example.

His children bore him to the grave on three sheaves of corn, and buried him as he had desired, placing on his grave, his hedging-bill, his spade, and a plough-share.

Ah! I cried, if those men celebrated by Bossuet, Flechier, Mascaron, and Neuville, had the hundredth part of the virtue of this villager, I would pardon them their pompous and futile eloquence.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLIV.

VERSAILLES.

I ARRIVED at Versailles, and looked round for that superb palace, from whence issued the destiny of many nations. What was my surprise! I could perceive nothing but ruins, gaping walls, and mutilated statues; some porticos, half-demolished, afforded a confused idea of its ancient magnificence. As I walked over these ruins, I saw an old man sitting upon the capital of a column. Alas! I said to him, what is become of this vast palace?—“It is fallen.”—How?—“It was crushed by its own weight. A man in his impatient pride would have here forced nature. He hastily heaped buildings upon buildings; greedy of gratifying his capricious will, he harassed his subjects; all the wealth of the nation was here swallowed up; here flowed a stream of tears to compose those reservoirs of which there are now no traces. Behold all that remains of that colossus which a million of hands erected with so much painful labour. The foundations of this palace were laid in iniquity; it was an image of the wretched greatness of him that built it*.” The
“kings,

* We magnify those pompous spectacles given to the Roman people; and from them we would infer the grandeur of that empire; but it was wretched when it began to exhibit those fastuous shews, in which the fruits of their victories were dissipated with prodigality. Who built their circuses, their theatres, their baths? Who dug those artificial lakes, where a whole fleet was exercised as in open sea?

“kings, his successors, were obliged to fly from it, lest they should be crushed by its fall. O, may these ruins cry aloud to all sovereigns; that they who abuse a momentary power, only discover their weakness to future generations.”—At these words, he shed a flood of tears, and turned his eyes to heaven with a mournful, repenting look. Why do you weep? I said. All the world is happy, and these ruins by no means declare any public calamity. He raised his voice and said: “Oh, how wretched is my fate! Know that I am Lewis XIV. who built this rueful palace. The Divine Justice has again illumined the torch of my days, to make me contemplate more nearly my deplorable enterprize. How transient are the moments of pride; I must now and for ever weep. O, that I had but known*” I was going to ask him a question, when one of the adders, with which this place swarmed, darted from a broken column, stung me on the neck, and I waked.

sea? Those crowned monsters, whose tyrannic pride crushed one half of the people to divert the other. The enormous boasted pyramids of Egypt are nothing more than monuments of despotism. Republics may construct acqueducts, canals, highways, and public places; but every palace that is erected by an arbitrary monarch, forms the foundation of an approaching calamity.

* Placed in the middle of Europe, commanding the ocean, and by the long extent and winding of its coasts, over the seas of Flanders, Spain, and Germany, communicating with the Mediterranean, &c. what a kingdom is France! and what people seem to have more right to be happy!

THE END.