



Class II 16

Book V95 .7

THE
PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY,
OR A
PHILOSOPHICAL AND HISTORICAL
DISSERTATION,

ON
THE ORIGIN, MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND RELIGION OF THE DIFFERENT
NATIONS, AND PEOPLE, OF ANTIQUITY; WITH A CLEAR AND
CONCISE EXPOSITION, OF THE USAGES, AND OPINIONS
COMMON AMONGST THEM; AND, IN PARTICULAR,
OF THEIR RELIGIOUS RITES, CEREMONIES,
AND SUPERSTITIONS:

INTERSPERSED WITH
A GREAT VARIETY OF OTHER USEFUL AND HIGHLY INTERESTING
MATTER, WELL WORTHY THE PERUSAL OF ALL TRUE
LOVERS OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH.

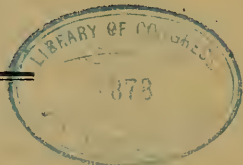
TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL FRENCH MANU-
SCRIPTS OF MONS^R. L'ABBÉ BAZIN.

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When an old error has taken deep root, policy uses it, as a bit, which the vulgar have put into their mouths, until some other superstition comes and supersedes it; of which, policy will make the same use, as it did of the first error.—Page 306.



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PREFACE

BY THE TRANSLATOR.

My object in translating the following most excellent work, has been to forward the cause of truth and simplicity; and to dispel the mists and delusions, which hang over the human mind, on a perusal of the records of antiquity. I have been careful to adhere, as strictly as possible, to the language and sentiments of the learned author. The task was one which required no ordinary exertions, but I have been constantly animated by the reflection, that, to free the minds of men from superstition and enthusiasm, to correct error, to inform ignorance, to detect fraud, to combat priestcraft, and to rally false zeal, and false devotion, was certainly the noblest work, the sublimest task, a man could be engaged in; and I cannot refrain from expressing a firm belief, that a careful perusal of, and an attentive research into, the facts and incidents related in the following pages, will produce those noble results in the minds of every dispassionate and reflecting individual, who is alone anxious to promote the cause,

the great and noble cause, of truth; and who believes nothing, contrary to the honour and glory of a great, merciful, and Almighty Creator! moreover, who sanctions nothing, that reason points out as inconsistent with the ever great and glorious attributes of a Deity, who has never ceased, nor ever will cease, to be the Universal Parent, Father, Protector, and Defender of his creatures.

The following enlightened and philosophical investigation into the origin, and real foundation, of some of the most formidable and astonishing narrations found in ancient history, and the easy and rational solution given to some of the most mysterious problems of Holy Writ, cannot fail of being highly gratifying and instructive to all. If I could for a moment conceive that, by a perusal of the following pages, the cause of virtue, and of true and genuine religion, would suffer in the estimation of a single individual, that moment I would consign the work to the flames! But shall I—can I—for an instant, cherish so profane, and truly irreligious an idea, that the worship of an Almighty God, of a truly great and glorious Being, whose goodness is manifested in every part of his creation, can be, in the least, weakened, or at all injured, by the dissipation of error and delusion? would it not be (blasphemous, I had almost said, but certainly) wicked in the extreme, to suppose that the cause of

truth, and the true and genuine worship of a great, just, and merciful God, could ever stand in need of such weak and insidious props to support it? Props, that must, with time, sink into oblivion and decay, and, fall into such universal contempt, that were it not, that the whole creation inspires the heart with true and genuine devotion, and lifts it up unto God, one might, indeed, fear, that the cause of the Creator might, for a time suffer, and religion fall to decay. But no! Reason tells us that such can never be the case, for that, notwithstanding the false colourings given by those arch deceivers, Error and Delusion, to almost every incident related by the historians of antiquity, and to which the historians of modern times have given but too easy a credence, yet, those staunch champions, Simplicity, and Truth, will prevail over every obstacle; and then, with such props as these, (and who will presume to say that a God of Truth, Mercy, and Goodness requires any other?) will the church be established on a basis which nothing can shake, or subvert;—then will universal charity and benevolence prevail throughout the earth;—then will appear uniformity of worship and opinion, the natural offspring of Simplicity and Truth. Such a state of things may well be termed, “the reign of love and peace,”—or, that “pure Christianity” described by Christ as equivalent to all “law and prophecy,” that is, we shall be-

hold men loving their God with all their hearts, with all their souls, and with all their minds, and their neighbours as themselves.

With respect to other matters referred to, and discoursed upon, in this work, they require no commentary from me: nor, do I think it at all necessary, to enter into any explanation respecting them. To them, therefore, I must respectfully beg to refer the reader: sincerely hoping, that he may derive, from the perusal, all the gratification and benefit he can possibly wish for, or desire. To conclude, that the general tendency of the work may be, to enlighten all my brethren and fellow-creatures, who may be wandering in the regions of "error and darkness," is the most ardent wish and fervent prayer of

THE TRANSLATOR.

*Pulborough Academy,
March 6th, 1829.*

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ERRATUM.

Page 176, line 6, *for form, read from.*

THE
PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS.

You would wish that philosophers had written Ancient History, because you are desirous of perusing it philosophically. You have searched for useful facts, and you have found nothing, you say, but useless errors. Let us try to understand each other, and see whether it be not possible for us to discover some valuable materials among the rubbish of antiquity.

We will begin by examining, if the earth which we inhabit, was, formerly, such as it is at present.

It is possible that our world may have suffered as many changes, as states and kingdoms have experienced revolutions.

It is an undoubted fact, that the sea formerly covered immense territories, upon which, we now see erected, large cities, and from which, the labourer now gathers, the rich and fruitful harvest. Those immense beds of shells which are found in Touraine, and in other places, can only have been deposited there by the flux of the sea, for a long continuance of ages. Touraine, Brittany, Normandy, and the adjacent countries, were a part of the ocean, for a much longer period than they have been a part of France and of Gaul. Can the moving sands of Northern Africa, and the coasts of Syria, bordering on Egypt, be any thing else than the sands left by the sea, on its gradual retirement from those countries? Herodotus (who does not always romance) tells us, without doubt, a great truth, when he relates, that, according to the account given by the priests of Egypt, the Delta was not always land. And may we not say as much of those sandy countries situated near the Baltick Sea? Do not the Cyclades, by the flats which surround them, by the vegetation which is easily perceptible beneath the waters which encircle them, bear sufficient evidence, that they once formed a part of the continent?

The straits of Sicily, that ancient gulf of Scylla and Charybdis, and which is still dangerous for small vessels, plainly indicate, that Sicily was formerly joined to Apulia, as the Ancients have asserted. Mount Vesuvius, and Mount Etna, have the

same basis, as the sea which separates them. Vesuvius only began to be a dangerous volcano, when Etna ceased to be so; and there is never an irruption of one, but when the other is quiet. A dreadful eruption destroyed that part of the mountain which joined Naples to Sicily.

It is a fact, well known to all Europe, that the sea swallowed up the principal part of Friesland. It is not forty years ago, that we, ourselves, saw the spires and steeples of eighteen villages near Mordike, which were then perceptible above the water, but which have since yielded to the violence of the waves. It is unquestionable, that the sea frequently recedes (and that in no long space of time) from its ancient bounds. Let us look, for instance, at Aiguemorti, Frejus, and Ravenna, which formerly, were ports, but are now, no longer so.—Damietta, also, which, in the time of the Crusades, was the place of landing, is now, not less than ten miles within land; and the sea is also, gradually, but perceptibly, retiring from Rosetta.

Nature every where presents sufficient evidence of its revolutions; and, if some of the stars have been lost in the immensity of space, — if the seventh of the Pleiades has for a long time disappeared, — and if other stars, in the Milky Way, have vanished from our sight, — ought we to be surprised, that our little globe, should, also, be subject to continual changes?

We will not, however, venture to affirm that the sea has formed, or even approached near to, all the mountains of the earth. The beds of shells found near those mountains, may be the deposits of the testaceous inhabitants of some lakes, and those lakes having disappeared, on the occurrence of earthquakes, have become united, or been thrown into, other lakes, inferior in size. Ammon's Horns, starry and lenticular stones, petrified fish-teeth, &c. appear to us to be nothing more than earthy fossils. It has always appeared to us impossible that these latter petrifications can be the tongues of sea-dogs, and we agree with him, who has said, that we may as well believe that thousands of women had come to deposit their *concas veneris* on a particular coast, as that thousands of sea-dogs had come there to deposit their tongues.

Let us beware how we blend doubt with certainty, and falsehood with truth. We have abundant proofs of the great changes and revolutions which the world has undergone, without seeking for others. The greatest of all these revolutions would, certainly, be the disappearance of the western continent,—if it be true, that that part of the world, had been previously known to exist. It is, however, very probable, that that supposed continent, was nothing more than the island of Madeira, discovered, perhaps, by the Phœnicians, (the most bold and adventurous navigators of an-

tiquity), subsequently forgotten, and again discovered in the beginning of the fifteenth century of the Christian era. In short, it appears evident, by the sloping inclination of all those parts of the earth, bordering on, and washed by the sea;—by those gulfs which have been formed by the irruptions of the sea;—and by those archipelagos, scattered here and there in the midst of the ocean, that the two hemispheres have lost more than two thousand leagues of land on one side, which have been regained by, and added to, the other.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE DIFFERENT RACES, OR KINDS, OF MEN.

NOTHING can be more interesting to us, than the sensible difference in the species of men, who people the four known quarters of the world.

None, but those who are blind, can have any doubt, that the Whites, the Negroes, the Albinos, the Hottentots, the Laplanders, the Chinese, and the Americans, are altogether a different race, or genus, of man.

No well-informed traveller, who has passed through Leyden, but has had the curiosity to inspect the part of the *reticulum mucosum*, of a negro dissected by the celebrated Ruish. The whole of the remainder of this membrane is in the cabinet of curiosities at St. Petersburg. It is black : and it is this which gives to the negroes, that inherent blackness, which they never lose, except in a state of severe illness, or disease ; which may so far injure, or weaken the texture of, this membrane, as to cause the escape of the fat, or mucus, enclosed therein ; the consequence of which, is, the appearance of white spots, or strokes, on various

parts of their bodies. Their large round eyes, their broad flat noses, their thick coarse lips, their differently formed ears, and the measure, even, of their capacity, place them at an immense distance from every other race, or species, of man: and, what demonstrates, most clearly, that this difference is not owing to their climate, is, that negroes and negresses transported to the coldest climates and countries of the earth, there produce beings, precisely of the same species; and that Mulattoes are only a spurious race, the offspring of a black man and a white woman, or of a white man and a black woman; similarly to asses, which, being specifically different from horses, engender mules by copulation with mares.

The Albinos, are, indeed, but few in number, and very scarce; they inhabit the middle of Africa. Their weakness does not permit them to wander far from the caverns in which they live; nevertheless, the negroes sometimes catch some of them; of whom, curiosity prompts us to purchase them. We have seen two or three ourselves, and so, we dare say, have thousands of other Europeans. To pretend that they are white negroes, whose skins have been made white by some leprous disorder, is, in fact, the same, as saying, that the blacks themselves, are whites, whom an attack of leprosy has made black. An Albinos bears no greater resemblance to a negro of the coast of Guinea, than he does to an Englishman, or a Spaniard. Their

whiteness is very different from ours ; — nothing of a flesh colour ; — no mixture of white and red ; — it is completely the colour of linen ; or, rather, of white wax. — Their hair, and their eye-brows, may be compared to the softest and most beautiful silk. — Their eyes do not, in any respect, resemble those of any other race of men, but they are very much like the eyes of a partridge. — They resemble the Laplanders, in point of shape ; but a great dissimilarity exists, between them and every other people, with respect to their heads ; their hair, eyes, and ears being altogether different : and they have nothing in them resembling man, but the stature of their bodies, and the faculty of speech and thought ; and the latter, in a degree, extremely remote from what we possess.

The apron which nature has given to the Caffres, whose soft loose skin descends from the navel to the middle of the thighs ; — the black breasts of the women of Samoieda ; — the beards which the men of our continent have, and the ever beardless chin of the Americans ; are such marked and extraordinary distinctions, that it is impossible for us to believe otherwise, than that they are so many different species of beings.

If it be asked, what is the origin of the Americans, and whence do they come ? Why not also inquire, whence the inhabitants of the southern countries, or Australia, have come ? To which we reply that the same Providence which placed men

in Norway, also fixed some in America and in the southern polar circle ; in like manner, as the same Providence has there planted trees and shrubs, and causes the grass to grow.

Many learned men have been of opinion that some of the various species of men, or of animals approaching to, or resembling men, have perished. The Albinos are now so few in number, so weak, and so ill-treated by the negroes, that it is to be feared, that this race of beings, will, in a short time, be extinct.

Satyrs are spoken of by almost all ancient authors. We do not conceive their existence to have been impossible. — In Calabria, even, at the present time, they stifle and suppress monsters, to which women have given birth. It is not improbable, that in warm countries, apes and monkeys may have subjugated, and had commerce with females. Herodotus, in his second book, says, that when travelling in Egypt, he saw a woman, having public commerce with a goat, in the province of Mendes ; and he appeals to all Egypt for the truth of his assertion. We observe also, that in the book of Leviticus, it is there forbidden to commit abomination, (or have commerce) with he and she goats. It is clear, therefore, that these horrid copulations were very common ; and, until we are better informed on the subject, we may reasonably presume that from such a detestable commerce, would spring a species of monsters.

But if they ever did exist, it is plain they were unable to change the course of human nature; and, similar to mules, which do not breed, they have not been able to pervert, or degenerate the other species.

With respect to the duration of human life, (if we except the list of the descendants of Adam, consecrated by the Jewish books) it is probable that the duration of life, in all the various races and species of men, has been pretty much the same as it is at present; in the same way that we see animals, trees, and all the productions of nature, continue to exist for the same length of time.

We ought, however, to observe, that as commerce did not always convey the productions and diseases of other nations to the human species, and as men were more robust and industrious when they lived in all the simplicity of a rural life, for which nature designed them, they probably enjoyed a more regular state of health, and lived longer, than those who lead a life of luxury, and occupy themselves in the unhealthy trades of great cities;—that is to say, that if in Constantinople, Paris and London, one man in twenty thousand attains the age of a hundred years, it is probable that twenty men in twenty thousand, formerly attained that age. Such was the case in several parts of America, where the human race lived in a state of pure nature.

The plague, and the small pox, which, in the

course of time, the caravans of Arabia communicated to the people of Asia and of Europe, were, for a long time, unknown. Thus, the human race in Asia, and in the beautiful climates of Europe, became much more numerous, than in other parts of the world. Casual diseases, and wounds, were not, to be sure, cured with such facility as at present; but the advantage of never being attacked with the small pox and the plague, was an ample compensation for all the dangers to which our nature was subject. So that, considering all things, we can readily believe, that in favourable climates, the human species formerly lived longer, and enjoyed a healthier and happier state of existence, than since the establishment of great empires. A

CHAPTER III.

OF THE ANTIQUITY OF NATIONS.

ALMOST all nations, but, in particular, the nations of Asia, reckon a series of ages which astonishes us. And the conformity which exists between them, ought to induce us to examine whether their representations, respecting this antiquity, be altogether destitute of truth, or probability.

Reflection will tell us, that an immense period of time must elapse, before a nation can become civilized, powerful and warlike, and learned. There were but two kingdoms in America, when discovered; and, even in those two, the people had not invented the art of writing.—All the rest of that vast continent was divided, and still is, into numerous petty states; to whom the arts are almost entirely unknown. The whole of these people live in huts; and, in the colder climates, they cover themselves with the skins of beasts; while, in the warm and temperate parts, they go almost naked. Some live by the chase; and others, feed themselves, principally, with roots, which they

make into a kind of bread. They have never sought any other manner of life, because “people do not desire that with which they are unacquainted.”—Their industry has never carried them beyond the supply of their immediate wants. The Samoieds, the Laplanders, the inhabitants of the north of Siberia, and those of Kamschatka, are still less advanced than the people of America. And the greater part of the Negroes, and all the Caffres, are plunged in the same state of barbarous ignorance.

A vast number of favourable circumstances, must, for ages, concur in forming a large society of men, united under one form of government, and the same laws.—Such a concurrence of circumstances is even necessary to form a language.—Men would not articulate, if they were not taught to pronounce words; they would only make a confused noise, and would make themselves understood by signs.—A child, for some time, speaks only from imitation; and he would pronounce with great difficulty, if his first years were suffered to pass without being taught to speak.

More time was perhaps necessary for those, who, (gifted with particular talents) first undertook to instruct others, in the rudiments of language, (rude and imperfect as they must have been) than was subsequently requisite for their association and establishment as a people. There are, even now,

whole nations, who have never been able to form a language, and to articulate distinctly. Such are the Troglodites, according to Pliny.—Such are also those who live in some parts of the Cape of Good Hope, and on the coast of Guineã. But what an immense distance there is, from this barbarous jargon, to the art of thinking, and expressing our thoughts!!

The brutal life which was, for a long time, led by mankind, must have tended greatly to diminish their number in all climates. Men could, with difficulty, supply their most pressing necessities: and, not understanding, they could not assist, each other. Wild beasts, which had more instinct than they, covered the earth; and, no doubt, destroyed numbers of the human species.

Men could only defend themselves against ferocious animals, by attacking them with large stones, and arming themselves with large branches of trees; and, it is not improbable, that, from this circumstance, arose that confused notion of antiquity, that the first heroes fought against lions and wild beasts with clubs.

The most populous countries, were, without doubt, those which were situate in warm climates; where man easily found nourishment and subsistence, in corn, nuts, dates, figs and ananas, not omitting rice, which grows there without cultivation. Hence, it is very probable, that India,

China, and the countries bordering on the Euphrates and Tigris, were very populous, when other regions were scarcely inhabited. In our northern climates, on the contrary, there was a much greater probability of your meeting a company of wolves, than a society of men,

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SOUL.

WHAT were the notions entertained by the first inhabitants of the earth respecting the soul? The same which all our peasants entertain of it, before they have heard the catechism; and, even after they have heard it, they have but a confused idea of its meaning; and seldom or never reflect upon it. Nature had too much regard for them, to make metaphysicians of them: and this nature, is always, and everywhere, the same. It caused the first societies of men to feel, that there was some being, superior to man, on their experiencing any sudden or awful calamity. It made them also feel that there is a principle in man which acts and thinks. They did not distinguish this principle from that of life, or existence.

By what degrees came man to imagine, that in our physical state of being, there was another state, termed metaphysical? Most assuredly, men who were entirely occupied in providing for their wants, were not philosophers.

In the course of time, there arose societies of

men, somewhat civilized and polished; among whom, a few might have had time for reflection. It happened, perhaps, that a man deeply affected with the loss of his father, his brother, or his wife, may have seen in a dream the person whose loss he deplored. Two or three dreams of this kind were found sufficient to render a whole village uneasy. Here is a dead man who appears to those who are alive; and, notwithstanding this, the dead man, half eaten by worms, continues always in the same place. It must therefore be something that was in him, which appears in the air. It must be his soul, his shadow, his m^ānes; an aërial representation of himself. Such is the natural way of reasoning of all ignorant persons, who begin to think, or reflect. This opinion was common to all people, who lived in those remote times of ignorance and barbarism. The idea of a being purely immaterial, never presented itself to the minds of those, who knew only that which was material. Blacksmiths, carpenters, masons, and tillers of the earth, were found necessary, and sprung up, no doubt, long before there appeared any individuals, who had, and would devote, sufficient time, to reflection and study. It cannot be questioned, that the manual arts had precedence, for ages, of metaphysicks.

We may here remark that in the middle ages of Greece, in the time of Homer, the soul was considered as nothing but an aërial representation

of the body. Ulysses saw in the infernal regions, shadows, mānes; he could not possibly see pure spirits.

We will examine, hereafter, how the Greeks adopted the opinions of the Egyptians, respecting the infernal regions, (or hell,) and the Apotheosis of the dead; and how they believed, (in common with other people,) a second state of existence, without suspecting the spirituality of the soul; on the contrary, they could not possibly conceive, how, a being without a body, could experience good and evil. | And we do not know, whether Plato be not the first, who ever spoke, or wrote, of a being purely spiritual. This is, perhaps, one of the greatest efforts of which the human mind is capable. | But we do not belong to those early times; and we consider, that, as yet, the world is scarcely emerged from Chaos, and in but a rude and indigested state.

CHAPTER V.

OF THE RELIGION OF THE FIRST MEN.

AFTER a great number of ages had elapsed, and some union, or society, among men, had been established, we may reasonably suppose there was some kind of religion ; some sort of rude worship. Men, being then solely occupied and interested in making the necessary provision for their subsistence, did not raise their thoughts to the Author of their being ; they were insensible to the evidence which all parts of the universe bear of Him, and of those innumerable causes and effects, which, to enlightened minds, so clearly demonstrate an Eternal Architect.

The knowledge of God, the Creator, the Rewarder and Punisher of his creatures, is the fruit of cultivated reason, or of Revelation.

All people therefore, were, for ages, what at the present day we find the inhabitants of several of the coasts of Southern Africa ; those, of numerous islands ; and one half of the Americans. These people have no idea of one God, the Creator of all things, present in all places, existing in

himself from all eternity. We ought not however to call them Atheists, in the ordinary sense of the word ; for they do not deny the Supreme Being, but they do not know him, nor have they the least idea of him. The Caffres adopt, as their protector, an insect ; and the Negroes, a serpent. Among the Americans, some worship the moon ; others a tree. Many of them have, absolutely, no form of worship.

The Peruvians, being somewhat civilized, worshipped the sun. Either Mango Capac made them believe that he was the son of that planet, or their dawning reason told them that they owed some gratitude to the planet which animates all nature.

To know how, and in what manner, these different forms of worship, (or rather superstitions,) were established, it appears to us necessary, to follow the march of the human mind, left and abandoned to itself. The half-savage inhabitants of some small town or village, behold the destruction of the fruits on which they subsist : an inundation destroys some of their cabins ; a few others are destroyed by lightning. Who is it that has done them this injury ? It cannot be one of their countrymen, for all have equally suffered. It must, then, be some secret power, which has inflicted this punishment upon them ; and they must endeavour to appease him. How are they to accomplish it ? By acting towards him, as we would towards those whom we are desirous to please, by

making him some little presents. There is a serpent in the neighbourhood; it is very likely he that did the mischief. They bring him an offering of some milk, which they place near the cavern which he inhabits; and from that time he becomes sacred; his aid is invoked, when they are at war with a neighbouring town; the inhabitants of which have, probably, made choice of some other protector.

Other colonies and plantations find themselves in a similar predicament. But, not having near them any object which excites either their dread or adoration, they generally give to the being whom they suspect to have injured them, the name of master, lord, chief, or ruler. This idea, being most in conformity with the dawning powers of reason, (which increases and gathers strength with time,) remains fixed, and impressed on every mind, when the people become more numerous. Thus, we see that many nations have had no other god, than the master, the lord. Among the Phœnicians the name given to him was Adonäi, and among the people of Syria, Baal, Milkom, and Adad. But all these names have one signification—the Lord—the Almighty.

It appears then, that in the course of time, each state, or people, had its tutelar divinity; without even knowing what was meant by a god; or, without, in the least, suspecting, that the neighbouring state had not, as well as itself, a real protec-

tor. For how could they suppose, when they had a lord, that others had not one also? It remained simply to be known, which, among so many masters, lords, gods, &c. would prevail, when the nations were at war with each other. Thence arose, no doubt, the opinion, so generally, and for such a length of time, entertained, that each people was really protected by the divinity which it had chosen. This idea had taken such deep root among men, that, for a very long time after, we see it adopted by the Jews themselves. Jephtha says to the Ammonites, "Do you not possess, by right, what your god, Chemosh gave you? Permit us then to take possession of the land which our God, Adonäi, has promised to us." There are two other passages, not less expressive, to be found in the books of Jeremiah and Isaiah, where it is asked "What right had the Lord Melkom to seize the land of Gad?" It is therefore evident that the Jews, although servants of the lord Adonäi, acknowledged, notwithstanding, the gods Melkom and Chemosh.

We may go still further. Nothing was more common than the adoption of strange gods. The Greeks acknowledged the gods of the Egyptians; perhaps not the ox Apis, and the dog Anubis, but certainly Ammon, and the twelve principal deities. The Romans worshipped all the gods of the Greeks. We are assured by Jeremiah, Amos, and St. Stephen, that in the wilderness for the space

of forty years, the Jews acknowledged only the lords, Moloch, Remphan, and Kium, and that they offered no sacrifice, nor presented any oblation to the lord, Adonäi, whom they afterwards worshipped. It is true, that the Pentateuch speaks only of the golden calf, which is not mentioned by any of the prophets; but this is not the place to clear up this great doubt: it suffices us to regard with equal reverence, Moses, Jeremiah, Amos, and St. Stephen, who appear to contradict each other, but whom they make to agree.

We shall here merely remark, that with the exception of those times of war and sanguinary fanaticism, which extinguished every feeling of humanity, and which rendered the manners, laws, and religion of one people, objects of horror and disgust to another, no nation had any objection to its neighbours having their own particular deities, or to their frequent imitation of the worship and ceremonies of strangers.

The Jews themselves, notwithstanding their detestation of the rest of mankind, (which increased with time) imitated the Arabians and Egyptians in the rite of circumcision: and, like the latter people, even attached themselves to particular meats, adopted their ceremonies of ablutions, processions, sacred dances, the goat Hazaël, and the red calf. They also frequently worshipped the Baal and Belphegor of their other neighbours; so apt is nature and custom to

prevail, almost always, over established law ; particularly, when that law is not universally known by the people. Thus, Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, did not scruple to marry two sisters, who were (what we call) idolaters, and the daughters of an idolatrous father.—Even Moses himself, married the daughter of an idolatrous priest of Midian.

These same Jews, who exclaimed so much against all other forms of worship, did not hesitate, in their sacred books, to denominate the idolatrous Nebuchadnezzar, “ The anointed of the Lord,” and the idolatrous Cyrus, also, was termed, “ The Lord’s anointed.” One of their prophets was sent to the idolatrous city of Nineveh. Elisha granted permission to the idolatrous Naaman to go and worship in the temple of Rimmon. But let us anticipate nothing ; we know sufficiently, that men, in their customs and laws, are directly at variance with each other. Let us not depart from the subject on which we treat, but go on and inquire in what manner the different religions have become established.

The most cultivated people of Asia, beyond the Euphrates, worshipped the stars. The Chaldeans, before the time of the first Zoroaster, paid their devotions to the sun ; as the Peruvians subsequently did, in another hemisphere. It would appear that this error was very common to man, from its having had so many disciples, both in

Asia and America. A small, and semi-barbarous nation, has but one protector. If it become more numerous, it increases the number of its gods. The Egyptians began by worshipping Isheth or Isis, and terminated by worshipping cats. The rustic Romans rendered their first homage to Mars: but, when they became masters of Europe, they worshipped the goddess of the act of marriage, and the god of privies. And nevertheless, Cicero, and all the philosophers, with the initiated, acknowledged one Supreme and Almighty God. They had all, by the aid of reason, arrived at that point, from which men in a savage state, had started, from pure instinct.

The apotheosis, or deification of the dead, could not have been contrived, or imagined, until a very long time after the first institutions of worship. It is not natural, at first, to make a god of a man, whom we have seen partaking of the same common nature with ourselves; subjected, like us, to disease, sorrow, the miseries incident to humanity, and experiencing the same humiliating wants and necessities; and moreover, whom we have seen die, and become food for worms. But this is what happened in almost every nation, after the lapse of many ages.

The man who had done some great actions, and rendered considerable service to the human race, could not in point of fact, be looked upon as a god, by those who had seen him tremble and

shake in a fever, and possess the infirmities common to his nature. But enthusiasts persuaded themselves, that, having great and eminent qualities, he must have received them from some god; and therefore, that he was the son of a god. In this way, the gods had children throughout the world; for, without taking into account the reveries and deliriums of all the people who preceded the Greeks, were not Bacchus, Perseus, Hercules, Castor, and Pollux, the sons of the gods? Romulus was also the son of a god. Alexander was declared to be the son of a god in Egypt; an individual named Odin, among the northern nations, was revered as the son of a god, while Mango Capac was declared by the Peruvians to be the son of the sun. Abulgazi, the historian of the Moguls, relates that Alanku, one of the grandmothers of Gengiscan, was pregnant with celestial rays. Gengiscan himself, passed for the son of a god; and when Pope Innocent sent brother Ascelin to Batoukan, the grandson of Gengis, this monk, not being able to obtain admittance without having recourse to one of the viziers, told him that he came from the vicar of God; the minister replied, "Is this vicar ignorant of the reverence, "homage, and tribute, due to the son of God, the "great Batoukan, his master?"

From the son of god, to a god, the distance is not great; among those who delight in the marvellous. Only two or three generations are requisite,

to enable the son to possess the dominions of his father; thus, in the course of time, temples were erected in honor of all those whom they supposed to be the offspring of the gods, by the supernatural commerce they were declared to have had with our wives and daughters.

We may write volumes on this subject; but all these volumes may be reduced to two words, the ignorance and imbecility in which the mass of mankind was, for a long time plunged; and probably, the most ignorant and imbecile of all, have been those, who have attempted to find a meaning to, and put a rational construction upon, those absurd fables; and to mix up reason with folly.

CHAPTER VI.

OF THE CUSTOMS AND OPINIONS COMMON TO
ALMOST ALL THE ANCIENT NATIONS.

NATURE being every where the same, it is rational and reasonable to suppose, that, in general, mankind have adopted the same truths, and the same errors, relative to those things which most forcibly assail the senses, and strike the imagination. For instance, they would naturally attribute the noise and effects of thunder to the power of some superior being, living in the clouds. Their neighbours, who lived near the sea, observing the high tides to overflow their borders at the time of full moon, would, with as much reason, believe that the moon was the cause of every thing which happened at the time of her different phases.

In their religious ceremonies, almost all people turned themselves towards the east, (not reflecting that there is neither east nor west) and rendered a kind of homage to the sun which they saw rising before their eyes.

Amongst animals, the serpent would appear to them as gifted with superior intelligence; because,

observing that he sometimes shed his skin, they believed he could always maintain himself in youth and vigour, he was therefore declared to be immortal. Thus, in Egypt and Greece, a serpent was the symbol of immortality. Those large serpents which were found near fountains and springs, prevented those who were timid from approaching them. This soon gave rise to the idea that they were the guardians of treasures. Thus, a serpent guarded the golden apples of Hesperia; another watched over the golden fleece; and in the mysteries of Bacchus, a serpent is represented as guarding a bunch of golden grapes.

The serpent had therefore the character of being the most subtle and skilful of all animals; and thence arose that ancient Indian fable, that “ God having created man, gave him a drug which insured to him a long and healthy life; that the man loaded his ass with this divine present, but the ass becoming thirsty on the road, the serpent directed him to a spring of water, and appropriated the drug to his own use, whilst the ass was drinking; wherefore, man lost that immortality by his negligence, which the serpent acquired by his address.” Hence, no doubt, the origin of the many stories we meet with, of serpents and asses.

These serpents were very injurious; but, as there was something divine in them, no one but a God could order them to be destroyed. Thus, the

great serpent Python was killed by Apollo: and the great serpent Opheonei made war against the gods, a long time before the Greeks had invented their Apollo. In one of the fragments of Pherecidus it is related, that this fable of the great serpent, the enemy of the gods, was one of the most ancient in Phœnicia.

We have already remarked, that dreams and visions were likely to introduce the same superstitions throughout the earth. An individual finds himself very uneasy, during the evening, respecting the health of his wife, or his son, and during his sleep he beholds them dying; and, in fact, they die a few days after; which result, produces a firm conviction in the mind of the individual, that the gods have revealed the melancholy truth to him in a dream. On the other hand, if his dream be not accomplished, it is a deception which the gods have practised on him. Thus, we see in Homer, that Jupiter sent a deceitful dream to Agamemnon, the Grecian chief.—All dreams, whether true or false, come from heaven. Oracles were established, in the same way, all over the world.

A woman comes to ask the Magi if her husband will die in the course of the year—one will answer her—“Yes;” the other—“No.”—It is certain that one of them must be right. If the husband live, the woman holds her peace; if he die, she proclaims every where that the magus

who foretold his death is a divine prophet. There quickly spring up in all countries, men who foretell the future, and reveal the most hidden things. These men are called Seers in Egypt, as Manethon recites, confirmed by Josephus, in his discourse against Apion. There were Seers also in Chaldea and Syria.

Every temple had its oracles. Those of Apollo obtained such great credit, that Rollin, in his *Ancient History*, quotes the oracles given by Apollo to Cræsus. The god predicts that the king will have a turtle dressed in a copper baking-dish, and assures him that his reign will terminate when a mule shall sit on the throne of the Persians. Rollin does not examine whether these predictions (worthy of Nostradamus) were made after the acts themselves. He expresses his confidence in the science and knowledge of the priests of Apollo, and believes that God permitted Apollo to speak truth.—It was probably for the purpose of confirming the Pagans in their religion.

There is yet one question, the most philosophical of all, and in which all the great and civilized nations, from India to Greece, have concurred :—It is, the origin of good and evil.

The first theologians of every nation must have asked themselves the same question, which we all ask from the age of fifteen years ;—Why is there any evil upon earth ?

It is taught in India that Adimo, the daughter

of Brama, brought forth just men through the navel on the right side, and unjust through that on the left; and that it is from this left side that all moral and physical evil came. The Egyptians had their Typhon, who was the enemy of Osiris. The Persians were of opinion that Ariman pierced the egg which Oromasus had laid, and introduced sin into it. The Pandora of the Greeks is well known: it is the most beautiful of all the allegories which have been transmitted to us by antiquity.

The allegory of Job was certainly written in Arabic, since the Hebrew and Greek translations have preserved several Arabic terms. This book, which is of very great antiquity, represents Satan, (who is the Ariman of the Persians, and the Typhon of the Egyptians,) as walking to and fro in the earth, and asking permission of the Lord to afflict Job. Satan appeared subordinate to God; but it follows that Satan is a very powerful being, capable of sending diseases upon the earth, and of destroying animals.

It was found, in fact, that so many nations, without knowing it, agreed in their belief of two principles, that the whole of the then known world, was, in some respects, what is termed Manichean.

All people concurred in the admission of expiations, for where was the man who had not greatly sinned against his fellow-creatures? And

where was the man whose reason did not instinctively condemn him for such conduct? Water cleanses the body and the clothes which we wear, and fire purifies metals: therefore, fire and water must of course tend to the purification of souls. Thus, there was no temple without its sacred fire and water.

Men plunged themselves into the Ganges, the Indus, and the Euphrates, at the time of new moon, and at the eclipses. This immersion was for the expiation of sins; and, if similar purifications did not take place in the Nile, it was because the crocodiles would have devoured the poor penitents. But the priests, who purified themselves for the people, immersed themselves in large tubs; in which they also bathed the criminals, who came to ask pardon of the gods for their offences.

The Greeks, in all their temples, had sacred baths, as well as sacred fires; esteemed, by all people, as the universal symbols of the purity of souls. In fine, superstition seems to have established itself among all nations, except among the literati and learned men of China.

CHAPTER VII.

OF SAVAGES.

By Savages, are we to understand rustics, living in cottages with their wives, and a few animals; continually exposed to the inclemency of the weather, acquainted only with the land from which they derive their subsistence, and the market where they sometimes go, to sell their wares and commodities, to enable them to purchase some coarse clothing for themselves; speaking a kind of jargon, unintelligible in towns and cities; having but few ideas, and consequently but little expression; subject, they know not why, to some chief, to whom they bring, every year, a half of what they obtain by the sweat of their brows; assembling themselves together, on particular days, in a kind of barn, to assist in the celebration of ceremonies, far beyond their comprehension; listening to a man differently clothed from them, and whom they do not understand; sometimes leaving their cottages at the sound of a drum, and engaging to risk their own lives, and to take away the

lives of their fellow-creatures, in a foreign country, and that, for one fourth part of what they could obtain by their labour, and remaining at home? There are savages of this description in every part of Europe. It must, above all, be allowed, that the people of Canada, and the Caffres, whom we are pleased to call savages, are infinitely superior to ours. The Hurons, Algonquins, the Illinois, Caffres, and Hottentots, possess among themselves the art of manufacturing every thing they require; and, in this art, our rusticks are deficient. The colonists of America and Africa are free, and our savages have not even the least idea of liberty.

The supposed savages of America, are sovereigns, who receive ambassadors from our colonies, which avarice and levity have transplanted close to their territories. They possess those feelings of honour of which, our savages of Europe, have never heard speak. They have a country, and they love and defend it; they make treaties, fight courageously, and often speak with an energy truly heroic. Plutarch, in his lives of great men, does not produce any thing more beautiful and heroic, than the answer which one of the Canadian chiefs returned to one of the nations of Europe, which had proposed to him the relinquishment of his patrimony, on certain terms and conditions. “ We were born on this land,—
 “ our fathers are buried here,—shall we say to the
 “ bones of our fathers, Arise, and come with us
 “ into a strange land ?”

These Canadians may be looked upon as Spartans, when compared with those rusticks who vegetate in our villages, and those Sibarites who enervate themselves in our towns and cities.

Or, do you mean, by savages, animals with two feet; in case of need, walking on their hands; lonely, wandering in the forests, copulating by chance, forgetting the females to whom they have united themselves, knowing neither their children, nor their fathers; living like brutes, without possessing either the instinct or the resources of brutes? Some writers have asserted that such was the real state of man, and that we have but miserably degenerated since we quitted it. It is impossible to believe, that the isolated and solitary life ascribed to our forefathers, is at all consistent with human nature. If we are not mistaken, we are placed first in rank of those animals who live in flocks and herds, as bees, ants, beavers, geese, fowls, sheep, &c. If we should chance to meet a wandering or strayed bee, ought we to infer that that bee is in a state of pure nature, and that those who are labouring in the hive have degenerated?

Does not every animal possess that irresistible instinct, to whose power he is continually subject? And what is this instinct, but the arrangement and contrivance of organs, whose action unfolds itself by time? This instinct does not develope itself at first, because the organs have not acquired their plenitude—

- “ Their power is certain, their principle divine,
 “ The child must grow before he can practise them ;
 “ He knows them not, subject to the hand that rears him.—
 “ The sparrow, at the first moment of his birth,
 “ Without plumage, in his nest, feels he the power of love ?
 “ The fox, when born, goes he in search of prey ?
 “ The short-lived insects which spin us silk,
 “ The buzzing swarms of those daughters of the sky
 “ Which compound honey, and wax do petrify,
 “ As soon as hatched, do they begin their work ?
 “ All things increase by time, and ripen with age.
 “ Each being has its destination, and at the time appointed,
 “ Begins and completes the task by Heaven assigned.”—

In fact, do we not see that every animal, as well as all other beings, invariably executes the laws which nature has bestowed upon its species ? The bird builds its nest, and the stars fulfil their course, by one invariable principle. How has it happened that man alone has changed ? If he had been destined to lead a solitary and wandering life, would it have been possible for him so far to subvert the laws of nature, as to live in society ? And on the contrary, if he were made to live in society, like the animals alluded to, could he, at the first, have so far perverted his destiny, as to live, for ages, in solitude ? Man is a perfectible being ; and it has been thence inferred, that he has degenerated. But, why not conclude that he has arrived at that point of perfection, of which nature has defined the limits ?

All men live in society ; can it thence be inferred that they led a different life in former times ?

May we not, with as much propriety, conclude, that if the bulls of the present day have horns, it is because they were not always provided with them?

Man, generally speaking, has always been what he now is: that does not imply that he has always had fine towns and cities, twenty-four pound caronades, comic operas, and convents of religious women; but he has always had the same instinct which inclines him to delight within himself in the consort of his choice, in his children, and grandchildren, and in all the works of his hands. This is a principle which never varies, from one end of the world to the other. The basis of society having always existed, there must therefore have always been some society:—whence, it may be inferred, that we were not made to live after the manner of bears and wild-beasts.

Human beings have been sometimes found wandering in the woods, and living after the manner of brutes; but sheep and geese have been found in a similar situation: that, however, does not negative the fact, that sheep and geese were destined to live in flocks.

There are Faquirs in India, who lead a solitary life, and load themselves with chains—Yes! and there can be no question that their motive for leading such a life, is to excite the compassion and admiration of travellers, so far as to induce them to bestow their charity upon them. They, from a principle of vain-glorious fanaticism, do the same

as our beggars on the highway, who lame and wound themselves, for the purpose of exciting compassion.

These excrements of human society, are only proofs, of how far the abuse of that society may be carried.

It is very probable, that, for thousands of years, man led an agrestic kind of life, such as we still see led by an infinite number of peasants. But man could never have led the life of badgers and hares.

By what laws, by what secret ties, by what instinct, could man have always lived in society, without the assistance of the arts, and without having yet formed a language? It is by his own proper nature; by the taste and feeling which leads him to unite himself to some woman; by the attachment which an Icelander, a Laplander, or a Hottentot, feels for his wife, when, beholding her in a state of pregnancy, he feels a hope of soon seeing, born of his blood, a being like himself; by the feeling of mutual necessity which exists between this man and woman; by the love with which nature inspires them for their offspring as soon as it is born; by the authority which nature gives them over it; by a constant feeling of love for it, and from the habit which the child necessarily acquires of obeying the father and mother; by the assistance which the parents receive from the child as soon as it reaches the age of five or

six years ; by other children which the parents beget ; — and finally, it is, because, in a more advanced age, they behold, with pleasure, their sons and daughters beget children also ; which have the same instinctive powers as their fathers and mothers.

All this, it must be confessed, is an assemblage, or society of beings, in a very coarse and rude state. But do you think that the colliers in the forests of Germany, the inhabitants of the North, and a hundred petty nations in Africa, live in a state very different from this ?

What language will these hordes of savages and barbarians speak ? They will no doubt be a very long time without speaking any. They will understand each other very well by exclamations and gestures. In this sense of the word, every nation has been, in some degree, savage : — that is to say, there were, for a long time, families or tribes, wandering in the forests, disputing their subsistence with other animals, and arming themselves against them with stones and large branches of trees ; living upon wild herbs and fruits of all sorts, and, eventually, upon the animals also.

There is, in man, a mechanical instinct ; which we see producing, every day, the greatest effects ; even on men of the most gross and rude nature. There are machines invented by the inhabitants of the Tyrolean mountains, and the Vosques ; which have struck the learned men of the day,

with surprise and wonder. The most ignorant clown is every where acquainted with the means of moving the greatest burdens by the assistance of the lever ; without having the least idea that the power making the equilibrium, is to the weight, as the distance of the point of support to this weight, is to the distance of this same point of support, to the power. If it had been necessary for this knowledge to precede the use of levers, how many centuries would have elapsed before a large stone could have been moved from its place !

Propose to a dozen boys to leap over a ditch ; they will all mechanically take their leap, by first retiring a little backwards, and then running forwards. They do not, assuredly, know that in such a case, their strength is the product of their weight multiplied by their velocity.

It is therefore proved that nature alone inspires us with useful ideas, which precede all our reflections. It is the same with morality. We all of us possess two feelings which form the basis of society ; — commiseration and justice. If a child beholds his companion wounded and hurt, he experiences the most heart-rending anguish, and evinces it by his cries and tears ; he will also, if it be in his power, relieve him from his state of suffering.

Ask an uneducated child who begins to think and speak, if the grain which a man has sown in his field belongs to him ? and if the robber who

has killed the proprietor thereof, has any legitimate right to this grain? you will see whether the child will not answer you, similarly to all the legislators and law-givers in the world, under the same circumstances.

God has given to us a principle of universal feeling, as he has given feathers to birds, and fur to bears; and this principle is of so invariable a nature, that it subsists, notwithstanding all the passions which resist it; and in spite of all the tyrants who would drown it in blood, and of those impostors who would bury it beneath the rubbish of superstition. It is this feeling, which, in the long run, enables the most ignorant people to form a tolerably correct opinion of the laws by which they are governed; because they can feel and discern whether these laws are in conformity with, or opposed to, those principles of commiseration and justice which are planted in their hearts.

But, before we can arrive at the point of forming a numerous society, a people, or a nation, a language is necessary; and this is the most difficult part. Without the gift of imitation, this could never have been accomplished. Men, at first, no doubt, expressed their wants by cries and gesticulations; subsequently those among them who were the most ingenious, and born with the most flexible organs, would begin to form some kind of articulation, which their children would imitate. These children would, no doubt, find their mo-

thers among the first to assist them in their articulations. The commencement, or origin of all language, must have been composed of monosyllables, as being the most easy to express and retain. In fact, we see that the most ancient nations who have preserved any thing of their original language, still make use of monosyllables to express those things which are most common and familiar to our senses. Almost all the Chinese language, even at this time, is grounded in monosyllables. Examine the ancient Tuscan, and all the dialects of the North, you will perceive that hardly any thing in common use, or of necessity, is expressed by more than one articulation. Every thing is monosyllabic—*zon*—the sun ;—*moun*—the moon ;—*zè*—the sea ;—*flus*—a river ;—*man* ;—*hof*—the head ;—*boun*—a tree ;—*drink* ; *march* ; *shlaf*—to sleep, &c. It is with this brevity that people express themselves in the forests of Gaul and Germany and throughout the North. The Greeks and Romans did not use words of more difficult composition, until a long time after they became of political consequence, as a people.

But, by what sagacity have we been able to define the variations of time ? In what way have we been enabled to express by different tenses and inflections,—“ I was willing—thou wast willing—
 “ ling—I would or should be willing, or, I
 “ should have been willing,” &c. things positive and things conditional ? . It can only have been

among the most civilized nations, that they have arrived in the course of time to the power of expressing by words compounded, those secret operations of the human mind. Thus, we find that among uncivilized and barbarous nations, there are only two or three tenses. The Hebrews expressed themselves only by the present and the future. And, in fine, notwithstanding all the efforts and ingenuity of man, there is yet no language which approaches perfection.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF AMERICA.

WILL any one, in the present day, ask, whence came the men which have peopled America? We may, with equal propriety, ask the same question with respect to the natives of Australia, or Southern Asia. These countries are much more distant from the port whence Christopher Columbus sailed, than the Caribbee Islands. Men and animals have been found in every country which is inhabitable. Who has placed them there? or rather, who can have placed them there, but the Great Creator of all things? Nor can it (or, at least, it ought not to) have been a subject of greater surprise, to find men in America, than flies.

It is not a little amusing to observe that the Jesuit Lafiteau, in his preface to the "History of American Savages," maintains that "none but atheists can say that God created the Americans!"

There are still extant, maps of the old world, in which America is delineated as "The Atlantic Isle." The Cape Verd Islands are marked as "the Gorgonas," and the Caribbee Islands as

“ the Hesperides.” However, all this can only be founded on the ancient discovery of the Canary Isles, and probably of the Island of Madeira, whether the Phœnicians and Carthaginians made voyages ; they are not far from Africa ; and perhaps they were not so distant from it in ancient times as at present.

Let us leave father Lafiteau in the enjoyment of his opinion, that the natives of the Caribbees are descended from the Carians ; both, in consequence of the conformity in their names, and because the domestic habits of the Caribbee women are similar to those of the women of Caria. We will allow him also to suppose that the Caribbees are born red, and the negresses black, purely on account of the habit which their forefathers had, of painting themselves of a black and red colour. “ It happened,” says he, “ that the negresses seeing “ their husbands painted black, had their imagi- “ nations so forcibly struck therewith, that their “ race retained the colour for ever after.” The same thing happened to the Caribbee women, who, by the same force of imagination, gave birth to children of a red colour. To strengthen his argument, Lafiteau quotes the sheep of Jacob, which gave birth to speckled lambs, in consequence of Jacob’s address, in placing before their eyes the branches of trees, with the bark partially stripped off ; these branches, appearing nearly of two colours, gave also two colours to the patriarch’s

lambs. But the Jesuit should remember that every thing which happened in the days of Jacob, does not happen in our time. To this, we may add, that if Laban's son-in-law had been asked, why his sheep, having the grass continually before their eyes, did not bring forth green lambs, he would have been rather puzzled to answer the question.

Finally, Lafiteau represents the Americans as being descended from the ancient Greeks, and these are his reasons:—The Greeks had many fables, some of the Americans have some also. The early Greeks were fond of the chase, and so are the Americans. The Greeks of old had their oracles, and the Americans have their sorcerers. Dancing was customary at the Grecian festivals, and so also among the Americans. We are free to confess, that these reasons do not, to us, appear very convincing.

We may here make a few remarks respecting the nations of the new world, which do not seem to have struck father Lafiteau. The people far distant from the Tropicks, have always been invincible; whereas, those that are situated within, or near the Tropicks, have been, almost all, subjected to monarchical governments. It was thus, for a long time, with the people of our continent. But we do not find that the people of Canada ever attempted the subjugation of Mexico, as the Tartars spread themselves over Asia and Europe.

It appears that the people of Canada were never sufficiently numerous to attempt the foundation of colonies in other parts.

Generally speaking, it is not possible that America could ever have been so populous as Europe and Asia; it is covered with immense bogs and marshes which render the air very unhealthy; the earth there produces a great number of vegetable poisons: arrows dipped in the juices of these poisonous herbs, inflict wounds which always prove mortal. In fact, nature does not seem to have endued the Americans with that industry which distinguishes the inhabitants of the old world. These causes united, must have tended greatly to diminish the population.

Among all the physical observations which may be made respecting this fourth part of the world, so long unknown, the most remarkable, perhaps, is, that only one people can be found that have any beards. These are the Esquimaux. They inhabit the northern parts, in about the 52nd degree of latitude, where the cold is more severe than the 66th degree of latitude in our continent. The neighbouring people have no beards. Here then we see two distinct races of men living close by each other.

Towards the Isthmus of Panama is the race of the Darians, a people somewhat similar to the Albinos; they shun the light, and live in caverns; they are a feeble race, and consequently not very numerous.

The American lion is cowardly and timorous ; but the sheep in that country are so large and strong that they are frequently employed in carrying burdens. The rivers in America are ten times as large as ours. In fine, the natural productions of the earth, are not those of our hemisphere. Thus, every thing is varied ; and the same Providence which has produced the elephant, the rhinoceros, and negroes, has also produced in another quarter of the world, elks, contours, hogs, whose navels are on their backs, and men of a species altogether different from ours.

CHAPTER IX.

OF THEOCRACY, OR CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

It appears that most of the ancient nations were governed by a kind of Theocracy. If we begin with India, we find that the Bramins, for a long time, possessed almost sovereign power; and, in Persia, the Magi possess the greatest authority. The history of "The Ears of Smerdis" may perhaps be a fable, but we may certainly deduce from it that one of the Magi sat on the throne of Cyrus. Many of the priests of Egypt, prescribed to the kings of that country how much they should eat and drink; took charge of their infancy; and sat in judgment upon them after their death. It was not uncommon for them to assume the sovereign power and authority.

If we come down to the time of the Greeks, their history, fabulous as it is, informs us, that the prophet Calcas had sufficient power with the army, to sacrifice the daughter of the king of kings.

Among those barbarous nations, existing at a time posterior to the Greeks, we find the Druids governing the Gauls, and other nations.

It hardly seems possible, that in the first ages, any other kind of government, than a Theocracy, could have existed: for, as soon as a nation has made choice of a tutelary deity, this deity must have some priests. These priests rule over the minds of the people: they rule solely in the name of their god; they therefore, on all occasions, make him speak; they proclaim his will by oracles; and every thing is declared to be done by the express command of God.

This is the origin of all those sacrifices of human victims, which have disgraced almost every part of the world. What father or mother could act so contrary to every principle and feeling of nature, as to bring their son or daughter to the priest, to be sacrificed upon an altar, if they had not been previously convinced, that the god of the country commanded the sacrifice to be made?

Theocracy was not only for a long time predominant, but the tyranny, and horrible excesses of her government, were carried to as great extremes, as human madness and folly would permit; and the more this government was declared to be divine, the more execrable it was.

Almost every people have sacrificed children to their gods; they must therefore have believed that they received this unnatural order from the mouth of the gods whom they worshipped.

Among those people who have been improperly called civilized, the Chinese alone, appear not to

have practised these horrible absurdities. Of all the ancient states known, China is the only one, which has not been subjected to the priesthood; for, the Japanese were subjected to the rule of the priests, six hundred years before our era. In almost every other part, Theocracy has been so firmly established, and so deeply rooted, that our first histories are those of the gods themselves, who became incarnate, to preside and rule over the destinies of men. According to the people of Thebes and Memphis, the gods reigned 1200 years in Egypt. Brama became incarnate for the purpose of reigning in India; and Samonocodom, at Siam. The god Adad governed Syria; the goddess Cybele was sovereign of Phrygia; Jupiter, of Crete; and Saturn, of Greece and Italy. The same spirit prevails in all those fables. Every where a confused idea seems to have been prevalent, that the gods, in former times, came upon earth, to govern men.

CHAPTER X.

OF THE CHALDEANS.

WE think we may venture to assert that the Chaldeans, the Indians, and the Chinese, were the first of the ancient nations reduced to order and government. We can fix the era of Chaldean science, by referring to the 1903 years of celestial, or astronomical, observations, sent from Babylon, by Callisthenes, to the preceptor of Alexander. These astronomical tables come up exactly to the year 2234 before the Christian era. It is true that this epoch nearly corresponds to the time in which the Vulgate places the Deluge. But we do not mean to enter into the depths of the different chronologies of the Vulgate, the Samaritans, and the Septuagint, which we equally respect. The universal deluge is a great miracle ; with which, our researches do not permit us to meddle. The arguments we shall make use of, shall be such as are consistent with reason and nature ; always submitting the feeble researches of our circumscribed mind, to the more enlightened ideas of a superior order of beings.

Ancient authors, quoted by George le Sincelle, relate that in the reign of one of the Chaldean kings, named Xixotrou, or Xixoutrou, there was a great and terrible inundation. The Tigris and the Euphrates appear to have overflowed their banks much more than usual. But, the Chaldeans could only know, through the medium of Revelation, that a similar scourge had fallen on the whole habitable globe.

It is clear that if the Chaldeans had existed only 1900 years before our era, that short space of time would not have sufficed for them to discover the true system of our universe : a degree of wisdom, not a little surprising, and to which the Chaldeans, had, at length, arrived. Aristarchus of Samos, informs us, that the Chaldean sages saw, clearly, how impossible it was for the earth to occupy the centre of the planetary world ; that they assigned to the sun his proper place in the universe ; and described the earth, and the other planets, as performing their revolutions around him, each in its own orbit.

The progress of the mind is so slow, — ocular illusions so powerful, and the subjection to received ideas so tyrannical and absolute, that it is impossible for a people who had existed only 1900 years, to reach that high state of philosophical perfection, which is directly opposed to ocular appearances, and which it requires the most profound researches of theory to establish. Thus, the Chal-

deans reckoned a period of four hundred and seventy thousand years!—Still, this knowledge of the true system of the world, was known, in Chaldea, to only a small number of philosophers. This is the fate of all great truths; and the Greeks, who came after, adopted only the common system, which is the system of children.

Four hundred and seventy thousand years, seems a great deal to us that are but of yesterday; but it may be considered as trifling for the whole universe. We know that it is impossible for us to adopt this calculation,—that Cicero ridicules it,—that it appears exorbitant, and that, above all, we ought to believe the Pentateuch, in preference to Sanchoniathon and Berosus; but, we again repeat, that it is impossible, (humanly speaking) for men to arrive at the knowledge of such astonishing facts, in the short period of 1900 years. ¶ The first art is that of providing for our subsistence; which was formerly much more difficult for men, than for brutes. ¶ The second, is that of forming a language; which, it must be allowed, requires a very considerable space of time. ¶ The third, that of erecting a few huts; and the fourth, to provide ourselves with some sort of clothing.—Subsequently, the forging of iron, and the manufacturing thereof, render necessary, so many fortuitous circumstances, such great industry, and such immense time, that we can hardly conceive how men have succeeded in accomplish-

ing it. But, what an immense distance is this state of man, from the sublime science of astronomy!

For a long time, the Chaldeans engraved their observations, as well as their laws, on brick; in hieroglyphics, which were speaking characters: a custom, in use among the Egyptians, after the lapse of many centuries. The art of transmitting the thoughts by alphabetical characters, could not have been a very early invention in that part of Asia.

It may be reasonably supposed that at about the time the Chaldeans built towns and cities, they began to make use of the alphabet. In what way did they previously manage? it may be asked. In the same way that they manage in our native villages and towns, and in thousands of other towns and villages in the world, where scarcely any one knows how to read or write, and yet they understand each other very well; and even the necessary arts are sometimes cultivated among them with genius.

Babylon was, probably, a very ancient little town, before it became a superb and immensely large city. But who built this city? Was it Semiramis? or, Belus? or, was it Nabonassar? We shall not pretend to determine: — but this we may say, — that there never was, in Asia, any woman named Semiramis, nor any man by the name of Belus. We may, with as great propriety, give to

any of the Greek cities, the names of Armagnac and Abbeville. The Greeks, who changed all barbarous terminations into Greek words, perverted, or misconstrued, all the Asiatick names. We beg also to observe, that the history of Semiramis, resembles, in all respects, the Eastern, or “ Oriental Tales.”

Nabonassar, or rather Nabon-Assor, is, probably, the prince who embellished and fortified Babylon; and, eventually, made it so superb a city.—This prince, is a real monarch; known, in Asia, by the era which bears his name. The commencement of this era, is incontestibly established as being 1747 years before the beginning of ours: it is therefore of modern date, when we consider the number of centuries necessary to the establishment of great and powerful dominions. It is evident even from the name of Babylon, that it existed a long time before the age of Nabonassar. It means the “ City of Father Bel.”—*Bab*, signifies *Father*, in the Chaldean language, as Herbelot himself acknowledges.—*Bel* is the name of the Lord. The people of the East never knew this city by any other name than *Babel*: the *City of the Lord*: the City of God: or, according to some, the Gate of God.

There was no more a Ninus who founded Ninvah, than there was a Belus who founded Babylon. No Asiatick prince ever bore a name ending in *us*.

It is possible that the circumference of Babylon may have been twenty-four of our middling

leagues; but that an individual named Ninus should have built on the Tigris, only forty leagues distant from Babylon, a city named Ninvah, (or as we call it Nineveh,) of an equally great extent, appears altogether incredible. Three powerful empires are spoken of, as subsisting at the same time; that of Babylon, that of Assyria or Nineveh, and that of Syria or Damascus. It is a very improbable thing. It is, in fact, the same as saying that there existed, in a part of Gaul, three powerful empires, whose capitals, Paris, Soissons, and Orleans, have each a circumference of twenty-four leagues. Besides, Nineveh was not built, or at least was of very little importance, at the time when the prophet Jonas, was, (as it is said,) deputed to go and exhort the inhabitants to repentance; and was swallowed up, on the way, by a fish, which kept him three days and three nights in its stomach.

The pretended empire of Assyria was not even in existence in the days of Jonas; for, it is said, that he prophesied under the petty Jewish king Joash; and Phul, or Pul, who in the Hebrew books is styled as the first king of Assyria, did not, (according to their account,) begin his reign until upwards of fifty-two years after the death of Joash. It is thus, that, by comparing dates, we find, every where, so much contradiction, and we therefore still remain in uncertainty.

It is said in the book of Jonas, that there were

in Nineveh, a hundred and twenty-thousand newly born infants ; this would require a population of upwards of five millions ; according to the calculation which we have made, (and which we believe to be tolerably correct,) founded on the number of living children born in the same year.— Now five millions of inhabitants in a city not yet built, is a circumstance rather strange and uncommon !

We confess that we cannot comprehend any thing of the two empires of Babylon and Assyria.— Several of our learned men have attempted to throw some light on this mysterious subject, and have affirmed that Chaldea and Syria were but one and the same empire, governed, sometimes, by two princes, the one resident at Babylon, and the other at Nineveh ; and this rational opinion may be adopted, until one still more rational, can be found.

That which contributes to throw an air of great probability on the antiquity of this nation, is the celebrated tower, built expressly to observe the motion of the stars : or, as we would say, for an observatory. Nearly the whole of our commentators, not being able to dispute the existence of this monument, have ventured to give it as their opinion, that it was a remnant of the Tower of Babel, which men wished to build up to Heaven.— We do not exactly understand what these commentators mean by Heaven ; is it the moon ? or, the planet

Venus? both these are somewhat distant from heaven!

Be that as it may, if Nabonassar erected this building for an observatory, we are, at least, compelled to acknowledge, that the Chaldeans had an observatory more than two thousand four hundred years before we had one. / We may subsequently reflect, how many centuries the slow and gradual progress of the human mind would require, to arrive at that degree of knowledge, which would lead men to erect such a monument as this, to the sciences.

It was in Chaldea, and not in Egypt, that the Zodiac was invented. There are three tolerably strong proofs of this fact. The first is, that the Chaldeans were an enlightened nation, before Egypt (continually inundated by the Nile,) could have been inhabited; the second is, that the signs of the Zodiac correspond to the climate of Mesopotamia, and not that of Egypt. The Egyptians could not have the sign Taurus, or the Bull, in the month of April, for it is not in that season they till the ground; nor, in the month which we call August, would they set forth a girl carrying ears of corn, because it is not at this period they carry their harvest: neither would they represent the month of February by a pitcher of water, for it rains very rarely in Egypt, and never in the months of January and February. The third reason is, that the ancient signs of the Chaldean Zodiac were

one of the articles of their religion. They were under the government of twelve secondary deities; twelve mediatory gods: each of which presided in his respective constellation; as we are informed in the second book of Diodorus Siculus. The religion of the ancient Chaldeans was Sabaism, that is to say, the worship of one Supreme God, and a veneration of the stars, and of those celestial spirits which presided over the stars. When they prayed, they turned themselves towards the north star: so closely was their worship in unison with astronomy.

Vitruvius, in his ninth book, treating of sundials, the heights of the sun, the length of shadows, and of the light reflected by the moon, always quotes the ancient Chaldees, and never the Egyptians.—This is a sufficiently strong proof that Chaldea, and not Egypt, was looked upon as the cradle of that science; so that nothing can be more true than the old Latin proverb;

“ Tradidit Egyptis Babylon, Ægyptus Achivis.”

CHAPTER XI.

OF THE BABYLONIANS,—SUBSEQUENTLY PER-
SIANS.

To the east of Babylon were situated the Persians. They carried their arms and their religion into Babylon, when Koresh, whom we call Cyrus, took that city, assisted by the Medes, whose country lay to the north of Persia. We are favoured with two remarkable fables respecting Cyrus; the one by Herodotus, and the other by Zenophon, who contradict each other in every thing, but whom a thousand writers have copied indiscriminately.

Herodotus supposes a king of Media, that is, a king of Hyrcania, whom he calls Astyages, from the Greek. This Hyrcanian, Astyages, orders his grandson, Cyrus, then in the cradle, to be drowned; because he saw in a dream, his daughter Mandane, the mother of Cyrus, “p—ss so copiously as to inundate all Asia.” The rest of the story runs pretty much in the same strain. It is the history of Garagantua written seriously.

Zenophon turns the life of Cyrus into a moral romance, something similar to the adventures of Telemachus. In order to give you a just idea of the manly and vigorous education and habits of his hero, he begins, by alledging that the Medes were a licentious people, immersed in luxury and effeminacy. The inhabitants of Hyrcania (whom the Tartars then called Scythians) had ravaged the country around them for thirty years: and were they Sibarites? Were they effeminate?

All that can be said, with certainty of Cyrus, is, that he was a great conqueror, and, consequently, a scourge of the earth. The foundation of his history is true; the episodes are fabulous; as is the case with most historical relations.

Rome existed in the time of Cyrus; she had a territory of four or five leagues, and took every opportunity of plundering her neighbours; but who can vouch for the truth of the combat of the Horatii, the affair of Lucretia, the heaven-descended bucklers, and the stone cut with a razor? There were a few Jewish slaves in Babylon and elsewhere; but, humanly speaking, it may be doubted, whether the angel Raphael came down from heaven to conduct the young Tobit, on foot, into Hyrcania; in order to compel the payment of a sum of money, and to drive out the devil Asmodeus with the smoke of a pike's liver.

We shall be cautious in our examination of the romances both of Herodotus and Zenophon, con-

cerning the life and death of Cyrus. We may here, however, just remark, that the Parsians, or Persians, pretended to have had among them, six thousand years previously, an ancient prophet named Zerdust, who taught them to be just and upright, and to reverence the sun, as the ancient Chaldeans had revered the stars, by observing them.

We shall not venture to affirm that these Persians, and these Chaldeans, were so very just, or to define particularly, the period when their second Zerdust made his appearance, who rectified the error of worshipping the sun, and taught them to worship God only; the creator of the sun, and of the stars. It is said that he either wrote, or commented upon, the book of Zend, which the Persians of the present day, (dispersed throughout Asia,) reverence as their Bible. This book is probably the oldest in the world; next to that of the "Five Kings of the Chinese:" it is written in the ancient sacred Chaldean tongue: and Mr. Hide, who has furnished us with a translation of Sadder, would also have procured for us a copy of the Zend, if he had had it in his power to pay the expence of such a research. We can refer, however, to the Sadder, where we meet with the Persian Catechism, as extracted from the Zend. We there observe, that these Persians, had, for a long time, believed in a god; a devil; a resurrection; a paradise, or heaven; and a hell. They

are, beyond all contradiction, the first who established these opinions: it is the most ancient system of any; and was not adopted by other nations, until a great many centuries afterwards; for, it is well known, that the Pharisees among the Jews, did not openly maintain the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and of rewards and punishments after death, until about the time of Herod.


This, perhaps, is the most important point in the Ancient History of the world. Here, we have a useful religion; founded on the immortality of the soul, and the knowledge of an Almighty Creator. Let us never cease to remark, through how many degrees the human mind must travel, and what astonishing advances it must make, previous to the conception of such a system! It should also be remarked that baptism, and immersion in water, for the purification of the soul, through the body, is one of the precepts of the Zend.* Thus then, it appears, that the whole of our rites and ceremonies, have travelled from among the Persians and Chaldeans, with whom they originated, to the farthest extremities of the West.

It is not our business, here to inquire, why, and wherefore, the Babylonians had secondary deities; while they acknowledged a Sovereign God of all. This system, or rather this chaos, was the same in

* Page 251.

all nations; China only, excepted. We find, almost every where, a great deal of folly, mixed with but little wisdom, in the laws, worship, and customs, of the people. { Instinct, more than reason, guides the human race. } We behold, in all parts, a Divinity worshipped, and yet dishonoured. The Persians revered statues, as soon as they had any celebrated sculptors; a strong evidence of this exists in the ruins of Persepolis: but yet in those very figures, we behold the symbols of immortality; the heads of beings flying to heaven with wings; the symbols of emigration, from a transient, to an immortal life.

We come now to notice those customs which are purely human. It is astonishing that Herodotus, in his first book, should say, before all Greece, that all the Babylonians were obliged, by the law, to prostitute themselves to strangers, at least once in their life-time, in the temple of Melita, or Venus. It is still more astonishing that in all those historical compositions for the instruction of youth, this story should be repeated. Truly, it must be a most extraordinary festival, and a singular sort of devotion, to see running into a church camel-merchants, and dealers in horses, oxen, and asses, and to see them descend from their beasts, in order to have commerce before the altar, with the chief women of the city. In good faith, let us ask, if it be possible, for such an infamous practice ever to have existed at all? much less, that it



should form a part, in the character of a civilized people ! Is it possible that the magistrates of one of the greatest cities in the world, could have established, or countenanced, such an abominable custom? What ! would husbands consent to prostitute their wives, and parents their daughters, to all the grooms, stable-boys, and riff-raff of Asia? That which is impossible to nature, cannot possibly be true. We could as readily believe what Dion Cassius tells us, that the grave senators of Rome proposed a decree, by which Cæsar, who was 57 years old, should be allowed the privilege of a free intercourse, with whatever women he chose to select for that honour.

Those, who in the present day, undertake to compile Ancient History, and who copy so many authors without examining any, ought to have seen that Herodotus was either relating fables, or that his text was corrupted, and that he only meant to speak of those courtesans who are to be met with in all large cities, and who even frequently waited for travellers on the road.

Neither is it possible to give credit to what Sextus Empiricus tells us ; that, among the Persians, the vile and unnatural crime of Sodomy, was ordained and encouraged. How ! Is it possible to believe that men would make a law, which, if carried into effect, would destroy the race of man ? On the contrary, this most detestable practice is expressly forbidden in the book of Zend, and also in an abridgment of the Sadder,

where it is said “ that there cannot be a greater sin.”

Again : Strabo asserts that the Persians married their mothers ! But what are his proofs ? Mere hearsay, — vague and idle rumours. This may have given rise to an epigram of Catullus, “ Nam magus ex matre, et nato nascatur oportet.” The Magi must be all the offspring of an incestuous intercourse between the mother and son. Such a law, is by no means credible ; nor is an epigram any proof of its existence. So then ! if no mothers had been found willing to consummate this unnatural commerce with their sons, the Persians would have had no priests ! The religion of the Magi, whose great object was to increase the population, would have induced them to allow, in preference, the intercourse of fathers with their daughters, than sons with their mothers, since an old man may beget children, and an aged woman has not that advantage.

To be brief, in our perusal of all History, let us be on our guard against all fabulous, and would-be marvellous, representations.

CHAPTER XII.

OF SYRIA.

ALL existing monuments testify, that the country which extends from Alexandretta, or Scanderoon, nearly to Bagdat, was always called Syria; that the alphabet of the people was always Syriack; and that in this country were situated the ancient cities of Zobah, Balbec, and Damascus, and subsequently those of Antioch, Seleucia, and Palmyra. Balk was so ancient that the Persians represented their Bram, or Abraham, as coming from Balk into their country. What then becomes of the powerful empire of Assyria, of which so much has been said? We can find no place for it, but in the country of romance.

The Gauls sometimes extended their dominions as far as the Rhine, and were sometimes more confined; but who ever thought of placing a vast empire between the Rhine and the Gauls? That the nations bordering on the Euphrates, may have been called Assyrians, when they extended them-

selves as far as Damascus; and that the people of Syria may have been called Assyrians, when they approached as far as the Euphrates, is not impossible: and this appears the only solution to the problem.—All the neighbouring people had become mixed; all had been involved in war, and had changed their boundaries. But when once capital cities are erected, these cities establish a marked and decided distinction between two nations. Thus, the Babylonians, whether conquerors or conquered, were always a different people from those of Syria. The ancient characters of the Syriack language, were never those of the ancient Chaldeans. Their form of worship,—their superstitions,—their laws (whether good or bad),—and their ridiculous and fantastic customs, were in no respect the same. The goddess of Syria, (so very ancient,) had no affinity whatever, with the worship of the Chaldeans. The Chaldean sages, or magi, as well as those of the Babylonians, and Persians, never made themselves eunuchs, after the manner of the priests of the goddess of Syria. A most singular thing!—that the Syrians should pay their devotions to the figure which we call Priapus, and that their priests should deprive themselves of their virility.

This renouncement of the powers of generation, is a proof of great antiquity, and a numerous population. It is not probable that any thing,

so contrary to nature, would have been either allowed, or practised, in a country but thinly populated.

The priests of the goddess Cybele, in Phrygia, also made themselves eunuchs, like those of Syria. — There can be but little doubt, that this practice was the result of an ancient custom among men, to sacrifice to the gods whatever was most dear to them; and not expose themselves to the commission of what was considered an impurity, before beings whom they believed to be pure. After such sacrifices as these, need we be astonished at that of the foreskin, which prevailed among many other people? and of the amputation of one testicle, as practised by some African nations? The stories of Atis and Combalus are but fables, like that of Jupiter, who made a eunuch of his father Saturn. Superstition engenders the most ridiculous customs; and the spirit of romance endeavours to account for them, by reasons, equally ridiculous and absurd.

We shall only add, respecting the ancient Syrians, that the city, subsequently known as the holy city, and to which the Greeks gave the name of Hierapolis, was called by the Syrians, Magog. The word Mag has great affinity to the ancient Magi; it seems common among all those, whom, in these climates, were consecrated to the service of the divinity. Almost every people had a holy city. We know that Thebes, in Egypt, was

called the city of God. Apamea, in Phrygia, was also named the city of God.

The Hebrews, a long time after, speak of the people of Gog and Magog; they may possibly mean, by these terms, the people of the Euphrates, and of the Orontes. They may also mean the Scythians, who ravaged Asia before the time of Cyrus, and laid waste Phœnicia. But it signifies very little, what import the Jews attached to the names Gog and Magog.

Finally, there can be no question, but that the Syrians are of much greater antiquity than the Egyptians: for this plain reason, — that those countries which are the most easily cultivated, are, necessarily, the first peopled; and, become prosperous and flourishing, the first.

CHAPTER XIII.

OF THE PHŒNICIANS; AND OF SANCHO-
NIATHON.

IT is probable that the Phœnicians were established as a people, as early as the other inhabitants of Syria. They may not be quite so ancient as the Chaldeans, because their country is not so fruitful. Sidon, Tyre, Joppa, Berith, and Ascalon, are by no means fertile soils. Maritime commerce has always been the last resource of a people. The earth must be cultivated, before ships can be built, for the purpose of obtaining supplies from beyond the seas. But those who are forced to have recourse to maritime commerce, soon possess that spirit of enterprise, and industry, (the daughter of necessity) which is not common to other nations. We hear of no maritime enterprise, either of the Chaldeans, or Indians. Even the Egyptians held the sea in great abhorrence. The sea was their Typhon: their evil spirit: and leads us to doubt the fact, of Sesostris having equipped four hundred vessels for the conquest of India, as asserted.—But, the enterprises of the

Phœnicians, are real, and undoubted. — Carthage and Cadiz were founded by them; England was discovered; and a trade opened to the Indies by the way of Ezion-gaber. These, with their manufacture of rich stuffs, and the art of dying in purple, are so many proofs of their skill and ability; and that ability laid the foundation of their greatness. The Phœnicians of antiquity seem to have been what the Venetians of the fifteenth century were; and, subsequently, what the Dutch became; that is, they were compelled to enrich themselves by enterprise and industry.

Commerce, necessarily required registers, of some sort, to serve as books of account; with such signs, or figures, as would at once be durable and easily understood. Therefore, the existing opinion, that the Phœnicians were the inventors of alphabetic writing, is, very probably, correct. It is possible that they did not invent such characters before the Chaldeans; but, their alphabet was certainly the most complete and useful; since, they described the vowels, which the Chaldeans did not express. Even the word “Alphabet,” composed of their two first characters, speaks decidedly in favour of the Phœnicians.

It does not appear that the Egyptians ever communicated their letters, or language, to any people. The Phœnicians, on the contrary, transmitted their language and alphabet to the Carthaginians, who subsequently altered them. Their

letters became those of the Greeks. What decisive proof of the antiquity of the Phœnicians!

Sanchoniathon was a Phœnician; who wrote (long before the Trojan war) the history of the first ages; of which, some fragments have been preserved to us by Eusebius; and translated by Philo of Biblos. We are informed by Sanchoniathon, that the Phœnicians had sacrificed to the winds and elements, from time immemorial; and this is, in fact, perfectly consistent with the notions and ideas of a maritime people. Sanchoniathon, like all the first or early writers, wished, in his history, to go back to the origin of all things; he had the same ambition as the authors of the Zend, and the Vedam; and as Manethon, in Egypt; and Hesiod, in Greece.

That which proves the very great antiquity of the book written by Sanchoniathon, is, that the first lines of it were read in the mysteries of Isis and Ceres; a degree of homage and respect, which the Egyptians, and the Greeks, would not have rendered to a foreign author; had they not considered him as one of the first, and best authenticated, sources, of human wisdom and learning.

Sanchoniathon wrote nothing on his own responsibility. He consulted all the ancient archives, and the priest Jerombal in particular. The name "Sanchoniathon," signifies, in the ancient Phœnician language, "A lover of Truth." Porphyry, Theodorus, and Eusebius, confess as much.—

Phœnicia was called the "Country of the Archives" — "Kirjath Sepher." When the Hebrews came to establish themselves in a part of this country, they did them that justice; as may be seen in the books of Joshua and Judges.

This Jerombal, whom Sanchoniathon consulted, was the priest of the Supreme God, whom the Phœnicians name Iaho, or Jehovah, a name reputed sacred by them; afterwards adopted by the Egyptians, and subsequently by the Jews. We perceive, by the fragments which remain to us, of this ancient record, that Tyre had existed for a long time previous; although it had not then become a great and powerful city. The word El, which signified God among the first Phœnicians, has some affinity to the Alla of the Arabs; and it is probable that from this monosyllable EL the Greeks composed their Elios. But, what is still more remarkable, we find among the ancient Phœnicians the word Eloa, Eloim, which the Hebrews made use of for a very long time after, when they established themselves in the land of Canaan.

It was from the Phœnicians that the Jews took all the names which they gave to God, — Eloa, Iaho, or Jehovah, Adonai, &c. It could not be otherwise, since the Jews in Canaan, did not, for a long time, speak any other language than the Phœnician.

The word Iaho, or Jehovah, a name so ineffable among the Jews, that they never ventured to ut-

ter it, was so common in the East, that Diodorus, in his second book, in speaking of those who pretended to have held converse with the gods, says that “Minos boasted of having had communication with the god Zeus;—Zamolxis, with the goddess Vesta; and the Jew Moses with the god Iaho,” &c.

That, which claims our particular attention, is, that Sanchoniathon, in reference to the ancient cosmology of his country, speaks, at first, of a chaos, enveloped and surrounded with darkness. “Chaut-Ereb” — the Erebus, or Night, of Hesiod, is taken from the Phœnician word, preserved by the Greeks. From Chaos, came forth “muth,” or “moth,” — which signifies matter. Now, who arranged and set in order this matter? It was “Colpi Iaho,” — the spirit of God, the wind of God, or rather, the mouth of God; the voice of God.—It was by the voice of God that men and animals were called into existence.

We can readily believe that this cosmogony had precedence of, and is the origin of almost all others. The people of the greatest antiquity, are always imitated, in their manners and customs, by those who succeed them. They learn their language; adopt, generally, their rites and ceremonies; and apply their antiquities and fables, to themselves. We are aware that great obscurity attaches to all the Chaldean, Syrian, Phœnician, Egyptian, and Greek origins. And what origin is not obscure?—

We can know nothing, certain, of the formation of the world; but, what the Creator of the world will himself deign to furnish us with. We penetrate, with safety, to a certain extent. We know that Babylon existed before Rome; and, that the cities of Syria were eminent and powerful, before Jerusalem was known, or heard of. We can say, with certainty, that there were kings of Egypt, long before the time of Jacob and Abraham. We know what people were last established; but to know, with precision, who were the first people, requires a revelation.

We are, at least, permitted to weigh probabilities, and to make use of our reason, in the examination of whatever does not interfere with our sacred tenets; which rise superior to all reason.

It is incontestably proved, that the Phœnicians were in possession of their country, a long time before the Hebrews made their appearance there. Could the Hebrews have learned the Phœnician language, whilst they were wandering in the desert, far from Phœnicia, in the midst of a few hordes of Arabians?

Could the Phœnician language have become the ordinary language of the Hebrews, and could they have written in that language, in the time of Joshua, amidst scenes of continual devastation and massacre? The Hebrews, after Joshua, were, for a considerable time, slaves, in the country which they had attempted to destroy by fire and

sword. Is it not therefore probable, that it was, at this time, that they acquired some knowledge of the language of their masters? as they afterwards did, of the Chaldean, when they were slaves at Babylon?

Is it not much more likely that a commercial, industrious, and skilful people, established from time immemorial, and who are allowed to be the inventors of letters, began to write, a long time before a wandering people, but recently established in its neighbourhood, possessing no science, without either industry or commerce, and subsisting entirely by plunder?

Will any one, seriously, pretend to question, the authenticity of the fragments of Sanchoniathon, handed down to us by Eusebius? Or, can any one be of opinion, with the learned Huet, that Sanchoniathon could have drawn any thing he recorded, from the books of Moses? Whilst all the monuments and records of antiquity, which remain to us, inform us, that Sanchoniathon lived somewhere about the time in which they place the life of Moses, we shall not pretend to decide the point. We shall leave the judicious and enlightened reader to decide between Huet, and Vandale who refutes him. — We are in search of truth, and not dispute.

CHAPTER XIV.

OF THE SCYTHIANS AND THE GOMERITES.

WE shall leave Gomer, from about the time of his leaving the ark to go and subjugate the Gauls, and to people their country, in a few years. Tubal also, we shall leave to go into Spain, and Magog, into the north of Germany, about the time that the sons of Cham, or Ham, begat a prodigious quantity of children, entirely black, towards the coasts of Guinea and Congo. These ridiculous, and we may say, disgusting absurdities, have been related in so many books, that we are spared the trouble of repeating them. Children begin to laugh at, and ridicule, such absurd ideas. But, by what weakness, or by what secret malignity, or affectation, exhibited in a misplaced eloquence, have so many historians highly extolled the Scythians, of whom, in fact they knew nothing?

How is it that Quintus Curtius, in speaking of the Scythians, who inhabited the country to the north of Sogdiana, beyond the Oxus, (but which he mistakes for the Tanais, which is fifty leagues from it;) how is it, we ask, that Quintus Curtius

puts into the mouths of these barbarians a philosophical harangue? Why does he represent them as reproaching Alexander with his thirst of conquest? Why does he make them say to Alexander, that he is the most famous robber in the world, when they, themselves, had been the greatest robbers in all Asia, long before the time of Alexander? In fine, why does Quintus Curtius describe the Scythians as the most just of men? The reason of it is, that as he places the Tanais near the Caspian sea, in his erroneous geography, he declaims as an orator, in favour of the supposed disinterestedness of the Scythians.

If Horace, in drawing a comparison between the manners of the Scythians, and those of the Romans, pronounces, in harmonious verse, the panegyric of these barbarians: if he says,

“Campestres melius Scithæ
 Quorum plaustra vagas rite trahunt domos
 Vivunt et rigidi Getæ:—”

it is, because Horace, as a poet, speaks somewhat satirically, and seems glad to elevate strangers, (or foreigners,) at the expence of his own country. Tacitus, in the same way, exhausts himself in praising the barbarous Germans, who plundered the Gauls, and who sacrificed men to their abominable gods. Tacitus, Quintus Curtius, and Horace, resemble those pedagogues, who, in order to excite emulation in their pupils, are, in their pre-

sence, profuse of their praises of the children of foreigners, however rude or clownish they may be.

The Scythians, are the same barbarians whom we have since called Tartars: and are the same people, who a long time before the age of Alexander, had frequently ravaged Asia; and been the depredators of a large portion of that continent. Sometimes, under the name of Monguls, or Huns, they have subjected China and the Indies; sometimes under the name of Turks, they have driven out the Arabs, who had conquered a part of Asia. It is from these extensive countries that the Huns set out on their expedition to Rome. These are the upright and disinterested men, whose equity is so lauded by the compilers of the present day, who imitate Quintus Curtius! It is thus, that we are overwhelmed with ancient histories, without either taste or judgment; they are read, with about the same degree of taste and spirit, in which they were written; and, our minds become stored with falsehood and error.

The Russians are the present inhabitants of ancient European Scythia. These people have furnished history with some very astonishing facts. There may have been more striking revolutions in the world, but, certainly, none more gratifying to the human mind; and which does it so much honor. We have heard of conquerors, and of conquests and devastations; but that a single in-

dividual should, in the space of twenty years, effect an entire change in the manners, laws, and genius, of the most extensive empire in the world, and that all the arts should throng, as it were, to the embellishment of the desert, is truly glorious. A woman, who could neither read nor write, perfected what Peter the Great began. Another woman, (Elizabeth) carried, still further, these noble beginnings: and, a succeeding empress, has gone much further than the other two: she has communicated her taste and genius to her subjects; and the revolutions of the palace, have not, for a moment, retarded the progress of the improvement of the empire. In short, in the course of half a century, we behold the court of Scythia, become more enlightened, than were ever those of Greece and Rome.

CHAPTER XV.

OF ARABIA.

THEY, who are curious in such monuments as are found in Egypt, would not seek for them in Arabia. It is said that Mecca was built about the time of Abraham ; but it is situated in such a sandy and barren soil, that it is not likely to have been built before those cities which are erected near large rivers, and in much more fruitful soils. More than one half of Arabia, is a vast desert of sand, or stone. But Arabia Felix, or Happy Arabia, deserves that appellation ; inasmuch as, that surrounded by dreary solitudes, and a stormy sea, she has been protected from the rapacity and violence of those robbers, called conquerors, until the time of Mahomet ; or she was, rather, the companion of his victories. This, is a much greater advantage to it, than its perfumes, its incense, or its spice, (which is of inferior quality) or, even of its coffee, which constitutes its present wealth.

Arabia Deserta, is that wretched country, which is now inhabited by a few Amalekites, Moabites, and Midianites. It is a frightful country ; and, in

the present day, does not contain more than nine or ten thousand Arabs, (a set of wandering thieves and robbers); nor will it afford subsistence for a greater number. It was in these same deserts, that two millions of Hebrews are said to have passed forty years. Correctly speaking, this is not Arabia; and the country is frequently called the “Deserts of Syria.”

Arabia Petræa, was so called, from the name of Petra, a small fortress; a name, certainly not given to it by the Arabs, but by the Greeks, about the time of Alexander. Arabia Petræa, is very small; and may be confounded, without doing it much injustice, with Arabia Deserta. Both the one and the other have always been inhabited by hordes of vagabonds.

Nearly the half of that vast part, which is called Arabia Felix, also consists in deserts; but, when we advance a few miles into the country, whether to the east of Mocha, or even to the east of Mecca, we find ourselves in one of the most pleasant and agreeable countries in the world. The air is perfumed, in a continual summer, by the odour of those aromattick plants, which nature there produces without cultivation. A thousand rivulets run down the mountains, which breathe perpetual coolness; and, with the delightful ever-green shades, serve to temper the heat of the sun.

It is deserving of remark, that in this country,

the word garden, or paradise, signified the favor of heaven.

The gardens of Saana near Aden or Eden, were much more famous among the Arabians, than even those of Alcinous, subsequently were, among the Greeks. And this Aden, or Eden, was called "The place of Delights." They still speak, in this country, of an ancient Shedad, whose gardens were not less celebrated. The shady groves constitute the greatest felicity of those hot climates.

The extensive country of Yemen, is so beautiful; and its ports in the Indian ocean, so well situated; that, it is even asserted, that Alexander wished to make a conquest of Yemen; in order to make it the seat of his empire, and the grand magazine of the commerce of the world. He would have preserved, and kept up, the old canal of the kings of Egypt, which unites the Nile with the Red sea: and, all the treasures of India, would have passed by the way of Aden, or Eden, to his city of Alexandria. Such an enterprise as this, bears no resemblance to those insipid and absurd narrations, with which the whole of ancient history is filled. It would have been certainly necessary for him to conquer all Arabia; and, if any one was ever able to do so, it was Alexander. It appears, however, that these people did not fear him; they did not even send delegates to him, when he had both Persia and Egypt in subjection.

The Arabs, defended by their deserts and their courage, have never been subjected to a foreign yoke. Trajan conquered but a small part of Arabia Petræa. Even at the present time, they brave the power of the Turk. This great people have always been as free as the Scythians; and much more civilized, than they.

We must guard against confounding the ancient Arabs, with those hordes who pretend to be the descendants of Ishmael. The Ishmaelites, or Agarines, or those who pretended to be the children of Cethura, were foreign tribes, who never set foot in Arabia Felix. Their clans wandered about Arabia Petræa, towards Midian; they afterwards became mixed with the true Arabians, in the time of Mahomet; when they embraced his religion.

But the people of Arabia, properly speaking, are the really indigenous natives; that is to say, those, who from time immemorial, have inhabited this beautiful country, without mixing with any other nation; and, without ever having been conquered, or conquerors. Their religion was the most beautifully simple, and natural, of any: it was the worship of one God, and a veneration for the stars, which seemed, under so beautiful and clear a sky, to declare the greatness of God, with more magnificence than any other part of nature. They considered the planets as mediators between God and man. This was their religion, until the

time of Mahomet. It was, probably, tinctured with many superstitions, as they were but men. But, separated from the rest of the world by seas and deserts, in possession of a most delightful country, and placed above all want, and all fear, they must, of necessity, have been less wicked, and less superstitious, than other nations.

They were never known to invade the dominions of their neighbours, like voracious wild beasts; nor to slaughter the weak and defenceless, under the pretext of a divine command; nor to pay their court to the powerful, by flattering them with false oracles. Their superstitions were neither absurd nor barbarous.

These people are not at all mentioned in those universal, or general histories, fabricated in our western world. And, for a very good reason. They have no kind of affinity with the little Jewish nation, which has become the object, and the basis, of our pretended universal histories; in which, a certain class of authors, copying the one from the other, totally overlook three quarters of the world.

CHAPTER XVI.

OF BRAM, ABRAM, AND ABRAHAM.

IT appears that the name of Bram, Brama, Abram, or Ibrahim, is one of the most common, among the ancient people of Asia. The Indians, whom we reckon among the first of the nations, make of their Brama, a son of God, who taught the Bramins their form of worshipping him. This name was had in veneration by other nations successively. The Arabs, the Chaldeans, and the Persians, appropriated it to themselves; and the Jews considered him as one of their patriarchs. The Arabs, who trafficked with the Indians, were probably the first, who had some confused ideas of Brama, whom they called Abrama; and from whom, they afterwards boasted to be descended. The Chaldeans adopted him as a legislator. The Persians called their ancient religion "Millat Ibrahim," and the Medes called theirs "Kish Ibrahim." They maintained that this Ibrahim, or Abraham, was a native of Bactriana, and that he had lived near the town of Balk. They invested him with the title of "Prophet of the religion of the ancient Zoroaster." But he un-

questionably belongs to the Jews only, since they acknowledge him as their father, in their sacred books.

Some learned men have declared the name to be Indian ; because the Indian priests called themselves Bramins, or Brachmans, and that several of their sacred institutions have an immediate reference to this name : whereas, among the natives of western Asia, we find no establishment which derives its name from Abram, or Abraham. No society whatever, is called the Abrahamic ; nor any rite, or ceremony, having any reference whatever to it. But, since the Jewish books assert that Abraham was of the stock of the Hebrews, we are bound to believe them, without hesitation or difficulty.

The Alcoran cites, respecting Abraham, the ancient Arabian histories, but they say very little of him. They, however, allege, that this Abraham was the founder of Mecca.

The Jews affirm that Abraham came from Chaldea ; and not from India, or Bactriana. But, we should recollect, that they were neighbours of the Chaldees, and that India, and Bactriana, were unknown to them. Abraham was a stranger to all these people ; and Chaldea, being a country long celebrated for the arts and sciences, it was, humanly speaking, an honour, for a petty nation shut up in Palestine, to reckon, among its ancestors, an ancient reputed Chaldean sage.

If we are allowed to examine the historical part of the Jewish books, by the same rules which would guide us in our examination of other histories, we shall be of opinion, with every other commentator, that the relation of the adventures of Abraham, as we find it in the Pentateuch, would be subject to some doubt, if found in any other history.

The book of Genesis tells us, that Abraham departed from Haran, after the death of his father, at the age of seventy-five years. But, in the same book of Genesis, we are told that Terah, his father, begat him, when seventy years old; and lived to the age of 205 years. So that Abraham must have quitted Chaldea at the age of 135 years; and, it certainly seems strange, that, at that age, he should abandon the fertile country of Mesopotamia, to travel a distance of three hundred miles, into the barren and stony country of Sichem; which was not a place of any trade, or commerce. From Sichem, they represent him as going to Memphis, to buy corn; a distance, of about six hundred miles; and, shortly after his arrival, the king of the country becomes enamoured of his wife, who was seventy-five years old.

We shall not meddle with any thing divine in this history; but, adhere strictly, to the researches of antiquity. It is said, that Abraham received great presents from the king of Egypt. This country then, must, at this time, have been a pow-

erful state : monarchy was established, and the arts cultivated ; the large rivers had been subdued, and canals cut in all parts, to receive the overflowing waters ; without which, the country could not have been habitable.

Now, we appeal to every sensible and rational man, whether ages are not necessary to the establishment of such an empire as this, in a country, rendered, for a long time, waste and inaccessible, by the very waters which fertilized it ? According to the book of Genesis, Abraham arrived in Egypt two thousand years before our vulgar era. We can, therefore, well excuse Manethon, Herodotus, Diodorus, and Eratosthenes, and many other authors, for the very great antiquity which they ascribe to the kingdom of Egypt. And yet, it is of modern date, when compared with the antiquity of the Chaldeans, and Syrians.

Abraham is represented, on going out of Egypt, as a wandering shepherd, straying somewhere between Mount Carmel and the Lake Asphaltide ; and this, is one of the most barren spots, in Arabia Petraea. He there pitches his tents, with three hundred and eighteen servants ; and his nephew, Lot, was settled in the city, or town, of Sodom. A king of Babylon, a king of Pontus, a king of Persia, and a king of many other nations, form an alliance, and make war against Sodom, and four other neighbouring towns. They take these towns, and Sodom, also. Lot becomes their prisoner ;

We cannot well comprehend, how five such great and powerful kings, could find it necessary to confederate, for the purpose of attacking a horde of Arabs, in a part of the world so wild and uncultivated ; nor; how Abraham was enabled to defeat such great and powerful monarchs, with only three hundred country servants, or followers ; nor, how he could possibly pursue them beyond Damascus. Some translators put Dan for Damascus, but Dan did not exist even in the time of Moses, much less in the time of Abraham. It is more than three hundred miles from the extremity of the Lake Asphaltide, where Sodom was situated, to Damascus. All this is far beyond our conceptions. Every thing is miraculous in the history of the Hebrews ; but, we have already said, and now repeat, that we believe these, and all other Hebrew prodigies, without examination.

CHAPTER XVII.

OF INDIA.

WE think we may safely venture to give it as our opinion, that the Indians, about the Ganges, were among the first of the nations. It is certain that the soil, yielding in the greatest abundance, food for the animal race, is very soon covered with the species to which it affords nourishment. Now, there is no country in the world, where the human species can more easily acquire the most wholesome and agreeable food, and in the greatest abundance, than towards the Ganges. Rice grows there without cultivation; ananas, coconuts, dates, and figs, on all sides, present to our acceptance the most delicious food: whilst, the orange and citron tree, afford the most refreshing drinks, with some nourishment. The sugar cane grows indigenous. Palm-trees, and fig-trees with large broad leaves, afford the most pleasant and delightful shades. It is not necessary, in this country, to slaughter the flocks, to provide clothing as a defence against the rigours of the season. Even in the present day, children are brought up

in a state of nature, until they reach the age of puberty. The people of the country were never obliged to risk their lives for their support, by hunting and attacking animals, and subsisting on their lacerated members, as has been the case in almost every other part.

In this delightful climate, men assembled, as it were, spontaneously, and formed themselves into societies. There were never any disputed claims to a paltry, barren, spot of land, for the purpose of rearing their lean flocks; nor did they ever make war upon each other for a spring, or well: as was the case with the barbarians of Arabia Petraea.

We do not intend to recapitulate, the ancient monuments, of which, the Bramins make so much boast. It will suffice to observe, that the greatest curiosities and rarities of antiquity, which the Chinese emperor, Cam-hi, had in his palace, were all Indian. He shewed our mathematical missionaries, some ancient Indian coins, stamped in the corner; and of a date, greatly anterior, to the copper coins of the Chinese emperors. It is highly probable, that the Persians acquired the art of coining money, from the Indians.

The Greeks, previous to Pythagoras, travelled into India for information. The signs of the seven planets, &c. are still, in almost all the world, the same as the Indians invented. The Arabs were obliged to adopt their arithmetical characters;

and, it is incontestable, that the game [chess] which does the greatest honour to human invention, is of Indian origin. The elephants, for which we have substituted castles, are a proof of it.

In fine, the people of the greatest antiquity, — the Persians, the Phœnicians, the Arabians, and the Egyptians, were accustomed, from time immemorial, to travel into India; and to traffic for, and bring thence, those spices which nature has bestowed on these countries alone. But, the Indians, were never necessitated to resort to any of those countries, for produce of any kind.

We are told of a certain Bacchus, who, it is said, set out from Egypt, or from some country of western Asia, to conquer India. This Bacchus then, who ever he may have been, knew, that at the extremity of our continent, there was a country far preferable to his own. Necessity leads to robbery and plunder. They only invaded India because she was rich; and, assuredly, a rich people were united in society, and civilized and enlightened, long before a people, who live by robbery and plunder.

That which strikes me the most forcibly, in India, is, the ancient opinion of the transmigration of souls; which, in the course of time, extended to China and Europe. It was not that the Indians had any just, or regularly defined, ideas of the soul; but, they imagined that this principle, whether ærial or igneous, successively animated other

bodies. Let us observe, attentively, the effect, which this system of philosophy produced, on the manners of the people. The perverse and wicked had a great dread of being condemned by Visnou, and Brama, to become the most vile and pitiful of animals. We shall soon see, that the superior people had an idea of another life; although they possessed different notions. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul, seems to have been established among the whole of the ancient empires of the world, with the exception of the Chinese. Their first legislators promulgated only moral laws; they thought it sufficient to exhort men to virtue; and, to enforce it, by a strict and severe policy.

In embracing the doctrine of Metempsychosis, the Indians were still further restrained, by the fear of killing their fathers or mothers, in killing men, or animals; and this inspired them with a great horror of the crime of murder, and violence, of any kind; which, among them, became a kind of feeling of second nature. Thus, the Indians, whose families are not allied to the Arabians, or Tartars, are, at the present day, the most meek and gentle of all people. Their religion, and the temperature of their climate, render these people, in every respect, similar to those harmless animals which we lock up in our sheep-cotes and pigeon-houses, to slaughter at our convenience. All those barbarous nations which invaded this country, from

the mountains of Caucasus, Taurus, and Immaus, for the purpose of subjugating the inhabitants on the borders of the Indus, the Hidaspes and the Ganges, enslaved them, solely by shewing themselves.

The same thing would happen to those primitive Christians, whom we call Quakers, and who are as peaceable and harmless as the Indians. They would be destroyed by other nations, if they were not united with, and protected by, their warlike brethren. The Christian religion, which these primitives alone follow to the letter, is as great an enemy to the shedding of blood, as the Pythagorean. But the people, calling themselves Christians, have never followed their religion; whereas, the ancient Indian castes, have always practised theirs. The Pythagorean, is the only religion in the world, possessed of influence sufficient to engender, from a feeling of horror of murder and manslaughter, filial piety and religious sentiments. The transmigration of souls is a system, in itself, so simple, and even so probable, in the eyes of an unlettered and ignorant people; and, it is so easy to believe, that what animates one individual, may, subsequently, animate another; that all those, who adopted this religion, fancied they saw the souls of their parents, animating those by whom they were surrounded. They all looked upon each other, as brothers, fathers, mothers, and children, of the same family. Such an idea, naturally in-

spired a feeling of universal charity. They shuddered, at the thoughts of wounding a being, who belonged to the common family. In a word, the ancient religions of India, and of the literati of China, are the only ones in which men have not acted as barbarians. How did it happen, that the same individuals, who considered it a crime to slaughter an animal, subsequently permitted women to burn themselves, on the bodies of their husbands; in the vain hope of seeing them revive, in bodies, much more beautiful and happy? To this, we reply, that fanaticism and superstition are the common ingredients of human nature.

We ought, in particular, to consider, that their abstinence from animal food, results from the nature of the climate. From the extreme heat and moisture, meat soon becomes corrupt in this country; and, consequently, is a very indifferent article of food. Nature also prohibits the use of strong liquors in India; which there requires cool and refreshing drinks. It is a fact, that Metempsychosis was known to, and practised by, several of our northern nations. The Celtæ believed, that they should be born again, with other bodies; but, if, to this doctrine, the Druids had added a prohibition to eat flesh, they would not have been obeyed.

We know but very little of the ancient rites of the Bramins, as practised at the present time. They suffer very little to escape them, of the an-

cient books of the Hanscrit, (or Shanscrit) which they still preserve in that most ancient and sacred language. Their Vedams were as long unknown to us, as the Zend of the Persians, and the Five Kings of the Chinese. It is not more than a hundred and twenty years ago, that the Europeans obtained their first information of the Five Kings: and the Zend has only been seen by the celebrated Doctor Hide, who had not the means of purchasing it, nor wherewith to pay the interpreter; and the merchant Chardin, who would not pay the price he was asked for it. We had only that extract from the Zend, the Sadder, of which we have spoken so much at length.

A more fortunate chance furnished the library of Paris, with an ancient book of the Bramins; the Ezourvedam, written before the expedition of Alexander into India; with a ritual of all the ancient rites and ceremonies of the Bramins, entitled the "Cormo-Vedam:" this manuscript, translated by a Bramin, is not, certainly, the Vedam itself; but, it is a summary of the opinions and rites, contained in that law. We may now, then, flatter ourselves with the fact of possessing some knowledge, of the three most ancient records in the world.

We must despair of ever obtaining any precise information respecting the Egyptians: their books, are lost; and their religion, annihilated: they know nothing, even of their ancient vulgar

tongue: much less, the sacred. Thus, that which was nearest to us, and most easily preserved; and deposited, withal, in immense libraries, has perished for ever; whilst we have found, at the extremity of the world, monuments of antiquity, not less authentic or important; and which, we could not have had the most distant hopes of obtaining.

No doubt whatever can be entertained, of the authenticity of this ritual of the Brachmans, of which we are speaking. The author is not, by any means, a flatterer of his sect; he does not attempt to disguise their superstitions; nor to give them an air of probability, by forced or constrained explanations; nor, to excuse them, under the veil of allegory. But, on the contrary, he gives an account of the most ridiculous and extravagant laws, with simplicity and candour. The human mind, is there exhibited, in all its misery. If the Bramins observed all the laws of their Vedam, there is no monk, who would subject himself to such a rigorous state of discipline. Scarcely is the son of a Bramin born, than he becomes the slave of ceremonies. His tongue is rubbed, with a diluted preparation of rosin and flour: they pronounce over him, the word *Oum*; twenty divinities are invoked, before they venture to cut the navel-string; but, at the same time, they say to him, "Live to rule over men;" and, as soon as he can speak, he is made to feel

the dignity of his nature. In fact, the Bramins were, a long time, sovereigns, in India; and, theocracy was more deeply rooted, in that extensive country, than in any other, in the world.

In a short time, the infant is exposed to the moon; they pray to the Supreme Being, beseeching him to pardon and efface the sins which the child may have committed, although he is not more than a week old: they chaunt anthems to the fire; and, attended with numerous ceremonies, they give the child the name of *Chormo*; which is the title of honour, among the Bramins.

As soon as the child can walk, he is continually occupied in bathing, and reciting prayers. He performs the sacrifice of the dead; and this sacrifice is instituted, as an invocation to Brama, to bestow upon the child's ancestors, a happy and agreeable abode, in other bodies. Prayers are then offered up, to the five winds, which pass through the five apertures of the human body. But, this is not more strange and silly, than the prayers which the good old women of Rome, offer up to the god Pet.

None of the operations of nature, nor any action whatever, among the Bramins, is suffered to pass, without prayers and invocations. When the child's head is first shaved, the father says devoutly to the razor,—“Razor, shave my son; as thou hast shaved the sun, and the god Indro.” It may, after all, be possible, that the god Indro

had been formerly shaved, but as for the sun, that is not so easy to comprehend: unless, indeed, the Bramins had in view our Apollo; whom, we still represent, as without a beard.

The recital of the whole of these ceremonies would be as tedious, as the ceremonies themselves are ridiculous. But they, in their blindness, say just as much with respect to us. There is, however, one mysterious rite among them, which ought not to be passed over in silence. It is the “*Matricha Machom.*” By this mystery, they bestow upon themselves a new being,—a new life.

They supposed the soul to be situated in the breast; and we may here remark, that this was, in fact, the general opinion of the ancients. They pass the hand from the breast to the head, pressing on the nerve which they believe to communicate from one of these organs to the other; and thus, the soul is conducted to the brain: when they feel sure of the soul’s being sufficiently elevated, the young man then exclaims, that his soul, and his body, are reunited to the Supreme Being; and adds, “I am myself a portion of the Divinity.”

This opinion, was also that of the most respectable philosophers of Greece; of those Stoicks, who have exalted human nature beyond itself;—of the divine Antonines. We must allow, that no opinions can be better calculated, to inspire men

with the love of great and exalted virtue. To believe ourselves a portion of the Divinity, is, in fact, imposing a positive law upon ourselves, not to be guilty of any thing, unworthy of God himself.

We find, in the Bramin law, ten commandments, and they are so many sins to avoid. They are divided into three classes;—the sins of the body;—those of speech;—and those of the will or inclination. To assault or kill our neighbour, to rob him, and to violate the chastity of women, are the sins of the body. To dissemble, to lie, to slander, and speak ill of our neighbour, are the sins of speech. Those of the will, consist in wishing evil; in beholding with envy the possessions of others: and, in not feeling compassion for the miseries of other people.—These ten commandments obliterate, at once, the remembrance of all their ridiculous rites. We see clearly, that morality is the same, among all civilized nations; and that those ceremonies and customs, which are considered as of the most sacred nature by one people, may, to others, appear equally absurd and extravagant. Established rites divide the human race in opinion, but morality heals the division, and is uniform in its effects.

Superstition, never precluded the Bramins from acknowledging one God.—Strabo, in his 15th Book, says, that “they worship one Supreme God; that, they keep silence several years before

“ they presume to speak ; that they are sober, chaste, and temperate ; and that, they live in the practice of justice, and die without regret.” The same testimony to their character is borne by St. Clement of Alexandria, Apulius, Porphyry, Palladius, and St. Ambrose. Let us not forget, in particular, that they had a terrestrial paradise ; and that those, who abused the blessings of God, were driven out of this paradise.

The fall of degenerate man, is made the foundation of the theology of almost all ancient nations. The natural inclination of man to complain of the present, and to boast of the past, has everywhere led to the entertainment of an opinion, that there must have been a kind of golden age ; and that the iron ages have succeeded it.

It is not a little remarkable, that the Vedam of the ancient Brachmans, teaches, that the first man was Adimo (or Adam), and the first woman, Procriti. Adimo, signifies “ Lord,”—and Procriti, “ Life ;” in the same way that Heva, or Eve, among the Phœnicians and Hebrews, also signified life, or the serpent. This conformity merits our greatest attention.

CHAPTER XVIII.

OF CHINA.

SHALL we venture to speak of the Chinese without a reference to their own proper annals? They are confirmed by the unanimous testimony of travellers of all nations and sects;—by Jacobins, Jesuits, Lutherans, and Calvinists; all interested in their contradiction.

It is evident that the Chinese empire has been established upwards of four thousand years. This ancient people, never heard speak of those physical revolutions,—of those inundations and conflagrations, the feeble recollections of which, were preserved and varied, in the fables of the deluge of Deucalion, and the fall of Phaëton. The climate of China, then, happily escaped these scourges; as it did, also, that of the plague, properly so called; and which, has so frequently ravaged Africa, Asia, and Europe.

If any annals carry with them an air of certainty, and possess a genuine character, they are those of the Chinese; who have united, as we have already said elsewhere, the history of the heavens

with that of the earth. They only, of all people, have constantly marked their epochs, by the eclipses, and by the conjunctions of the planets; and our astronomers, on examining their calculations, have been astonished to find them uniformly correct. Other nations devised allegorical fables; but the Chinese, wrote their history, with the pen and cross-staff in their hands, with a simplicity and correctness, of which we find no example in any other part of Asia.

The reign of each of their emperors, has been written by contemporaries; no different manner of reckoning among them; no chronologies, which contradict each other. Our missionary travellers relate, with candour, that, when they spoke to that sage emperor, Camhi, of the great chronological variations of the Vulgate, of the Septuagint, and of the Samaritans, Camhi asked them, if it were possible, that the books in which they believed, contradicted each other?

The Chinese wrote on tablets of thin bamboo, when the Chaldeans wrote only on brick; and those ancient tablets exist at present; having been preserved from corruption, by an ingenious preparation of varnish. They are, perhaps, the most ancient records in the world. There is no history, among them, before the time of their emperors; no fictions; no prodigies, or miracles; nor any inspired individuals, pretending to be demi-gods, as

among the Egyptians and the Greeks. But, as soon as this people begin to write, they write rationally.

They differ in particular from other nations, in this, — that their history makes no mention whatever of a college of priests, at all interfering with, or possessing any influence over, the laws. The Chinese do not go back to those savage and barbarous times, when it was necessary to practise deceptions on men, in order to govern them. The history of other nations, begins with the creation of the world; the Zend of the Persians, the Vedam of the Indians, Sancthoniathon, Manethon, and even Hesiod, all go back to the origin of things; to the creation of the world. The Chinese have not acted with such folly; their history, is that of historical times only.

It is here, in particular, that we must apply our great fundamental principle; that a nation, whose first chronicles attest the existence of a vast empire, powerful and learned, must have been united in society, as a people, for many centuries previously. We here behold a people, who, for more than four thousand years, write a daily account of their historical annals. Again; — we ask, if it would not be madness to dispute the fact, that in order to be well skilled in all the arts of civil society, and to arrive at the point not only of writing, but of writing well, more time must have been necessary than the Chinese empire has

existed; in reckoning only from the time of the emperor Fo-hi, to the present day. No literary man, in China, has any doubt, of the books of the Five Kings having been written two thousand three hundred years, before our vulgar era. This monumental record, therefore, has a precedence of four hundred years, over the first Babylonian observations sent into Greece by Callisthenes. Does it, in good faith, become the literati of Paris, to contest the antiquity of a Chinese book, regarded as authentic by all the tribunals of China?

The first rudiments, of every kind, are more slow of acquisition among mankind, than great proficiencies. Let us remember, that five hundred years ago, scarcely any one knew how to write, either in the north, or in Germany, or among ourselves. The tallies, which are used in the present day, by our bakers and butchers, were our hieroglyphics, and our books of account. This was the only arithmetic made use of, in levying the taxes; as the name of "Tallies," still in use in our different provinces, sufficiently attests. Our capricious customs, which have been committed to writing, only about four hundred and fifty years, point out to us, how very rare the art of writing was in those days. There is not a people in Europe, who have not, latterly, made more progress in half a century, in all the arts, than they had previously made, from the time of the

invasions of the barbarians, up to the fourteenth century.

We shall not here inquire, why the Chinese arrived at the knowledge and practice of every thing useful to society, have not arrived at that point of perfection in the sciences, which is our present boast. It must be confessed, they are as bad physicians, as we were, two hundred years ago; and, as the Greeks and Romans also were; but they have perfected morality, which is the first of all the sciences.

Their vast and populous empire was already governed as one family, of whom the monarch was the father, and of whom forty legislative tribunals were regarded as the eldest brothers, when we were wandering, few in number, in the forests of Ardennes.

Their religion was beautifully simple, modest, and august;—free from all superstition, and all barbarism; when we, had not even those deities, to whom the Druids sacrificed the children of our ancestors, in large wicker baskets.

The Chinese emperors, themselves, presented an offering to the God of the universe, (to Chang-ti,—or Tien;—to the principle, or first cause of all things;) the first fruits of the harvests, twice a year. And these offerings were always the fruits, or produce, of what they had sown with their own hands! This custom has prevailed for upwards of

four thousand years ; even in the midst of revolutions, and of the most horrid calamities. The religion of the emperors, and of the tribunals, has never been disgraced by impostures ; nor disturbed by the quarrels of the national priesthood ; nor burthened with absurd innovations, opposed to each other, by arguments, as absurd as the innovations themselves ; and the folly and madness of which, have led fanatics, at the instigation of the factious, to defend their opinions at the point of the sword. It is in this, above all, that the Chinese have proved themselves superior to every nation in the universe.

Their Confucius did not propagatè any new opinions, nor establish any new rites. He did not pretend to be inspired, nor to be a prophet. He was a magistrate, who instructed them in their ancient laws. We sometimes say, but very improperly, “ The Religion of Confucius ; ” he had no other religion than that of all the emperors, and all the tribunals ; such, as was common to all the sages, and literati, of the empire. He preached no mystery, and virtue only, was the object of his strong recommendation. In his first book, he says, that to learn to govern well, we must pass our whole time, in improving, and correcting, ourselves. In his second book, he proves that God himself has engraved the love of virtue, on the heart of man ; he says, that man is not born wicked ; but becomes so, by his own faulty, and

bad, conduct. The third book, is a collection of pure and excellent maxims ; wherein, we find nothing low, or mean ; nor any thing, of a nature ridiculously allegorical. He had five thousand disciples, and might have put himself at the head of a powerful party ; but, the chief object of his delight, was to instruct men ; not, to govern them.

In an essay on General History, the temerity with which we, at the extremity of the West, have passed judgment on this eastern court, and branded it with atheism, is most forcibly and justly condemned. In fine, by what folly and ignorance must those, among us, have been actuated, who have ventured to reproach with atheism, an empire, almost the whole of whose laws are founded on the acknowledgment of a Supreme Being, the rewarder and punisher of his creatures ? The inscriptions on their temples, of which we have authentic copies, are to this effect — “ To the
“ Great First Cause, without beginning, and
“ without end. He is the Creator of all ;
“ He governs all. He is infinitely good, infi-
“ nitely just ; he enlightens, he supports, he re-
“ gulates, the whole of nature.”

In Europe, the Jesuits, (who are no great favourites, have been reproached with flattering the atheists of China. A Frenchman, named Maigrot, the bishop of Conon, who did not understand a word of Chinese, was deputed by the

Pope, to go and judge of their actions, on the spot. He pronounced Confucius to be an atheist, from the following words of that great man: "Heaven has given me virtue, man can do me no harm." The greatest of our saints never uttered a more divine maxim. If Confucius was an atheist, Cato, and the Chancellor of the Hospital were so also.

To put such gross calumniators to the blush, we shall here remark, that the same men, who, in opposition to Bayle, maintained that a society of atheists was impossible, asserted, at the same time, that the most ancient government in the world was composed of atheists! Men cannot take too much shame to themselves for such silly contradictions.

We must here observe that the literati of China, the worshippers of one only God, yet abandoned the people to the superstitions of the Bonzes. They tolerated the sect of Laokium, of Fo, and several others. The magistrates considered, that the people might have different religions from the state; in the same way, that they are accustomed to a coarser kind of food, and nourishment. They therefore, tolerated the Bonzes; and protected them. In almost every part, those who filled the office of Bonze, were entrusted with the principal authority.

It is true, that the laws of China do not speak of rewards and punishments after death; they

would not venture to affirm that, of which they knew nothing. The doctrine of a hell, was useful; but the government of China, would never admit it. They were content to exhort men to reverence the Deity; and to be just, and upright. They believed that a strict attention to, and a constant restraint exercised over, the manners and habits of the people, would have more effect, than opinions which may be disputed; and that the people would live in greater fear of the law, always present, than a law to come. We shall speak, in the proper place, of another people, of infinitely less consequence, who possessed nearly the same ideas; or rather, who had no ideas at all; but, who were conducted by ways unknown to other men.

To resume,—we shall here merely remark, that the Chinese empire subsisted in splendour, when the Chaldeans began their calculations, of 1900 years of astronomical observations, sent into Greece by Callisthenes. The Bramins then reigned, in a part of India; the Persians had their laws; the Arabians, in the south, and the Sycthians in the north, dwelt in tents: and Egypt, of which we are now going to speak, was a powerful kingdom.

CHAPTER XIX.

OF EGYPT.

It appears evident that the Egyptians, (ancient as they undoubtedly are,) could not have been united in society as a regularly organized body ; or have become a civilized, cultivated, industrious and powerful people, but for a very long time after, all those nations, which have passed in review. The cause thereof is easy of explanation ; and will, we trust, be as easily understood. Egypt, as far as the Delta, is enclosed by two chains of rocks, between which the Nile precipitates itself, in descending from Ethiopia in the south, to the north. From the Cataracts of the Nile, at its sources, it runs only in a straight line of one hundred and sixty leagues, of three thousand geometrical paces each ; and the breadth is only from ten, to fifteen and twenty leagues, up as far as the Delta, in the lower part of Egypt, which embraces an extent of fifty leagues, from east to west. To the right of the Nile, are the deserts of Thebaid ; and to the left the unin-

habitable sands of Libya; as far as the little country, where the temple of Ammon was built.

The inundations of the Nile must, for ages, have prevented the colonization of a country, overflowed during four months in the year: and, these stagnant waters, continually on the increase, must, for a long time, have rendered Egypt a complete marsh, or bog. It is very different with those countries situated on the borders of the Euphrates, the Tigris, the Indus, the Ganges, and some other rivers; which also overflow their banks, almost every year, in summer, on the thawing of the snows. Their overflowings are not so considerable; and the vast plains which surround them, afford the husbandmen abundant opportunity of profiting by the fertilization of the soil.

Let us observe, in particular, that the plague, (that scourge of the human race) prevails in Egypt, at least one year in ten; and it must have been much more destructive, when the stagnant waters of the Nile added their infection to this horrible contagion; and, consequently, the population of Egypt must, for many centuries, have been of very trifling extent.

The natural order and course of things seems, therefore, clearly to demonstrate, that Egypt, was one of the lastly inhabited parts of the earth. The Troglodites, born on those rocks with which the Nile is bounded, were compelled to undertake the long and tedious task of cutting canals, to receive

the waters of the river; and of erecting cabins and cottages, at an elevation of five and twenty feet above the ground. This, however, is what must have been done before Thebes, with its hundred gates, could have been built; and also, before the erection of Memphis, or any idea of the construction of pyramids, could have been entertained. It is singular, that no ancient historian has made so rational and consistent a reflection.

We have already observed, that about the time placed for the travels, or journeyings, of Abraham, Egypt was a powerful kingdom. Its kings had already built some of those pyramids, which still astonish the eyes, and the imagination, of the traveller. The Arabian writings relate, that the largest of them was raised by Saurid, many centuries before the time of Abraham. It is not known when the celebrated Thebes, with its hundred gates, was built,—the city of God,—Diospolis. It appears that in those remote times, large cities bore the name of “The Cities of God,” as Babylon, &c. But, who can possibly believe, that through each of the hundred gates of Thebes, there went out two hundred chariots of war, and one hundred thousand combatants? That would amount to twenty thousand chariots, and one million of soldiers; and, if we reckon one soldier to every five inhabitants, the amount of the population of this single city, would be five millions; in a country which is not so large as Spain or France,

and which had not, according to Diodorus of Sicily, more than three millions of inhabitants, and one hundred and sixty thousand soldiers for its defence. Diodorus, in his first book, says, that Egypt was so populous, that it formerly contained seven millions of inhabitants; and that, in his time, it still had a population of three millions.

We can probably place as little reliance on the conquests of Sesostris, as on the million of soldiers going out by the hundred gates of Thebes. We fancy ourselves in the field of romance, when we are told by all those who copy Herodotus, that the father of Sesostris, founding his hopes and expectations on a dream, and on an oracle, destined his son for the subjugation of the world; and that he had all those children, who were born on the same day as his son, brought up in his court, to the profession of arms: and, that they were not permitted to eat, until they had run eight of our largest leagues. We are told withal, that Sesostris set out with six hundred thousand men, and twenty-seven thousand chariots of war, for the conquest of the whole world; extending from the Indus, to the extremities of the Pont-Euxine; and that he subjugated Mingrelia, and Georgia, (then called Colchis.) Herodotus seems to have no doubt that Sesostris colonized Colchis; because, he there saw some tawny-coloured men, with frizzled^h air, like the Egyptians. We should think it much more probable, that the Scythians,

from the borders of the Black and Caspian seas, had made exactions upon the Egyptians, when they (for such a length of time) ravaged Asia, before the reign of Cyrus. It is not improbable, that they brought away with them, some Egyptian slaves; the descendants of whom, Herodotus saw, or thought he saw, at Colchis. If it be true, that these Colchians had the superstition to circumcise themselves, they had, probably, retained that custom, from the Egyptians; as, it almost always happens, that the people of the north adopt the rites and customs of the civilized nations whom they have subdued.

The Egyptians were never, within any recognised period, a formidable people; no enemy ever invaded their country, or made war upon them, without success. The Scythians began; after them, came Nabuchodonosor, who conquered Egypt without resistance; Cyrus only found it necessary to send thither one of his lieutenants; when they revolted, under Cambyses, a single campaign was sufficient to reduce them to subjection; and this same Cambyses had so great a contempt of the Egyptians, that he killed their god Apis, before their eyes. Ochus reduced Egypt to a province of his kingdom. Alexander, Cæsar, Augustus, and the Caliph Omar, conquered Egypt with equal facility. These same people of Colchis, under the denomination of Mamelukes, seized upon Egypt in the time of the

Crusades; and finally, Selim conquered Egypt in a single campaign, like all those who had preceded him. The Crusaders alone, were beaten by the Egyptians, the most cowardly and pusillanimous of all people, as we have before observed; but it was, because they were, at that time, under the military government of the Mamelukes, of Colchis. It is certainly possible, that a people, now reduced to subjection, may have been, formerly, conquerors: witness, the Greeks and Romans. But, we are much more certain of the ancient greatness of the Romans and Greeks, than we are of that of Sesostris.

It may be possible, that he, whom they call Sesostris, had a fortunate war, against some Ethiopians, a few Arabs, or some of the people of Phoenicia. This, in the language of exaggerators, has been magnified into the conquest of the world. There is no nation, to whatever state of subjection it may be brought, but will boast of having, formerly, subjugated and conquered others. The vain glory of an ancient superiority, affords consolation for present humiliation.

Herodotus frankly, and ingenuously, related to the Greeks, what the Egyptians had told him; but how is it, that in speaking to him of nothing but prodigies, they neglected to mention those remarkable plagues of Egypt, and that magic combat, between the minister of the God of the Jews, and the sorcerers of Pharaoh; and also of a whole

army, swallowed up by the Red Sea, the waters rising on each side, like mountains, that the Hebrews might pass over; which, on returning to their place, overwhelmed the Egyptians? It was, unquestionably, the greatest event in the history of the world: but neither Herodotus, nor Manethon, nor Eratosthenes, nor any of the Greeks, such great lovers of the marvellous, and in constant communication with Egypt, have said a word about these great miracles, destined to occupy the attention of all generations! We are not led to these observations by any desire to invalidate the testimony of the Hebrew books, which we respect, as we ought. We confine ourselves, merely to the expression of our astonishment, at the silence of all the Egyptians, and all the Greeks, upon the subject. But, God would not, probably, suffer, so divine a history, to be transmitted to us, by any profane hand.

CHAPTER XX.

OF THE LANGUAGE OF THE EGYPTIANS, AND
OF THEIR SYMBOLS.

THE language of the Egyptians has no affinity whatever, with that of any of the nations of Asia. We do not find among these people either the word *Adonai* or *Adonijah*, or *Bal* or *Baal*, terms which signify “*The Lord;*”—nor *Mitra*, which means “*The Sun,*” among the Persians; nor *Melch*, or *Melk*, which signifies “*King,*” in Syria; nor *Shak*, *Schach*, or *Shah*, which signifies the same thing among the Indians and the Persians. We see, on the contrary, that *Pharaoh* was the Egyptian word for “*King:*” *Oshireth*, (Osiris,) corresponded to the *Mitra* of the Persians; and the common word *On*, signified the sun. The Chaldean priests were called *Mag—Magi*; those of the Egyptians *Choen*, according to Diodorus of Sicily. The hieroglyphicks, and the alphabetick characters of Egypt, which time has spared to us, and which we yet see engraven on their obelisks, bear no kind of similarity to those of any other people.

Before men had invented hieroglyphicks, they

undoubtedly had representative signs of some sort; for what, in fact, could the first men have done, more than all others, who have found themselves similarly situated? If a child finds himself in a country, of the language of which he is ignorant, he speaks by signs; if he is not understood, he describes on a wall, with a piece of chalk or charcoal, the things of which he stands in need, provided he has the least sagacity.

Every one, therefore, at first, gave some kind of rude delineation of what he meant to express; and the art of drawing, without doubt, had precedence of the art of writing. It was in this way the Mexicans and Peruvians wrote; they had not carried the art any further. The same method, no doubt, prevailed among all the first people, reduced to order and government. In the course of time, symbolical figures were invented: two hands interwoven, signified peace; arrows, represented war; an eye, signified the Divinity; a sceptre, royalty; and the lines uniting these figures, were expressive of short sentences.

At length, the Chinese invented characters, expressive of each word of their language. But what people invented the alphabet, which, by placing before our eyes, the different sounds capable of articulation, affords a facility to the combination of words of every description, by writing, or expression? Who thus instructed men to inscribe so easily, their thoughts? We forbear re-

peating all the tales of the ancients respecting this art, which eternizes all arts. We shall merely observe, that it must have been the work of ages.

The Choens, or priests of Egypt, continued, for a long time, to write in hieroglyphicks; which is forbidden in the second article of the Hebrew law. When the people of Egypt had acquired a knowledge of alphabetick characters, the priests, or Choens, adopted others, different from them, which they called sacred;—in order to raise a barrier, betwixt them, and the people. The Magi, and the Bramins, did the same; so much has it been considered necessary, to act mysteriously towards men, in order to govern them. Not only did the Choens possess characters, known only to them, but they even preserved, and adhered to, the ancient language of Egypt, when time had changed that of the common people.

Manethon, cited by Eusebius, speaks of two columns, or pillars, engraved by Thaut, the first Hermes, in characters, appropriate to the sacred language. But who can tell in what time this ancient Hermes lived?

The Egyptians were, in particular, most scrupulously tenacious of their early symbols. It is somewhat curious to see, on their monuments, a serpent biting his tail, representative of the twelve months of the year; and these twelve months are each expressed by animals, which have no connection with the signs of the Zodiack, in use among

us. The five days, over and above the twelve months, are afterwards added in the shape of a little serpent, upon which five figures are represented:—a hawk, a man, a dog, a lion, and an ibis. They have been designed by Kirker, from copies preserved at Rome. Thus, we see, that in ancient times, symbol, and allegory, were predominant.

CHAPTER XXI.

OF THE MONUMENTS OF THE EGYPTIANS.

IT is certain, that after the lapse of ages, when the Egyptians fertilized the soil, by draining their large rivers, when villages began to give place to large and opulent cities; then, the necessary arts being perfected, the arts of ostentation and embellishment, began to be had in repute. At that time, were found sovereigns, who employed their subjects, with the Arabs adjoining the lake Sirbon, to build their palaces, and pyramidal tombs: in hewing huge masses of stone in the quarries of Upper Egypt, and embarking them on rafts, to Memphis, for the purpose of erecting massive columns of large flat stones, without either taste or proportion. They were acquainted with the great, but not with the beautiful. They instructed the first Greeks, but, subsequently, the Greeks became superior to them in every thing, when they had built the city of Alexandria.

It is a great misfortune, that in the war with Cæsar, one-half of the celebrated library of the Ptolemies was burnt, and the other half served to

heat the baths of the Mussulmans, when Egypt was subjugated by Omar. We should at least, have discovered the origin of the many superstitions, with which this people were infected ; and the chaos of their philosophy, with a few of their antiquities and sciences.

They must, necessarily, have enjoyed ages of peace ; or their princes could never have found, either time or leisure, to construct those vast and prodigious buildings, of which, the greater part still exists.

Their pyramids were erected at an immense expence of time and money ; and, a large part of the nation, with the numerous foreign slaves in the country, must have been a long time employed in these immense works. They were the works of despotism, vanity, slavery, and superstition. In fine, no other than a despotic monarch could drive nature to such extremes. England, for example, is much more powerful than Egypt ever was ; but, could a king of England employ his people, in the erection of such monuments as these ? Vanity, no doubt, operated as one powerful ingredient, in their construction.

The kings of Egypt were rivals of each other, in the erection of the most beautiful pyramid, in honour either of his father, or himself ; and slavery, procured the hands of the workman. And, with regard to superstition, we should remember, that these pyramids were tombs ; and, that the Cho-

chamatim, or Choens, of Egypt,—that is to say, the priests,—had persuaded the nation that the soul would return to, and reanimate the body, at the expiration of a thousand years. They wished, therefore, to preserve the body, free from all corruption, for the whole of this thousand years. It was on this account, that they were so scrupulously careful in embalming it ; and, to protect it from all accidents, they enclosed it in a mass of stone, without an aperture, or outlet of any kind. The kings, and great men, raised their pyramids, or tombs, in a form the least liable to the injuries of the weather. Their bodies have been, therefore, preserved, for a period, beyond all human hopes, and calculations. We have, at this day, Egyptian mummies more than four thousand years old. The bodies have endured as long as the pyramids themselves.

The opinion of a resurrection after the expiration of ten centuries,—or a thousand years,—was subsequently imbibed by the Greeks, disciples of the Egyptians ; and afterwards by the Romans, disciples of the Greeks. We find it again, in the sixteenth book of the *Æneid* ; which is but a description of the mysteries of Isis, and of Ceres Eleusis :—

“ Has omnes ubi mille rotam volvère per annos
Lethæum ad fluvium Deus advocat agmine magno ;
Scilicet ut memores supera et convexa revisant.”

This doctrine afterwards found its way among

the Christians, who established the reign of a thousand years; and the sect of the Millenarians has again revived it. In this manner, several opinions have made the tour of the world.

We have said enough, to shew, with what motives these pyramids were built. It is needless, here to repeat, what has been said of their architecture and dimensions. We are examining only the history of the human mind.

CHAPTER XXII.

OF THE RITES OF THE EGYPTIANS, AND OF
CIRCUMCISION.

DID the Egyptians, at first, acknowledge a God supreme? If this question had been put to any of the common people, they would not have known what answer to give;—if to young students of Egyptian theology, they would have discoursed a long time without coming to a conclusion;—but, if the question had been put to any of those sages consulted by Pythagoras, or Plato, or Plutarch, they would have answered, plainly, that they worshipped only one God. As the groundwork of their opinions, they would have referred to the ancient inscription on the statue of Isis,—“I am that I am;” and to this other,—“I am all that has been, and all that shall be; no mortal can lift up my veil.” They would also have pointed to the globe, placed over the door of the temple of Memphis, which represented the unity of the Divine Nature, under the name of *Knef*. Also, the name, esteemed the most sacred by the Egyptians, was that which the Hebrews adopted,—*Y-ha-ho*. It is

variously pronounced; but Clement of Alexandria assures us, in his *Stromates*, that all those who entered into the temple of Serapis, were obliged to wear on their persons, in a conspicuous situation, the name of “*i-ha-ho*,” or “*i-ha-hou*,” which signifies “The God Eternal.” Of this, the Arabs have retained only the syllable *hou*; which was, subsequently, adopted by the Turks; who pronounce it, with still greater respect, than the word *Allah*; for, they frequently use the word *Allah*, in common conversation; but the word *hou*, they never use but in their prayers. It may not be inappropriate, here to remark, that when the Turkish ambassador, Said Effendi, saw represented, at Paris, the piece entitled “*Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*,” and in that laughable part, where, in acting the part of a Turk, he heard the sacred word *hou* pronounced with derision, accompanied by silly and ridiculous gestures, he looked upon the whole entertainment, as a most wicked and abominable profanation.

To resume.—The priests of Egypt cherished a sacred ox,—a sacred dog,—and a sacred crocodile! Yes,—and so had the Romans their sacred geese; they had gods of all sorts; and the devotees had among their household gods, the god of the close-stool,—*Deum stercutium*; and the god Pet,—*Deum crepitum*: but they were not the less worshippers of the *Deum optimum maximum*; the Lord of gods, and men. In what country do we not meet with

crowds of weak and superstitious persons ; and but few possessed of wisdom and discernment ?

It is particularly worthy of notice, both with respect to Egypt, and all other nations, that they have never been constant and uniform in their opinions ; like as, they have never persevered uniformly in their laws ; notwithstanding the attachment of men to their ancient customs, and usages. There is nothing immutable, but geometry ; every thing else is subject to continual variation and change.

The learned dispute ; and will continue to dispute. One asserts, that the people, in ancient times, were all idolaters ; the other denies it. One says, that they worshipped only one God, without image or representation ; the other, that they worshipped a plurality of gods, under various images and representations ; they are both in the right : we have only to distinguish between the times and the men, which have changed ; nothing was ever fixed and invariable. When the Ptolemies, and the chief priests, made a jest of the ox, Apis, the people fell on their knees before it !

Juvenal says, that the Egyptians worshipped onions : but, no other historian has repeated it. There is a great deal of difference between a sacred onion, and an onion god ; — we do not worship every thing that is placed, or consecrated, on an altar. We read in Cicero, that men who had adopted all manner of superstitions, and those of

the grossest nature, had not yet arrived at that of eating their gods ; and that this is the only absurdity, from which they were free.

Does circumcision originate with the Egyptians, the Arabs, or the Ethiopians ? We cannot tell. Let those who can, decide the point. All that we know, is, that the priests of antiquity were accustomed to imprint on their bodies, marks of their consecration ; like as the Roman soldiers, in an after period, were marked in the hand with a red-hot iron. In one place, those who sacrificed, cut and slashed their bodies ; as was, subsequently, the custom with the priests of Bellona. In another, they made themselves eunuchs, after the manner of the priests of Cybele.

It was not from a desire to preserve their health (as has been asserted), that the Ethiopians, the Arabs, and the Egyptians, circumcised themselves. It has been said that their foreskins were too long. But, if we may judge of a nation, by an individual, we have seen a young Ethiopian, who, from not having been born in his own country, had not been circumcised ; and we can assert, positively, that his foreskin was precisely the same as ours.

We cannot tell what nation first adopted the ceremony of carrying in procession the *Kteis* and the *Phallum* ; that is to say, the distinctive signs of male and female animals ; a ceremony, properly considered as indecent, in the present day, though formerly held sacred. The Egyptians had this

custom; they offered to the Gods the first fruits; and sacrificed to them the most precious and valuable of what they possessed. It appeared reasonable and just, that the priests should offer up a trifling part of the organ of generation, to those, by whom all were engendered. The Ethiopians, and the Arabs, also circumcised their daughters, by cutting off a very small part of the *nympha*; which clearly proves that neither health, nor cleanliness, led to the institution of this ceremony; for assuredly an uncircumcised female is, in all respects, as fit and proper, as a circumcised one.

When the priests of Egypt had consecrated this operation, their initiated subjected themselves to it also; but, in the course of time, it was abandoned by these; and remained with the priests alone. It does not appear that either of the Ptolemies were circumcised; and the Roman authors never branded the Egyptians, with the name, or title, of "Apella," which they bestowed upon the Jews. These Jews had adopted part of the Egyptian ceremonies; and, with it, the rite of circumcision. They have always adhered to it; and so have the Arabs, and the Ethiopians. The Turks also submitted themselves to it, although, it is not enjoined in the Alcoran. In fact, it is merely an ancient ceremony, originating in superstition, and preserved by custom.

CHAPTER XXIII.

OF THE MYSTERIES OF THE EGYPTIANS.

WE do not pretend to say what people were the first inventors, or instituters, of those mysteries, which were in such great repute, from the Euphrates, to the Tiber. The Egyptians do not tell us, with whom the mysteries of Isis originate. Zoroaster has the credit, of having established them, in Persia; and Cadmus, and Inachus, in Greece; Orpheus, in Thrace; and Minos, in Crête. It is certain, that these mysteries announced a future life; because, Celsus says to the Christians, — “ You boast of believing in everlasting punishments; but do not all the ministers of mysteries announce the same thing to the initiated?”

The Greeks, who adopted so many of the customs of the Egyptians, — (their Tartharoth, of which they made Tartarus, — the lake of which they made their Achèron — and the boatman Charon, of whom they made a pilot for the dead,) had not invented their celebrated mysteries of Eleusinia, till some time after those of Isis. But,

whether the mysteries of Zoroaster, had, or had not, precedence of those of the Egyptians, is what no one can venture to affirm. Both the one, and the other, were of the very highest antiquity; and all the Greek and Latin authors who have written on the subject, agree, in asserting, that the unity of the godhead, the immortality of the soul, and rewards and punishments after death, were all duly announced, in these sacred ceremonies.

It is extremely probable that the Egyptians, having once established these mysteries, preserved the rites and ceremonies attached to them; for, notwithstanding their levity and mutability of character, they were firm and constant in superstition. The prayer that we find in Apuleïus, when Lucius is initiated into the mysteries of Isis, is, we presume, the ancient form of prayer.—“The heavenly
“ powers serve thee; — hell is subject unto thee;
“ — the universe turns beneath thy hand; — thy
“ feet tread on Tartarus; — the planets answer to
“ thy call; — the seasons return at thy com-
“ mand; — the elements obey thee,” &c. &c.

Can we possibly have stronger proof than this, that the Egyptians, in the midst of all their detestable superstitions, yet acknowledged, the unity of one only God?

CHAPTER XXIV.

OF THE GREEKS:—OF THEIR ANCIENT DELUGES:—OF THEIR ALPHABETS:—AND OF THEIR GENIUS.

GREECE is a little mountainous country, intersected by the sea, of nearly the extent of Great Britain. Every thing in this country attests the physical revolutions which it has experienced. The islands which surround it, sufficiently indicatè, by the close bodies of rocks bordering on them, as well as by the trifling depth of the sea, and the herbs and roots which grow beneath its waters, that they have been detached from the continent. The Gulfs of Eubœa, Chalcis, Argos, Corinth, Actium, and Messina, convince the spectator that the sea has made encroachments on the land. The beds of sea-shells, found in the mountains enclosing the celebrated valley of Tempè, are evident proofs of some ancient inundation. And, the deluges of Ogyges, and of Deucalion, which have given rise to so many fables, are, therefore, founded in historical truth. This is, probably, the cause of the Greeks being so modern a people.

These great revolutions replunged them into a state of rudeness and barbarism, when the nations of Asia, and Egypt, were already in a flourishing condition.

We leave, to more learned commentators, the task, of proving, that the three children of Noah, who were the sole inhabitants of the earth, divided it amongst themselves; and travelled, each, two or three thousand leagues from the other; laying, every where, the foundation of powerful empires; and, that Javan, Noah's grandson, peopled Greece, as he passed through, on his way to Italy: that, it is from him, the Greeks take the name of Ionians; because, Ion sent colonies on the coasts of Asia Minor; and, that this Ion was, evidently, Javan, — which it becomes, by merely changing *I* into *Ja*, — and *on* into *van*. These stories are related to children, who ridicule them, and treat them as romantic.

“Nec pueri credunt nisi qui nondum ære lavantur.”

The deluge of Ogyges is commonly understood, to have happened, about twelve hundred years before the first Olympiad. The first who speaks of it, is Acesilas; cited by Eusebius, in his Evangelical Preparation; and, by George le Sincelle. Greece, say they, was almost deserted, for two hundred years, after this irruption of the sea, into the country. It is, nevertheless, pretended, that, at the same time, there were established govern-

ments at Sicyon, and Argos : we are favoured even with the names of the first magistrates of these little provinces ; and they are called *Basiloi*, which corresponds with the word Princes. Let us not waste our time in penetrating these useless obscurities.

There was another inundation, in the time of Deucalion, the son of Prometheus. The fable adds, that the only remaining inhabitants of these climates, were Deucalion and Pyrrha ; who begat men, and repopled the country, by throwing stones behind them, between their legs. In this way, the human race increased, much more rapidly, than rabbits in a warren.

If we may believe what is advanced by such wise men, as the Jesuit Petau, and others, one, only, of Noah's sons, produced a race, which, in *two hundred and eighty-five* years, amounted to six hundred and twenty-three thousand six hundred and twelve millions of men ! The calculation seems rather high. In the present day, we are so unfortunate, that, out of twenty-six marriages, it seldom happens, that the offspring of more than four, live to become parents. This calculation is extracted from the registers of some of our largest cities. Of a thousand children, born in one year, there, hardly ever, remain, six hundred, at the end of twenty years. Let us be on our guard, against attaching any credit to what Petau, or those that are like him, may say. Petau, no doubt, found it

as easy to make children by a stroke of the pen, as Deucalion and Pyrrha, to people Greece, by throwing stones between their legs.

It is well known, that Greece was the country of fable, and romance; and almost every fable was the origin of some form of worship, — of a temple, — and a public festival. By what excess of folly, or absurd obstinacy, is it, that the compilers of so many enormous volumes have attempted to prove, that a public festival, established in commemoration of an event, is an evident demonstration of the truth of that event? What! is it, because they celebrated, in a temple, young Bacchus coming out of Jupiter's thigh, that we are to believe, that Jupiter had, in fact, kept the said Bacchus in his thigh! And we are to believe, also, that Cadmus and his wife were changed into serpents in Bœotia, because the Bœotians commemorated that event in their ceremonies! And the temple of Castor and Pollux, at Rome will, we presume, be considered as decisive proof, that the gods descended upon earth, to fight in favour of the Romans!

We may, with much greater propriety, conclude, when we see an ancient festival, or an antique temple, that they are the works of error and superstition. In the course of two or three centuries, the error gains strength, and becomes celebrated; at length, it is considered sacred; and temples are built, to chimeras, and idle fancies.

In historical times, on the contrary, the most noble truths find but few disciples; the greatest men die without honour. The Themistocles, Cimon, Miltiades, Aristides, and Phocions, of the day, are persecuted; whilst Perseus, Bacchus, and other fantastick personages, have temples erected to their honour.

We may give credit to a people, who relate circumstances to their own disadvantage; when, what they relate, is attended with probability; and, in no respect, contrary to the ordinary course of nature.

The Athenians, scattered over a barren and unfruitful country, inform us, that an Egyptian, named Cecrops, exiled from his own country, gave them their first institutions. This appears rather surprising, as the Egyptians were not navigators. But, it is possible, that the Phœnicians, who had intercourse with all nations, may have brought this Cecrops into Attica. It is very certain, that the Greeks did not adopt the Egyptian letters; for there is not the least resemblance between them. The Phœnicians brought them their first alphabet; which, then, consisted of only sixteen characters; which are, evidently, the same. To these, the Phœnicians, subsequently, added eight other letters; which the Greeks likewise adopted.

An alphabet may be considered as an incontestible monument, of the country from which a

nation has acquired its first learning. It appears still further probable, that the Phœnicians worked the silver mines of Attica ; as, they unquestionably did those of Spain. Merchants were the first preceptors of those very Greeks, from whom, so many nations subsequently derived instruction.

This people, as barbarous as they were in the days of Ogyges, appeared born with organs more adapted to the cultivation of the fine arts, than all other people. They displayed in their nature, the most refined cunning and acuteness ; their language is a proof of it ; for, even before they knew how to write, their language was distinguished for a union of the most harmonious consonants and vowels ; previously, unknown to all the people of Asia.

Certainly, the name of *Knath*, which, according to Sanchoniathon, denotes “Phœnicians,” is not so harmonious as that of *Hellenos*, or *Graius*.—Argos, Athens, Lacedæmon, and Olympia, sound better in the ear than the city of Reheboth. Sophia—wisdom, is more harmonious than Shochemath, in Syriack, and in Hebrew. Basileus, king, sounds better than Melk or Shack. Compare the names of Agamemnon, Diomedes, and Idomeneus, with those of Mardokempad, Simordak, Sohasdudch, and Niricassolahssar. Josephus, himself, in his book against Apion, acknowledges, that the Greeks could not pronounce the barba-

rous name of Jerusalem ; pronounced by the Jews, Hershalaïm : this word stuck in the throat of an Athenian ; and, it was the Greeks, who changed Hershalaïm, into Jerusalem.

The Greeks transformed all the rude Syriack, Persian, and Egyptian, names.—Of Coresh, they made Cyrus ; of Isheth and Oshireth, they made Isis and Osiris ; of Moph, they made Memphis ; and, at length, they accustomed the barbarians to pronounce in the same manner ; so that, in the time of the Ptolemies, the cities, and gods, of Egypt, retained the Grecian names alone.

It was the Greeks, who gave names to the Indus and the Ganges. The Ganges, in the language of the Bramins, was called Sannoubi ; and the Indus, Sombadipo. These are the ancient names which we meet with in the Vedam.

The Greeks, in extending themselves along the coasts of Asia Minor, carried harmony along with them. Their Homer was, in all probability, born at Smyrna.

Beautiful architecture, the most perfect sculpture, painting, good music, correct poetry, true eloquence, a just method of writing history, and in short, philosophy itself, although rude and obscure, were attained by other nations from the Greeks. Thus, those who came last, excelled their predecessors in every thing.

All the beautiful statues in Egypt, were of Grecian workmanship. The ancient Balbek, in Syria,

and the ancient Palmyra, in Arabia; were indebted, for their palaces, and their magnificent and well-built temples, to the Grecian artists; whom their sovereigns employed, for the purpose. We see, only, the remains of barbarism, (as has been already observed) in the ruins of Persepolis, built by the Persians; whilst the monuments of Balbek and Palmyra, beneath heaps of rubbish, exhibit masterpieces of architecture.

CHAPTER XXV.

OF THE GREEK LEGISLATORS—OF MINOS AND
ORPHEUS—AND OF THE IMMORTALITY OF THE
SOUL.

LET compilers continue to favour us with pompous and exaggerated accounts of the battles of Marathon and Salamis;—these great exploits, are sufficiently well known. Let others repeat the story of a grandson of Noah, named Settim, being king of Macedon; because, in the first book of Maccabees, it is said, that Alexander came out of the country of Kittim, or Chittim:—we have other objects in view, the elucidation of which we consider of much greater importance.

Minos lived about the time in which we place the existence of Moses; which circumstance, has led the learned Huet, bishop of Avranches, to maintain, in his works, that Minos, born in Crête, and Moses, born on the confines of Egypt, were one, and the same person. This assertion, however, (notwithstanding its absurdity,) has met with no partisans.

We have not here to deal with a Greek fable; Minos, indubitably, was a legislative king. The celebrated marbles of Paros, the most precious

monuments of antiquity, (and for which we are indebted to the English) fix his birth, as having occurred 1482 years before our vulgar era. Homer, in his *Odyssey*, calls him "The wise confidant of God." Flavius Josephus does not hesitate to say, that he (Minos) received his laws from some god. This seems rather strange, in a Jew; who, one would imagine, ought not to acknowledge any other god, than his own; unless indeed, he entertained the common opinion of the Romans, and all the early people of antiquity, who admitted the existence of all the gods of other nations.

It is evident, that Minos was a very severe legislator; since, he is represented, after his death, as judging the souls of the dead, in the infernal regions, or hell; it is also evident, that the belief of another life was, then, generally entertained, and spread over a large part of Asia, and Europe.

Orpheus is a personage, no less real than Minos; it is true, the marbles of Paros make no mention of him; probably because he was not born in *Grecia proper*, but in *Thrace*. The existence of the first Orpheus, has been doubted by some; owing to a passage in Cicero's excellent work, on the nature of the Gods. Cotta, one of his interlocutors, pretends, that Aristotle did not believe, that this Orpheus had ever been among the Greeks; but, Aristotle does not say a word on the subject, in any of his works that we have seen. Besides, the opinion of Cotta, is not that of Cicero. A

hundred ancient authors speak of Orpheus. The mysteries, bearing his name, are a sufficient evidence of his existence, and Pausanias, the most correct and valuable author the Greeks ever had, says, that his verses were chaunted in their religious ceremonies, in preference to those of Homer, who did not live, till a long time after Orpheus. We are well aware, that he did not descend into hell; but, even this fable proves, that hell, or the infernal regions, formed a part of the theology of those remote times.

The vague, and indefinite, opinion, of the permanency of the soul, after death; the ethereal soul; the shadow of the body; manes; a fickle breath; the incomprehensible, but living soul; and, the belief of rewards and punishments in another world; were admitted, and established, throughout all Greece; in the islands; in Asia; and in Egypt.

The Jews alone, appear to have been ignorant of this mystery; the book of their laws does not make the least mention of, or allusion to it. We read of nothing, therein, but temporal rewards and punishments. In the book of Exodus, it is said, "Honour thy father and mother, that thy days may be long in the land which Adonai (the Lord) giveth thee." But, in the book of the Zend, we find, "Honour thy father and mother, that thou mayest merit heaven."

Bishop Warburton, who has demonstrated, that

the Pentateuch makes no mention of the immortality of the soul, attempts to prove, that this dogma was unnecessary, in theocracy. Arnaud, in his apology of Port-royal, expresses himself thus: "It is the height of ignorance to question
" this truth, which is one of the most common,
" and which is attested by all the Fathers, that the
" promises of the Old Testament were merely
" temporal, and earthly; and, that the Jews wor-
" shipped God, for temporal blessings, only." To this, it is objected, that if the Persians, the Arabs, the Syrians, the Indians, the Egyptians, and the Greeks, believed in the immortality of the soul, and a life to come, with eternal rewards and punishments, the Hebrews might well also believe them. And, that if all the legislators of antiquity established wise laws on this basis, Moses might also have done the same; for that, if he were ignorant of such useful tenets, he was not worthy to be the leader of a nation; and that, if he knew them, and did not promulgate them, he was still more unworthy to be so.

To these arguments it is replied, that God, (whose organ Moses was) vouchsafed to proportion his measures to the ignorance of the Jews. This knotty point we shall not attempt to discuss; and entertaining a due respect for every thing divine, we continue our examinations of the history of mankind.

CHAPTER XXVI.

OF THE GRECIAN SECTS.

It appears that, among the Egyptians, the Persians, the Chaldeans, and the Indians, there was but one sect of philosophers. The priests of all these nations, being of a particular race, or kind, that, which was called wisdom, belonged only to that race. Their sacred language, of which the common people were ignorant, rendered them the sole depositaries of science. But in Greece,—more free and happy Greece,—the acquisition of knowledge, was open to every one; and every one gave free vent to his ideas; which rendered the Greeks the most ingenious and skilful, of all the people of the earth. From the same cause, the English, of the present day, are the most enlightened of all people: because, in England, the minds of men are free, and they may think with impunity.

The Stoicks worshipped one universal soul, or spirit, of the world, in which the souls of all became again involved. The Epicureans denied that there was any soul; and acknowledged none

but physical principles. They maintained, that the gods did not interfere in the affairs of men; and the Epicureans were suffered to enjoy their opinions, in peace; as they left the gods to them.

From the time of Thales, to the time of Plato and Aristotle, the schools resounded with philosophical disputes; which, at once, disclose the sagacity, and folly, of the human mind; its power, and weakness. They, almost always, argued, without comprehending each other; as has been, but too frequently, the case with us, since the thirteenth century: at which time, we began to be a reasoning people.

The reputation which Plato enjoyed, is not at all surprising; all the philosophers were unintelligible, and he, equally so, with the rest: but, Plato expressed himself, with more dignity and eloquence. What success, however, would attend him, in the present day, if he appeared among men of common sense, and were to address them in these beautiful words, extracted from his *Timæus*? “Of the substance indivisible and divisible, God composed a third kind of substance, between the two, partaking both of the nature of *itself and the other*; then taking these three natures together, he mixed them all together, into one form only, and compelled the nature of the soul to blend with the nature of *itself*, and having mixed them with the substance, and of these three having made an agent, or member,

“ he divided it into proper portions ; each of these
“ portions partook of *itself and of the other* ; and
“ of the substance he made his division.”

He subsequently gives us the same enlightened exposition of Pythagoras’s works. It must be admitted, that every rational and enlightened individual, who had read “ Locke on Human Understanding,” would intreat Plato to go to his school.

Notwithstanding this bombast, and nonsense, of the worthy Plato, we, here and there, meet with some very beautiful ideas, in his works. The Greeks, had so much genius, that they abused it. But, what redounds to their honour, is, that none of their governments ever imposed any restraint upon the thoughts, and opinions, of men. There is only Socrates, of whom it is said, that his opinions cost him his life ; and he was less the victim of his opinions, than of a violent party, formed against him. The Athenians, indeed, compelled him to drink the juice of hemlock ; but, we know, how very much they repented of it ; and, that they punished his accusers, and erected a temple, in honour of him, whom they had condemned. Athens gave full scope, and perfect liberty, not only to philosophy, but to every variety of religion.

It is unquestionable, that the Greeks acknowledged a Supreme Being ; in common with all the nations, of whom we have spoken. Their

Zeus—their Jupiter, was the master of gods and men. This opinion underwent no change, from the time of Orpheus; we find it repeated again, a hundred times, by Homer: the other gods were all inferior. They may be compared to the Periscii of the Persians, or the Genii of the other Eastern nations. All the philosophers, except the Stratonicians and Epicureans, acknowledged the Supreme Architect of the world, the Demiourgos.

| We need not fear, of giving too much weight to this great historical truth: that human nature, in its infancy, adored some power, some being, who was considered far superior to mortals; whether he were represented in the sun, moon, or stars; and human nature, in a state of cultivation, worshipped (notwithstanding all its weaknesses and errors) One Supreme God, the Lord of the elements, and of the other gods; and that all civilized nations, from India to the extremity of Europe, believed, in general, in a life to come; although several sects of philosophers maintained contrary opinions.

CHAPTER XXVII.

OF ZALEUCUS, AND SOME OTHER LEGISLATORS.

EVERY moralist and legislator may be challenged to produce any thing more beautiful and useful than the exordium of the laws of Zaleucus, who lived before the time of Pythagoras, and was the first magistrate of the Locrians. “ Every citizen
 “ must be convinced of the existence of a divinity.
 “ It is sufficient to observe the order and harmony
 “ of the universe, to be convinced that chance
 “ could not have produced it. Every one should
 “ subdue his soul; purify it; and discard all evil
 “ from it; from a conviction, that God cannot be
 “ well, or properly; served, by the perverse and
 “ wicked; and that *He* is not like those miserable
 “ mortals, who suffer themselves to be entreat-
 “ ed by magnificent ceremonies, and sumptuous
 “ offerings. Virtue, and a constant desire to do
 “ good, can alone please *Him*. Let every one,
 “ therefore, endeavour to be just, in his principles
 “ and practice; for, by such conduct only, can he
 “ be beloved of the Divinity. Every one should

“dread the commission of any action, which leads
“to infamy and disgrace; much more, than that,
“which leads to poverty. He must be consider-
“ed the best citizen, who abandons fortune for
“justice; but those, whose violent passions in-
“cite them to evil—men, women, citizens, inha-
“bitants in general, should be warned to remember
“the Gods; and, the severe judgments which
“they exercise, against the guilty: let them call
“to remembrance, the hour of death; that fatal
“hour, which awaits us all; when the remem-
“brance of our faults, will bring with it remorse,
“and, the vain repentance, of not having regu-
“lated all our actions by the rules of equity.

“Every one should so conduct himself during
“every moment of his life, as if that moment were
“his last; but, if an evil genius entices him to sin,
“let him fly to the foot of the altar, and pray to
“Heaven, to drive far from him this evil genius;
“let him, above all, seek the society of just and
“virtuous men; whose good counsels will re-
“claim him, and enable him to retrace the
“paths of virtue, by holding up to his view, the
“goodness of God, and his vengeance.”

No! there is nothing, in all antiquity, to be preferred to this simple and sublime piece; dictated by reason and virtue; stripped of all enthusiasm, and, of that extravagant colouring, which good sense disavows.

Charondas, who succeeded Zaleucus, expressed

himself in the same way. The Platos, Ciceros, and divine Antonines, subsequently, held no other language; and similar doctrines are expounded in a hundred places, in the works of Julian; who had the misfortune to abandon the Christian religion, but who did so much honour to the natural;—Julian, at once the scandal of our church, and the glory of the Roman empire. “We ought
“ (says he) to instruct the ignorant, and not to
“ punish them; to pity, and not hate them. The
“ duty of an emperor is to imitate God; and to
“ imitate him, is to have as few wants, and to do
“ as much good, as possible.” Let those, therefore, who insult and reproach antiquity, learn to know it: let them not confound wise legislators, with the tellers of idle stories, and the relaters of fables; let them learn to distinguish between the laws of the wisest of magistrates, and the ridiculous customs of the people; let them not say, they invented superstitious ceremonies, and were lavish of false oracles, and sham prodigies, and therefore all the magistrates of Greece and Rome, who tolerated them, were blind deceivers and deceived. It would be the same as saying, there are Bonzes in China which deceive the populace, and therefore the wise and good Confucius was a miserable imposter. In an age so enlightened as ours, we ought to blush at the frequent declamations of the ignorant, against those wise men, whom we ought to imitate and not to calumniate.

Are not the common people, of every country, weak, superstitious, and foolish? Have there not been fanatics in the country of the Chancellor de l'Hôpital, of Charon, of Montagne, of de la Motte le Vayer, of Descartes, Bayle, Fontenelle, and Montesquieu? And are there not Methodists, Moravians, Millenarians, and fanatics of every description, in the country which had the honour and happiness of giving birth to the Chancellor Bacon, and to those immortal geniuses, Newton, and Locke, and numerous other great men?

CHAPTER XXVIII.

OF BACCHUS.

WITH the exception of those fables which are clearly allegorical, such as those of the Muses, of Venus, the Graces, Love, Zephyrus, and Flora, with a few others of the same species, all the rest are but a collection of idle stories, which have no other merit than that of having furnished Ovid and Quinault with materials for some beautiful verses, and exercised the pencil of some of our best painters. But, there is one, which claims the attention of those who delight in the researches of antiquity, and that is, “The fable of Bacchus.”

This Bacchus, or Back, or Backos, or Dionisios, the son of God, was he, or not, a real personage? So many nations speak of him, as well as of Hercules, and they have celebrated so many different Herculesees and Bacchuses, that we may very reasonably conclude, that in point of fact, there have been one Bacchus, and one Hercules.

One thing is certain, that in Egypt, Asia, and Greece, Bacchus, as well as Hercules, was acknowledged as a demi-god; their feasts were cele-

brated, and miracles attributed to them; and mysteries were instituted in the name of Bacchus, long before the Jewish books were known.

It is sufficiently well known, that the Jewish books were not communicated, or made known, to strangers, until the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus, about two hundred and thirty years before our era. Now, long before this, the east and west resounded with the orgies of Bacchus. The verses ascribed to the ancient Orpheus, celebrate the conquests and good deeds of this supposed demi-god. His history is so ancient, that the fathers of the church have entertained an idea, that Bacchus, and Noah, were the same: because Bacchus and Noah were reputed to have both cultivated the vine.

Herodotus, in referring to ancient opinions, says, that Bacchus was an Egyptian, brought up in Arabia Felix. The Orphick verses relate, that he was preserved from the waters, in a little box, or chest; that he was called Misem in commemoration of this event; that he was instructed in all the secrets of the gods; that he had a rod which he changed into a serpent at his pleasure; that he passed through the Red Sea dry-shod, as Hercules subsequently did, in his goblet, through the straits of Abila and Calpe; and that when he went into India, he, and his army, enjoyed the light of the sun during the night; moreover, it is said that he touched, with his magic rod, the waters of the great rivers Orontes and Hydaspes; upon

which, those waters flowed back, and left him a free passage. It is even said that he arrested the course of the sun and moon. He wrote his laws on two tables of stone. He was anciently represented with horns, or rays, issuing from his head.

It is not at all to be wondered at, that the preceding description of Bacchus should lead many learned men, and particularly Bochart and Huet, in modern times, to assert, that Bacchus is a copy, or representation, of Moses and of Joshua. Every thing combines to favour the resemblance : for Bacchus was called, (among the Egyptians,) Arsaph ; and among the names which the fathers have given to Moses, we find that, of Osasirph.

Between those two histories, which seem to resemble each other in so many points, it is not to be doubted, that that of Moses is the truth, and that of Bacchus, the fable. But, it appears, that this fable was known among the different nations, a long time before the history of Moses reached them. No Grecian author cited Moses before Longinus, who lived in the reign of the emperor Aurelian ; but all had previously celebrated Bacchus.

It seems impossible, that the Greeks could have taken their ideas of Bacchus, from the book of the Jewish law ; which, they neither understood, nor of which they had the least knowledge ; a book, besides, so rare, that, among the Jews themselves, in the reign of king Josias, but

one copy could be found; a book, moreover, almost wholly lost, during the captivity of the Jews in Chaldea, and other parts of Asia; but which was again restored, by Esdras, in the flourishing times of Athens; when the mysteries of Bacchus had long been instituted.

God, therefore, permitted that the spirit of lying should divulge the absurdities of the life of Bacchus, to a hundred nations; before the Spirit of Truth made known the life of Moses, to any people, except the Jews.

The learned Bishop of Avranches, struck with so astonishing a resemblance, did not hesitate to pronounce, that Moses was, not only Bacchus, but, the Osiris of the Egyptians. He even adds, (to unite contradictions) that Moses was also their Typhon,—that is to say, that he was, at one and the same time, their good and bad principle: the protector, and the enemy; the god and devil, recognized by the Egyptians.

Moses, according to this learned man, was the same as Zoroaster. He was Esculapius, Amphion, Apollo, Faunus, Janus, Perseus, Romulus, Vertumnus, and finally, Adonis and Priapus. The proof that he was Adonis, is the following line in Virgil:—

“ Et formosus oves ad flumina pavit Adonis.”

“ And the beautiful Adonis was a keeper of sheep.”

Moses also kept sheep somewhere in Arabia.—

The proof of his being Priapus, is still better: it is, because Priapus was sometimes represented with an ass, and the Jews were reputed to worship the ass. The learned Huet adds, as the highest confirmation, that the rod of Moses may very well be compared to the sceptre of Priapus:—

“Sceptrum Priapo tribuitur, virga Mosi.”

This is what Huet calls his demonstration. It is not, in truth, very geometrical; and we can readily believe that he was ashamed of it, in his latter years: and that he remembered his demonstration, when he wrote his treatise on the weakness of the human mind, and of the uncertainty of its powers.

CHAPTER XXIX.

OF GRECIAN METAMORPHOSES, — AS COMPILED
BY OVID.

THE opinion of the migration of souls, naturally leads to metamorphoses, as we have already observed. Every idea which strikes the mind, and amuses it, quickly finds its way through the world. As soon as you have persuaded me that my soul may enter into the body of a horse, you will not have much difficulty in making me believe, that my body may be changed into that of a horse, also.

The compilation of *Metamorphoses* by Ovid, of which we have already spoken, would not, in the least, astonish a Pythagorean, a Bramin, a Chaldean, or an Egyptian. The gods were transformed to animals in ancient Egypt. Dorceto, or Dercetis, was metamorphosed into a fish, in Syria; and Semiramis into a dove, at Babylon. The Jews, in times very posterior to this, write, that Nabuchodonosor was transformed into an ox, without reckoning the wife of the unfortunate Lot, who became a pillar of salt. May not all the

apparitions of the gods, and the genii, under the human form, be considered a real, though transient, metamorphosis?

A god can have but little communication with us, unless he appears in a human form. It is certainly said that Jupiter assumed the figure of a beautiful swan, to enjoy Leda; but instances of of this kind are very rare: and, in every religion, the divinity always assumes the human form, when he comes to give orders. It would be rather difficult for us to understand the voice of the gods, if they presented themselves to us in the shape of bears and crocodiles.

In fine, the gods metamorphosed themselves almost every where: and, as soon as we became acquainted with the secrets of magic, we, also, metamorphosed ourselves. Several persons, worthy of credit, changed themselves into wolves. The word "*were-wolf*,"* still attests, among us, the existence of this metamorphosis.

That which contributes greatly to the belief of all these transmutations, and all, and every prodigy, of the same kind and species, is, that we cannot circumstantially prove their impossibility. We can urge no argument against any one who should say to us, "A god came yesterday to my house, in the form of a beautiful young man, and my daughter, nine months hence, will give birth

* *Loup-garou*.

“ to a beautiful child, which the god has conde-
 “ scended to make for her. My brother, who pre-
 “ sumed to doubt this fact, has been transformed
 “ into a wolf, and is actually running about howl-
 “ ing in the woods.” — If the daughter be really
 brought to bed, and if the man, transformed into a
 wolf, affirms that he has actually been subjected
 to that metamorphosis, how can you demonstrate
 that the thing is not true? You would have no
 other resource, than to cite before the judges, the
 young man who counterfeited the god, and by
 whom the girl was pregnant; and to cause the
 uncle, *were-wolf*, to be watched, that you may
 produce evidence of his imposture: but the family
 will not subject itself to this examination; and
 they, and all the priests of the district, will re-
 proach you with being a profane and ignorant
 creature. They will point out to you, that as a
 caterpillar becomes a butterfly, so a man, with
 equal ease, may be changed into a beast; and, if
 you attempt to dispute it, you will be impeached
 before the inquisition of the country, as an impi-
 ous wretch, who believes neither in *were-wolves*,
 nor in the gods, who get young maids with child.

CHAPTER XXX.

OF IDOLATRY.

AFTER reading all that has been written on the subject of Idolatry, we can find nothing which gives us any correct notions of it, or precisely defines what it is. Locke appears to be the first, who taught men to define the words which they pronounced; and, not to speak at random. The term which answers to the word Idolatry, is not found in any ancient language. It is an expression of the Greeks, of the latter ages; and was never brought into use, until the second century of our era. It signifies “The adoration, or worship of Images.” It is a term of reproach; — an expression of abuse, or insult. No people have ever taken upon them the title of “Idolaters.” No government has ever commanded, or ordained, that an image should be worshipped as the “Supreme God of all Nature.” The ancient Chaldeans, Arabians, and Persians, had not, for a length of time, either images, or temples. How can those who worshipped the sun, the stars, and

fire, as emblems of the Divinity, be called idolaters? They revered what they saw. But assuredly, to worship the sun and stars, is very different from worshipping an image carved by an artisan; we may assert it to be an erroneous form of worship, but it is not idolatry.

We will suppose it possible, that the Egyptians really worshipped the dog Anubis, and the ox Apis; that they were fools enough not to look upon them, as animals consecrated to the Divinity; and, as emblems of the benefits which their Isheth, or Isis, conferred upon men; or to believe, even, that this dog and ox were animated by celestial rays; it is evident that this is not the worship of an image. A beast is not an idol.

It cannot, for a moment, be questioned, that men had adopted objects of worship, long before there were any sculptors; and, it is clear, that men, so ancient, cannot, with any propriety, be called idolaters. It remains then to be known, if those, who eventually caused statues, or images, to be placed in temples, and who ordained the reverence, or worship, of those statues, were called “worshippers of images,”—and their people, also, “worshippers of images.” We certainly cannot discover any thing of the kind, in any record, or monument of antiquity, extant.

But then comes the question. — Although they did not assume the title of idolaters, were they so, in point of fact? Were people commanded to be-

lieve, that the brazen image, which represented the fantastick figure of Bel, at Babylon, was the master, the God, the Creator, of the world? Was the figure, or image, of Jupiter, Jupiter himself? Is it not, (if we may be allowed to draw a comparison between our holy religion, and the customs of the ancients,) the same, as saying, that we worship the image of the Father everlasting, in the form of an old man with a long beard: — or the images of a woman and a child, and a dove? these, forming the emblematical ornaments of our temples. But, we have so little adoration for them, that if these images happen to be of wood, and fall to decay, we use them for firewood, and erect others in their places. They are merely significant emblems, speaking to the eyes and the imagination. The Turks, and the Protestant reformers, say, that the Catholics are idolaters; but the Catholics loudly protest against, and deny, the accusation.

It is impossible, in fact, for any one really to worship an image; or to believe, that that image is the Supreme God. There was only one Jupiter, but, there were thousands of his statues. Now, this Jupiter, who was believed to launch the thunder, was supposed to dwell in the clouds, or on Mount Olympus, or in the planet which bears his name. His images then, did not launch thunder, nor dwell in the clouds, nor in a planet, nor on Mount Olympus. All prayers were addressed to

the immortal gods ; and, assuredly, statues were not considered immortal.

It is but too true, that knaves and impostors have inspired the weak and superstitious, with a belief, that statues and images had spoken. And numbers of the lower order of people, among us, have possessed, and do possess, the same credulity. But, among no people whatever, were these absurdities considered as the religion of the state. Some imbecile old woman, perhaps, may not have been able to distinguish between the god and the statue ; but that, will not warrant us, in affirming, that the government entertains similar opinions to this old woman. The magistrates wished the people to reverence the representations of the gods, whom they worshipped ; that their attention might be fixed by these outward and visible signs. This is precisely what is done, in one half of Europe. There are figures, representative of God the Father, as an old man ; and, it is well known that God the Father is not an old man. There are many images of different saints, whom we are taught to venerate, and, we are well aware, that those saints are not God the Father.

In the same way, if we may venture to say as much, the ancients did not mistake, nor had they so little discernment, as not to be enabled to distinguish between the demi-gods, the gods, and the God of gods. If these ancients were idolaters, the people of one half of Christendom are

idolaters also ; and if the latter are not so, neither were the nations of antiquity.

In a word, there is not, in all antiquity, a single instance of a poet, a philosopher, or a statesman, representing any people as worshippers of stone, marble, brass, or wood. The proofs to the contrary are innumerable. Idolatrous nations, therefore, are something like sorcerers ; people speak of them, but there never were any such in existence.

Some commentator has concluded that the statue of Priapus was actually worshipped, because Horace, in making this bug-bear speak, causes it to say — “ I was formerly the trunk of a tree ; — the artisan, undetermined whether he should make a god, or a joint-stool, of me, finally resolved to make me a god,” &c. This commentator cites the prophet Baruch, to prove, that in the time of Horace, the statue of Priapus was worshipped as a real divinity. He does not perceive, that Horace is making a jest, both of the pretended god and his statue. It may be possible that, one of the servant-maids, in seeing this enormous figure, might conceive there was something divine in it ; but it will not, assuredly, be pretended, that all those wooden figures of Priapus, with which the gardens were filled for the purpose of driving away the birds, were regarded as the Creators of the world !

It is said that Moses, notwithstanding the Di-

vine decree, to make no representation of either man or beast, set up a serpent of brass; which, by the bye, was an imitation of the serpent of silver, carried by the priests of Egypt in their processions; but, although this serpent was made to heal the bites of real serpents, yet, the people did not worship it. Solomon placed two Cherubims in the temple; but, these Cherubims were not looked upon as gods. If then, both in the Jewish temples, and ours, people have had respect for statues, without being idolaters, why cast so many reproaches on other nations? Either we ought to absolve them, or they, to accuse us.

CHAPTER XXXI.

OF ORACLES.

IT is evident that we can know nothing of the future ; because, we cannot know that, which does not exist ; but, it is equally clear, that one may conjecture the issue, or probability, of an event.

For instance, you behold a numerous and well disciplined army advance, in an advantageous position, and conducted by a skilful chief, against a rash and imprudent commander, accompanied with but few troops, badly armed, badly posted, and one half of whom you know will betray him ; you foretel that this commander will be beaten.

You have remarked that some young man and woman are desperately in love with each other ; you have observed them both coming out of the paternal mansion, and promenading together : you predict that, before long, the young woman will be pregnant ; and you will not be much mistaken. All predictions come within the verge of probability. There is not therefore any nation which has not had its predictions, and which predictions have been duly accomplished. The most celebrated,

and best attested, is that which was made by the treacherous Flavius Josephus, to Vespasian, and Titus his son; the conquerors of the Jews. He observes, that Titus and Vespasian are greatly beloved by the Roman armies in the East; and that, Nero is detested by all the empire. In order to gain the good graces of Vespasian, he ventures to predict to him, in the name of the God of the Jews, that he, and his son, will be emperors. They became so, in fact; but it is evident that Josephus ran no risk by his prediction. For, if Vespasian, in aspiring to the empire, should perish in the attempt, he will not be in a condition to punish Josephus; if he becomes emperor, he rewards him; and whilst he does not reign, he has hopes of doing so. Vespasian tells Josephus, that if he were a prophet, he ought to have foretold the taking of Jotaphat, which he had in vain defended against the Roman army. Josephus replies, that, in fact, he had foretold it; which was not very surprising: what commander, in sustaining a siege, shut up in a small place, against a large and powerful army, could not predict that the place would be taken?

It was not very difficult for any one to foresee, that he would acquire the respect, as well as the money, of the multitude, by acting the prophet; and that the credulity of the people would be a fruitful revenue to him, who knew how to deceive them. There were diviners and conjurors in all parts; but it was not sufficient for them to foretel

events in their own names ; they went farther, and prophesied in the name of the divinity : and from the time of the prophets of Egypt, who were called seers, to the time of Ulpian, prophet of the favorite of the deified Emperor Adrian, there has been a prodigious number of holy quacks, and religious impostors, who, for the purpose of deceiving men, have pretended to speak, and to prophesy, in the name of their gods. It is well known by what means they did, and could succeed ; sometimes by an ambiguous answer, which they subsequently explained in a manner most conducive to their object ; and sometimes, by bribing the servants, and secretly enquiring of them, an account of the conduct and adventures of the devotees who came to consult them. Some silly bigot would be quite astonished, on being told by an impostor, in the name of God, of some of the most private actions of his life.

These prophets had the reputation of knowing the past, the present, and the future. This is the eulogy which Homer bestows on the celebrated soothsayer Calchas. It will not be necessary to add any thing here, to what has been said by the learned Vandale, and his judicious compiler, Fontenelle, respecting oracles. They have, with great sagacity and discernment, unveiled whole ages of imposture ; and the Jesuit Balthus evinced very little sense, or a great deal of malignity, by maintaining, in opposition to them, the truth of the pa-

gan oracles, upon the principles of the Christian religion. It is absolutely an insult to, and an abuse of, the Deity, to pretend that He, the God of goodness and truth, had let loose devils from hell, to come upon earth, to do that, which he does not do himself,—render oracles. Now, either these devils spoke truth, and in such case it was impossible not to believe them; and God himself, by advancing the cause of, and supporting all false religions by daily miracles, would thus throw the universe into the arms of his enemies: or, they spoke falsely; and in that case, we must suppose these devils were let loose by God, for the purpose of imposing upon, and deceiving mankind. A more absurd, or ridiculous opinion, could not possibly be entertained.

The most celebrated oracle was that of Delphos. At first they made choice of young innocent girls, as most proper to be inspired; that is, to utter, or give out, faithfully, the bombast and nonsense which the priests dictated to them. The young Pythia was mounted on a tripod, placed near the hole of a subterraneous cavity, whence issued the prophetic exhalation. The divine spirit entered beneath the robes of the Pythia, in a way perfectly human. But, it having unfortunately happened, that some votary offered violence to, and carried off, one of the pretty Pythias, they, from that time, chose none but old women to perform the office; and we believe, that on this account,

the oracle of Delphos, lost much of its former fame.

Divinations and auguries were a species of oracles; and are, we believe, of much greater antiquity; for, many ceremonies, and much time, are necessary to the establishment of an oracle; in which, both priests and temples, are indispensable: but, nothing was more easy, than to tell fortunes in a cross-road. This art subdivided itself in a thousand different ways; predictions were made on the flight of birds, the liver of sheep, by the plaits or folds in the palm of the hand, by circles drawn on the ground, by water, by fire, by small flint-stones, by magic wands, by every thing which imagination could invent: and often, even by a pure enthusiasm, which bid defiance to all rules. But who was the inventor of this celebrated art? It was the first knave who encountered an imbecile adapted to his purpose.

The greater part of these predictions were something like those of the Liege Almanack. “A great man will die; there will be shipwrecks.” If the judge, or magistrate, of a village happens to die in the course of the year, this, (for that village,) is the great man whose death was foretold. If a bark of fishermen are upset and drowned, these are the great shipwrecks, so gravely predicted. The author of the Liege Almanack is declared to be a sorcerer, whether his predictions are accomplished or not; for if some event happens to favour

them, his magic powers are demonstrated; but, should things prove contrary, then the prediction is applied to some other event, and the allegory clears him.

The Liege Almanack has predicted that a people from the north will come and destroy every thing; they do not, however, make their appearance; but a north wind destroys the vines of the country, and this is what was foretold by Matthew Lansberg. Will any one pretend to dispute his great powers and wisdom? The Hawkers will immediately denounce him as a bad citizen, and the astrologers will call him a person of no mind, and a wicked and mischievous reasoner.

The Sunnite Mahometans have made great use of this method, in their explanations of the Koran of Mahomet. The star, Aldebaran, was held in great veneration by the Arabians; it signifies, "The eye of the Bull;" which means, that the eye of Mahomet would enlighten the Arabians, and that, like a bull, he would butt his enemies with his horns.

The Acacia tree was also held in veneration by the Arabians; they made great hedges of it, which protected the harvests from the scorching heat of the sun; thence, Mahomet is the Acacia, which extends his protecting shadow over the earth. Sensible Turks laugh at these subtle foole-ries; young women do not bestow their reflection upon them; and old women, believe them; and

he who should publicly declare to a Dervise, that he taught nonsense, would run the risk of being impaled alive. Some learned men have met with the history of their times in the Iliad, and in the Odyssey; but these learned men have not been quite so fortunate as the commentators of the Alcoran.

The most brilliant and conspicuous function of the oracles was that of ensuring victory in time of war. Each army, and each nation, had its oracles; which, respectively, promised triumph and victory. One of the two parties must, infallibly, have received a true oracle. The vanquished party, who had been deceived, attributed the defeat to some fault committed against the gods, after the oracle had been rendered; and he hopes, that another time, the oracle will be duly accomplished. In this manner, have almost all the world cherished illusions and fallacies. Scarcely one, among the many nations and people of the earth, but what has preserved in its archives, or possessed, by oral tradition, some prediction, which ensured to it the conquest of the world; that is to say, of the neighbouring nations; no conqueror has appeared, who had not been distinctly foretold, immediately after his conquests. The Jews even, though shut up, as it were, in a little corner of the earth, almost unknown, between Anti-libanus, Arabia Deserta, and Arabia

Petræa, had similar hopes and expectations to other nations. They cherished the idea of becoming the masters and lords of the universe; founded on a thousand oracles, which we interpret in a mystical sense, but which they understood literally.

CHAPTER XXXII .

OF THE GREEK SIBYLS, AND OF THEIR INFLUENCE UPON OTHER NATIONS.

WHEN almost all the earth was filled with oracles, there arose some old maidens, who, without being attached to any party, or temple, bethought themselves of prophesying on their own account. They were called Sibyls, a Greek word, of the Laconian dialect, which signifies—"The counsel of God." Antiquity reckons ten principal ones, in different countries. The story is well known, of the old woman who came to Rome, for the purpose of bringing to the elder Tarquin, the nine books of the ancient Sibyl of Cumæa. As Tarquin haggled too much, the old woman threw the first six books in the fire; and then, demanded as much for the remaining three books, as she had previously asked for the whole nine. Tarquin complied with the demand. They were, it is said, preserved at Rome, until the reign of Sylla, and were burnt in a conflagration of the Capitol. But how could they dispense with these prophecies of the Sibyls? Three senators were sent to Erythea, a city of Greece, where was very carefully pre-

served, a thousand verses, in bad Greek, which were reputed to be of the manufacture of the Erythæan Sibyl. Every one was desirous of having copies of them. The Erythæan Sibyl had foretold every thing. Her prophecies were like those of Nostradamus, among us. They did not fail, on every extraordinary occasion, to invent some Greek verse; which was, of course, attributed to the Sibyl.

Augustus, who feared (and not without reason) that some verses in this rhapsody would be discovered, authorising conspiracies, &c. forbade, on pain of death, any Roman to have in his possession, Sibylline verses of any description. A prohibition, worthy of a suspicious tyrant, who preserved, by address and cunning, the power which he had usurped by crime.

The Sibylline verses, however, were more valued than ever; now, that they were prohibited from reading them. They must, of course, contain the truth; since, they were so strictly concealed from the people.

Virgil, in his eclogue on the birth of Pollio, Marcellus, or Drusus, did not fail to cite the authority of the Sibyl of Cumæa, who had plainly foretold that this child, who died shortly after, should restore the golden age. It was then asserted, that the Erythæan Sibyl had prophesied, as well as the Cumæan. The newly born infant, belonging either to Augustus, or his favourite, was

sure to have been foretold by the Sibyl. Besides, predictions are never made but for the great: the common people are not worth the trouble of them.

These oracles of the Sibyls therefore, were always in very great repute. The first Christians, too far led away by a false zeal, thought they might as well forge similar oracles; and be thus enabled to fight the Gentiles with their own weapons. Hermas and St. Justin are reputed to be the first, who, unhappily, practised this imposture. St. Justin cites the oracles of the Sibyl of Cumæa, rendered by a Christian who had assumed the name of Istapus; and pretended, that this Sibyl had lived from the time of the deluge. St. Clement of Alexandria, in his *Stromates*, assures us that the apostle St. Paul recommends in his Epistles, “the perusal of the Sibylline books, which had manifestly foretold the birth of the Son of God.” This epistle of St. Paul must, however, be lost; for we do not find these words, nor any thing like them, in any of St. Paul’s Epistles now extant. In these days, the Christians appear to have possessed an infinite number of books, which are lost to us. Such as the prophecies of Jallabash, Seth, Enoch, and of Cham, Kam, or Ham; the Penitence of Adam; the History of Zechariah, the father of St. John; the Evangelists, or Gospels of the Egyptians, St. Peter, Andrew, James, and of Eve; the Apocalypse of Adam; the letters of Jesus Christ, and a hundred other writings, of which, but few

fragments remain ; buried in the rubbish of publications, which no person considers worthy of a perusal.

The Christian Church was, at this time, divided into societies, the one Judaizing, and the other the reverse, or Non-Judaizing.—These were subdivided into many others. Any one possessed of sufficient talent, wrote in behalf of his own party. There were more than fifty gospels, up to the time of the Council of Nice ; of which, there remain, at present, those only of the Virgin, of the Infancy, and of Nicodemus. They were very particular in forging verses, which they attributed to the ancient Sibyls. And indeed, such was the respect which the people had for these Sibylline oracles, that it was considered necessary to have this strange support, to prop up, and strengthen, the then infant state of Christianity. Not only were Greek Sibylline verses manufactured, which announced Jesus Christ, but these verses were written in acrosticks, so that the letters of these words, “Jesous Chreistos iös Soter” followed in regular succession at the commencement of each line.—It is in one of these poesies that we find this prediction :—

- “ With five loaves and two fishes,
- “ He will feed five-thousand men in the desert,
- “ And in gathering up the fragments that remain,
- “ He will fill twelve baskets.

This even was not enough ; it was considered possible to wrest, in favour of Christianity, the

sense or meaning of the verses of the fourth eclogue of Virgil :—

“ Ultima Cumæi venit jam carminis ætas ;

“ Jam nova progenies cœlo demittitur alto.”

“ The times of the Sibyls are at last arrived,

“ A new progeny descends from above the skies.”

This opinion was so current in the first ages of the church, that the emperor Constantine strongly maintained, and supported it. When an emperor speaks, he must, of course, be in the right. Virgil, for a long time, had the credit of being a prophet. In fine, people were so convinced of the truth of these Sybilline oracles, that we have, in one of our hymns, which is not very ancient, these two very remarkable lines :

“ Solvet sæclum in favilla

“ Teste David cum Sibylla.”

“ The world to ashes he will reduce,

“ In proof—David and the Sibyl we adduce.”

Among the predictions ascribed to the Sibyls, that was particularly valued, which related to the reign of a thousand years ; and which the fathers of the church adopted, even to the time of Theodosius the Second.

This reign of Jesus Christ for a thousand years upon earth, was originally founded on the prophecy of St. Luke, (chapter xxi.) a prophecy but very indifferently understood :—“ That Jesus
“ Christ would come in the clouds, with power

“ and great glory, before the (then) present generation had passed away.”—The generation passed away;—but St. Paul had also said in his first epistle to the Thessalonians, chapter iv.—“ We declare unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep.

“ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

“ Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

It is very strange that St. Paul should say that the Lord himself had spoken to him; for Paul, far from having been one of the disciples of Christ, was, for a long time, one of his greatest persecutors. However that may be, it is also said in the twentieth chapter of Revelations that the just “ shall reign (upon earth) a thousand years with Jesus Christ.”—People were, therefore, in constant expectation that Jesus Christ would descend from heaven, to establish his reign, and to rebuild Jerusalem; in which, the Christians were to live, in joy and happiness, with the Patriarchs. This new Jerusalem was thus announced in the Revelations of St. John:—

“ I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem,
 “ coming down from God out of heaven, prepared
 “ as a bride adorned for her husband. It
 “ had a wall great and high, and twelve gates, and
 “ at the gates twelve angels. And the walls
 “ of the city had twelve foundations, and in them
 “ the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb.
 “ He that talked with me had a golden
 “ reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof,
 “ and the wall thereof. The city lieth four-
 “ square, and the length is as large as the breadth;
 “ and he measured the city with the reed twelve
 “ thousand furlongs. The length, and the breadth,
 “ and the height of it are equal. And he
 “ measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty
 “ and four cubits. The wall of it was of
 “ jasper, and the city was pure gold,” &c. &c.
 They might have contented themselves with this prediction; but nevertheless, they preferred having it confirmed by the Sibyls; to whom they ascribe nearly the same words. This opinion was so firmly engraved on the minds of all, that St. Justin, in his dialogue against Tryphon, says—
 “ That he is perfectly convinced of its truth, and
 “ that Jesus Christ will appear in this new Jerusalem, to eat and to drink with his disciples.”—
 St. Irenæus, also, was so decidedly of this opinion, that he ascribes to St. John the Evangelist these words.—“ In the new Jerusalem, the root of every
 “ vine shall produce ten thousand branches, every

“ branch ten thousand shoots, every shoot ten
 “ thousand bunches, every bunch ten thousand
 “ grapes, and every grape twenty-five measures of
 “ wine. And when one of the holy vintagers
 “ shall pluck a grape, the grape next to it shall
 “ say, take me, I am better than he,” &c.

It was not enough that the Sibyl had foretold all these wonders, but their accomplishment must needs be witnessed also. According to Tertullian, the new Jerusalem was seen to descend from heaven, for forty successive nights.

Tertullian thus expresses himself:—“ We confess that the kingdom is promised to us for a
 “ thousand years upon earth, after the resurrection in the city of Jerusalem brought down from
 “ heaven here below.”

It is thus, that, in all ages, the love of the marvellous, and the desire of hearing and relating wonderful and uncommon things, has perverted common sense, and banished reason. It is thus that fraud has been resorted to, when power and authority were wanting. The Christian religion, notwithstanding the mass of fraud and error mixed up with it, was in other respects, founded on so rational and so solid a basis, that it could not be shaken. The pure gold was disengaged from all this alloy, and the church arrived, by degrees to its present state of perfection.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

OF MIRACLES.

LET us always bear in mind, and particularly direct our attention to, the nature and constitution of man. He is delighted only with the wonderful and the extraordinary; and, so true is this, that as soon as the beautiful and the sublime becomes common, it ceases to be beautiful and sublime. People will have the marvellous, in all its varieties; and, they push this extraordinary feeling, even to impossibilities. Ancient history resembles that of the great cabbage, much larger than a house; and of the pot, made to cook the cabbage in, much larger than a church. What definition shall we apply to the word "Miracle," which, originally, meant something admirable, or worthy of admiration? We have already said, it is that which nature cannot work, or perform. Something contrary to the order of nature, and all its laws. Thus, the Englishman who notified ~~to~~ the inhabitants of London, that he would put the whole of his body into a quart bottle, announced a miracle. And, in former times, legendaries would not have been want-

ing, to affirm the accomplishment of this prodigy, if it would have added to the revenue of the convent.

We believe, without doubt or hesitation, all those true miracles worked, in the manner stated, in our holy religion; and among the Jews, whose religion laid the foundation of ours. We are only speaking here, of other nations; and we presume to argue, only, according to the rules of good sense, always submitting ourselves to the light of revelation.

Whoever is not enlightened by faith, can only look upon a miracle, as a contravention of the eternal laws of nature. To him, it will appear neither possible nor probable, that God should derange, and throw into disorder, his own proper work. He knows that every thing in nature is united by chains, which nothing can break or destroy. He knows, that God, being immutable, his laws must be so, also; and that not a single wheel of the great machine can be stopped, without the whole of nature being deranged.

If Jupiter, in sleeping with Alcmena, makes a night of twenty-four hours, instead of twelve, it becomes a necessary consequence that the earth stops in its course, and remains stationary for twelve whole hours. But, as the same phenomena of the heavens re-appear, on the following night, it must have also happened, that the moon, and all the planets, were arrested in their course,

also. Here we have a great revolution in all the celestial orbs, in behalf of a woman of Bœotia!

At the expiration of a certain time, a dead man, they say, is raised up. Very well! it follows, of course, that all the imperceptible parts of his body, exhaled in the air, and which the winds had carried far away, must return, each, to its proper place; and also, that the worms, birds, and other animals, which had fed on the substance of the dead man's body, must, each, restore the parts they have respectively taken. The worms which had fattened on the entrails of the dead man, have, (we will suppose,) been eaten by swallows,—the swallows by magpies, — the magpies by hawks,— and the hawks by vultures. Each of these must restore, precisely, what he has taken, belonging to the dead man; without which it would be no longer the same person. And even all this would amount to nothing, if the soul did not return to its usual abode!

If the everlasting Being who has foreseen every thing, who has arranged every thing, and who governs and regulates every thing, by laws which are immutable, acts contrary to himself, by overthrowing, or reversing, all his laws, it can only be for the general good of nature. But, it appears a contradiction in terms, to suppose a case, where the Creator, and Lord, and Master of all, can change the order of the world for the good of the world. For, either he has foreseen the supposed necessity,

or deficiency, or he has not foreseen it. If he has foreseen it, he has provided a remedy for it from the beginning ; and if he has not foreseen it, he cannot be God.

They say, that to give pleasure to a particular nation, city, or family, the Eternal Being restored to life Pelops, Hippolites, Heres, and some other very celebrated personages ; but, it seems very unlikely, that the common Lord and Master of the universe would neglect the care of that universe, in favor of this Pelops, Hippolites, &c.

The more incredible miracles are, judging of them by the feeble lights which illuminate our minds, the more they appear to have obtained credit and belief. Every people had so many prodigies, — so many miracles, that they were quite common things. No nation, therefore, ever thought proper to throw any discredit on the miracles of its neighbours. The Greeks, in addressing the Egyptians, and the nations of Asia, say, “ The
“ Gods have sometimes spoken to you, but we
“ have a daily conference with them ; if they have
“ fought twenty times for you, they have put them-
“ selves, more than forty times, at the head of our
“ armies. If you have metamorphoses, we have a
“ hundred times more than you. If your animals
“ speak, ours have made some very fine speeches.”
There are no people, even up to the time of, and including the Romans, among whom, beasts have not exercised the gift of speech, to foretel the fu-

ture. Titus Livius relates that an ox in the open market exclaimed, "Rome, take care of thyself." Pliny, in his eighth book, tells us that a dog spoke, when Tarquin was driven from the throne. And, if we may believe Suetonius, a crow cried out in the Capitol, when they were going to assassinate Domitian, "Estai panta kalos," It is very well done; all is well. In the same manner, one of the horses of Achilles, named Xanthus, predicted his master's death before the walls of Troy. Before Achilles' horse, the ram of Phryxus had spoken, and also the cows of mount Olympos. Thus, we see, that instead of attempting the refutation of fables, they vied with each other in their manufacture. They were something like the practitioner against whom was brought a forged bond. He did not waste his time in arguing and pleading, but immediately produced a forged receipt.

It is true, that among the Romans, we do not hear of many resurrections; they confined themselves, chiefly to miraculous cures. But the Greeks, more attached to metempsychosis, had a great many resurrections. They acquired this secret from the eastern nations; whence all the sciences, and all superstition, had come.

Of all the miraculous cures spoken of, the most authentick, and best attested, are those of the blind man, whom Vespasian restored to sight; and of the paralytic, to whom he restored the use of his limbs. It was in Alexandria that this double mi-

racle was performed, before an immense concourse of people, consisting of Romans, Greeks, and Egyptians. The emperor Vespasian performed these miracles, seated on his throne. It was not he, that sought to exalt himself, by any such illusions, of which, so well established a monarch could not be in need. No! it was the two diseased persons themselves, who, falling prostrate at his feet, conjure him to heal them of their infirmities. He blushes at their request, and even ridicules it. He tells them, that such a cure was not in the power of mortals to effect. The two poor wretches, however, urge their request. They say that Serapis had appeared to them, and told them, that they should be healed by Vespasian. At length, he suffers himself to be prevailed upon; and, he lays his hands upon them; but, without any hopes of success. The Divinity, however, pleased with his modesty and virtue, communicates its power to him, and in a moment, the blind man sees, and the lame walks. Alexandria, Egypt, and the whole of the empire, resound with the applauses of Vespasian, the favourite of Heaven. This miracle is preserved in the archives of the empire; and alluded to, in all contemporary histories. Nevertheless, from the lapse of time, this miracle is believed by nobody; because, no one has any interest in supporting it.

If we may attach any credit to a writer of the barbarous ages, named Helgaut, King Robert, the

son of Hugh Capet, also restored a blind man to sight. This gift of miracles, in Robert, was, perhaps, the recompence of his humanity, in consigning to the flames his wife's confessor, and the canons of Orleans, who had refused to acknowledge the infallibility, and absolute power, of the Pope; and were, consequently, Manicheans. Or, if it were not the reward of this good action, it was, probably, intended, as a return for the excommunication he had suffered, for sleeping with the queen, his wife.

Philosophers have worked miracles, as well as emperors and kings. We may cite those of Apollonius Thyanæus, a Pythagorean philosopher, temperate, chaste, and just; and, whom history has not reproached with one equivocal action, nor any of those weaknesses, of which, Socrates himself was accused. He travelled among the Magi and the Brachmins, and was, every where, the more honoured, on account of his modesty and virtue; giving, always, wise and prudent counsels; and rarely disputing with any one. The prayer which he was accustomed to offer up to the gods is admirable. "Oh, ye immortal Gods, grant us whatever you shall judge fit and proper to bestow, and of which we may not be undeserving." He was, by no means, an enthusiast himself; but, his disciples were so. They attributed many miracles to him, which were compiled by Philostratus. The Thyanæans have ranked him

among the demi-gods ; and, the Roman emperors approved of his apotheosis. But, in the course of time, the apotheosis of Apollonius had the same fate, as that which was decreed to the Roman emperors ; and, the chapel of Apollonius became as much deserted, as that, which the Athenians erected in honor of Socrates.

The kings of England, from the time of Edward the Confessor, to King William the Third, daily performed a great miracle ;—that, of curing the king's-evil, which the physicians were unable to cure. But, William the Third would not work any miracles ; and his successors have also abstained from doing so. If England should ever experience any great revolution, which would again involve her in ignorance and darkness, she would then have her daily miracles as before.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

OF TEMPLES.

THE recognition of a Deity must, for some considerable time, have preceded the erection of temples, in honor of him. The Arabians, the Chaldeans, and the Persians, who revered the stars, could have had, at first, but few consecrated edifices: they had only to look at the skies:—that was their temple. The temple of Bel, at Babylon, is reputed the most ancient of all; but the temples of Brama, in India, possess, we imagine, greater antiquity: at least, so the Bramins assert. In the annals of China, it is said, that the first emperors sacrificed in a temple. That of Hercules, at Tyre, does not seem to rank among the most ancient. Hercules was never considered, by any people, more than a secondary divinity; nevertheless, the temple of Tyre existed a very long time before that of Judæa. Hiram had a very magnificent temple, when Solomon, assisted by Hiram, built his. Herodotus, who travelled into Tyre, says, that in his time, the archives of Tyre assigned to this temple, an antiquity of only two thousand

three hundred years. Egypt was full of temples, for a long time previous. Herodotus also says, that he was informed, that the temple of Vulcan, at Memphis, had been built by Menes, about the time which corresponds to the year 3000 before our era; and, it cannot be supposed, that the Egyptians had erected a temple to Vulcan, before they had built one in honour of Isis, their principal divinity.

We cannot reconcile, what Herodotus says in his second book, with the common feelings or ordinary habits of men. He pretends that, with the exception of the Greeks and the Egyptians, all other people had adopted the singular custom of lying with women in the midst of their temples. We suspect the Greek text has been corrupted: the most rude and barbarous of men abstain from an intercourse of this nature, in the presence of others. No man ever thinks of caressing his wife, or his mistress, before persons, for whom he has the least respect, or consideration.

It is scarcely possible, that among so many nations, who were so very scrupulous, and severe, in all religious matters, their temples should have been converted into places of prostitution. We imagine that the substance of what Herodotus means to say, is, that the priests dwelt in the enclosure surrounding the temple, and slept there with their wives, as the Jewish and other priests were accustomed to do; but, that the Egyptian

priests, who did not reside in an enclosure of this sort, or perhaps had none connected with their temples, abstained from all intercourse with their wives, when they kept guard, or watched, in the porches with which the temple was surrounded.

Petty nations were, for a long time, without any temples. They carried their gods about in chests or tabernacles. We have already observed, that when the Jews dwelt in the deserts, or wilderness, to the east of the Lake Asphaltide, they carried about with them the tabernacle of the god Rempham, of the god Moloch, of the god Kium, &c. as we are told by Jeremiah, Amos, and St. Stephen.

The other petty nations of the wilderness had a similar custom. This custom is, probably, the most ancient of any; as it is much more easy to have a chest, or tabernacle, than to erect a stately edifice. These portable gods, in all probability, were the origin of the different religious processions in use among so many people. For, it does not seem very likely, that they would remove a god from its place in a temple, to parade it up and down the city; such an outrage would have been considered a sacrilege, if the ancient custom of carrying their gods on a cart, or litter, had not been for a long time established.

The greater number of temples were, at first, citadels, or fortresses; within which, were safely deposited all sacred and holy things. Thus, the

Palladium was, in the fortress of Troy; and the bucklers which came down from heaven, were kept in the Capitol. We perceive, that the temple of the Jews was fortified; and capable of sustaining an assault. It is said, in the third book of Kings, that the building was sixty cubits long, and twenty broad. There are but few public edifices on so small a scale. This house, however, being built of stone, and on a mountain, might at least be defended from a surprise. The windows being much more narrow without, than within, gave them the appearance of so many loop-holes. It is said that the priests lodged in sheds of wood, built along, and strengthened by, the wall.

It is difficult to comprehend the dimensions of this architecture. By the same book of Kings we are told, that upon the walls of this temple there were three stories, built of wood: that the first was five cubits wide; the second, six; and the third, seven. These proportions are not ours; and, we imagine, these wooden stories would have somewhat surprised Michael Angelo, and Bradamantus. Be that as it may, we must consider that this temple was built on the declivity of the mountain Moriah, and, consequently, could not be of very great depth. It was necessary to go up several steps to arrive at the little esplanade, or glacis, where the sanctuary was built, which we are told, was twenty cubits long. Now, a temple, into, and out of which, you must ascend

and descend, must be a rude and barbarous kind of edifice. It might be praise-worthy, for its holiness and sanctity; but certainly not for its architecture. It was not necessary to the due fulfilment of the designs of the Deity, that the city of Jerusalem should be the most magnificent of cities; nor his people, the most powerful of people; neither did it, to him, appear necessary that his temple should excel that of other nations. Those are the most beautiful temples, in which the purest homage and worship are offered up.

The greater number of commentators have, each of them, given us a sketch, or design, of this building; each according to his own ideas. We can readily believe, that neither of them ever built a house. However, when it is considered, that the walls supporting those wooden stories were of stone, it may be possible that in this petty place of refuge, they might have defended themselves for a few days.

This species of fortification, by a people destitute of the arts and sciences, did not hold out long against Nabuzaradam, one of the captains of the king of Babylon, whom we call Nabuchodonosor.

The second temple, built by Nehemiah, was of (smaller) dimensions, and less splendid. In the book of Esdras, we are told, that the walls of this new temple had three rows only, of rough stone; and that the rest was entirely of wood. It must have had more the appearance of a barn, than a

temple. But, that which was subsequently built by Herod, was a real fortress. He was obliged, (according to Josephus,) to demolish, entirely, the temple of Nehemiah, which he calls the temple of Haggai. Herod had the ruins collected together, at the bottom of the Mount Moriah, for the purpose of erecting a platform, supported by a very thick wall, upon which the temple was built. Near this edifice was the tower Antonia, which he also fortified; so that this temple was, in reality, a citadel. In fact, the Jews ventured to defend themselves in it, against the army of Titus; until, one of the Roman soldiers having thrown a burning log into the interior of the fort, or building, every thing took fire in a moment. This is some proof, that the buildings surrounding the temple were only of wood, in the time of Herod, as well as under Nehemiah and Solomon. These fir buildings contradict, in a trifling degree, that extraordinary magnificence, of which the exaggerator, Josephus, speaks. He tells us, that Titus, having entered into the sanctuary, admired it; and confessed, that its splendour surpassed its fame. There is, however, but little probability, that a Roman emperor, in the midst of carnage and slaughter, walking over heaps of slain, would stop to amuse himself, by admiring a building of twenty cubits long; or, that a man who had seen the Capitol, would be surprised, or astonished, at the beauty of a Jewish temple. This temple was very holy, without

doubt ; but a sanctuary of twenty cubits long was not an erection of Vitruvius. The temples of Ephesus, Alexandria, Athens, Olympia, and Rome, were, indeed, beautiful ; but these, we imagine, were erected on a somewhat different scale, and different principles of architecture, than the temple of the Jews.

Josephus, in his declamations against Apion, says that the Jews required but one temple, “because there is but one God.” This reasoning does not appear very conclusive ; for, if the Jews had possessed a country of seven or eight hundred miles in extent, like many other people, they must have been occupied during the whole of their lives in travelling backwards and forwards, in order to sacrifice in the temple once a year. As there is but one God, it follows, of course, that all the temples in the world should be erected only to him ; but it is not, we imagine, thence to be inferred, that the world is to have but one temple. Unfortunately for superstition, her logic is built on such bad grounds, and has, withal, so weak a foundation, that she is soon laid open to the powers of reason and reflection.

Besides, with what correctness, or truth, could Josephus say, that one temple only, was requisite for the Jews, when they had possessed, from the time of Ptolemy Philometer, the well known temple of the Onion, at Bubastis in Egypt.

CHAPTER XXXV.

OF MAGICK.

WHAT is magick? The secret of doing that which nature cannot do; the thing impossible; and therefore magick is a thing that has at all times been believed in. The word is derived from Mag, Magdim, or the Magi of Chaldea. They were the best acquainted with the art; they searched out the cause of rain and fine weather; and, in a short time, they were believed to have the power of bringing rain and fine weather. They were astronomers; the most ignorant and impudent set up the business of astrologers. An event happened at the conjunction of two planets; therefore these two planets were the cause of that event: and the astrologers were declared masters or rulers of the planets. Persons with minds deeply affected, had seen, in a dream, their friends dying, or dead; hence, the magicians made the dead to appear.

Having ascertained the course of the moon, it was quite easy for them to bring her down to the earth. They disposed even of the lives of men; whether by making figures of wax, or by pro-

nouncing the name of God, or that of the devil, does not much signify. Clement of Alexandria, in his *Stromates*, Book V., says, that according to an ancient author, Moses pronounced the name of Iaho or Jehovah, in the ears of Pharaoh Necho, with such tremendous effect, that it caused the instant death of that king.

In fine, from the days of Jannes and Membres, the commissioned, or official sorcerers of Pharaoh, to the time of Marshal De l'Ancre, who was burnt at Paris, for having killed a white cock during the time of full moon, no period has been free from witchcraft.

The Pythoness, or witch of Endor, who conjured up the ghost of the prophet Samuel, is well known. It is certainly not a little strange that the word Python, which is of Greek origin, should be known to the Jews in the time of Saul. Several learned men have, however, inferred from it, that this history was not written until after the time of Alexander, when the Jews began to have some commercial intercourse with the Greeks; but this is not the subject of our present enquiry.

To resume our subject—magick. The Jews practised it, as soon as they became known, and were spread abroad in the world. The Sabbath of Sorcerers is an evident proof of it; and the goat with which the sorceresses, or witches, were supposed to have commerce, originates in that ancient commerce of the Jews with goats in the wilderness,

and with which abomination they are reproached in the book of Leviticus.

Among us, but few criminal processes against sorcerers have been instituted, in which some Jew was not implicated.

The Romans, as enlightened as they were in the time of Augustus, were, notwithstanding, as much infatuated with witchcraft, as other nations. Read the eclogue of Virgil, entitled *Pharmacentria*:

“ *Carmina vel cœlo possunt deducere lunam.*”

The voice of the enchanter makes the moon come down.

“ *His ego sæpe lupum fieri et se condere silvis,*

“ *Mœrim sæpe animas imis exire sepulcris.*”

Mœris become a wolf, concealed himself in the woods.

From the bottom of their tombs, I have seen the spirits rise.

Can any one be surprised, that at Naples, even in the present day, Virgil is considered as having been a sorcerer? Abundant reasons may be found in this eclogue, for the appellation.

Horace reproaches Sagana and Canidia with their horrible witcheries. Some of the first men in the republick were infected with these horrible fancies. Sextus, the son of the great Pompey, sacrificed a child, when labouring under one of these enchantments.

Love potions were a species of magick, of a more sweet and pleasing nature. The Jews had the

privilege of selling them to the Roman ladies. Those of that nation who had no prospect of becoming rich courtiers, established themselves as manufacturers of prophecies, or love potions.

All these extravagances, whether of a ridiculous or frightful tendency, have been perpetuated among us; and it is not a century since they were discredited. Missionaries have been overwhelmed with astonishment, on finding those abominable practices established in the most distant parts of the world. Their pity has been excited for the people, labouring (as they describe them) under the inspirations of the devil. Alas! my good friends, why did you not remain in your own country? You would not, probably, have found more devils, but certainly quite as many fooleries, as you met with abroad. You would have found thousands of wretches, senseless enough to believe themselves sorcerers; and judges, equally silly and barbarous, to condemn them to the flames. You would have seen a jurisprudence over magick, established in Europe, with the same solemnity as laws against robbery and murder. A jurisprudence withal, founded on the grave debates of state councils. And what is still worse, the people perceiving that the church and the magistracy believed in witchcraft and magick, were the more invincibly persuaded of its existence, and in consequence, the more the sorcerers were persecuted, the more they increased. Whence did so fatal,

and so general an error, arise? From ignorance. And need we adduce more decisive proof, that those who labour to undeceive mankind, are their real friends and benefactors?

It is alleged that the general consent of mankind is a proof of the truth. What proof! Nearly every people and nation have believed in magic, in astrology, in oracles, and the influences of the moon. It might have been said that the general consent of the sages or literati, was, not a proof, but some sort of probability. And yet what probability! Did not all the sages, or learned men, before the time of Copernicus, believe that the earth was motionless in the centre of the world?

No people can, with justice, mock or reproach its neighbours. If Rabelais addresses Picatrix, as "my reverend father in the devil," because they taught magick at Toledo, Salamanca, and Seville; the Spaniards, in return, might justly reproach the French with their prodigious number of sorcerers.

France, of all countries, is, perhaps, the one which has most extensively combined the cruel with the ridiculous. There is not a single tribunal, in France, which has not consigned to the flames a vast number of magicians. There were, in ancient Rome, fools who fancied themselves sorcerers; but there were no barbarians to be found, to condemn them to the flames for their folly.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

OF HUMAN VICTIMS.

MEN would have been too fortunate — too happy, if they had only been deceived ; but time, (which sometimes corrupts the usages and customs of men, and then again rectifies them,) having made the blood of animals to flow upon the altars, the barbarous priests, accustomed to, and we may say, enveloped in blood, passed from animals to men ; and Superstition, the unnatural daughter of Religion, strayed so far from the purity of her mother, as to compel men to immolate their own children, under the pretence that it was their duty to sacrifice to God, that which they held most dear.

If we may believe the fragments of Sanchoniathon, the first sacrifice of this nature was that of Jehud, among the Phœnicians, who was immolated by his father Hillu, about two thousand years before our era. It was at a time when great states and empires were already established ; when Syria, Chaldea, and Egypt were very flourishing : and, according to Herodotus, they had already sacrificed a maid, by drowning her in the Nile ; in

the hopes of obtaining a full and complete overflowing of this river, which should be neither too abundant, nor the reverse.

These abominable sacrifices, or offerings, were established throughout almost all the earth. Pausanias tells us that Lycaon was the first who sacrificed human victims in Greece. This most horrid custom had been adopted at the time of the Trojan war, since Homer describes Achilles as sacrificing twelve Trojans to the shades of Patroclus. Would Homer have related any thing so horrible? Would he not rather have been fearful of disgusting all his readers by such a relation, if, in fact, such sacrifices had not been according to the then established custom?

Without referring to the sacrifice of Iphigenia, and that of Idumantus, the son of Idomeneus,—for, whether true or false, they show the prevailing opinions,—can we pretend to call in question, the established fact, that the Scythians of Tauridus immolated all foreigners?

If we come down to more modern times, the Tyrians and Carthaginians, in times of great danger, always sacrificed a man to Saturn. They did the same in Italy; and the Romans themselves, who condemned these horribly revolting practices, yet did not scruple to immolate two Gauls and two Greeks, as an expiation for the crime of some vestal. We meet with this in Plutarch's questions on the Romans.

The Gauls and Germans had also adopted this horrible custom. The Druids burned human victims in large wicker baskets: the witches of Germany cut the throats of the poor wretches who were devoted to death; and judged of the future, by the greater or less rapidity, with which the blood flowed from the wound.

We may well believe that these sacrifices were not common—were not an every-day occurrence. If they had been frequent; if annual festivals of this horrible nature had been regularly celebrated; if every family had been kept in constant dread, that the priests would come and select the most beautiful of their daughters, or their eldest son, for the pious purpose of plucking out their hearts, on a consecrated stone, or altar;—an end would soon have been put to them by the sacrifice of the priests themselves. It is very probable, that these holy parricides were committed only in times of urgent necessity, or great danger; when men were subjugated by fear or apprehension, and when an erroneous idea of public welfare compelled individual interest, and personal feeling, to be silent.

Among the Bramins, every widow did not burn herself upon the funeral pile of her husband. The most imbecile and weak of their votaries have made, from time immemorial, and still continue to make, this singular and amazing sacrifice. The Scythians sometimes sacrificed to the manes of

their Kans, or Chams, those officers which were the most cherished and beloved by those princes. Herodotus informs us, that their custom was, to impale them around the royal corpse; it does not, however, appear, from history, that this custom was of long duration.

If we read the history of the Jews, written by an author of another nation, we should have considerable difficulty in believing it possible, that a fugitive people from Egypt, should come, by the express command of the Deity, to immolate seven or eight petty nations, with whom they were entirely unacquainted; to slaughter, without mercy, all the old men and women, and children at the breast, and to reserve only the young maidens, for the gratification of their abominable lusts. And moreover, that this people should have been punished by their God, for having spared one single individual, devoted to the common anathema. We could never have believed that such an abominable people ever existed upon the face of the earth; but as these people, themselves, inform us of all these facts, in their most holy books, we are bound to believe them.

We do not mean to meddle with the question as to whether these books were inspired. Our holy church, which holds the Jews in great abhorrence, informs us, that these Jewish books were dictated by Almighty God, the Creator and Father of all mankind! That being the case, we can have no

doubt upon the subject, nor suffer ourselves to hold any argument upon it.

It is certainly true, that our feeble understanding does not enable us to conceive, in our most gracious God, any other kind of wisdom, justice, and goodness, than that which our conceptions have enabled us to form of him; and which we believe to be perfectly consistent with his high character, as a God of mercy, truth, and justice. But after all, it may be said, that he has done according to his will, and it is not for us to judge of his actions. Let us adhere strictly to the path of simple narrative.

The Jews have a law, by which they are expressly forbidden to spare any thing,—or any man devoted to the Lord—“None devoted, which shall be devoted of men, shall be redeemed, but he shall surely be put to death;” says the Law of Leviticus, in the twenty-seventh chapter. It was by virtue of this law, that Jephthah sacrificed his own daughter; and that Samuel hewed in pieces the unfortunate king Agag. By the Pentateuch, we learn, that in the petty country of Midian, which is about nine leagues square, the Israelites having found six hundred and seventy-five thousand sheep, seventy-two thousand oxen, sixty-one thousand asses, and thirty-two thousand young virgins, Moses issued a command that they should massacre all the men, women, and children, but to spare the young virgins, of whom only

thirty-two were immolated! One very remarkable feature in this horrid immolation, is, that Moses was the son-in-law of Jethro, the high-priest of the Midianites, who had rendered him the most signal services, and heaped numerous favours upon him.

By the same book we learn, that Joshua, the son of Nun, having passed, with his horde, over the little river Jordan, on dry foot, and having caused the walls of the city of Jericho to fall at the sound of the trumpet, he executed, (as he says,) the wrath of the Lord upon the inhabitants of this devoted city; and they all perished in the flames, with the exception of the harlot Rahab and her family, who were preserved from the general destruction, for having piously concealed the spies of the holy people Israel. We are also told that this same Joshua devoted to death, or massacred, twelve thousand inhabitants of the city of Ai; and that he sacrificed to the Lord thirty-one of the petty kings of the country, all subjected to the common anathema, and who were all hung. We have nothing, in our historical annals, that can be compared to these holy and pious assassinations, excepting perhaps the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and the Irish massacres. There is one thing, however, to be mentioned with regret; and that is, that numerous (and among them many learned,) individuals, doubt the fact, of the Jews having found six hundred and seventy-five thou-

sand sheep, and thirty-two thousand young virgins, in a little town in the wilderness, surrounded by rocks ; but, no one doubts the horrible massacre of St. Bartholomew's. But, we again repeat, that the light bestowed upon our feeble understanding is, altogether, inadequate to the task of removing the veil, which hangs over the singular events and occurrences of antiquity ; or, of forming an opinion, upon the reasons which induced the God of mercy and truth, — the Master of life and death, — to make choice of the Jewish people, to massacre and exterminate the people of Canaan.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

OF THE MYSTERIES OF CERES ELEUSIS, OR THE
ELEUSINIAN MYSTERIES.

AMIDST the chaos of popular superstitions, which would have converted almost all the world into a vast den of ferocious and savage beasts, there was one salutary institution, which preserved a part of the human race, from falling into a state of perfect brutishness ; it was that of mysteries and expiations. It was impossible, that there should not be some mild and gentle spirits, found among so many barbarous and cruel fools ; and that some philosopher would not arise, whose exertions would be directed to the restoration of his fellow creatures to the paths of reason and morality.

These sages even brought in the aid of superstition itself, in order to correct its enormous abuses ; in the same way that the hearts of vipers are used, to heal the bites of those animals. A great many fables were mixed up with useful truths ; and the truths were supported by the fables.

We are not now acquainted with the mysteries of Zoroaster : and we know but little of those of

Isis. There cannot, however, be any doubt, that they announced the grand system of a future life; for Celsus says to Origen, in his eighth book, “ You boast of believing in eternal rewards and punishments, and did not all the ministers of mysteries announce the same to the initiated ? ”

The unity of the Godhead was the grand dogma in all these mysteries. Apuleius has still preserved to us the prayer of the priestesses of Isis :—“ The heavenly powers serve thee ; hell is subject unto thee ; the universe revolves beneath thy hand ; thy feet tread on Tartarus ; the stars answer to thy voice ; the seasons return at thy command ; and the elements obey thee.”

The mysterious ceremonies of Ceres were an imitation of those of Isis. Those who had committed crimes were brought to confess and expiate them ; they fasted, purified themselves, and gave alms. All these ceremonies were kept secret, under the religious restraint of an oath ; in order to increase the respect and veneration of the people. These mysteries were celebrated in the night, for the purpose of inspiring a holy dread. Some sort of tragedy was generally exhibited to the votaries, representative of the happiness of the just, and the misery of the wicked. The greatest men of antiquity, the Platos and Ciceros of the age, have eulogised these mysteries ; which had not, then, degenerated from their original purity.

Some very learned men have proved, that the

sixth book of the *Æneid* is but a representation of the ceremonies, in use, at those pious, and highly renowned, spectacles. There is not indeed any mention of the *Demiourgos*, the Creator of the World; but in the vestibule, in the front scene, may be seen the children, whom their parents had suffered to perish; which was intended, as a warning to fathers and mothers. “*Continuo auditæ vagitus et ingens,*” &c.: and then appeared *Minos*, to sit in judgment on the dead. The wicked were dragged away to *Tartarus*; and the good and just conducted to the *Elysian fields*. These gardens contained every thing which the imagination could devise, as best calculated to promote the happiness of the generality of mankind. The honour of going to heaven was granted, only, to heroes and demi-gods. Every religion seems to have adopted a garden, or paradise, as the future abode of the just; and when, even the *Essenians*, among the Jews, received the dogma of another life, they believed that the good and just would, after death, be conveyed to some delightful gardens, on the borders of the sea. With respect to the *Pharisees*, they adopted the doctrine of *metempsychosis*, and not that of the resurrection. If, among so many profane things, we may be allowed to quote a passage in sacred history, we shall refer to the promise of *Jesus Christ* made to the repentant robber—“Thou shalt be with me this day in the garden,” (in paradise.) He spoke

conformably to the language and opinions of all men.

The mysteries of Eleusinia, acquired the greatest celebrity. It is not a little singular, that at these ceremonies, it was customary to read the first part of the Theogony of Sanchoniathon, the Phœnician: which, is some proof, that Sanchoniathon had announced the Supreme God, the creator and governor of the universe. It was, therefore, this doctrine, which was revealed to the initiated, impressed with a belief of polytheism. Let us imagine, among us, a superstitious people, who should be accustomed, from their earliest infancy, to render to the Virgin, St. Joseph, and a hundred other saints, the same homage and worship, as to God the Father. It would, very probably, be dangerous, to undeceive them all at once; it would be prudent, at first, to explain to some of the most moderate, the infinite distance there is between God and his creatures. This is precisely what the mystagogues did. The participators of those mysteries assembled in the temple of Ceres; and, the Hierophantes informed them, that, instead of worshipping Ceres, conducting Triptolemus, on a chariot drawn by dragons, they ought to worship God, who was the nourisher and preserver of all men, and who had permitted Ceres and Triptolemus to do honour to agriculture. That this was certainly the case, is further confirmed, by the fact, that the Hierophantes began by re-

citing the verses of the ancient Orpheus :—“ Walk
 “ in the ways of justice ; worship and adore the sole
 “ Lord and Master of the Universe ; he is one ; he,
 “ alone, exists in himself ; and, all other beings
 “ owe their existence to him ; he acts in them, and
 “ by them ; he sees all things, but has never yet
 “ been seen by mortal eyes.”

We confess ourselves unable to conceive, how, with any degree of propriety or correctness, Pausanias can say that these verses are not equal to those of Homer. It must be acknowledged, that, at least, in point of sense, they are worth more than the whole of the Iliad and Odyssey combined.

The learned Bishop Warburton, although very unjust in many of his bold decisions, greatly strengthens what we have just advanced, respecting the necessity of concealing the dogma, of the unity of the Deity, from a people infatuated with polytheism. He remarks, with Plutarch, that the young Alcibiades, having assisted at these mysteries, did not hesitate to insult the statues of Mercury, in company with several of his friends, in a party of pleasure ; and that the people, in a fury, demanded the condemnation of Alcibiades. It was therefore, at that time, necessary to use the greatest discretion, in order to avoid shocking the prejudices of the multitude. Alexander, himself, when in Egypt, having obtained permission of the Hierophantes of the mysteries, to reveal to his

mother the secrets of the initiated, at the same time conjured her to burn his letter, as soon as she had read it, to avoid incensing the Greeks.

Those who, led away by a false zeal, have since declared that these mysteries were nothing but scenes of infamous debauchery, should undeceive themselves, by simply considering the meaning of the word "initiated." It implies the commencement of a new life.

Another, and most decisive, proof, that the celebration of these mysteries were intended to inspire men with the love of virtue, is, the set form of admonition, with which the assembly was dismissed: which, among the Greeks, consisted of the two ancient Phœnician words, "Koff omphet," Watch, and be pure. We add, as final proof, that the emperor Nero, guilty of his mother's death, was refused admittance to the participation of those mysteries, when he travelled into Greece; the crime was of too heinous a nature: and, notwithstanding his being an emperor, the initiated persisted in their refusal to admit him. Zozimus also tells us, that Constantine could find no pagan priests, who would consent to purify and absolve him from his parricides.

∣ We come then to the conclusion, that among those people whom we call Pagans, Gentiles, and Idolaters, there was a species of pure religion; ∣ whilst, both the people, and the priests, had the most shameful customs, puerile cere-

monies, and ridiculous doctrines: and that, at times, they would even shed human blood, to the honour of some imaginary deities, who were despised and detested by the sages.

The purity of this religion consisted, in the avowal of the existence of a Supreme Being; and of his providence, and justice. These mysteries were, according to Tertullian, somewhat tarnished by the ceremony of regeneration. It was necessary for the initiated to appear to revive; it was the symbol of the new kind of life he intended to lead. A crown was presented to him, which he trod under foot; the Hierophantes then drew forth the sacred knife, and the initiated, whom he pretended to strike, also pretended to fall dead at his feet: after which, he appeared to rise again, as it were, from the dead. A remnant of this ancient ceremony still exists among the Freemasons.

Pausanias, in his account of Arcadia, tells us, that in several of the Eleusinian temples, they flagellated the penitents, the initiated; an odious custom; which, a long time afterwards, was introduced into many of our Christian churches. It cannot be doubted, that in all these mysteries, whose institution was founded in wisdom and utility, many odious superstitions crept in. Superstition led to debauchery, and contempt followed. Finally, the only existing remains of all these ancient mysteries, are to be seen in troops of beg-

gars, under the name of Egyptians, or Gypsies, wandering through Europe, with castanets, dancing the dance of the priests of Isis, selling balsam and small wares, pretending to cure the itch, whilst they are covered with it themselves, telling fortunes, and robbing the hen-roosts. Such has been the end of what, at one time, was considered of the most sacred nature in half the known world.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

OF THE JEWS, AT THE TIME WHEN THEY BEGAN
TO BE KNOWN.

WE shall interfere as little as possible, with whatever is considered divine, in the history of the Jews; or, if we are compelled to allude to it, it will be no further than their miracles may have an immediate reference to the common course of events. For the continual prodigies which signalize the march of this nation, we have all possible respect. We believe them, of course, with that reasonable faith, exacted by the church, which has been substituted for the synagogue, and we do not presume to examine them, but confine ourselves to the path of simple narrative. We shall speak of the Jews, as if we were speaking of the Scythians and Greeks; by weighing probabilities, and discussing facts. As no one, but themselves, ever ventured to write their history, previous to the destruction of their empire by the Romans, we shall have only to refer to their own proper annals. This nation ranks only among the most modern; if we consider them, in the same light, as

the people of other nations; from the time that they began to form settlements, and to have a capital. The Jews appear to have been of but little consideration to their neighbours, until the time of Solomon; which was about the time of Hesiod and Homer, and the first Archons of Athens.

The name of Salomon, Soloman, or Soleiman, is well known in the East; but that of David is not so; and of Saul, still less. The Jews, before Saul, appear to have been merely a horde of Arabs of the desert; and so insignificant, that the Phœnicians treated them something in the same way as the Lacedemonians treated the Iliots; that is, as slaves, who were not permitted to have arms in their possession. They had not the privilege of forging iron, nor even of sharpening their ploughshares and axes, themselves. They were compelled to resort to their masters, for all operations of this kind. The Jews declare it themselves, in the book of Samuel; and they add, that they had neither sword, nor javeline, in the battle fought at Bethaven, by Saul and Jonathan, against the Philistines, or Phœnicians; on which day Saul declared, with an oath, that he would sacrifice to the Lord, whoever should have eaten during the combat.

It is true, that previous to their gaining this battle without arms, it is said in the preceding chapter, that Saul, with an army of three hundred and thirty thousand men, completely defeated the

Ammonites; which does not seem entirely to accord with the assertion, that they had neither javelin, nor sword, nor arms of any kind. Besides, the greatest kings have very rarely, if ever, had, at one time, an army of three hundred and thirty thousand effective fighting men. How then, could the Jews, who appear as a wandering and oppressed people in this little country, without a fortified town, or arms of any kind, (not even a sword,) have been enabled to bring into the field three hundred and thirty thousand soldiers? Such a force was adequate to the conquest of all Asia and Europe. We leave to more learned and enlightened authors, the task of reconciling these apparent contradictions, which evaporate before superior wisdom; let us respect what we are bound to respect; and resume the history of the Jews, as deduced from their own proper writings.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

OF THE JEWS IN EGYPT.

By the Jewish annals we learn that that people dwelt on the confines of Egypt, in times unknown; that their abode was in the little country of Gossen, Gessen, or Goshen, towards the mount Cassius, and the lake Sirbon. A few scattered Arabs are still to be met with in this country, who come in the winter to feed their flocks in Lower Egypt. To proceed. This nation, it is said, was composed of a single family; which, in two hundred and five years, had increased to two millions of people. For, to furnish six hundred thousand fighting men, which, according to the book of Genesis, came out of Egypt, a population of two millions, at least, is necessary. This astonishing increase, so contrary to the order and principles of nature, is one of the miracles which God condescended to work in favor of the Jews. It is in vain that a host of learned men express their surprise, that the king of Egypt should have ordered two midwives to destroy all the Hebrew male children; and that the king's daughter, who dwelt at Memphis, should come so

far from that city, to bathe in an arm of the Nile, wherein no one ever bathed for fear of the crocodiles. It is in vain also, that they raise objections to the age of eighty years, which Moses had attained, previous to his undertaking to conduct a whole people out of a state of bondage and slavery.

These learned men attempt to dispute the truth of, and raise many objections to, the ten plagues of Egypt; they say that the magicians of the kingdom could not work the same miracles as the messenger of God; and that, if God had given them this power, he would appear to act against himself. They pretend that Moses, having changed all the waters into blood, there could have been no water left, for the magicians to effect the same metamorphosis.

It is also asked, how Pharaoh could pursue the Jews with a numerous cavalry, when all the horses had been killed in the fifth and sixth plagues? Also, why six hundred thousand fighting men, with God at their head, and who might have contended to advantage with the Egyptians, whose first-born had been struck with death, should, nevertheless, fly before them full of terror and dismay? It is also demanded, why God did not bestow the fertile country of Egypt, on his beloved and cherished people; instead, of making them wander, for forty years, in frightful deserts?

We have but one answer to all these numerous objections; and that answer is, ‘It was the will

of God.”—The Church believes it, and we also ought to believe it. It is in this point that the history of the Jews differs from every other. Every people has its prodigies; but every thing with the Jews is full of prodigy; and how, we ask, could it be otherwise, since they were conducted by God himself? It is clear that no comparison can be drawn, between the history of God, and the history of men. On this account we decline referring to any of those supernatural facts, of which it belongs only to the Holy Spirit to speak. Much less shall we attempt to explain them. Let us continue our examination of the few events, which may, with propriety, be subjected to criticism.

CHAPTER XL.

OF MOSES, CONSIDERED SIMPLY AS THE CHIEF
OF A NATION.

THE God of nature, alone, gives strength to the arm, of which he deigns to make choice. Every thing is supernatural in the history of Moses. Some learned men have represented him as a skilful politician. Others, only view him as a feeble reed; of which the Divine Hand deigns to make use, to decide the fate of empires. In fact, what powers, or capacity, can an old man of eighty years of age be supposed to possess, to warrant his undertaking the conduct and government of a whole people, over whom he can have no legitimate authority? His arm cannot fight, nor his tongue articulate. He is described to us, as a decrepit, stammering, old man. He conducts his followers through frightful deserts only, for the space of forty years. His declared object is to give them a settlement, and he gives them none whatever. If we trace his rout, or march, through the deserts of Sur, Sin, Horeb, Sinai, Pharan, and of Cades-Barnea, and behold him retrograding,

nearly to the very spot from whence he had set out, it will be difficult for us to pronounce him a great commander. He finds himself at the head of six hundred thousand men, and he provides neither for the clothing, nor subsistence of his troops. God does every thing. He remedies every thing. He feeds and clothes the people by the working of miracles. Moses then, in himself; is nothing; and his impotence is a proof of his having been guided and protected by the arm of the Almighty; therefore, in weighing his character, we shall speak of him as a man, and not as the minister of God. His person, in this point of view, is the object of a more sublime research.

He sets out with the avowed purpose of going into the country of the Canaanites, to the west of the river Jordan, in the land of Jericho; which is, in fact, the only part worth cultivating in the whole province; but, instead of taking this route, he turns to the east, between Esion-gaber and the Dead Sea; a wild, barren, and mountainous country; on which, not a single shrub, or bush, grows; and, without springs, if we except a few wells of brackish, and unwholesome water.

The Canaanites, or Phœnicians, on hearing of this irruption of a foreign people, come down to oppose, and fight with them, in the deserts of Cades-Barnea. How did it happen that Moses subjected himself to a defeat, at the head of six hundred thousand men, in a country, which, at

the present day, does not contain three thousand inhabitants? At the expiration of thirty-nine years, he obtains two victories; but, he does not fulfil a single object of his legislation. He, and his people, die, before they set foot in the country, which, it was their avowed intention to subjugate.

A legislator, according to our vulgar notions, ought to make himself beloved and respected; but he should not push his severities to the extent of barbarism and cruelty. He ought not, instead of inflicting by the proper legal authorities, those punishments which the guilty deserved, to cause a large part of the nation to be massacred at random, by the other part.

Does it appear probable, we had almost said, possible, that Moses, at the age of a hundred and twenty years, could, actuated only by his own feelings, have been so inhuman, so inured to carnage, as to command the Levites to massacre, without distinction, twenty-three thousand of their brethren, and that too, for the fault, or at least the collusion, of his own brother, who ought to have sacrificed his life, rather than make a calf to be worshipped? What! after this unworthy action, his brother is made High Priest, and twenty-three thousand men are massacred!!

Moses had espoused a Midianitish woman, the daughter of Jethro, the high priest of Midian, in Arabia Petræa. Jethro had conferred numerous

favours upon him ; and permitted his son to accompany him, as a guide, in the wilderness. Now, let us ask, by what cruelty, so opposed to all policy, (to judge only according to our feeble notions) must Moses have been actuated, in commanding the immolation, or massacre, of twenty-four thousand of his countrymen, under the pretext that a Jew had been discovered cohabiting with a woman of Midian ? And how can it be said, after all these amazing and horrid butcheries, that “ Moses was the most meek and gentle of men ? ” Can we do otherwise than acknowledge, that, humanly speaking, such horrid cruelties, are, alike, revolting to reason, and to nature. But, on the other hand, if we consider Moses as the minister of the designs and punishments of God, every thing becomes changed in appearance ; we do not behold a man, acting as a man, but as an instrument of the Divinity ; and, of whom, as such, we have no right to demand an account. We have only to adore, and be silent.

If Moses had been the founder of his religion, like Zoroaster, Thauth, the first Bramins, Numa, Mahomet, and many others, we should be led to ask him, why, in the formation of it, he did not incorporate those doctrines, which are the most efficacious and useful, in restraining lust and crimes ? In other words, why did he not announce, in plain and direct terms, the immortality of the soul, and rewards and punishments after

death? These dogmas had been then long known, and admitted, in Egypt, Phœnicia, Mesopotamia, Persia, and India. We should say to him, “ You
“ have been instructed in all the wisdom of the
“ Egyptians, you are a legislator, and you abso-
“ lutely neglect the principal dogma of the Egyp-
“ tians ; a dogma, most essential to man, and of
“ so salutary and sacred a nature, that your own
“ people, the Jews, ignorant as they were, esta-
“ blished their belief in it, a long time after the
“ termination of your career ; at least, it was partly
“ adopted by the Essenians and Pharisees, at the
“ end of a thousand years.”

Against one of our ordinary legislators, this would be an overwhelming objection ; but, as we have before noticed, it loses its weight, and falls to the ground, when we consider, that the laws in question, were given by God himself ; who had deigned to declare himself the King of the Jewish people ; temporally punishing, and rewarding, them ; and, who would not reveal to them the knowledge of the immortality of the soul, and of eternal rewards and punishments, but at the appointed time, marked out by his decrees. In a human point of view, almost every action of the Jews is of the most horrible and revolting description. That which is said to be divine, is far beyond our weak and feeble comprehension. Both the one and the other compel us to be silent.

There have been men of profound science and

learning, who have carried their historical doubts so far, as to question even the existence of such an individual as Moses; his whole life, from his cradle to the grave, is so full of prodigy and wonder, that it has appeared to them, nothing but an imitation of the ancient Arabian fables; and, particularly, of that of the ancient Bacchus.* They cannot reduce the existence of Moses to any definite period; the name even, of Pharaoh, or king of Egypt, in whose reign he is said to have lived, is altogether unknown. No monument, or track of any kind, remains to us, of the country in which he is said to have travelled. To these learned men, it has appeared impossible, that Moses could have governed two or three millions of people, in uninhabitable deserts, for the space of forty years; in a country, where, at the present day, only two or three hordes of vagabonds, consisting of three or four thousand men, can find subsistence. We are far from adopting this rash opinion, which would at once sap the foundation of all Jewish history.

Neither shall we adopt the opinions of Aben-Esra, Maimonides, Nugnes, or the author of the Jewish ceremonies, although they are strengthened by those of Le Clerc, Middleton, the learned theologians of Holland, and even the great Newton himself. These illustrious and most learned men,

* See Bacchus, page 157, ante.

are of opinion, that neither Moses nor Joshua, could, possibly, write the books which are attributed to them; they say, that their history, and their laws, would have been engraven on stone; if, in fact, they ever had existence; moreover, that this art requires great labour and perseverance to accomplish; and that, it was quite impossible to cultivate it in the desert, or wilderness. These learned men ground their objections, (as may be seen elsewhere) in anticipations and evident contradictions. We embrace, in opposition to these great and learned men, the common and generally received opinion; which is that of the Synagogue, and of the Church, whose infallibility we are bound to acknowledge.

Far be it from us, to accuse Le Clerc, Middleton, and Newton of impiety. God forbid! we should be guilty of such great presumption. We feel convinced, that if the books of Moses, and of Joshua, and the rest of the Pentateuch, did not appear, to them, to have been written by those Israelitish heroes, they were not the less persuaded that these books were the produce of divine inspiration. They recognize the finger of God in every line in Genesis, Joshua, Samson, and Ruth. The Jewish historian, strictly speaking, was merely the secretary of God; it was God, of course, who dictated every word. Could it be possible for Newton to think otherwise? We feel that he could not. May God preserve us,

from becoming like those perverse hypocrites, who lay hold of any, and every pretext, for accusing all great and learned men of impiety and irreligion, as they were formerly accused of magick, witchcraft, &c. ! We should feel that we were acting contrary to every principle of integrity, as well as cruelly insulting the Christian religion, if we were so abandoned as to attempt to persuade the public, that the most learned men, and the greatest geniuses, of the earth, were not true Christians. / The more we respect the church, to which we are subject, the more we are convinced that that church tolerates the opinions of those learned and virtuous men, with that charity and forbearance which characterises it ; and is, indeed, its distinguishing feature.

CHAPTER XLI.

OF THE JEWS, FROM MOSES TO SAUL.

WE shall not here enquire why Joshuah or Josuë, the captain of the Jews, on conducting his horde or clan, from the east of the river Jordan, to the west, towards Jericho, found it necessary for the Deity to suspend the course of that river; which, in that part, is not more than forty feet wide, and over which it would have been easy for him to throw a temporary bridge of planks, and still more easy for him and his people to ford it over. There were several fords, or passes, to this river; witness that where the Israelites slaughtered forty-two thousand of their brethren, who could not pronounce the word Shibboleth.

Neither do we inquire why the walls of Jericho, fall at the sound of the trumpet? These are new miracles, which it pleased God to work, in favour of the people, of whom he had declared himself the King; and which do not belong to historical research. Upon the same grounds, we refrain from examining, by what right, Joshua came to destroy the towns and villages, whose inhabitants knew

nothing, nor had ever before heard speak, of him, or his people? The Jews say, "We are descended from Abraham. Abraham travelled through this country about four hundred years ago; your country therefore belongs to us; and we are come to slaughter your mothers, wives, and children." On this point, Fabricius and Holstenius have raised the following objection. What would be said, if a Norwegian came into Germany, with a few hundreds of his countrymen, and were to say to the Germans, "About four hundred years ago, one of our countrymen, the son of a potter, travelled in this country, near Vienna, and therefore Austria belongs to us, and we are come to massacre all the inhabitants of the country, in the name of the Lord?" The same authors very properly remark, that the times of Joshua, are not ours; and that it does not belong to us, to view with a profane eye, the things which are divine, and that, above all, God had a right to punish the sins of the Canaanites, by the hands of the Jews. It is said, that no sooner was Jericho in a defenceless state, than the Jews sacrifice to their God, all the inhabitants—old men, women, young maidens, and suckling children, and also, all the animals. None were excepted, but the abandoned prostitute, who had concealed at her house the Jewish spies; but whence the use of these spies, since the walls of Jericho were destined to fall at the sound of

trumpets? And, to what purpose, destroy all the animals, which might have been of great use?

With respect to this woman, whom the Vulgate calls Meretrix, she would appear to have afterwards led a more virtuous life, as she is described as being one of king David's grandmothers. The whole of these events are figurative; prophecies, which remotely announce the law disgraced. Once more, we repeat, that these are mysteries with which we do not feel warranted to meddle.

By the book of Joshua, we learn, that this chief, having made himself master of part of the land of Canaan, had thirty-one of their petty kings hanged: that is, thirty-one chiefs of the towns and villages which he had destroyed, and who had dared to defend their fire-sides, their wives and their children. We ought here to prostrate ourselves before that Divine Providence, who thought proper to punish the sins of these kings by the sword of Joshua.

It is not to be wondered at, that the neighbouring people combined against the Jews; who in their eyes, could only appear as a band of execrable robbers and depredators; and not, as the sacred instruments of divine vengeance, and of the future salvation of the human race. They were subdued, and reduced to a state of bondage and slavery, by Chushan, king of Mesopotamia. Mesopotamia, to be sure, is a considerable distance from Jericho; it was therefore necessary, for

Chushan, to conquer Syria, and a part of Palestine. Be that as it may, they were enslaved eight years; and they remained in a state of total inactivity for the successive sixty-two years. It is evident, that even during these sixty-two years, they must have been in a state of subjection, since they were commanded, by the laws, to make a conquest of all the country, from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates: the whole of this vast country was promised to them; and, if they had been free, there can be no doubt but they would have been tempted to seize upon it. They were also in bondage eighteen years, to Eglon, king of the Moabites, who was assassinated by Ehud, or Aod; and again, for the space of twenty-years, to a people of Canaan, whom they do not name; when they were delivered by the warlike prophetess Deborah. They were again brought to subjection, by the Midianites; and continued in bondage, seven years; when Gideon effected their deliverance.

After this, they were conquered by the Philistines (properly Phœnicians), to whom they remained in subjection eighteen years, until the time of Jephthah. They were again subjected to the same people, and continued in a state of bondage for the space of forty years, until the time of Saul. But what tends greatly to confound our judgment is, that they were slaves even in the time of Sampson, when the jaw-bone of an ass

sufficed for Sampson to slay a thousand Philistines, and that it pleased God to work great miracles by the hand of Sampson.

Here let us pause a moment, in order to take a short sketch of the number of Jews exterminated by their own brethren, or by the command of God himself, from the time that they were wanderers in the wilderness, to the time of their election of a king by lot :—

| | |
|--|--------|
| Slaughtered by the Levites, after the worship of the Golden Calf made by Aaron, the brother of Moses..... | 23,000 |
| Consumed by fire for the revolt of Korah and others | 250 |
| Slaughtered, or as it is said, died in the plague for the same rebellion..... | 14,700 |
| Slaughtered for having commerce with Midianitish women | 24,000 |
| Slain at one of the passes of Jordan, found incapable of pronouncing the word Shibolet | 42,000 |
| Killed by the Benjamites, whom they attacked | 40,000 |
| Benjamites killed by the other tribes | 45,000 |
| When the Ark was taken by the Philistines, and God having afflicted them with emerods, they bring the Ark to Bethshemeth, and make an offering of five golden emerods, and five golden | |

mice, there were slaughtered of the
Bethshemites for looking into the Ark, 50,700

Sum total 239,650

Here we have two hundred and thirty-nine thousand six hundred and fifty Jews, exterminated either by the command of God himself, or in their civil wars; without reckoning those who perished in the desert, or wilderness, and those who fell in the different battles with the Canaanites, &c.

If we are allowed to look upon the Jews in the same light as other nations, we shall be at a loss to conceive how the children of Jacob could have multiplied to such an extraordinary degree, as to bear such a loss. But God, who conducted and watched over them — God, who proved and punished them, made this nation so very different from all others, that we are bound to look on it with other eyes, than those with which we should examine the rest of the world; and not judge of those events, as we would of the common and general occurrences of other nations.

CHAPTER XLII.

OF THE JEWS, SUBSEQUENT TO SAUL.

THE JEWS do not seem to have been in a much better condition under their kings than under their judges.

Their first king, Saul, is reduced to the necessity of committing suicide. Ishbosheth, and Mephibosheth, his sons, are assassinated. David delivers up to the Gibeonites seven of Saul's grandsons, who were cruelly murdered. He also orders his son Solomon to put to death Adonijah, his other son, and Joab his general. Their king Asa destroys a considerable number of the people in Jerusalem, and Baasha assassinates Nadab, the son of Jeroboam, and all his family and kindred. Jehu assassinates Joram and Ochosias, Ahab's seventy sons, forty-two brethren of Ochosias, and all their kindred. Athaliah assassinates all her grandsons except Joash ; and she, in her turn, is assassinated by the high priest, Jehoiada. The servants of Joash conspire against him, and as-

sassinate him ; and his son Amaziah experiences the same fate. Zachariah is slain by Shallum ; who, after a short reign, is slain by Menahem. Of this last wretch (Menahem), it is said in the Scriptures, “ that he ripped up all the women “ that were with child, in Tipshah.” Pekahiah, the son of Menahem, is assassinated by Pekah, the son of Remaliah : and Pekah himself is assassinated by Hoshea, the son of Elah. Of Manasseh, it is said, that he “ shed innocent blood “ very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one “ end to another.” And Amon, the son of Manasseh, is assassinated, &c.

In the midst of these massacres and assassinations, ten tribes are carried away captive by the king of Babylon ; and all, with the exception of a few labourers, whom they leave to till the ground, become slaves, and are for ever dispersed.

There yet remained two tribes ; who, in their turn, were also carried into captivity, and continued in a state of bondage seventy years ; at the expiration of which time, they obtain permission of their conquerors and masters, to return to Jerusalem. These two tribes, with the few remaining Jews in Samaria, who had become incorporated with the new foreign inhabitants, were finally subjected to the kings of Persia.

When Alexander invaded and conquered Persia, Judea was comprised in his conquests. After

Alexander, the Jews continued subject, sometimes to the Selucidæ, his successors in Syria; and sometimes to the Ptolemies, his successors in Egypt. Always in a state of subjection, and obtaining (many of them) a livelihood, by acting in the capacity of brokers, in different parts of Asia. The Jews obtained some favours of Ptolemy Epiphanes, the king of Egypt. A Jew, named Joseph, or Josephus, was made farmer-general of the taxes in Lower Syria and Judea, which belonged to this Ptolemy. This is, in fact, the most peaceable and happy state of the Jews, for a long time previous. It was at this time that they built the third part of their city, subsequently called the inclosure of the Maccabees, or the wall of the Maccabees, because they finished and completed the work.

From the yoke of Ptolemy, king of Egypt, they pass over to that of Antiochus Theos, king of Syria. As they had become rich in their posts of farmers-general, they became insolent and audacious, and rebelled against their master, Antiochus. It was in the time of the Maccabees; of whom the Jews of Alexandria evinced great courage, and performed many great actions. The Maccabees, however, with all their exertions, could not prevent the general of Antiochus Eupater, the son of Antiochus Epiphanes, from razing to the ground the walls of the temple, leaving only the sanctuary standing, and cutting

off the head of Onias, the high priest, who was considered ~~at~~ the instigator of the revolt. as /

The Jews were never more inviolably attached to their law, than under the government of the kings of Syria; they no longer worshipped strange gods; and it was at this time that their religion was irrevocably fixed. Yet, it was at this very time, they were more miserable than ever; continually looking forward to their deliverance; relying on the prophecies and predictions of their prophets; and full of expectation, that the promises of succour from their God would be duly fulfilled. But they were, alas! abandoned by that Providence, whose decrees are unknown to men.

They respired a little during the intestine wars of the kings of Syria; but they soon fell out among themselves, and took up arms against each other. As they had no kings, and the office and dignity of High Priest was the greatest among them, it was to obtain this exaltation that gave rise to the formation of parties, opposed to each other by a spirit of feeling of the most violent and rancorous nature. In short, this dignity was obtained only sword in hand, and the high priest arrived at the sanctuary over the dead bodies of his rivals.

Hircan, of the race of the Maccabees, being made high priest (subject always to the Syrians), caused the sepulchre of David to be opened, in

which the exaggerator, Josephus, pretends, that he found three thousand talents. It was at a time that they were rebuilding the temple, under Nehemiah, that it became necessary to search for this supposed treasure. Hircan, they say, obtained leave of Antiochus Sidetes, to coin money. But, as there never was any Jewish coin extant, the treasure reported to have been found in the sepulchre of David, was not, in all probability, very considerable.

It is worthy of notice, that this high priest, Hircan, was of the sect of the Sadducees; and, consequently, did not believe in the immortality of the soul, nor in angels; this was the subject of fresh quarrels, which now began to divide the Sadducees and the Pharisees. These latter conspired against Hircan, and would willingly have condemned him to suffer imprisonment, and the degrading punishment of the lash. He, however, avenges himself of all his enemies, and governs despotically. His son, Aristobulus, ventured to declare himself king, during the intestine troubles of Syria and Egypt. He was one of the most cruel tyrants who had ever oppressed the Jewish people. This Aristobulus, who was extremely punctual and exact in going up into the temple to pray, and in never eating pork, nevertheless, as a pious son, starved his mother to death, and assassinated his own brother Antigonus. His

successor was John, or Johannes, as wicked; in every respect, as his predecessor.

This Johannes (stained with crimes), left two sons, who made war upon each other. These two sons were Aristobulus and Hircan. Aristobulus prevailed, expelled his brother, and declared himself king. The Romans at that time were subjugating Asia. Pompey arrives among them, and puts things somewhat in order. He takes the temple, hangs the rebels at the doors, and loads with irons the self-declared king Aristobulus.

This Aristobulus had a son, who presumed to give himself the name of Alexander. He stirs up a revolt, and puts himself at the head of a few troops; and concludes, by being hung, by order of Pompey.

At last, Marc Antony confers the dignity of king of the Jews on an Idumean Arab, of the country of those Amalekites who were so much hated and accursed of the Jews. It was that very Herod whom St. Matthew accuses of slaughtering "all the young children in Beth-lehem, and in all the coasts thereof," upon his being informed that there was a king of the Jews, born in that village; and, that three of the Magi, or wise men, conducted by a star, had been to offer him presents.

Thus then, it appears, that the Jews were, almost always, in a state of subjugation, or slavery.

It is well known in what manner they rebelled against the Romans, and how that Titus had them all sold in the open market, at the price of that very animal, whose flesh they would not touch.

They experienced a still more miserable fate, in the reigns of the emperors Trajan and Adrian; and they well deserved it. In the reign of Trajan, there was a terrible earthquake, which swallowed up some of the most beautiful cities of Syria. The Jews considered this, as the signal of the wrath of God against the Romans; they again collected themselves together in considerable numbers, and took up arms in some parts of Africa, and in Cyprus: they were animated by such a fury, that they devoured the living members of the Romans, whom they slaughtered. But they were quickly brought to their senses, and all who were guilty, died under the dreadful punishment of the rack, or torture. Those who remained, were animated by the same rage, in the reign of Adrian; when Barcochebas, calling himself their Messiah, put himself at their head. This desperate fanaticism was not subdued without great difficulty, and shedding torrents of blood.

It is surprising that there are any Jews remaining in the world. The celebrated Benjamin of Tudela, a very learned Rabbin, who travelled through Asia and Europe, in the twelfth century,

reckoned nearly three hundred and eighty thousand of them, — as well Jews as Samaritans ; for we think it too ridiculous to mention the pretended kingdom of Thema, towards Thibet, where this Benjamin (in this respect, certainly the deceiver, or deceived) pretends, that there are three hundred thousand men of the ten ancient tribes, collected together under a sovereign. The Jews have never had any country, or settlements, to call their own, since the reign of Vespasian ; if we except a few villages in the deserts of Arabia Felix, towards the Red Sea. Mahomet, at first, was under the necessity of sparing them ; but finally, he destroyed the petty dominion or government, which they had established to the north of Mecca. It is since the time of Mahomet, that they have actually ceased to exist, as a people.

In following simply the thread of the history of the petty Jewish nation, we shall perceive, that its termination, or extinction, was such as might have been very naturally expected. They themselves tell us (and that boastingly), that they came out of Egypt little, if any thing, better than a band of robbers ; carrying off every thing which they had borrowed of the Egyptians ; they make it their glory to have spared neither old age, sex, nor even childhood, in the villages and towns which they subdued. They make a parade of their irreconcilable hatred to all other nations and

people ; they rebel against all their masters and governors ; always superstitious, eager to possess the property of others ; barbarous and cruel in the extreme ; servile and mean in a state of adversity, and insolent in prosperity. Such were the Jews, in the eyes of all the Greeks and Romans, who could, and did, read their books : but, in the eyes of Christians enlightened by faith, they are declared as our forerunners, and as having prepared the way for us. They were (according to some) the heralds of Providence.

The two other nations, who are wanderers like the Jews in the East, and who, like them also, form no alliance with any other people, are the Banians and the Guebres, of the race of the Parsis, or Persians. These Banians are (like the Jews), active in commercial pursuits, and are believed to be the descendants of the first peaceable inhabitants in India : they keep themselves separate and distinct, neither forming any alliance, nor mixing with, any other people : in this respect, they resemble the Bramins. The Parsis are the very same people, whom we now call Persians ; formerly the lords and rulers of the East ; and sovereigns of the Jews. They have been a dispersed people since the time of Omar ; and cultivate, in peace, the country in which they established themselves ; faithful to the ancient religion of the Magi ; worshipping only one God ; and conserving the sacred fire ; which they re-

gard as the work, and as an emblem, of the Divinity.

We do not take into account the remnant of the Egyptians, secret worshippers of Isis; who now no longer exist, but as strolling and wandering vagabonds: and will, no doubt, shortly be totally annihilated.

CHAPTER XLIII.

OF THE JEWISH PROPHETS.

WE shall be very careful not to confound the Nabim and Roheim of the Hebrews, with the impostors of other nations. We are aware that God made himself known to the Jews only; and held communication with no other people; except, in a few particular instances, such as, with Balaam, the prophet of Mesopotamia, whom he inspired, and made to pronounce the very reverse of what Balak wished him to do. This Balaam was the prophet of some other God; and yet, it is not said that he was a false prophet. We have already remarked, that the priests of Egypt were prophets and seers. What precise definition, or meaning, was attached to this word? That of "*Inspired.*" Sometimes, those who were inspired revealed the past; sometimes, the future; sometimes they contented themselves by speaking in a figurative style. Therefore, when St. Paul quotes this verse of the Greek poet Aratus, "In God we live, and move, and have our being;" he gives this poet the name of prophet.

Was the title and quality of prophet, among the Hebrews, a particular dignity or office, conferred by the law on certain select persons, like the dignity of Pythia at Delphos? No! nothing like it. Those only, were prophets, who felt themselves inspired; or who had seen visions. Thence it frequently happened, that false prophets arose, having no distinct mission, and who frequently brought great misfortunes on the people; like the prophets of Cevennes, at the commencement of the present century.*

It was difficult to distinguish between the false prophet, and the true. Therefore, it was, that Manasseh, the king of Judah, put the prophet Isaiah to the most cruel death. King Zedekiah could not decide between the prophets Jeremiah and Hananiah, whose predictions were directly opposed to each other; and he put Jeremiah in prison. The prophet Ezekiel was killed by the Jews, his companions in slavery. The prophet Micah, or Michaiah, having prophesied evil tidings to the kings Ahab and Jehoshaphat, another prophet named Tsedekia, or Zedekiah, the son of Che-naanah, smote Micah on the cheek, exclaiming, "Which way went forth the spirit of the Lord "from me to thee?" Hosea, in the ninth chapter of the book of that name, declares that all the prophets are fools, "*stultum prophetam, insanum "virum spiritualem."*" The prophets looked upon,

* The 18th.

and in fact called, each other, visionaries and liars. There was therefore no other method of distinguishing the false prophet from the true, than by waiting for the accomplishment of the predictions, respectively announced.

The prophet Elisha, having gone up to Damascus in Syria, the king, Benhadad, who was sick, sent him forty camels laden with presents, in order to know from him, whether he should recover of his disease? Elisha replied, "That he might certainly recover;" but that the Lord had shewn him that the king "would surely die." The king, in fact, died. Now, if Elisha had not been a true prophet of the Lord, he might very justly be suspected of gross equivocation in this reply; for, if the king had not died, he would say that he had foretold his cure by saying, "that he might certainly recover," and that he had not specified the time of his death. But, having confirmed his mission by such transcendant miracles, we cannot for a moment doubt the veracity and uprightness of his character.

We shall not here inquire, (as some commentators have done) into the meaning of the double portion of spirit, which Elisha received from Elijah; nor, what is signified, by the mantle which Elijah gave him, when he was taken up into heaven in a chariot of fire, and horses of fire; precisely corresponding with the poetic description which the Greeks give of the Car, or Chariot

of Apollo. Neither shall we attempt to investigate the typical, or mystical sense, of those forty-two young children, who, on seeing Elisha going up by the way to Bethel, say to him jestingly, "Go up thou bald head—Go up thou bald head," and of the divine vengeance which the prophet drew down upon them, in the shape of two she-bears, which are said to have devoured these little innocent creatures. The facts are revealed to us; but the sense in which they are to be taken may probably be concealed.

We ought here to remark particularly, a custom of the East; which the Jews carried to an extent, which astonishes us. This custom was, not only to speak in allegories, but to express by the most singular actions the things they wished to be understood. And indeed, at this time, nothing could be more natural than this custom; for as men had for such a length of time expressed their thoughts and ideas in hieroglyphicks, they naturally acquired the habit of speaking in the same figurative manner in which they wrote.

Thus according to Herodotus, the Scythians sent to Darah, whom we call Darius, a bird, a mouse, a frog, and five arrows; by which they signified, that if Darius did not flee, or run away, as swiftly as a bird, or conceal himself like a frog, or a mouse, he would assuredly perish by their arrows. The story may not, possibly, be true; but it is an evident testimony of the emblematical

communications, common among men in those remote times.

Kings were accustomed to write and speak in enigmas; of which we have an example in Hiram (the king of Tyre), in Solomon, and in the queen of Sheba. Tarquinius Superbus being consulted by his son, when walking in his garden, as to the manner he should act towards the Gabii, (or Gabians) answered him, by knocking off the heads of the poppies, which grew much higher than the other flowers; by which he meant that the great and principal people were to be exterminated, and the lower orders spared.

It is to these hieroglyphicks that we are indebted for those fables, of which the first works of men were composed. Fable is of much greater antiquity, than simple narrative.

It is necessary for us to be somewhat familiarised with antiquity, to prevent our being shocked and disgusted by the actions, and enigmatical discourses, of the Jewish prophets.

Isaiah wishing to signify to the king Achas, or Ahaz, that in a few years he will be delivered from the power of the king of Syria, and the petty king of Samaria, who had formed an alliance against him, says to the king: "Before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, thou shalt be delivered from the power of these two kings." And again, "The Lord shall shave with a razor that is hired" (namely, by the

king of Assyria) “ the head, the hair of the feet, “ and the beard,” &c. &c. Then the prophet takes two witnesses, Zechariah and Uriah ; he sleeps with the prophetess, and she brings forth a son ; the Lord gives him the name of Maher-shalal-hash-baz, (*divide quickly the spoils,*) and this means, that they should take of, and divide, the spoils of their enemies.

We shall not enter into a discussion of the allegorical sense, and infinitely respectable construction which is given to this prophecy ; we confine ourselves merely to the examination of these singular and astonishing customs, to us, of the present day.

The same prophet, Isaiah, walks naked, and barefoot, through Jerusalem ; to indicate, that the Egyptians will be entirely destroyed, and rooted out, by the king of Babylon.

What ! it will be asked, is it possible that a man could be guilty of such indecency, as to walk naked through the streets of Jerusalem, without being taken up by the police ? Yes, without doubt it was so ; Diogenes was not the only one of antiquity, who had boldness and impudence sufficient, for so gross an action. Strabo, in his 15th Book, says, that there was, in India, a sect of the Bramins, who would have felt ashamed to ~~to~~ wear any kind of clothing. At the present time, we understand, it is not uncommon, in India, to meet with penitents going about entirely naked, and laden with chains ; as an expiation for the

sins and transgressions of the people. We believe the same habits prevail, to a certain extent, in Africa and Turkey. These manners and customs are not ours ; nor do we believe, that, in the time of Isaiah, there was a single usage, or custom, which bears any kind of resemblance to the customs and habits which prevail among us, and the other nations of the world, at the present day.

The prophet Jeremiah was only fourteen years of age, when he received the gift of the spirit of prophecy. As he laboured under a difficulty of speech, the Lord (he says) put forth his hand, and touched his mouth. The first thing which he sees, in his character of a prophet, is a seething-pot turned towards the north. This seething-pot is representative of the people who were to come from the north ; and the boiling water prefigures the misfortunes and miseries of Jerusalem. The prophet is commanded to get a linen girdle, and put it on his loins ; and to go and hide it in a hole of the rock near the Euphrates. He afterwards returns, to take the girdle from thence, and finds it decayed and rotten. He, himself, explains this parable to us, by saying, that, after the same manner, the pride of Jerusalem shall be decayed and brought down. He provides himself with bonds and yokes, and puts them on his neck. He then sends the bonds and yokes to the neighbouring kings, to warn them to sub-

mit to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, in favour of whom he prophecies.

The prophet Ezekiel surprises us still more. He predicts to the Jews, "that the fathers shall eat their sons, and the sons shall eat their fathers." But, before this prediction, he saw a vision of four bright and sparkling animals, of the appearance of lightning, and four wheels, full of eyes. The animals have been, by us, denominated cherubims. The prophet eats a roll of parchment, and he is bound with chains. He portrays the city of Jerusalem upon a tile; and puts an iron pan upon the earth. Afterwards he lies three hundred and ninety days upon his left side, and forty days upon the right side. He is to eat bread of wheat, barley, beans, lentiles, and millet, covered with human excrement. "It is thus," says he, "that the children of Israel shall eat their defiled bread, among the nations whither I will drive them." But after having eaten of this bread of misery, he is, on remonstrance, permitted by God to substitute "cow's dung for man's dung." Again, the prophet cuts off his hair, and divides it into three portions; — one part he throws into the fire, another he scatters in the wind, and the third he cuts with a sword round about the city of Jerusalem.

The same prophet, Ezekiel, furnishes us with allegories of a still more surprising nature; of which the following are a sketch:

He introduces the Lord, whom he represents as thus addressing him : — “ When thou wast born, “ thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed “ in water to supple thee: thou wast not salted “ at all, nor swaddled at all thou hast “ increased and waxed great, thy breasts are “ fashioned, and thine hair is grown I “ passed by thee, and behold thy time was the “ time of love. I spread my skirt over thee, and “ covered thy nakedness I clothed thee “ with broidered work, and shod thee with bad- “ ger’s skin I decked thee also with orna- “ ments, put bracelets upon thy hands, and a “ chain upon thy neck, and ear-rings in thy “ ears, &c. But thou didst trust in thine “ own beauty, and playedst the harlot because “ of thy renown, and pouredst out thy fornica- “ tion on every one that passed by Thou “ hast built thy high place at every head of the “ way . . . and hast opened thy feet to every “ one that passed by. . . . Thou hast also com- “ mitted fornication with the Egyptians, thy “ neighbours, great of flesh They give “ gifts to all whores : but thou givest thy gifts to “ all thy lovers,” &c. &c. And again — “ Aholah “ played the harlot when she was mine ; and “ she doted on her lovers, — princes, captains, “ and rulers, desirable young men Her “ sister, Aholibah, was more corrupt in her in- “ ordinate love, than she For she doted

“ upon her paramours, whose flesh is as the flesh
 “ of horses, and whose issue is like the issue of
 “ horses,” &c. &c.

These expressions appear to us very gross and indecent, but they were not so considered by the Jews. They signified the apostacies of Jerusalem and Samaria; which apostacies were very frequently represented as a fornication and an adultery. Once more, we beg to impress on the minds of our readers, that we must not judge of the manners, customs, and the manner of speaking, among the ancients, by those which are in use among us. They are no more alike, than the French language is like the Chaldean and Arabick.

The prophet Hosea, is commanded by the Lord,* to take a prostitute for a wife; and he obeys. This prostitute bears him a son; to whom the Lord gives the name of Jezreel. This is a type of the house of Jehu, which is destined to destruction, because Jehu had killed Joram in Jezreel. The Lord afterwards orders Hosea to espouse an adulterous woman, beloved of another: “ according to the love of the Lord toward the
 “ children of Israel, who look to other gods, and
 “ love flagons of wine.” † In the prophecies of Amos, the Lord threatens “ the kine of Bashan
 “ that are in the mountain of Samaria, to take
 “ them away with hooks, and their posterity with

* Chapter I.

† Chapter III.

“ fish-hooks,”* &c. &c. In short, every thing is directly opposed to the manners and customs common to other people, and to our turn of thinking, in the present day. And, if we examine the customs of all the eastern nations, we shall find them equally opposed to, and different from, ours; not only in remote, and ancient times, but even at the present period, when we are so much better acquainted with them, and have an opportunity of judging of them more correctly.

* Chapter IV.

CHAPTER XLIV.

OF THE PRAYERS OF THE JEWS.

THERE are but few remaining, of the prayers, in use among the people of ancient times. We have only two or three formulas, or set forms of prayer, used in the celebration of the mysteries, of which we have spoken so much at length; and the ancient prayer of Isis, found in Apuleïus. The Jews, however, have preserved their prayers; we can therefore refer to, and make some slight commentary upon them.

If we may form an opinion of the character of a nation, or people, by the prayers which they offer up to their God, we shall have no difficulty in deciding, that the Jews were a most carnal and sanguinary people. They appear, in their Psalms, to wish for the death and utter destruction of the sinner, instead of praying for his repentance and conversion; and they intreat the Deity, in the truly oriental style, to bestow upon them every earthly blessing. Our limits will allow us to give but a few specimens—

“Oh Lord! water thou the hills from above,

“ that the earth may be filled with the fruits of thy
“ works.

“ The Lord bringeth forth grass for the cattle,
“ and green herb for the service of man.—He
“ bringeth forth food out of the earth, and wine
“ that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to
“ make him a cheerful countenance. Judah is as
“ a vessel filled with good things. The mountain
“ of the Lord is as a mountain of iron : it standeth
“ strong and is full of richness and plenty.”

By the following extracts, we shall perceive that the Jews heaped curses upon their enemies, in a style, not less figurative—

“ Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen
“ for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of
“ the earth for thy possession.

“ Thou shalt bruise them with a rod of iron ;
“ and break them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.
“ My God, reward thou my enemies according
“ to their deeds, and according to the wickedness
“ of their own inventions. Recompense them after
“ the work of their hands ; pay them that they
“ have deserved.

“ Let mine enemies be confounded, and put to
“ silence in the grave.

“ Oh Lord ! fight thou against them that fight
“ against me. Lay hand upon the shield and
“ buckler, and stand up to help me. Bring forth
“ the spear, and stop the way against them that
“ persecute me. Let mine enemies be confounded

“and put to shame. Let them be as the dust before the wind, and the angel of the Lord scattering them. Let their way be dark and slippery. Let a sudden destruction come upon them unawares.

“Let death come hastily upon them; and let them go down quick into hell.

“Break their teeth, O God! in their mouths; smite the jaw-bones of these lions, O Lord! consume them in thy wrath; consume them that they may perish.

“Let them wander up and down for meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied.”

“God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such a one as goeth on still in his wickedness.

“That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and that the tongue of thy dogs may be red through the same. Pour out thine indignation upon them, O Lord! and let thy wrathful displeasure take hold of them. Let their habitation be void; and no man to dwell in their tents.

“Pour out thine indignation upon the heathen that have not known thee.

“My God, do thou unto them as unto the Midianites, who perished at Endor and became as the dung of the earth. Make them like unto a wheel; and as the stubble before the wind; like as the fire that burneth up the wood; and as the

“ flame that consumeth the mountains. Destroy
 “ thou the wicked man, and set thou an ungodly
 “ man to be ruler over him ; let Satan stand at his
 “ right hand. When sentence is given upon him,
 “ let him be condemned : and let his prayer be
 “ turned into sin. Let his children be fatherless,
 “ and his wife a widow. Let his children be vaga-
 “ bonds, and beg their bread. Let the extortioner
 “ consume all that he hath. The righteous Lord
 “ will hew them in pieces ; and all the enemies of
 “ Zion shall be as the grass growing upon the
 “ house tops, which withereth ;” &c.

“ Blessed shall he be that taketh thy little ones
 “ and dasheth them against the stones,” &c. &c.

The above is but a small portion, of what may be found of a similar nature, in the Jewish Psalms, known, as the Psalms of David.

It is evident that if God had turned a favourable ear to, and granted all the prayers of his “ chosen people,” there would be none but Jews to inhabit the earth ; for they detested all nations, and in their turn, were detested by them ; and their continually praying to, and exhorting, the Deity, to exterminate and root out all those whom they hated, is very much like praying for the utter ruin and destruction of the whole of the inhabitants of the earth — excepting, always, themselves. But then, again, we are bound to call to our remembrance, that the Jews were not only the cherished people of the Lord, but were also made the instru-

ments of his vengeance. It was by them that he punished the sins of other nations ; and, eventually, made use of the same nations to punish the Jews. Thanks be to God ! that in the present day, it is no longer considered either human or allowable, to put up similar prayers to him ; and to call down a blessing upon those, who shall slaughter the mothers, and take their suckling children and cruelly dash them against the stones, &c.—The great Lord and God of all, being now recognized as the common parent and governor of all mankind, no one people ever thinks of pronouncing similar curses and imprecations against its neighbours. In the days of ignorance, darkness, and superstition, we sometimes were as cruel and barbarous in our conduct, as the Jews ; but in chaunting their Psalms, we have no idea of applying their sense and construction to the people with whom we are at war. This is one of the great advantages, which the law of grace has over the law of rigour.—And, would to God ! that under the sanction of holy laws, and divine prayers, we ourselves had not shed the blood of our brethren, and ravaged the earth in the name of a God of mercy !! Is it not worse than blasphemy, to unite the name of a God of mercy and truth, with such horrid proceedings ?

CHAPTER XLV.

OF FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS, THE HISTORIAN OF
THE JEWS.

It is by no means astonishing that the History of Flavius Josephus met with decided contradictions, and was opposed and denounced, when it made its appearance at Rome. There were not, it is true, many copies of it. The most skilful copiers could not transcribe it in less than three months. Books were very dear, and very scarce; and but few Romans would condescend to read the annals of a pitiful nation of slaves, for whom both great and small, high and low, had an equal contempt. It appears, however, by the reply of Josephus to Apion, that it had found a few readers; but we see, at the same time, that these few denounced the historian as a visionary and a liar.

We must put ourselves in the place of the Romans in the days of Titus to have a proper idea of the contempt, mixed with horror, with which, the conquerors of the whole known world, and the legislators of nations, would look upon

such a history as that of the Jewish people. These Romans could not very well know, that Josephus had extracted the greater number of the facts which he related from the Sacred writings, dictated by the Holy Spirit. They could not have been informed that Josephus had enlarged upon those things which he had taken from the Bible, and passed over many others in silence. They were ignorant also, that the main points of many of his stories, were taken from the Third Book of Esdras ; and that this Book of Esdras is one of those which we term Apocryphal.

Now, let us ask, what would be the opinion of a Roman senator on reading these oriental tales? Josephus relates (book x. ch. xii.) that Darius, the son of Astyages, had made the prophet Daniel, governor over three hundred and sixty cities ; when he prohibited, under the penalty of death, that any one should offer up prayer or petition, to any god whatever, for the space of thirty days. The Scriptures certainly do not report, that Daniel governed three hundred and sixty cities.

Josephus seems, subsequently, to entertain an idea of the conversion of the whole of Persia to Judaism.

The same individual assigns a most singular cause for the rebuilding of the second Temple of the Jews, by Zorobabel. The following is his account of its origin.

Zorobabel, says he, was the intimate friend of

the king Darius. — What! a Jewish slave the intimate friend of the King of kings! It would be about the same thing, if one of our historians were to tell us, that one of the fanaticks of Cervennes, but just released from the galleys, had been the intimate friend of Lewis the Fourteenth!

But, be that as it may, according to Josephus, the king Darius, who was a prince of lively wit and genius, proposed to his whole court the solution of the following question, (worthy of the gallant Mercury) to wit: — “Which had the most power? Wine, kings, or women?” He who gave the best and most appropriate answer was to receive the following reward: — A tiara of linen, — a purple robe, — a collar of gold, — to drink out of a gold cup, — repose on a gold bed, — to ride in a chariot of gold, drawn by horses in gold harness, — and to have letters patent conferring on him the dignity of “The King’s Cousin.”

Darius seated himself on his throne of gold, for the purpose of hearing the replies of his academy of wits, to this knotty question. One gave a luminous dissertation in favour of wine, — another, in favour of kings. But, Zorobabel was decidedly in favour of women. “There is nothing,” says he, “so powerful as they are; for I have seen “Apamea, the mistress of my lord, the king, repeatedly give his sacred majesty little pats on “the cheek, and even to take off his turban, and “put it on her own head.”

Darius found himself so much amused at the ludicrous reply of Zorobabel, that he gave immediate orders for the rebuilding of the Temple!

This story very much resembles that of one of our most ingenious academicians, of "Soliman and the Cocked Nose,"—which has served for the groundwork of a very pretty comic opera. But we are constrained to avow, that the author of this pretty piece has not been rewarded with a bed of gold, nor a chariot of gold; nor has the king of France dignified him with the familiar appellation of "my cousin."—Alas! we no longer live in the days of Darius.

There can be no doubt but that the reveries and idle fancies, with which Josephus overloaded the sacred books, greatly weakened the truths which the Bible contains, in the eyes of the Pagans. The Romans could not distinguish between what had been composed by Josephus from an impure source, and the part he had extracted from the holy writings. The Bible, esteemed as sacred by us, was either unknown to the Romans, or equally despised by them, with Josephus himself. Every thing was the object of raillery or profound disdain, which the readers of the Jewish history conceived for it. The appearance of angels to the patriarchs, — the passage of the Red Sea, — the ten plagues of Egypt, — the inconceivable increase of the Jewish people in so short a time, and

in so small a country, with all the prodigies and miracles which signalized this petty, and almost unknown, people; were treated with that contempt, which the conquerors of so many nations, (a majestic people, but to whom God had not revealed himself,) would naturally feel, for a petty and insignificant nation, reduced to a state of slavery.

Josephus was well aware of the disgust and abhorrence, every prophane author would entertain for his writings: for he says, in several places — “The reader may judge of the matter as he pleases.” He was fearful of disgusting men of sense and judgment by his extraordinary narrative; and he lessens, as much as possible, the faith which we all ought to put in such great and wonderful miracles. We perceive, as we run through his work, that he is every moment ashamed of being a Jew; while he strives to recommend his nation to the favourable consideration of its conquerors. We must pardon the unfortunate Romans, who were only blessed with common sense, and who had not yet received the gift of faith, for having looked upon Josephus as a miserable fugitive, who only indulged himself in relating to them idle and ridiculous fables, in order to extort money from his masters. Let us bless God, (we who have the happiness of being more enlightened than the Tituses, the Trajans, the Antonines,

and all the senate and deputies of the Romans, our masters — we, who have been enlightened by a great and superior light,) that we can discern between the absurd fables of Josephus, and the sublime truths which are revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures.

CHAPTER XLVI.

OF THE FALSEHOODS OF FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS,
CONCERNING ALEXANDER AND THE JEWS.

ALEXANDER had been chosen by all the Greeks as their common father and sovereign; as, formerly, Agamemnon had been. In furtherance of his designs to avenge his country of the wrongs and injuries she had sustained from Asia, he attacked the Persians, and gained a decided victory at the battle of Issus. He, thereupon, seized Syria, one of the provinces of Darah, or Darius; and, being desirous of securing Egypt, before he passed the Euphrates and Tigris, in order to deprive Darius of all the ports which could send fleets to his assistance to execute this project, (which was worthy of a great commander) it became necessary for him to lay siege to Tyre, then under the protection of the kings of Persia. Tyre was the mistress of the seas, and after a siege of seven months, in which Alexander evinced equal skill and courage, he took it. The dyke which he boldly ventured to make on the sea-side of the city, is, even in the present day, considered as a

model, worthy the imitation of all generals, who find themselves engaged in similar undertakings. It was by an imitation of Alexander's plan, that the Duke of Parma was enabled to take Anvers, and the Cardinal de Richelieu, Rochelle; if we may venture to compare petty exploits with great ones. Rollin, indeed, tells us, that Alexander's motive for besieging and taking Tyre, was grounded on the injuries and insults which the inhabitants of that city had offered to the Jews: for, that God had determined to avenge his chosen people of the Tyrians, by the hands of Alexander. It is, however, possible, that Alexander had other motives, which can be much more reasonably accounted for. After having reduced Tyre, he lost no time in securing to himself the port of Pelusium, considered as the key of Egypt, on the side of Phœnicia. Therefore, Alexander, after a forced march, in order to take Gaza by surprise, went from Gaza to Pelusium in seven days. This is the relation which is faithfully reported to us from Alexander's own diary by Arrian, Quintus Curtius, Diodorus, and even by Paulus Orosius.

But what does Josephus, in order to exalt his poor depressed nation, subject to the Persians; but which, with the whole of Syria, had lately fallen under the dominion of Alexander? He favours us with the following pretty little story. Alexander, he says, when in Macedon, had seen in a dream, the high priest of the Jews, named

Jaddus, (supposing that there ever was a Jewish priest with a name ending in *us*,) and that this priest had encouraged him to undertake his expedition against the Persians, assuring him of success; and that this was, in fact, the ground-work of Alexander's attack on Asia. To give some sort of colour to this romantic tale, he leads Alexander, after the siege of Tyre, five or six days' journey out of his way, that he may gratify his desire of paying a visit to Jerusalem. As the high priest, Jaddus, had formerly appeared to Alexander in a dream; Jaddus also, received orders from God, in a dream, to go out and salute this great king. He obeys; and, clothing himself in his pontifical robes, followed by the Levites in their surplices, he goes forth in grand procession to meet Alexander. As soon as this monarch had fixed his eyes on Jaddus, he immediately recognized in him, the very same individual who had appeared to him in a dream, about seven or eight years before, inviting him to come over and make a conquest of Persia; and he turns round, and confesses the fact, to Parmenio, one of his attendants. The high priest, Jaddus, had, on his head, the pontifical cap, adorned with a gold plate, on which was engraved a Hebrew word; Alexander, (who, without doubt, understood Hebrew perfectly well,) immediately recognized in this word the name *Jehovah*, and he most humbly prostrated himself before it; well knowing that God could have no other name than this.

Hereupon, Jaddus shews Alexander the prophecies of the Hebrew prophets, in which was clearly foretold the conquest of Persia, by a prince of Grecia, which, of course, could mean no other than Alexander himself. These prophecies could not be supposed to have been made after the event itself. Jaddus flatters Alexander with the idea that God had made choice of him, to destroy all hopes of his chosen people ever inheriting the promised land; in the same way that Nabuchodonozor and Cyrus, who had each successively possessed "The Land of Promise," had been chosen by God for the same purpose. This absurd story of the romancist Josephus, ought not, we think, to have been copied by Rollin, as if it had been attested by one of the holy writers.

But it is in this way that ancient history has been written, and the example is but too frequently followed by modern historians.

CHAPTER XLVII.

OF POPULAR ERRORS, AND PREJUDICES, WHICH
THE SACRED WRITERS HAVE CONDESCENDED
TO SANCTION BY THEIR ADMISSION OR
EXAMPLE.

THE Scriptures, or Holy Writings, were no doubt intended to perfect us in morality, and not to make natural philosophers of us.

In ancient times the serpent was looked upon as the most cunning and skilful of all animals. The author of the Pentateuch, therefore, does well, in saying that the serpent was sufficiently adroit and cunning to deceive Eve. Speech was sometimes attributed to animals; therefore the sacred writers represent the serpent and Balaam's ass as making very fine discourses. Many Jews, as well as some of our Christian doctors, have considered this story to be merely an allegory. But whether emblematic, or real, it is equally respectable. The stars were considered as so many points or fixed lights in the firmament; the Divine Author, most complaisantly, conforms himself to the com-

mon opinion, and represents the moon as ruling over the stars and the night.

The general opinion was, that the heavens were solid; they were denominated, in Hebrew, *Rakiah*, a word which may be defined as “*A Plate of Metal*;” or a large and firm body, which we translate—*Firmament*. It was supposed to hold, or contain, those waters, which were imagined to escape by various openings and passages in the heavens, and with which we are blessed in the form of rain. Accordingly, we find the sacred historian adopting this principle of natural philosophy.

The Indians, the Chaldeans, and the Persians, had an idea that God had formed the world at six different periods. So, the author of the book of Genesis, in order not to shock the prejudices of the Jews, represents the Deity as creating the world in six days: although a word, and a moment, had been quite sufficient for his Almighty Power.

The delightful shades of a garden were the chief source of comfort and happiness, in a country dried up, and burnt, by the heat of the sun; therefore the Divine Author places the first man in a garden.

In those days, there was not the least idea of a Being purely immaterial: God is continually represented as a man; he walks in the garden at noon;—he speaks,—and is spoken to, as a man.

The word soul (*ruah*) signifies breath, or life.

In the Pentateuch we always find it used in that sense, — as a breath, — as life.

It was believed that there were nations of giants ; — accordingly, we find them represented in the book of Genesis, as the children of angels by the daughters of men.

Brutes were imagined to possess some kind of reason ; and so, after the deluge, we find that God is said to have deigned to make an alliance, or covenant, with brutes, as well as men.

No one knew what the rainbow was, nor the cause thereof ; it was considered as a supernatural production ; and, as such, Homer always speaks of it. The Scriptures term it the ark, or bow, of God : — the token of the covenant between God and every living creature.

Among the numerous errors into which mankind had fallen, was one, that you could have animals of any colour you pleased, by presenting this colour to the view of the mother, at the time of conception. It will be remembered, that Jacob is said to have obtained speckled lambs, by resorting to this artifice.

The people of antiquity made use of charms to remedy the bites of serpents ; and when the wound was not mortal, or the poison had been effectually sucked out by one of those mountebanks, denominated Psilles ; — or, that, in fact, a certain form and species of writing had been successfully applied to it ; — then, and in such

case, the charms had all the credit of having effected the cure. Moses raised up a brazen serpent, the sight of which, is said to have healed all those, whom the real serpents had bitten. Thus God changed a popular error into a novel truth.

One of the most ancient errors was, the opinion that bees could be generated from a putrid carcase. This idea was, very probably, founded on the daily experience of observing flies and worms resort to, and quickly cover, the dead bodies of animals. From this experience (which was an ocular deception), the ancients conceived that corruption was the principle of generation. Since it was believed that a dead body produced flies, they fancied that the most certain method of procuring bees, would be, to prepare the bleeding skins of animals in a manner prescribed, in order to effect this metamorphosis. They did not, for a moment, reflect, that bees have the greatest aversion for all flesh that is in the least tainted or corrupt; and the instinctive feeling, with them, seems to be, most carefully to avoid it. We need not therefore be surprised that this method of procuring bees did not succeed; but they, nevertheless, believed, that the failure was to be attributed to some defect in their preparations. Virgil, in the 4th canto of his *Georgicks*, says, that this operation was successfully attempted by Aristæus; but he also adds that it was *a miracle*, — *mirabile monstrum*.

It is by a refinement of this ancient prejudice, that it is related of Sampson, that he found a swarm of bees in the mouth of a lion, which he had torn in pieces with his hands.

There also existed a vulgar opinion that the aspic (or adder) stopped her ears, in order not to hear the voice of the enchanters. The Holy Psalmist countenances this error by saying in the 58th Psalm — “ Like the deaf adder that stoppeth “ her ears ; which refuseth to hear the voice of the “ charmer, charm he never so wisely.”

A ridiculous and vulgar opinion pervaded antiquity, that women, at the time of their periodical sickness, caused wine and milk to turn, or spoil ; prevented the coagulation of butter ; and also caused the death of the young pigeons in the pigeon-house. This opinion still exists among the lower order of people ; who believe in it, as well as in the moon’s influences. It was also believed that the periodical purgations of females was corrupt blood, and that if a man had intercourse with his wife at this critical period, he had in consequence, a leprous and maimed offspring. The Jews were so strongly prejudiced in favour of this opinion, that in the 20th chapter of Leviticus, we find those, who are known to have conjugal intercourse at the critical time alluded to, are condemned to death !

In short, so determined was the Holy Spirit to conform itself to, and as we may say, countenance

the popular errors and prejudices of the day, that we find the Saviour himself, saying that "No man putteth new wine into old bottles;" and that before wheat, or any other grain, can shoot and spring up, it must rot and decay.

St. Paul, in his endeavours to convince the Corinthians of the truth of the resurrection, says: "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die." We are, however, well aware, at the present day, that grain neither rots nor dies in the earth, before it springs up; for if it decayed it would not shoot at all. But this was the popular error of the time: and the Holy Spirit has deigned to draw from it, some very salutary and useful inferences. This is what St. Jerome calls speaking by economy.

All those persons who were afflicted with convulsive disorders were supposed to be possessed of the devil, as soon as the doctrine of devils was admitted. Epilepsy, among the Romans and the Greeks, was denominated "The Holy Sickness." Melancholy, accompanied with a species of rage, or madness, was also a disorder, the cause of which was unknown; those who were afflicted with it, wandered about among the tombs in the night, howling and making a noise. They were called by the Greeks, Demoniacks (*Kylantropes*). The Scriptures admit the existence of demoniacks, wandering among the tombs.

The guilty, among the Greeks, were frequently

tormented by furies. They had reduced Orestes to such despair, that, in a fit of rage, he bit off one of his fingers. These furies also haunted Alcmaeon, Eteocles, and Polynices. The Hellenist Jews, who had become pretty well acquainted with all the Greek opinions, also admitted the existence of all kinds of furies, and unclean spirits;—of devils, who were the tormentors of men. The Sadducees would not, indeed, admit the doctrine, or existence, of devils; but the Pharisees did, a short time before the reign of Herod. At that time the Jews had among them, exorcists, whose business it was, to cast out devils: they made use of a certain root, which they put under the nose of those possessed, and repeated some kind of formula, which they pretended to have been extracted from a book of Solomon's. In short, they were so far in possession of the power of casting out devils, that our Saviour himself, when accused (according to St. Matthew) of casting out devils through Beelzebub, the prince of the devils, replies by allowing that they had the power of doing the same, and then asks them, if it is by Beelzebub that they triumph over evil spirits?

Truly, if these same Jews who put Jesus to death, had possessed the power of working such miracles; if, in fact, the Pharisees did cast out devils, they performed similar prodigies to our Saviour himself; they possessed the gift of doing

that which was said to have been communicated by Jesus to his disciples. And if, in reality, they did not possess this power, Jesus countenanced this popular error, by deigning to allow, that his implacable enemies, whom he called a race of vipers, had the gift of miracles, and power over evil spirits. It is true that neither Jews, nor Christians, possess this power at the present day; however common it might formerly have been. There are still exorcists, and conjurors, but we hear nothing of any devils, or of any persons possessed of the devil: so much does the course of things change with time! It was, perhaps, proper, in the order and course of events, that there should have been devils at that time, and that there should be none now. Those prodigies which were requisite and necessary to the erection of a divine edifice, are no longer required when the building is complete. All things have undergone a change: Virtue alone is immutable: she is like the light of the sun, which contains hardly any known matter, and which is always pure, always immutable, when all the elements are in confusion. We have only to open our eyes to bless its Author!

CHAPTER XLVIII.

OF ANGELS, GENII, AND DEVILS, AMONG THE
NATIONS OF ANTIQUITY, INCLUDING THE
JEWS.

EVERY thing springs from the nature of the human mind : all great and powerful men, — magistrates, and princes, had their messengers : it was therefore considered very probable, that the gods had their messengers also. The Chaldeans and Persians appear to be the first, who have referred to, or spoken any thing of, angels. The Parsis (fire worshippers), who still exist, communicated to the author* of the “ Religion of the Ancient Parsis” the names of the angels acknowledged by the first, or early Persians. There are one hundred and nineteen of them, but we find neither Gabriel nor Raphael among them. The two latter were not adopted by the Persians till a long time after. In fact, the words are Chaldean, and were not known to the Jews until the time of their captivity : for, before the history of Tobit,

* Hide, de religione veterum Persarum.

we do not find the name of any angel, neither in the Pentateuch, nor any of the Hebrew books.

The Persians, in their ancient catalogue, or list, given in the fore-part of the *Sadder*, only reckoned up twelve devils; and Ariman was the first. It was certainly matter for great consolation, to know, that the genii, benefactors and friends of men, were much more numerous than the demons, their enemies.

We do not discover that this doctrine was ever admitted, or adopted, by the Egyptians. The Greeks, instead of tutelar genii, had their secondary divinities, — heroes and demi-gods. Instead of devils they had *Atè*, *Erinnys*, and the *Eumenides*. We believe *Plato* is the first who speaks of a good and evil genius, which respectively presided over all the actions of mortals. After him, the Greeks and the Romans pretended to have each two genii; and the bad, or evil genius, seems to have had much more business and employment, and to have been much more successful, than his antagonist.

When the Jews had, at last, given names to their celestial army, they divided them into ten classes:—The saints; the swift, or rapid; the strong; the flaming, or fiery; the sparkling; the deputies, or delegates; princes; the sons of princes; the imaginary; and the animated. But this hierarchy is only to be found in the *Talmud*,

and the Targum, and not in any of the Canonical Hebrew books.

These angels always appeared in a human form, and it is thus we describe and paint them in the present day; not forgetting to furnish them each with a pair of wings. The angels which appeared to Abraham and Lot, ate and drank with those patriarchs; and the furious and brutal conduct of the inhabitants of Sodom proves but too strongly, that the angels visiting Lot, had a body. It would, in fact, be very difficult to comprehend, how angels could have conversed, or held any kind of communication with men, if they had assumed any other form than the human.

The Jews had no other ideas, than the preceding, even of God himself. They represent him as addressing Adam and Eve in the language of man. He speaks even to the serpent. He walks in the garden of Eden (at noon.) He deigns to hold converse with Abraham, — with the Patriarchs, and with Moses. Some commentators have even gone so far, as to express their belief, that these words, in Genesis — “ Let us make man in our image, — after our likeness,” may be so understood, to the letter; — and that the most perfect of beings on earth, was a feeble resemblance of the form, or image, of his Creator. It is very properly added, that this idea should rouse the exertions of men, and operate as an inducement with them, never to degenerate.

Although the fall of angels, transformed into demons and devils, be the foundation of both the Jewish and the Christian religions, not a word is said upon the subject, either in the Book of Genesis, nor in the Book of the Law, nor in any canonical book. In the Book of Genesis it is expressly said, that a serpent spoke to Eve, and seduced her. It is, at the same time, particularly remarked, that the serpent was the most skilful and cunning of all animals : and we have already observed, that this opinion of the serpent was generally entertained by all nations. The Book of Genesis tells us also, in positive terms, that the hatred which all men have for the serpent, arises from the evil done by it to the human race ; and that it is from this time we must date the enmity existing between this animal and man. Thence, he seeks to bite us, — and we, to destroy him : and, in fine, the serpent, for his wicked and bad conduct, was condemned to creep on his belly, and to eat the dust of the ground. It is now, however, well ascertained, that the serpent does not eat, or feed, upon the earth ; but all antiquity believed that to be the case.

It seems, to our curiosity, that from the preceding relation, we are to infer, that this serpent was one of the fallen angels, who, in this shape, came to exercise his vengeance upon, and to corrupt the works of God. Nevertheless, there is no passage in the Pentateuch, from which such an

inference can be drawn; if we consult only our own feeble ideas upon the subject.

In the Book of Job, Satan is represented as the master, or prince, of this world, subject to God. But what individual, how little soever versed in antiquity, who does not know that the word *Satan*, is Chaldean; and that this Satan was the Ariman of the Persians, adopted by the Chaldeans; the evil principle predominating over men? Job, it is said, was an Arabian shepherd, living on the confines of Persia. We have already remarked, that the retention of several Arabick words, in the Hebrew translation of this ancient allegory, shews clearly that the book was originally written by the Arabs. Flavius Josephus, who does not include it in the Hebrew canonical books, removes every doubt upon that subject.

Demons and devils thrust out from Heaven, and precipitated to the centre of our world here below; and suffered to escape from their prison, to tempt men, and lead them into evil, have been looked upon, for ages, as the authors of our damnation. But once more, we assert, that there is not the least foundation for this opinion in the Old Testament. The truth, if truth it be, rests entirely upon tradition.

Some commentators have told us that this passage (in the 14th chapter of Isaiah), “How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!” designates the fall of the angels, and

that it was Lucifer who disguised himself as a serpent, and tempted Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit.

In point of fact, however, so singular an allegory may, very properly, be compared to those enigmas, formerly presented for solution, to the young students of our colleges. For instance, a picture was exhibited, representing an old man, and a young girl. One will say — it is winter and spring; another, it is fire and snow; another, it is a thorn and a rose; and another, it is strength and weakness. He who discovered the sense, in a degree the most remote from the subject represented, and gave it the most extraordinary application, always gained the prize.

It is precisely the same with this singular application, or comparison, of the star of the morning to the devil. Isaiah, in his 14th chapter, insultingly triumphing at the death of the king of Babylon, exclaims, “How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased! They break forth into singing. Yea, the fir-trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us. Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. How art thou fallen from heaven, *O Helel!* (O Lucifer,) son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!” —

This word *Helel* was rendered in Latin, *Lucifer*; and the same name has been since given to the devil, though one would imagine there could be no great affinity between the devil and the star of the morning. It was supposed that this devil, being a star fallen from Heaven, was an angel who had made war against God: he could not make, or carry on, war by himself; he must therefore have had some companions. The fable of the giants rising in arms against the gods, was spread among all nations, and is, according to several of our learned commentators, a profane imitation of the tradition handed down to us, of the angels rising in rebellion against their master. This idea was further strengthened by the Epistle of Saint Jude, where it is said, “And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.”—“Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain . . . And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints,” &c.

It was thence imagined that Enoch had left some account in writing of the fall of the angels. But there are two very important things to be observed here:—First, Enoch did not write, nor did Seth, although the Jews attributed books to both of them; and the pretended book of Enoch, cited

by St. Jude, was discovered to have been forged by some Jew. Secondly, even in this book of the sham Enoch, not a word is said of the rebellion and fall of the angels, before the creation of man. This is, word for word, what is said in his Egregori:—

“ The number of men having prodigiously multiplied and increased, they had very beautiful daughters born unto them: the angels, the watchers (Egregori), became exceedingly amorous of them, and were led into many errors in consequence. They spake one to another, saying, ‘ Let us take unto ourselves wives from among the daughters of the men of the earth.’ Semiaxas, their prince, told them that he feared they durst not carry their intentions into effect, and that he alone should be subjected to all the blame resulting from the commission of such a crime. They, with one voice, replied, ‘ Let us make an oath to execute our designs, and to devote ourselves to the Anathema, in case of failure.’ They thereupon bound themselves by oaths and imprecations. There were two hundred of them; who set out together, in the time of Jared, and came down upon Mount Hermonim, in fulfilment of their oath. These are names of the principal ones:—Semiaxas, Atarculph, Araciël, Chobabiel Hosampsich, Zaciël Parmar, Thausaël, Samiël, Tiril, Sumiël.”

“ They, in conjunction with those who accom-

“panied them, took unto themselves wives, in the
 “year 1170 of the creation of the world. From
 “this commerce were born three different races of
 “men, the giants of Naphilim,” &c.

It will be perceived that the author of this fragment writes in a style suitable to the earliest periods: with the same simplicity, and ingenuousness of manner. He does not fail to mention the names of the different personages concerned; he does not forget to furnish us with dates; no reflexions; no maxims. It is the ancient oriental style.

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 It is easy to see that the above narration has its origin in the 16th chapter of Genesis, where we find written as follows. “There were giants in
 “the earth in those days; and also after that,
 “when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them;
 “the same became mighty men, which were of
 “old, men of renown.”

There is no mention made of evil spirits and the devil, except in the allegory of Job, of which we have already spoken, (as not being a Jewish book) and in the book, or adventures of Tobit. The devil Asmodeus, or Shammadey, who strangled the first seven husbands of Sara, or Sarah, and whom Raphaël is said to have dislodged, or turned out of his abode, by the smoke of a pike’s liver, was not a Jewish, but a Persian devil. Raphaël went and enchained him in Upper Egypt; but it

is certain that the Jews, having no hell, could have no devils. They began very late to believe in the immortality of the soul, and a hell, and that was when the sect of the Pharisees prevailed. They, therefore, could never have entertained any such ideas, as that the serpent which tempted Eve was a devil, or one of the fallen angels. This stone, which serves for the foundation of the whole building, was laid the last! Let it be understood that we have not the less respect for the history of the fallen angels, (now devils,) but that we cannot discover whence it has originated.

Beelzebub, Belphegor, and Astaroth (or Ashtaroth) were denominated devils; but these, in fact, were the ancient gods of Syria. Belphegor was the god of marriage; Beelzebub, Belzebuth, or Bel-se-buth, signified “the Lord who defends us from insects.” The king Okosias, (called in the Bible, Ahaziah,) even sent to consult him as a god, to enquire if he should recover of his sickness; and Elijah, indignant at his conduct, reproached him for it in these words. “Is it because there is no God in Israel, that ye go to enquire of Baalzebub, the God of Ekron.”

Ashtaroth, or Astaroth, was the moon, and surely the moon was not transformed into a devil.

Again, the apostle Jude says that “the devil quarrelled with Michael the archangel, about the body of Moses.” But we find nothing of the sort in the Jewish canons. This dispute of

Michael with the devil, is only to be met with in an apocryphal book entitled, “Analipses of “Moses,” cited by Origen, in his third book of Principles.

It is therefore unquestionable that the Jews recognized no devils, until about the time of the Babylonish captivity. They acquired their first knowledge of them from the Persians, who derived it from Zoroaster.

Nothing but ignorance, fanaticism, or bad faith, can pretend to deny all these plain and simple truths; and we may very properly add, that religion need not be alarmed at the consequences. God has certainly permitted that the belief of a good and evil genius, the immortality of the soul, and of eternal rewards and punishments, should be established among more than twenty nations of antiquity, before it reached the Jewish people. Our holy religion has consecrated this doctrine. It has established what other nations had merely a glimpse of; and what was but an opinion among the ancients, is become by revelation a divine truth.

CHAPTER XLIX.

AN INQUIRY AS TO WHETHER THE JEWS HAVE BEEN THE TEACHERS OF OTHER NATIONS, OR HAVE BEEN TAUGHT BY THEM.

THE sacred Books having never determined the point, whether the Jews were the masters or disciples of other nations, we are at liberty to examine the question.

Philo, in giving us an account of his mission to Caligula, begins by saying that *Israël* is a Chaldean word, and that it is a name given by the Chaldeans to the just, consecrated to God.—In their language, the word *Israël* means *Seeing God*.—It is then proved, by this single fact, that the Jews could not have called Jacob, *Israël*, nor could they have taken the name of Israelites, but until after they had acquired some knowledge of the Chaldean tongue; and this could only have happened when they were slaves, or captives, in Chaldea. For is it likely,—is there the shadow of a possibility,—that wandering in the deserts of Arabia Petræa, they could at that time have acquired any knowledge of the Chaldean?

Flavius Josephus in his reply to Apion, Lysimachus, and Molon, (book ii. chap. 5.) confesses, in plain terms, “that it was the Egyptians from whom other nations acquired the rite of circumcision, as Herodotus has testified.”—In fact, is it, in the least, probable, that an ancient and powerful nation, like the Egyptians, could have taken such a custom from a petty people, held by them in abhorrence; and who, by their own confession, were not circumcised until the time of Joshua?

The sacred Books themselves inform us, that Moses had been instructed in all the learning of the Egyptians, but they make no mention whatever of the Egyptians having acquired any kind of learning or information from the Jews.—When Solomon was about to build his temple, he had recourse to Hiram, the king of Tyre, for artisans and workmen, of every description.—It is even said that he gave Hiram twenty cities, in order to obtain these workmen, and cedar-trees, fir-trees, &c. It was certainly paying rather a high price for such an indulgence, and the contract is a singular one; but we do not find that the Tyrians ever availed themselves of the assistance of any of the Jewish artists!

The same Josephus, of whom we have spoken, acknowledges that his nation (which, let it be remembered, he strives to exalt) had no kind of commerce, or intercourse, with other nations; and that they were, in particular, unknown to the

Greeks, who well knew both the Scythians and the Tartars.—“Need we be surprised” (he adds, in book i. chap. 5.) “that our nation, so far distant
“from the sea, and having no pretensions to writ-
“ing, or publishing works of any kind, should
“have been so little known?”

When this same Josephus relates, with his usual exaggeration, the honorable (but at the same time incredible) manner of the purchase made by the king Ptolemy Philadelphus of a Greek translation of the Jewish laws, made by the Hebrews in the city of Alexandria, he adds, that Demetrius Phalereus, who had caused this translation to be made for the king’s library, demanded of one of the translators, “how it happened, that no his-
“torian, or poet whatever, of any other nation,
“had spoken of, or made any allusion to, the Jew-
“ish laws.”—To which, according to Josephus, the translator replied,—“As these laws are all
“divine, no person has dared to undertake writing
“or speaking any thing concerning them; and
“those who have presumed to do any such thing
“have been severely punished for it by God.—
“Theopompus having cited a portion of them in
“his history, lost his senses for the space of thirty
“days; but having learnt in a dream that he had
“become insane, in consequence of penetrating
“into things divine, and communicating them to
“the profane,* he appeased the anger of God by
“his prayers, and was restored to his senses.”

* Josephus, b. xii. c. 2.

“ Theodectes, a Greek poet, having put in a tragedy which he had composed, sundry passages extracted from our sacred books, became, (almost immediately,) blind ; and only recovered his sight on a penitent acknowledgment of his fault.”

These two stories, so unworthy of the page of history, and so degrading to any man possessed of common sense, contradict, in reality, the praises which he bestows upon the Greek translation of the Jewish books, to which we have alluded ; for if it were a crime to translate a few passages only of these books, it must have been a much greater crime, we should imagine, to translate the whole, and giving to the whole of the Greeks an opportunity of becoming acquainted with them. Josephus, however, by his relation of these two little stories, establishes the fact, that the Greeks had never previously known any thing of the Jewish books.

On the contrary, from the time that the Hebrews became somewhat settled in Alexandria, they applied themselves to the acquisition of Greek, and were called Hellenist Jews. It is, then, unquestionable, that the Jews, from the time of Alexander, learnt many things of the Greeks, (whose language had become that of the whole of Asia Minor, and part of Egypt), and that the Greeks could learn nothing from the Hebrews.

CHAPTER L.

OF THE ROMANS — THE COMMENCEMENT OF
THEIR EMPIRE — THEIR RELIGION AND TO-
LERATION.

THE Romans cannot be classed with the primitive nations.—They are of too modern date. The first existence of Rome can only be taken at somewhere about seven hundred and fifty years before our vulgar era. When they became possessed of laws, and religious rites and ceremonies, they were indebted for them to the Etruscans and the Greeks. The Etruscans instructed them in the science of auspices and auguries. This superstition, however, was founded on physical observations,—on the flight and passage of birds;—from which were augured the changes and variations of the atmosphere. It would appear, that almost every superstition has its origin in some natural occurrence; and that many errors have arisen from an abuse and misconception of the truth.

The Greeks furnished the Romans with the law of the twelve tables.—Now, a people who seeks its laws and its gods from among other nations,

can be but a petty and a barbarous people; and such, in fact, were the first Romans. Their territory, in the time of their kings and first consuls, was not so extensive as that of Ragusa. We do not suppose that the kings here spoken of would bear a comparison with Cyrus and his successors! The chief of a petty nation of robbers and plunderers can never become a despot. The spoils were considered as common property, and divided as such; and each defended his liberty, as his own proper right.—The first kings of Rome were evidently little better than captains of buccaneers.

If the Roman historians may be believed, this petty nation began its career by ravishing the daughters, and plundering the property, of their neighbours. They merited extermination,—but a ferocious courage, instigated by necessity, animated them in all their enterprises, and rendered them finally successful. They maintained themselves in a state of constant warfare with their neighbours; and finally, at the end of about four hundred years, having become more warlike than all other nations, they subjected them, one after another, to their dominion, from the extremity of the Adriatick Gulf to the Euphrates.

In the midst of robbery and plunder, the love of their country predominated, until the time of Sylla. This love of country consisted in their bringing to the common stock, for more than four hundred years, whatever had been taken,

or plundered, from other nations or people. This is the distinguishing virtue of robbers. To love our country, is to kill and despoil other men. But, in the bosom of the republick, were to be found, many great and noble virtues. The Romans who had become civilized and polished by time, undertook the civilization of the rude and barbarous nations, and people, whom they had conquered, and at length, became the sole legislators of the western world.

In the early days of the republicks of Greece they appear in a light far superior to the Romans. The latter sallied forth from their places of retreat in the Seven Mountains, with handfuls (*manipli*) of hay, serving them for ensigns and colours, with the view only of robbing and plundering the neighbouring towns and villages. The former, on the contrary, sought only to defend their liberties. The Romans plunder, for four or five miles around, the *Æqui*, the *Volsci*, and the *Antii*, but the Greeks repulse immense armies of the great king of Persia, and triumph over him both by sea and land. The conquering Greeks cultivate, and bring to perfection, all the fine arts, of which, the Romans were totally ignorant, until about the time of *Scipio Africanus*.

With respect to the religion of the Romans, we shall here make one or two important remark; first, that they adopted or tolerated, all the gods, and different forms of worship, of other nations, after

the example of the Greeks: secondly, that the groundwork of the religion of the senate and emperors was laid in the belief of a Supreme Being, in accordance with the greater number of the philosophers and poets of Greece.

The toleration of all religions was a law of nature, graven on the hearts of all men. For what right can any created being have, to compel his fellow-creatures to think as he does, and to exercise the same form of worship? But when a people become united in society as a nation, and religion is made a law of the state, we are then bound to submit to that law. Now, the Romans, by their laws, adopted all the gods of the Greeks, who, (as we have before observed) themselves, had erected altars "To the unknown gods." By the ordinances of the twelve tables it is decreed "That no person shall adopt or introduce, any new or strange gods, without the public sanction." — (*Separatim nemo habessit deos neve advenas nisi publice adscitos*). This sanction was given to several forms of worship, and all others were tolerated. This association, or union, of all the divinities of the world, this species of divine hospitality, was esteemed as a common right by all the people of antiquity; with the exception, perhaps, of one or two petty nations.

As there were no particular or arbitrary dogmas, so there were never any religious wars. It was quite enough that ambition, and a love of plunder,

caused human blood to flow in torrents ; without calling in the aid of religion, to complete the extermination of the world !

It is, again, very remarkable, that among the Romans, no one was ever persecuted for his way of thinking—for his opinions. There is not a single instance on record, from Romulus to Domitian. The same may be said of the Greeks, with the solitary exception of Socrates. It is also an indisputable fact, that the Romans, like the Greeks, worshipped a God Supreme. Their Jupiter was the only one who was regarded as the god of thunder, and whom they designated as the infinitely great and good God—*Deus optimus maximus*. Thus from Italy, to India and China, we find the worship of a Supreme God ; and toleration granted by all the known nations of the earth.

To this knowledge of a Supreme Being, and to this universal indulgence, (which are the declared fruits of cultivated reason,) were united many superstitions, the ancient offspring of erroneous and dawning reason. We are not ignorant of the ridicule which so justly attaches to the sacred chicks, and the goddesses Pertunda and Cloacina.

It may be asked, why the vanquishers and legislators of so many nations, did not abolish these fooleries ? It is answered, because they were dear to the people, and did not hurt, or at all interfere with, the government. Scipio, Paulus Emilius, Cicero, Cato, and the Cæsars of the day,

had other business to attend to, than troubling themselves with the superstitions of the populace. When an old error has taken deep root, policy uses it, as a bit, which the vulgar have put into their own mouths, until some other superstition comes and supersedes it; of which, policy will make the same use, as it did of the first error.

CHAPTER LI.

QUERIES, CONCERNING THE CONQUESTS OF THE
ROMANS, AND OF THEIR DECLINE AND FALL.

How did it happen that the Romans, who, at the beginning of their career, were not more than three or four thousand in number, and who, under Romulus, had but one city, or town, of about a thousand paces in circuit, subsequently became the greatest conquerors of the earth? And, how was it, that the Jews, who boast of having left Egypt with an army of six hundred and thirty thousand men, and of journeying in the midst of miracles, with the God of armies (as they pretend) fighting for them, never made a conquest, even of Tyre and Sidon, situate in their immediate neighbourhood? Nay, could never even be brought to make the attempt? Why was it, also, that these Jews were almost always in a state of bondage and slavery? They possessed all the enthusiasm and ferocity necessary to make them conquerors; the God of armies being always at their head; and yet it is those very Romans, who come from

a country distant not less than 1800 miles from the Jewish territory, and make a complete conquest of them, and sell them in the market as slaves!

Humanly speaking, and considering only, secondary causes, is it not clear, that if the Jews, who aspired to the conquest of the world, have been almost always enslaved, it must have been their own fault? And if the Romans have triumphed, and been conquerors, did they not merit their good fortune, by their courage, perseverance, and prudence? We most humbly beg pardon of the Romans, for comparing them, for one moment, with the Jews.

Why was it that the Romans, for upwards of four hundred and fifty years, could only make a conquest of an extent of territory of about twenty-five leagues? Was it not because they were few in number, and had to contend, in succession, with only petty nations, or people, like themselves? But when, at length, they had incorporated with themselves, their vanquished neighbours, they were sufficiently powerful to oppose Pyrrhus.

At that time, the petty nations around them, having all become Romans, they formed, together, a people, sufficiently formidable and warlike, effectually to destroy Carthage.

Whence came it, that the Romans were occupied seven hundred years, in acquiring an empire,

nearly equal in extent to that of Alexander, but over which he extended his conquests in about seven or eight years? Was it not because the Romans had to contend with martial and warlike nations, and Alexander with those who were luxurious and effeminate?

The Roman empire was destroyed by those, whom historians have been pleased to call barbarians. Whence did it arise? Was it not because those barbarians were more hardy and warlike than the Romans, who, under Honorius and his successors, had greatly degenerated, and become luxurious and effeminate? When the Cimbri invaded Italy in the time of Marius, the Romans might have foreseen, that when these people had no longer a Marius to contend with, they would return, and attempt the conquest, or dismemberment, of the empire.

The weakness and effeminacy of their emperors; the factions of their ministers and eunuchs; the hatred borne to the new religion of the empire, by the professors of the old; the bloody quarrels to which Christianity gave rise; the substitution of theological disputes for the handling of arms, and of effeminacy for valour; and multitudes of monks replacing agriculturists and soldiers; all these causes united, produced the attacks of those same barbarians, who were unable to vanquish the warlike republick, but who found but little difficulty in overwhelming the falling empire, under

the denomination of emperors, cruel, effeminate, and superstitious.

When the Goths, the Heruli, the Vandals, and the Huns, inundated the Roman empire, what steps were taken by the two emperors to withstand their attacks, and resist the torrent of invasion? The difference between *Omoosios* and *Omousios*, excited disputes and troubles in the East and West, and theological persecutions completed the ruin of every thing. Nestorius, the patriarch of Constantinople, who at first stood high in the opinion of the emperor Theodosius the Second, obtained from that prince, permission to persecute all who considered it necessary to rebaptise apostate, but repentant, Christians; them who believed it proper to celebrate the passover on the 14th of the moon of March; and also them who did not plunge, or dip, three times, all those who came to be baptised. In fact, they plagued and tormented the Christians, as much as they, in their turn, were plagued and tormented by them. Nestorius wished the Holy Virgin to be called *Antropotokos*, but his enemies insisted that it should be *Theotokos*, and they were no doubt in the right, as the council of Ephesus decided it in their favour. Hence arose the most violent persecutions and quarrels; and these, unfortunately, occupied the attention of all minds. But whilst they were disputing, the barbarians

seized and divided among themselves, both Europe and Africa.

A question here arises, why Alaric, who, at the beginning of the fifth century, marched to the banks of the Danube, towards Rome, did not begin by attacking Constantinople, being then master of Thrace? Why did he run the risk of being shut up between the empires of the East and West? Was it consistent, or natural, for him to wish to cross the Alps and the Apennines, whilst Constantinople, in a state of terror and alarm, presented to him an easy conquest? The historians of that time, about as badly informed as the people were governed, do not unravel this mystery for us: but it is not of very difficult solution. Alaric had been a general in the army of Theodosius the first (a violent, imprudent, and superstitious prince), who lost the empire by confiding its defence to the Goths. By their assistance he vanquished and overcame his competitor, Eugenius; and taught the Goths, how to conquer for themselves. Theodosius, therefore, kept both Alaric and the Goths in pay. And this pay became a kind of tribute, when Arcadius, the son of Theodosius, sat on the throne of the East. Alaric therefore spared his tributary, to go and fall upon Honorius and Rome.

Honorius had chosen for his general the celebrated Stilicho, the only man capable of defending Italy, and who had already arrested the progress

of the barbarians. His fidelity, however, being subjected to the most unfounded suspicions of Honorius, that prince, in a fatal moment, had him beheaded ; without process, or form of trial, of any kind. Honorius found it much more easy to chop off the head of his defender, Stilicho, than to contend with Alaric. That unworthy emperor retired, in the most dastardly manner, to Ravenna, and left Alaric, (who, though termed a barbarian, was superior to him in every thing,) to lay siege to Rome :—and the former mistress of the world redeemed herself from pillage by agreeing to pay five thousand pounds weight of gold, thirty thousand pounds of silver, four thousand robes of silk, three thousand robes of purple, and three thousand pounds weight of spices.—The produce of India served for the ransom of Rome.

Honorius would not adhere to the treaty, but made some little show of levying troops ; these, however, Alaric soon exterminated, and entered Rome in triumph in the year 409, where a Goth created an emperor, who became his first subject ! In the year following, being deceived by Honorius, Alaric punished him for his treachery, by completely sacking and plundering Rome. The empire of the West being then rent and torn in pieces, the people of the North rushed in on all sides, and the emperors of the East only preserved themselves from destruction, for a time, by becoming tributary to their enemies. Theodosius the Second

was so to Attila.—Thus Italy, Gaul, Spain, and Africa fell a prey to whatever nation had strength and enterprise sufficient to penetrate into them.—Here we see the fruits of the strained and unnatural policy of Constantine, in transferring the seat of the Roman empire to Thrace.

Is there not a destiny visibly attending the rise and fall of states and empires? What would Augustus have said, if it had been predicted to him that the Capitol would, one day, be in possession of a priest? and the priest too, of a religion built on the foundation of the Jewish? Would he not have expressed his amazement at such a prediction, and declared its fulfilment impossible? How did it happen, that this priest made so easy a prey of the city of the renowned Scipios and Cæsars? It was because it was in a state of anarchy and confusion, and he therefore became master of it, almost without an effort; in the same way that the bishops of Germany, about the thirteenth century, became the sovereigns of those of whom they had been the pastors.

Every event brings with it others which were altogether unforeseen and unexpected.) Romulus did not believe that Rome would ever have been subject to the Goths, or to bishops or priests of any kind. Alexander had not the least idea that ever Alexandria would belong to the Turks, nor did Constantine build Constantinople for Mahomet the Second.

CHAPTER LII.

OF THE FIRST PEOPLE WHO WROTE HISTORY,
AND OF THE FABULOUS RELATIONS OF THE
FIRST HISTORIANS.

It is incontestable that the most ancient annals in the world are those of China. These annals succeed each other, in an uninterrupted succession, with a clear and simple relation of every event, and the circumstances attending it,—wise, modest, without any mixture of the marvellous, and supported by astronomical observations, for upwards of 4152 years. They even go back several centuries beyond that, without, in fact, possessing precise dates; yet, with such strong probability of correctness in what they relate, as to leave but little doubt of its truth. It is very probable that other powerful and ancient nations of antiquity, such as the Indians, the Chaldeans, the Syrians, and the Egyptians, each having large and populous cities, had also annals.

A people without any fixed settlement, wandering about from country to country, must evidently have been among the last to attempt to write their history; because they have not the means or

power of having archives and preserving them, which other nations have; and also because their wants and laws are few, and they have but few events or occurrences of consequence to narrate; being occupied, principally, in obtaining a precarious subsistence. Oral tradition therefore suffices them. A little town, or village, never thought of writing its history; a wandering people, or nation, still less; and a single city but very rarely.

The history of any nation can never be written till very late; till a very considerable time after its foundation, or establishment. Historians generally commence by reciting some very brief abstracts of registers, which have been preserved, (as much as they could be so) in some temple, or citadel. An unfortunate war often destroys these annals, and they must be begun over again, perhaps for the twentieth time; like the ants, in the re-establishment of their habitation, which has been so unceremoniously trampled upon and destroyed. It is not, therefore, till the termination of several centuries, that a history somewhat in detail is brought to succeed those rude and shapeless records: and then this first history is generally intermixed with the sham marvellous and wonderful, which serves to fill up the vacancy occasioned by the lack of true and genuine matter. Thus the Greeks had not their Herodotus until the 80th Olympiad; which is more than a thousand years after the first epoch recorded on the marbles of Paros. The

most ancient historian of the Romans, Fabius Pictor, did not write until the time of the second war against Carthage, which was about five hundred and forty years after the foundation of Rome.

Now, if the Greeks and Romans, our masters, and two of the most spirited and sensible nations of the earth, began their history at so late a period, and if our northern nations had no historian before the time of Gregory of Tours, can any one possibly believe that vagabond Tartars, accustomed to sleep on the snow, or the Troglodites, who hide themselves in holes and caverns, or a tribe of wandering Arabs, robbers, straying about among mountains of sand, could have had their Thucydides's and their Zenophons? Could they possibly know any thing of their ancestors? What degree of knowledge or learning could they have acquired, before they possessed, and inhabited, towns and cities, and had drawn thither and cultivated the arts and sciences of which they were, previously, in utter ignorance?

Suppose the Samoieds, or the Nazamons, or the Esquimaux, were to present to us their annals, antedated for many ages, and filled with wonderful and astonishing feats of arms, with a long continued course of prodigies and miracles, surprising to human nature, should we not laugh at and ridicule, those poor savages? And if a few individuals, lovers of the marvellous, or interested in their belief, should torture their minds, to throw

an air of probability over narrations so romantic and foolish, should we not pity their delusion, and ridicule their vain efforts? And, if to their absurdities they were to add the insolence of an affected contempt for the wise and learned, and the cruel persecution of those who doubted (what they could neither understand nor believe) the truth of their relations, should we not consider them the most execrable of men? If a Siamese were to come and relate to me the metamorphoses of Sammonocodom, and threaten to burn me, if I made any objections, or expressed any doubts, in what way ought I to act towards this Siamese?

The Roman historians tell us, to be sure, that the god Mars begat two children by a vestal named Ilia, in an age when Italy had no vestals; and that a she-wolf nourished and fed these children instead of devouring them, as has been already observed; and that Castor and Pollux fought at the head of the Roman armies; and that Curtius solemnly threw himself into a gulph, which instantly closed over his head; but we do not find that the Roman senate ever condemned to death those who expressed any doubts of those prodigies. The people in the Capitol were allowed freely to canvass and ridicule them.

There are many events recorded in Roman history, which though very possible, are by no means probable. Several learned men have already called in question the adventure of the geese which

saved Rome, and also that of Camillus, who is said to have destroyed the whole army of the Gauls. The victory of Camillus certainly shines brilliantly in Titus Livius; but Polybius, a more ancient historian, and much more a man of state, than Titus Livius, says directly the reverse. He relates that the Gauls, fearing an attack from the Vaneti, set out from Rome, laden with spoils and booty, after having concluded a peace with the Romans. Which shall we believe, Titus Livius, or Polybius? We shall certainly have our doubts.

May we not also, with great propriety, question the truth of those tortures to which Regulus is said to have been subjected, by being shut up in a barrel whose sides were every where filled with large iron spikes? This species of death is certainly very remarkable and singular. It is also very singular, that this same Polybius, almost a contemporary, who may be said to have been on the spot and privy to every transaction; who has, moreover, written, in so superior a style, the history of the wars between Rome and Carthage; should pass over in silence, so extraordinary and important an event; and which would have been some justification of the bad faith of the Romans towards the Carthaginians! Can we think it probable, that this people would have dared to violate, in so barbarous a manner, the rights of nations, in the person of Regulus, whilst the Romans had in their hands many of the principal citizens of Car-

thage, upon whom they could have taken ample vengeance?

Finally, Diodorus Siculus relates in one of his fragments, that the children of Regulus having very ill-treated some Carthaginian prisoners, they were severely reprimanded for their conduct by the Roman senate, and made to observe the rights of nations. Now, would not the senate have freely granted this just vengeance to the children of Regulus, if it were true that their father had been so basely and cruelly murdered at Carthage? The story of the tortures of Regulus gained strength with time, and the general hatred against Carthage made it to be currently believed. Horace chaunted it in his odes, and no further doubts were entertained upon the subject!

If we cast our eyes over the first pages of French history, we shall perhaps find matter equally obscure, romantic, and disgusting. It will, at least, be difficult for us to attach any credit to the adventures of Childeric, and of a Roman captain, elected king of the Franks, they not having previously had any king.

Gregory of Tours is our Herodotus; admitting, perhaps, that he is not quite so amusing and elegant as the Greek historian, were the monks who wrote subsequently to Gregory, more enlightened, or more veridical? Did they not frequently lavish the most disgusting praises on the basest and worst of characters, but who had given them lands

and possessions? And, on the contrary, did they not cast the most opprobrious reflections on the memory of wise and virtuous princes, but who had given them nothing?

We are well aware that the Franks who invaded Gaul, were more savage and cruel than the Lombards who seized upon Italy, and the Visigoths who reigned in Spain. We observe almost as many murders and assassinations in the annals of the Clovises, Thierries, Childeberts, Chilperics, and the Clotaires, as in those of the kings of Judah and Israel. Nothing, assuredly, can evince greater ferocity than the annals of those barbarous times; nevertheless, we may be permitted to doubt the cruel and singular death, said to have been inflicted on the aged queen Brunehaut. She was nearly eighty years of age when she died in 613 or 614. Friedegaire, who wrote about a hundred and fifty years after the death of Brunehaut; that is, about the end of the eighth century, (and not in the seventh, as erroneously reported in a chronological abridgment) assures us most positively that Clotaire, a most pious prince, and fearing God, humane, patient, and of a cheerful disposition, had the queen Brunehaut paraded round his camp seated on a camel, and subsequently tied by the hairs of her head, an arm, and a leg, to the tail of a wild mare, which dragged her violently along the roads and highways, dashed her head in pieces on the stones, and tore her in

pieces; and that subsequently, the fragments of her body were collected, and burnt to ashes. This camel, and wild mare, and a queen eighty years old tied by a leg, and the hair of her head, to the tail of this wild mare, we cannot avoid pronouncing to be things of very rare and uncommon occurrence. It is perhaps rather difficult to conceive, how the small portion of hair which persons of the age of Brunehaut generally have, could be attached to the tail of a horse; and particularly when an arm and a leg are at the same time tied to it. But we shall now ask how it happened, that after putting her to this cruel death, she was interred in a handsome tomb at Autun? The monks Fredegaire and Aimoin say so; but these monks are somewhat different from our Humes and De Thous.

There is also another monument, erected to the memory of this queen in the fifteenth century, in the abbey of St. Martin at Autun, which she founded. In this sepulchre was found the remains of a spur, which was reported to be the very spur used and applied to the flanks of the wild, or untamed mare of which we have spoken. It is a pity they did not also find the hoofs of the camel, upon which the queen was insultingly paraded around Clotaire's camp! Is it not more probable, that this spur may have been inadvertently placed there, or rather, as a mark of honour? For in the fifteenth century, a gold or gilt spur was

considered a great mark of honour. In a word, is it not reasonable and proper for us to suspend our judgment on so strange and singular an adventure, so badly verified, and standing, as it does, upon so very weak a foundation? It is certainly true that Paquier says the death of Brunehaut “had been predicted by the Sibyls!”

The whole of those ages of barbarism were also the ages of horror, and of miracles! But, are we bound to believe every thing which the monks have written? They were almost the only persons who knew how to read and write, whilst even Charlemagne could not sign his own name! They have favoured us with the dates of a few great events. We believe, with them, that Charles Martel beat the Saracens, but that he killed three hundred and sixty thousand of them in battle, is quite another matter. The number strikes us to be somewhat large.

They say that Clovis, the second of that name, became insane: the thing is not impossible: but that it pleased God to afflict him with this disorder, as a punishment for his having taken an arm of St. Denis from the church of those monks, to place in his own chapel, we should pronounce to be very improbable.

If we had only such idle stories as these to retrench from the history of France, or rather from the history of the Franks and their mayors, we might be constrained to read it. But how can we en-

dure the gross falsehoods with which it is filled ? We read of the besieging and taking of towns, cities, and fortresses, which never had existence. There was nothing beyond the Rhine but little towns without walls, defended by ditches and the palissades of the pious. It was not until the time of Henry the Fowler, (l'Oiseleur) about the year 920, that Germany began to have walled and fortified towns. In fine, it is with regret we add, that the whole of the details of the history of those times, are little better than so many fables ; and what is worse, of fables not only tedious in detail, but injurious in their tendency.

CHAPTER LIII.

OF THOSE LEGISLATORS WHO HAVE SPOKEN IN
THE NAME OF THEIR GODS.

EVERY profane legislator, who has had the boldness to declare, that the laws which he promulgated were dictated to him by the Divinity, was evidently a blasphemer and a traitor:—a blasphemer, because he calumniated the gods; and a traitor, for enslaving and subjecting his country to the entertainment of his own proper opinions.

There are two sorts of laws; the one, natural, common to all, and useful to all — “Thou shalt not rob, nor kill thy neighbour; — thou shalt behave with duty and respect to the authors of thy being, and who have watched over thy infancy; — thou shalt not ravish the wife of thy brother, nor bear false witness against him, nor injure him in any way, — but thou shalt assist him in all his wants and necessities, that thou mayest in thy turn deserve to be assisted by him.” These are the laws which nature has promulgated from the Japan Isles to our western shores. Neither Orpheus, nor Hermes, nor

Minos, nor Lycurgus, nor Numa, required that Jupiter should come in clouds of thunder to announce those truths which are engraven on all hearts.

If we had ever come in contact with one of those distinguished mountebanks, in the public squares of the city, we should have cried out to them vehemently, “ Forbear! and do not thus “ compromise the Divinity, by endeavouring to “ deceive us into a belief that he came down “ upon earth to teach that, which he had previously instilled into the minds of all, and with “ which, of course, all are acquainted; your object, no doubt, is to make it subservient to “ some other purpose; you wish to take advantage of our consent to eternal truths, to extort “ from us our consent to your usurpation: we “ therefore denounce you to the people as a blaspheming tyrant.”

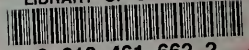
The other sort of laws are of a political nature: laws, purely civil, and for ever arbitrary; which sometimes establish the Ephori, and then consuls; at others, a Comitia by hundreds, and again a Comitia of all the tribes;—sometimes an Areopagus, or a senate; and then aristocracy, democracy, and monarchy. It would evince a very slight knowledge of human nature, to entertain, for a moment, the least doubt, that any profane legislator could ever have established any of those laws in the name of the gods, with any other view

than the promotion of his own interest. Attempts of this kind, to deceive mankind, have their origin entirely in private and interested views.

But were all profane legislators rogues and deceivers? No, — assuredly not; for, as at present, we find in some of our legislative assemblies, great and upright minds, — men, who propose things useful to society at large, without any pretence of their having received them by revelation, or miracle; so, also, among the legislators of old, we find many, who have instituted admirable laws, without attributing them to either Jupiter, or Minerva. Such was the Roman senate, which gave laws to Europe, Asia Minor, and Africa, without deceiving them: and such, in our days, was Peter the Great; who could, with much greater facility, have imposed upon his subjects, than Hermes upon the Egyptians, Minos on the Cretes, or Zamolxis upon the ancient Scythians.

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