The System of Nature

or

Laws of the Moral and Physical World

Baron D'Holbach

With Notes by Diderot

Now Translated for the First Time by H. D. Robinson.

Volume I

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Advertisement. To the Public.

To expose superstition, the ignorance and credulity on which it is based, and to ameliorate the condition of the human race, is the ardent desire of every philanthropic mind.

Mankind are unhappy, in proportion as they are deluded by imaginary systems of theology. Taught to attach much importance to belief in religious doctrines, and to mere forms and ceremonies of religious worship, the slightest disagreement among theological dogmatists is oftentimes sufficient to inflame their minds, already excited by bigotry, and to lead them to anathematize and destroy each other without pity, mercy, or remorse.

The various theological systems in which mankind have been misled to have *faith*, are but fables and falsehoods imposed by visionaries and fanatics on the ignorant, the weak, and the credulous, as historical truths; and for unbelief of which, millions have perished at the stake, or pined in gloomy dungeons: and such will ever be the case, until the mists of superstition, and the influence of priestcraft, are exposed by the light of knowledge and the power of truth.

Many honest and talented philanthropists have directed their powerful intellects against the religious dogmas which have caused so much misery and persecution among mankind. Owing, however, to the combined power and influence of kings and priests, many of those learned and liberal works have been either destroyed or buried in oblivion, and the characters of the writers assailed by the unsparing and relentless rancour of *pious* abuse.

To counteract and destroy, if possible, these sources of mischief and misery, is the intention of the publishers of the Free Enquirer's Family Library. It is proposed to publish in a form which shall unite the various advantages of neatness of typography and cheapness of price, the works of those celebrated authors whose writings, owing to religious intolerance, have been kept in obscurity.

We have commenced the library with a translation of Baron d'Holbach's System of Nature, because it is estimated as one of the most able expositions of theological absurdities which has ever been written. It is in *reality* a *System of Nature.* Man is here considered in all his relations both to his own species and those spiritual beings which are supposed to exist in the imaginary Utopia of religious devotees. This great work strikes at the root of all the errours and evil consequences of religious superstition and intolerance. It inculcates the purest morality; instructing us to be kind one to another, in order to live happily in each other's society — to be tolerant and forbearing, because belief is involuntary, and mankind are so organized that all *cannot* think alike — to be indulgent and benevolent, because kindness begets kindness, and hence each individual becomes interested for the happiness of every other, and thus all contribute to human felicity.

Let those who declare the immorality of sceptical writings, read the System of Nature, and they will be undeceived. They will then learn that the calumniated sceptics are incited by no other motives than the most praiseworthy benevolence; that far from endeavouring to increase that misery which is incidental to human life, they only wish to heal the animosities caused by religious dissensions, and to show men that their true polar star is to be happy, and endeavour to render others so. But above all, let those read this work who seek to come at a "knowledge of the truth;" — let those read it whose minds are harassed by the fear of death,

or troubled by the horrible tales of a sanguinary and vengeful God. Let them read this work, and their doubts will vanish if there is any potency in the spear of Ithuriel.

If the most profound logic, the acutest discrimination, the keenest and most caustic sarcasm, can reflect credit on an author, then we may justly hail Baron d'Holbach as the greatest among philosophers, and an honour to infidels. He is the author of many celebrated works besides the *System of Nature*,[1] among which we may number, *Good Sense*, *The Natural History of Superstition*, *Letters to Eugenia*, and other famous publications. He is described by biographers as "a man of great and varied talents, generous and kindhearted."[2] And the Reverend Laurence Sterne, informs us in his Letters, that he was rich, generous, and learned, keeping an open house several days in the week for indigent scholars. Davenport, *ubi sup.*, page 324, says, "His works are numerous, and were all published anonymously." It is, no doubt, on this account that the *Système de la Nature* was first attributed to Helvetius, and then to Mirabeau. But this important question has been set to rest by Baron Grimm, from whose celebrated correspondence we make the following extracts, under the date of August 10th, 1789: —

"I became acquainted with the Baron d'Holbach only a few years before his death; but, to know him, and to feel that esteem and veneration with which his noble character inspired his friends, a long acquaintance was not necessary. I therefore shall endeavour to portray him as he appeared to me; and I fain would persuade myself, that if his manes could hear me, they would be pleased with the frankness and simplicity of my homage.

"I have never met with a man more learned — I may add, more *universally* learned, than the Baron d'Holbach; and I have never seen any one who cared so little to pass for learned in the eyes of the world. Had it not been for the sincere interest he took in the progress of science, and a longing to impart to others what he thought might be useful to them, the world would always have remained ignorant of his vast erudition. His learning, like his fortune, he gave away, but never crouched to public opinion.

"The French nation is indebted to Baron d'Holbach for its rapid progress in natural history and chymistry. It was he who, 30 years ago, translated the best works published by the Germans on both these sciences, till then, scarcely known, or at least, very much neglected in France. His translations are enriched with valuable notes, but those who availed themselves of his labour ignored to whom they were indebted for it; and even now it is scarcely known.

'There is no longer any indiscretion in stating that Baron d'Holbach is the author of the work which, eighteen years ago, made so much noise in Europe, of the far-famed *System of Nature*. His self-love was never seduced by the lofty reputation his work obtained. If he was so fortunate as to escape suspicion, he was more indebted for it to his own modesty, than to the prudence and discretion of his friends. As to myself, I do not like the doctrines taught in that work, but those who have known the author, will, in justice, admit, that no private consideration induced him to advocate that system: he became its apostle with a purity of intention, and an abnegation of self, which in the eyes of faith, would have done honour to

the apostles of the holiest religion.

"His *Système Social*, and his *Morale Universelle*, did not create the same sensation as the *Système de la Nature*; but those two works show that, after having pulled down what human weakness had erected as a barrier to vice, the author felt the necessity of rebuilding another founded on the progress of reason, a good education, and wholesome laws.

"It was natural for the Baron d'Holbach to believe in the empire of reason, for his passions (and we always judge others by ourselves), were such, as in all cases to give the ascendency to virtue and correct principles. It was impossible for him to hate any one; yet he could not, without an effort, dissimulate his profound horrour for priests, the panders of despotism, and the promoters of superstition. Whenever he spoke of these, his naturally good temper forsook him.

"Among his friends, the Baron d'Holbach numbered the celebrated Helvétius, Diderot, d'Alembert, Naigeon, Condillac, Turgot, Buffon, J. J. Rousseau, Voltaire, &c.; and in other countries, such men as Hume, Garrick, the Abbate Galiani, &c. If so distinguished and learned a society was calculated to give more strength and expansion to his mind, it has also been justly remarked, that those illustrious men could not but learn many curious and useful things from him; for he possessed an extensive library, and the tenacity of his memory was such as to enable him to remember without effort every thing he had once read."

However, the most praiseworthy feature in d'Holbach's character, was his benevolence; and we now conclude this sketch with the following pithy anecdote related by Mr. Naigeon, in the Journal of Paris: —

"Among those who frequented d'Holbach's house, was a literary gentleman, who, for some time past, appeared musing and in deep melancholy. Pained to see his friend in that state, d'Holbach called on him. 'I do not wish,' said d'Holbach, 'to pry into a secret you did not wish to confide to me, but I see you are sorrowful, and your situation makes me both uneasy and unhappy. I know you are not rich, and you may have wants which you have hid from me. I bring you ten thousand francs which are of no use to me. You will certainly not refuse them if you feel any friendship for me; and by-and-by, when you find yourself in better circumstances, you will return them.' This friend, moved to tears by the generosity of the action, assured him that he did not want money, that his chagrin had another cause, and therefore could not accept his offer; but he never forgot the kindness which prompted it, and to him I am indebted for the facts I have just related."

We have no apologies to make for republishing the System of Nature at this time; the work will support itself, and needs no advocate; it has never been answered, because, in truth, it is, indeed, unanswerable. It demonstrates the fallacy as well of the religion of the Pagan as the Jew — the Christian as the Mahometan. It is a guide alike to the philosopher emancipated from religious thraldom, and the poor votary misled by the follies of superstition.

All Christian writers on Natural Theology have studiously avoided even the mention of this masterly production: knowing their utter inability to cope with its powerful reasoning, they have wisely passed it by in silence. Henry Lord Brougham, it is true, in his recent Discourse

of Natural Theology, has mentioned this extraordinary treatise, but with what care does he evade entering the lists with this distinguished writer! He passes over the work with a haste and sophistry that indicates how fully conscious he was of his own weakness and his opponent's strength. "There is no book of an Atheistical description," says his lordship, "which has ever made a greater impression than the famous *Système de la Nature*."

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"It is impossible to deny the merits of the *Système de la Nature*. The work of a great writer it unquestionably is; but its merit lies in the extraordinary eloquence of the composition, and the skill with which words are substituted for ideas; and assumptions for proofs, are made to pass current," &c. It is with a few pages of *such* empty declamation that his lordship attacks and condemns this eloquent and logical work.[3]

We do not wish to detain the reader longer from its perusal by lengthening out our preface, and have only to remark, in conclusion, that when Baron d'Holbach finished this work, he might have said with more truth, and far less vanity than Horace: —

> "Exegi monumentum aere perennius,
> Regalique situ pyramidum altius;
> Quod non imber edax, non Aquilo impotens
> Possit diruere, aut innumerabilis
> Annorum series, et fuga temporum." — et seq.
> Q, Hor. Flac. Car. Lib. III. 30, v. 1–5.

New York, September; 1835.

Author's Preface

The source of man's unhappiness is his ignorance of Nature. The pertinacity with which he clings to blind opinions imbibed in his infancy, which interweave themselves with his existence, the consequent prejudice that warps his mind, that prevents its expansion, that renders him the slave of fiction, appears to doom him to continual errour. He resembles a child destitute of experience, full of idle notions: a dangerous leaven mixes itself with all his knowledge: it is of necessity obscure, it is vacillating and false: — He takes the tone of his ideas on the authority of others, who are themselves in errour, or else have an interest in deceiving him. To remove this Cimmerian darkness, these barriers to the improvement of his condition; to disentangle him from the clouds of errour that envelop him, that obscure the path he ought to tread; to guide him out of this Cretan labyrinth, requires the clue of Ariadne, with all the love she could bestow on Theseus. It exacts more than common exertion; it needs a most determined, a most undaunted courage — it is never effected but by a persevering resolution to act, to think for himself; to examine with rigour and impartiality the opinions

he has adopted. He will find that the most noxious weeds have sprung up beside beautiful flowers; entwined themselves around their stems, overshadowed them with an exuberance of foliage, choked the ground, enfeebled their growth, diminished their petals, dimmed the brilliancy of their colours; that deceived by the apparent freshness of their verdure, by the rapidity of their exfoliation, he has given them cultivation, watered them, nurtured them, when he ought to have plucked out their very roots.

Man seeks to range out of his sphere: notwithstanding the reiterated checks his ambitious folly experiences, he still attempts the impossible; strives to carry his researches beyond the visible world; and hunts out misery in imaginary regions. He would be a metaphysician before he has become a practical philosopher. He quits the contemplation of realities to meditate on chimeras. He neglects experience to feed on conjecture, to indulge in hypothesis. He dares not cultivate his reason, because from his earliest days he has been taught to consider it criminal. He pretends to know his fate in the indistinct abodes of another life, before he has considered of the means by which he is to render himself happy in the world he inhabits: in short, man disdains the study of Nature, except it be partially: he pursues phantoms that resemble an *ignis-fatuus*, which at once dazzle, bewilder, and affright: like the benighted traveller led astray by these deceptive exhalations of a swampy soil, he frequently quits the plain, the simple road of truth, by pursuing of which, he can alone ever reasonably hope to reach the goal of happiness.

The most important of our duties, then, is to seek means by which we may destroy delusions that can never do more than mislead us. The remedies for these evils must be sought for in Nature herself; it is only in the abundance of her resources, that we can rationally expect to find antidotes to the mischiefs brought upon us by an ill-directed, by an overpowering enthusiasm. It is lime these remedies were sought; it is time to look the evil boldly in the face, to examine its foundations, to scrutinize its superstructure: reason, with its faithful guide experience, must attack in their entrenchments those prejudices to which the human race has but too long been the victim. For this purpose reason must be restored to its proper rank, — it must be rescued from the evil company with which it is associated. It has been too long degraded — too long neglected — cowardice has rendered it subservient to delirium, the slave to falsehood. It must no longer be held down by the massive chains of ignorant prejudice.

Truth is invariable — it is requisite to man — it can never harm him — his very necessities, sooner or later, make him sensible of this; oblige him to acknowledge it. Let us then discover it to mortals — let us exhibit its charms — let us shed its effulgence over the darkened road; it is the only mode by which man can become disgusted with that disgraceful superstition which leads him into errour, and which but too often usurps his homage by treacherously covering itself with the mask of truth — its lustre can wound none but those enemies to the human race whose power is bottomed solely on the ignorance, on the darkness in which they have in almost every climate contrived to involve the mind of man.

Truth speaks not to these perverse beings: — her voice can only be heard by generous minds

accustomed to reflection, whose sensibilities make them lament the numberless calamities showered on the earth by political and religious tyranny — whose enlightened minds contemplate with honour the immensity, the ponderosity of that series of misfortunes with which errour has in all ages overwhelmed mankind.

To errour must be attributed those insupportable chains which tyrants, which priests have forged for all nations, To errour must be equally attributed that abject slavery into which the people of almost every country have fallen. Nature designed they should pursue their happiness by the most perfect freedom. To errour must be attributed those religious terrours which, in almost every climate, have either petrified man with fear, or caused him to destroy himself for coarse or fanciful beings. To errour must be attributed those inveterate hatreds, those barbarous persecutions, those numerous massacres, those dreadful tragedies, of which, under pretext of serving the interests of heaven, the earth has been but too frequently made the theatre. It is errour consecrated by religious enthusiasm, which produces that ignorance, that uncertainty in which man ever finds himself with regard to his most evident duties, his clearest rights, the most demonstrable truths. In short, man is almost every where a poor degraded captive, devoid either of greatness of soul, of reason, or of virtue, whom his inhuman gaolers have never permitted to see the light of day.

Let us then endeavour to disperse those clouds of ignorance, those mists of darkness which impede man on his journey, which obscure his progress, which prevent his marching through life with a firm, with a steady step. Let us try to inspire him with courage — with respect for his reason — with an inextinguishable love for truth — to the end that he may learn to know himself — to know his legitimate rights — that he may learn to consult his experience, and no longer be the dupe of an imagination led astray by authority — that he may renounce the prejudices of his childhood — that he may learn to found his morals on his nature, on his wants, on the real advantage of society — that he may dare to love himself — that he may learn to pursue his true happiness by promoting that of others — in short, that he may no longer occupy himself with reveries either useless or dangerous — that he may become a virtuous, a rational being, in which case he cannot fail to become happy.

If he must have his chimeras, let him at least learn to permit others to form theirs after their own fashion; since nothing can be more immaterial than the manner of men's thinking on subjects not accessible to reason, provided those thoughts be not suffered to imbody themselves into actions injurious to others: above all, let him be fully persuaded that it is of the utmost importance to the inhabitants of this world to be *just*, *kind*, and *peaceable*.

Far from injuring the cause of virtue, an impartial examination of the principles of this work will show that its object is to restore truth to its proper temple, to build up an altar whose foundations shall be consolidated by morality, reason, and justice: from this sacred fane, virtue guarded by truth, clothed with experience, shall shed forth her radiance on delighted mortals; whose homage flowing consecutively shall open to the world a new era, by rendering general the belief that happiness, the true end of man's existence, can never be attained but *by promoting that of his fellow creature*.

In conclusion: — Warned by old age and weak limbs that death is fast approaching, the author protests most solemnly that, in his labours, his sole object has been to promote the happiness of his fellow creatures; and his only ambition, to merit the approbation of the few partizans of Truth who honestly and sincerely seek her. He writes not for those who are deaf to the voice of reason, who judge of things only by their vile interest or fatal prejudices: his cold remains will fear neither their clamours nor their resentments, so terrible to those who, whilst living, dare proclaim the *truth*.

Chapter I: Of Nature.

Men will always deceive themselves by abandoning experience to follow imaginary systems. Man is the work of Nature: he exists in Nature: he is submitted to her laws: he cannot deliver himself from them; nor can he step beyond them even in thought. It is in vain his mind would spring forward beyond the visible world, an imperious necessity always compels his return. For a being formed by Nature, and circumscribed by her laws, there exists nothing beyond the great whole of which he forms a part, of which he experiences the influence. The beings which he pictures to himself as above nature, or distinguished from her, are always chimeras formed after that which he has already seen, but of which it is impossible he should ever form any correct idea, either as to the place they occupy, or of their manner of acting. There is not, there can be nothing out of that Nature which includes all beings.

Instead, therefore, of seeking out of the world he inhabits for beings who can procure him a happiness denied to him by Nature, let man study this Nature, let him learn her laws, contemplate her energies, observe the immutable rules by which she acts: — let him apply these discoveries to his own felicity and submit in silence to her mandates, which nothing can alter: — let him cheerfully consent to ignore causes hid from him by an impenetrable veil: — let him without murmuring yield to the decrees of a universal necessity, which can never he brought within his comprehension, nor ever emancipate him from those laws imposed on him by his essence.

The distinction which has been so often made between the *physical* and the *moral* man is evidently an abuse of terms. Man is a being purely physical: the moral man is nothing more than this physical being considered under a certain point of view, that is to say, with relation to some of his modes of action, arising out of his particular organization. But is not this organization itself the work of Nature? The motion or impulse to action of which he is susceptible, is that not physical? His visible actions, as well as the invisible motion interiorly excited by his will or his thoughts, are equally the natural effects, the necessary consequences, of his peculiar mechanism, and the impulse he receive? from those beings by whom he is surrounded. All that the human mind has successively invented with a view to change or perfect his being, and to render himself more happy, was only a necessary consequence of man's peculiar essence, and that of the being? who act upon him. The object of all his institutions, of all his reflections, of all his knowledge, is only to procure that happiness towards which he is incessantly impelled by the peculiarity of his nature. All that

he does, all that he thinks, all that he is, all that he will be, is nothing more than what Universal Nature has made him. His ideas, his will, his actions, are the necessary effects of those qualities infused into him by Nature, and of those circumstances in which she has placed him. In short, *art* is nothing but Nature acting with the tools she has made.

Nature sends man naked and destitute into this world which is to be his abode: he quickly learns to cover his nakedness, to shelter himself from the inclemency of the weather, first with rude huts and the skins of the beasts of the forest; by degrees he mends their appearance, renders them more convenient: he establishes manufactories of cloth, of cotton, of silk; he digs clay, gold, and other fossils from the bowels of the earth, converts them into bricks for his house, into vessels for his use, gradually improves their shape, augments their beauty. To a being elevated above our terrestrial globe, who should contemplate the human species through all the changes he undergoes in his progress towards civilization, man would not appear less subjected to the laws of Nature when naked in the forest painfully seeking his sustenance, than when living in civilized society surrounded with comforts; that is to say, enriched with greater experience, plunged in luxury, where he every day invents a thousand new wants and discovers a thousand new modes of satisfying them. All the steps taken by man to regulate his existence, ought only to be considered as a long succession of causes and effects, which are nothing more than the development of the first impulse given him by nature.

The same animal by virtue of his organization passes successively from the most simple to the most complicated wants; it is nevertheless the consequence of his nature. The butterfly whose beauty we admire, whose colours are so rich, whose appearance is so brilliant, commences as an inanimate unattractive egg; from this, heat produces a worm, this becomes a chrysalis, then changes into that winged insect decorated with the most vivid tints: arrived at this stage he reproduces, he propagates: at last despoiled of his ornament? he is obliged to disappear, having fulfilled the task imposed on him by Nature, having described the circle of mutation marked out for beings of his order.

The same progress, the same change takes place in vegetables. It is by a succession of combinations originally interwoven with the energies of the aloe, that this plant is insensibly regulated, gradually expanded, and at the end of a great number of years produces those flowers which announce its dissolution.

It is equally so with man, who in all his motion, all the changes he undergoes, never acts but according to laws peculiar to his organization, and to the matter of which he is composed.

The *physical man,* is he who acts by causes our senses make us understand.

The *moral man,* is he who acts by physical causes, with which our prejudices preclude us from becoming acquainted.

The *wild man,* is a child destitute of experience, who is incapable of pursuing his happiness, because he has not learnt how to oppose resistance to the impulses he receives from those beings by whom he is surrounded.

The *civilized man,* is he whom experience and social life have enabled to draw from nature

the means of his own happiness; because he has learned to oppose resistance to those impulses he receives from exterior beings, when experience has taught him they would be injurious to his welfare.

The *enlightened man,* is man in his maturity, in his perfection; who is capable of pursuing his own happiness; because he has learned to examine, to think for himself, and not to take that for truth upon the authority of others, which experience has taught him examination will frequently prove erroneous.

The *happy man,* is he who knows how to enjoy the benefits of nature: in other words, he who thinks for himself; who is thankful for the good he possesses; who does not envy the welfare of others; who does not sigh after imaginary benefits always beyond his grasp.

The *unhappy man,* is he who is incapacitated to enjoy the benefits of nature; that is, he who suffers others to think for him; who neglects the absolute good he possesses, in a fruitless search after imaginary benefits; who vainly sighs after that which ever eludes his pursuit.

It necessarily results, that man in his researches ought always to fall back on experience, and natural philosophy: These are what he should consult in his religion — in his morals — in his legislation — in his political government — in the arts — in the sciences — in his pleasures — in his misfortunes. Experience teaches that Nature acts by simple, uniform, and invariable laws It is by his senses man is bound to this universal Nature; it is by his senses he must penetrate her secrets; it is from his senses he must draw experience of her laws. Whenever, therefore, he either fails to acquire experience or quits its path, he stumbles into an abyss, his imagination leads him astray.

All the errours of man are physical errours: he never deceives himself but when he neglects to return back to nature, to consult her laws, to call experience to his aid. It is for want of experience he forms such imperfect ideas of matter, of its properties, of its combinations, of its power, of its mode of action, or of the energies which spring from its essence. Wanting this experience, the whole universe to him is but one vast scene of illusion. The most ordinary results appear to him the most astonishing phenomena; he wonders at every thing, understands nothing, and yields the guidance of his actions to those interested in betraying his interests. He is ignorant of Nature, he has mistaken her laws; he has not contemplated the necessary routine which she has marked out for every thing she contains. Mistaken the laws of Nature, did I say? He has mistaken himself: the consequence is, that all his systems, all his conjectures, all his reasoning, from which he has banished experience, are nothing more than a tissue of errours, a long chain of absurdities.

All errour is prejudicial: it is by deceiving himself that man is plunged in misery. He neglected Nature; he understood not her laws; he formed gods of the most preposterous kinds: these became the sole objects of his hope, the creatures of his fear, and he trembled under these visionary deities; under the supposed influence of imaginary beings created by himself; under the terrour inspired by blocks of stone; by logs of wood; by flying fish; or else under the frowns of men, mortal as himself, whom his distempered fancy had elevated above that Nature of which alone he is capable of forming any idea. His very posterity laughs to

scorn his folly, because experience has convinced them of the absurdity of his groundless fears, of his misplaced worship. Thus has passed away the ancient mythology, with all the trumpery attributes attached to it by ignorance.[4]

Man did not understand that Nature, equal in her distributions, entirely destitute of goodness or malice, follows only necessary and immutable laws, when she either produces beings or destroys them, when she causes those to suffer, whose organization creates sensibility; when she scatters among them good and evil; when she subjects them to incessant change — he did not perceive it was in the bosom of Nature herself, that it was in her abundance he ought to seek to satisfy his wants; for remedies against his pains; for the means of rendering himself happy: he expected to derive these benefits from imaginary beings, whom he erroneously imagined to be the authors of his pleasures, the cause of his misfortunes. From hence it is clear that to his ignorance of Nature, man owes the creation of those illusive powers under which he has so long trembled with fear; that superstitious worship, which has been the source of all his misery.

For want of clearly understanding his own peculiar nature, his proper tendency, his wants, and his rights, man has fallen in society, from *freedom* into *slavery*. He had forgotten the design of his existence, or else he believed himself obliged to smother the natural desires of his heart, and to sacrifice his welfare to the caprice of chiefs, either elected by himself, or submitted to without examination. He was ignorant of the true policy of association — of the true object of government; he disdained to listen to the voice of Nature, which loudly proclaimed that the price of all submission is protection and happiness: the end of ail government the benefit of the governed, not the exclusive advantage of the governours. He gave himself up without reserve to men like himself, whom his prejudices induced him to contemplate as beings of a superior order, as gods upon earth: these profited by his ignorance, took advantage of his prejudices, corrupted him, rendered him vicious, enslaved him, made him miserable. Thus man, intended by Nature for the full enjoyment of freedom, to patiently investigate her laws, to search into her secrets, to always cling to his experience, has, from a neglect of her salutary admonitions, from an inexcusable ignorance of his own peculiar essence, fallen into servitude, and has been wickedly governed.

Having mistaken himself, he has remained ignorant of the necessary affinity that subsists between him and the beings of his own species: having mistaken his duty to himself, it followed, as a consequence, he has mistaken his duty to others. He made an erroneous calculation of what his felicity required; he did not perceive, what he owed to himself, the excesses he ought to avoid, the passions he ought to resist, the impulses he ought to follow, in order to consolidate his happiness, to promote his comfort, to further his advantage. In short, he was ignorant of his true interests; hence his irregularities, his intemperance, his shameful voluptuousness, with that long train of vices to which he has abandoned himself, at the expense of his preservation, at the risk of his permanent felicity.

It is, therefore, ignorance of himself, that has prevented man from enlightening his morals. The depraved governments to which he had submitted, felt an interest in preventing the

practice of his duties, even when he knew them.

Man's ignorance has endured so long, he has taken such slow, such irresolute steps to ameliorate his condition, only because he has neglected to study Nature, to scrutinize her laws, to search out her resources, to discover her properties. His sluggishness finds its account in permitting himself to be guided by precedent, rather than to follow experience which demands activity; to be led by routine, rather than by his reason which exacts reflection. From hence may be traced the aversion man betrays for every thing that swerves from those rules to which he has been accustomed: hence his stupid, his scrupulous respect for antiquity, for the most silly, the most absurd institutions of his fathers: hence those fears that seize him, when the most advantageous changes are proposed to him, or the most probable attempts are made to better his condition. He dreads to examine, because he has been taught to hold it a profanation of something immediately connected with his welfare; he credulously believes the interested advice, and spurns at those who wish to show him the danger of the road he is travelling.

This is the reason why nations linger on in the most scandalous lethargy, groaning under abuses transmitted from century to century, trembling at the very idea of that which alone can remedy their misfortunes.

It is for want of energy, for want of consulting experience, that medicine, natural philosophy, agriculture, painting, in short, all the useful sciences have so long remained under the shackles of authority, have progressed so little: those who profess these sciences, for the most part prefer treading the beaten paths, however inadequate to their end, rather than strike out new ones: they prefer the ravings of their imagination, their gratuitous conjectures, to that laborious experience which alone can extract her secrets from Nature.

In short, man, whether from sloth or from terrour, having renounced the evidence of his senses, has been guided in all his actions, in all his enterprises, by imagination, by enthusiasm, by habit, by prejudice, and above all, by authority, which knew well how to deceive him. Thus, imaginary systems have supplied the place of experience — of reflection — of reason. Man, petrified with his fears, inebriated with the marvellous, or benumbed with sloth, surrendered his experience: guided by his credulity, he was unable to fall back upon it, he became consequently inexperienced: from thence he gave birth to the most ridiculous opinions, or else adopted without examination, all those chimeras, all those idle notions offered to him by men whose interest it was to fool him to the top of his bent. Thus, became man has forgotten Nature, has neglected her ways — because he has disdained experience — because he has thrown by his reason — because he has been enraptured with the marvellous, with the supernatural — because he has unnecessarily *trembled,* man has continued so long in a state of infancy; and these are the reasons there is so much trouble in conducting him from this state of childhood to that of manhood. He has had nothing but the most jejune hypotheses, of which he has never dared to examine either the principles or the proofs, because he has been accustomed to hold them sacred, to consider them as the most perfect truths, of which it is not permitted to doubt, even for an instant. His ignorance

rendered him credulous: his curiosity made him swallow large draughts of the marvellous: time confirmed him in his opinions, and he passed his conjectures from race to race for realities; a tyrannical power maintained him in his notions, because by those alone could society be enslaved. At length the whole science of man became a confused mass of darkness, falsehood and contradictions, with here and there a feeble ray of truth, furnished by that Nature of which he can never entirely divest himself, because, without his knowledge, his necessities are continually bringing him back to her resources.

Let us then, raise ourselves above these clouds of prejudice, contemplate the opinions of men, and observe their various systems; let us learn to distrust a disordered imagination; let us take experience, that faithful monitor, for our guide; let us consult Nature, explore her laws, dive into her stores; let us draw from herself our ideas of the beings she contains; let us fall back on our senses, which errour, interested errour has taught us to suspect; let us consult that reason, which, for the vilest purposes, has been so shamefully calumniated, so cruelly disgraced; let us attentively examine the visible world, and let us try if it will not enable us to form a tolerable judgment of the invisible territory of the intellectual world: perhaps it may be found that there has been no sufficient reason for distinguishing them, and that it is not without motives that two empires have been separated, which are equally the inheritance of nature.

The universe, that vast assemblage of every thing that exists, presents only matter and motion: the whole offers to our contemplation nothing but an immense, an uninterrupted succession of causes and effects; some of these causes are known to us, because they strike immediately on our senses; others are unknown to us, because they act upon us by effects, frequently very remote from their original cause.

An immense variety of matter, combined under an infinity of forms, incessantly communicates, unceasingly receives a diversity of impulses. The different properties of this matter, its innumerable combinations, its various methods of action, which are the necessary consequence of these combinations, constitute for man, what he calls the *essence* of beings: it is from these diversified essences that spring the orders, the classes, or the systems, which these beings respectively occupy, of which the sum total makes up that which is called *nature*.

Nature, therefore, in its most extended signification, is the great whole that results from the assemblage of matter under its various combinations, with that diversity of motions which the universe offers to our view. Nature, in a less extended sense, or considered in each individual, is the whole that results from its essence; that is to say, the properties, the combination, the impulse, and the peculiar modes of action, by which it is discriminated from other beings. It is thus that *man* is, as a whole, the result of a certain combination of matter, endowed with peculiar properties, competent to give, capable of receiving, certain impulses, the arrangement of which is called *organization*, of which the essence is, to feel, to think, to act, to move, after a manner distinguished from other beings with which he can be compared. Man, therefore, ranks in an order, in a system, in a class by himself, which differs from that

of other animals, in whom we do not perceive those properties of which he is possessed. The different systems of beings, or if they will, their *particular natures,* depend on the general system of the great whole, or that universal nature, of which they form a part; to which every thing that exists is necessarily submitted, and attached.

Having described the proper definition that should be applied to the word *nature,* I must advise the reader, once for all, that whenever, in the course of this work, the expression occurs, that "Nature produces such or such an effect," there is no intention of personifying that nature, which is purely an abstract being; it merely indicates, that the effect spoken of, necessarily springs from the peculiar properties of those beings which compose the mighty macrocosm. When, therefore, it is said, *Nature demands that man should pursue his own happiness,* it is to prevent circumlocution, to avoid tautology; it is to be understood that it is the property of a being that feels, that thinks, that wills, that acts, to labour to its own happiness; in short, *that* is called *natural* which is conformable to the essence of things, or to the laws which Nature prescribes to the beings she contains, in the different orders they occupy, under the various circumstances through which they are obliged to pass. Thus health is *natural* to man in a certain state; disease is *natural* to him under other circumstances; dissolution, or if they will, death, is a *natural* state for a body, deprived of some of those things, necessary to maintain the existence of the animal, &c. By *essence* is to be understood, that which constitutes a being such as it is; the whole of the properties, or qualities, by which it acts as it does. Thus, when it is said, it is the *essence* of a stone to fall, it is the same as saying, that its descent, is the necessary effect of its gravity, of its density, of the cohesion of its parts, of the elements of which it is composed. In short, the *essence* of a being, is its particular, its individual nature.

Chapter II: Of Motion, and its Origin.

Motion is an effect by which a body either changes, or has a tendency to change its position: that is to say, by which it successively corresponds with different parts of space, or changes its relative distance to other bodies. It Is motion alone that establishes the relation between our senses and exterior or interior beings: it is only by motion, that these beings are impressed upon us — that we know their existence — that we judge of their properties — that we distinguish the one from the other — that we distribute them into classes.

The beings, the substances, or the various bodies, of which nature is the assemblage, are themselves effects of certain combinations — effects which. become causes in their turn. A *cause* is a being which puts another in motion, or which produces some change in it. The *effect* is the change produced in one body by the motion or presence of another.

Each being, by its essence, by its peculiar nature, has the faculty of producing, is capable of receiving, has the power of communicating a variety of motion. Thus some beings are proper to strike our organs: these organs are competent to receiving the impression, are adequate to undergoing changes by their presence. Those which cannot act on any of our organs, either immediately and by themselves, or mediately, by the intervention of other bodies, exist not

for us; since they can neither move. us, nor consequently furnish us with ideas: they can neither he known to us, nor of course be judged of by us. To know an object, is to have felt it; to feel it, it is requisite to have been moved by it. To see, is to have been moved by something acting on the visual organs; to hear, is to have been struck by something on our auditory nerves. In short, in whatever mode a body may act upon s, whatever impulse we may receive from it. we can have no other knowledge of it than by the change it produces in us. Nature, as we have already said, is the assemblage of all the beings, and consequently, of all the motion of which we have a knowledge, as well as of many others of which we know nothing, because they have not yet become accessible to our senses. From the continual action and re- action of these beings, result a series of causes and effects; or a chain of motion guided by the constant and invariable laws peculiar to each being: which are necessary or inherent to its particular nature, which, make it always act or move after a determinate manner. The different principles of this motion, are unknown to us, because we are in many instances, if not in all, ignorant of what constitutes the essence of beings. The elements of bodies escape our senses; we know them only in the mass: we are neither acquainted with their intimate combination, nor the proportion of these combinations; from whence must necessarily result their mode of action, their impulse, or their different effects. Our senses, bring us generally acquainted with two sorts of motion in the beings that surround us. The one is the motion of the mass, by which an entire body, is transferred from one place to another. Of the motion of this genus we are perfectly sensible, — Thus, we see a stone fall, a ball roll, an arm move or change its position. The other, is an internal or concealed motion, which always depends on the peculiar energies of a body: that is to say, on its *essence,* or the combination, the action, and reaction of the minute, of the insensible particles of matter, of which that body is composed. This motion we do not see; we know it only by the alteration, or change, which, after some time, we discover in these bodies or mixtures. Of this genus is that concealed motion which fermentation produces in the particles that compose flour, which, however scattered, however separated, unite, and form that mass which we call *bread.* Such, also, is the imperceptible motion, by which we see a plant or animal enlarge, strengthen, undergo changes, and acquire new qualities, without our eyes being competent to follow its progression, or to perceive the causes which have, produced these effects. Such, also, is the internal motion that takes place in man, which is called his *intellectual faculties,* his *thoughts,* his *passions,* his *will.* Of these we have no other mode of judging than by their action; that is, by those sensible effects which either accompany or follow them. Thus, when we see a man run away, we judge him to be interiorly actuated by the passion of fear.

Motion, whether visible or concealed, is styled *acquired* when it is impressed on one body by another; either by a cause to which we are a stranger, or by an exterior agent which our senses enable us to discover. Thus we call that *acquired motion,* which the wind gives to the sails of a ship. That motion, which is excited in a body containing within itself the causes of those changes we see it undergo, is called *spontaneous.* — Then it is said, this body acts or

moves by its own peculiar energies. Of this kind is the motion of the man who walks, who talks, who thinks. Nevertheless, if we examine the matter a little closer, we shall be convinced, that, strictly speaking, there is no such thing as spontaneous motion in any of the various bodies of Nature; seeing they are perpetually acting one upon the other; that all their changes are to be attributed to the causes, either visible or concealed, by which they are moved. The will of man, is secretly moved or determined by some exterior cause producing a change in him: we believe he moves of himself, because we neither see the cause that determined him, the mode in which it acted, nor the organ that it put in motion.

That is called *simple motion*, which is excited in a body by a single cause. *Compound motion*, that, which is produced by two or more different causes; whether these causes are equal or unequal, conspiring differently, acting together or in succession, known or unknown.

Let the motion of beings be of whatsoever nature it may, it is always the necessary consequence of their essence, or of the properties which compose them, and of those causes of which they experience the action. Each being can only move, and act, after a particular manner; that is to say, conformably to those laws which result from its peculiar essence, its particular combination, its individual nature: in short, from its specific energies, and those of the bodies from which it receives an impulse. It is this that constitutes the invariable laws of motion: I say *invariable*, because they can never change without producing confusion in the essence of things. It is thus that a heavy body must necessarily fall, if it meets with no obstacle sufficient to arrest its descent; that a sensible body must naturally seek pleasure, and avoid pain; that fire must necessarily burn, and diffuse light.

Each being, then, has laws of motion that are adapted to itself, and constantly acts, or moves according to these laws; at least when no superior cause interrupts its action. Thus, fire ceases to burn combustible matter, as soon as sufficient water is thrown into it to arrest its progress. Thus, a sensible being ceases to seek pleasure, as soon as he fears that pain will be the result.

The communication of motion, or the medium of action, from one body to another, also follows certain and necessary laws: one being can only communicate motion to another by the affinity, by the resemblance, by the conformity, by the analogy, or by the point of contact which it has with that other being. Fire can only propagate when it finds matter analogous to itself: it extinguishes when it encounters bodies which it cannot embrace; that is to say, that do not bear towards it a certain degree of relation or affinity.

Every thing in the universe is in motion; the essence of matter is to act: if we consider its parts attentively, we shall discover that not a particle enjoys absolute repose. Those which appear to us to be without motion, are, in fact, only in relative or apparent rest; they experience such an imperceptible motion, and expose it so little on their surfaces, that we cannot perceive the changes they undergo.[5] All that appears to us to be at rest, does not, however, remain one instant in the same state. All beings are continually breeding, increasing, decreasing, or dispersing, with more or less tardiness or rapidity. The insect called *ephemeron*, is produced, and perishes in the same day; consequently, it experiences the great changes of its being very rapidly. Those combinations which form the most solid bodies, and

which, to our eyes, appear to enjoy the most perfect repose, are nevertheless decomposed and dissolved in the course of time. The hardest stones, by degrees, give way to the contact of air. A mass of iron, which time, and the action of the atmosphere, has gnawed into rust, must have been in motion from the moment of its formation in the bowels of the earth, until the instant we behold it in this state of dissolution.

Natural philosophers, for the most part, seem not to have sufficiently reflected on what they call the *nisus;* that is to say, the incessant efforts one body is making on another, but which, notwithstanding, appear, to our superficial observation, to enjoy the most perfect repose. A stone of five hundred weight seems at rest on the earth, nevertheless, it never ceases for an instant to press with force upon the earth, which resists or repulses it in its turn. Will the assertion be ventured, that the stone and the earth do not act? Do they wish to be undeceived? They have nothing to do, but interpose their hand betwixt the earth and the stone; it will then be discovered, that, notwithstanding its seeming repose, the stone has power adequate to bruise it. Action cannot exist in bodies without re-action. A body that experiences an impulse, an attraction, or a pressure of any kind, if it resists, clearly demonstrates by such resistance, that it reacts; from whence it follows, there is a concealed force, called by philosophers *vis inertia*, that displays itself against another force; and this clearly demonstrates, that this inert force is capable of both acting and re-acting. In short, it will be found, on close investigation, that those powers which are called *dead*, and those which are termed *live* or *moving*, are powers of the same species, which only display themselves after a different manner.[6]

May we not go farther yet, may we not say, that in those bodies, or masses, of which the whole appears to us to be at rest, there is, notwithstanding, a continual action and reaction, constant efforts, uninterrupted impulse, and continued resistance? In short, a *nisus*, by which the component particles of these bodies press one upon another, reciprocally resisting each other, acting, and reacting incessantly? that this reciprocity of action, this simultaneous reaction, keeps them united, causes their particles to form a mass, a body, a combination, which, viewed in its whole, has the semblance of complete rest, although no one of its particles ever *really* ceases to be in motion for a single instant? These bodies appear to be at rest, simply by the equality of the motion of the powers acting in them.

Thus bodies that have the appearance of enjoying the most perfect repose, really receive, whether upon their surface, or in their interior, continual impulsion from those bodies by which they are either surrounded or penetrated, dilated or contracted, rarefied or condensed; in short, from those which compose them: whereby their particles are constantly acting, and reacting, or in continual motion, the effects of which are ulteriorly displayed by very remarkable changes. Thus heat rarefies and dilates metals, which clearly demonstrates, that a bar of iron, from the variation of the atmosphere alone, must be in unceasing motion; and that not a single particle in it can be said to enjoy rest, even for a single moment. Indeed, in those hard bodies, the particles of which are contiguous, which are closely united, how is it possible to conceive, that air, cold or heat, can act upon one of these particles, even exteriorly, without the motion being successively communicated to those which are most

intimate and minute in their union? How, without motion, should we be able to conceive the manner in which our sense of smelling is affected by emanations escaping from the most compact bodies, of which all the particles appear to be at perfect rest? How could we, even by the aid of a telescope, see the most distant stars, if there was not a progressive motion of light from these stars to the retina of our eye?

Observation and reflection ought to convince us, that every thing in Nature is in continual motion: that not one of its parts enjoys true repose: that Nature acts in all; that she would cease to be Nature if she did not act; and that, without unceasing motion, nothing could be preserved, nothing Could be produced, nothing Could act. Thus, the idea of Nature necessarily includes that of motion. But, it will be asked, from whence did she receive her motion? Our reply is, from herself, since she is the great whole, out of which, consequently, nothing can exist. We say this motion is a manner of existence, that flows, necessarily, out of the essence of matter; that matter moves by its own peculiar energies; that its motion is to be attributed to the force which is inherent in itself; that the variety of motion, and the phenomena which result, proceed from the diversity of the properties, of the qualities, and of the combinations, which are originally found in the primitive matter, of which Nature is the assemblage.

Natural philosophers, for the most part, have regarded as inanimate, or as deprived of the faculty of motion, those bodies which are only moved by the interposition of some agent, or exterior cause; they have considered themselves justified in concluding, that the matter which constitutes these bodies, is perfectly inert in its nature. They have not relinquished this errour, although they must have observed, that whenever a body is left to itself, or disengaged from those obstacles which oppose themselves to its descent, it has a tendency to fall, or to approach the centre of the earth, by a motion uniformly accelerated; they have rather chosen to suppose an imaginary exterior cause, of which they themselves had no correct idea, than admit that these bodies held their motion from their own peculiar nature.

In like manner, although these philosophers saw above them an infinite number of immense globes, moving with great rapidity round a common centre, still they clung fast to their opinions; and never ceased to suppose chimerical causes for these movements, until the immortal Newton demonstrated that it was the effect of the gravitation of these celestial bodies towards each other.[7] A very simple observation would have sufficed to make the philosophers anterior to Newton feel the insufficiency of the causes they admitted to operate with such powerful effect: they had enough to convince themselves in the clashing of one body against another which they could contemplate, and in the known laws of that motion, which these always communicate by reason of their greater or less density: from whence they ought to have inferred, that the density of *subtile* or *ethereal* matter being infinitely less than that of the planets, it could only communicate to them a very feeble motion.

If they had viewed Nature uninfluenced by prejudice, they must have been long since convinced, that matter acts by its own peculiar energy, and needs not any exterior impulse to set it in motion. They would have perceived, that whenever mixed bodies were placed in

a capacity to act on each other, motion was instantly engendered, and that these mixtures acted with a force capable of producing the most surprising effects. If filings of iron, sulphur and water be mixed together, these bodies thus capacitated to act on each other, are heated by degrees, and ultimately produce a violent combustion. If flour be wetted with Water, and the mixture closed up, it will be found, after some little lapse of time, by the aid of a microscope, to have produced organized beings that enjoy life, of which the water and the flour were believed incapable:[8] it is thus that inanimate matter can pass into life, or animate matter, which is in itself only an assemblage of motion. Reasoning from analogy, the production of a man, independent of the ordinary means, would not be more marvellous than that of an insect with flour and water. Fermentation and putrefaction evidently produce living animals. We have here the principle; and with proper materials, principles can always be brought into action. That generation which is styled *equivocal*, is only so for those who do not reflect, or who do not permit themselves attentively to observe the operations of Nature. The generation of motion, and its development, as well as the energy of matter, may be seen more especially in those combinations in which fire, air, and water, find themselves in union. These elements, or rather these mixed bodies, are the most volatile, the most fugitive of beings; nevertheless, in the hands of Nature they are the principal agents employed to produce the most striking phenomena. To these are to be ascribed the effects of thunder, the eruption of volcanoes, earthquakes. &c. Art offers an agent of astonishing force in gunpowder, the instant it comes in contact with fire. In fact, the most terrible effects result from the combination of matter which is generally believed to be dead and inert.

These facts incontestably prove, that motion is produced, is augmented, is accelerated in matter, without the concurrence of any exterior agent: it is, therefore, reasonable to conclude, that motion is the necessary consequence of immutable laws, resulting from the essence, from the properties inherent in the different elements, and the various combinations of these elements. Are we not justified, then, in concluding from these examples, that there may be an infinity of other combinations, with which we are unacquainted, competent to produce a great variety of motion in matter, without being under the necessity of recurring for the explanation to agents who are more difficult to comprehend than even the effects which are attributed to them?

If man had paid proper attention to what passed under his view, he would not have sought out of Nature a power distinguished from herself, to set her in action, and without which he believes she cannot move. If, indeed, by Nature is meant a heap of dead matter, destitute of properties, purely passive, we must unquestionably seek out of this Nature the principle of her motion: but, if by Nature, be understood what it really is, a whole, of which the numerous parts are endowed with diverse, and various properties; which oblige them to act according to these properties; which are in a perpetual reciprocity of action and reaction; which press, which gravitate towards a common centre, whilst others diverge and fly off towards the periphery, or circumference; which attract, and repel, which unite, and separate; which by continual approximation, and constant collision, produce and decompose all the bodies we

behold; than I say, there is no necessity to have recourse to supernatural powers to account for the formation of things, and those phenomena which are the result of motion.

Those who admit a cause exterior to matter, are obliged to suppose, that this cause produced all the motion by which matter is agitated in giving it existence. This supposition rests on another, namely, that matter could begin to exist; a hypothesis that, until this moment, has never been demonstrated by any thing like solid proof. To produce from nothing, or the *Creation,* is a term that cannot give us the most slender idea of the formation of the universe; it presents no sense, upon which the mind can fasten itself.[9]

Motion becomes still more obscure, when creation, or the formation of matter, is attributed to a *spiritual* being, that is to say, to a being which has no analogy, no point of contact, with it; to a being which has neither extent, nor parts, and cannot, therefore, be susceptible of motion, as we understand the term; this being only the change of one body relatively to another body, in which the body moved, presents successively different parts to different points of space. Moreover, as all the world are nearly agreed that matter can never be totally annihilated, or cease to exist, how can we understand, that that which cannot cease to be, could ever have had a beginning?

If, therefore, it be asked, whence came matter? it is a very reasonable reply to say, it has always existed. If it be inquired, whence proceeds the motion that agitates matter? the same reasoning furnishes the answer; namely, that, as motion is coeval with matter, it must have existed from all eternity, seeing that motion is the necessary consequence of its existence, of its essence, of its primitive properties, such as its extent, its gravity, its impenetrability, its figure, &c. By virtue of these essential, constituent properties, inherent in all matter, and without which it is impossible to form an idea of it, the various matter of which the universe is composed must, from all eternity, have pressed against each other; have gravitated towards a centre; have clashed; have come in contact; have been attracted; have been repelled; have been combined; have been separated; in short, must have acted and moved according to the essence and energy peculiar to each genus, and to each of its combinations. Existence supposes properties in the thing that exists: whenever it has properties, its mode of action must necessarily flow from those properties which constitute its mode of being. Thus, when a body is ponderous, it must fall; when it falls, it must come in collision with the bodies it meets in its descent; when it is dense, when it is solid, it must, by reason of this density, communicate motion to the bodies with which it clashes; when it has analogy or affinity with these bodies, it must unite with them; when it has no point of analogy with them, it roust be repulsed.

From which it may be fairly inferred, that, in supposing, as we are under the necessity of doing, the existence of matter, we must suppose it to have some kind of properties, from which its motion, or modes of action, must necessarily flow. To form the universe *Descartes* asked but matter and motion: a diversity of matter sufficed for him; variety of motion was the consequence of its existence, of its essence, of its properties: its different modes of action would be the necessary consequence of its different modes of being. Matter without

properties, would be a mere nothing: therefore, as soon as matter exists, it must act; as soon as it is various, it must act variously; if it cannot commence to exist, it must have existed from all eternity; if it has always existed, it can never cease to be: if it can never cease to be, it can never cease to act by its own energy. Motion is a manner of being, which matter derives from its peculiar existence.

The existence then of matter is a fact; the existence of motion is another fact. Our visual organs point out to us matter with different essences, forming a variety of combinations, endowed with various properties that discriminate them. Indeed, it is an errour to believe that matter is a homogeneous body, of which the parts differ from each other only by their various modifications. Among the individuals of the same species that come under our notice, no two are exactly alike, and it is therefore evident that the difference of situation alone, will necessarily carry a diversity more or less sensible, not only in the modifications, but also in the essence, in the properties, in the entire system of beings.[10]

If this principle be properly weighed, fend experience seems always to produce evidence of its truth, we must be convinced, that the matter, or primitive elements which enter the composition of bodies, are not of the same nature, and, consequently, can neither have the same properties, nor the same modifications; and if so, they cannot have the same mode of moving, and acting. Their activity or motion, already different, can be diversified to infinity, augmented or diminished, accelerated or retarded, according to the combinations, the proportions, the pressure, the density, the volume of the matter that enters their composition. The element of fire, is visibly more active and more inconstant than that of earth. This is more solid and ponderous than fire, air, or water. According to the quality of the elements which enter the composition of bodies, these must act diversely, and their motion must in some measure partake the motion peculiar to each of their constituent parts. Elementary fire appears to be in nature the principle of activity; it may be compared to a fruitful leaven, that puts the mass into fermentation and gives it life. Earth appears to be the principle of solidity in bodies, from its impenetrability, and by the firm coherence of its parts. Water is a medium, to facilitate the combination of bodies, into which it enters itself as a constituent part. Air is a fluid, whose business it seems to be, to furnish the other elements with the space requisite to exercise their motion, and which is, moreover, found proper to combine with them. These elements, which our senses never discover in a pure state; which are continually and reciprocally set in motion by each other; which are always acting and re-acting; combining and separating; attracting and repelling; are sufficient to explain to us the formation of all the beings we behold. Their motion is uninterruptedly, and reciprocally, produced from each other; they are alternately causes and effects. Thus, they form a vast circle of generation and destruction, of combination and decomposition, which could never have had a beginning, and which can never have an end. In short, nature is but an immense chain of causes and effects, which unceasingly flow from each other. The motion of particular beings depends em the general motion, which is itself maintained by individual motion. This is strengthened or weakened — accelerated or retarded — simplified or complicated — procreated or

destroyed, by a variety of combinations and circumstances, which every moment change the directions, the tendency, the modes of existing and of acting, of the different beings that receive its impulse.[11]

If we desire to go beyond this, to find the principle of action in matter and to trace the origin of things, it is for ever to fall back upon difficulties; it is absolutely to abridge the evidence of our senses, by which alone we can, judge of and understand the causes acting upon them, or the impulse by which they are set in action.

Let us, therefore, content ourselves with saying *that* which is supported by our experience, and by all the evidence we are capable of understanding; against the truth of which, not a shadow of proof such as our reason can admit, has ever been adduced; which has been maintained by philosophers in every age; which theologians themselves have not denied, but which many of them have upheld; namely, that *matter always existed; that it moves by virtue of its essence; that all the phenomena of Nature is ascribable to the diversified motion of the variety of matter she contains; and which, like the phenix, is continually regenerating out of her own ashes.*[12]

Chapter III: Of Matter: — Of its various Combinations; Of its diversified Motion; or, of the Course of Nature.

We know nothing of the elements of bodies, but we know some of their properties or qualities; and we distinguish their various matter by the effect or change produced on our senses; that is to say, by the variety of motion their presence excites in us. In consequence, we discover in them extent, mobility, divisibility, solidity, gravity, and inert force. From these general and primitive properties, flow a number of others, such as density, figure, colour, ponderosity, &c. Thus, relatively to us, matter is all that affects our senses, in any manner whatever; the various properties we attribute to matter, are founded on the different impressions we receive, on the changes they produce in us.

A satisfactory definition of matter has not yet been given. Man, deceived and led astray by his prejudices, formed but vague, superficial, and imperfect notions concerning it. He looked upon it as a unique being, gross and passive, incapable of either moving by itself, of forming combinations, or of producing any thing by its own energies; whilst he ought to have contemplated it as a *genus* of beings, of which the individuals, although they might possess some common properties, such as extent, divisibility, figure, &c., should not, however, be all ranked in the same class, nor comprised under the same general denomination.

An example will serve more fully to explain what we have just asserted, throw its correctness into light, and facilitate the application. The properties common to all matter, are, extent, divisibility, impenetrability, figure, mobility, or the property of being moved in mass. Fire, beside these general properties common to all matter, enjoys also the peculiar property of being put into activity by a motion producing on our organs of feeling the sensation of heat, and by another, which communicates to our visual organs the sensation of light. Iron, in common with matter in general, has extent and figure; is divisible, and moveable in mass: if

fire be combined with it in a certain proportion, the iron acquires two new properties, namely, those of exciting in us similar sensations of heat and light, which the iron had not before its combination with the igneous matter. These distinguishing properties are inseparable from matter, and the phenomena that result, may, in the strictest sense of the word, be said to result necessarily.

If we only contemplate the paths of nature; if we trace the beings in this nature under the different states through which, by reason of their properties, they are compelled to pass, we shall discover that it is to motion, and motion alone, that is to be ascribed all the changes, all the combinations, all the forms, in short, all the various modifications of matter. That it is by motion every thing that exists is produced, experiences change, expands, and is destroyed. It is motion that alters the aspect of beings, that adds to, or takes away from their properties; which obliges each of them, by a consequence of its nature, after having occupied a certain rank or order, to quit it to occupy another, and to contribute to the generation, maintenance, and decomposition of other beings, totally different in their bulk, rank, and essence.

In what experimental philosophers have styled the *three orders of nature,* that is to say, the *mineral,* the *vegetable,* and the *animal* worlds, they have established, by the aid of motion, a transmigration, an exchange, a continual circulation in the particles of matter. Nature has occasion in one place for those particles which, for a time, she has placed in another. These particles, after having, by particular combinations, constituted beings endued with peculiar essences, with specific properties, with determinate modes of action, dissolve and separate with more or less facility; and combining in a new manner, they form new beings. The attentive observer sees this law execute itself in a manner more or less prominent through all the beings by which he is surround ed. He sees nature full of *erratic germs,* some of which expand themselves, whilst others wait until motion has placed them in their proper situation, in suitable wombs or matrices, in the necessary circumstances to unfold, to increase, to render them more perceptible by the addition of other substances of matter analogous to their primitive being. In all this we see nothing but the effect of motion, necessarily guided, modified, accelerated or slackened, strengthened or weakened, by reason of the various properties that beings successively acquire and lose; which, every moment, infallibly produces alterations in bodies, more or less marked. Indeed these bodies cannot be, strictly speaking, the same in any two successive moments of their existence; they must, every instant, either acquire or lose: in short, they are obliged to undergo continual variations in their essences, in their properties, in their energies, in their masses, in their qualities, in their mode of existence.

Animals, after they have been expanded in, and brought out of the wombs that are suitable to the elements of their machine, enlarge, strengthen, acquire new properties, new energies, new faculties; either by deriving nourishment from plants analogous to their being, or by devouring other animals whose substance is suitable to their preservation; that is to say, to repair the continual deperdition, or loss, of some portion of their own substance that is disengaging itself every instant. These same animals are nourished, preserved, strengthened,

and enlarged by the aid of air, water, earth, and fire. Deprived of air, or of the fluid that surrounds them, that presses on them, that penetrates them, that gives them their elasticity, they presently cease to live. Water combined with this air, enters into their whole mechanism, of which it facilitates the motion. Earth serves them for a basis, by giving solidity to their texture: it is conveyed by air and water, which carry it to those parts of the body with which it can combine. Fire itself, disguised and enveloped under an infinity of forms, continually received into the animal, procures him heat, continues him in life, renders him capable of exercising his functions. The aliments, charged with these various principles, entering into the stomach, re-establish the nervous system, and restore, by their activity, and the elements which compose them, the machine which begins to languish, to be depressed, by the loss it has sustained. Forthwith the animal experiences a change in his whole system; he has more energy, more activity; he feels more courage; displays more gaiety; he acts, he moves, he thinks, after a different manner; all his faculties are exercised with more ease.[13] From this it is clear, that what are called the elements, or primitive parts of matter, when variously combined, are, by the agency of motion, continually united to, and assimilated with the substance of animals: that they visibly modify their being, have an evident influence over their actions, that is to say, upon the motion they undergo, whether risible or concealed.

The same elements, which under certain circumstances serve to nourish, to strengthen, to maintain the animal, become, under others, the principles of his weakness, the instruments of his dissolution, of his death: they work his destruction, whenever they are not in that just proportion, which renders them proper to maintain his existence: thus, when water becomes too abundant in the body of the animal, it enervates him, it relaxes the fibres, and impedes the necessary action of the other elements: thus, fire admitted in excess, excites in him disorderly motion, destructive of his machine: thus, air, charged with principles not analogous to his mechanism, brings upon him dangerous diseases and contagion. In fine, the aliments modified after certain modes, instead of nourishing destroy the animal, and conduce to his ruin: the animal is preserved no longer than these substances are analogous to his system. They ruin him when they want that just equilibrium that renders them suitable to maintain his existence.

Plants, that serve to nourish and restore animals, are themselves nourished by earth; they expand on its bosom, enlarge and strengthen at its expense, continually receiving into their texture, by their roots and their pores, water, air, and igneous matter: water visibly reanimates them whenever their vegetation, or genus of life, languishes; it conveys to them those analogous principles by which they are enabled to reach perfection; air is requisite to their expansion, and furnishes them with water, earth, and igneous matter with which it is charged. By these means they receive more or less of the inflammable matter; and the different proportions of these principles, their numerous combinations, from whence result an infinity of properties, a variety of forms, constitute the various families and classes into which botanists have distributed plants: it is thus, we see the cedar, and the hyssop, develop their growth; the one, rises to the clouds; the other, creeps humbly on the earth. Thus, by degrees,

from an acorn springs the majestic oak, accumulating with time its numerous branches, and overshadowing us with its foliage. Thus, a grain of corn, after having drawn its own nourishment from the juices of the earth, serves, in its turn, for the nourishment of man, into whose system it conveys the elements or principles by which it has been itself expanded — combined and modified in such a manner, as to render this vegetable proper to assimilate and unite with the human frame: that is to say, with the fluids and solids of which it is composed. The same elements, the same principles, are found in the formation of minerals, and also in their decomposition, whether natural or artificial. We find that earth diversely modified, wrought and combined, serves to increase their bulk, and give them more or less density and gravity. Air and water contribute to make their particles cohere: the igneous matter, or inflammable principle, tinges them with colour, and sometimes, plainly indicates its presence by the brilliant scintillation, which motion elicits from them. These stones and metals, these bodies so compact and solid, are disunited, are destroyed, by the agency of air, water, and fire which the most ordinary analysis is sufficient to prove, as well as a multitude of experience to which our eyes are the daily evidence.

Animals, plants, and minerals, after a lapse of time, give back to nature — that is to say, to the general mass of things, to the universal magazine — the elements or principles which they have borrowed. The earth retakes that portion of the body of which it formed the basis and the solidity; the air charges itself with those parts that are analogous to it, and with those particles which are light and subtile;. water carries off that which is suitable to liquescency; fire bursting its chains, disengages itself, and rushes into new combinations with other bodies. The elementary particles of the animal being thus dissolved, disunited, and dispersed, assume new activity, and form new combinations: thus, they serve to nourish, to preserve, or destroy new beings — among others, plants, which, arrived at their maturity, nourish and preserve new animals; these, in their turn, yielding to the same fate as the first.

Such is the invariable course of Nature: such is the eternal circle of mutation, which all that exists is obliged to describe. It is thus that motion generates, preserves for a time, and successively destroys one part of the universe by the other; whilst the sum of existence remains eternally the same. Nature, by its combinations, produces suns, which place themselves in the centre of so many systems: she forms planets, which, by their peculiar essence, gravitate and describe their revolutions round these suns: by degrees the motion is changed altogether, and becomes eccentric: perhaps the day may arrive when these wondrous masses will disperse, of which man, in the short space of his existence, can only have a faint and transient glimpse.

It is clear, then, that the continual motion inherent in matter, changes and destroys all beings; every instant depriving them of some of their properties to substitute others: it is motion which, in thus changing their actual essence, changes also their order, their direction, their tendency, and the laws which regulate their mode of acting and being: from the stone formed in the bowels of the earth by the intimate combination and close coherence of similar and analogous particles, to the sun, that vast reservoir of igneous particles, which sheds torrents

of light over the firmament; from the benumbed oyster, to the thoughtful and active man, we see an uninterrupted progression, a perpetual chain of motion and combination, from which is produced beings, that only differ from each other by the variety of their elementary matter: and by the numerous combinations of these elements spring modes of action and existence, diversified to infinity. In generation, in nutrition, in preservation, we see nothing more than matter variously combined, of which each has its peculiar motion, regulated by fixed and determinate laws, which oblige them to submit to necessary changes. We shall find in the formation, in the growth, in the instantaneous life of animals, vegetables and minerals, nothing but matter which, combining, accumulating, aggregating, and expanding by degrees forms beings, who are either feeling living, vegetating, or else destitute of these faculties; and having existed some time under one particular form they are obliged to contribute by their ruin to the production of other forms.[14]

Chapter IV: Of the Laws of Motion common to all the Beings of Nature — Of Attraction and Repulsion — Of inert Force — Of Necessity.

Man is never surprised at those effect of which he thinks he knows the cause he believes he does know the cause a soon as he sees them act in a uniform and determinate manner, or when the motion excited is simple: the descent of a stone, that falls by its own peculiar weight, is an object of meditation only to the philosopher, to whom the mode by which the most immediate causes act, and the most simple motion, are no less impenetrable mysteries than the most complex motion, and the manner by which the most complicated causes give impulse. The uninformed are seldom tempted either to examine the effects which are familiar to them, or to recur to first principles. They think they see nothing in the descent of a stone which ought to elicit their surprise, or become the object of their research: it requires a Newton to feel that the descent of heavy bodies is a phenomenon worthy his whole, his most serious attention: it requires the sagacity of a profound experimental philosopher, to discover the laws by which heavy bodies fall, by which they communicate to others their peculiar motion. In short, the mind that is most practised in philosophical observation, has frequently the chagrin to find, that the most simple and most common effects escape all his researches, and remain inexplicable to him.

When any extraordinary, any unusual effect is produced, to which our eyes have not been accustomed; or when we are ignorant of the energies of the cause, the action of which so forcibly strikes our senses, we are tempted to meditate upon it, and take it into our consideration. The European, accustomed to the use of *gunpowder,* passes it by, without thinking much of its extraordinary energies; the workman, who labours to manufacture it, finds nothing marvellous in its properties, because he daily handles the matter that enters its composition. The American, who had never beheld its operation, looked upon it as a divine power, and its energies as supernatural. The uninformed, who are ignorant of the true cause of *thunder*, contemplate it as the instrument of celestial vengeance. The experimental

philosopher considers it as the effect of the electric matter, which, nevertheless, is itself a cause which he is very far from perfectly understanding.[15]

Be this as it may, whenever we see a cause act, we look upon its effect as natural: when this cause becomes familiar to the sight, when we are accustomed to it, we think we understand it, and its effects surprise us no longer. Whenever any unusual effect is perceived without our discovering the cause, the mind sets to work, becomes uneasy; this uneasiness increases in proportion to its extent: as soon as it is believed to threaten our preservation, we become completely agitated: we seek after the cause with an earnestness proportioned to our alarm; our perplexity augments in a ratio equivalent to the persuasion we are under how essentially requisite it is we should become acquainted with the cause that has affected us in so lively a manner. As it frequently happens that our senses can teach us nothing respecting this cause which so deeply interests us, which we seek with so much ardour; we have recourse to our imagination; this, disturbed with alarm, enervated by fear, becomes a suspicious, a fallacious guide: we create chimeras, fictitious causes, to whom we give the credit, to whom we ascribe the honour of those phenomena by which we have been so much alarmed. It is to this disposition of the human mind that must be attributed, as will be seen in the sequel, the religious errours of man, who, despairing of the capability to trace tie natural causes of those perplexing phenomena to which he was the witness, and sometimes the victim, created in his brain, heated with terrour, imaginary causes, which have become to him a source of the most extravagant folly.

In nature, however, there can be only natural causes and effects; all the motion excited in this nature follows constant and necessary laws: the natural operations to the knowledge of which we are competent, of which we are in a capacity to judge, are of themselves sufficient to enable us to discover those which elude our sight; we can at least judge of them by analogy. If we study nature with attention, the modes of action which she displays to our senses will teach us not to be disconcerted by those which she refuses to discover. Those causes which are the most remote from their effects, unquestionably act by intermediate causes; by the aid of these, we can frequently trace out the first. If in the chain of these causes we sometimes meet with obstacles that oppose themselves to our research, we ought to endeavour by patience and diligence to overcome them; when it so happens we cannot surmount the difficulties that occur, we still are never justified in concluding the chain to be broken, or that the cause which acts is *supernatural.* Let us, then, be content with an honest avowal, that Nature contains resources of which we are ignorant; but never let us substitute phantoms, fictions, or imaginary causes, senseless terms, for those causes which escape our research; because, by such means, we only confirm ourselves in ignorance, impede our inquiries, and obstinately remain in errour.

In spite of our ignorance with respect to the meanderings of Nature, of the essence of beings, of their properties, their elements, their combinations, their proportions, we yet know the simple and general laws according to which, bodies move, and we see clearly, that some of these laws, common to all beings, never contradict themselves: although, on some occasions,

they appear to vary, we are frequently competent to discover that the cause becoming complex, from combination with other causes, either impedes, or prevents its mode of action, being such as in its primitive state we had a right to expect. We know that active, igneous matter, applied to gunpowder, must necessarily cause it to explode: whenever this effect does not follow the combination of the igneous matter with the gunpowder, whenever our senses do not give us evidence of the fact, we are justified in concluding, either that the powder is damp, or that it is united with some other substance that counteracts its explosion. We know that all the actions of man have a tendency to render him happy: whenever, therefore, we see him labouring to injure or destroy himself, it is just to infer that he is moved by some cause opposed to his natural tendency; that he is deceived by some prejudice; that, for want of experience, he is blind to consequences: that he does not see whither his actions will lead him.

If the motion excited in beings was always simple; if their actions did not blend and combine with each other, it would be easy to know the effect a cause would produce. I know that a stone, when descending, ought to describe a perpendicular: I also know, that if it encounters any other body which changes its course, it is obliged to take an oblique direction; but if its fall be interrupted by several contrary powers which act upon it alternately, I am no longer competent to determine what line it will describe. It may be a parabola, an. ellipsis, spiral, circular, &c.; this will depend on the impulse it receives, and the powers by which it is impelled.

The most complex motion, however, is never more than the result of simple motion combined: therefore, as soon as we know the general laws of beings, and their action, we have only to decompose and to analyze them, in order to discover those of which they are combined: experience teaches us the effects we are to expect. Thus it is clear, the simplest motion causes that necessary junction of different matter of which all bodies are composed: that matter varied in its essence, in its properties, in its combinations, has each its several modes of action, or motion. peculiar to itself: the whole motion of a body is consequently the sum total of each particular motion that is combined.

Amongst the matter we behold, some is constantly disposed to unite, whilst other is incapable of union; that which is suitable to unite, forms combinations more or less intimate, possessing more or less durability: that is to say, with more or less capacity to preserve their union and to resist dissolution. Those bodies which are called *solids,* receive into their composition a great number of homogeneous, similar, and analogous particles, disposed to unite themselves; with energies conspiring or tending to the same point. The primitive beings, or elements of bodies, have need of support, of props, that is to say, of the presence of each other, for the purpose of preserving themselves; of acquiring consistence, or solidity; a truth which applies with equal uniformity to what is called *physical,* as to what is termed *moral.* It is upon this disposition in matter and bodies with relation to each other, that is founded those modes of action which natural philosophers designate by the terms *attraction, repulsion, sympathy, antipathy, affinities, relations.*[16] Moralists describe this disposition

under the names of *love, hatred, friendship, aversion.* Man, like all the beings in nature, experiences the impulse of attraction and repulsion; the motion excited in him differing from that of other beings, only because it is more concealed, and frequently so hidden, that neither the causes which excite it, nor their mode of action are known.

Be this as it may, it is sufficient for us to know, that by an invariable law certain bodies are disposed to unite with more or less facility, whilst others cannot combine. Water combines itself readily with salt, but will not blend with oil. Some combinations are very strong, cohering with great force, as metals; others are extremely feeble, their cohesion slight, and easily decomposed, as in fugitive colours. Some bodies, incapable of uniting by themselves, become susceptible of union by the agency of other bodies, which serve for common bonds or m*ediums.* Thus, oil and water, naturally heterogeneous, combine and make soap, by the intervention of alkaline salt. From matter diversely combined, in proportions varied almost to infinity, result all physical and moral bodies; the properties and qualities of which are essentially different, with modes of action more or less complex: which are either understood with facility, or difficult of comprehension, according to the matter that has entered into their composition, and the various modifications this matter has undergone.

It is thus, from the reciprocity of their attraction, that the primitive, imperceptible particles of matter which constitute bodies, become perceptible, and form compound substances, aggregate masses, by the union of similar and analogous matter, whose essences fit them to cohere. The same bodies are dissolved, or their union broken, whenever they undergo the action of matter inimical to their junction. Thus by degrees are formed plants, metals, animals, men; each grows, expands, and increases, in its own system, or order; sustaining itself in its respective existence by the continual attraction of analogous matter, to which it becomes united, and by which it is preserved and strengthened. Thus, certain aliments become fit for the sustenance of man; whilst others destroy his existence: some are pleasant to him, strengthen his habit; others are repugnant to him, weaken his system; in short, never to separate physical from moral laws — it is thus that men, mutually attracted to each other by their reciprocal wants, form those unions which we designate by the terms *marriage, families, societies, friendships, connexions:* it is thus that virtue strengthens and consolidates them; that vice relaxes, or totally dissolves them.

Of whatever nature may be the combination of beings, their motion has always one direction or tendency: without direction we could not have any idea of motion: this direction is regulated by the properties of each being; as soon as they have any given properties, they necessarily act in obedience to them; that is to say, they follow the law invariably determined by these same properties, which, of themselves, constitute the being such as he is found, and settle his mode of action, which is always the consequence of his manner of existence. But what is the general direction, or common tendency, we see in all beings? What is the visible and known end of all their motion? It is to preserve their actual existence — to strengthen their several bodies — to attract that which is favourable to them — to repel that which is injurious to them — to avoid that which can harm them, to resist impulsions contrary to their

manner of existence and to their natural tendency.

To exist, is to experience the motion peculiar to a determinate essence: to preserve this existence, is to give and receive that motion from which results the maintenance of its existence: — it is to attract matter suitable to corroborate its being, — to avoid that by which it may be either endangered, or enfeebled. Thus, all beings of which we have any knowledge, have a tendency to preserve themselves each after its own peculiar manner: the stone, by the firm adhesion of its particles, opposes resistance to its destruction. Organized beings preserve themselves by more complicated means, but which are, nevertheless, calculated to maintain their existence against that by which it may be injured. Man, both in his physical and in his moral capacity, is a living, feeling, thinking, active being, who every instant of his duration strives equally to avoid that which may be injurious, and to procure that which is pleasing to him, or that which is suitable to his mode of existence.[17]

Conservation, then, is the common point to which all the energies, all the powers, all the faculties of being, seem continually directed. Natural philosophers call this direction, or tendency, *self-gravitation*. *Newton* calls it inert *force*. Moralists denominate it, in man *self-love;* which is nothing more than the tendency he has to preserve himself — a desire of happiness — a love of his own welfare — a wish for pleasure — a promptitude in seizing on every thing that appears favourable to his conservation — a marked aversion to all that either disturbs his happiness, or menaces his existence — primitive sentiments common to all beings of the human species, which all their faculties are continually striving to satisfy; which all their passions, their wills, their actions, have eternally for their object and their end. This self-gravitation, then, is clearly a necessary disposition in man and in all other beings, which, by a variety of means, contributes to the preservation of the existence they have received as long as nothing deranges the order of their machine or its primitive tendency.

Cause always produces effect; there can be no effect without cause. Impulse is always followed by some motion more or less sensible, by some change more or less remarkable in the body which receives it. But motion, and its various modes of displaying itself, is, as has been already shown, determined by the nature, the essence, the properties, the combinations of the beings acting. It must then be concluded, that motion, or the modes by which beings act, arises from some cause; and as this cause is not able to move or act but in conformity with the manner of its being, or its essential properties, it must equally be concluded, that all the phenomena we perceive are necessary; that every being in nature, under the circumstances in which it is placed and with the given properties it possesses, cannot act otherwise than it does.

Necessity is the constant and infallible connexion of causes with their effects. Fire, of necessity, consumes combustible matter placed within its sphere of action: man, of necessity, desires, either that which really is, or appears to be useful to his welfare. Nature, in all the phenomena she exhibits, necessarily acts after her own peculiar essence: all the beings she contains necessarily act each after its individual essence: it is by motion that the whole has relation with its parts, and these with the whole: it is thus that in the universe every thing is

connected; it is itself but an immense chain of causes and effects, which flow without ceasing one from the other. If we reflect a little, we shall be obliged to acknowledge, that every thing we see is necessary; that it cannot be otherwise than it is; that all the beings we behold, as well as those which escape our sight, act by certain and invariable laws. According to these laws heavy bodies fall, light bodies rise; analogous substances attract each other; beings tend to conserve themselves; man cherishes himself; loves that which he thinks advantageous, detests that which he has an idea may prove unfavourable to him. In fine, we are obliged to admit that there can be no independent energy — no isolated cause — no detached action, in a nature where all the beings are in a reciprocity of action — who without interruption mutually impel and resist each other — who is herself nothing more than an eternal circle of motion given and received according to necessary laws.

Two examples will serve to throw the principle here laid down, into light — one shall be taken from physics, the other from morals.

In a whirlwind of dust, raised by the impetuous elements, confused as it appears to our eyes; in the most frightful tempest, excited by contrary winds, when the waves roll high as mountains; there is not a single particle or dust, or drop of water, that has been placed by *chance;* that has not a sufficient cause for occupying the place where it is found; that does not, in the most rigorous sense of the word, act after the manner in which it ought to act; that is, according to its own peculiar essence, and that of the beings from whom it receives impulse. A geometrician, who exactly knew the different energies acting in each case, with the properties of the particles moved, could demonstrate, that, after the causes given, each particle acted precisely as it ought to act, and that it could not have acted otherwise than it did.

In those terrible convulsions that sometimes agitate political societies, shake their foundations, and frequently produce the overthrow of an empire — there is not a single action, a single word, a single thought, a single will, a single passion in the agents, whether they act as destroyers or as victims, that is not the necessary result of the causes operating; that does not act as of necessity it must act from the peculiar situation these agents occupy in the moral whirlwind. This could be evidently proved by an understanding capacitated to seize and to rate all the actions and reactions of the minds and bodies of those who contributed to the revolution.

In fact, if all be connected in nature; if all motion be produced the one from the other, notwithstanding their secret communications frequently elude our sight; we ought to feel convinced that there is no cause, however minute, however remote, that does not sometimes produce the greatest and the most immediate effects on man. It may perhaps be in the arid plains of Lybia, that are amassed the first elements of a storm or tempest, which, borne by the winds, approximate our climate, render our atmosphere dense, which operating on the temperament, may influence the passions of a man whose circumstances shall have capacitated him to influence many others, and who shall decide after his will the fate of many nations.

Man, in fact, finds himself in nature, and makes a part of it: he acts according to laws which are peculiar to him; he receives, in a manner more or less distinct, the action, the impulse of the beings who surround him; who themselves act after laws that are peculiar to their essence. It is thus that he is variously modified; but his actions are always the result of his own peculiar energy, and that of the beings who act upon him, and by whom he is modified. This is what gives such variety to his determinations; what frequently produces such contradiction in his thoughts, his opinions, his will, his actions; in short, that motion, whether concealed or visible, by which he is agitated. We shall have occasion, in the sequel, to place this truth, at present so much contested, in a broader light: it will be sufficient for our present purpose to prove, generally, that every thing in nature is necessary, that nothing to be found in it can act otherwise than it does.

It is motion alternately communicated and received, that establishes the connexion and the relation between the different orders of beings: when they are in the sphere of reciprocal action, attraction approximates them; repulsion dissolves and separates them; the one conserves and strengthens them; the other enfeebles and destroys them. Once combined, they have a tendency to preserve themselves in that mode of existence, by virtue of their *inert force:* in this they cannot succeed, because they are exposed to the continual influence of all other beings who act upon them perpetually and in succession: their change of form, their dissolution is requisite to the preservation of nature herself: this is the sole end we are able to assign her; to which we see her tend incessantly; which she follows without interruption by the destruction and reproduction of all subordinate beings, who are obliged to submit to her laws, and to concur, by their mode of action, to the maintenance of her active existence, so essentially requisite to the GREAT WHOLE.

Thus, each being is an individual, who, in the great family, executes the necessary task assigned to him. All bodies act according to laws inherent in their peculiar essence, without the capability to swerve, even for a single instant, from those according to which Nature herself acts. This is the central power, to which all other powers, all other essences, all other energies, are submitted; she regulates the motion of beings; by the necessity of her own peculiar essence, she makes them concur by various modes to the general plan: this plan appears to be nothing more than the life, action, and maintenance of the whole, by the continual change of its parts. This object she obtains in removing them one by the other: by that which establishes, and by that which destroys the relation subsisting between them; by that which gives them, and by that which deprives them of their forms, combinations, proportions, qualities, according to winch they act for a time, and after a given mode; these are afterwards taken from them, to make them act after a different manner. It is thus that nature makes them expand and change, grow and decline, augment and diminish, approximate and remove, forms them and destroys them, according as she finds it requisite to maintain the whole, towards the conservation of which this nature is herself essentially necessitated to have a tendency. This irresistible power, this universal necessity, this general energy, is, then, only a consequence of the nature of things, by virtue of which every thing

acts without intermission, after constant and immutable laws; these laws not varying more for the whole, than for the beings of which it is composed. Nature is an active, living whole, whose parts necessarily concur, and that without their own knowledge, to maintain activity, life, and existence. Nature acts and exists necessarily: all that she contains necessarily conspires to perpetuate her active existence.[18]

We shall see in the sequel, how much man's imagination has laboured to form an idea of the energies of that nature he has personified and distinguished from herself: in short, we shall examine some of the ridiculous and pernicious inventions which for want of understanding nature, have been imagined to impede her course, to suspend her eternal laws, to place obstacles to the necessity of things.

Chapter V: Of Order and Confusion — Of Intelligence — Of Chance.

The observation of the necessary, regular, and periodical motion in the universe, generated in the mind of man the idea of *order*. This term, in its primitive signification, represents to him nothing more than a mode of considering, a facility of perceiving, together and separately, the different relations of a whole, in which is discovered by its manner of existing and acting, a certain affinity or conformity with his own. Man, in extending this idea to the universe, carried with him those methods of considering things which are peculiar to himself: he has consequently supposed there really existed in nature affinities and relations, which he classed under the name of *order;* and others, which appeared to him not to conform to those which he has ranked under the term *confusion.*

It is easy to comprehend that this idea of order and confusion can have no absolute existence in nature, where every thing is necessary; where the whole follows constant and invariable laws; and which oblige each being, in every moment of its duration, to submit to other laws which themselves flow from its own peculiar mode of existence. It is, therefore, in his imagination alone man finds the model of that which he terms order, or confusion, which, like all his abstract, metaphysical ideas, supposes nothing beyond his reach. Order, however, is never more than the faculty of conforming himself with the beings by whom he is environed, or with the whole of which he forms a part.

Nevertheless, if the idea of order be applied to nature, it will be found to be nothing but a series of action, or motion, which man judges to conspire to one common end. Thus, in a body that moves, order is the chain of action, the series of motion proper to constitute it what it is, and to maintain it in its actual state. Order, relatively to the whole of nature, is the concatenation of causes and effects necessary to her active existence, and to the maintaining her eternally together; but, as it has been proved in the preceding chapter, every individual being is obliged to concur to this end in the different ranks they occupy; from whence it is a necessary deduction, that what is called the *order of nature,* can never be more than a certain manner of considering the necessity of things, to which all, of which man has any knowledge, is submitted. That which is styled *confusion,* is only a relative term used to

designate that series of necessary action, that chain of requisite motion, by which an individual being is necessarily changed or disturbed in its mode of existence, and by which it is instantaneously obliged to alter its manner of action: but no one of these actions, no part of this motion, is capable, even for a single instant, of contradicting or deranging the general order of nature, from which all beings derive their existence, their properties, the motion peculiar to each.

What is termed confusion in a being, is nothing more than its passage into a new class, a new mode of existence, which necessarily carries with it a new series of action, a new chain of motion, different from that of which this being found itself susceptible in the preceding rank it occupied. That which is called order in nature, is a mode of existence, or a disposition of its particles strictly *necessary.* In every other assemblage of causes and effects, or of worlds, as well as in that which we inhabit, some sort of arrangement, some kind of order, would necessarily be established. Suppose the most discordant and the most heterogeneous substances were put into activity; by a concatenation of necessary phenomena they would form amongst themselves a complete order, a perfect arrangement of some sort. This is the true notion of a property which may be defined an aptitude to constitute a being such as it is actually found, such as it is, with respect to the whole of which it makes a part.

Thus, I repeat, order is nothing but necessity, considered relatively to the series of actions, or the connected chain of causes and effects that it produces in the universe. What is, in fact, the motion in our planetary system, the only one of which man has any distinct idea, but order; but a series of phenomena, operated according to necessary laws, regulating the bodies of which it is composed? In conformity to these laws, the sun occupies the centre; the planets gravitate towards it, and describe round it, in regulated periods, continual revolutions: the satellites of these planets gravitate towards those which are in the centre of their sphere of action, and describe round them their periodical route. One of these planets, the earth, which man inhabits, turns on its own axis, and by the various aspects which its annual revolution obliges it to present to the sun, experiences those regular variations which are called *seasons.* By a necessary series of the sun's action upon different parts of this globe, all its productions undergo vicissitudes: plants, animals, men, are in a sort of lethargy during *Winter:* in *Spring*, these beings appear to reanimate, to come, as it were, out of a long drowsiness. In short, the mode in which the earth receives the sun's beams, has an influence on all its productions; these rays, when darted obliquely, do not act in the same manner as when they fall perpendicularly; their periodical absence, caused by the revolution of this sphere on itself, produces *night* and *day*. In all this, however, man never witnesses more than necessary effects, flowing from the essence of things, which, whilst that shall remain the same, can never be contradicted. These effects are owing to gravitation, attraction, centrifugal power, &c.[19]

On the other hand, this *order*, which man admires as a supernatural effect, is sometimes disturbed or changed into what he calls *confusion:* this confusion itself is, however, always a necessary consequence of the laws of nature, in which it is requisite for the maintenance

of the whole that some of her parts should be deranged, and thrown out of the ordinary course. It is thus *comets* present themselves so unexpectedly to man's wondering eyes; their eccentric motion disturbs the tranquillity of his planetary system; they excite the terrour of the uninformed, to whom every thing unusual is marvellous. The natural philosopher himself conjectures that, in former ages, these comets have overthrown the surface of this mundane ball, and caused great revolutions on the earth. Independent of this extraordinary *confusion*, he is exposed to others more familiar to him: sometimes the seasons appear to have usurped each other's place — to have quitted their regular order; sometimes the discordant elements seem to dispute among themselves the dominion of the world; the sea bursts its limits; the solid earth is shaken, is rent asunder; mountains are in a state of conflagration; pestilential diseases destroy men, sweep off animals; sterility desolates a country; then affrighted man utters piercing cries, offers up his prayers to recall order, and tremblingly raises his hands towards the Being he supposes to be the author of all these calamities: and yet, the whole of this afflicting confusion are necessary effects, produced by natural causes, which act according to fixed, to permanent laws, determined by their own peculiar essence, and the universal essence of nature, in which every thing must necessarily be changed, be moved, be dissolved; where that which is called *order* must sometimes be disturbed, and be altered into a new mode of existence, which, to his mind, appears *confusion.*

What is called the *confusion of nature*, has no existence: man finds order in every thing that is conformable to his own mode of being; confusion in every thing by which it is opposed: nevertheless, in nature all is in order, because none of her parts are ever able to emancipate themselves from those invariable and necessary rules, which, flow from their respective essences: there is not, there cannot be, confusion in a whole, to the maintenance of which what is called confusion is absolutely requisite; of which the general course can never be deranged where all the effects produced are the consequence of natural causes, that, under the circumstances in which they are placed, act only as they infallibly are obliged to act.

It thus follows that there can be neither monsters nor prodigies, wonders nor miracles in nature: those which are designated as *monsters*, are certain combinations with which the eyes of man are not familiarized, but which are not less the necessary effects of natural causes. Those which he terms *prodigies*, *wonders*, or *supernatural* effects, are phenomena of nature with whose mode of action he is unacquainted — of which his ignorance does not permit him to ascertain the principles — whose causes he cannot trace, but which his heated imagination makes him foolishly attribute to fictitious causes, which, like the idea of order, have no existence but in himself; for, out of nature, none of these things can have existence.

As for those effects, which are called *miracles*, that is to say, contrary to the immutable laws of nature, such things are impossible; because nothing can for an instant suspend the necessary course of beings, without arresting the entire of nature, and disturbing her in her tendency. There have neither been wonders nor miracles in nature, except for those who have not sufficiently studied this nature, and who consequently do not feel that her laws can never be contradicted, even in the minutest of her parts, without the whole being annihilated, or at

least, without changing her essence, or her mode of action.[20]

Order and confusion, then, are only relative terms, by which man designates the state in which particular beings find themselves. He says, a being is in order when all the motion it undergoes conspires to favour its tendency to self-preservation, and is conducive to the maintenance of its actual existence; that it is in confusion, when the causes which move it disturb the harmony of its existence, or have a tendency to destroy the equilibrium necessary to the conservation of its actual state. Nevertheless, confusion, as we have shown, is nothing but the passage of a being into a new order; the more rapid the progress, the greater the confusion for the being that is submitted to it: that which conducts man to what is called death, is, for him, the greatest of all possible confusion. Yet this death is nothing more than a passage into a new mode of existence: it is in the order of nature.

The human body is said to be in order, when its various component parts act in that mode from which results the conservation of the whole, which is the end of his actual existence.[21] He is said to be in health, when the fluids and solids of his body concur towards this end. He is said to be in confusion, or in ill health, whenever this tendency is disturbed; when any of the constituent parts of his body cease to concur to his preservation, or to fulfil his peculiar functions. This it is that happens in a state of sickness, in which, however, the motion excited in the human machine is as necessary, is regulated by laws as certain, as natural, as invariable, as that which concurs to produce health. Sickness merely produces in him a new order of motion, a new series of action, a new chain of things. Man dies: to us this appears the greatest confusion he can experience; his body is no longer what it was — its parts cease to concur to the same end — his blood has lost its circulation — he is deprived of feeling — his ideas have vanished — he thinks no more — his desires have fled — death is the epoch is the cessation of his human existence. — His frame becomes an inanimate mass by the substraction of those principles by which it was animated; its tendency has received a new direction, and the motion excited in its ruins conspires to a new end. To that motion, the harmony of which produced life, sentiment thought, passions, and health, succeeds a series of motion of another species, which, nevertheless, follows laws as necessary as the first: all the parts of the dead man conspire to produce what is called dissolution, fermentation, putrefaction; and these new modes of being, of acting, are just as natural to man, reduced to this state, as sensibility, thought, the periodical motion of the blood, &c. were to the living man: his essence having changed, his mode of action can no longer be the same. To that regulated motion, to that necessary action, which conspired to the production of life, succeeds that determinate motion, that series of action, which concur to produce the dissolution of the dead carcass, the dispersion of its parts, and the formation of new combinations, from which result new beings: and this, as we have before seen, is the immutable order of ever-active nature.[22] It cannot, then, be too often repeated, that, relatively to the great whole, all the motion of beings, all their modes of action, can never he but in order, that is to say, are always conformable to nature: that in all the stages through which beings are obliged to pass, they invariably act after a mode necessarily subordinate to the universal whole. Nay, each

individual being always acts in order; all its actions, the whole system of its motion, are the necessary consequence of its peculiar mode of existence, whether that be momentary or durable. Order, in political society, is the effect of a necessary series of ideas, of wills, of actions, in those who compose it, whose movements are regulated in a manner either calculated to maintain its indivisibility, or to hasten its dissolution. Man constituted or modified in the manner we term virtuous, acts necessarily in that mode from whence results the welfare of his associates: the man we style wicked, acts necessarily in that mode from whence springs the misery of his fellows: his nature and his modification being essentially different, he must necessarily act after a different mode: his individual order is at variance, but his relative order is complete: it is equally the essence of the one to promote happiness, as it is of the other to induce misery.

Thus order and confusion in individual beings, are nothing more than the manner of man's considering the natural and necessary effects which they produce relatively to himself. He fears the wicked man; he says that he will carry confusion into society, because he disturbs its tendency; because he places obstacles to its happiness. He avoids a falling stone, because it. will derange in him the order necessary to his conservation. Nevertheless, order and confusion are always, as we have shown, consequences equally necessary to either the transient or durable state of beings. It is in order that fire burns, because it is of its essence to burn; for the wicked to do mischief, because it is of his essence to do mischief: on the other hand, it is in order that an intelligent being should remove himself from whatever can disturb his mode of existence. A being, whose organization renders him sensible, must, in virtue of his essence, fly from every thing that can injure his organs, that can place his existence in danger.

Man calls those beings *intelligent* who are organized after his own manner, in whom he sees faculties proper for their preservation, suitable to maintain their existence in the order that is convenient to them, enabling them to take the necessary measures towards this end with a consciousness of the motion they undergo. From hence it will be perceived, that the faculty called intelligence, consists in a capability to act conformably to a known end in the being to which it is attributed. He looks upon those beings as deprived of intelligence in whom he finds no conformity with himself; in whom he discovers neither the same organization, nor the same faculties: of which he knows neither the essence, the end to which they tend, the energies by which they act, nor the order that is convenient to them. The whole cannot have a distinct end, because there is nothing out of itself to which it can have a tendency. If it be in himself that he arranges the idea *of order*, it is also in himself that he draws up that of *intelligence.* He refuses to ascribe it to those beings who do not act after his own manner: he accords it to all those whom he supposes to act like himself: the latter he calls intelligent agents; the former blind causes, that is to say, intelligent agents who act by *chance* — a word void of sense, but which is always opposed to that of intelligence, without attaching to it any determinate or certain idea.[23]

In fact, he attributes to *chance* all those effects of which the connexion they have with their

causes is not seen, Thus man uses the word *chance* to cover his ignorance of those natural causes which produce visible effects, by means of which he cannot form an idea; or that act by a mode of which he does not perceive the order; or whose system is not followed by actions conformable to his own. As soon as he sees, or believes he sees the order of action, he attributes this order to an intelligence; which is nothing more than a quality borrowed from himself, from his own peculiar mode of action, and from the manner in which he is himself affected.

Thus an *intelligent being* is one who thinks, who wills, who acts, to compass an end. If so, he must have organs and an aim conformable to those of man: therefore, to say that nature is governed by an intelligence, is to affirm that she is governed by a being furnished with organs; seeing that without this organic construction he can neither have sensations, perceptions, ideas, thoughts, will, plan, nor self-understood action.

Man always makes himself the centre of the universe: it is to himself that he relates all he beholds. As soon as he believes he discovers a mode of action that has a conformity with his own, or some phenomenon that interests his feelings, he attributes it to a cause that resembles himself, that acts after his manner, that has similar faculties with those he himself possesses, whose interests are like his own, whose projects are in unison with, and have the same tendency as those he himself indulges: in short, it is from himself, from, the properties which actuate him, that he forms the model of this cause. It is thus that man beholds out of his own species nothing but beings who act differently from himself; yet, believes that he remarks in nature an order analogous to his own peculiar ideas: views, conformable to those, which he himself has. He imagines that nature is governed by a cause, whose intelligence is conformable to his own; to whom he ascribes the honour of the order which he believes he witnesses: of those views that fall in with those that are peculiar to himself; of an aim which quadrates with that which is the great end of all his own actions. It is true that man, feeling his incapability to produce the vast, the multiplied effects, of which he witnesses the operation when contemplating the universe, was under the necessity of making a distinction between himself and the cause which he supposed, to be the author of such stupendous effects; he believed he removed every difficulty by exaggerating in this cause all those faculties of which he was himself in possession. It was thus, and by degrees, he arrived at forming an idea of that intelligent cause which he has placed above nature to preside over her action, and to give her that motion of which he has chosen to believe she was in herself incapable. He obstinately persists in always regarding this nature as a heap of dead, inert, formless matter, which has not within itself the power of producing any of those great effects, of those regular phenomena, from which emanates what he styles the *order of the universe*.[24]

From whence it may be deduced, that it is for want of being acquainted with the powers of nature, with the properties of matter, that man has multiplied beings without necessity: that he has supposed the universe, under the empire of an intelligent cause, of which he is, and perhaps always will be, himself the model: and he only rendered this cause more inconceivable, when he extended in it his own faculties too much. He either annihilates, or

renders it altogether impossible, when he would attach to it incompatible qualities, which he is obliged to do to enable him to account for the contradictory and disorderly effects he beholds in the world. In fact, he sees confusion in the world; yet, notwithstanding this confusion contradicts the plan, the power, the wisdom, the bounty of this intelligence, and the miraculous order which he ascribes to it, he says the extreme beautiful arrangement of the whole obliges him to suppose it to be the work of a sovereign intelligence.[25]

It will, no doubt, be argued, that as nature contains and produces intelligent beings, either she must be herself intelligent, or else she must be governed by an intelligent cause. We reply, intelligence is a faculty peculiar to organized beings, that is to say, to beings constituted and combined after a determinate manner, from whence results certain modes of action, which are designated under various names, according to the different effects which these beings produce: wine has not the properties called *wit* and *courage;* nevertheless, it is sometimes seen that it communicates those qualities to men who are supposed to be in themselves entirely devoid of them. It cannot be said that nature is intelligent after the manner of any one of the beings she contains; but she can produce intelligent beings, by assembling matter suitable to form the particular organization, from whose peculiar modes of action will result the faculty called intelligence, who shall be capable of producing those effects which are the necessary consequence of this property. I therefore repeat, that to have intelligence, designs, and views, it is requisite to have ideas: to the production of ideas, organs or senses are necessary: this is what is neither said of nature, nor of the causes he has supposed to preside over her actions. In short, experience proves beyond a doubt that matter, which is regarded as inert and dead, assumes sensible action, intelligence, and life, when it is combined after particular modes.

From what has been said, it must be concluded, that *order* is never more than the necessary, the uniform connexion of causes with their effects; or that series of action which flows from the peculiar properties of beings so long as they remain in a given state — that *confusion* is nothing more than the change of this state — that, in the universe, all is necessarily in order; because every thing acts and moves according to the properties of the beings it contains — that, in nature, there cannot be either confusion, or real evil, since every thing follows the laws of its natural existence — that there is neither *chance*, nor any thing fortuitous in this nature, where no effect is produced without a sufficient cause; where all causes act necessarily according to fixed, to certain laws, which are themselves dependant on the essential properties of these causes, as well as on the combination or modification, which constitutes either their transitory or permanent state — that intelligence is a mode of acting, a method of existence, natural to some particular beings — that, if this intelligence should be attributed to nature, it would then be nothing more than the faculty of conserving herself in active existence by necessary means. In refusing to nature the intelligence he himself enjoys — in rejecting the intelligent cause which is supposed to be the contriver of this nature, or the principle of that *order* he discovers in her course, nothing is given to *chance*, nothing to a blind cause; but every thing he beholds is attributed to real, to known causes, or

to such as are easy of comprehension. All that exists is acknowledged to be a consequence of the inherent properties of eternal matter, which, by contact, by blending, by combination, by change of form, produces order and confusion, and all those varieties which assail his sight — it is himself who is blind, when he imagines blind causes — man only manifested his ignorance of the powers and laws of nature, when he attributed any of its effects to *chance.* He did not show a more enlightened mind when he ascribed them to an intelligence, the idea of which is always borrowed from himself, but which is never in conformity with the effects which he attributes to its intervention — he only imagined words to supply the place of things, and believed he understood them by thus obscuring ideas which he never dared either define or analyze.

Chapter VI: Of Man — Of his Distinction into Moral and Physical — Of his Origin.

Let us now apply the general laws we have scrutinized, to those beings of nature who interest us the most. Let us see in what man differs from the other beings by which he is surrounded. Let us examine if he has not certain points in conformity with them, that oblige him, notwithstanding the different properties they respectively possess, to act in certain respects according to the universal laws to which every thing is submitted. Finally, let us inquire if the ideas he has formed of himself in meditating on his own peculiar mode of existence, be chimerical, or founded in reason.

Man occupies a place amidst that crowd, that multitude of beings, of which nature is the assemblage. His essence, that is to say, the peculiar manner of existence by which he is distinguished from other beings, renders him susceptible of various modes of action, of a variety of motion, some of which are simple and visible, others concealed and complicated. His life itself is nothing more than a long series, a succession of necessary and connected motion, which operates perpetual and continual changes in his machine; which has for its principle either causes contained within himself, such as blood, nerves, fibres, flesh, bones, in short, the matter, as well solid as fluid, of which his body is composed — or those exterior causes, which, by acting upon him, modify him diversely; such as the air with which he is encompassed, the aliments by which he is nourished, and all those objects from which he receives any impulse whatever by the impression they make on his senses.

Man, like all other beings in nature, tends to his own preservation — he experiences inert force — he gravitates upon himself — he is attracted by objects that are analogous, and repelled by those that are contrary to him — he seeks after some — he flies or endeavours *to* remove himself from others. It is this variety of action, this diversity of modification of which the human being is susceptible, that has been designated under such different names, by such varied nomenclature. It will be necessary, presently, to examine these closely and in detail.

However marvellous, however hidden, however complicated, may be the modes of action which the human frame undergoes, whether interiorly or exteriorly; whatever may be, or

appear to be the impulse he either receives or communicates, examined closely, it will be found that all his motion, all his operations, all his changes, all his various states, all his revolutions, are constantly regulated by the same laws, which nature has prescribed to all the beings she brings forth — which she develops — which she enriches with faculties — of which she increases the bulk — which she conserves for a season — which she ends by decomposing or destroying — thus obliging them to change their form.

Man, in his origin, is an imperceptible point, a speck, of which the parts are without form; of which the mobility, the life, escapes his senses; in short, in which he does not perceive any sign of those qualities called *sentiment, feeling, thought, intelligence, force, reason,* &c. Placed in the womb suitable to his expansion, this point unfolds, extends, increases by the continual addition of matter he attracts that is analogous to his being, which consequently assimilates itself with him. Having quitted this womb, so appropriate to conserve his existence, to unfold his qualities, to strengthen his habit; so competent to give, for a season, consistence to the weak rudiments of his frame; he becomes adult: his body has then acquired a considerable extension of bulk, his motion is marked, his action is visible, he is sensible in all his parts; he is a living, an active mass; that is to say, he feels, thinks, and fulfils the functions peculiar to beings of his species. But how has he become sensible? Because he has been by degrees nourished, enlarged, repaired by the continual attraction that takes place within himself of that kind of matter which is pronounced inert, insensible, inanimate; although continually combining itself with his machine, of which it forms an active whole, that is living, that feels, judges, reasons, wills, deliberates, chooses, elects; with a capability of labouring, more or less efficaciously, to his own individual preservation; that is to say, to the maintenance of the harmony of his natural existence.

All the motion and changes that man experiences in the course of his life, whether it be from exterior objects, or from those substances contained within himself, are either favourable or prejudicial to his existence; either maintain its order, or throw it into confusion; are either in conformity with, or repugnant to the essential tendency of his peculiar mode of being. He is compelled by nature to approve of some, to disapprove of others; some of necessity render him happy, others contribute to his misery; some become the objects of his most ardent desire, others of his determined aversion: some elicit his confidence, others make him tremble with fear.

In all the phenomena man presents, from the moment he quits the womb of his mother, to that wherein he becomes the inhabitant of the silent tomb, he perceives nothing but a succession of necessary causes and effects, which are strictly conformable to those laws common to all the beings in nature. All his modes of action — all his sensations — all his ideas — all his passions — every act of his will — every impulse he either gives or receives, are the necessary consequences of his own peculiar properties, and those which he finds in the various beings by whom he is moved. Every thing he does — every thing that passes within himself, are the effects of inert force — of self-gravitation — of the attractive or repulsive powers contained in his machine — of the tendency he has, in common with other beings,

to his own individual preservation; in short, of that energy which is the common property of every being he beholds. Nature, in man, does nothing more than show, in a decided manner, what belongs to the peculiar nature by which he is distinguished from the beings of a different system or order.

The source of those errours into which man has fallen when he has contemplated himself, has its rise, as will presently be shown, in the opinion he has entertained, that he moved by himself — that he always acts by his own natural energy — that in his actions, in the will that gave him impulse, he was independent of the general laws of nature, and of those objects which, frequently without his knowledge, and always in spite of him, are, in obedience to these laws, continually acting upon him. If he had examined himself attentively, he must have acknowledged, that none of the motion he underwent was spontaneous — he must have discovered, that even his birth depended on causes wholly out of the reach of his own powers — that it was without his own consent he entered into the system in which he occupies a place — that, from the moment in which he is born, until that in which he dies, he is continually impelled by causes which, in spite of himself, influence his frame, modify his existence, dispose of his conduct. Would not the slightest reflection have sufficed to prove to him, that the fluids and the solids of which his body is composed, as well as that concealed mechanism, which he believes to be independent of exterior causes, are, in fact, perpetually under the influence of these causes; that without them he would find himself in a total incapacity to act? Would he not have seen, that his temperament. his constitution, did in nowise depend on himself — that his passions are the necessary consequence of this temperament — that his will is influenced — his actions determined by these passions; and consequently by opinions which he has not given to himself? His blood more or less heated or abundant, his nerves more or less braced, his fibres more or less relaxed, give him dispositions either transitory or durable, which are at every moment decisive of his ideas, of his desires, of his fears, of his motion, whether visible or concealed. And the state in which he finds himself, does it not necessarily depend on the air which surrounds him diversely modified; on the various properties of the aliments which nourish him; on the secret combinations that form themselves in his machine, which either preserve its order, or throw it into confusion? In short, had man fairly studied himself, every thing must have convinced him, that in every moment of his duration, he was nothing more than a passive instrument in the hands of necessity.

Thus it must appear, that where all the causes are linked one to the other, where the whole forms but one immense chain, there cannot he any independent, any isolated energy; any detached power. It follows, then, that nature, always in action, marks out to man each point of the line he is bound to describe. It is nature that elaborates, that combines the elements of which he must be composed. — It is nature that gives him his being, his tendency, his peculiar mode of action. — It is nature that develops him, expands him, strengthens him, and preserves him for a season, during which he is obliged to fulfil the task imposed on him. — It is nature, that in his journey through life, strews on the road those objects, those events,

those adventures, that modify him in a variety of ways, and give him impulses which are sometimes agreeable and beneficial, at others prejudicial and disagreeable. — It is nature, that in giving him feeling, has endowed him with capacity to choose the means, and to take those methods that are most conducive to his conservation. — It is nature, who, when he has finished his career, conducts him to his destruction, and thus obliges him to undergo the constant, the universal law, from the operation of which nothing is exempted. It is thus, also, motion brings man forth out of the womb, sustains him for a season, and at length destroys him, or obliges him to return into the bosom of nature, who speedily reproduces him, scattered under an infinity of forms, in which each of his particles will, in the same manner, run over again the different stages, as necessarily as the whole had before run over those of his preceding existence.

The beings of the human species, as well as all other beings, are susceptible of two sorts of motion: the one, that of the mass, by which an entire body, or some of its parts, are visibly transferred from one place to another; the other, internal and concealed, of some of which man is sensible, while some takes place without his knowledge, and is not even to be guessed at but by the effect it outwardly produces. In a machine so extremely complex as man, formed by the combination of such a multiplicity of matter, so diversified in its properties, so different in its proportions, so varied in its modes of action, the motion necessarily becomes of the most complicated kind; its dullness, as well as its rapidity, frequently escapes the observation of those themselves in whom it takes place.

Let us not, then, be surprised, if when man would account to himself for his existence, for his manner of acting, finding so many obstacles to encounter, he invented such strange hypotheses to explain the concealed spring of his machine — if when this motion appeared to him to be different from that of other bodies, he conceived an idea that he moved and acted in a manner altogether distinct from the other beings in nature. He clearly perceived that his body, as well as different parts of it, did act; but, frequently, he was unable to discover what brought them into action: he then conjectured he contained within himself a moving principle distinguished from his machine, which secretly gave an impulse to the springs which set this machine in motion; that moved him by its own natural energy; and that consequently he acted according to laws totally distinct from those which regulated the motion of other beings. He was conscious of certain internal motion which he could not help feeling; but how could he conceive that this invisible motion was so frequently competent to produce such striking effects? How could he comprehend that a fugitive idea, an imperceptible act if thought, could frequently bring his whole being into trouble and confusion? He fell into the belief, that he perceived within himself a substance distinguished from that self, endowed with a secret force, in which he supposed existed qualities distinctly differing from those of either the risible causes that acted on his organs, or those organs themselves. He did not sufficiently understand, that the primitive cause which makes a stone fall, or his arm move, are perhaps as difficult of comprehension, as arduous to be explained, as those internal impulses of which his thought or his will are the effects. Thus, for want of meditating nature — of considering

her under her true point of view — of remarking the conformity and noticing the simultaneity of the motion of this fancied motive-power with that of his body and of his material organs — he conjectured he was not only a distinct being, but that he was set apart, with different energies, from all the other beings in nature; that he was of a more simple essence, having nothing in common with any thing that he beheld.[26]

It is from thence his notions of *spirituality, immateriality, immortality,* have successively sprung; in short, all those vague unmeaning words lie has invented by degrees, in order to subtilize and designate the attributes of the unknown power which he believes he contains within himself, and which he conjectures to be the concealed principle of all his visible actions.[27] To crown the bold conjectures he ventured to make on this internal motive-power, he supposed that different from all other beings, even from the body that served to envelop it. it was not bound to undergo dissolution; that such was its perfect simplicity, that it could not be decomposed, nor even change its form; in short, that it was by its essence exempted from those revolutions to which he saw the body subjected, as well as all the compound beings with which nature is ruled.

Thus man became double; he looked upon himself as a whole, composed by the inconceivable assemblage of two distinct natures, which had no point of analogy between themselves: he distinguished two substances in himself; one evidently submitted to the influence of gross beings, composed of coarse inert matter: this he called *body:* — the other, which he supposed to be simple, and of a purer essence, was contemplated as acting from itself, and giving motion to the body with which it found itself so miraculously united: this he called *soul or spirit:* the functions of the one he denominated *physical, corporeal, material;* the functions of the other he styled *spiritual, intellectual.* Man, considered relatively to the first, was termed the *physical man;* viewed with relation to the last, he was designated the *moral man,*

These distinctions, although adopted by the greater number of the philosophers of the present day, are only founded on gratuitous suppositions. Man has always believed he remedied his ignorance of things by inventing words to which he could never attach any true sense or meaning. He imagined he understood matter, its properties, its faculties, its resources, its different combinations, because he had a superficial glimpse of some of its qualities: he has, however, in reality done nothing more than obscure the faint ideas he has been capacitated to form of this matter, by associating it with a substance much less intelligible than itself. It is thus speculative man, in forming words, in multiplying beings, has only plunged himself into greater difficulties than those he endeavoured to avoid, and thereby placed obstacles to the progress of his knowledge: whenever he has been deficient of facts, he has had recourse to conjecture, which he quickly changed into fancied realities. Thus, his imagination no longer guided by experience, was lost, without hope of return, in the labyrinth of an ideal and intellectual world, to which he had himself given birth; it was next to impossible to withdraw him from this delusion, to place him in the right road of which nothing but experience can furnish him the clue. Nature points out, that in man himself, as well as in all those objects

which act upon him, there is nothing more than matter endowed with various properties, diversely modified, and acting by reason of these properties: that man is an organized whole, composed of a variety of matter; that, like all the other productions of nature, he follows general and known laws, as well as those laws or modes of action which are peculiar to himself, and unknown.

Thus, when it shall be inquired, what is man?

We say, he is a material being, organized after a peculiar manner; conformed to a certain mode of thinking, of feeling, capable of modification in certain modes peculiar to himself, to his organization, to that particular combination of matter which is found assembled in him.

If, again, it be asked, what origin we give to beings of the human species?

We reply, that, like all other beings, man is a production of nature, who resembles them in some respects, and finds himself submitted to the same laws; who differs from them in other respects, and follows particular laws determined by the diversity of his conformation.

If. then, it be demanded, whence came man?[28]

We answer, our experience on this head does not capacitate us to resolve the question; but that it cannot interest us, as it suffices for us to know that man exists, and that he is so constituted as to be competent to the effects we witness.

But it will be urged, has man always existed? Has the human species existed from all eternity, or is it only an instantaneous production of nature? Have there been always men like ourselves? Will there always be such? Have there been, in all times, males and females? Was there a first man, from whom all others are descended? Was the animal anterior to the egg, or did the egg precede the animal? Is this species without beginning? Will it also be without end? The species itself, is it indestructible, or does it pass away like its individuals? Has man always been what he now is, or has he, before he arrived at the state in which we see him, been obliged to pass under an infinity of successive developments? Can man at last flatter himself with having arrived at a fixed being, or must the human species again change? If man *is* the production of nature, it will perhaps be asked, Is this nature competent to the production of new beings, and to make the old species disappear? Adopting this supposition, it may be inquired, why nature does not produce under our eyes new beings, new species?

It would appear on reviewing these questions, to be perfectly indifferent, as to the stability of the argument we have used, which side was taken: for want of experience, hypothesis must settle a curiosity that always endeavours to spring forward beyond the boundaries prescribed to our mind. This granted, he contemplator of nature will say, that he sees no contradiction in supposing the human species, such as it is it the present day, was either produced in the course of time, or from all eternity: he will not perceive any advantage that can arise from supposing that it has arrived by different stages, or successive developments, to that state in which it is actually found. Matter is eternal, and necessary, but its forms are evanescent and contingent. It may be asked of man, is he any thing more than matter combined, of which the form varies every instant?

Notwithstanding, some reflections seem to favour the supposition, and to render more

probable the hypothesis that man is a production formed in the course of time; who is peculiar to the globe he inhabits, and the result of the peculiar laws by which it is directed; who, consequently, can only date his formation as coeval with that of his planet. Existence is essential to the universe, or to the total assemblage of matter essentially varied that presents itself to our contemplation; but the combinations, the forms, are not essential. This granted, although the matter of which the earth is composed has always existed, this earth may not always have had its present form and its actual properties — perhaps, it may be a mass detached in the course of time from some other celestial body; — perhaps, it is the result of the spots or encrustations which astronomers discover in the sun's disk, which have had the faculty to diffuse themselves over our planetary system — perhaps, the sphere we inhabit, may be an extinguished or a displaced comet, which heretofore occupied some other place in the regions of space, and which, consequently, was then competent to produce beings very different from those we now behold spread over its surface, seeing that its then position, its nature, must have rendered its productions different from those which, at this day, it offers to our view.

Whatever may be the supposition adopted, plants, animals, men, can only be regarded as productions inherent in and natural to our globe, in the position or in the circumstances in which it is actually found: these productions would be changed, if this globe, by any revolution, should happen to shift its situation. What appears to strengthen this hypothesis, is, that on our ball itself, all the productions vary by reason of its different climates: men. animals, vegetables, minerals, are not the same on every part of it: they vary sometimes in a very sensible manner, at very inconsiderable distances. The elephant is indigenous to, or a native of the torrid zone: the reindeer is peculiar to the frozen climates of the north: Indostan is the womb that matures the diamond; we do not find it produced in our own country: the pineapple grows in the common atmosphere of America; in our climate it is never produced until art has furnished a sun analogous to that which it requires. Lastly, man, indifferent climates, varies in his colour, in his size, in his conformation, in his powers, in his industry, in his courage, in the faculties of his mind. But, what is it that constitutes climate? It is the different position of parts of the same globe relatively to the sun; positions that suffice to make a sensible variety in its productions.

There is, then, sufficient foundation to conjecture, that, if by any accident our globe should become displaced, all its productions would of necessity be changed; for, causes being no longer the same, or no longer acting after the same manner, the effects would necessarily no longer be what they now are: all productions, that they may be able to conserve themselves, or maintain their actual existence, have occasion to co-order themselves with the whole from which they have emanated: without this, they would no longer be in a capacity to subsist. It is this faculty of co-ordering themselves, — this relative adaptation, which is called the *order of the universe, the* want of it is called *confusion.* Those productions which are treated as *monstrous,* are such as are unable to co-order themselves with the general or particular laws of the beings who surround them, or with the whole in which they find themselves placed:

they have had the faculty in their formation to accommodate themselves to these laws; but these very laws are opposed to their perfection: for this reason, they are unable to subsist. It is thus, that, by a certain analogy of conformation which exists between animals of different species, mules are easily produced; but these mules cannot propagate their species. Man can live only in air, fish only in water. Put the man into the water, the fish into the air, not being able to co-order themselves with the fluids which surround them, these animals will quickly be destroyed. Transport, by imagination, a man from our planet into *Saturn*, his lungs will presently be rent by an atmosphere too rarefied for his mode of being, his members will be frozen with the intensity of the cold; he will perish for want of finding elements analogous to his actual existence: transport another into *Mercury*, the excess of heat will quickly destroy him.

Thus, every thing seems to authorize the conjecture that the human species is a production peculiar to our sphere, in the position in which it is found; that, when this position may happen to change, the human species will, of consequence, either be changed, or will be obliged to disappear; for then, there would not be that with which man could co-order himself with the whole, or connect himself with that which can enable him to subsist. It is this aptitude in man to co-order himself with the whole, that not only furnishes him with the idea of order, but also makes him exclaim, *Whatever is, is right*, whilst every thing is only that which it can be, and the whole is necessarily what it is, and whilst it is positively neither good nor bad. It is only requisite to displace a man to make him accuse the universe of confusion.

These reflections would appear to contradict the ideas of those who are willing to conjecture that the other planets, like our own, are inhabited by beings resembling ourselves. But if the Laplander differs in so marked a manner from the Hottentot, what difference ought we not rationally to suppose between an inhabitant of our planet and one of Saturn or of Venus?

However, if we are obliged to recur, by imagination, to the origin of things, to the infancy of the human species, we may say, that it is probable man was a necessary consequence of the disentangling of our globe, or one of the results of the qualities, of the properties, of the energies of which it is susceptible in its present position; — that he was born male and female; — that his existence is co-ordinate with that of the globe, under its present position; — that as long as this co-ordination shall subsist, the human species will conserve himself, will propagate himself, according to the impulse and the primitive laws which he has originally received — that, if this co-ordination should happen to cease; if the earth, displaced, should cease to receive the same impulse, the same influence, on the part of those causes which actually act upon it and give it energy; that then, the human species would change to make place for new beings suitable to co- order themselves with the state that should succeed to that which we now see subsist.

In thus supposing changes in the position of our globe, the primitive man did, perhaps, differ more from the actual man than the quadruped differs from the insect. Thus, man, the same as every thing else that exists on our planet, as well as in all the others, may be regarded as in a state of continual vicissitude: thus, the last term of the existence of man. is, to us, as

unknown, as indistinct, as the first: there is, therefore, no contradiction in the belief, that the species vary incessantly; and it is as impossible to know what he will become, as to know what he has been.

With respect to those who may ask, why nature does not produce new beings? we inquire of them in turn, upon what foundation they suppose this fact? What is it that authorizes them to believe this sterility in nature? Know they, if, in the various combinations which she is every instant forming, nature be not occupied in producing new beings without the cognizance of these observers? Who has informed them that this nature is not actually assembling in her immense elaboratory the elements suitable to bring to light generations entirely new, that will have nothing in common with those of the species at present existing?[29] What absurdity, then, or what want of just inference would there be to imagine, that man. the horse, the fish, the bird, will be no more! Are these animals so indispensably requisite to nature, that without them she cannot continue her eternal course? Does not all change around us? Do we not change ourselves? Is it not evident that the whole universe has not been, in its anterior eternal duration, rigorously the same that it now is; that it is impossible, in its posterior eternal duration, it can be rigidly in the same state that it now is for a single instant? How, then, pretend to divine the infinite succession of destruction, of reproduction, of combination, of dissolution, of metamorphosis, of change, of transposition, which may eventually take place? Suns encrust themselves, and are extinguished; planets perish and disperse themselves in the vast plains of air; other suns are kindled; new planets form themselves, either to make revolutions round these suns, or to describe new routes; and man, an infinitely small portion of the globe, which is itself but an imperceptible point in the immensity of space, vainly believes it is for himself this universe is made; foolishly imagines he ought to be the confidant of nature; confidently flatters himself he is eternal, and calls himself King of the Universe! O man! wilt thou never conceive that thou art but an ephemeron? All changes in the universe: nature contains no one constant form, yet thou pretendest that thy species can never disappear; that thou shall be exempted from the universal law, that wills all shall experience change ! Alas ! in thy actual being, art thou not submitted to continual alterations? Thou, who in thy folly arrogantly assumest to thyself the title of King of Nature! Thou, who measures! the earth and the heavens! Thou, who in thy vanity imagines! that the whole was made because thou art intelligent! there requires but a very slight accident, a single atom to be displaced, to make thee perish; to degrade thee; to ravish from thee this intelligence of which thou appearest so proud.

If all the preceding conjectures be refused; if it be pretended that nature acts by a certain quantum of immutable and general laws; if it be believed that men, quadrupeds, fish, insects, plants, are from all eternity, and will remain eternally what they now are: if it be contended, that from all eternity the stars have shone in the immense regions of space; if it be insisted that we must no more demand why man is such as he appears than ask why nature is such as we behold her, or why the world exists; we shall no longer oppose such arguments. Whatever may be the system adopted, it will perhaps reply equally well to the difficulties with which

our opponents endeavour to embarrass the way: examined closely, it will be perceived they make nothing against those truths which we have gathered from experience. It is not given to man to know every thing: it is not given him to know his origin: it is not given him to penetrate into the essence of things, nor to recur to first principles; but it is given him to have reason, to have honesty, to ingenuously allow he is ignorant of that which he cannot know, and not to substitute unintelligible words and absurd suppositions for his uncertainty. Thus we say to those who, to solve difficulties, pretend that the human species descended from a first man and a first woman, created by a God, that we have some ideas of nature, but that we have none of the Divinity nor of creation, and that to use these words, is only in other terms to acknowledge our ignorance of the powers of nature, and our inability to fathom the means by which she has been capacitated to produce the phenomena we behold.[30]

Let us then conclude, that man has no reason to believe himself a privileged being in nature, for he is subject to the same vicissitudes as all her other productions. His pretended prerogatives have their foundation in errour. Let him but elevate himself, by his thoughts, above the globe he inhabits, and he will look upon his own species with the same eyes he does all the other beings in nature. He will then clearly perceive that in the same manner each tree produces its fruit in consequence of its species, so each man acts by reason of his particular energy, and produces fruit, actions, works, equally necessary: he will feel, that the illusion which gives him such an exalted opinion of himself, arises from his being, at one and the same time a spectator and a part of the universe. He will acknowledge, that the idea of excellence which he attaches to his being, has no other foundation than his own peculiar interest, and the predilection he has in favour of himself.[31]

Chapter VII: Of the Soul, and of the Spiritual System.

Man, after having gratuitously supposed himself composed of two distinct independent substances, having no common properties relatively with each other, has pretended, as we have seen, that that which actuated him interiorly, that motion which is invisible, that impulse which is placed within himself, is essentially different from those which act exteriorly. The first he designated, as we nave already said, by the name of a *spirit*, or a *soul.* If, however, it be asked, what is a spirit? the moderns will reply, that the whole fruit of their metaphysical researches is limited to learning that this motive-power, which they state to be the spring of man's action, is a substance of an unknown nature, so simple, so indivisible, so deprived of extent, so invisible, so impossible to be discovered by the senses, that its parts cannot be separated, even by abstraction or thought. But how can we conceive such a substance, which is only the negation of every thing of which we have a knowledge? How form to ourselves an idea of a substance void of extent, yet acting on our senses; that is to say, on material organs which nave extent? How can a being without extent he moveable and put matter in action? How can a substance, devoid of parts, correspond successively with different parts of space?

At any rate all men are agreed in this position, that motion is the successive change of the

relations of one body with other bodies, or with the different parts of space. If that, which is called *spirit,* be susceptible of communicating or receiving motion; if it acts — if it gives play to the organs or body — to produce these effects it necessarily follows, that this being changes successively its relation, its tendency, its correspondence, the position of its parts, either relatively to the different points of space, or to the different organs of the body which it puts in action; but to change its relation with space and with the organs to which it gives impulse, this spirit must have extent, solidity, consequently distinct parts: whenever a substance possesses these qualities, it is what we call *matter*, and can no longer be regarded as a simple pure being in the sense attached to it by the moderns.[32]

Thus it will be seen that those who have supposed in man an immaterial substance, distinguished from his body, have not thoroughly understood themselves; indeed they have done nothing more than imagined a negative quality of which they cannot have any correct idea: matter alone is capable of acting on our senses, and without this action nothing would be capable of making itself known to us. They have not seen that a being without extent, is neither in a capacity to move itself, nor has the capability of communicating motion to the body, since such a being, having no parts, has not the faculty of changing its relation, or its distance, relatively to other bodies, nor of exciting motion in the human body, which is itself material. That which is called our soul, moves itself with us; now motion is a property of matter — this soul gives impulse to the arm; the arm, moved by it, makes an impression, a blow, that follows the general law of motion: in this case, the force remaining the same, if the mass was twofold, the blow would be double. This soul again evinces its materiality in the invincible obstacles it encounters on the part of the body. If the arm be moved by its impulse when nothing opposes it, yet this arm can no longer move when it is charged with a weight beyond its strength. Here then is a mass of matter that annihilates the impulse given by a spiritual cause, which spiritual cause having no analogy with matter, ought not to find more difficulty in moving the whole world than in moving a single atom, nor an atom than the universe. From this it is fair to conclude that such a substance is a chimera; a being of the imagination: nevertheless such is the being the metaphysicians have made the contriver and the author of nature!![33]

As soon as I feel an impulse or experience motion, I am under the necessity to acknowledge extent, solidity, density, impenetrability in the substance I see move, or from which I receive impulse: thus, when action is attributed to any cause whatever, I am obliged to consider it *material.* I may be ignorant of its individual nature, of its mode of action, of its generic properties; but I cannot deceive myself in general properties which are common to all matter: besides this ignorance will only be increased, when I shall take that for granted, of a being of which I am precluded from forming any idea, which moreover deprives it completely of the faculty of moving and acting. Thus, a spiritual substance, that moves itself, that gives an impulse to matter, that acts, implies a contradiction, which necessarily infers a total impossibility.

The partizans of spirituality believe they answer the difficulties they have themselves

accumulated, by saying, "*The soul is entire, is whole under each point of its extent.*" If an absurd answer will solve difficulties, they have done it; for after all it will be found, that this point, which is called soul, however insensible, however minute, must yet remain something.[34] But if as much solidity had appeared in the answer as there is a want of it, it must be acknowledged, that in whatever manner the spirit or the soul finds itself in its extent, when the body moves forward, the soul does not remain behind; if so, it has a quality in common with the body peculiar to matter, since it is transferred from place to place jointly with the body. Thus., if even the soul should be immaterial, what conclusion must be drawn? Entirely submitted to the motion of the body, without this body it would remain dead and inert. This soul would only be part of a twofold machine, necessarily impelled forward by a concatenation or connexion with the whole. It would resemble a bird, which a child conducts at its pleasure by the string with which it is bound.

Thus, it is for want of consulting experience, and by not attending to reason, that man has obscured his ideas upon the concealed principle of his motion. If, disentangled from prejudice, he would contemplate his soul, or the moving principle that acts within him, he would be convinced that it forms part of his body; that it cannot be distinguished from it but by abstraction; and that it is only the body itself considered relatively with some of its functions, or with those faculties of which its nature and its peculiar organization renders it susceptible. He will also perceive that this soul is obliged to undergo the same changes as the body; that it is born and expands itself with it; that, like the body, it passes through a state of infancy, a period of weakness, a season of inexperience; that it enlarges and strengthens itself in the same progression; that, like the body, it arrives at an adult age, reaches maturity; that it is then it obtains the faculty of fulfilling certain functions, enjoys reason, and displays more or less wit, judgment, and manly activity; that like the body, it is subject to those vicissitudes which exterior causes oblige it to undergo by their influence; that, conjointly with the body, it suffers, enjoys, partakes of its pleasures, shares its pains, is sound when the body is healthy, diseased when the body is oppressed with sickness; that, like the body, it is continually modified by the different degrees of density in the atmosphere; by the variety of the seasons; by the various properties of the aliments received into the stomach: in short, he would be obliged to acknowledge that at some periods, it manifests visible signs of torpor, decrepitude, and death.

In despite of this analogy, or rather this continual identity of the soul with he body, man has been desirous of distinguishing their essence: he has therefore made the soul an inconceivable being; but in order that he might form to himself some idea of it, he was after all obliged to have recourse to material beings and to their manner of acting. In fact, the word *spirit* presents to the mind no other ideas than those of breathing, of respiration, of wind. Thus, when it is said, the *soul is a spirit*, it really means nothing more than that its mode of action is like that of breathing, which, though invisible in itself, or acting without being seen, produces, nevertheless, very visible effects. But breath is a material cause — it is air modified; it is not therefore a simple, a pure substance, such as the moderns designate under

the name of *spirit**

Although the word *spirit* is so very ancient among men, the sense attached to it by the moderns is quite new; and the idea of spirituality, as admitted at this day, is a recent production of the imagination. Neither Pythagoras nor Plato, however heated their brain, and however decided their taste for the marvellous, appear to have understood by *spirit* an immaterial substance, or one without extent, such as that of which the moderns have formed the human soul, and the concealed author of motion. The ancients, by the word *spirit,* were desirous to define matter of an extreme subtilty, and of a purer quality than that which acted grossly on our senses. In consequence, some have regarded the soul as an ethereal substance; others as igneous matter:[35] others again have compared it to light. Democritus made it consist in motion, consequently gave it a mode of existence. Aristoxenes, who was himself a musician, made it harmony. Aristotle regarded the soul as the moving faculty upon which depended the motion of living bodies.

The earliest doctors of Christianity had no other idea of the soul than that it was material.[36] Tertullian, Arnobius, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Saint Justin, Irenaeus, have never spoken of it other than as a corporeal substance. It was reserved for their successors, at a great distance of time, to make the human soul, and the soul of the world, *pure spirits;* that is to say, immaterial substances, of which it is impossible to form any accurate idea: by degrees this incomprehensible doctrine of spirituality, conformable without doubt to the views of theologians who make it a principle to annihilate reason, prevailed over the others:[37] this doctrine was believed divine and supernatural, because it was inconceivable to man. Those who dared believe *that the soul was material,* were held as rash, inconsiderate madmen, or else treated as enemies to the welfare and happiness of the human race. When man had once renounced experience and abjured his reason, he did nothing more, day after day, than subtilize the ravings of his imagination: he pleased himself by continually sinking deeper into the most unfathomable depths of errour; and he felicitated himself on his discoveries, on his pretended knowledge, in an exact ratio as his understanding became enveloped with the clouds of ignorance. Thus, in consequence of man's reasoning upon false principles, the soul, or moving principle within him, as well as the concealed moving principle of Nature, have been made mere chimeras, mere beings of the imagination.[38]

Therefore the doctrine of spirituality offers nothing but vague ideas — or rather is the absence of all ideas. What does it present to the mind, but a substance which possesses nothing of which our senses enable us to have a knowledge? Can it be truth, that man is able to figure to himself a being not material, having neither extent nor parts, which, nevertheless, acts upon matter without having any point of contact, any kind of analogy with it, and which itself receives the impulse of matter by means of material organs, which announce to it the presence of other beings? Is it possible to conceive the union of the soul with the body, and to comprehend how this material body can bind, enclose, constrain, determine a fugitive being which escapes all our senses? Is it honest to solve these difficulties by saying there is a mystery in them; that they are the effects of an omnipotent power more inconceivable than

the human soul and its mode of acting? When, to resolve these problems, man is obliged to have recourse to miracles, and to make the Divinity interfere, does he not avow his own ignorance?

Let us not, then, be surprised at those subtle hypotheses, as ingenious as they are unsatisfactory, to which theological prejudice has obliged the most profound modern speculators to recur, when they have undertaken to reconcile the spirituality of the soul with the physical action of material beings on this incorporeal substance, its reaction upon these beings, and its union with the body. When the human mind permits itself to be guided by authority without proof to be led forward by enthusiasm — when it renounces the evidence of its senses; what can it do more than sink into errour?[39]

If man wishes to form to himself clear ideas of his soul, let him throw himself back on his experience; let him renounce his prejudices; let him avoid theological conjecture; let him tear the sacred bandage with which lie has been blindfolded only to confound his reason Let the natural philosopher, let the anatomist, let the physician, unite their experience and compare their observations, in order to show what ought to be thought of a substance so disguised under a heap of absurdities: let their discoveries teach moralists the true motive-power that ought to influence the actions of man — legislators, the true motives that should excite him to labour to the welfare of society — sovereigns, the means of rendering truly happy the subjects committed to their charge. Physical souls have physical wants, and demand physical and real happiness, far preferable to that variety of fanciful chimeras with which the mind of man has been fed during so many ages. Let us labour to perfect the morality of man; let us make it agreeable to him; and we shall presently see his morals become better, himself become happier; his mind become calm and serene; his will determined to virtue by the natural and palpable motives held out to him. By the diligence and care which legislators shall bestow on natural philosophy, they will form citizens of sound understanding, robust and well constituted, who, finding themselves happy, will be themselves necessary to that useful impulse so necessary to general happiness. When the body is suffering, when nations are unhappy, the mind cannot be in a proper state. *Mens sana in corpore sano,* a sound mind in a sound body, this always makes a good citizen.

The more man reflects, the more he will be convinced that the soul, very far from being distinguished from the body, is only the body itself considered relatively to some of its functions, or to some of the modes of existing or acting of which it is susceptible whilst it enjoys life. Thus, the soul is man considered relatively to the faculty he has of feeling, of thinking, and of acting in a mode resulting from his peculiar nature; that is to say, from his properties, from his particular organization; from the modifications, whether durable or transitory, which the beings who act upon him cause his machine to undergo.[40]

Those who have distinguished the soul from the body, appear only to have distinguished their brain from themselves. Indeed, the brain is the common centre where all the nerves, distributed through every part of the body, meet and blend themselves: it is by the aid of this interior organ that all those operations are performed which are attributed to the soul: it is the

impulse, the motion, communicated to the nerve, which modifies the brain: in consequence, it reacts, and gives play to the bodily organs, or rather it acts upon itself, and becomes capable of producing within itself a great variety of motion, which has been designated *intellectual faculties.*

From this it may be seen, that some philosophers have been desirous to make a spiritual substance of the brain; but it is evidently ignorance that has both given birth to, and accredited this system, which embraces so little of the natural. It is from not having studied himself that man has supposed he was compounded with an agent essentially different from his body: in examining: his body he will find that it is quite useless to recur to hypothesis to explain he various phenomena it presents; for hypothesis can do nothing more than lead him out of the right road. What obscures this question, arises from this, that man cannot see himself: indeed, for this purpose it would be requisite that he could be at one and the same moment both within and without himself. Man may be compared to an Eoliah harp, that issues sounds of itself, and should demand what it is that causes it to give them forth? it does not perceive that the sensitive quality of its chords causes the air to brace them; that being so braced, it is rendered sonorous by every gust of wind with which it comes in contact.

The more experience we collect, the more we shall be convinced that the word *spirit* conveys no one sense even to. those that invented it; consequently, cannot be of the least use either in physics or morals. What modern metaphysicians believe and understand by the word, is in truth nothing more than an *occult* power, imagined to explain *occult* qualities and actions, but which, in fact, explains nothing. Savage nations admit of spirits to account to themselves for those effects which to them appear marvellous, and the cause of which they ignore. In attributing to *spirits* the phenomena of nature, as well as those of the human body, do we, in fact, do any thing more than reason like savages? Man has filled nature with *spirits,* because he has almost always been ignorant of the true causes of those effects by which he was astonished. Not being acquainted with the powers of nature, he has supposed her to be animated by a *great spirit:* not understanding the energy of the human frame, he has, in like manner, conjectured it to be animated by a *spirit:* from this it would appear, that whenever he wished to indicate the unknown cause of the phenomena he knew not how to explain in a natural manner, he had recourse to the word *spirit.* It was according to these principles, that when the Americans first beheld the terrible effects of gunpowder, they ascribed the cause to their Spirits or Divinities: it is by adopting these principles that we now believe in Angels and Demons, and that our ancestors believed in a plurality of Gods, in ghosts, in genii, &c., and pursuing the same track, we ought to attribute to *spirits* gravitation, electricity, magnetism, &c., &c.[41]

Chapter VIII: Of the Intellectual Faculties; they are all derived from the Faculty of Feeling.

To convince ourselves that the faculties called *intellectual,* are only certain modes of existence, or determinate manners of acting which result from the peculiar organization of

the body, we have only to analyze them: we shall then see, that all the operations which are attributed to the soul, are nothing more than certain modifications of the body, of which a substance that is without extent, that has no parts, that is immaterial, is not susceptible.

The first faculty we behold in the living man, that from which all his others flow, *is feeling:* however inexplicable this faculty may appear on a first view, if it be examined closely, it will be found to be a consequence of the essence, a result of the properties of organized beings; the same as *gravity*, *magnetism*, *elasticity*, *electricity*, &c. result from the essence or nature of some others; and we shall also find that these last phenomena are not less inexplicable than that of feeling. Nevertheless, if we wish to define to ourselves a precise idea of it, we shall find that feeling is a particular manner of being moved peculiar to certain organs of animated bodies, occasioned by the presence of a material object that acts upon these organs, and which transmits the impulse or shock to the brain.

Man only feels by the aid of nerves dispersed through his body, which is itself, to speak correctly, nothing more than a great nerve; or may be said to resemble a large tree, of which the branches experience the action of the root communicated through the trunk. In man the nerves unite and loose themselves in the brain; that intestine is the true seat of feeling: like the spider suspended in the centre of his web, it is quickly warned of all the changes that happen to the body, even at the extremities to which it sends its filaments and branches. Experience enables us to ascertain that man ceases to feel in those parts of his body of which the communication with the brain is intercepted; he feels very little, or not at all, whenever this organ is itself deranged or affected in too lively a manner.[42]

However this may be, the sensibility of the brain, and of all its parts, is a fact. If it be asked, whence comes this property? We shall reply, it is the result of an arrangement, of a combination, peculiar to the animal; insomuch, that coarse and insensible matter ceases to be so by animalizing itself, that is to say, by combining and identifying itself with the animal. It is thus that milk, bread, wine, change themselves in the substance of man, who is a sensible being: this insensible matter becomes sensible in combining itself with a sensible whole. Some philosophers think that sensibility is a universal quality of matter: in this case it would be useless to seek from whence this property is derived, as we know it by its effects. If this hypotheses be admitted, in like manner as two kinds of motion are distinguished in nature, the one called *live* force, the other *dead,* or *inert* force, two sorts of sensibility will. be distinguished — the one active or live, the other inert or dead. Then to animalize a substance, is only to destroy the obstacles that prevent its being active or sensible. In fact, sensibility is either a quality which communicates itself like motion, and which is acquired by combination; or this sensibility is a property inherent in all matter: in both, or either case, an unextended being, without parts, such as the human soul is said to be, can neither be the cause of it, nor submitted to its operation.[43]

The conformation, the arrangement, the texture, the delicacy of the organs, as well exterior as interior, which compose men and animals, render their parts extremely mobile, and make their machine susceptible of being moved with great facility. In a body, which, is only a heap

of fibres, a mass of nerves, contiguous one to the other, and united in a common centre, always ready to act; in a whole, composed of fluids and of solids, of which the parts are in equilibrium; of which the smallest touch each other, are active, rapid in their motion, communicating reciprocally, alternately and in succession, the impressions, the oscillations, the shocks they receive; in such a composition, I say, it is not at all surprising that the slightest impulse propagates itself with celerity; that the shocks excited in its remotest parts make themselves quickly felt in the brain, whose delicate texture renders it susceptible of being itself very easily modified. Air, fire, water, agents the most inconstant, possessing the most rapid motion, circulate continually in the fibres, incessantly penetrate the nerves, and without doubt contribute to that incredible celerity with which the brain is acquainted with what passes at the extremities of the body.

Notwithstanding the great mobility of which man's organization renders him susceptible; although exterior as well as interior causes are continually acting upon him, he does not always feel in a distinct, in a decided manner, the impulse given to his senses: indeed, he does not feel it until it has produced some change, or given some shock to his brain. Thus, although completely environed by air, he does not feel its action until it is so modified as to strike with a sufficient degree of force on his organs and his skin, through which his brain is warned of its presence. Thus, during a profound and tranquil sleep, undisturbed by any dream, man ceases to feel. In short, notwithstanding the continued motion that agitates his frame, man does not appear to feel when this motion acts in a convenient order; he does not perceive a state of health, but he discovers a state of grief or sickness; because, in the first, his brain does not receive too lively an impulse, whilst in the others his nerves are contracted, shocked, agitated, with violent and disorderly motion, thus giving notice that some cause acts strongly upon them, and impels them in a manner that bears no analogy with their natural habit: this constitutes in him that peculiar mode of existing which he calls *grief*.

On the other hand, it sometimes happens that exterior objects produce very considerable changes on his body, without his perceiving them at the moment. Often, in the heat of battle, the soldier perceives not that he is dangerously wounded; because at the time the rapidity, the multiplicity of impetuous motions that assail his brain, do not permit him to distinguish the particular change a part of his body has undergone by the wound. In short, when a great number of causes are simultaneously acting on him with too much vivacity, he sinks under their accumulated pressure, — he swoons — he loses his senses — he is deprived of feeling. In general, feeling only obtains when the brain can distinguish distinctly the impressions made on the organs with which it has communication; it is the distinct shock, the decided modification, man undergoes, that constitutes *conscience*.[44] From whence it will appear, that *feeling* is a mode of being, or a marked change, produced on our brain by the impulse communicated to our organs, whether by interior or exterior agents, and by which it is modified, either in a durable or transient manner. In fact, it is not always requisite that man's organs should be moved by an exterior object to enable him to be conscious of the changes effected in him: he can feel them within himself by means of an interior impulse; his brain

is then modified, or rather, he renews within himself the anterior modifications. We should not be astonished that the brain should be necessarily warned of the shocks, of the impediments, of the changes that may happen to so complicated a machine as the human body, in which all the parts are contiguous to the brain — to a whole, in which all the sensible parts concentrate themselves in this brain, and are by their essence in a continual state of action and reaction.

When a man experiences the pains of the gout, he is conscious of them; in other words, he feels interiorly that it has produced very distinct changes in him, without his perceiving that he has received an impulse from any exterior cause; nevertheless, if he will recur to the true source of these changes, he will find that they have been wholly produced by exterior agents; they have been the consequence either of his temperament, of the organization received from his parents, or of the aliments with which his frame has been nourished, besides a thousand trivial, inappreciable causes, which, congregating themselves by degrees, produce in him the gouty humour, the effect of which is to make him feel in a very acute manner. The pain of the gout engenders in his brain an idea or modification which it acquires the faculty of representing or reiterating to itself, even when he shall be no longer tormented with the gout: his brain, by a series of motion interiorly excited, is again placed in a state analogous to that in which it was when he really experienced this pain: but if he had never felt it, he would have had no idea of this excruciating disease.

The visible organs of man's body, by the intervention of which his brain is modified, take the name of *senses.* The various modifications which his brain receives by the aid of these senses, assume a variety of names. *Sensation*, *perception*, *idea*, are terms that designate nothing more than the changes produced in this interior organ, in consequence of impressions made on the exterior organs by bodies acting on them: these changes, considered by themselves, are called *sensations;* they adopt the term *perception,* when the brain is warned of their presence; *ideas,* is that state of them in which the brain is able to ascribe them to the objects by which they have been produced.

Every *sensation,* then, is nothing more than the shock given to the organs; every *perception,* is this shock propagated to the brain: every *idea,* is the image of the object to which the sensation and the perception is to be ascribed. From whence it will be seen, that if the senses be not moved, there can neither be sensations, perceptions, nor ideas: and this will be proved to those who yet doubt so demonstrable and striking a truth.

It is the extreme mobility of which man is capable, owing to his peculiar organization, which distinguishes him from other beings that are called insensible or inanimate: and the different degrees of mobility of which the individuals of his species are susceptible, discriminate them from each other, making that incredible variety and that infinity of difference which is to be found, as well in their corporeal faculties as in those which are mental or intellectual. From this mobility, more or less remarkable in each human being, results wit, sensibility, imagination, taste. &c. For the present, however, let us follow the operation of the senses: let us examine in what manner they are acted upon and are modified by exterior objects: — we

will afterwards scrutinize the reaction of the interior organ or brain.

The eyes are very delicate, very moveable organs, by means of which the sensation of light, or colour, is experienced: these give to the brain a distinct perception, in consequence of which man forms an idea generated by the action of luminous or coloured bodies: as soon as the eyelids are opened, the retina is affected in a peculiar manner; the fluid, the fibres, the nerves, of which they are composed, are excited by shocks which they communicate to the brain, and to which they delineate the images of the bodies from which they have received the impulse; by this means an idea is acquired of the colour, the size, the form, the distance of these bodies: it is thus that may be explained the mechanism of *sight.*

The mobility and the elasticity of which the skin is rendered susceptible by the fibres and nerves which form its texture, account for the rapidity with which this envelope to the human body is affected when applied to any other body: by their agency the brain has notice of its presence, of its extent, of its roughness, of its smoothness, of its surface, of its pressure, of its ponderosity, &c. — qualities from which the brain derives distinct perceptions, which breed in it a diversity of ideas; it is this that constitutes the *touch.*

The delicacy of the membrane by which the interior of the nostrils is covered, renders them easily susceptible of irritation, even by the invisible and impalpable corpuscles that emanate from odorous bodies: by this means sensations are excited, the brain has perceptions, and generates ideas: it is this that forms the sense *of smelling*.

The mouth, filled with nervous, sensible, moveable, and irritable glands, saturated with juices suitable to the dissolution of saline substances, is affected in a very lively manner by the aliments which pass through it; these glands transmit to the brain the impressions received: it is from this mechanism that results *taste.*

The ear, whose conformation fits it to receive the various impulses of air diversely modified, communicates to the brain the shocks or sensations; these breed the perception of sound, and generate the idea of sonorous bodies: it is this that constitutes *hearing.*

Such are the only means by which man receives sensations, perceptions, ideas. These successive modifications of his brain are effects produced by objects that give impulse to his senses; they become themselves causes producing in his mind new modifications, which are denominated *thought, reflection, memory, imagination, judgment, will, action;* the basis, however, of all these is sensation.

To form a precise notion of *thought,* it will be requisite to examine step by step what passes in man during the presence of any object whatever. Suppose, for a moment, this object to be a peach: this fruit makes, at the first view, two different impressions on his eyes; that is to say, it produces two modifications, which are transmitted to the brain, which on this occasion experiences two new perceptions, has two new ideas or modes of existence, designated by the terms *colour* and *rotundity;* in consequence, he has an idea of a body possessing roundness and colour: if he places his hand on this fruit, the organ of feeling having been set in action, his hand experiences three new impressions, which are called *softness, coolness, weight,* from whence result three new perceptions in the brain, and consequently three new

ideas: if he approximates this peach to his nose, the organ of *smelling* receives an impulse, which, communicated to the brain, a new perception arises, by which he acquires a new idea called *odour*: if he carries this fruit to his mouth, the organ of taste becomes affected in a very lively manner; this impulse communicated to the brain, is followed by a perception that generates in him the idea of *flavour*. In reuniting all these impressions, or these various modifications of his organs, which have been consequently transmitted to his brain, that is to say, in combining the different sensations, perceptions, and ideas, that result from the impulse he has received, he has the idea of a whole, which he designates by the name of a peach, with which he can then occupy his thoughts.[45]

What has been said is sufficient to show the generation of sensations, of perceptions, of ideas, with their associations, or connexion in the brain: it will be seen that these various modifications are nothing more than the consequence of successive impulsions, which the exterior organs transmit to the interior organ, which enjoys the faculty of thought, that is to say, to feel in itself the different modifications it has received, or to perceive the various ideas which it has generated — to combine them — to separate them — to extend them — to abridge them — to compare them — to renew them, &c. From whence it will be seen, that thought is nothing more than the perception of certain modifications which the brain either gives to itself, or has received from exterior objects.

Indeed, not only the interior organ perceives the modifications it receives from without, but again it has the faculty of modifying itself — of considering the changes which take place in it, the motion by which it is agitated in its peculiar operations, from which it imbibes new perceptions, new ideas. It is the exercise of this power to fall back upon itself, that is called *reflection.*

From this it will appear, that for man to think and to reflect, is to feel, or perceive within himself the impressions, the sensations, the ideas, which have been furnished to his brain by those objects which give impulse to his senses in consequence of the various changes which his brain produced on itself.

Memory is the faculty which the brain has of renewing in itself the modifications it has received, or rather, to restore itself to a state similar to that in which it has been placed by the sensations, the perceptions, the ideas, produced by exterior objects, in the exact order it received them, without any new action on the part of these objects, or even when these objects are absent; the brain perceives that these modifications assimilate with those it formerly experienced in the presence of the objects to which it relates, or attributes them. Memory is faithful when these modifications are precisely the same; it is treacherous when they differ from those which the organs have exteriorly experienced.

Imagination in man is only the faculty which the brain has of modifying itself, or of forming to itself new perceptions upon the model of those which it has anteriorly received through the fiction of exterior objects on the senses. The brain, then, does nothing more than combine ideas which it has already formed, and which it recalls to itself to form a whole, or a collection of modifications, which it has not received, although the individual ideas, or the

parts of which this ideal whole is composed, have been previously communicated to it. It is thus, man forms to himself the idea of *Centaurs*,[46] of *Hyppogriffs*,[47] of Gods,[48] and Demons.[49] by memory, the brain renews in itself the sensations, the perceptions, the ideas, which it has received, and represents to itself the objects which have actually moved its organs. By imagination it combines them variously; forms objects or wholes in their place, which have not moved its organs, although it is perfectly acquainted with the elements or ideas of which it composes them. It is thus that man, by combining a great number of ideas borrowed from himself, such as justice, wisdom, goodness, intelligence, &c., has, by the aid of imagination, formed an imaginary whole, which he has called God.

Judgment, is the faculty which the brain possesses of comparing with each other the modifications it receives, the ideas it engenders, or which it has the power of awakening within itself, to the end that it may discover their relations or their effects.

Will, is a modification of the brain, by which it is disposed to action, that is to say, to give such an impulse to the organs of the body as can induce it to act in a manner that will procure for itself what is requisite to modify it in a mode analogous to its own existence, or to enable it to avoid that by which it can be injured. To will is to be disposed to action. The exterior objects, or the interior ideas, which give birth to this disposition, are called *motives*, because they are the springs or movements which determine it to act, that is to say, which give play to the organs of the body. Thus *voluntary actions* are the motion of the body, determined by the modification of the brain. Fruit hanging on a tree, through the agency of the visual organs modifies the brain in such a manner as to dispose the arm to stretch itself forth to cull it; again, it modifies it in another manner, by which it excites the hand to carry it to. the mouth. All the modifications which the interior organ or the brain receives; all the sensations — all the perceptions — all the ideas that are generated by the objects which give impulse to the senses, or which it renews within itself by its own peculiar faculties, are either favourable or prejudicial to man's mode of existence, whether that be transitory or habitual: they dispose the interior organ to action, which it exercises by reason of its own peculiar energy: this action is not, however, the same in all the individuals of the human species, depending much on their respective temperaments. From hence the *passions* have their birth; these are more or less violent: they are, however, nothing more than the motion of the will, determined by the objects which give it activity — consequently, composed of the analogy or of the discordance which is found between these objects and man's peculiar mode of existence, or the force of his temperament. From this it results, that the passions are modes of existence or modifications of the brain, which either attract or repel those objects by which man is surrounded; that consequently they are submitted in their action to the physical laws of attraction and repulsion.

The faculty of perceiving, or of being modified, as well by itself as by exterior objects, which the brain enjoys, is sometimes designated by the term *understanding*. To the assemblage of the various faculties of which this interior organ is susceptible, is applied the name of *intelligence*. To a determined mode, in which the brain exercises the faculties peculiar to

itself, is given the appellation of *reason*. The dispositions, or the modifications of the brain, some of them constant, others transitory, which give impulse to the beings of the human species, causing them to act, are styled *wit, wisdom, goodness, prudence, virtue, &c.*

In short, as there will be an opportunity presently to prove, all the intellectual faculties, that is to say, all the modes of action attributed to the soul, may be reduced to the modifications, to the qualities, to the modes of existence, to the changes produced by the motion of the brain, which is visibly in man the seat of feeling — the principle of all his actions. These modifications are to be attributed to the objects that strike on his senses; of which the impression is transmitted to the brain, or rather to the ideas which the perceptions caused by the action of these objects on his senses have there generated, and which it has the faculty to reproduce. This brain moves itself in its turn, reacts upon itself, gives play to the organs, which concentrate themselves in it, or which rather are nothing more than an extension of its own peculiar substance. It is thus the concealed motion of the interior organ renders itself sensible by outward and visible signs. The brain. affected by a modification which is called *fear,* diffuses a paleness over the countenance, excites a tremulous motion in the limbs, called trembling. The brain, affected by a sensation of *grief,* causes tears to flow from the eyes, even without being moved by any exterior object; an idea which it retraces with great strength, suffices to give it very lively modifications, which visibly have an influence on the whole frame.

In all this nothing more is to be perceived than the same substance which acts diversely on the various parts of the body. If it be objected, that this mechanism does not sufficiently explain the principles of the motion, or the faculties of the soul; we reply, that it is in the same situation as all the other bodies of nature, in which the most simple motion, the most ordinary phenomena, the most common modes of action, are inexplicable mysteries, of which we shall never be able to fathom the first principles. Indeed, how can we flatter ourselves we shall ever be enabled to compass the true principle of that gravity by which a stone falls? Are we acquainted with the mechanism which produces attraction in some substances, repulsion in others? Are we in a condition to explain the communication of motion from one body to another? But it may be fairly asked; are the difficulties that occur, when attempting to explain the manner in which the soul acts, removed, by making it a *spiritual being,* a substance of which we have not, nor cannot form one idea, which consequently must bewilder all the notions we are capable of forming to ourselves of this being? Let us then be contented to know that the soul moves itself, modifies itself, in consequence of material causes, which act upon it, which give it activity; from whence the conclusion may be said to flow consecutively, that all its operations, all its faculties, prove that it is itself *material.*

Chapter IX: Of the Diversity of the Intellectual Faculties; they depend on Physical Causes, as do their Moral Qualities. The Natural Principles of Society. — Of Morals. — Of Politics.

Nature is under the necessity to diversify all her works. Elementary matter, different in its

essence, must necessarily form different beings, various in their combinations, in their properties, in their modes of action, in their manner of existence. There is not, neither can there be, two beings, two combinations, which are mathematically and rigorously the same; because the place, the circumstances, the relations, the proportions, the modifications, never being exactly alike, the beings that result can never bear a perfect resemblance to each other: and their modes of action must of necessity vary in something, even when we believe we find between them the greatest conformity.

In consequence of this principle, which every thing we see conspires to prove to be a truth, there are not two individuals of the human species, who have precisely the same traits; who think exactly in the same manner; who view things under the same identical point of sight; who have decidedly the same ideas; consequently no two of them have uniformly the same system of conduct. The visible organs of man, as well as his concealed organs, have indeed some analogy, some common points of resemblance, some general conformity, which makes them appear, when viewed in the gross, to be affected in the same manner by certain causes; but the difference is infinite in the detail. The human soul may be compared to those instruments of which the chords, already diversified in themselves by the manner in which they have been spun, are also strung upon different notes: struck by the same impulse, each chord gives forth the sound that is peculiar to itself, that is to say, that which depends on its texture, its tension, its volume, on the momentary state in which it is placed by the circumambient air. It is this that produces the diversified spectacle, the varied scene, which the moral world offers to our view: it is from this that results the striking contrariety that is to be found in the minds, in the faculties, in the passions, in the energies, in the taste, in the imagination, in the ideas, in the opinions of man: this diversity is as great as that of his physical powers: like them it depends on his temperament, which is as much varied as his physiognomy. This variety gives birth to that continual series of action and reaction which constitutes the life of the moral world: from this discordance results the harmony which at once maintains and preserves the human race.

The diversity found among the individuals of the human species, causes inequalities between man and man: this inequality constitutes the support of society. If all men were equal in their bodily powers, in their mental talents, they would not have any occasion for each other: it is the variation of his faculties, the inequality which this places him in with regard to his fellows, that renders man necessary to man: without these he would live by himself, he would remain an isolated being. From whence it may be perceived that this inequality, of which man so often complains without cause; this impossibility each man finds when in an isolated state, when left to himself, when unassociated with his fellow men, to labour efficaciously to his own welfare, to make his own security, to ensure his own conservation, places him in the happy situation of associating with his like, of depending on his fellow associates, of meriting their succour, of propitiating them to his views, of attracting their regard, of calling in their aid to chase away, by common and united efforts, that which would have the power to trouble or derange the order of his existence. In consequence of man's diversity and of the inequality

that results, the weaker is obliged to seek the protection of the stronger: this, in his turn, recurs to the understanding, to the talents, to the industry of the weaker, whenever his judgment points out he can be useful to him: this natural inequality furnishes the reason why nations distinguish those citizens who have rendered their country eminent services; and it is in consequence of his exigencies that man honours, that he recompenses those whose understanding, whose good deeds, whose assistance, whose virtues, have procured for him real or supposed advantages, pleasures, or agreeable sensations of any sort: it is by this means that genius gains an ascendency over the mind of man, and obliges a whole people to acknowledge its power. Thus, the diversity, the inequality of the faculties, as well corporeal, as mental or intellectual, render man necessary to his fellow man, makes him a social being, and incontestably proves to him the necessity of morals.

According to this diversity of faculties, the individuals of the human species are divided into different classes, each in proportion to the effects produced, to the different qualities that may be remarked: all these varieties in man flow from the individual properties of his mind, or from the particular modification of his brain. It is thus that wit, imagination, sensibility, talents, &c. diversify to infinity the differences that are to be found in man. It is thus that some are called good, others wicked; some are denominated virtuous, others vicious; some are ranked as learned, others as ignorant; some are considered reasonable, others unreasonable, &c.

If all the various faculties attributed to the soul are examined, it will be found that like those of the body they are to be ascribed to physical causes, to which it will be very easy to recur. It will be found that the powers of the soul are the same as those of the body; that they always depend on the organization of this body, on its peculiar properties, on the permanent or transitory modifications that it undergoes; in a word, on its temperament.

Temperament, is. in each individual, the habitual state in which he finds the fluids and the solids of which his body is composed. This temperament varies by reason of the elements or matter that predominates in him; inconsequence of the different combinations, of the various modifications, which this matter, diversified in itself, undergoes in his machine. Thus in one the blood is superabundant; in another, the bile; in a third, phlegm. &c.

It is from nature — from his parents — from causes, which from the first moment of his existence have unceasingly modified him, that man derives his temperament. It is in his mother's womb that he has attracted the matter which, during his whole life, shall have an influence on his intellectual faculties — on his energies — on his passions — on his conduct. The very nourishment he takes, the quality of the air he respires, the climate he inhabits, the education he receives, the ideas that are presented to him, the opinions he imbibes, modify this temperament. As these circumstances can never be rigorously the same in every point for any two men, it is by no means surprising that such an amazing variety, so great a contrariety, should be found in man, or that there should exist as many different temperaments as there are individuals in the human species.

Thus, although man may bear a general resemblance, he differs essentially, as well by the

texture of his fibres, the disposition of his nerves, as by the nature, the quality, the quantity of matter that gives them play, and sets his organs in motion. Man, already different from his fellow, by the elasticity of his fibres, the tension of his nerves, becomes still more distinguished by a. variety of other circumstances: he is more active, more robust, when he receives nourishing aliments, when he drinks wine, when he takes exercise; whilst another, who drinks nothing but water, who takes less juicy nourishment, who languishes in idleness, shall be sluggish and feeble.

All these causes have necessarily an influence on the mind, on the passions, on the will, in a word, on what are called the intellectual faculties. Thus, it may be observed, that a man of a sanguine constitution is commonly lively, ingenious, full of imagination, passionate, voluptuous, enterprising; whilst the phlegmatic man is dull, of a heavy understanding, slow of conception, inactive, difficult to be moved, pusillanimous, without imagination, or possessing it in a less lively degree, incapable of taking any strong measures, or of willing resolutely.

If experience was consulted in the room of prejudice, the physician would collect from morals the key to the human heart: and in curing the body, he would sometimes be assured of curing the mind. Man, in making a spiritual substance of his soul, has contented himself with administering to it spiritual remedies, which either have no influence over his temperament, or do it an injury. The doctrine of the spirituality of the soul has rendered morals a conjectural science, that does not furnish a knowledge of the true motives which ought to be put in activity in order to influence man to his welfare. If, calling experience to his assistance, man sought out the elements which form the basis of his temperament, or of the greater number of the individuals composing a nation; he would then discover what would be most proper for him, that which could be most convenient to his mode of existence, which could most conduce to his true interest; — what laws would be necessary to his happiness — what institutions would be most useful for him — what regulations would be most beneficial. In short, morals and politics would be equally enabled to draw from *materialism* advantages which the dogma of spirituality can never supply, of which it even precludes the idea. Man will ever remain a mystery to those who shall obstinately persist in viewing him with eyes prepossessed by theology, or to those who shall pertinaciously attribute his actions to a principle of which it is impossible to form to themselves any distinct idea. When man shall be seriously inclined to understand himself, let him sedulously endeavour to discover the matter that enters into his combination, which constitutes his temperament; these discoveries will furnish him with the clue to the nature of his desires, to the quality of his passions, to the bent of his inclinations, and will enable him to foresee his conduct on given occasions; will indicate the remedies that may be successfully employed to correct the defects of a vicious organization and of a temperament as injurious to himself as to the society of which he is a member.

Indeed, it is not to be doubted that man's temperament is capable of being corrected, of being modified, of being changed, by causes as physical as the matter of which it is constituted. We

are all in some measure capable of forming our own temperament: a man of a sanguine constitution, by taking less juicy nourishment, by abating its quantity, by abstaining from strong liquor, &c., may achieve the correction of the nature, the quality, the quantity, the tendency, the motion of the fluids, which predominate in his machine. A bilious man, or one who is melancholy, may, by the aid of certain remedies, diminish the mass of this bilious fluid; he may correct the blemish of his humours by the assistance of exercise; he may dissipate his gloom by the gaiety which results from increased motion. A European transplanted into Hindostan will by degrees become quite a different man in his humours, in his ideas, in his temperament, and in his character.

Although but few experiments have been made with a view to learn what constitutes the temperament of man, there are still enough if he would but deign to make use of them, or if he would vouchsafe to apply to useful purposes the little experience he has gleaned. It would appear, speaking generally, that the igneous principle which chymists designate under the name of *phlogiston,* or inflammable matter, is that which in man yields him the most active life, furnishes him with the greatest energy, affords the greatest mobility to his frame, supplies the greatest spring to his organs, gives the greatest elasticity to his fibres, the greatest tension to his nerves, the greatest rapidity to his fluids. From these causes, which are entirely material, commonly result the dispositions or faculties, called sensibility, wit, imagination, genius, vivacity, &c., which give the tone to the passions, to the will, to the moral actions of man. In this sense, it is with great justice we apply the expressions, "warmth of soul," "ardenct of imagination," "fire of genius," &c.[50]

It is this fiery element, diffused in different doses, distributed in various proportions, through the beings of the human species, that sets man in motion, gives him activity, supplies him with animal heat, and which, if we may be allowed the expression, renders him more or less alive. This igneous matter, so active, so subtile, dissipates itself with great facility, then requires to be reinstated in his system by means of aliments that contain it, which thereby become proper to restore his machine, to lend new warmth to the brain, to furnish it with the elasticity requisite to the performance of those functions which are called intellectual. It is this ardent matter, contained in wine, in strong liquor, that gives to the most torpid, to the dullest, to the most sluggish man, a vivacity, of which, without it, he would be incapable, and which urges even the coward on to battle. When this fiery element is too abundant in man, whilst he is labouring under certain diseases, it plunges him into delirium; when it is in too weak, or in too small a quantity, he swoons, he sinks to the earth. This igneous matter diminishes in his old age, it totally dissipates at his death.[51]

If the intellectual faculties of man, or his moral qualities, be examined according to the principles here laid down, the conviction must be complete, that they are to be attributed to material causes, which have an influence more or less marked, either transitory or durable over his peculiar organization. But where does he derive this organization except it be from the parents from whom he receives the elements of a machine necessarily analogous to their own? From whence does he derive the greater or less quantity of igneous matter, or vivifying

heat, which gives the tone to his mental qualities? It is from the mother, who bore him in her womb, who has communicated to him a portion of that fire with which she was herself animated, which circulated through her veins with her blood: it is from the aliments that have nourished him: it is from the climate he inhabits: it is from the atmosphere that surrounds him: for. all these causes have an influence over his fluids, over his solids, and decide on his natural dispositions. In examining these dispositions, from whence his faculties depend, it will ever be found that they are *corporeal* and *material.*

The most prominent of these dispositions in man, is that physical sensibility from which flows all his intellectual or moral qualities. To. feel, according to what has been said, is to receive an impulse, to be moved, and to have a consciousness of the changes operated on his system. To have sensibility, is nothing more than to be so constituted as to feel promptly, and in a very lively manner, the impressions of those objects which act upon him. A sensible soul, is only man's brain disposed in a mode to receive the motion communicated to it with facility and with promptness, by giving an instantaneous impulse to the organs. Thus, the man is called *sensible,* whom the sight of the distressed, the contemplation of the unhappy, the recital of a melancholy tale, the witnessing of an afflicting catastrophe, or the idea of a. dreadful spectacle, touches in so lively a manner as to enable the brain to give play to his lachrymal organs, which, cause him to shed tears; a sign by which we recognise the effect of extreme anguish in the human being. The man in whom musical sounds excite a degree of pleasure, or produce very remarkable effects, is said to have a *sensible* or a fine ear. In short, when it is perceived that eloquence, — the. beauty of the arts, — the various objects, that strike his senses, excite in him very lively emotions, he is said to possess a soul full of sensibility.[52]

Wit is a consequence of this physical sensibility; indeed, wit is nothing more than the facility which some beings of the human species possess of seizing with promptitude, of developing with, quickness a whole, with its different relations to other objects. *Genius,* is the facility with which some men comprehend this whole, and its various, relations, when they are difficult to be known, but useful to forward great and mighty projects. *Wit,* may be compared to a piercing eye, which perceived things quickly. *Genius,* is an eye that comprehends at one view all the points of an extended horizon, or what the French term *coup d'oeil. True wit,* is that which perceives objects with their relations, such as they really arc. *False wit,* is that which catches at relations which do not apply to the object, or which arises from some blemish in the organization. *True wit* resembles the direction on a hand-post.

Imagination, is the faculty of combining with promptitude ideas or images; it consists in the power man possesses of reproducing with ease the modifications of his brain; of connecting them, and of attaching them to the objects to which they are suitable. When imagination does this, it gives pleasure; its fictions are approved, it embellishes nature, it is a proof of the soundness of the mind, it aids truth: when, on the contrary, it combines ideas not formed to associate themselves with each other; when it paints nothing but disagreeable phantoms, it disgusts. Thus poetry, calculated to render nature more pathetic, more touching, pleases when

it adorns the object it portrays with all those beauties with which it can with propriety be associated. True, it only creates ideal beings, but as they move us agreeably, we forgive the illusions it has held forth on account of the pleasure we have reaped from them. The hideous chimeras of superstition displease, because they are nothing more than the productions of a distempered imagination, which can only awaken afflicting sensations.

Imagination, when it wanders, produces fanaticism — religious terrours — inconsiderate zeal — phrensy — the most enormous crimes. When imagination is well regulated, it gives birth to a strong predilection for useful objects — an energetic passion for virtue — an enthusiastic love of our country — the most ardent friendship: the man who is divested of imagination, is commonly one in whose torpid constitution phlegm predominates over that sacred fire, which is the great principle of his mobility, of his warmth of sentiment, and which vivifies all his intellectual faculties. There must be enthusiasm for transcendent virtues as well as for atrocious crimes. Enthusiasm places the soul, or brain, in a state similar to that of drunkenness; both the one and the other excite in man that rapidity of motion which is approved when good results, but which is called folly, delirium, crime, fury, when it produces nothing but disorder.

The mind is out of order, it is incapable of judging sanely, and the imagination is badly regulated, whenever man's organization is not so modified as to perform its functions with precision. At each moment of his existence man gathers experience; every sensation he has, furnishes a fact that deposits in his, brain an idea, which his memory recalls with more or less fidelity: these facts connect themselves, these ideas are associated, and their chain constitutes *experience* and *science*. Knowledge, is that consciousness which arises from reiterated experience, made with precision of the sensations, of the ideas, of the effects which an object is capable of producing, either in ourselves or in others. All science must he founded on truth. Truth itself rests on the constant and faithful relation of our senses. Thus *truth* is that conformity or perpetual affinity which man's senses, when well constituted, when aided by experience, discover to him, between the objects of which he has a knowledge, and the qualities with which he clothes them. In short, truth is nothing more than the just, the precise association of his ideas. But how can he, without experience, assure himself of the accuracy of this association? How, if he do not reiterate this experience, can he compare it? If his senses are vitiated, how is it possible they cart convey to him, with precision, the sensations, the facts, with which they store his brain? It is only by multiplied, by diversified, by repeated experience, that he is enabled to rectify the errours of his first conceptions.

Man is in errour every time his organs, either originally defective in their nature, or vitiated by the durable or transitory modifications which they undergo, render him incapable of judging soundly of objects. Errour consists in the false association of ideas, by which qualities are attributed to objects which they do not possess. Man is in errour, when, he supposes those beings really to have existence which have no local habitation but in his own imagination: he is in errour, when he associates the idea of happiness with objects capable of injuring him, whether immediately or by remote consequences which he cannot foresee.

But how can he foresee effects of which he has not yet any knowledge? It is by the aid of experience. By the assistance which this experience affords it is known, that analogous, or like causes, produce analogous or like effects: memory, by recalling these effects, enables him to form a judgment of those he may expect, whether it be from the same causes, or from causes that bear a relation to those of which he has already experienced the action. From this it will appear, that *prudence, foresight,* are faculties that grow out of experience. If he has felt that fire excited in his organs a painful sensation, this experience suffices him to foresee that fire so applied, will eventually excite the same sensations. If he has discovered that certain actions, on his part, stirred up the hatred, and elicited the contempt of others, this experience sufficiently enables him to foresee, that every time he shall act in a similar manner, he will be either hated or despised.

The faculty man has of gathering experience, of recalling it to himself, of foreseeing effects, by which he is enabled to avoid whatever may have the power to injure him. or procure that which may be useful to the conservation of his existence and his felicity, which is the sole end of all his actions, whether corporeal or mental, constitutes that which in one word is designated under the name of *reason.* Sentiment, imagination, temperament, may be capable of leading him astray; may have the power to deceive him; but experience and reflection will place him again in the right road, and teach him what can really conduct him to happiness. From this it will appear, that *reason* is man's nature modified by experience, moulded by judgment, regulated by reflection: it supposes a sober temperament, a sound mind, a well regulated imagination, a knowledge of truth grounded upon tried experience; in fact, prudence and foresight: and this proves, that, although nothing is more common than the assertion that *man is a reasonable being,* yet there are but a very small number of the individuals who compose the human species who really enjoy the faculty of reason, or who combine the dispositions and the experience by which it is constituted.

It ought not then to excite surprise that the individuals of the human race who are in a capacity to make true experience, are so few in number. Man, when he is born, brings with him organs susceptible of receiving impulse, and of collecting experience; but whether it be from the vice of his system, the imperfection of his organization, or from those causes by which it is modified, his experience is false, his ideas are confused, his images are badly associated, his judgment is erroneous, his brain is saturated with vicious systems, which necessarily have an influence over his conduct, and continually disturb his reason.

Man's senses, as it has been shown, are the only means by which he is enabled to ascertain whether his opinions are true or false, whether his conduct is useful to himself, and whether it is advantageous or disadvantageous. But that his senses may be competent to make a faithful relation, or be in a capacity to impress true ideas on his brain, it is requisite they should be sound; that is to say, in the state necessary to maintain his existence in that order which is suitable to his preservation and his permanent felicity. It is also indispensable that his brain itself should be healthy, or in the proper state to enable it to fulfil its functions with precision and to exercise its faculties with vigour. It is necessary that memory should

faithfully retrace its anterior sensations and ideas, to the end, that he may be competent to judge or to foresee the effects he may have to hope or to fear from those actions to which he may be determined by his will. If his interior or exterior organs be defective, whether by their natural conformation, or from those causes by which they are regulated, he feels but imperfectly, and in a manner less distinct than is. requisite; his ideas are either false for suspicious; he judges badly; he is in a delusion, or in a state of ebriety that prevents his grasping the true relation of things. In short, if his memory be faulty, if it be treacherous, his reflection is void; his imagination leads him astray; his mind deceives him; whilst the sensibility of his organs, simultaneously assailed by a crowd of impressions, oppose him to prudence, to foresight, and to the exercise of his reason. On the other hand, if the confirmation of his organs, as it happens with those of a phlegmatic temperament, does not permit him to move, except with feebleness and in a sluggish manner, his experience is slow, and frequently unprofitable. The tortoise and the butterfly are alike incapable of preventing their destruction. The stupid man and he who is intoxicated, are in that state which renders it impossible for them to attain the end they have in view.

But what is the aim of man in the sphere he occupies? It is to preserve himself and to render his existence happy. It becomes, then, of the utmost importance that he should understand the true means which reason points out, which prudence teaches him to use, in order that he may always and with certainty arrive at the end which he proposes to himself. These are his natural faculties, his mind, his talents, his industry, his actions determined by those passions of which his nature renders him susceptible, and which give more or less activity to his will. Experience and reason show him again that the men with whom he is associated, are necessary to him — are capable of contributing to his happiness and to his pleasures, and are competent to assist him by those faculties which are peculiar to them: experience teaches him the mode he must adopt to induce them to concur in his designs — to determine them to will and to act in his favour. This points out to him the actions they approve — those which displease them — the conduct which attracts them — that which repels them — the judgment by which they are swayed — the advantages that occur, the prejudicial effects that result to him from their various modes of existence and manner of acting. This experience furnishes him with the ideas of virtue and of vice — of justice and of injustice — of goodness and of wickedness — of decency and of indecency — of probity and of knavery. In short, he learns to form a judgment of men, to estimate their actions — to distinguish the various sentiments excited in them, according to the diversity of those effects which they make him experience. It is upon the necessary diversity of these effects that is founded the discrimination between good and evil — between virtue and vice; distinctions which do not rest, as some thinkers have believed, on the conventions made between men; still less upon the chimerical will of a supernatural being, but upon the invariable, the eternal relations that subsist between beings of the human species congregated together, and living in society — relations which will have existence as long as man shall remain, and as long as society shall continue to exist.

Thus *virtue* is every thing that is truly and constantly useful to the individuals of the human

race living together in society; *vice,* every thing that is injurious to them. The greatest virtues are those which procure for man the most durable and solid advantages: the greatest vices, are those which most disturb his tendency to happiness, and which most interrupt the necessary order of society. The *virtuous man* is he whose actions tend uniformly to the welfare of his fellow creatures. The *vicious man* is he whose conduct tends to the misery of those with whom he lives; from whence his own peculiar misery most commonly results. Every thing that procures for man a true and a permanent happiness, is reasonable; everything that disturbs his individual felicity, or that of the beings necessary to his happiness, is foolish or unreasonable. The man who injures others, is wicked — the man who injures himself, is an imprudent being, who neither has a knowledge of reason, of his own peculiar interests, nor of truth.

Man's *duties* are the means pointed out to him by experience and reason, by which he is to arrive at that goal he proposes to himself: these duties are the necessary consequence of the relations subsisting between mortals who equally desire happiness, and who are equally anxious to preserve their existence. When it is said, these duties *compel him,* it signifies nothing more than that, without taking these means, he could not reach the end proposed to him by his nature. Thus, *moral obligation* is the necessity of employing the natural means to render the beings with whom he lives happy, to the end that he may determine them in turn, to contribute to his own individual happiness: his obligation towards himself is the necessity he is under to take those means without which he would be incapable to conserve himself, and render his existence solidly happy. Morals, like the universe, are founded upon necessity, or upon the eternal relation of things.

Happiness, is a mode of existence of which man naturally wishes the duration, or in which he is willing to continue. It is measured by its duration and its vivacity. The greatest happiness is that which has the longest continuance: transient happiness, or that which has only a short duration, is called *pleasure;* the more lively it is, the more fugitive, because man's senses are only susceptible of a certain quantum of motion. When pleasure exceeds this given quantity, it is changed into *anguish,* or into that painful mode of existence of which he ardently desires the cessation: this is the reason why pleasure and pain frequently so closely approximate each other as scarcely to be discriminated. Immoderate pleasure is the forerunner of regret. It is succeeded by ennui and weariness, and it ends in disgust: transient happiness frequently converts itself into durable misfortune. According to these principles, it will be seen that man, who in each moment of his duration seeks necessarily after happiness, ought, when he is reasonable, to regulate his pleasures, and to refuse himself to all those of which the indulgence would be succeeded by regret or pain; whilst he should endeavour to procure for himself the most permanent felicity.

Happiness cannot be the same for all the beings of the human species; the same pleasures cannot equally affect men whose confirmation is different, whose modification is diverse. This, no doubt, is the true reason why the greater number of moral philosophers are so little in accord upon those objects in which they have made man's happiness consist, as well as on

the means by which it may be obtained. Nevertheless, in general happiness appears to be a state, whether momentary or durable, in which man readily acquiesces, because he finds it conformable to his being. This state results from the accord which is found between himself and those circumstances in which he has been placed by nature: or, if it be preferred, *happiness is the co-ordination of man with the causes that give him impulse.*

The ideas which man forms to himself of happiness, depend not only on his temperament, on his individual conformation, but also upon the habits he has contracted. *Habit,* is in man a mode of existence — of thinking — of acting, which his organs, as well interior as exterior, contract by the frequent reiteration of the same motion, from whence results the faculty of performing these actions with promptitude and with facility.

It things be attentively considered, it will be found that almost the whole conduct of man, the entire system of his actions, his occupations, his connexions, his studies, his amusements, his manners, his customs, his very garments, even his aliments, are the effect of habit. He owes equally to habit the facility with which he exercises his mental faculties of thought, of judgment, of wit, of reason, of taste, &c. It is to habit he owes the greater part of his inclinations, of his desires, of his opinions, of his prejudices, of the ideas, true or false, he forms to himself of his welfare. In short, it is to habit, consecrated by time, that he owes those errours into which every thing strives to precipitate him, and to prevent him from emancipating himself. It is habit that attaches him either to virtue or to vice.[53]

Man is so much modified by habit, that it is frequently confounded with his nature: from hence results, as will presently be seen, those opinions, or those ideas which he has called *innate,* because he has been unwilling to recur back to the source from whence they sprung, which has, as it were, identified itself with his brain. However this may be. he adheres with great strength of attachment to all those things to which he is habituated; his mind experiences a sort of violence, or incommodious revulsion, when it is endeavoured to make him change the course of his ideas: a fatal predilection frequently conducts him back to the old track in despite of reason.

It is by a pure mechanism that may be explained the phenomena of habit, as well physical as moral; the soul, notwithstanding its pretended spirituality, is modified exactly in the same manner as the body. Habit, in man, causes the organs of voice to learn the mode of expressing quickly the ideas consigned to his brain, by means of certain motion, which, during his infancy, the tongue acquires the power of executing with facility: his tongue, once habituated to move itself in a certain manner, finds much trouble to move itself after another mode; the throat yields with difficulty to those inflections which are exacted by a language different from that to which he has been accustomed. It is the same with his ideas; his brain, his interior organ, his soul, inured to a given manner of modification, accustomed to attach certain ideas to certain objects, long used to form to itself a system connected with certain opinions, whether true or false, experiences a painful sensation whenever he undertakes to give it a new impulse, or alter the direction of its habitual motion. It is nearly as difficult to make him change his opinions as his language.[54]

Here then, without doubt, is the cause of that almost invincible attachment which man displays to those customs, those prejudices, those institutions of which it is in vain that reason, experience, good sense, prove to him the inutility, or even the danger. Habit opposes itself to the clearest demonstrations; these can avail nothing against those passions and those vices which time has rooted in him — against the most ridiculous systems — against the strangest customs — especially when he has learned to attach to them the ideas of utility — of common interest — of the welfare of society. Such is the source of that obstinacy which man evinces for his religion — for ancient usages — for unreasonable customs — for laws, so little accordant with justice — for abuses, which so frequently make him suffer — for prejudices of which he sometimes acknowledges the absurdity, although unwilling to divest himself of them. Here is the reason why nations contemplate the most useful novelties as mischievous innovations, and believe they would be lost if they were to remedy those evils which they have learned to consider as necessary to their repose, and which they have been taught to consider dangerous to be cured.[55]

Education, is the only art of making man contract in early life, that is to say, when his organs are extremely flexible, the habits, the opinions, and the modes of existence adopted by the society in which he is placed. The first moments of his infancy are employed in collecting experience; those who are charged with the care of bringing him up, teach him how to apply it: it is they who develop reason in him: the first impulse they give him commonly decides of his condition, his passions, the ideas he forms to himself of happiness, and the means he shall employ to procure it — of his virtues and his vices. Under the eyes of his masters, the infant acquires ideas,. and learns to associate them — to think in a certain manner — to judge well or ill. They point out to him various objects, which they accustom him either to love or to hate, to desire or to avoid, to esteem or to despise. It is thus opinions are transmitted from fathers, from mothers, from nurses, and from masters, to man in his infantile state. It is thus that his mind by degrees saturates itself with truth, or fills itself with errour, and as either of them regulates his conduct, it renders him either happy or miserable, virtuous or vicious, estimable or hateful. It is thus he becomes either contented or discontented with his destiny, according to the objects towards which they have directed his passions, and bent the energies of his mind; that is to say, in which they have shown him his interest, or taught him to place his felicity: in consequence he loves and seeks after that which they have instructed him to revere, which they have made the object of his research: he has those tastes, those inclinations, those phantasms, which, during the whole course of his life, he is forward to indulge, which he is eager to satisfy, in proportion to the activity they have excited in him, and the capacity with which he has been provided by nature.

Politics ought to be the art of regulating the passions of man, and of directing them to the welfare of society; but too frequently it is nothing more than the detestable art of arming the passions of the various members of society against each other, to accomplish their mutual destruction, and fill with rancorous animosities that association, from which, if properly managed, man ought to derive his felicity. Society is commonly so vicious because it is not

founded upon nature, upon experience, upon general utility, but on the contrary, upon the passions, the caprices, the particular interests of those by whom it is governed.

Politics, to be useful, should found its principles upon nature; that is to say, should conform itself to the essence of man, and to the great end of society: and society being a whole, formed by the union of a great number of families or individuals, assembled from a reciprocity of interest in order that they may satisfy with greater facility their reciprocal wants, and procure the advantages they desire; that they may obtain mutual succours; above all, that they may gain the faculty of enjoying in security those benefits with which nature and industry may furnish them; it follows, of course, that politics, destined to maintain society, ought to enter into its views, facilitate he means of giving them, efficiency, and remove all those obstacles that have a tendency to counteract the intention with which man entered into association.

Man in approximating to his fellow man to live with him in society, has made, either formally or tacitly, a covenant, by which he engages to render mutual services, and to do nothing that can be prejudicial to his neighbour. But as the nature of each individual impels him constantly to seek after his own welfare, which he has mistaken to consist in the gratification of his passions, in the indulgence of his transitory caprices, without any regard to the convenience of his fellows; there needed a power to conduct him back to his duty, to oblige him to conform himself to his obligations, and to recall him to engagements which the hurry of his passions frequently make him forget. This power is the *law*; it is the collection of the will of society, reunited to fix the conduct of its members, and to direct their action in such a mode that it may concur to the great end of his association.

But as society, more especially when very numerous, cannot assemble itself unless with great difficulty, and without tumult make known its intentions, it is obliged to choose citizens in whom it places confidence; whom it makes the interpreter of its will; whom it constitutes the depositaries of the power requisite to carry it into execution. Such is the origin of all *government,* which to be legitimate can only be founded on the free consent of society — without which it is violence, usurpation, robbery. Those who are charged with the care of governing, call themselves *sovereigns, chiefs, legislators,* and, according to the form which society has been willing to give to its government, these sovereigns are styled *monarchs, magistrates, representatives, &c.* Government only borrows its power from society: being established for no other purpose than its welfare, it is evident society can revoke this power whenever its interest shall exact it — change the form of its government — extend or limit the power which it has confided to its chiefs, over whom, by the immutable laws of nature, it always conserves a supreme authority; because these laws enjoin, that the part shall always remain subordinate to the whole.

Thus sovereigns are the ministers of society — its interpreters — the depositaries of a greater or of a less portion of its power, but they are not its absolute masters, neither are they the proprietors of nations. By a *covenant,* either expressed or implied, they engage themselves to watch over the maintenance, and to occupy themselves with the welfare, of society*;* it is

only upon these conditions that society consents to obey them. The price of obedience is protection.[56] No society upon earth was ever willing or competent to confer irrevocably upon its chiefs the right of doing it injury. Such a compact would be annulled by nature; because she wills that each society, the same as each individual of the human species, shall tend to its own conservation; it has not, therefore, the capacity to consent to its permanent misery. Laws, in order that they may be just, ought invariably to have for their end the general interest of society; that is to say, to assure to the greater number of citizens those advantages for which man originally associated. These advantages are, *liberty, property, security.*

Liberty, to man, is the faculty of doing, for his own peculiar happiness, every thing which does not injure or diminish the happiness of his associates: in associating, each individual renounced the exercise of that portion of his natural liberty, which would be able to prejudice or injure the liberty of his fellows. The exercise of that liberty which is injurious to society is called *licentiousness. Property* is the faculty of enjoying those advantages which spring from labour — those benefits which industry or talent has procured to each member of society. *Security* is the certitude that each individual ought to have, of enjoying in his person and his property, the protection of the laws, as long as he shall faithfully perform his engagements with society. *Justice* assures to all the members of society, the possession of those advantages or rights which belong to them. From this it will appear, that, without justice, society is not in a condition to procure the happiness of any man. Justice is also called *equity*, because, by the assistance of the laws, made to command the whole, she reduces all its members to a state of equality; that is to say, she prevents them from prevailing one over the other by the inequality which nature or industry may have made between their respective powers. *Rights* are every thing which society, by equitable laws, permits each individual to do for his own peculiar felicity. These rights are evidently limited by the invariable end of all association; society has, on its part, rights over all its members, by virtue of the advantages which it procures for them; all its members, in turn, have a right to claim from society, or secure from its ministers, those advantages for the procuring of which they congregated, and renounced a portion of their natural liberty. A society of which the chiefs, aided by the laws, do not procure any good for its members, evidently loses its right over them: those chiefs who injure society, lose the right of commanding. It is not our country without it secures the welfare of its inhabitants; a society without equity contains only enemies; a society oppressed is composed only of tyrants and slaves; slaves are incapable of being citizens; it is liberty — property — security, that render our country dear to us; and it is the true love of his country that forms the citizen.[57]

For want of having a proper knowledge of these truths, or for want of applying them when known, some nations have become unhappy — have contained nothing but a vile heap of slaves, separated from each other, and detached from society, which neither procures for them any good, nor secures to them any one advantage. In consequence of the imprudence of some nations, or of the craft, the cunning, the violence of those to whom they have confided the power of making laws, and of carrying them into execution, their sovereigns

have rendered themselves absolute masters of society. These, mistaking the true source of their power, pretended to hold it from heaven; to be accountable for their actions to God alone; to owe nothing to society, in a word, to be Gods upon earth, and to possess the right of governing arbitrarily, as the God or Gods above. From thence politics became corrupted, they were only a mockery. Such nations, disgraced and grown contemptible, did not dare resist the will of their chiefs — their laws were nothing more than the expression of the caprice of these chiefs; public welfare was sacrificed to their peculiar interests — the force of society was turned against itself — its members withdrew to attach themselves to its oppressors, to its tyrants; these, to seduce them, permitted them to injure it with impunity, to profit by its misfortunes. Thus liberty, justice, security, virtue, were banished from many nations — politics was no longer any thing more than the art of availing itself of the forces of a people, of the treasure of society, of dividing it on the subject of its interest, in order to subjugate it by itself: at length a stupid and mechanical habit made them love their chains.

Man, when he has nothing to fear, presently becomes wicked; he who believes he has not occasion for his fellow, persuades himself he may follow the inclinations of his heart, without caution or discretion. Thus, fear is the only obstacle society can effectually oppose to the passions of its chiefs: without it they will quickly become corrupt, and will not scruple to avail themselves of the means society has placed in their hands to make them accomplices in their iniquity. To prevent these abuses it is requisite society should set bounds to its confidence; should limit the power which it delegates to its chiefs; should reserve to itself a sufficient portion of authority to prevent them from injuring it; it must establish prudent checks; it must cautiously divide the powers it confers, because united it will be infallibly oppressed. The slightest reflection will make men feel, that the burden of governing is too ponderous to be borne by an individual — that the scope and the multiplicity of his duties must always render him negligent — that the extent of his power has ever a tendency to render him mischievous. In short, the experience of all ages will convince nations that man is continually tempted to the abuse of power: that therefore the sovereign ought to be subject to the law, not the law to the sovereign.

Government has necessarily an equal influence over the philosophy as over the morals of nations. In the same manner that its care produces labour, activity, abundance, salubrity, justice, and its negligence induces idleness, sloth, discouragement, penury, contagion, injustice, vices and crimes. It depends upon government either to foster industry, mature genius, give a spring to talents, or to stifle them. Indeed, government, the distributer of dignities, of riches, of rewards, of punishments — the master of those objects in which man from his infancy has learned to place his felicity — acquires a necessary influence over his conduct; it kindles his passions; gives them direction; makes him instrumental to whatever purpose it pleases: it modifies him; determines his manners; which, in a whole people, as in the individual, is nothing more than the conduct, or the general system of wills and of actions that necessarily result from his education, his government, his laws, his religious opinions, his institutions, whether rational or irrational. In short, manners are the habits of a people:

these are good whenever society draws from them true and solid happiness; they are detestable in the eye of reason, when the happiness of society does not spring from them, and when they have nothing more in their favour than the suffrage of time, or the countenance of prejudice, which rarely consults experience and good sense. If experience be consulted, it will be found there is no action, however abominable, that has not received the applause of some people. Parricide — the sacrifice of children — robbery — usurpation — cruelty — intolerance — prostitution, have all in their turn been licensed actions, and have been deemed laudable and meritorious deeds with some nations of the earth. Above all, Religion has consecrated the most unreasonable, the most revolting customs.

Man's passions depending on the motion of attraction and of repulsion of which he is rendered susceptible by nature, who enables him, by his peculiar essence, to be attracted by those objects which appear useful to him, to be repelled by those which he considers prejudicial; it follows that government, by holding the magnet, has the power either of restraining them, or of giving them a favourable or an unfavourable direction. All his passions are constantly limited by either loving or hating — seeking or avoiding — desiring or fearing. These passions, so necessary to the conservation of man, are a consequence of his organization, and display themselves with more or less energy, according to his temperament: education and habit develop them, and government conducts them towards those objects which it believes itself interested in making desirable to its subjects. The various names which have been given to these passions are relative to the different objects by which they are excited, such as pleasure — grandeur — riches, which produce voluptuousness — ambition — vanity — avarice. If the source of those passions which predominate in nations be attentively examined, it will be commonly found in their governments. It is the impulse received from their chiefs that renders them sometimes warlike — sometimes superstitious — sometimes aspiring after glory — sometimes greedy after wealth — sometimes rational — sometimes unreasonable. If sovereigns, in order to enlighten and to render happy their dominions, were to employ only the *tenth* part of the vast expenditures which they lavish, and only a *tithe* of the pains which they employ to stupify them — to deceive them — to afflict them, their subjects would presently be as wise and as happy, as they are now remarkable for being blind, ignorant, and miserable.

Let the vain project of destroying passions from the heart of man be abandoned; let an effort be made to direct them towards objects that may be useful to himself and to his associates. Let education, let government, let the laws, habituate him to restrain his passions within those just bounds which experience and reason prescribe. Let the ambitious have honours, titles, distinctions, power, when they shall have usefully served their country; let riches be given to those who covet them, when they shall have rendered themselves necessary to their fellow citizens; let eulogies encourage those who shall be actuated by the love of glory. In short, let the passions of man have a free course, whenever there shall result from their exercise real and durable advantages to society. Let education kindle only those which are truly beneficial to the human species; let it favour those alone which are really necessary to the maintenance

of society. The passions of man are dangerous, only because every thing conspires to give them an evil direction.

Nature does not make man either good or wicked;[58] she combines machines more or less active, mobile, and energetic; she furnishes him with organs, with temperament, of which his passions, more or less impetuous, are the necessary consequence; these passions have always his happiness for their object; therefore they are legitimate and natural, and they can only be called bad or good, relatively to the influence they have on the beings of his species. Nature gives man legs proper to sustain his weight, necessary to transport him from one place to another; the care of those who rear them, strengthens them; habituates him to avail himself of them; accustoms him to make either a good or a bad use of them. The arm which he has received from nature is neither good nor bad; it is necessary to a great number of the actions of life; nevertheless the use of this arm becomes criminal if he has contracted the habit of using it to rob or to assassinate, with a view to obtain that money which he has been taught from his infancy to desire; which the society in which he lives renders necessary to him, but which his industry will enable him to obtain without doing injury to his fellow man.

The heart of man is a soil which, nature has made equally suitable to the production of brambles or of useful grain — of deleterious poison or of refreshing fruit, by virtue of the seeds which may be sown in it — by the cultivation that may be bestowed upon it. In his infancy those objects are pointed out to him which he is to estimate or to despise — to seek after or to avoid — to love or to hate. It is his parents and his instructors who render him either virtuous or wicked — wise or unreasonable — studious or dissipated — steady or trifling — solid or vain. Their example and their discourse modify him through his whole life, teaching him what are the things he ought either to desire or to avoid: he desires them in consequence; and he imposes on himself the task of obtaining them according to the energy of his temperament, which ever decides the force of his passions. It is thus that education, by inspiring him with opinions and ideas either true or false, gives him those primitive impulsions after which he acts in a manner either advantageous or prejudicial, both to himself and to others. Man, at his birth, brings with him into the world nothing but the necessity of conserving himself and of rendering his existence happy: instruction, example, the customs of the world, present him with the means, either real or imaginary, of achieving it: habit procures for him the facility of employing these means; and he attaches himself strongly to those he judges best calculated to secure to him the possession of those objects which he has learned to desire as the preferable good attached to his existence. Whenever his education, whenever the examples which have been afforded him, whenever the means with which he has been provided, are approved by reason, are the result of experience, every thing concurs to render him virtuous: habit strengthens these dispositions in him; and he becomes, in consequence, a useful member of society, to the interests of which every thing ought to prove to him, that his own permanent well-being is necessarily allied. If, on the contrary, his education — his institutions — the examples which are set before him — the opinions which are suggested to him in his infancy, are of a nature to exhibit to his mind virtue as useless and

repugnant, and vice as useful and congenial to his own individual happiness, he will become vicious; he will believe himself interested in injuring society; he will be carried along by the general current: he will renounce virtue, which to him will no longer be any thing more than a vain idol, without attractions to induce him to follow it; without charms to tempt his adoration, because it will appear to exact that he should immolate at its shrine all those objects which he has been constantly taught to consider the most dear to himself and as benefits the most desirable.

In order that man may become virtuous, it is absolutely requisite that he should have an interest or should find advantages in practising virtue. For this end, it is necessary that education should implant in him reasonable ideas; that public opinion should lean towards virtue as the most desirable good; that example should point it out as the object most worthy esteem; that government should faithfully reward it; that honour should always accompany its practice; that vice and crime should invariably be despised and punished. Is virtue in this situation amongst men? Does the education of man infuse into him just ideas of happiness; true notions of virtue; dispositions really favourable to the beings with whom he is to live? The examples spread before him, are they suitable to innocence of manners? are they calculated to make him respect decency — to cause him to love probity — to practise honesty — to value good faith — to esteem equity — to revere conjugal fidelity — to observe exactitude in fulfilling his duties? Religion, which alone pretends to regulate his manners, does it render him sociable — does it make him pacific — does it teach him to be humane? The arbiters of society, are they faithful in rewarding those who have best served their country, in punishing those who have plundered, divided, and ruined it? Justice, does she hold her scales with an even hand between all the citizens of the state? The laws, do they never support the strong against the weak; favour the rich against the poor; uphold the happy against the miserable? In short, is it an uncommon spectacle to behold crime frequently justified, or crowned with success, insolently triumphing over that merit which it disdains, over that virtue which it outrages? Well, then, in societies thus constituted, virtue can only be heard by a very small number of peaceable citizens, who know how to estimate its value, and who enjoy it in secret. For the others, it is only a disgusting object, as they see in it nothing but the supposed enemy t their happiness, or the censor of their individual conduct. If man, according to his nature, is necessitated to desire his welfare, he is equally obliged to cherish the means by which he believes it is to be acquired it would be useless, and perhaps unjust to demand that a man should be virtuous, if he could not be so without rendering himself miserable. Whenever he thinks vice renders him happy, he must necessarily love vice; whenever he sees inutility or crime rewarded and honoured, what interest will he find in occupying himself with the happiness of his fellow creatures, or in restraining the fury of his passions? In fine, whenever his mind is saturated with false ideas and dangerous opinions, it follows of course that his whole conduct will become nothing more than a long chain of errours, a series of depraved actions.

We are informed, that the savages, in order to flatten the heads of their children, squeeze

them between two boards, by that means preventing them from taking the shape designed for them by nature. It is pretty nearly the game thing with the institutions of man; they commonly conspire to counteract nature — to constrain — to divert — to extinguish the impulse nature has given him, to substitute others which are the source of all his misfortunes. In almost all the countries of the earth man is bereft of truth, is fed with falsehoods, is amused with marvellous chimeras: he is treated like those children whose members are, by the imprudent care of their nurses, swathed with little fillets, bound up with rollers, which deprive them of the free use of their limbs, obstruct their growth, prevent their activity, and oppose themselves to their health.

Most of the religious opinions of man have for their object only to display to him his supreme felicity in those illusions for which they kindle his passions: but as the phantoms which are presented to his imagination are incapable of being considered in the same light by all who contemplate them, he is perpetually in dispute concerning these objects; he hates and persecutes his neighbour — his neighbour in turn persecutes him — he believes in doing this he is doing well; that in committing the greatest crimes to sustain his opinions he is acting right. It is thus religion infatuates man from his infancy, fills him with vanity and fanaticism: if he has a heated imagination it drives him on to fury; if he has activity, it makes him a madman, who is frequently as cruel to himself, as he is dangerous and incommodious to others: if, on the contrary, he be phlegmatic or of a slothful habit, he becomes melancholy and is useless to society.

Public opinion every instant offers to man's contemplation false ideas of honour and wrong notions of glory: it attaches his esteem not only to frivolous advantages, but also to prejudicial and injurious actions, which example authorizes — which prejudice consecrates — which habit precludes him from viewing with disgust, from eying with the horrour they merit. Indeed, habit familiarizes his mind with the most absurd ideas — with the most unreasonable customs — with the most blameable actions — with prejudices the most contrary to his own interests, the most detrimental to the society in which he lives. He finds nothing strange, nothing singular, nothing despicable, nothing ridiculous, except those opinions and those objects to which he is himself unaccustomed. There are countries in which the most laudable actions appear very blameable and extremely ridiculous, and where the foulest, the most diabolical actions, pass for very honest and perfectly rational.[59]

Authority commonly believes itself interested in maintaining the received opinions; those prejudices and those errours which it considers requisite to the maintenance of its power, are sustained by force, which is never rational. Princes filled with deceptive images of happiness; with mistaken notions of power; with erroneous opinions of grandeur; with false ideas of glory, are surrounded with flattering courtiers, who are interested in keeping up the delusion of their masters: these contemptible men have acquired idea of virtue only that they may outrage it: by degrees they corrupt the people these become depraved, lend themselves to their debaucheries, pander to the vices of the great, then make a merit of imitating them in their irregularities. A court is the true focus of the corruption of a people.

This is the true source of moral evil It is thus that every thing conspires to render man vicious, to give a fatal impulse to his soul; from whence results the general confusion of society, which becomes unhappy from the misery of almost every one of its members. The strongest motive- powers are put in action to inspire man with a passion for futile or indifferent objects, which make him become dangerous to, his fellow man by the means which he is compelled to employ in order to obtain them. Those who have the charge of guiding his steps, either impostors themselves, or the dupes to their own prejudices, forbid him to hearken to reason; they make truth appear dangerous to him, and exhibit errour as requisite to his welfare, not only in this world but in the next. In short, habit strongly attaches him to his irrational opinions — to his perilous inclinations — to his blind passion for objects either useless or dangerous. Here then is the reason why for the most part man finds himself necessarily determined to evil; the reason why the passions, inherent in his nature and necessary to his conservation, become the instruments of his destruction, the bane of that society which they ought to preserve. Here, then, the reason why society becomes a state of warfare, and why it does nothing but assemble enemies, who are envious of each other and always rivals for the prize. If some virtuous beings are to be found in these societies, they must be sought for in the very small number of those, who, born with a phlegmatic temperament, have moderate passions, who therefore either do not desire at all, or desire very feebly, those objects with which their associates are continually inebriated.

Man's nature diversely cultivated, decides upon his faculties, as well corporeal as intellectual — upon his qualities, as well moral as physical. The man who is of a sanguine, robust constitution, must necessarily have strong passions: he who is of a bilious, melancholy habit, will as necessarily hare fantastical and gloomy passions: the man of a gay turn, of a sprightly imagination, will have cheerful passions; while the man, in whom phlegm abounds, will have those which are gentle, or which have a very slight degree of violence. It appears to be upon the equilibrium of the humours that depends the state of the man who is called *virtuous:* his temperament seems to be the result of a combination, in which the elements or principles are balanced with such precision, that no one passion predominates over another, or carries into his machine more disorder than its neighbour. Habit, as we have seen, is man's nature modified: this latter furnishes the matter; education, domestic example, national manners, give it the form: these acting on his temperament, make him either reasonable or irrational, enlightened or stupid, a fanatic or a hero, an enthusiast for the public good, or an unbridled criminal, a wise man smitten with the advantages of virtue or a libertine plunged into every kind of vice. All the varieties of the moral man depend on the diversity of his ideas. which are themselves arranged and combined in his brain by the intervention of his senses. His temperament is the produce of physical substances; is habits are the effect of physical modifications; the opinions, whether good or bad, injurious or beneficial, true or false, which form themselves in his mind, are never more than the effect of those physical impulsions which the brain receives by the medium of the senses.

Chapter X: The Soul does not derive its Ideas from itself. It has no innate Ideas.

What has preceded suffices to prove that the interior organ of man, which is called his *soul,* is purely material. He will be enabled to convince himself of this truth, by the manner in which he acquires his ideas; from those impressions, which material objects successively make on his organs, which are themselves acknowledged to be material. It has been seen that the faculties which are called *intellectual,* are to be ascribed to that of feeling; the different qualities of those faculties, which are called moral, have been explained after the necessary laws of a very simple mechanism: it now remains to reply to those who still obstinately persist in making the soul a substance distinguished from the body, or who insist on giving it an essence totally distinct. They seem to found their distinction upon this, that this interior organ has the faculty of drawing its ideas from within itself; they will have it that man, at his birth, brings with him ideas into the world, which according to this wonderful notion, they have called *innate.*[60] They have believed, then, that the soul, by a special privilege, in a nature where every thing is connected, enjoyed the faculty of moving itself without receiving any impulse; of creating to itself ideas, of thinking on a subject, without being determined to such action by any exterior object, which, by moving its organs, should furnish it with an image of the subject of its thoughts. In consequence of these gratuitous suppositions, which it is only requisite to expose in order to confute, some very able speculators, who were prepossessed by their superstitious prejudices, have ventured the length to assert, that, without model, without prototype, to act on the senses, the soul is competent to delineate to itself the whole universe, with all the beings it contains. Descartes and his disciples have assured us, that the body went absolutely for nothing in the sensations or idea's of the soul; that it can feel — that it can perceive, understand, taste, and touch, even when there should exist nothing that is corporeal or material exterior to ourselves.

But what shall be said of a Berkeley, who has endeavoured to prove to man, that every thing in this world is nothing more than a chimerical illusion, and that the universe exists nowhere but in himself: that it has no identity but in his imagination; who has rendered the existence of all things problematical by the aid of sophisms, insolvable even to those who maintain the doctrine of the spirituality of the soul.[61]

To justify such monstrous opinions, they assert that ideas are only the objects of thought. But according to the last analysis, these ideas can only reach man from exterior objects, which in giving impulse to his senses, modify his brain; or from the material beings contained within the interior of his machine, who make some parts of his body experience those sensations which he perceives, and which furnish him with ideas, which he relates, faithfully or otherwise, to the cause that moves him. Each idea is an effect, but however difficult it may be to recur to the cause, can we possibly suppose it is not ascribable to a cause? If we can only form ideas of material substances, how can we suppose the cause of our ideas can possibly be immaterial? To pretend that man, without the aid of exterior objects, without the intervention of his senses, is competent to form ideas of the universe, is to assert, that a blind

man is in a capacity to form a true idea of a picture that represents some fact of which he has never heard any one speak.

It is very easy to perceive the source of those errours into which men, otherwise extremely profound and very enlightened, have fallen, when they have been desirous to speak of the soul and of its operations. Obliged, either by their own prejudices, or by the fear of combating the opinions of an imperious theology, they have become the advocates of the principle, that the soul was a *pure spirit*, an immaterial substance, of an essence directly different from that of the body, or from every thing we behold: this granted, they have been incompetent to conceive how material objects could operate, or in what manner gross and corporeal organs were enabled to act on a substance that had no kind of analogy with them, and how they were in a capacity to modify it by conveying it ideas; in the impossibility of explaining this phenomenon, at the same time perceiving that the soul had ideas, they concluded that it must draw them from itself, and not from those beings, which according to their own hypothesis, were incapable of acting on it; they therefore imagined that all the modifications of this soul, sprung from its own peculiar energy, were imprinted on it from its first formation by the author of nature — an immaterial being like itself; and that these did not in any manner depend upon the beings of which we nave a knowledge, or which act upon it by the gross means of our senses.

There are, however, some phenomena which, considered superficially, appear to support the opinion of these philosophers, and to announce a faculty in the human soul of producing ideas within itself, without any exterior aid; these are *dreams*, in which the interior organ of man, deprived of objects that move it visibly, does not, however, cease to have ideas, to be set in activity, and to be modified in a manner that is sufficiently sensible to have an influence upon his body. But if a little reflection be called in, the solution to this difficulty will be found: it will be perceived, that, even during sleep, his brain is supplied with a multitude of ideas, with which the eve or time before has stocked it; these ideas were communicated to it by exterior and corporeal objects; by which it has been modified: it will be found that these modifications renew themselves, not by any spontaneous or voluntary motion on its part, but by a chain of involuntary movements which take place in his machine, which determine or excite those that give play to the brain; these modifications renew themselves with more or less fidelity, with a greater or lesser degree of conformity to those which it has anteriorly experienced. Sometimes in dreaming he has memory, then he retraces to himself the objects which have struck him faithfully; at other times, these modifications renew themselves without order, without connexion, or very differently from those which real objects have before excited in his interior organ. If in a dream he believe he sees a friend, his brain renews in itself the modifications or the ideas which this friend had formerly excited, in the same order that they arranged themselves when his eyes really beheld him; this is nothing more than an effect of memory. If, in his dream, he fancy he sees a monster which has no model in nature, his brain is then modified in the same manner that it was by the particular or detached ideas with which it then does nothing more than compose an ideal

whole, by assembling and associating, in a ridiculous manner, the scattered ideas that were consigned to its keeping; it is then, that in dreaming he has imagination.

Those dreams that are troublesome, extravagant, whimsical, or unconnected, are commonly the effect of some confusion in his machine; such as painful indigestion, an overheated blood, a prejudicial fermentation, &c. — these material causes excite in his body a disorderly motion, which precludes the brain from being modified in the same manner it was on the day before; in consequence of this irregular motion, the brain is disturbed, it only represents to itself confused ideas that want connexion. When in a dream he believes he sees a sphinx,[62] either he has seen the representation of one when he was awake, or else the disorderly motion of the brain is such, that it causes it to combine ideas, to connect parts, from which there results a whole without model, of which the parts were not formed to be united. It is thus, that his brain combines the head of a woman, of which it already has the idea, with the body of a lioness, of which it also has the image. In this his head acts in the same manner as when, by any defect in the interior organ, his disordered imagination paints to him some objects, notwithstanding he is awake. He frequently dreams without being asleep: his dreams never produce any thing so strange but that they have some resemblance with the objects which have anteriorly acted on his senses, or have already communicated ideas to his brain. The crafty theologians have composed at their leisure, and in their waking hours, those phantoms of which they avail themselves to terrify man; they have done nothing more than assemble the scattered traits which they have found in the most terrible beings of their own species; by exaggerating the powers and the rights claimed by tyrants, they have formed Gods before whom man trembles.

Thus it is seen that dreams, far from proving that the soul acts by its own peculiar energy, or draws its ideas from its own recesses, prove, on the contrary, that in sleep it is entirely passive, that it does not even renew its modifications, but according to the involuntary confusion, which physical causes produce in the body, of which every thing tends to show the identity and the consubstantiality with the soul. What appears to have led those into a mistake, who maintained that the soul drew its ideas from itself, is this, they have contemplated these ideas as if they were real beings, when, in point of fact, they are nothing more than the modifications produced in the brain of man by objects to which this brain is a stranger; they are these objects, who are the true models or archetypes to which it is necessary to recur: here is the source of their errours.

In the individual who dreams, the soul does not act more from itself than it does in the man who is drunk, that is to say, who is modified by some spirituous liquor; or than it does in the sick man when he is delirious, that is to say, when he is modified by those physical causes which disturb his machine in the performance of its functions; or than it does in him whose brain is disordered: dreams, like these various states, announce nothing more than a physical confusion in the human machine, under the influence of which the brain ceases to act after a precise and regular manner: this disorder may be traced to physical causes, such as the aliments, the humours, the combinations, the fermentations, which are but little analogous

to the salutary state of man; from which it will appear, that his brain is necessarily confused whenever his body is agitated in an extraordinary manner.

Do not let him, therefore, believe that his soul acts by itself, or without a cause, in any one moment of his existence; it is, conjointly with the body, submitted to the impulse of beings who act on him necessarily, and according to their various properties. Wine, taken in too great a quantity, necessarily disturbs his ideas, causes confusion in his corporeal functions, occasions disorder in his mental faculties.

If there really existed a being in nature with the capability of moving itself by its own peculiar energies, that is to say, able to produce motion independent of all other causes, such a being would have the power of arresting itself, or of suspending the motion of the universe, which is nothing more than an immense chain of causes linked one to the other, acting and reacting by necessary and by immutable laws, which cannot be changed or suspended, unless the essences of every thing in it were changed — nay, annihilated. In the general system of the world, nothing more can be perceived than a long series of motion, received and communicated in succession by beings capacitated to give impulse to each other: it is thus that each body is moved, by the collision of some other body. The invisible motion of his soul is to be attributed to causes concealed within himself; he believes that it is moved by itself, because he does not see the springs which put it in motion, or because he conceives those motive-powers are incapable of producing the effects he so much admires: but, does he more clearly conceive how a spark in exploding gunpowder is capable of producing the terrible effects he witnesses? The source of his errours arises from this, that he regards his body as gross and inert, whilst this body is a sensible machine, which has necessarily an instantaneous conscience the moment it receives an impression, and which is conscious of its own existence by the recollection of impressions successively experienced; memory, by resuscitating an impression anteriorly received, by detaining it, or by causing an impression which it receives to remain, whilst it associates it with another, then with a third, gives all the mechanism of *reasoning.*

An idea, which is only an imperceptible modification of the brain, gives play to the organ of speech, which displays itself by the motion it excites in the tongue: this, in its turn, breeds ideas, thoughts, passions, in those beings who are provided with organs susceptible of receiving analogous motion; in consequence of which, the wills of a great number of men are influenced, who, combining their efforts, produce a revolution in a state, or even have an influence over the entire globe. It is thus that an Alexander decided the fate of Asia; it is thus that a Mahomet changed the face of the earth; it is thus that imperceptible causes produce the most terrible, the most extended effects, by a series of necessary motion imprinted on the brain of man.

The difficulty of comprehending the effects produced on the soul of man, has made him attribute to it those incomprehensible qualities which have been examined. By the aid of imagination, by the power of thought, this soul appears to quit his body, to transport itself with the utmost facility towards the most distant objects; to run over and to approximate in

the twinkling of an eye all the points of the universe: he has therefore believed that a being, who is susceptible of such rapid motion, must be of a nature very distinguished from all others; he has persuaded himself that this soul in reality does travel, that it actually springs over the immense space necessary to meet these various objects; he did not perceive, that to do it in an instant, it had only to run over itself, and approximate the ideas consigned to its keeping by means of the senses.

Indeed, it is never by any other means than by his senses, that beings become known to man, or furnish him with ideas; it is only in consequence of the impulse given to his body, that his brain is modified; or that his soul thinks, wills, and acts. If, as Aristotle asserted more than two thousand years ago, "*nothing enters the mind of man, but through the medium of his senses*;" it follows as a consequence, that every thing that issues from it, must find some sensible object to which it can attach its ideas, whether immediately, as a man, a tree, a bird, &c., or in the last analysis or decomposition, such as pleasure, happiness, vice, virtue, &c.[63] Whenever, therefore, a word or its idea, does not connect itself with some sensible object, to which it can be related, this word, or this idea, is unmeaning, is void of sense: it were better for man that the idea was banished from his mind, struck out of his language. This principle is only the converse of the axiom of Aristotle; if the direct be evident, the inverse must be so likewise.

How has it happened, that the profound Locke, who, to the great mortification of the metaphysicians, has placed this principle of Aristotle in the clearest point of view; haw is it that all those who, like him, have recognised the absurdity of the system of innate ideas, have not drawn the immediate and necessary consequences? How has it come to pass, that they have not had sufficient courage to apply so clear a principle to all those fanciful chimeras with which the human mind has for such a length of time been so vainly occupied? Did they not perceive, that their principle sapped the very foundations of that theology, which never occupies man but with those objects, of which, as they are inaccessible to his senses, he, consequently, can never form to himself any accurate idea? But prejudice, particularly when it is held sacred, prevents him from seeing the most simple application of the most self-evident principles; in religious matters, the greatest men are frequently nothing more than children, who are incapable of either foreseeing or deducing the consequence of their own data.

Locke, as well as all those who have adopted his system, which is so demonstrable, or the axiom of Aristotle, which is so clear, ought to have concluded from it, that all those wonderful things with which theologians have amused themselves, are mere chimeras; that an immaterial spirit or substance, without extent, without parts, is nothing more than an absence of ideas; in short, they ought to have felt, that the ineffable intelligence which they have supposed to preside at the helm of the world, is nothing more than a being of their own imagination, of which it is impossible his senses can ever prove either the existence or the qualities.

For the same reason moral philosophers ought to have concluded, that what is called *moral*

sentiment, moral instinct, that is, innate ideas of virtue, anterior to all experience of the good or bad effects resulting from its practice, are mere chimerical notions, which, like a great many others, have for their guarantee and base only theological speculation.[64] Before man can judge, he must feel; before he can distinguish good from evil, he must compare.

To undeceive him with respect to innate ideas or modifications imprinted on his soul at the moment of his birth, it is simply requisite to recur to their source; he will then see, that those with which he is familiar, which have, as it were, identified themselves with his existence, have all come to him through the medium of some of his senses; that they are sometimes engraven on his brain with great difficulty, that they have never been permanent, and that they have perpetually varied in him: he will see that these pretended inherent ideas of his soul, are the effect of education, of example, above all, of habit, which, by reiterated motion, has taught his brain to associate his ideas, either in a confused or perspicuous manner; to familiarize itself with systems, either rational or absurd. In short, he takes those for innate ideas, of which he has forgotten the origin; he no longer recalls to himself either the precise epoch or the successive circumstances when these ideas were first consigned to his brain: arrived at a certain age, he believes he has always had the same notions; his memory, crowded with experience and a multitude of facts, is no longer able to distinguish the particular circumstances which have contributed to give his brain its present modifications, its instantaneous mode of thinking, its actual opinions. For example, not one of his race recollects, the first time the word God struck his ears, the first ideas that it formed in him, the first thoughts that it produced in him; nevertheless, it is certain that from thence he has searched for some being with whom to connect the idea which he has either formed to himself, or which has been suggested to him: accustomed to hear God continually spoken of, he has, when in other respects most enlightened, regarded this idea as if it were infused into him by nature; whilst it is clearly to be attributed to those delineations of it which his parents or his instructers have made to him, and which he has afterwards modified according to his own particular organization, and the circumstances in which he has been placed: it is thus that each individual forms to himself a God of which he is himself the model, or which he modifies after his own fashion.[65]

His ideas of morals, although more real than those of metaphysics, are not, however, *innate:* the moral sentiments he forms on the will, or the judgment he passes on the actions of man, are founded on experience, which, alone, can enable him to discriminate those which are either useful or prejudicial, virtuous or vicious, honest or dishonest, worthy his esteem or deserving his censure. His moral sentiments are the fruit of a multitude of experience, frequently very long and very complicated. He gathers it with time: it is more or less faithful, by reason of his particular organization, and the causes by which he is modified; he ultimately applies this experience with greater or lesser facility, and on this depends his habit of judging. The celerity with which he applies his experience, when he judges of the moral actions of his fellow man, is what has been termed *moral instinct.*

That which in natural philosophy is called *instinct,* is only the effect of some want of the

body, the consequence of some attraction, or some repulsion, in man or animals. The child that is newly born, sucks for the first time: the nipple of the breast is put into his mouth: the natural analogy that is found between the conglomerate glands which line his mouth, and the milk which flows from the bosom of the nurse through the medium of the nipple, causes the child to press it with his mouth, in order to express the fluid appropriate to nourish his tender age; from all this the infant gathers experience; by degrees the ideas of a nipple, of milk, of pleasure, associate themselves in his brain, and every time he sees the nipple, he seizes it, promptly conveys it to his mouth, and applies it to the use for which it is designed.

What has been said will enable us to judge of those prompt and sudden sentiments, which have been designated *the force of blood*. Those sentiments of love, which fathers and mothers have for their children; those feelings of affection, which children, with good inclinations, bear towards their parents, are by no means innate sentiments; they are nothing more than the effect of experience, of reflection, of habit, in souls of sensibility. These sentiments do not even exist in a great number of human beings. We but too often witness tyrannical parents, occupied with making enemies of their children, who appear to have been formed only to be the victims of their irrational caprices.

From the instant in which man commences, until that in which he ceases to exist, he feels, he is moved either agreeably or unpleasantly, he collects facts, he gathers experience, which produce ideas in his brain that are either cheerful or gloomy. Not one individual has this experience present to his memory at the same time, nor does it ever represent to him the whole clew at once; it is however this experience that mechanically, and without his knowledge, directs him in all his actions; it was to designate the rapidity with which he applied this experience, of which he se frequently loses the connexion, of which he is so often at a loss to render himself an account, that he imagined the word *instinct:* it appears to be the effect of a magical and supernatural power to the greater number of individuals; but it is a word devoid of sense to many others; however, to the philosopher it is the effect of a very lively feeling, which, to him, consists in the faculty of combining promptly a multitude of experiences and a long and numerous train of extremely complicated ideas. It is want that causes the inexplicable instinct we behold in animals, which have been denied souls without reason; whilst they are susceptible of an infinity of actions that prove they think, they judge, have memory, are capable of experience, can combine ideas, can apply them with more or less facility to satisfy the wants engendered by their particular organization; in short, that prove they have passions, and that these are capable of being modified.[66]

The embarrassments which animals have thrown in the way of the partisans of the doctrine of spirituality is well known: they have been fearful, if they allowed them to have a spiritual soul, of elevating them to the condition of human creatures; on the other hand, in not allowing them to have a soul, they have furnished their adversaries with authority to deny it in like manner to man, who thus finds himself debased to the condition of the animal. Theologians have never known how to extricate themselves from this difficulty. Descartes fancied he solved it by saying that beasts have no souls, are mere machines. Nothing can be

nearer the surface than the absurdity of this principle. Whoever contemplates nature without prejudice, will readily acknowledge, that there is no other difference between the man and the beast than that which is to be attributed to the diversity of his organization.

In some beings of the human species, who appear to be endowed with a greater sensibility of organs than others, may be seen *an instinct*, by the assistance of which they very promptly judge of the concealed dispositions of their fellows, simply by inspecting the lineaments of their face. Those who are denominated *physiognomists*, are only men of very acute feelings, who have gathered an experience of which others, whether from the coarseness of their organs, from the little attention they have paid, or from some defect in their senses, are totally incapable: these last do not believe in the science of physiognomy, which appears to them perfectly ideal. Nevertheless, it is certain that the action of this soul, which has been made spiritual, makes impressions that are extremely marked upon the exterior of the body; these impressions continually reiterated, their image remains: thus, the habitual passions of man paint themselves on his countenance, by which the attentive observer, who is endowed with acute feeling, is enabled to judge with great rapidity of his mode of existence, and even to foresee his actions, his inclinations, his desires, his predominant passions, &c. Although the science of physiognomy appears chimerical to a great number of persons, yet there are few who have not a clear idea of a tender regard, of a cruel eye, of an austere aspect, of a false and dissimulating look, of an open countenance, &c. Keen and practised optics acquire, without doubt, the faculty of penetrating the concealed motion of the soul, by the visible traces it leaves upon features that it has continually modified. Above all, the eyes of man very quickly undergo changes, according to the motion which is excited in him: these delicate organs are visibly altered by the smallest shock communicated to his brain. Serene eyes announce a tranquil soul; wild eyes indicate a restless mind; fiery eyes portray a choleric and sanguine temperament; fickle or inconstant eyes give room to suspect a soul either alarmed or dissimulating. It *is* the study of this variety of shades that renders man practised and acute: upon he spot he combines a multitude of acquired experience, in order to form his judgment of the person he beholds. His judgment partakes in nothing of the supernatural or the wonderful: such a man is only distinguished by the fineness of his organs, and by the celerity with which his brain performs its functions.

It is the same with some beings of the human species, in whom may be discovered an extraordinary sagacity, which to the uninformed appears Divine and miraculous.[67] Indeed, we see men who are capable of appreciating in the twinkling of an eye a multitude of circumstances, and who have sometimes the faculty of foreseeing the most distant events, yet this species *of prophetic* talent has nothing in it of the supernatural; it indicates nothing more than great experience, with an extremely delicate organization, from which they derive the faculty of judging with extreme facility of causes, and of foreseeing their very remote effects. This faculty is also found in animals, who foresee much better than man the variations of the atmosphere, with the various changes of the weather. Birds have long been the prophets and even the guides of several nations who pretend to be extremely enlightened.

It is, then, to their organization, exercised after a particular manner, that must be attributed those wondrous faculties which distinguish some beings. *To have instinct* only signifies to judge quickly, without requiring to make a long reasoning on the subject. Man's ideas upon vice and upon virtue are by no means innate; they are, like all others, acquired; the judgment he forms is founded upon experience, whether true or false: this depends upon his conformation, and upon the habits that have modified him. The infant has no ideas either of the Divinity or of virtue: it is from those who instruct him that he receives these ideas: he makes more or less use of them, according to his natural organization, or as his dispositions have been more or less exercised. Nature gives man legs, the nurse teaches him their use, his agility depends upon their natural conformation, and the manner in which he exercises them. What is called *taste* in the fine arts, is to be attributed, in the same manner, only to the acuteness of man's organs practised by the habit of seeing, of comparing, and of judging certain objects: from whence results, to some of his species, the faculty of judging with great rapidity, or in the twinkling of an eye, the whole with its various relations. It is by the force of seeing, of feeling, of experiencing objects, that he attains to a knowledge of them; it is in consequence of reiterating this experience, that he acquires the power and the habit of judging with celerity. But this experience is by no means *innate*, for he did not possess it before he was born; he is neither able to think, (to judge, nor to have ideas, before he has feeling; he is neither in a capacity to love nor to hate; to approve nor to blame, before he has been moved either agreeably or disagreeably. This is, however, what must be supposed by those who are desirous to make man admit *innate, ideas*, or opinions infused by nature, whether in morals, theology, or in any science. That his mind should have the faculty of thought, and should occupy itself with an object, it is requisite it should be acquainted with its qualities; that it may have a knowledge of these qualities, it is necessary that some of his senses should have been struck by them: those objects, therefore, of which he does not know any of the qualities are nullities, or at least they do not exist for him.

It will be asserted, perhaps, that the universal consent of man upon certain propositions, such as *the whole is greater than its part*, and upon all geometrical demonstrations, appear to warrant the supposition of certain primary notions that are innate, or not acquired. It may be replied, that these notions are always acquired, and that they are the fruit of an experience more or less prompt; that it is requisite to have compared the whole with its part before conviction can ensue that the whole is the greater of the two. Man, when he is born, does not bring with him the idea that two and two make four; but he is, nevertheless, very speedily convinced of its truth. Before forming any judgment whatever, it is absolutely necessary to have compared facts.

It is evident that those who have gratuitously supposed innate ideas, or notions inherent in man, have confounded his organization, or his natural dispositions, with the habit by which he is modified, and with the greater or less aptitude he has of making experiments, and of applying them in his judgment. A man who has taste in painting, has, without doubt, brought with him into the world eyes more acute and more penetrating than another; but these eyes

would by no means enable him to judge with promptitude if he had never had occasion to exercise them; much less, in some respects, can those dispositions which are called *natural* be regarded as innate. Man is not at twenty years of age the same as he was when he came into the world; the physical causes that are continually acting upon him, necessarily have an influence upon his organization, and so modify it, that his natural dispositions themselves are not at one period what they are at another.[68] Every day may be seen children who, to a certain age, display a great deal of ingenuity, a strong aptitude for the sciences, and who finish by falling into stupidity. Others may be observed, who, during their infancy, have shown dispositions but little favourable to improvement, yet develop themselves in the end, and astonish us by an exhibition of those qualities of which we judged them deficient: there arrives a moment in which the mind makes use of a multitude of experience which it has amassed without its having been perceived, and, if I may be allowed the expression, without their own knowledge.

Thus, it cannot be too often repeated, all the ideas, all the notions, all the modes of existence, all the thoughts of man are acquired. His mind cannot act and exercise itself but upon that of which it has knowledge; it can understand either well or ill only those things which it has previously felt. Such of his ideas that do not suppose some exterior material object for their model, or one to which he is able to relate them, which are therefore called *abstract ideas,* are only modes in which his interior organ considers its own peculiar modifications, of which it chooses some without respect to others. The words which he uses to designate these ideas, such as *bounty, beauty, order, intelligence, virtue,* &c., do not offer any one sense if he does not relate them to, or if he does not explain them by those objects which his senses have shown him to be susceptible of those qualities, or of those modes of existence and of acting, which are known to him. What is it that points out to him the vague idea of *beauty,* if he does riot attach it to some object that has struck his senses in a particular manner, to which, in consequence, he attributes this quality? What is it that represents the word *intelligence,* if he does not connect it with a certain mode of being and of acting? Does the word *order* signify any thing, if he does not relate it to a series of actions, to a chain of motion, by which he is affected in a certain manner? Is not the word *virtue* void of sense, if he does not apply it to those dispositions of his fellows which produce known effects, different from those which result from contrary inclinations? What do the words *pain* and *pleasure* offer to his mind in the moment when his organs neither suffer nor enjoy, if it be not the modes in which he has been affected, of which his brain conserves the remembrance or the impressions, and which experience has shown him to be either useful or prejudicial? But when he hears the words *spirituality, immateriality, incorporeality, divinity,* &c., pronounced, neither his senses nor his memory afford him any assistance: they do not furnish him with any means by which he can form an idea of their qualities, nor of the objects to which he ought to apply them: in that which is not matter, he can only see vacuum and emptiness, which cannot be susceptible of any one quality.

All the errours and all the disputes of men, have their foundation in this, that they have

renounced experience and the evidence of their senses, to give themselves up to the guidance of notions which they have believed *infused* or *innate*, although in reality they are no more than the effect of a distempered imagination; of prejudices in which they have been instructed from their infancy; with which habit has familiarized them; and which authority has obliged them to conserve. Languages are filled with abstract words, to which are attached confused and vague ideas; of which, when they come to be examined, no model can be found in nature; no object to which they can be related. When man gives himself the trouble to analyze things, he is quite surprised to find that those words which are continually in the mouths of men, never present any fixed and determinate idea: he hears them unceasingly speaking of *spirits* — of the *soul* and its faculties — of *God* and his attributes — of *duration* — of *space* — of *immensity* — of *infinity* — of *perfection* — of *virtue* — of *reason* — of *sentiment* — of *instinct* — of *taste*, &c., without his being able to tell precisely what they themselves understand by these words. And yet words appear to have been invented but for the purpose of representing the images of things, or to paint, by the assistance of the senses, those known objects on which the mind is able to meditate, which it is competent to appreciate, to compare, and to judge.

For man to think of that which has not acted on any of his senses, is to think on words: it is a dream of sounds; it is to seek in his own imagination for objects to which he can attach his wandering ideas. To assign qualities to these objects is, unquestionably, to redouble his extravagance. The word is destined to represent to him an object that has not the capacity to act on any one of his organs, of which, consequently, it is impossible for him to prove either the existence or the qualities; still, his imagination, by dint of racking itself, will in some measure supply him with the ideas he wants, and compose some kind of a picture with the images or colours he is always obliged to borrow from those objects of which he has a knowledge: thus the Divinity has been represented under the character of a venerable old man, or under that of a puissant monarch, &c. It is evident, however, that man with some of his qualities has served for the model of this picture. But if he be informed that this God is a pure spirit; that has neither body nor extent; that he is not contained in space; that he is beyond nature; here then he is plunged into emptiness; his mind no longer has any ideas.: it no longer knows upon what it meditates. This, as will be seen in the sequel, is the source of those unformed notions which men have formed of the divinity; they themselves annihilate him, by assembling incompatible and contradictory attributes.[69] In giving him moral and known qualities, they make him a man; in assigning him the negative attributes of theology, they destroy all antecedent ideas; they make him a mere nothing — a chimera. From this it will appear that those sublime sciences which are called *theology*, *psychology*, *metaphysics*, have been mere sciences of words: morals and politics, which they too often infect, have, in consequence, become inexplicable enigmas, which nothing short of the study of nature can enable us to expound. Man has occasion for truth; it consists in a knowledge of the true relations he has with those things which can have an influence on his welfare: these relations are to be known only by experience: without experience there can be no reason; without

reason man is only a blind creature who conducts himself by chance. But how is he to acquire experience upon ideal objects, which his senses neither enable him to know nor to examine? How is he to assure himself of the existence and the qualities of beings he is not able to feel? How can he judge whether these objects be favourable or prejudicial to him? How is he to know what he ought to love, what he should hate, what to seek after, what to shun, what to do, what to leave undone? Yet it is upon this knowledge that his condition in this world rests — the only world of which he knows any thing; it is upon this knowledge that morals is founded. From whence it may be seen, that, by causing him to blend vague theological notions with morals, or the science of the certain and invariable relations which subsist between mankind, or by weakly establishing them upon chimerical beings, which have no existence but in his imagination, this science, upon which the welfare of society so much depends, is rendered uncertain and arbitrary, is abandoned to the caprices of fancy, is not fixed upon any solid basis.

Beings essentially different by their natural organization, by the modifications they experience, by the habits they contract, by the opinions they acquire, must of necessity think differently. His temperament, as we have seen, decides the mental qualities of man; this temperament itself, is diversely modified in him; from whence it consecutively follows, his imagination cannot possibly be the same, neither can it create to him the same images. Each individual is a connected whole, of which all the parts have a necessary correspondence. Different eyes must see differently, must give extremely varied ideas of the objects they contemplate, even when these objects are real. What, then, must be the diversity of these ideas if the objects meditated upon do not act upon the senses? Mankind have pretty nearly the same ideas, in the gross, of those substances that act on his organs with vivacity; he is sufficiently in unison upon some qualities which he contemplates very nearly in the same manner; I say *very nearly*, because the intelligence, the notion, the conviction of any one proposition, however simple, however evident, however clear it may be supposed, is not, nor cannot be strictly the same in any two men. Indeed, one man not being another man, the first cannot, for example, have rigorously and mathematically the same notion of unity as the second, seeing that an identical effect cannot be the result of two different causes. Thus when men agree in their ideas, in their modes of thinking, in their judgment, in their passions, in their desires, and in their tastes, their consent does not arise from their seeing or feeling the same objects precisely in. the same manner, but pretty nearly, for language is not, nor cannot be, sufficiently copious to designate the vast variety of shades, the multiplicity of imperceptible differences which are to be found in their modes of seeing and thinking. Each man has, I may say, a language which is peculiar *to* himself alone, and this language is incommunicable to others. What harmony, then, can possibly exist between them when they discourse with each other upon objects only known to their imagination? Can this imagination in one individual, ever be the same as in another? How can they possibly understand each other when they assign to these objects qualities that can only be attributed to the particular manner in which their brain is affected.

For one man to exact from another that he shall think like himself, is to insist that fee shall be organized precisely in the same manner, that he shall have been modified exactly the same in every moment of his existence; that he shall have received the same temperament, the same nourishment, the same education; in a word, that he shall require that other to be himself. Wherefore is it not exacted that all men shall have the same features? Is man more the master of his opinions? Are not his opinions the necessary con-sequence of his nature, and of those peculiar circumstances which, from his infancy, have necessarily had an influence upon his mode of thinking and his manner of acting? If man be a connected whole, whenever a single feature differs from his own, ought he not to conclude that it is not possible his brain can either think, associate ideas, imagine, or dream precisely in the same manner with that other. The diversity in the temperament of man is the natural and necessary source of the diversity of his passions, of his taste, of his ideas of happiness, of his opinions of every kind. Thus the same diversity will be the fatal source of his disputes, of his hatreds, and of his injustice, every time he shall reason upon unknown objects, but to which he shall attach the greatest importance. He will never understand either himself or others in speaking of a spiritual soul, or of an immaterial God distinguished from nature; he will, from that moment, cease to speak the same language, and he will never attach the same ideas to the same words. What, then, shall be the common standard that shall decide which is the man that thinks most correctly? What is the scale by which to measure who has the best regulated imagination? what balance shall be found sufficiently exact to determine whose knowledge is most certain when he agitates subjects which experience cannot enable him to examine; that escape all his senses; that have no model; that are above reason? Each individual, each legislator, each speculator, each nation, has ever formed to himself different ideas of these things, and each believes that his own peculiar reveries ought to be preferred to those of his neighbours; which always appear to him as absurd, as ridiculous, as false as his own can possibly have appeared to his fellow. Each clings to his own opinion, because each retains his own peculiar mode of existence, and believes his happiness depends upon his attachment to his prejudices, which he never adopts but because he believes them beneficial to his welfare. Propose to a man to change his religion for yours, he will believe you a madman; you will only excite his indignation, elicit his contempt; he will propose to you, in his turn, to adopt his own peculiar opinions; after much reasoning, you will treat each other as absurd beings, ridiculously opiniated and stubborn; and he will display the least folly who shall first yield. But if the adversaries become heated in the dispute, which always happens when they suppose the matter important, or when they would defend the cause of their own self-love, then their passions sharpen, they grow angry, quarrels are provoked, they hate each other, and end by reciprocal injury. It is thus, that for opinions which no man can demonstrate, we see the Brahmin despised; the Mohammedan hated; the Pagan held in contempt; and that they oppress and disdain each other with the most rancorous animosity: the Christian burns the Jew because he clings to the faith of his fathers; the Roman Catholic condemns the Protestant to the flames, and makes a conscience of massacring him in cold blood; this reacts in his turn;

again the various sects of Christians have leagued together against the incredulous, and for a moment suspended their own bloody disputes, that they might chastise their enemies: then, having glutted their revenge, they returned with redoubled fury to wreak over again their infuriated vengeance on each other.

If the imaginations of men were the same, the chimeras which they bring forth would be everywhere the same; there would be no disputes among them on this subject if they all dreamt in the same manner; great numbers of human beings would be spared, if man occupied his mind with objects capable of being known, of which the existence was proved, of which he was competent to discover the true qualities by sure and reiterated experience. *Systems of philosophy* are subject to dispute only when their principles are not sufficiently proved; by degrees experience, in pointing out the truth, terminates these quarrels. There is no variance among *geometricians* upon the principles of their science; it is only raised when their suppositions are false, or their objects too much complicated. Theologians find so much difficulty in agreeing among themselves, simply because in their contests they divide without ceasing, not known and examined propositions, but prejudices with which they have been imbued in their youth, in the schools, in their books, &c. They are perpetually reasoning, not upon real objects, of which the existence is demonstrated, but upon imaginary systems, of which they have never examined the reality; they found these disputes not upon averred experience nor upon constant facts, but upon gratuitous suppositions, which each endeavours to convince the other are without solidity. Finding these ideas of long standing, and that few people refuse to admit them, they take them for incontestable truths, that ought to be received merely upon being; announced; whenever they attach great importance to them, they irritate themselves against the temerity of those who have the audacity to doubt, or even to examine them.

If prejudice had been laid aside, it would perhaps have been discovered that many of those objects which have given birth to the most shocking, the most sanguinary disputes among, many were mere phantoms which a little examination would have shown to be unworthy their notice. The most trifling: reflection would have shown him the necessity of this diversity in his notions, of this contrariety in his imagination, which depends upon his natural conformation diversely modified, and which necessarily has an influence over his thoughts, over his will, and over his actions. In short, if he had consulted morals and reason, every thing; would have proved to him, that beings who call themselves rational, were made to think variously, without on that account, ceasing to live peaceably with each other, love each other, and lend each other mutual succours; and that whatever might be their opinions upon subjects either impossible to be known or to be contemplated under the same point of view: every thing: would have joined in evidence to convince him of the unreasonable tyranny, of the unjust violence, and of the useless cruelty of those men of blood, who persecute mankind in order that they may mould others to their own peculiar opinions: every thing would have conducted mortals to *mildness,* to *indulgence,* to *toleration;* virtues unquestionably of more real importance to the welfare of society than the marvellous speculations by which it is

divided, and by which it is frequently hurried on to sacrifice the pretended enemies to these revered opinions.

From this it must be evident of what importance it is to *morals* to examine the ideas to which it has been agreed to attach so much worth, and to which man, at the irrational command of fanatical and cruel guides, is continually sacrificing his own peculiar happiness and the tranquillity of nations. Let him return to experience, to nature, and to reason; let him consult those objects that are real and useful to his permanent felicity; let him study nature's laws; let him study himself; let him consult the bonds which unite him to his fellow mortals; let him tear asunder the fictitious bonds that enchain him to a mere phantom. If his imagination must always feed itself with illusions, if he remains steadfast in his own opinions, if his prejudices are dear to him, let him at least permit others to ramble in their own manner or seek after truth as best suits their inclination; but let him always recollect, that all the opinions, all the ideas, all the systems, all the wills, all the actions of man, are the necessary consequence of his nature, of his temperament, of his organization, and of those causes, either transitory or constant, which modify him: in short, that *man is not more a free agent to think than to act:* a truth that will be again proved in the following chapter.

Chapter XI: Of the System of Man's Free Agency.

Those who have pretended that the *soul* is distinguished from the body, is immaterial, draws its ideas from its own peculiar source, acts by its own energies, without the aid of any exterior object, have, by a consequence of their own system, enfranchised it from those physical laws according to which all beings of which we have a knowledge are obliged to act. They have believed that the soul is mistress of its own conduct, is able to regulate its own peculiar operations, has the faculty to determine its will by its own natural energy; in a word, they have pretended that man is *a free agent.*

It has been already sufficiently proved that the soul is nothing more than the body considered relatively to some of its functions more concealed than others: it has been shown that this soul, even when it shall be supposed immaterial, is continually modified conjointly with the body, is submitted to all its motion, and that without this it would remain inert and dead: that, consequently, it is subjected to the influence of those material and physical causes which give impulse to the body; of which the mode of existence, whether habitual or transitory, depends upon the material elements by which it is surrounded, that form its texture, constitute its temperament, enter into it by means of the aliments, and penetrate it by their subtility. The faculties which are called *intellectual*, and those qualities which are styled *moral*, have been explained in a manner purely physical and natural. In the last place it has been demonstrated that all the ideas, all the systems, all the affections, all the opinions, whether true or false, which man forms to himself, are to be attributed to his physical and material senses. Thus man is a being purely physical; in whatever manner he is considered, he is connected to universal nature, and submitted to the necessary and immutable laws that she imposes on all the beings she contains, according to their peculiar essences or to the respective properties

with which, without consulting them, she endows each particular species. Man's life is a line that nature commands him to describe upon the surface of the earth, without his ever being able to swerve from it, even for an instant. He is born without his own consent; his organization does in nowise depend upon himself; his ideas come to him involuntarily; his habits are in the power of those who cause him to contract them; he is unceasingly modified by causes, whether visible or concealed, over which he has no control, which necessarily regulate his mode of existence, give the hue to his way of thinking, and determine his manner of acting. He is good or bad, happy or miserable, wise or foolish, reasonable or irrational, without his will being for any thing in these various states. Nevertheless, in despite of the shackles by which he is bound, it is pretended he is a free agent, or that independent of the causes by which he is moved, he determines his own will, and regulates his own condition. However slender the foundation of this opinion, of which every thing ought to point out to him the errour, it is current at this day and passes for an incontestable truth with a great number of people, otherwise extremely enlightened; it is the basis of religion, which, supposing relations between man and the unknown being she has placed above nature, has been incapable of imagining how man could either merit reward or deserve punishment from this being, if he was not a free agent. Society has been believed interested in this system; because an idea has gone abroad, that if all the actions of man were to be contemplated as necessary, the right of punishing those who injure their associates would no longer exist. At length human vanity accommodated itself to a hypothesis which, unquestionably, appears to distinguish man from all other physical beings, by assigning to him the special privilege of a total independence of all other causes, but of which a very little reflection would have shown him the impossibility.

As a part subordinate to the great whole, man is obliged to experience its influence. To be a free agent, it were needful that each individual was of greater strength than the entire of nature; or that he was out of this nature, who, always in action herself, obliges all the beings she embraces to act, and to concur to her general motion; or, as it has been said elsewhere, to conserve her active existence by the motion that all beings produce in consequence of their particular energies, submitted to fixed, eternal, and immutable laws. In order that man might be a free agent, it were needful that all beings should lose their essences; it would be equally necessary that he himself should no longer enjoy physical sensibility; that he should neither know good nor evil, pleasure nor pain; but if this were the case, from that moment he would no longer be in a state to conserve himself, or render his existence happy; all beings would become indifferent to him; lie would no longer have any choice; he would cease to know what he ought to love, what it was right he should fear; he would not have any acquaintance with that which he should seek after, or with that which it is requisite he should avoid. In short, man would be an unnatural being, totally incapable of acting in the manner we behold. It is the actual essence of man to tend to his well being, or to be desirous to conserve his existence; if all the motion of his machine spring as a necessary consequence from this primitive impulse; if pain warn him of that which he ought to avoid; if pleasure announce to

him that which he should desire; if it be in his essence to love that which either excites delight, or that from which he expects agreeable sensations; to hate that which either makes him fear contrary impressions or that which afflicts him with uneasiness; it must necessarily be that he will be attracted by that which he deems advantageous; that his will shall be determined by those objects which he judges useful; that he will be repelled by those beings which he believes prejudicial, either to his habitual or to his transitory mode of existence. It is only by the aid of experience that man acquires the faculty of understanding what he ought to love or to fear. Are his organs sound? his experience will be true; are they unsound? it will be false: in the first instance he will have reason, prudence, foresight; he will frequently foresee very remote effects; he will know that what he sometimes contemplates as a good, may possibly become an evil by its necessary or probable consequences; that what must be to him a transient evil, may by its result procure him a solid and durable good. It is thus experience enables him to foresee, that the amputation of a limb will cause him painful sensation, he consequently is obliged to fear this operation, and he endeavours to avoid the pain; but, if experience has also shown him that the transitory pain this amputation will cause him may be the means of saving his life; the preservation of his existence being of necessity dear to him, he is obliged to submit himself to the momentary pain, with a view to procuring a permanent good by which it will be overbalanced.

The will, as we have elsewhere said, is a modification of the brain, by which it is disposed to action, or prepared to give play to the organs. This will is necessarily determined by the qualities, good or bad, agreeable or painful, of the object or the motive that acts upon his senses, or of which the idea remains with him, and is resuscitated by his memory. In consequence, he acts necessarily, his action is the result of the impulse he receives either from the motive, from the object, or from the idea which has modified his brain, or disposed his will. When he does not act according to this impulse, it is because there comes some new cause, some new motive, some new idea, which modifies his brain in a different manner, gives him a new impulse, determines his will in another way, by which the action of the former impulse is suspended: thus, the sight of an agreeable object, or its idea, determines his will to set him in action to procure it; but if a new object or a new idea more powerfully attracts him, it gives a new direction to his will, annihilates the effect of the former, and prevents the action by which it was to be procured. This is the mode in which reflection, experience, reason, necessarily arrests or suspends the action of man's will: without this he would of necessity have followed the anterior impulse which carried him towards a then desirable object. In all this he always acts according to necessary laws, from which he has no means of emancipating himself.

If when tormented with violent thirst, he figures to himself in idea, or really perceives a fountain, whose limpid streams might cool his feverish want, is he sufficient master of himself to desire or not to desire the object competent to satisfy so lively a want? It will no doubt be conceded, that it is impossible he should not be desirous to satisfy it; but it will be said — if at this moment it is announced to him that the water he so ardently desires is

poisoned, he will, notwithstanding his vehement thirst, abstain from drinking it: and it has, therefore, been falsely concluded that he is a free agent. The fact, however, is, that the motive in either case is exactly the same: his own conservation. The same necessity that determined him to drink before he knew the water was deleterious, upon this new discovery equally determines him not to drink; the desire of conserving himself either annihilates or suspends the former impulse; the second motive becomes stronger than the preceding, that is, the fear of death, or the desire of preserving himself, necessarily prevails over the painful sensation caused by his eagerness to drink: but, it will be said, if the thirst is very parching, an inconsiderate man without regarding the danger will risk swallowing the water. Nothing is gained by this remark: in this case, the anterior impulse only regains the ascendency; he is persuaded that life may possibly be longer preserved, or that he shall derive a greater good by drinking the poisoned water than by enduring the torment, which, to his mind, threatens instant dissolution: thus the first becomes the strongest and necessarily urges him on to action. Nevertheless, in either case, whether he partakes of the water, or whether he does not, the two actions will be equally necessary; they will be the effect of that motive which finds itself most puissant; which consequently acts in the most coercive manner upon his will.

This example will serve to explain the whole phenomena of the human will. This will, or rather the brain, finds itself in the same situation as a bowl, which, although it has received an impulse that drives it forward in a straight line, is deranged in its course whenever a force superior to the first obliges it to change its direction. The man who drinks the poisoned water appears a madman; but the actions of fools are as necessary as those of the most prudent individuals. The motives that determine the voluptuary and the debauchee to risk their health, are as powerful, and their actions are as necessary, as those which decide the wise man to manage his. But, it will be insisted, the debauchee may be prevailed on to change his conduct: this does not imply that he is a free agent; but that motives may be found sufficiently powerful to annihilate the effect of those that previously acted upon him; then these new motives determine his will to the new mode of conduct he may adopt as necessarily as the former did to the old mode.

Man is said to *deliberate*, when the action of the will is suspended; this happens when two opposite motives act alternately upon him. *To deliberate*, is to hate and to love in succession; it is to be alternately attracted and repelled; it is to be moved, sometimes by one motive, sometimes by another. Man only deliberates when he does not distinctly understand the quality of the objects from which he receives impulse, or when experience has not sufficiently apprised him of the effects, more or less remote, which his actions will produce. He would take the air, but the weather is uncertain; he deliberates in consequence; he weighs the various motives that urge his will to go out or to stay at home; he is at length determined by that motive which is most probable; this removes his indecision, which necessarily settles his will, either to remain within or to go abroad: this motive is always either the immediate or ultimate advantage he finds, or thinks he finds, in the action to which he is persuaded.

Man's will frequently fluctuates between two objects, of which either the presence or the

ideas move him alternately: he waits until he has contemplated the objects, or the ideas they have left in his brain which solicit him to different actions; he then compares these objects or ideas; but even in the time of deliberation, during the comparison, pending these alternatives of love and hatred which succeed each other, sometimes with the utmost rapidity, he is not a free agent for a single instant; the good or the evil which he believes he finds successively in the objects, are the necessary motives of these momentary wills; of the rapid motion of desire or fear, that he experiences as long as his uncertainty continues. From this it will be obvious that deliberation is necessary; that uncertainty is necessary; that whatever part he takes, in consequence of this deliberation, it will always necessarily be that which he has judged, whether well or ill, is most probable to turn to his advantage.

When the soul is assailed by two motives that act alternately upon it, or modify it successively, it deliberates; the brain is in a sort of equilibrium, accompanied with perpetual oscillations, sometimes towards one object, sometimes towards the other, until the most forcible carries the point, and thereby extricates it from this state of suspense, in which consists the indecision of his will. But when the brain is simultaneously assailed by causes equally strong that move it in opposite directions, agreeable to the general law of all bodies when they are struck equally by contrary powers, it stops, it is in *nisu;* it is neither capable to will nor to act; it waits until one of the two causes has obtained sufficient force to overpower the other; to determine its will; to attract it in such a manner that it may prevail over the efforts of the other cause.

This mechanism, so simple, so natural, suffices to demonstrate why uncertainty is painful, and why suspense is always a violent state for man. The brain, an organ so delicate and so mobile, experiences such rapid modifications that it is fatigued; or when it is urged in contrary directions, by causes equally powerful, it suffers a kind of compression, that prevents the activity which is suitable to the preservation of the whole, and which is necessary to procure what is advantageous to its existence. This mechanism will also explain the irregularity, the indecision, the inconstancy of man, and account for that conduct which frequently appears an inexplicable mystery, and which is, indeed, the effect of the received systems. In consulting experience, it will be found that the soul is submitted to precisely the same physical laws as the material body. If the will of each individual, during a given time, was only moved by a single cause or passion, nothing would be more easy than to foresee his actions; but his heart is frequently assailed by contrary powers, by adverse motives, which either act on him simultaneously or in succession; then his brain, attracted in opposite directions, is either fatigued, or else tormented by a state of compression, which deprives it of activity. Sometimes it is in a state of incommodious inaction; sometimes it is the sport of the alternate shocks it undergoes. Such, no doubt, *is* the state in which man finds himself when a lively passion solicits him to the commission of crime, whilst fear points out to him the danger by which it is attended: such, also, is the condition of him whom remorse, by the continued labour of his distracted soul, prevents from enjoying the objects he has criminally obtained.

If the powers or causes, whether exterior or interior, acting on the mind of man, tend towards opposite points, his soul, as well as all other bodies, will take a mean direction between the two; and in consequence of the violence with which his soul is urged, his condition becomes sometimes so painful that his existence is troublesome: he has no longer a tendency to his own peculiar conservation; he seeks after death as a sanctuary against himself, and as the only remedy to his despair: it is thus we behold men, miserable and discontented, voluntarily destroy themselves whenever life becomes insupportable. Man cannot cherish his existence any longer than life holds out charms to him: when he is wrought upon by painful sensations, or drawn by contrary impulsions, his natural tendency is deranged; he is under the necessity to follow a new route; this conducts him to his end, which it even displays to him as the most desirable good. In this manner may be explained the conduct of those melancholy beings, whose vicious temperaments, whose tortured consciences, whose chagrin, whose *ennui* sometimes determine them to renounce life.[70]

The various powers, frequently very complicated, that act either successively or simultaneously upon the brain of man, which modify him so diversely in the different periods of his existence, are the true causes of that obscurity in morals, of that difficulty which is found, when it is desired to unravel the concealed springs of his enigmatical conduct. The heart of man is a labyrinth, only because it very rarely happens that we possess the necessary gift of judging it; from whence it will appear, that his circumstances, his indecision, his conduct, whether ridiculous or unexpected, are the necessary consequences of the changes operated in him; are nothing but the effect of motives that successively determine his will; which are dependant on the frequent variations experienced by his machine. According to these variations the same motives have not always the same influence over his will; the same objects no longer enjoy the faculty of pleasing him; his temperament has changed, either for the moment, or for ever: it follows as a consequence, that his taste, his desires, his passions, will change; there can be no kind of uniformity in his conduct; nor any certitude in the effects to be expected.

Choice by no means proves the free agency of man: he only deliberates when he does not yet know which to choose of the many objects that move him, he is then in an embarrassment, which does not terminate until his will is decided by the greater advantage he believes he shall find in the object he chooses, or the action he undertakes. From whence it may be seen, that choice is necessary, because he would not determine for an object, or for an action, if he did not believe that he should find in it some direct advantage. That man should have free agency it were needful that he should be able to will or choose without motive, or that he could prevent motives coercing his will. Action always being the effect of his will once determined, and as his will cannot be determined but by a motive which is not in his own power, it follows that he is never the master of the determination of his own peculiar will; that consequently he never acts as a free agent. It has been believed that man was a free agent because he had a will with the power of choosing; but attention has not been paid to the fact that even his will is moved by causes independent of himself; is owing to that which is

inherent in his own organization, or which belongs to the nature of the beings acting on him.[71] Is he the master of willing not to withdraw his hand from the fire when he fears it will be burnt? Or has he the power to take away from fire the property which makes him fear it? Is he the master of not choosing a dish of meat, which he knows to be agreeable, or analogous to his palate; of not preferring it to that which he knows to be disagreeable or dangerous? It is always according to his sensations, to his own peculiar experience, or to his suppositions, that he judges of things, either well or ill; but whatever may be his judgment, it depends necessarily on his mode of feeling, whether habitual or accidental, and the qualities he finds in the causes that move him, which exist in despite of himself.

All the causes by which his will is actuated, must act upon him in a manner sufficiently marked to give him some sensation, some perception, some idea; whether complete or incomplete, true or false: as soon as his will is determined, he must have felt either strongly or feebly; if this was not the case he would have determined without motive: thus, to speak correctly, there are no causes which are truly indifferent to the will: however faint the impulse he receives, whether on the part of the objects themselves, or on the part of their images or ideas, as soon as his will acts, the impulse has been competent to determine him. In consequence of a slight or feeble impulse, the will is weak; it is this weakness in his will, that is called *indifference*. His brain with difficulty perceives the sensation it has received; it consequently acts with less vigour, either to obtain or to remove the object or the idea that has modified it. If the impulse is powerful, the will is strong, it makes him act vigorously to obtain or to remove the object which appears to him either very agreeable or very incommodious.

It has been believed that man was a free agent, because it has been imagined that his soul could at will recall ideas which sometimes suffice to check his most unruly desires.[72] Thus, the idea of a remote evil, frequently prevents him from enjoying a present and actual good: thus remembrance, which is an almost insensible or slight modification of his brain, annihilates, at each instant, the real objects that act upon his will. But he is not master of recalling to himself his ideas at pleasure; their association is independent of him; they are arranged in his brain in despite of him and without his own knowledge, where they have made an impression more or less profound; his memory itself depends upon his organization; its fidelity depends upon the habitual or momentary state in which he finds himself; when his will is vigorously determined to some object or idea that excites a very lively passion in him, those objects or ideas that would be able to arrest his action, no longer present themselves to his mind; in those moments his eyes are shut to the dangers that menace him; of which the idea ought to make him forbear; he marches forwards headlong towards the object by whose image he is hurried on; reflection cannot operate upon him in any way; he sees nothing but the object of his desires; the salutary ideas which might be able to arrest his progress disappear, or else display themselves either too faintly or too late to prevent his acting. Such is the case with all those who, blinded by some strong passion, are not in a condition to recall to themselves those motives, of which the idea alone, in cooler moments, would be sufficient

to deter them from proceeding; the disorder in which they are, prevents their judging soundly; renders them incapable of foreseeing the consequence of their actions; precludes them from applying to their experience; from making use of their reason; natural operations which suppose a justness in the manner of associating their ideas, but to which their brain is then not more competent, in consequence of the momentary delirium it suffers, than their hand is to write whilst they are taking violent exercise.

Man's mode of thinking is necessarily determined by his manner of being; it must therefore depend on his natural organization, and the modification his system receives independently of his will. From this, we are obliged to conclude, that his thoughts, his reflections, his manner of viewing things, of feeling, of judging, of combining ideas, is neither voluntary nor free. In a word, that his soul is neither mistress of the motion excited in it, nor of representing to itself, when wanted, those images or ideas that are capable of counterbalancing the impulse it receives. This is the reason, why man, when in a passion, ceases to reason; at that moment reason is as impossible to be heard, as it is during an ecstacy, or in a fit of drunkenness. The wicked are never more than men who are either drunk or mad; if they reason, it is not until tranquillity *is* re- established in their machine; then, and not till then, the tardy ideas that present themselves to their mind enable them to see the consequence of their actions, and give birth to ideas that bring on them that trouble, which is designated *shame, regret, remorse.*

The errours of philosophers on the free agency of man, have arisen from their regarding his will as the *primum mobile,* the original motive of his actions; for want of recurring back, they have not perceived the multiplied, the complicated causes which, independently of him, give motion to the will itself; or which dispose and modify his brain, whilst he himself is purely passive in the motion he receives. Is he the master of desiring or not desiring an object that appears desirable to him? Without doubt it will be answered, no: but he is the master of resisting his desire, if he reflects on the consequences. But, I ask, is he capable of reflecting on these consequences, when his soul is hurried along by a very lively passion, which entirely depends upon his natural organization, and the causes by which he is modified? Is it in his power to add to these consequences all the weight necessary to counterbalance his desire? Is he the master of preventing the qualities which render an object desirable from residing in it? I shall be told: he ought to have learned to resist his passions; to contract a habit of putting a curb on his desires. I agree to it without any difficulty. But in reply, I again ask, is his nature susceptible of this modification? Does his boiling blood, his unruly imagination, the igneous fluid that circulates in his veins, permit him to make, enable him to apply true experience in the moment when it is wanted? And even when his temperament has capacitated him, has his education, the examples set before him, the ideas with which he has been inspired in early life, been suitable to make him contract this habit of repressing his desires? Have not all these things rather contributed to induce him to seek with avidity, to make him actually desire those objects which you say he ought to resist.

The *ambitious man* cries out: you will have me resist my passion; but have they not

unceasingly repeated to me that rank, honours, power, are the most desirable advantages in life? Have I not seen my fellow citizens envy them, the nobles of my country sacrifice every thing to obtain them? In the society in which I live, am I not obliged to feel, that if I am deprived of these advantages, I must expect to languish in contempt; to cringe under the rod of oppression?

The *miser* says: you forbid me to love money, to seek after the means of acquiring it: alas! does not every thing tell me that, in this world, money is the greatest blessing; that it is amply sufficient to render me happy? In the country I inhabit, do I not see all my fellow citizens covetous of riches? but do I not also witness that they are little scrupulous in the means of obtaining wealth? As soon as they are enriched by the means which you censure, are they not cherished, considered and respected? By what authority, then, do you defend me from amassing treasure? what right have you to prevent my using means, which, although you call them sordid and criminal, I see approved by the sovereign? Will you have me renounce my happiness?

The *voluptuary* argues: you pre tend that I should resist my desires; but was I the maker of my own temperament, which unceasingly invites me to pleasure? You call my pleasures disgraceful; but in the country in which I live, do I not witness the most dissipated men enjoying the most distinguished rank? Do I not behold that no one is ashamed of adultery but the husband it has outraged? do not I see men making trophies of their debaucheries, boasting of their libertinism, rewarded with applause?

The *choleric man* vociferates: you advise me to put a curb on my passions, and to resist the desire of avenging myself: but can I conquer my nature? Can I alter the received opinions of the world? Shall I not be for ever disgraced, infallibly dishonoured in society, if I do not wash out in the blood of my fellow creature the injuries I have received?

The *zealous enthusiast* exclaims: you recommend me mildness; you advise me to be tolerant; to be indulgent to the opinions of my fellow men; but is not my temperament violent? Do I not ardently love my God? Do they not assure me, that zeal is pleasing to him; that sanguinary inhuman persecutors have been his friends? As I wish to render myself acceptable in his sight, I therefore adopt the same means.

In short, the actions of man are never free; they are always the necessary consequence of his temperament, of the received ideas, and of the notions, either true or false, which he has formed to himself of happiness; of his opinions, strengthened by example, by education, and by daily experience. So many crimes are witnessed on the earth only because every thing conspires to render man vicious and criminal; the religion he has adopted, his government, his education, the examples set before him, irresistibly drive him on to evil: under these circumstances, morality preaches virtue to him in rain. In those societies where vice is esteemed, where crime is crowned, where venality is constantly recompensed, where the most dreadful disorders are punished only in those who are too weak to enjoy the privilege of committing them with impunity, the practice of virtue is considered nothing more than a painful sacrifice of happiness. Such societies chastise, in the lower orders, those excesses

which they respect in the higher ranks; and frequently have the injustice to condemn those in the penalty of death, whom public prejudices, maintained by constant example, have rendered criminal.

Man, then, is not a free agent in any one instant of his life; he is necessarily guided in each step by those advantages, whether real or fictitious, that he attaches to the objects by which his passions are roused: these passions themselves are necessary in a being who unceasingly tends towards his own happiness; their energy is necessary, since that depends on his temperament; his temperament is necessary, because it depends on the physical elements which enter into his composition; the modification of this temperament is necessary, as it is the infallible and inevitable consequence of the impulse he receives from the incessant action of moral and physical beings.

In despite of these proofs of the want of free agency in man, so clear to unprejudiced minds, it will, perhaps, be insisted upon with no small feeling of triumph, that if it be proposed to any one, to move or not to move his hand, an action in the number of those called *indifferent,* he evidently appears to be the master of choosing; from which k is concluded that evidence has been offered of his free agency. The reply is, this example is perfectly simple; man in performing some action which he is resolved on doing, does not by any means prove his free agency: the very desire of displaying this quality, excited by the dispute, becomes a necessary motive, which decides his will either for the one or the other of these actions: what deludes him in this instance, or that which persuades him he is a free agent at this moment, is, that he does not discern the true motive which sets him in action, namely, the desire of convincing his opponent: if in the heat of the dispute he insists and asks, "Am I not the master of throwing myself out of the window?" I shall answer him, no; that whilst he preserves his reason there is no probability that the desire of proving his free agency, will become a motive sufficiently powerful to make him sacrifice his life to the attempt: if, notwithstanding this, to prove he is a free agent, he should actually precipitate himself from the window, it would not be a sufficient warranty to conclude he acted freely, but rather that it was the violence of his temperament which spurred him on to this folly. Madness is a state, that depends upon the heat of the blood, not upon the will. A fanatic or a hero, braves death as necessarily as a more phlegmatic man or a coward flies from it.[73]

It *is* said that free agency is the absence of those obstacles competent to oppose themselves to the actions of *man,* or to the exercise of his faculties: at is pretended that he is a free agent whenever, making use of these faculties, he produces the effect he has proposed to himself. In reply to this reasoning, it is sufficient to consider that it in nowise depends upon himself to place or remove the obstacles that either determine or resist him; the motive that causes his action is no more in his own power than the obstacle that impedes him, whether this obstacle or motive be within his own machine or exterior of his person: he is not master of the thought presented to his mind, which determines his will; this thought is excited by some cause independent of himself. To be undeceived on the system of his free agency, man has simply to recur to the motive by which his will is determined; he will always find this motive

is out of his own controul. It is said: that in consequence of an idea to which the mind gives birth, man acts freely if he encounters no obstacle. But the question is, what gives birth to this idea in his brain? was he the master either to prevent it from presenting itself, or from renewing itself in his brain? Does not this idea depend either upon objects that strike him exteriorly and in despite of himself, or upon causes, that without his knowledge, act within himself and modify his brain? Can he prevent his eyes, east without design upon any object whatever, from giving him an idea of this object, and from moving his brain? He is not more master of the obstacles; they are the necessary effects of either interior or exterior causes, which always act according to their given properties. A man insults a coward, this necessarily irritates him against his insulter, but his will cannot vanquish the obstacle that cowardice places to the object of his desire, because his natural conformation, which does not depend upon himself, prevents his having courage. In this case, the coward is insulted in despite of himself; and against his will is obliged patiently to brook the insult he has received.

The partisans of the system of free agency appear ever to have confounded constraint with necessity. Man believes he acts as a free agent, every time he does not see any thing that places obstacles to his actions; he does not perceive that the motive which causes him to will, is always necessary and independent of himself. A prisoner loaded with chains is compelled to remain in prison; but he is not a free agent in the desire to emancipate himself; his chains prevent him from acting, but they do not prevent him from willing; he would save himself if they would loose his fetters; but he would not save himself as a free agent; fear or the idea of punishment would be sufficient motives for his action.

Man may, therefore, cease to be restrained, without, for that reason, becoming a free agent: in whatever manner he acts, he will act necessarily, according to motives by which he shall be determined. He may be compared to a heavy body that finds itself arrested in its descent by any obstacle whatever: take away this obstacle, it will gravitate or continue to fall; but who shall say this dense body is free to fall or not? Is not its descent the necessary effect of its own specific gravity? The virtuous Socrates submitted to the laws of his country, although they were unjust; and though the doors of his jail were left open to him, he would not save himself; but in this he did not act as a free agent: the invisible chains of opinion, the secret love of decorum, the inward respect for the laws, even when they were iniquitous, the fear of tarnishing his glory, kept him in his prison; they were motives sufficiently powerful with this enthusiast for virtue, to induce him to wait death with tranquillity; it was not in his power to save himself, because he could find no potential motive to bring him to depart, even for an instant, from those principles to which his mind was accustomed.

Man, it is said, frequently acts against his inclination, from whence it is falsely concluded he is a free agent; but when he appears to act contrary to his inclination, he is always determined to it by some motive sufficiently efficacious to vanquish this inclination. A sick man, with a view to his cure, arrives at conquering his repugnance to the most disgusting remedies: the fear of pain, or the dread of death, then becomes necessary motives; consequently this sick man cannot be said to act freely.

When it is said, that man is not a free agent, it is not pretended to compare him to a body moved by a simple impulsive cause: he contains within himself causes inherent to his existence; he is moved by an interior organ, which has its own peculiar laws, and is itself necessarily determined in consequence of ideas formed from perceptions resulting from sensations which it receives from exterior objects. As the mechanism of these sensations, of these perceptions, and the manner they engrave ideas on the brain of man, are not known to him; because he is unable to unravel all these motions; because he cannot perceive the chain of operations in his soul, or the motive principle that acts within him, he supposes himself a free agent; which, literally translated, signifies, that he moves himself by himself; that he determines himself without cause: when he rather ought to say, that he is ignorant how or for why he acts in the manner he does. It is true the soul enjoys an activity peculiar to itself: but it is equally certain that this activity would never be displayed, if some motive or some cause did not put it in a condition to exercise itself: at least it will not be pretended that the soul is able either to love or to hate without being moved, without knowing the objects, without having some idea of their qualities. Gunpowder has unquestionably a particular activity, but this activity will never display itself, unless fire be applied to it; this, however, immediately sets it in motion.. It is the great complication of motion in man, it is the variety of his action, it is the multiplicity of causes that move him, whether simultaneously or in continual succession, that persuades him he is a free agent: if all his motions were simple, if the causes that move him did not confound themselves with each other, if they were distinct, if his machine were less complicated, he would perceive that all his actions were necessary, because he would be enabled to recur instantly to the cause that made him act. A man who should be always obliged to go towards the west, would always go on that side; but he would feel that, in so going, he was not a free agent: if he had another sense, as his actions or his motion, augmented by a sixth, would be still more varied and much more complicated, he would believe himself still more a free agent than he does with his five senses.

It is, then, for want of recurring to the causes that move him; for want of being able to analyze, from not being competent to decompose the complicated motion of his machine, that man believes himself a free agent: it is only upon his own ignorance that he founds the profound yet deceitful notion he has of his free agency; that he builds those opinions which he brings forward as a striking proof of his pretended freedom of action. If, for a short time, each man was willing to examine his own peculiar actions, search out their true motives to discover their concatenation, he would remain convinced that the sentiment he has of his natural free agency, is a chimera that must speedily be destroyed by experience.

Nevertheless it must be acknowledged that the multiplicity and diversity of the causes which continually act upon man, frequently without even his knowledge, render it impossible, or at least extremely difficult for him to recur to the true principles of his own peculiar actions, much less the actions of others: they frequently depend upon causes so fugitive, so remote from their effects, and which, superficially examined, appear to have so little analogy, so slender a relation with them, that it requires singular sagacity to bring them into light. This

is what renders the study of the moral man a task of such difficulty; this is the reason why his heart is an abyss, of which it is frequently impossible for him to fathom the depth. He is then obliged to content himself with a knowledge of the general and necessary laws by which the human heart is regulated: for the individuals of his own species these laws are pretty nearly the same; they vary only in consequence of the organization that is peculiar to each, and of the modification it undergoes: this, however, cannot be rigorously the same in any two. It suffices to know, that by his essence, man tends to conserve himself, and to render his existence happy: this granted, whatever may be his actions, if he recur back to this first principle, to this general, this necessary tendency of his will, he never can be deceived with regard to his motives. Man, without doubt, for want of cultivating reason and experience, frequently deceives himself upon the means of arriving at this end; sometimes the means he employs are unpleasant to his fellows, because they are prejudicial to their interests; or else those of which he avails himself appear irrational, because they remove him from the end to which he would approximate: but whatever may be these means, they have always necessarily and invariably for object either an existing or imaginary happiness, directed to preserve himself in a state analogous to his mode of existence, to his manner of feeling, to his way of thinking, whether durable or transitory. It is from having mistaken this truth, that the greater number of moral philosophers have made rather the romance than the history of the human heart; they have attributed the actions of man to fictitious causes; at least they have not sought out the necessary motives of his conduct. Politicians and legislators have been in the same state of ignorance, or else impostors have found it much shorter to employ imaginary motive-powers, than those which really have existence: they have rather chosen to make him tremble under incommodious phantoms, than guide him to virtue by the direct road to happiness, notwithstanding the conformity of the latter with the natural desires of his heart. However this may be, man either sees or believes he sees much more distinctly the necessary relation of effects with their causes in natural philosophy than in the human heart: at least he sees in the former sensible causes constantly produce sensible effects, ever the same, when the circumstances are alike. After this he hesitates not to look upon physical effects as necessary; whilst he refuses to acknowledge necessity in the acts of the human will: these he has, without any just foundation, attributed to a motive-power that acts independently by its own peculiar energy, which is capable of modifying itself without the concurrence of exterior causes, and which is distinguished from all material or physical beings. Agriculture is founded upon the assurance, afforded by experience, that the earth, cultivated and sown in a certain manner, when it has otherwise the requisite qualities, will furnish grain, fruit and flowers, either necessary for subsistence or pleasing to the senses. If things were considered without prejudice, it would be perceived, that in morals, education is nothing more than *the agriculture of the mind*; that, like the earth, by reason of its natural disposition, of the culture bestowed upon it, of the seeds with which it is sown, of the seasons, more or less favourable that conduct it to maturity, we may be assured that the soul will produce either virtue or vice — *moral fruit,* that will be either salubrious for man or baneful to society. *Morals* is the

science of the relations that subsist between the minds, the wills, and the actions of men, in the same manner that geometry is the science of the relations that are found between bodies. Morals would be a chimera and would have no certain principles, if it was not founded upon the knowledge of the motives which must necessarily have an influence upon the human will, and which must necessarily determine the actions of human beings.

If, in the moral as well as in the physical world, a cause, of. which the action is not interrupted, be necessarily followed by a given effect, it flows consecutively that a reasonable education, grafted upon truth, and founded upon wise laws; that honest principles instilled during youth; virtuous examples continually held forth; esteem attached solely to merit and good actions; contempt and shame and chastisements regularly visiting vice and falsehood and crime, are causes that would necessarily act on the will of man, and would determine the greater number of his species to exhibit virtue. But if, on the contrary, religion, politics, example, public opinion, all labour to countenance wickedness and to train man viciously; if instead of fanning his virtues, they stifle good principles; if instead of directing his studies to his advantage, they render his education either useless or unprofitable; if this education itself, instead of grounding him in virtue, only inoculates him with vice; if, instead of inculcating reason it imbues him with prejudice; if, instead of making him enamoured of truth, it furnishes him with false notions and with dangerous opinions; if, instead of fostering mildness and forbearance, it kindles in his breast only those passions which are incommodious to himself and hurtful to others: it must be of necessity that the will of the greater number shall determine them to evil.[74] Here, without doubt, is the real source from whence springs that universal corruption of which moralists, with great justice, so loudly complain, without, however, pointing out those causes of the evil, which are as true as they are necessary. Instead of this, they search for it in human nature; say it is corrupt;[75] blame man for loving himself; stigmatize him for seeking after his own happiness; insist that he must have *supernatural assistance* to enable him to become good; yet, notwithstanding the supposed free agency of man, it is insisted that nothing less than the author of nature himself, is necessary to destroy the wicked desires of his heart: but, alas! this powerful agent himself is found inefficacious to controul those unhappy propensities, which, under the fatal constitution of things, the most vigorous motives, as has been before observed, are continually infusing into the will of man. He is indeed incessantly exhorted to resist these passions; to stifle and root them out of his heart: but is it not evident they are necessary to his welfare, and inherent in his nature? Does not experience prove them to be useful to his conservation, since they have for object, only to avoid that which may be injurious and to procure that which may be advantageous? In short, is it not easy to be seen, that these passions well directed, that is to say, carried towards objects that are truly useful, that are really interesting to himself, which embrace the happiness of others, would necessarily contribute to the substantial and permanent well-being of society? The passions of man are like fire, at once necessary to the wants of life, and equally capable of producing the most terrible ravages.[76]

Every thing becomes an impulse to the will: a single word frequently suffices to modify a man for the whole course of his life; to decide for ever his propensities; an infant, who has burned his finger by having approached it too near to the flame of a lighted taper, is warned that he ought to abstain from indulging a similar temptation; a man once punished and despised for having committed a dishonest action, is not often tempted to continue so unfavourable a course. Under whatever point of view man is considered, he never acts but after the impulse given to his will, whether it be by the will of others, or by more perceptible physical causes. The particular organisation decides the nature of the impulse; souls act upon souls that are analogous; fiery imaginations act with facility upon strong passions, and upon imaginations easy to be inflamed; the surprising progress of enthusiasm, the hereditary propagation of superstition, the transmission of religious errours from race to race, the excessive ardour with which man seizes on the marvellous, are effects as necessary as those which result from the action and reaction of bodies.

In despite of the gratuitous ideas which man has formed to himself on his pretended free agency; in defiance of the illusions of this supposed intimate sense, which, maugre his experience, persuades him that he is master of his will; all his institutions are really founded upon necessity: on this, as on a variety of other occasions, practice throws aside speculation. Indeed, if it was not believed that certain motives embraced the power requisite to determine the will of man, to arrest the progress of his passions; to direct them towards an end, to modify him, of what use would be the faculty of speech? What benefit could arise from education, from legislation, from morals, even from religion itself? What does education achieve, save give the first impulse to the human will; make man contract habits; oblige him to persist in them; furnish him with motives, whether true or false, to act after a given manner? When the father either menaces his son with punishment, or promises him a reward, is he not convinced these things will act upon his will? What does legislation attempt except it be to present to the citizens of a state those motives which are supposed necessary to determine them to perform some actions that are considered worthy; to abstain from committing others that are looked upon as unworthy? What is the object of morals, if it be not to show man that his interest exacts he should suppress the momentary ebullition of his passions, with a view to promote a more certain happiness, a more lasting well- being, than can possibly result front the gratification of his transitory desires? Does not the religion of all countries suppose the human race, together with the entire of nature, submitted to the irresistible will of a necessary being who regulates their condition after the eternal laws of immutable wisdom? Is not this God, which man adores, the absolute master of their destiny? Is it not this divine being who chooses and who rejects? The anathemas fulminated by religion, the promises it holds forth, are they not founded upon the idea of the effects these chimeras will necessarily produce upon ignorant and timid people? Is not man brought into existence by this kind Divinity without his own knowledge? Is he not obliged to play a part against his will? Does not either his happiness or his misery depend on the part he plays?[77] Education, then, is only necessity shown to children: legislation, is necessity shown to the

members of the body politic: morals, is the necessity of the relations subsisting between men, shown to reasonable beings: in short, man grants necessity in every thing for which he believes he has certain unerring experience: that of which he does not comprehend the necessary connexion of causes with their effects he styles probability: he would not act as he does, if he was not convinced, or, at least, if he did not presume that certain effects will necessarily follow his actions. The moralist preaches reason, because he believes it necessary to man; the philosopher writes, because he believes truth must sooner or later prevail over falsehood: theologians and tyrants necessarily hate truth and despise reason, because they believe them prejudicial to their interests: the sovereign, who strives to terrify crime by the severity of his laws, but who, nevertheless, oftener renders it useful and even necessary to his purposes, presumes the motives he employs will be sufficient to keep his subjects within bounds. All reckon equally upon the power or upon the necessity of the motives they make use of, and each individual flatters himself, either with or without reason, that these motives will have an influence on the conduct of mankind. The education of man is commonly thus defective or inefficacious, only because it is regulated by prejudice: even when this education is good, it is but too often speedily counteracted and annihilated by every thing that takes place in society. Legislation and politics are very frequently iniquitous, and serve no better purpose than to kindle passions in the bosom of man, which, once set afloat, they are no longer competent to restrain. The great art of the moralist should be to point out to man and to those who are intrusted with the office of regulating his will, that their interests are identified; that their reciprocal happiness depends upon the harmony of their passions; that the safety, the power, the duration of empires, necessarily depend on the good sense diffused among the individual members; on the truth of the notions inculcated in the mind of the citizens; on the moral goodness that is sown in their hearts; on the virtues that are cultivated in their breasts. Religion should not be admissible unless it truly fortified and strengthened these motives, and unless it were possible for falsehood to lend real assistance to truth. But in the miserable state into which errour has plunged a considerable portion of the human species, man, for the most part, is obliged to be wicked or to injure his fellow creature; the strongest motives invite him to the commission of evil. Religion renders him a useless being; makes him an abject slave; causes him to tremble under its terrours; or else turns him into a furious fanatic, who is at once cruel, intolerant and inhuman: arbitrary power crushes him and obliges him to become cringing and vicious: law visits crime with punishment only in those who are too feeble to oppose its course, or when it has become incapable of restraining the violent excesses to which a bad government gives birth. In short, education neglected and despised, depends either upon priests, who are impostors, or else upon parents without understanding and devoid of morals, who impress on the ductile mind of their scholars those vices with which they are themselves tormented, and who transmit to them the false opinions which they have an interest in making them adopt.

All this proves the necessity of recurring to the primitive source of man's wanderings, if it be seriously intended to furnish him with suitable remedies. It is useless to dream of

correcting his mistakes, until the true causes that move his will are unravelled, or until more real, more beneficial, more certain motives, are substituted for those which are found so inefficacious and so dangerous both to society and to himself. It *is* for those who guide the human will who regulate the condition of nations, to seek after these motives with which reason will readily furnish them; even a good book, by touching the heart of a great prince, may become a very powerful cause that shall necessarily have an influence over the conduct of a whole people; that shall decide upon the felicity of a portion of the human race.

From all that has been advanced in this chapter, it results, that in no one moment of his existence is man a free agent. He is not the architect of his own conformation, which he holds from nature; he has no controul over his own ideas, or over the modification of his brain; these are due to causes, that, in despite of him, and without his own knowledge, unceasingly act upon him; he is not the master of not loving or coveting that which he finds amiable or desirable; he is not capable of refusing to deliberate, when he is uncertain of the effects certain objects will produce upon him; he cannot avoid choosing that which he believes will be most advantageous to him; in the moment when his will is determined by his choice he is not competent to act otherwise than he does. In what instance, then, is he the master of his own actions? In what moment is he a free agent?[78]

That which a plan is about to do, is always a consequence of that which he has been — of that which he is — of that which he has done up to the moment of the action: his total and actual existence, considered under all its possible circumstances, contains the sum of all the motives to the action he is about to commit; this is a principle the truth of which no thinking being will be able to refuse accrediting: his life is a series of necessary moments; his conduct, whether good or bad, virtuous or vicious, useful or prejudicial, either to himself or to others, is a concatenation of action, as necessary as all the moments of his existence. *To live,* is to exist in a necessary mode during the points of that duration which succeed each other necessarily: *to will,* is to acquiesce or not in remaining such as he is: *to be free,* is to yield to the necessary motives he carries within himself.

If he understood the play of his organs, if he was able to recall to himself all the impulsions they have received, all the modifications they have undergone, all the effects they have produced, he would perceive that all his actions are submitted to that *fatality,* which regulates his own particular system, as it does the entire system of the universe: no one effect in him, any more than in nature, produces itself by *chance;* this, as has been before proved, is a word void of sense. All that passes in him; all that is done by him; as well as all that happens in nature, or that is attributed to her, is derived from necessary causes, which act according to necessary laws, and which produce necessary effects from whence necessarily flow others. *Fatality,* is the eternal, the immutable, the necessary order, established in nature; or the indispensable connexion of causes that act, with the effects they operate. Conforming to this order, heavy bodies fall; light bodies rise; that which is analogous in matter reciprocally attracts; that which is heterogeneous mutually repels; man congregates himself in society, modifies each his fellow; becomes either virtuous or wicked; either contributes to his mutual

happiness, or reciprocates his misery; either loves his neighbour, or hates his companion necessarily, according to the manner in which the one acts upon the other. From whence it may be seen, that the same necessity which regulates the physical, also regulates the moral world, in which every thing is in consequence submitted to fatality. Man, in running over, frequently without his own knowledge, often in despite of himself, the route which nature has marked out for him, resembles a swimmer who is obliged to follow the current that carries him along: he believes himself a free agent, because he sometimes consents, sometimes does not consent, to glide with the stream, which, notwithstanding, always hurries him forward; he believes himself the master of his condition, because he is obliged to use his arms under the fear of sinking.

> Volentem ducunt fata, nolentem trahunt.
> *Senec.*

The false ideas he has formed to himself upon free agency, are in general thus founded: there are certain events which he judges *necessary*; either because he sees that they are effects constantly and invariably linked to certain causes, which nothing seems to prevent; or because he believes he has discovered the chain of causes and effects that is put in play to produce those events: whilst he contemplates as *contingent* other events of whose causes he is ignorant, and with whose mode of acting he is unacquainted: but in nature, where every thing is connected by one common bond, there exists no effect without a cause. In the moral as well as in the physical world, every thing that happens is a necessary consequence of causes, either visible or concealed, which are of necessity obliged to act after their peculiar essences. *In man, free agency is nothing more than necessity contained within himself.*

Chapter XII: An Examination of the Opinion which pretends that the System of Fatalism is Dangerous.

For a being whose essence obliges him to have a constant tendency to his own conservation and to render himself happy, experience is indispensable: without it he cannot discover truth, which is nothing more, as has been already said, than a knowledge of the constant relations which subsist between man and those objects that act upon him; according to his experience he denominates those that contribute to his permanent welfare, useful and salutary; those that procure him pleasure, more or less durable, he calls agreeable. Truth itself becomes the object of his desires, only when he believes it is useful; he dreads it whenever he presumes it will injure him. But has truth the power to injure him? Is it possible that evil can result to man from a correct understanding of the relations he has with other beings? Can it be true that he can be harmed by becoming acquainted with those things of which, for his own happiness, he is interested in having a knowledge? No! unquestionably not: it is upon its utility that truth founds its worth and its rights: sometimes it may be disagreeable to individuals, it may even appear contrary to their interests; but it will always be useful to the

whole human species, whose interests must for ever remain distinct from those of men who, duped by their own peculiar passions, believe their advantage consists in plunging others into errour.

Utility, then, is the touchstone of the systems, the opinions, and the actions of man; it is the standard of the esteem and the love he owes to truth itself: the most useful truths are the most estimable: those truths which are most interesting for his species, he styles eminent; those of which the utility limits itself to the amusement of some individuals who have not correspondent ideas, similar modes of feeling, wants analogous to his own, he either disdains, or else calls them barren.

It is according to this standard that the principles laid down in this work ought to be judged. Those who are acquainted with the immense chain of mischief produced on the earth by erroneous systems of superstition, will acknowledge the importance of opposing to them systems more accordant with truth, drawn from nature, and founded on experience. Those who are, or believe they are, interested in maintaining the established errours, will contemplate with horrour the truths here presented to them: in short, those infatuated mortals, who only feel very faintly the enormous load of misery brought upon mankind by theological prejudices, will regard all our principles as useless, or, at most, as steril truths, calculated to amuse the idle hours of a few speculators.

No astonishment, therefore, need be excited at the various judgments formed by man: his interests never being the same, any more than his notions of utility, he condemns or disdains every thing that does not accord with his our peculiar ideas. This granted, let us examine if, in the eyes of the disinterested man, who is not entangled by prejudice, who is sensible to the happiness of his species, *the doctrine of fatalism* be useful or dangerous? Let us see if it be a barren speculation, that has not. any influence upon the felicity of the human race? It has been already shown that it will furnish morals with efficacious arguments, with real motives to determine the will, supply politics with the true lever to raise the proper activity in the mind of man. It will also be seen that it serves to explain in a simple manner the mechanism of man's actions, and the most striking phenomena of the human heart: on the other hand, if his ideas are only the result of unfruitful speculations, they cannot interest the happiness of the human species. Whether he believes himself a free agent, or whether he acknowledges the necessity of things, he always equally follows the desires imprinted on his soul. A rational education, honest habits, wise systems, equitable laws, rewards uprightly distributed, punishments justly inflicted, will render man virtuous; while thorny speculations, filled with difficulties, can, at most, only have an influence over persons accustomed to think.

After these reflections it will be very easy to remove the difficulties that are unceasingly opposed to the system of fatalism; which so many persons, blinded by their religious systems, are desirous to have considered as dangerous; as deserving of punishment; as calculated to disturb public tranquillity; as tending to unchain the passions, and to confound ideas of vice and of virtue.

The opposers of necessity say: that if all the actions of man are necessary, no right whatever

exists to punish bad ones, or even to be angry with those who commit them; that nothing ought to be imputed to them; that the laws would be unjust, if they should decree punishment for necessary actions; in short, that under this system, man could neither have merit nor demerit. In reply it may be argued, that, to impute an action to any one, is to attribute that action to him — to acknowledge him for the author: thus, when even an action was supposed to be the effect of an agent, and that agent *necessity*, the imputation would still lie: the merit or demerit that is ascribed to an action are ideas originating in the effects, whether favourable or pernicious, that result to those who experience its operation: when, therefore, it should be conceded that the agent was necessity, it is not less certain that the action would be either good or bad; estimable or contemptible, to those who must feel its influence; in short, that it would be capable of either eliciting their love, or exciting their anger. Love and anger are modes of existence suitable to modify beings of the human species: when, therefore, man irritates himself against his fellow, he intends to excite his fear, or even to punish him. Moreover, his anger is necessary; it is the result of his nature and of his temperament. The painful sensation produced by a stone that falls on the arm, does not displease the less because it comes from a cause deprived of will, and which acts by the necessity of its nature. In contemplating man as acting necessarily, it is impossible to avoid distinguishing that mode of action or being which is agreeable, which elicits approbation, from that which is afflicting, which irritates, which nature obliges him to blame and to prevent. From this it will be seen that the system of fatalism does not in any manner change the actual state of things, and is by no means calculated to confound man's ideas of virtue and vice.[79]

Laws are made with a view to maintain society, and to prevent man associated from injuring his neighbour; they are therefore competent to punish those who disturb its harmony, or those who commit actions that are injurious to their fellows; whether these associates may be the agents of necessity, or whether they are free agents, it suffices to know that they are susceptible of modification, and are therefore submitted to the operation of the law. Penal laws are those motives which experience has shown capable of restraining or of annihilating the impulse passions give to man's will: from whatever necessary cause man may derive these passions, the legislator proposes to arrest their effect, and when he takes suitable means he is certain of success. The jurisconsult, in decreeing to crime, gibbets, tortures, or any other chastisement whatever, does nothing more than is done by the architect, who in building a house places gutters to carry off the rain, and prevent it from sapping the foundation.

Whatever may be the cause that obliges man to act, society possesses the right to crush the effects: as much as the man whose land would be ruined by a river, has to restrain its waters by a bank, or even, if he is able, to turn it's course. It is by virtue of this right, that society has the power to intimidate and to punish, with a view to its own conservation, those who may be tempted to injure it; or those who commit actions which are acknowledged really to interrupt its repose, to be inimical to its security, or repugnant to his happiness.

It will perhaps be argued, that society does not usually punish those faults in which the will has no share; that it punishes the will alone; that this it is which decides the nature of the

crime, and the degree of its atrocity: that if this will be not free, it ought not to be punished. I reply, that society is an assemblage of sensible beings, susceptible of reason, who desire their own welfare, who fear evil, and seek after good. These dispositions enable their will to be so modified or determined, that they are capable of holding such a conduct as will conduce to the end they have in view. Education, the laws, public opinion, example, habit, fear, are the causes that must modify associated man, influence his will, regulate his passions, restrain the actions of him who is capable of injuring the end of his association, and thereby make him concur to the general happiness. These causes are of a nature to make impressions on every man whose organization and whose essence place him in a capacity to contract the habits, the modes of thinking, and the manner of acting, with which society is willing to inspire him. All the individuals of the human species are susceptible of fear; from whence it flows as a natural consequence, that the fear of punishment, or the privation of the happiness he desires, are motives that must necessarily more or less influence his will, and regulate his actions. If the man is to be found, who is so badly constituted as to resist or to be insensible to those motives which operate upon all his fellows, he is not fit to live in society; he would contradict the very end of his association; he would be its enemy; he would place obstacles to its natural tendency; his rebellious disposition, his unsociable will, not being susceptible of that modification which is convenient to his own true interests and to the interests of his fellow citizens, these would unite themselves against such an enemy; and the law which is the expression of the general will, would visit with condign punishment that refractory individual upon whom the motives presented to him by society had not the effect which it had been induced to expect: in consequence such an unsociable man would be chastised; he would be rendered miserable; and according to the nature of his crime he would be excluded from society, as a being but little calculated to concur in its views.

If society has the right to conserve itself, it has also the right to take the means: these means are the laws which present to the will of man those motives which are most suitable to deter him from committing injurious actions. If these motives fail of the proper effect, if they are unable to influence him, society, for its own peculiar good, is obliged to wrest from him the power of doing it farther injury. From whatever source his actions may arise, whether they are the result of free agency, or whether they are the offspring of necessity, society coerces him, if after having furnished him with motives sufficiently powerful to act upon reasonable beings, it perceives that these motives have not been competent to vanquish his depraved nature. It punishes him with justice, when the actions from which it dissuades him are truly injurious to society; it has an unquestionable right to punish, when it only commands or defends those things that are conformable to the end proposed by man in his association. But, on the other hand, the law has not acquired the right to punish him, if it has failed to present to him the motives necessary to have an influence over his will; it has not the right to coerce him, if the negligence of society has deprived him of the means of subsisting, of exercising his talents, of exerting his industry, and of labouring for its welfare. It is unjust, when it punishes those to whom it has neither given an education, nor honest principles; whom it has

not enabled to contract habits necessary to the maintenance of society: it is unjust, when it punishes them for faults which the wants of their nature, or the constitution of society has rendered necessary to them: it is unjust aud irrational, whenever it chastises them for having followed those propensities which example, which public opinion, which the institutions, which society itself conspires to give them. In short, the law is defective when it does not proportion the punishment to the real evil which society has sustained. The last degree of injustice and folly is, when society is so blinded as to inflict punishment on those citizens who have served it usefully.

Thus penal laws in exhibiting terrifying objects to man who must be supposed susceptible of fear, present him with motives calculated to have an influence over his will. The idea of pain, the privation of liberty, the fear of death, are, to a being well constituted and in the full enjoyment of his faculties, very puissant obstacles that strongly oppose themselves to the impulse of his unruly desires: when these do not coerce his will, when they fail to arrest his progress, he is an irrational being, a madman, a being badly organized, against whom society has the right to guaranty itself and to take measures for its own security. Madness is, without doubt, an involuntary and a necessary state; nevertheless, no one feels it unjust to deprive the insane of their liberty, although their actions can only be imputed to the derangement of their brain. The wicked are men whose brain is either constantly or transitorily disturbed; still they must be punished by reason of the evil they commit; they must always be placed in the impossibility of injuring society; if no hope remains of bringing them back to a reasonable conduct, and to adopt a mode of action conformable to the great end of association, they must be for ever excluded its benefits.

It will not be requisite to examine here how far the punishments, which society inflicts upon those who offend against it, may be reasonably carried. Reason should seem to indicate, that the law ought to show to the necessary crimes of man all the indulgence that is compatible with the conservation of society. The system of fatalism, as we have seen, does not leave crime unpunished; but it is at least calculated to moderate the barbarity with which a number of nations punish the victims to their anger. This cruelty becomes still more absurd when experience has shown its inutility: the habit of witnessing ferocious punishments, familiarizes criminals with the idea. If it be true that society possesses the right of taking away the life of its members; if it be really a fact that the death of a criminal, thenceforth useless, can be advantageous for society, (which it will be necessary to examine,) humanity at least exacts, that this death should not be accompanied with useless tortures with which laws too frequently seem to delight in overwhelming their victim. This cruelty defeats its own end, as it only serves to make the culprit, who is immolated to the public vengeance, suffer without any advantage to society: it moves the compassion of the spectator, and interests him in favour of the miserable offender who groans under its weight: it impresses nothing upon the wicked; whilst the sight of those cruelties destined for himself but too frequently renders him more ferocious, more cruel, and more the enemy of his associates: if the example of death were less frequent, even without being accompanied with tortures, it would be more

efficacious.[80]

What shall be said for the unjust cruelty of some nations, in which the law, that ought to have for its object the advantage of the whole, appears to be made only for the security of the most powerful; in which punishments the most disproportionate to the crime, unmercifully take away the lives of men, whom the most urgent necessity has obliged to become criminal? It is thus, that in a great number of civilized nations, the life of the citizen is placed in the same scales with money; that the unhappy wretch, who *is* perishing from hunger and misery, is put to death for having taken a pitiful portion of the superfluity of another whom he beholds rolling in abundance? It is this, that in many otherwise very enlightened societies, is called *justice,* or making the punishment commensurate with the crime.

This dreadful iniquity becomes yet more crying, when the laws decree the most cruel tortures for crimes to which the most irrational customs give birth; which bad institutions multiply. Man, as it cannot be too frequently repeated, is so prone to evil, only because every thing appears to urge him on to the commission, by too frequently showing him vice triumphant: his education is void in most states; he receives from society no other principles, save those of an unintelligible religion, which make but a feeble barrier against his propensities: in vain the law cries out to him: "abstain from the goods of thy neighbour;" his wants, more powerful, loudly declare to him that he must live at the expense of a society who has done nothing for him, and who condemns him to groan in misery and in indigence; frequently deprived of the common necessaries, he compensates himself by theft, and by assassination; he becomes a plunderer by profession, a murderer by trade, and seeks, at the risk of his life, to satisfy those wants, whether real or imaginary, to which every thing around him conspires to give birth. Deprived of education, he has not been taught to restrain the fury of his temperament. Without ideas of decency, destitute of the true principles of honour, he engages in criminal pursuits that injure his country, which has teen to him nothing more than a step-mother. In the paroxysm of his rage, he only sees the gibbet that awaits him; his unruly desires have become too potent; they have given an inveteracy to his habits which preclude him from changing them; laziness has made him torpid; despair has rendered him blind; he rushes on to death; and society punishes him rigorously for those fatal and necessary dispositions, which it has itself engendered in his heart, or which at least it has not taken the pains seasonably to root out and to oppose by motives calculated to give him honest principles. Thus society frequently punishes those propensities of which it is itself the author, or which its negligence has suffered to spring up in the mind of man: it acts like those unjust fathers, who chastise their children for vices which they have themselves made them contract. However unjust and unreasonable this conduct may be, or appear to be, it is not the less necessary: society, such as it is, whatever may be its corruption, whatever vices may pervade its institutions, like every thing else in nature, tends to subsist and to conserve itself: in consequence it is obliged to punish those excesses which its own vicious constitution has produced: in despite of its peculiar prejudices and vices, it feels cogently that its own immediate security demands, that it should destroy the conspiracies of those who make war

against its tranquillity: if these, hurried on by necessary propensities, disturb its repose and injure its interests, this following the natural law, which obliges it to labour to its own peculiar conservation, removes them out of its road, and punishes them with more or less rigour, according to the objects to which it attaches the greatest importance, or which it supposes best suited to further its own peculiar welfare: without doubt it deceives itself frequently, but it deceives itself necessarily, for want of the knowledge calculated to enlighten it with regard to its true interests, or for want of those, who regulate its movements, possessing proper vigilance, suitable talents, and the requisite virtue. From this it will appear, that the injustice of a society badly constituted, and blinded by its prejudices, is as necessary as the crimes of those by whom it is hostily attacked and distracted.[81] The body politic, when in a state of insanity, cannot act more consistently with reason than one of its members whose brain is disturbed by madness.

It will still be said that these maxims, by submitting every thing to necessity, must confound, or even destroy, the notions man forms of justice and injustice, of good and evil, of merit and demerit. I deny it: although man, in every thing he does, acts necessarily, his actions are good, just, and meritorious, every time they tend to the real utility of his fellows, and of the society of which he makes a part: they are, of necessity, distinguished from those which are really prejudicial to the welfare of his associates. Society is just, good, and worthy our reverence, when it procures for all its members their physical wants, affords them protection, secures their liberty, and puts them in possession of their natural rights. It is in this that consists all the happiness of which the social compact is susceptible. Society is unjust, and unworthy our esteem, when it is partial to a few, and cruel to the greater number: it is then that it multiplies its enemies, and obliges them to revenge themselves by criminal actions which it is under the necessity to punish. It is not upon the caprices of political society that depend the true notions of justice and injustice, the right ideas of moral good and evil, a just appreciation of merit and demerit; it is upon *utility* — upon the necessity of things — which always forces man to feel that there exists a mode of acting which he is obliged to venerate and approve, either in his fellows or in society: whilst there is another mode which his nature makes him hate, which his feelings compel him to condemn. It is upon his own peculiar essence that man founds his ideas of pleasure and of pain, of right and of wrong, of vice and of virtue: the only difference between these is, that pleasure and pain make them instantaneously felt in his brain: whilst the advantages that accrue to him from justice and virtue, frequently do not display themselves but after a long train of reflections, and after multiplied experiences, which many, either from a defect in their conformation or from the peculiarity of the circumstances under which they are placed, are prevented from making, or, at least, from making correctly.

By a necessary consequence of this truism, the system of fatalism, although it has frequently been so accused, does not tend to encourage man in crime, and to make remorse vanish from his mind. His propensities are to be ascribed to his nature; the use he makes of his passions depends upon his habits, upon his opinions, upon the ideas he has received in his education,

and upon the examples held forth by the society in which he lives. These things are what necessarily decide his conduct. Thus when his temperament renders him susceptible of strong passions, he is violent in his desires, whatever may be his speculations.

Remorse is the painful sentiment excited in him by grief caused either by the immediate or probable future effect of his passions: if these effects were always useful to him, he would not experience remorse; but, as soon as he is assured that his actions render him hateful or contemptible; or as soon as he fears he shall be punished in some mode or other, he becomes restless and discontented with himself: he reproaches himself with his own conduct; he feels ashamed; he fears the judgment of those beings whose affection he has learned to esteem; in whose good will he finds his own comfort deeply interested. His experience proves to him, that the wicked man is odious to all those upon whom his actions have any influence: if these actions are concealed at the moment, he knows it very rarely happens they remain so forever. The smallest reflection convinces him, that there is no wicked man who is not ashamed of his own conduct; who is truly contented with himself; who does not envy the condition of the good man; who is not obliged to acknowledge, that he has paid very dearly for those advantages he is never able to enjoy without making the most bitter reproaches against himself: then he feels ashamed, despises himself, hates himself, his conscience becomes alarmed, remorse follows in its train. To be convinced of the truth of this principle, it is only requisite to cast, our eyes on the extreme precautions that tyrants and villains, who are otherwise sufficiently powerful not to dread the punishment of man, take to prevent exposure; to what lengths they push their cruelties against some, to what meanness they stoop to others, of those who are able to hold them up to public scorn. Have they not then a consciousness of their own iniquities? Do they not know, that they are hateful and contemptible? Have they not remorse? Is their condition happy? Persons well brought up acquire these sentiments in their education; which are either strengthened or enfeebled by public opinion, by habit, by the examples set before them. In a depraved society, remorse, either does not exist, or presently disappears: because in all his actions, it is ever the judgment of his fellow man that man is obliged necessarily to regard. He never feels either shame or remorse for actions he sees approved, that are practised by all the world. Under corrupt governments, venal souls, avaricious beings, mercenary individuals, do not blush, either at meanness, robbery, or rapine, when it is authorized by example: in licentious nations no one blushes at adultery; in superstitious countries, man does not blush to assassinate his fellow for his opinions. It will be obvious, therefore, that his remorse, as well as the ideas, whether right or wrong, which man has of decency, virtue, justice, &c. are the necessary consequence, of his temperament, modified by the society in which he lives: assassins and thieves, when they live only among themselves, have neither shame nor remorse.

Thus, I repeat, all the actions of man, are necessary; those which are always useful, which constantly contribute to the real, tend to the permanent happiness of his species, are called *virtues*, and are necessarily pleasing to all who experience their influence — at least, if their passions or false opinions do not oblige them to judge in that manner which is but little

accordant with the nature of things: each man acts, each individual judges necessarily according to his own peculiar mode of existence, and after the ideas, whether true or false, which he has formed with regard to his happiness. There are necessary actions, which man is obliged to approve; there are others, that in despite of himself, he is compelled to censure, of which the idea generates shame, when his reflection permits him to contemplate them under the same point of view that they are regarded by his associates. The virtuous man and the wicked act from motives equally necessary; they differ simply in their organization, and in the ideas they form to themselves of happiness: we love the one, necessarily, we detest the other from the same necessity. The law of his nature which wills that a sensible being shall constantly labour to preserve himself, has not left to man the power to choose, or the free agency to prefer pain to pleasure, vice to utility, crime to virtue. It is then the essence of man himself, that obliges him to discriminate those actions which are advantageous to him, from those which are prejudicial.

This distinction subsists even in the most corrupt societies, in which the ideas of virtue, although completely effaced from their conduct, remain the same in their mind. Let us suppose a man, who had decidedly determined for villany, who should say to himself: "It is folly to be virtuous in a society that is depraved, in a community that is debauched." Let us suppose also that he has sufficient address and good fortune to escape censure or punishment during a long series of years; I say, that despite of all these circumstances, apparently so advantageous for himself, such a man has neither been happy nor contented with his own conduct. He has been in continual agonies; ever at war with his own actions; in a state of constant agitation. How much pain, how much anxiety, has he not endured in this perpetual conflict with himself? how many precautions, what excessive labour, what endless solicitude, has he not been compelled to employ in this continued struggle; how many embarrassments, how many cares, has he not experienced in this eternal wrestling with his associates, whose penetration he dreads? Demand of him what he thinks of himself, he will shrink from the question. Approach the bedside of this villain at the moment he is dying, ask him if he would be willing to recommence, at the same price, a life of similar agitation? If he is ingenuous, he will avow that he has tasted neither repose nor happiness; that each crime filled him with inquietude; that reflection prevented him from sleeping; that the world has been to him only one continued scene of alarm and an everlasting anxiety of mind; that to live peaceably upon bread and water, appears to him to be a much happier, a more easy condition, than to possess riches, credit, reputation, honours, on the same terms that he has himself acquired them. If this villain, maugre all his success, finds his condition so deplorable, what must be thought of the feelings of those who have neither the same resources, nor the same advantages, to succeed in their criminal projects?

Thus the system of necessity, *is* a truth not only founded upon certain experience, but, again, it establishes morals upon an immoveable basis. Far from sapping the foundations of virtue, it points out its necessity; it clearly shows the invariable sentiments it must excite — sentiments so necessary, so strong, that all the prejudices and all the vices of man's

institutions, have never been able entirely to eradicate them from his mind. When he mistakes the advantages of virtue, it ought to be ascribed to the errours that are infused into him; to the irrationality of his institutions. All his wanderings are the fatal and necessary consequences of errour and of prejudices which have identified themselves with his existence. Let it not therefore any longer be imputed to his nature that he has become wicked, but to those baneful opinions he has imbibed with his mother's milk which have rendered him ambitious, avaricious, envious, haughty, arrogant, debauched, intolerant, obstinate, prejudiced, incommodious to his fellows, and mischievous to himself. It is education that carries into his system the germ of those vices, which necessarily torment him during the whole course of his life.

Fatalism is reproached with discouraging man, damping the ardour of his soul, plunging him into apathy, and with destroying the bonds that should connect him with society. Its opponents say: "If every thing is necessary, we must let things go on, and not be disturbed at any thing." But does it depend on man to be sensible or not? Is he master of feeling, or not feeling pain? If nature has endowed him with a humane and tender soul, is it possible he should not interest himself in a very lively manner in the welfare of beings whom he knows are necessary to his own peculiar happiness? His feelings are necessary; they depend on his own peculiar nature, cultivated by education. His imagination, prompt to concern itself with the felicity of his race, causes his heart to be oppressed at the sight of those evils his fellow creature is obliged to endure: makes his soul tremble in the contemplation of the misery arising from the despotism that crushes him; from the superstition that leads him astray; from the passions that distract him; from the follies that are perpetually ranking him in a state of warfare against his neighbour. Although he knows that death is the fatal and necessary period to the form of all beings, his soul is not affected in a less lively manner at the loss of a beloved wife — at the demise of a child calculated to console his old age — at the final separation from an esteemed friend, who had become dear to his heart. Although he is not ignorant that it is the essence of fire to burn, he does not believe he is dispensed from using his utmost efforts to arrest the progress of a conflagration. Although he is intimately convinced that the evils to which he is a witness are the necessary consequence of primitive errours with which his fellow citizens are imbued, yet he feels he ought to display truth to them, (if nature has given him the necessary courage,) under the conviction that if they listen to it, it will by degrees become a certain remedy for their sufferings — that it will produce those necessary effects which it is of its essence to operate.

If the speculations of man modify his conduct, if they change his temperament, he ought not to doubt that the system of necessity would have the most advantageous influence over him: not only is it suitable to calm the greater part of his inquietude, but it will also contribute to inspire him with a useful submission, a rational resignation to the decrees of a destiny, with which his too great sensibility frequently causes him to be overwhelmed. This happy apathy without doubt would be desirable to those whose souls, too tender to brook the inequalities of life, frequently render them the deplorable sport of their fate; or whose organs, too weak

to make resistance to the buffetings of fortune, incessantly expose them to be dashed in pieces under the rude blows of adversity.

But, of all the important advantages the human race would be enabled to derive from the doctrine of fatalism if man was to apply it to his conduct, none would be of greater magnitude, none of more happy consequence, none that would more efficaciously corroborate his happiness, than that general indulgence, that universal toleration, that must necessarily spring from the opinion that *all is necessary.* In consequence of the adoption of this principle, the fatalist, if he had a sensible soul, would commiserate the prejudices of his fellow man, would lament over his wanderings, would seek to undeceive him, without ever irritating himself against his weakness — without ever insulting his misery. Indeed, what right have we to hate or despise man for his opinions? His ignorance, his prejudices, his imbecility, his vices, his passions, his weakness, are they not the inevitable consequence of vicious institutions? Is he not sufficiently punished by the multitude of evils that afflict him on every side? Those despots who crush him with an iron sceptre, are they not continual victims to their own peculiar restlessness, and eternal slaves to their suspicions? Is there one wicked individual who enjoys a pure, an unmixed, a real happiness? Do not nations unceasingly suffer from their follies? Are they not the incessant dupes to their prejudices? Is not the ignorance of chiefs, the ill-will they bear to reason, the hatred they have for truth, punished by the imbecility of their citizens, and by the ruin of the states they govern? In short, the fatalist would grieve to witness necessity each moment exercising its severe decrees upon mortals who are ignorant of its power, or who feel its castigation, without being willing to acknowledge the hand from, whence it proceeds; he will perceive, that ignorance is necessary, that credulity is the necessary result of ignorance, that slavery and bondage are necessary consequences of ignorant credulity; that corruption of manners springs necessarily from slavery; that the miseries of society and of its members, are the necessary offspring of this corruption.

The fatalist, in consequence of these ideas, will neither be a gloomy misanthrope, nor a dangerous citizen. He will pardon in his brethren those wanderings which their nature vitiated by a thousand causes, has rendered necessary; he will offer them consolation; he will endeavour to inspire them with courage; he will be sedulous to undeceive them in their idle notions; in their chimerical ideas; but he will never show them that rancorous animosity which is more suitable to make them revolt from his doctrines than to attract them to reason. He will not disturb the repose of society; he will not raise the people to insurrection against the sovereign authority; on the contrary, he will feel that the miserable blindness and perverseness of so many conductors of the people, are the necessary consequence of that flattery administered to them in their infancy; of the depraved malice of those who surround them, and who wickedly corrupt them, that they may profit by their folly: in short, that these things are the inevitable effect of that profound ignorance of their true interest, in which every thing strives to keep them.

The fatalist has no right to be vain of his peculiar talents or of his virtues: he knows that these

qualities are only the consequence of his natural organization, modified by circumstances that have in nowise depended upon himself. He will neither have hatred nor feel contempt for those whom nature and circumstances have not favoured in a similar manner. It is the fatalist who ought to be humble and modest from principle: is he not obliged to acknowledge that he possesses nothing that he has not previously received?

In fact, every thing will conduct to indulgence the fatalist whom experience has convinced of the necessity of things. He will see with pain that it is the essence of a society badly constituted, unwisely governed, enslaved to prejudice, attached to unreasonable customs, submitted to irrational laws, degraded under despotism, corrupted by luxury, inebriated with false opinions, to be filled with trifling members; to be composed of vicious citizens; to be made up of cringing slaves, who are proud of their chains; of ambitious men, without ideas of true glory; of misers and prodigals; of fanatics and libertines! Convinced of the necessary connexion of things, he will not be surprised to see that the supineness of their chiefs carries discouragement into their country; or that the influence of their governors stirs up bloody wars by which it is depopulated; causes useless expenditures that empoverish it; and that all these excesses united is the reason why so many nations contain only men wanting happiness, who are devoid of morals, destitute of virtue. In all this, he will contemplate nothing more than the necessary action and reaction of physics upon morals, of morals upon physics. In short, all who acknowledge fatality, will remain persuaded that a nation badly governed is a soil very abundant in poisonous plants; that these have such a plentiful growth as to crowd each other and choke themselves. It is in a country cultivated by the hands of a Lycurgus, that he will witness the production of intrepid citizens, of noble-minded individuals, of disinterested men, who are strangers to irregular pleasures. In a country cultivated by a Tiberius, he will find nothing but villains, with depraved hearts, men with mean contemptible souls, despicable informers, and execrable traitors. It is the soil, it is the circumstances in which man finds himself placed, that renders him either a useful object or a prejudicial being: the wise man avoids the one, as he would those dangerous reptiles whose nature it is to sting and communicate their deadly venom; he attaches himself to the other, esteems him, loves him, as he does those delicious fruits, with whose rich maturity his palate is pleasantly gratified, and with whose cooling juices he finds himself agreeably refreshed: he sees the wicked without anger; he cherishes the good with pleasure; he delights in the bountiful; he knows full well that the tree which is languishing without culture in the arid, sandy desert; that is stunted for want of attention; leafless for want of moisture; that has grown crooked from neglect; become barren from want of loam; would perhaps have expanded far and wide its verdant boughs, brought forth delectable fruit, afforded an umbrageous refreshing shelter, if its seed had been fortunately sown in a more fertile soil, or if it had experienced the fostering cares of a skilful cultivator.

Let it not then be said, that it is degrading man to reduce his functions to a pure mechanism; that it is shamefully to undervalue him, to compare him to a tree — to an abject vegetation. The philosopher devoid of prejudice, does not understand this language invented by those

who are ignorant of what constitutes the true dignity of man. A tree is an object which, in its station, joins the useful with the agreeable; it merits our approbation when it produces sweet and pleasant fruit, and when it affords a favourable shade. All machines are precious, whenever they are truly useful, and when they faithfully perform the functions for which they are designed. Yes, I speak it with courage, the honest man. when he has talents and possesses virtue, is, for the beings of his species, a tree that furnishes them with delicious fruit, and affords them refreshing shelter: the honest man is a machine, of which the springs are adapted to fulfil its functions in a manner that must gratify the expectation of all his fellows. No, I should not blush to be a machine of this sort; and my heart would leap with joy if I could foresee that the fruit of my reflections would one day be useful and consoling to my fellow man.

Is not nature herself a vast machine, of which the human species is but a very feeble spring? I see nothing contemptible either in her or in her productions: all the beings who come out of her hands are good, are noble, are sublime, whenever they co-operate to the production of order; to the maintenance of harmony in the sphere where they must act. Of whatever nature the soul may be, whether mortal or immortal; whether it be regarded as a spirit, or whether it be looked upon as a portion of the body; it will be found noble, great, and sublime, in a Socrates, in an Aristides, in a Cato: it will be thought abject, it will be viewed as despicable and corrupt in a Claudius, in a Sejanus, in a Nero: its energies will be admired in a Shakspeare, in a Corneille, in a Newton, in a Montesquieu: its baseness will be lamented when we behold mean men, who flatter tyranny, or who servilely cringe at the foot of superstition.

All that has been said in the course of this work, proves clearly that every thing is necessary; that every thing is always in order relatively to nature, where all beings do nothing more than follow the laws that are imposed on their respective classes. It is part of her plan, that certain portions of the earth shall bring forth delicious fruits, whilst others shall only furnish brambles and noxious vegetables: she has been willing that some societies should produce wise men and great heroes, that others should only give birth to contemptible men, without energy, and destitute of virtue. Winds, tempests, hurricanes, volcanoes, wars, plagues, famine, diseases, death, are as necessary to her eternal march, as the beneficent heat of the sun, the serenity of the atmosphere, the gentle showers of spring, plentiful years, peace, health, harmony, life: vice and virtue, darkness and light, ignorance and science, are equally necessary; the one are not benefits, the other are not evils, except for those beings whose happiness they influence, by either favouring or deranging their peculiar mode of existence. *The whole cannot be miserable, but it may contain unhappy individuals.*

Nature, then, distributes with the same hand that which is called *order,* and that which is called *disorder;* that which is called *pleasure,* and that which is called *pain;* in short, she diffuses, by the necessity of her existence, good and evil, in the world we inhabit. Let not man therefore either arraign her bounty, or tax her with malice; let him not imagine that his vociferations or his supplications, can ever arrest her colossal power, always acting after

immutable laws. Let him submit silently to his condition; and when he suffers, let him not seek a remedy by recurring to chimeras that his own distempered imagination has created; let him draw from the stores of nature herself the remedies which she offers for the evil she brings upon him: if she send him diseases, let him search in her bosom for those salutary productions to which she has given birth. If she gives him errours, she also furnishes him with experience and truth to counteract and destroy their fatal effects. If she permits man to groan under the pressure of his vices, beneath the load of his follies, she also shows him in virtue a sure remedy for his infirmities: if the evils that some societies experience are necessary, when they shall have become too incommodious, they will be irresistibly obliged to search for those remedies which nature will always point out to them. If this nature has rendered existence insupportable to some unfortunate beings whom she may appear to have selected for her victims, still death is a door that will surely be opened to them, and will deliver them from their misfortunes, although they may be deemed impossible of cure.

Let not man, then, accuse nature with being inexorable to him; since there does not exist an evil for which she has not furnished the remedy to those who have the courage to seek and apply it. Nature follows general and necessary laws in all her operations; physical and moral evil are not to be ascribed to her want of kindness, but to the necessity of things. Physical calamity is the derangement produced in man's organs by physical causes which he sees act: moral evil is the derangement produced in him by physical causes, of which the action is to him a secret. These causes always terminate by producing sensible effects, which are capable of striking his senses; neither the thoughts nor the will of man ever show themselves but by the marked effects they produce either in himself or upon those beings whom nature has rendered susceptible of feeling their impulse. He suffers, because it is of the essence of some beings to derange the economy of his machine; he enjoys, because the properties of some beings are analogous to his own mode of existence; he is born, because it is of the nature of some matter to combine itself under a determinate form; he lives, he acts, he thinks, because it is of the essence of certain combinations to maintain themselves in existence for a season; at length he dies, because a necessary law prescribes that all the combinations which are formed, shall either be destroyed or dissolve themselves. From all this it results, that nature is impartial to all its productions; she submits man, like all other beings, to those eternal laws from which she has not been able to exempt herself: if she was to suspend these laws, even for an instant, from that moment disorder would reign in her system, and her harmony would be disturbed.

Those who wish to study nature, must take experience for their guide; this, and this only, can enable them to dive into her secrets, and to unravel by degrees the frequently imperceptible woof of those slender causes of which she avails herself to operate the greatest phenomena: by the aid of experience, man often discovers in her new properties, perceives modes of action entirely unknown to the ages which have preceded him; those effects which his grandfathers contemplated as marvellous, which they regarded as supernatural efforts, looked upon as miracles, have become familiar to him in the present day; are at this moment

contemplated as simple and natural consequences of which he comprehends the mechanism and the cause. Man, in fathoming nature, has arrived at discovering the true causes of earthquakes, of the periodical motion of the sea, of subterraneous conflagrations, of meteors, of the electrical fluid, the whole of which were considered by his ancestors, and are still so by the ignorant, as indubitable signs of heaven's wrath. His posterity, in following up, in rectifying the experience already made, will go still farther, and discover effects and causes which are totally veiled from present eyes. The united efforts of the human species, will one day perhaps penetrate even into the sanctuary of nature, and throw into light many of those mysteries, which, up to the present time, she seems to have refused to all his researches.

In contemplating man under his true aspect; in quitting authority to follow experience; in laying aside errour to consult reason; in submitting every thing to physical laws, from which his imagination has vainly exerted its utmost power to withdraw them; it will be found, that the phenomena of the moral world follow exactly the same general rules as those of the physical, and that the greater part of those astonishing effects, which ignorance aided by his prejudices, makes him consider as inexplicable and as wonderful, are natural consequences flowing from simple causes. He will find, that the eruption of a volcano and the birth of a Tamerlane are to nature the same thing; in recurring to the primitive causes of those striking events which he beholds with consternation, of those terrible revolutions, those frightful convulsions that distract mankind, lay waste the fairest works of nature, and ravage nations, he will find the wills that compassed the most surprising changes, that operated the most extensive alterations in the state of things, were moved by physical causes, whose exility made him treat them as contemptible, and as utterly incapable to give birth to the phenomena, whose magnitude strikes him with awe and amazement.

If man was to judge of causes by their effects, there would be no small causes in the universe. In a nature where every thing is connected; where every thing acts and reacts, moves and changes, composes and decomposes, forms and destroys, there is not an atom which does not play an important and necessary part; there is not an imperceptible particle, however minute, which, placed in convenient circumstances, does not operate the most prodigious effects. If man was in a capacity to follow the eternal chain, to pursue the concatenated links that connect with their causes all the effects he witnesses, without losing sight of any one of its rings, if he could unravel the ends of those insensible threads that give impulse to the thoughts, decision to the will, direction to the passions of those men who are called mighty, according to their actions; he would find that they are true atoms which nature employs to move the moral world; that it is the unexpected but necessary junction of these indiscernible particles of matter, it is their aggregation, their combination, their proportion, their fermentation, which modifying the individual by degrees, in despite of himself, and frequently without his own knowledge, make him think, will and act in a determinate but necessary mode. If the will and the actions of this individual have an influence over a great number of other men, here is the moral world in a state of the greatest combustion. Too much acrimony in the bile of a fanatic, blood too much inflamed in the heart of a conqueror, a

painful indigestion in the stomach of a monarch, a whim that passes in the mind of a woman, are sometimes causes sufficient to bring on war, to send millions of men to the slaughter, to root out an entire people, to overthrow walls, to reduce cities into ashes, to plunge nations into slavery, to put a whole people into mourning, to breed famine in a land, to engender pestilence, to propagate calamity, to extend misery, to spread desolation far and wide upon the surface of our globe, through a long series of ages.

The dominant passion of an individual of the human species, when it disposes of the passions of many others, arrives at combining their will, at uniting their efforts, and thus decides the condition of man. It is after this manner that an ambitious, crafty, and voluptuous Arab gave to his countrymen an impulse, of which the effect was the subjugation and desolation of vast countries in Asia, in Africa, and in Europe; whose consequences were sufficiently potential to give a novel system of religion to millions of human beings; to overturn the altars of their former gods; in short, to alter the opinions, to change the customs of a considerable portion of the population of the earth. But in examining the primitive sources of this strange revolution, what were the concealed causes that had an influence over this man, that excited his peculiar passions, that modified his temperament? What was the matter from the combination of which resulted a crafty, ambitious, enthusiastic, and eloquent man; in short, a personage competent to impose on his fellow creatures, and capable of making them concur in his views. They were the insensible particles of his blood, the imperceptible texture of his fibres, the salts, more or less acrid, that stimulated his nerves, the proportion of igneous fluid that circulated in his system. From whence came these elements? It was from the womb of his mother, from the aliments which nourished him, from the climate in which he had his birth, from the ideas he received, from the air which he respired, without reckoning a thousand inappreciable and transitory causes, that, in the instance given, had modified, had determined the passions of this important being, who had thereby acquired the capacity to change the face of this mundane sphere.

To causes so weak in their principles, if in the origin the slightest obstacle had been opposed, these wonderful events, which have astounded man, would never have been produced. The fit of an ague, the consequence of bile a little too much inflamed, had sufficed, perhaps, to have rendered abortive all the vast projects of the legislator of the Mussulmen. Spare diet, a glass of water, a sanguinary evacuation, would sometimes have been sufficient to have saved kingdoms.

It will be seen, then, that the condition of the human species, as well as that of each of its individuals, every instant depends on insensible causes, to which circumstances, frequently fugitive, give birth; that opportunity develops, and convenience puts in action: man attributes their effects to chance, whilst these causes operate necessarily and act according to fixed rules: he has frequently neither the sagacity, nor the honesty, to recur to their true principles; he regards such feeble motives with contempt, because he has been taught to consider them as incapable of producing such stupendous events. They are, however, these motives, weak as they may appear to be, these springs, so pitiful in his eyes, which, according to her

necessary laws, suffice in the hands of nature, to move the universe. The conquests of a Gengiskhan have nothing in them that is more strange to the eye of a philosopher than the explosion of a mine, caused in its principle by a feeble spark, which commences with setting fire to a single grain of powder; this presently communicates itself to many millions of other contiguous grains, of which the united and multiplied powers, terminate by blowing up mountains, overthrowing fortifications, or converting populous cities into heaps of ruins.

Thus imperceptible causes, concealed in the bosom of nature until the moment their action is displayed, frequently decide the fate of man. The happiness or the wretchedness, the prosperity or the misery of each individual, as well as that of whole nations, are attached to powers which it is impossible for him to foresee, to appreciate, or to arrest the action. Perhaps, *at this moment*, atoms are amassing, insensible particles are combining, of which the assemblage shall form a sovereign, who will be either the scourge or the saviour of a mighty empire.[82] Man cannot answer for his own destiny one single instant; he has no cognizance of what is passing within himself; he is ignorant of the causes which act in the interior of his machine; he knows nothing of the circumstances that will give them activity and develop their energy; it is, nevertheless, on these causes, impossible to be unravelled by him, that depends his condition in life. Frequently an unforeseen rencounter gives birth to a passion in his soul, of which the consequences shall necessarily have an influence over his felicity. It is thus that the most virtuous man, by a whimsical combination of unlocked for circumstances, may become in an instant the most criminal of his species.

This truth, without doubt, will be found frightful and terrible: but at bottom, what has it more revolting than that which teaches him that an infinity of accidents, as irremediable as they are unforeseen, may every instant wrest from him that life to which he is so strongly attached? Fatalism reconciles the good man easily to death: it makes him contemplate it as a certain means of withdrawing himself from wickedness; this system shows death, even to the happy man himself, as a medium between him and those misfortunes which frequently terminate by poisoning his happiness, and with imbittering the most fortunate existence.

Let man then submit to necessity: in despite of himself it will always hurry him forward: let him resign himself to nature; let him accept the good with which she presents him; let him oppose to the necessary evil which she makes him experience, those necessary remedies which she consents to afford him: let him not disturb his mind with useless inquietude; let him enjoy with moderation, because he will find that pain is the necessary companion of excess: let him follow the paths of virtue, because every thing will prove to him, even in this world of perverseness, that it is absolutely necessary to render him estimable in the eyes of others, and to make him contented with himself.

Feeble, and vain mortal, thou pretendest to be a free agent; alas, dost not thou see all the threads which enchain thee? Dost thou not perceive that they are atoms which form thee; that they are atoms which move thee; that they are circumstances independent of thyself that modify thy being, and rule thy destiny? In the puissant nature that environs thee, shall thou pretend to be the only being who is able to resist her power? Dost thou really believe, that

thy weak prayers will induce her to stop in her eternal march, or change her everlasting course?

Chapter XIII: Of the Immortality of the Soul, — Of the Doctrine of a future State; — Of the Fear of Death.

The reflections presented to the reader in this work, tend to show, what ought to be thought of the human soul, as well as of its operations and faculties: every thing proves, in the most convincing manner, that it acts and moves according to laws similar to those prescribed to the other beings of nature; that it cannot be distinguished from the body; that it is born with it; that it grows up with it; that it is modified in the same progression; in short, every thing ought to make man conclude that it perishes with it. This soul, as well as the body, passes through a state of weakness and infancy; it is in this stage of its existence that it. is assailed by a multitude of modifications and of ideas which it receives from exterior objects through the medium of the organs; that it amasses facts; that it collects experience, whether true or false; that it forms to itself a system of conduct, according to which it thinks and acts, and from whence results either its happiness or its misery, its reason or its delirium, its virtues or its vices: arrived with the body at its full powers; having in conjunction with it reached maturity, it does not cease for a single instant to partake in common of its sensations, whether these are agreeable or disagreeable; in consequence it conjointly approves or disapproves its state; like it, it is either sound or diseased, active or languishing, awake or asleep. In old age, man extinguishes entirely, his fibres become rigid, his nerves lose their elasticity, his senses are obtunded, his sight grows dim, his ears lose their quickness, his ideas become unconnected, his memory fails, his imagination cools; what, then, becomes of his soul? Alas! it sinks down with the body; it gets benumbed as this loses its feeling, becomes sluggish as this decays in activity; like it, when enfeebled by years it fulfils its functions with pain; and this substance, which is deemed spiritual or *immaterial,* undergoes the same revolutions, and experiences the same vicissitudes as does the body itself.

In despite of this convincing proof of the materiality of the soul, and of its identity with the body, some thinkers have supposed that although the latter is perishable, the former does not perish; that this portion of man enjoys the especial privilege of *immortality;* that it is exempt from dissolution and free from those changes of form all the beings in nature undergo: in consequence of this, man has persuaded himself that this privileged soul does not die: its immortality above all appears indubitable to those who suppose it spiritual: after having made it a simple being, without extent, devoid of parts, totally different from any thing of which he has a knowledge, he pretended that it was not subjected to the laws of decomposition common to all beings, of which experience shows him the continual operation.

Man, feeling within himself a concealed force that insensibly produced action, that imperceptibly gave direction to the motion of his machine, believed that the entire of nature, of whose energies he is ignorant, with whose modes of acting he is unacquainted, owed its motion to an agent analogous to his own soul, who acted upon the great macrocosm in the

same manner that this soul acted upon his body. Man having supposed himself double, made nature double also: he distinguished her from her own peculiar energy; he separated her from her mover, which by degrees he made spiritual. Thus this being distinguished from nature was regarded as the soul of the world, and the soul of man was considered as portions emanating from this universal soul. This notion upon the origin of the soul, is of very remote antiquity. It was that of the Egyptians, of the Chaldeans, of the Hebrews, of the greater number of the *wise men of the east.*[83] It was in these schools that Pherecydes, Pythagoras, Plato, drew up a doctrine so flattering to the vanity of human nature — so gratifying to the imagination of mortals. Thus man believed himself a portion of the Divinity; immortal, like the Godhead, in one part of himself; nevertheless, religions subsequently invented have renounced these advantages, which they judged incompatible with the other parts of their systems: they held forth that the sovereign of nature, or her contriver, was not the soul of man, but that in virtue of his omnipotence, he created human souls in proportion as he produced the bodies which they must animate; and they taught, that these souls once produced, by an effect of the same omnipotence, enjoyed immortality.

However it may be with these variations upon the origin of souls, those who supposed them emanating from the Divinity, believed that after the death of the body, which served them for an envelope, they returned by refunding to their first source. Those who, without adopting the opinion of divine emanation, admired the spirituality and the immortality of the soul, were under the necessity to suppose a region, to find out an abode for these souls, which their imagination painted to them each according to his fears, his hopes, his desires, and his prejudices.

Nothing is more popular than the doctrine of the *immortality of the soul;* nothing is more universally diffused than the expectation of another life. Nature having inspired man with the most ardent love for his existence, the desire of preserving himself for ever was a necessary consequence: this desire was presently converted into certainty; from that desire of existing eternally, which nature has implanted in him, he made an argument to prove that man would never cease to exist. Abbadie says: "Our soul has no useless desires, it desires naturally an eternal life;" and by a very strange logic he concludes, that this desire could not fail to be fulfilled.[84] However this maybe, man, thus disposed, listened with avidity to those who announced to him systems so conformable with his wishes. Nevertheless, he ought not to regard as supernatural the desire of existing, which always was, and always will be, of the essence of man; it ought not to excite surprise if he received with eagerness an hypothesis that flattered his hopes, by promising that his desire would one day be gratified; but let him beware how he concludes, that this desire itself is an indubitable proof of the reality of this future life, with which, for his present happiness, he seems to be far too much occupied. The passion for existence, is in man only a natural consequence of the tendency of a sensible being, whose essence it is to be willing to conserve himself: in the human being, it follows the energy of his soul or keeps pace with the force of his imagination, always ready to realize that which he strongly desires. He desires the life of the body, nevertheless this desire is

frustrated; wherefore should not the desire for the life of the soul be frustrated like the other?[85]

The most simple reflection upon the nature of his soul, ought to convince man that the idea of its immortality is only an illusion of the brain. Indeed, what is his soul, save the principle of sensibility? What is it to think, to enjoy, to suffer; is it not to feel? What is life, except it be the assemblage of modifications, the congregation of motion, peculiar to an organized being? Thus, as soon as the body ceases to live, its sensibility can no longer exercise itself; therefore it can no longer have ideas, nor in consequence thoughts. Ideas, as we have proved, can only reach man through his senses; now, how will they have it, that once deprived of his senses, he is yet capable of receiving sensations, of having perceptions, of forming ideas? As they have made the soul of man a being separated from the animated body, wherefore have they not made life a being distinguished from the living body? Life in a body is the totality of its motion; feeling and thought make a part of this motion: thus, in the dead man, these motions will cease like all the others.

Indeed, by what reasoning will it be proved, that this soul, which cannot feel, think, will, or act, but by aid of man's organs, can suffer pain, be susceptible of pleasure, or even have a consciousness of its own existence, when the organs which should warn it of their presence, are decomposed or destroyed? Is it not evident that the soul depends on the arrangement of the various parts of the body, and on the order with which these parts conspire to perform their functions or motions? Thus the organic structure once destroyed, can it be doubted the soul will be destroyed also? Is it not seen, that during the whole course of human life, this soul is stimulated, changed, deranged, disturbed, by all the changes man's organs experience? And yet it will be insisted that this soul acts, thinks, subsists, when these same organs have entirely disappeared!

An organized being may be compared to a clock, which, once broken, *is* no longer suitable to the use for which it was designed. To say, that the soul shall feel, shall think, shall enjoy, shall suffer, after the death of the body, is to pretend, that a clock, shivered into a thousand pieces, will continue to strike the hour, and have the faculty of marking the progress of time. Those who say, that the soul of man is able to subsist notwithstanding the destruction of the body, evidently support the position, that the modification of a body will be enabled to conserve itself, after the subject is destroyed: but this is completely absurd.

It will be said, that the conservation of the soul after the death of the body, is an effect of the divine omnipotence: but this is supporting an absurdity by a gratuitous hypothesis. It surely is not meant by divine omnipotence, of whatever nature it may be supposed, that a thing shall exist and not exist at the same time: that a soul shall feel and think without the intermediates necessary to thought.

Let them, then, at least forbear asserting, that reason is not wounded by the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, or by the expectation of a future life. These notions, formed to flatter man, or to disturb the imagination of the Uninformed who do not reason, cannot appear either convincing or probable to enlightened minds. Reason, exempted from the illusions of

prejudice, is, without doubt, wounded by the supposition of a soul that feels, that thinks, that is afflicted, that rejoices, that has ideas, without having organs; that is to say, destitute of the only known and natural means by which it is possible for it to feel sensations, have perceptions, or form ideas. If it be replied, that other means are able to exist, which are *supernatural* or *unknown;* it may be answered, that these means of transmitting ideas to the soul separated from the body, are not better known to, or more within the reach of those who suppose it than they are of other men. It is at least very certain, that all those who reject the system of innate ideas, cannot, without contradicting their own principles, admit the groundless doctrine of the immortality of the soul.

In defiance of the consolation that so many persons pretend to find in the notion of an eternal existence; in despite of that firm persuasion, which such numbers of men assure us they have, that their souls will survive their bodies, they seem so very much alarmed at the dissolution of this body, that they do not contemplate their end, which they ought to desire as the period of so many miseries, but with the greatest inquietude: so true it is, that the real, the present, even accompanied with pain, has much more influence over mankind, than the most beautiful chimeras of the future, which he never views but through the clouds of uncertainty. Indeed the most religious men, notwithstanding the conviction they express of a blessed eternity, do not find these flattering hopes sufficiently consoling to repress their fears and trembling when they think on the necessary dissolution of their bodies. Death was always for mortals the most frightful point of view; they regard it as a strange phenomenon, contrary to the order of things, opposed to nature; in a word, as an effect of the celestial vengeance, as the *wages of sin.* Although every thing proves to man that death is inevitable, he is never able to familiarize himself with its idea; he never thinks on it without shuddering, and the assurance of possessing an immortal soul, but feebly indemnifies him for the grief he feels in the deprivation of his perishable body. Two causes contribute to strengthen and nourish his alarm; the one is, that this death, commonly accompanied with, pain, wrests from him an existence that pleases him, with which he is acquainted, to which he is accustomed; the other is the uncertainty of the state that must succeed his actual existence.

The illustrious Bacon has said: that "Men fear death, for the same reason that children dread being alone in darkness."[86] Man naturally challenges every thing with which he is unacquainted; he is desirous to see clearly, to the end that he may guaranty himself against those objects which may menace his safety, or that he may be enabled to procure for himself those which may be useful to him. The man who exists, cannot form to himself any idea of non-existence; as this circumstance disturbs him, for want of experience his imagination sets to work; this points out to him, either well or ill, this uncertain state: accustomed to think, to feel, to be stimulated into activity, to enjoy society, he contemplates as the greatest misfortune a dissolution that will strip him of these objects, and deprive him of those sensations which his present nature has rendered necessary to him; that will prevent his being warned of his own existence; that shall bereave him of his pleasures to plunge him into nothing. In supposing it even exempt from pain, he always looks upon this nothing as an

afflicting solitude, as a heap of profound darkness; he sees himself in a state of general desolation, destitute of all assistance, and feeling the rigour of this frightful situation. But does not a profound sleep help to give him a true idea of this nothing? Does not that deprive him of every thing? Does it not appear to annihilate the universe to him, and him to the universe? Is death any thing more than a profound and permanent sleep? Is it for want of being able to form an idea of death, that man dreads it; if he could figure to himself a true image of this state of annihilation, he would from thence cease to fear it; but he is not able to conceive a state in which there is no feeling; he therefore believes, that when he shall no longer exist, he will have the same feelings and the same consciousness of things which during his existence appear to his mind in such gloomy colours: imagination pictures to him his funeral pomp; the grave they are digging for him; the lamentations that will accompany him to his last abode; he persuades himself that these melancholy objects will affect him as painfully, even after his decease, as they do in his present condition in which he is in full possession of his senses.[87]

Mortal, led astray by fear ! after thy death thine eyes will see no more; thine ears will hear no longer; in the depth of thy grave, thou wilt no more be witness to this scene which thine imagination at present represents to thee under such dismal colours; thou wilt no longer take part in what shall be done in the world; thou wilt no more be occupied with what may befall thine inanimate remains, than thou wast able to be the day previous to that which ranked thee among the beings of thy species. To die, is to cease to think, to feel, to enjoy, to suffer; thy sorrows will not follow thee to the silent tomb. Think of death, not to feed thy fears and to nourish thy melancholy, but to accustom thyself to look upon it with a peaceable eye, and to cheer thee up against those false terrours with which the enemies to thy repose labour to inspire thee!

The fears of death are vain illusions, that must disappear as soon as we learn to contemplate this necessary event under its true point of view. A great man has defined philosophy to be *a meditation on death*;[88] he is not desirous by that to have it understood that man ought to occupy himself sorrowfully with his end, with a view to nourish his fears; on the contrary he wishes to invite him to familiarize himself with an object that nature has rendered necessary to him, and to accustom himself to expect it with a serene countenance. If life is a benefit, if it be necessary to love it, it is no less necessary to quit it, and reason ought to teach him a calm resignation to the decrees of fate: his welfare exacts that he should contract the habit of contemplating without alarm an event that his essence has rendered inevitable: his interest demands that he should not by continual dread imbitter his life, the charms of which he must inevitably destroy, if he can never view its termination but with trepidation. Reason and his interest concur to assure him against those vague terrours with which his imagination inspires him in this respect. If he was to call them to his assistance, they would reconcile him to an object that only startles him because he has no knowledge of it, or because it is only shown to him with those hideous accompaniments with which it is clothed by superstition. Let him, then, endeavour to despoil death of these vain illusions, and he will perceive that it is only

the sleep of life; that this sleep will not be disturbed with disagreeable dreams, and that an unpleasant awakening will never follow it. To die, is to sleep; it is to reenter into that state of insensibility in which he was previous to his birth; before he had senses, before he was conscious of his actual existence. Laws, as necessary as those which gave him birth, will make him return into the bosom of nature from whence he was drawn, in order to reproduce him afterwards under some new form, which it would be useless for him to know: without consulting him, nature places him for a season in the order of organized beings; without his consent, she will oblige him to quit it to occupy some other order.

Let him not complain, then, that nature is callous; she only makes him undergo a law from which she does not exempt any one being she contains.[89] If all are born and perish; if every thing is changed and destroyed; if the birth of a being is never more than the first step towards its end; how is it possible to expect that man, whose machine is so frail, of which the parts are so complicated, the whole of which possesses such extreme mobility, should be exempted from the common law which decrees that even the solid earth he inhabits shall experience change, shall undergo alteration — perhaps be destroyed! Feeble, frail mortal! thou pretendest to exist for ever; wilt thou, then, that for thee alone, eternal nature shall change her undeviating course? Dost thou not behold in those eccentric comets with which thine eyes are sometimes astonished, that the planets themselves are subject to death? Live then in peace, for the season that nature permits thee; and if thy mind be enlightened by reason, thou wilt die without terrour!

Notwithstanding the simplicity of these reflections, nothing *is* more rare than the sight of men truly fortified against the fears of death: the wise man himself turns pale at its approach; he has occasion to collect the whole force of his mind to expect it with serenity. It cannot then furnish matter for surprise, if the idea of death is so revolting to the generality of mortals; it terrifies the young; it redoubles the chagrin and sorrow of the old, who are worn down with infirmity: indeed the aged although enfeebled by time, dread it much more than the young who are in the full vigour of life; the man of many lustres is more accustomed to live; the powers of his mind are weakened; he has less energy: at length disease consumes him; yet the unhappy wretch thus plunged into misfortune, and labouring under excruciating tortures, has scarcely ever dared to contemplate death which he ought to consider as the period to all his anguish.

If the source of this pusillanimity be sought, it will be found in his nature, which attaches him to life, and in that deficiency of energy in his soul, which hardly any thing tends to corroborate, but which every thing strives to enfeeble and bruise. All human institutions, all the opinions of man, conspire to augment his fears, and to render his ideas of death more terrible and revolting. Indeed, superstition pleases itself with exhibiting death under the most frightful traits; as a dreadful moment, which not only puts an end to his pleasures, but gives him up without defence to the strange rigour of a pitiless despot, which nothing can soften. According to this superstition, the most virtuous man is never sure of pleasing him; but has reason to tremble for the severity of his judgments; to fear the dreadful torments and endless

punishments which await the victims of his caprice, for involuntary weakness or the necessary faults of a short-lived existence. This implacable tyrant will avenge himself of man's infirmities, his momentary offences, of the propensities that have been planted in his heart, of the errours of his mind, the opinions he has imbibed in the society in which he was born without his own consent, the ideas he has formed, the passions he has indulged, and above all, his not being able to comprehend an inconceivable being, and all the extravagant dogmas offered to his acceptance.[90]

Such, then, are the afflicting objects with which religion occupies its unhappy and credulous disciples; such are the fears, which the tyrant of human thoughts points out to them as *salutary*. In defiance of the exility of the effect which these notions produce on the greater number of those who say they are, or who believe themselves persuaded, they are held forth as the most powerful rampart that can be opposed to the irregularities of man. Nevertheless, as will be seen presently, it will be found that these systems, or rather these chimeras so terrible to behold, operate little or nothing on the larger portion of mankind, who think of them but seldom, and never in the moment that passion, interest, pleasure, or example, hurries them along. If these fears act, it is commonly on those who have but little occasion to abstain from evil: they make honest hearts tremble, but fail of effect on the perverse. They torment sensible souls, but leave those that are hardened in repose; they disturb tractable and gentle minds, but cause no trouble to rebellious spirits: thus they alarm none but those who are already sufficiently alarmed; they coerce only those who are already restrained.

These notions, then, impress nothing on the wicked; when by accident they do act on them, it is only to redouble the wickedness of their natural character, to justify them in their own eyes, to furnish them with pretexts to exercise it without fear, and to follow it without scruple. Indeed, the experience of a great number of ages has shown to what excess of wickedness, to what lengths the passions of man have carried him, when they have been authorized and unchained by religion; or, at least, when he has been enabled to cover himself with its mantle. Man has never been more ambitious, never more covetous, never more crafty, never more cruel, never more seditious, than when he has persuaded himself that religion permitted or commanded him to be so: thus religion did nothing more than lend an invincible force to his natural passions, which, under its sacred auspices, he could exercise with impunity and without remorse; still more, the greatest villains, in giving free vent to the detestable propensities of their natural wickedness, have believed that by displaying an over-heated zeal they merited well of heaven; that they exempted themselves by crimes from that chastisement at the hand of their God. which they thought their anterior conduct had richly merited.

These, then, are the effects which the *salutary* notions of theology produce on mortals. These reflections will furnish an answer to those who say, that, "if religion promised heaven equally to the wicked as to the righteous, there would be found none incredulous of another life." We reply that, in point of fact, religion does accord heaven to the wicked, since it frequently places in this happy abode the most useless and the most depraved of men.[91]

Thus religion, as we have seen, sharpens the passions of evil disposed men, by legitimating

those crimes, at which, without this sanction, they would shudder to commit; or for which, at least, they would feel shame and experience remorse. In short, the ministers of religion furnish to the most profligate men the means of diverting from their own heads the thunderbolt that should strike their crimes, with the promise of a never-fading happiness.

With respect to the incredulous, without doubt there may be amongst them wicked men, as well as amongst the most credulous; but incredulity no more supposes wickedness than credulity supposes righteousness. On the contrary, the man who thinks, who meditates, knows far better the true motives to goodness, than he who suffers himself to be blindly guided by uncertain motives, or by the interest of others. Sensible men have the greatest advantage in examining opinions which it is pretended must have an influence over their eternal happiness: if these are found false or injurious to their present life, they will not therefore conclude that they have not another life either to fear or to hope; that they are permitted to deliver themselves up with impunity to vices which would do an injury to themselves, or would draw upon them the contempt and anger of society: the man who does not expect another life, is the more interested in prolonging his existence in this, and in rendering himself dear to his fellows in the only life of which he has any knowledge: he has made a great stride towards felicity, in disengaging himself from those terrours which afflict others.[92]

Superstition, in fact, takes a pride in rendering man slothful, credulous, and pusillanimous! It is its principle to afflict him without intermission; to redouble in him the horrours of death: ever ingenious in tormenting him, it has extended his inquietudes beyond even his known existence; and its ministers, the more securely to dispose of him in this world, invented future regions, reserving to themselves the privilege of awarding recompenses to those who yielded most implicitly to their arbitrary laws, and of having their God decree punishments to those refractory beings who rebelled against their power.[93]

Thus, far from holding forth consolation to mortals, far from cultivating man's reason, far from teaching him to yield under the hands of necessity, religion strives to render death still more bitter to him, to make its yoke sit heavy, to fill up its retinue with a multitude of hideous phantoms, and to render its approach terrible. By this means it has crowded the world with enthusiasts, whom it seduces by vague promises; with contemptible slaves, whom it coerces with the fear of imaginary evils. It has at length persuaded man, that his actual existence is only a journey by which he will arrive at a more important life. This irrational doctrine of a future life prevents him from occupying himself with his true happiness; from thinking of ameliorating his institutions, of improving his laws, of advancing the progress of science, and of perfectioning his morals. Vain and gloomy ideas have absorbed his attention: he consents to groan under religious and political tyranny; to live in errour, to languish in misfortune, in the hope, when he shall be no more, of being one day happier; in the firm confidence, that his calamities, his stupid patience, will conduct him to a never-ending felicity: he has believed himself submitted to a cruel God, who is willing to make him purchase his future welfare, at the expense of every thing most dear and most valuable to his existence here below: they have pictured their God as irritated against him, as disposed to appease itself by

punishing him eternally for any efforts he should make to withdraw himself from their power. It is thus that the doctrine of a future life has been most fatal to the human species: it plunged whole nations into sloth, made them languid, filled them with indifference to their present welfare; or else precipitated them into the most furious enthusiasm, which hurried them on to tear each other in pieces in order to merit heaven.

It will be asked, perhaps, by what road has man been conducted, to form to himself these strange and gratuitous ideas of another world? I reply, that it is a truth man has no idea of a future life, which does not exist for him; the ideas of the past and the present furnish his imagination with the materials of which he constructs the edifice of the regions of futurity; and Hobbes says, "We believe that that which is, will always be, and that the same causes will have the same effects." Man in his actual state, has two modes of feeling, one that he approves, another that he disapproves: thus, persuaded that these two modes of feeling must accompany him, even beyond his present existence, he placed in the regions of eternity two distinguished abodes; one destined to felicity, the other to misery: the one will contain the friends of his God; the other is a prison, destined to avenge Hun on all those who shall not faithfully believe the doctrines promulgated by the ministers of a vast variety of superstitions.[94]

Such is the origin of the ideas upon a future life, so diffused among mankind. Every where may be seen an *Elysium* and a *Tartarus;* a *Paradise* and a *Hell;* in a word, two distinguished abodes, constructed according to the imagination of the knaves or enthusiasts who have invented them and who have accommodated them to the peculiar prejudices, to the hopes, to the fears, of the people who believe in them. The Indian figures the first of these abodes as one of inaction and of permanent repose, because, being the inhabitant of a hot climate, he has learned to contemplate rest as the extreme of felicity: the Mussulman promises himself corporeal pleasures, similar to those that actually constitute the object of his research in this life: the Christian hopes for ineffable and spiritual pleasures — in a word, for a happiness of which he has no idea.

Of whatever nature these pleasures may be, man perceived that a body was needful, in order that his soul might be enabled to enjoy the pleasures, or to experience the pains in reserve for him by the Divinity: from hence the doctrine of the *resurrection;* but as he beheld this body putrify, as he saw it dissolve, as he witnessed its decomposition after death, he therefore had recourse to the divine omnipotence, by whose interposition he now believes it will be formed anew. This opinion, so incomprehensible, is said to have originated in Persia, among the Magi, and finds a great number of adherents, who have never given it a serious examination.[95] Others, incapable of elevating themselves to these sublime notions, believed, that under divers forms, man animated successively different animals, of various species, and that he never ceased to be an inhabitant of the earth; such was the opinion of those who adopted the doctrine of *Metempsychosis.*

As for the miserable abode of souls, the imagination of fanatics, who were desirous of governing the people, strove to assemble the most frightful images to render it still more

terrible. Fire is of all beings that which produces in man the most pungent sensation; it was therefore supposed that God could not invent any thing more cruel to punish his enemies: then fire was the point at which their imagination was obliged to stop; and it was agreed pretty generally, that fire would one day avenge the offended divinity:[96] thus they painted the victims to his anger as confined in fiery dungeons; as perpetually rolling in a vortex of bituminous flames; as plunged in unfathomed gulfs of liquid sulphur; and making the infernal caverns resound with their useless groanings, and with their unavailing gnashing of teeth.

But it will perhaps be inquired, how could man reconcile himself to the belief of an existence accompanied with eternal torments; above all, as many according to their own religious systems had reason to fear it for themselves? Many causes have concurred to make him adopt so revolting an opinion. In the first place, very few thinking men have ever believed such an absurdity, when they have deigned to make use of their reason; or, when they have accredited it, this notion was always counterbalanced by the idea of the goodness, by a reliance on the mercy, which they attributed to their God.[97]

In the second place, those who were blinded by their fears, never rendered to themselves any account of these strange doctrines, which they either received with awe from their legislators, or which were transmitted to them by their fathers. In the third place each sees the object of his terrours only at a favourable distance; moreover superstition promises him the means of escaping the tortures he believes he has merited. At length, like those sick people whom we see cling with fondness even to the most painful life, man preferred the idea of an unhappy though unknown existence, to that of non-existence, which he looked upon as the most frightful evil that could befall him. either because he could form no idea of it, or, because his imagination painted to him this non-existence, this nothing, as the confused assemblage of all evils. A known evil, of whatever magnitude, alarmed him less, above all when there remained the hope of being able to avoid it, than an evil of which he knew nothing, upon which consequently his imagination was painfully employed, but to which he knew not how to oppose a remedy.

It will be seen, then, that superstition, far from consoling man upon the necessity of death, only redoubles his terrours, by the evils which it pretends his decease will be followed: these terrours are so strong, that the miserable wretches who believe strictly in these formidable doctrines, pass their days in affliction, bathed in the most bitter tears. What shall be said of au opinion, so destructive to society, yet adopted by so many nations, which announces to them, that a severe God, may at each instant, *like a thief*, take them unprovided; that at each moment they are liable to pass under the most rigorous judgment? What idea can be better suited to terrify man, what more likely to discourage him, what more calculated to damp the desire of ameliorating his condition, than the afflicting prospect of a world always on the brink of dissolution, and of a divinity seated upon the ruins of nature, ready to pass judgment on the human species? Such are, nevertheless, the fatal opinions with which the mind of nations has been fed for thousands of years; they are so dangerous, that if by a happy want of just inference, he did not derogate in his conduct from these afflicting ideas, he would fall

into the most abject stupidity. How could man occupy himself with a perishable world, ready every moment to crumble into atoms? How think of rendering himself happy on earth, when it is only the porch to an eternal kingdom? Is it, then, surprising that the superstitions to which such doctrines serve for a basis, have prescribed to their disciples a total detachment from things below: an entire renunciation of the most innocent pleasures; and have given birth to a sluggishness, to a pusillanimity, to an abjection of soul, to an insociability, that renders him useless to himself and dangerous to others? If necessity did not oblige man to depart in his practice from these irrational systems; if his wants did not bring him back to reason, in despite of his religious doctrines, the whole world would presently become a vast desert, inhabited by some few isolated savages, who would not even have courage to multiply themselves. What kind of notions are those which must necessarily be put aside, in order that human association may subsist?

Nevertheless, the doctrine of a future life, accompanied with rewards and punishments, has been regarded for a great number of ages as the most powerful, or even as the only motive capable of coercing the passions of man — as the sole means that can oblige him to be virtuous. By degrees, this doctrine has become the basis of almost all religious and political systems, so much so, that at this day it is said this prejudice cannot be attacked without absolutely rending asunder the bonds of society. The founders of religions have made use of it to attach their credulous disciples; legislators have looked at it as the curb best calculated to keep mankind under discipline. Many philosophers themselves have believed with sincerity, that this doctrine was requisite to terrify man, and thus divert him from crime.[98]

It must indeed be allowed, that this doctrine has been of the greatest utility to those who have given religions to nations and made themselves its ministers: it was the foundation of their power; the source of their wealth; the permanent cause of that blindness, the solid basis of those terrours, which it was their interest to nourish in the human race. It was by this doctrine the priest became first the rival, then the master of kings: it is by this dogma that nations are filled with enthusiasts inebriated with religion, always more disposed to listen to its menaces than to the counsels of reason, to the orders of the sovereign, to the cries of nature, or to the laws of society. Politics itself, was enslaved to the caprice of the priest; the temporal monarch was obliged to bend under the yoke of the eternal monarch; the one only disposed of this perishable world; the other extended his power into the world to come, much more important for man than the earth, on which he is only a pilgrim, a mere passenger. Thus the doctrine of another life, placed the government itself in a state of dependance upon the priest; the monarch was nothing more than his first subject, and he was never obeyed, but when the two were in accord to oppress the human race. Nature in vain cried out to man, to be careful of his present happiness; the priest ordered him to be unhappy, in the expectation of future felicity. Reason in vain exhorted him to be peaceable, the priest breathed forth fanaticism and fury, and obliged him to disturb the public tranquillity, every time there was a question of the interests of the invisible monarch of another life, or the real interests of his ministers in this. Such is the fruit that politics has gathered from the doctrine of a future fife. The regions of

the world to come, have enabled the priesthood to conquer the present world. The expectation of celestial happiness, and the dread of future tortures, only served to prevent man from seeking after the means to render himself happy here below. Thus errour under whatever aspect it is considered, will never be more than a source of evil for mankind. The doctrine of another life, in presenting to mortals an ideal happiness, will render them enthusiasts; in overwhelming them with fears, it will make useless beings, generate cowards, form atrabilarious or furious men, who will lose sight of their present abode, to occupy themselves with the pictured regions of a world to come, and with those dreadful evils which they must fear after their death.

If it be insisted, that the doctrine of future rewards and punishments is the most powerful curb to restrain the passions of man; we shall reply by calling in daily experience. If we only cast our eyes around, we shall see this assertion contradicted; and we shall find that these marvellous speculations do not in any manner diminish the number of the wicked, because they are incapable of changing the temperament of man, of annihilating those passions which the vices of society engender in his heart. In those nations who appear the most thoroughly convinced of this future punishment, may be seen assassins, thieves, crafty knaves, oppressors, adulterers, voluptuaries; all these pretend they are firmly persuaded of the reality of an hereafter; yet in the whirlwind of dissipation, in the vortex of pleasure, in the fury of their passions, they no longer behold this formidable future existence, which in those moments has no kind of influence over their earthly conduct.

In short, in many of those countries where the doctrine of another life is so firmly established that each individual irritates himself against whoever may have the temerity to combat the opinion, or even to doubt it, we see that it is utterly incapable of impressing anything on rulers who are unjust, who are negligent of the welfare of their people, who are debauched; on courtesans who are lewd in their habits; on covetous misers; on flinty extortioners, who fatten on the substance of a nation; on women without modesty; on a vast multitude of drunken, intemperate and vicious men; on great numbers even amongst those priests, whose function it is to announce the vengeance of heaven. If it be inquired of them, how they dare to give themselves up to such scandalous actions, which they ought to know are certain to draw upon them eternal punishment? They will reply: that the madness of their passions, the force of their habits, the contagion of example, or even the power of circumstances, have hurried them along, and have made them forget the dreadful consequences in which their conduct is likely to involve them; besides, they will say that the treasures of the divine mercy are infinite, and that repentance suffices to efface the foulest transgressions, the blackest guilt, and the most enormous crimes.[99] In this multitude of wretched beings, who, each after his own manner, desolates society with his criminal pursuits, you will find only a small number who are sufficiently intimidated by the fears of a miserable hereafter to resist their evil propensities. What did I say? these propensities are in themselves too weak to carry them forward, and without the aid of the doctrine of another life, the law and the fear of censure would have been motives sufficient to prevent them from rendering themselves criminal.

It is, indeed, fearful, timorous souls, upon whom the terrours of another life make a profound impression: human beings of this sort come into the world with moderate passions, a weakly organization, and a cool imagination; it is not therefore surprising that in such men, who are already restrained by their nature, the fear of future punishment counterbalances (he weak efforts of their feeble passions; but it is by no means the same with those hardened criminals, with those men who are habitually vicious, whose unseemly excesses nothing can arrest, and who, in their violence, shut their eyes to the fear of the laws of this world, despising still more those of the other.

Nevertheless, how many persons say they are, and even believe themselves restrained by the fears of the life to come ! But, either they deceive us, or they impose upon themselves, by attributing to these fears that which is only the effect of motives much nearer at hand, such as the feebleness of their machine, the mildness of their temperament, the slender energy of their souls, their natural timidity, the ideas imbibed in their education, the fear of consequences immediately resulting from criminal actions, the physical evils attendant on unbridled irregularities: these are the true motives that restrain them, and not the notions of a future life, which men who say they are most firmly persuaded of its existence, forget whenever a powerful interest solicits them to sin. If for a time man would pay attention to what passes before his eyes, he would perceive that he ascribes to the fear of his God that which is in reality only the effect of peculiar weakness, of pusillanimity, of the small interest found to commit evil: these men would not act otherwise than they do if they had not this fear before them; if therefore he reflected, he would feel that it is always necessity that makes men act as they do.

Man cannot be restrained, when he does not find within himself motives sufficiently powerful to conduct him back to reason. There is nothing, either in this world or in the other, that can render him virtuous when an untoward organization, a mind badly cultivated, a violent imagination, inveterate habits, fatal examples, powerful interests, invite him from every quarter to the commission of crime. No speculations are capable of restraining the man who braves public opinion, who despises the law, who is careless of its censure, who turns a deaf ear to the cries of conscience, whose power in this world places him out of the reach of punishment.[100] In the violence of his transports he will fear still less a distant futurity, of which the idea always recedes before that which he believes necessary to his immediate and present happiness. All lively passions blind man to every thing that is not its immediate object; the terrours of a future life, of which his passions always possess the secret to diminish to him the probability, can effect nothing upon the wicked man who does not fear even the much nearer punishment of the law — who sets at naught the assured hatred of those by whom he is surrounded. Man, when he delivers himself up to crime, sees nothing certain except the supposed advantage which attends it; the rest always appear to him either false or problematical.

If man would but open his eyes, he would clearly perceive, that to effect any thing upon hearts hardened by crime, he must not reckon upon the chastisement of an avenging Divinity,

which the self-love natural to man always shows him as pacified in the long run. He who has arrived at persuading himself that he cannot be happy without crime, will always readily deliver himself up to it notwithstanding the menaces of religion. Whoever is sufficiently blind, not to read his infamy in his own heart, to see his own vileness in the countenances of his associates, his own condemnation in the anger of his fellow men, his own unworthiness in the indignation of the judges established to punish the offences he may commit; such a man. I say, will never feel the impression his crimes make on the features of a judge that *is* either hidden from his view, or that he only contemplates at a distance. The tyrant, who with dry eyes can hear the cries of the distressed, who with callous heart can behold the tears of a whole people of whose misery he is the cause, will not see the angry countenance of a more powerful master. When a haughty, arrogant monarch, pretends to be accountable for his actions to the Divinity alone, it is because he fears his nation more than he does his God.

On the other hand, does not religion itself annihilate the effects of those fears which it announces as salutary? Does it not furnish its disciples with the means of extricating themselves from the punishments with which it has so frequently menaced them? Does it not tell them, that a steril repentance will, even at the moment of death, disarm the celestial wrath; that it will purify the filthy souls of sinners? Do not even the priests, in some superstitions, arrogate to themselves the right of remitting to the dying, the punishment due to the crimes committed during the course of a disorderly life? In short, do not the most perverse men, encouraged in iniquity, debauchery, and crime, reckon, even to the last moment, upon the aid of a religion that promises them the infallible means of reconciling themselves to the Divinity whom they have irritated, and of avoiding his rigorous punishments?

In consequence of these notions, so favourable to the wicked, so suitable to tranquillize their fears, we see that the hope of an easy expiation, far from correcting man, engages him to persist until death in the most crying disorders. Indeed, in despite of the numberless advantages which he is assured flows from the doctrine of a life to come, in defiance of its pretended efficacy to repress the passions of men, do not the priests themselves, although so interested in the maintenance of this system, every day complain of its insufficiency? They acknowledge, that mortals, whom from their infancy they have imbued with these ideas, are not less hurried forward by their evil propensities, less sunk in the vortex of dissipation, less the slaves to their pleasures, less captivated by bad habits, less driven along by the torrent of the world, less seduced by their present interest, which make them forget equally the recompense and the chastisement of a future existence. In a word, the ministers of Heaven allow, that their disciples, for the greater part, conduct themselves in this world as if they had nothing either to hope or to fear in another.

But let it be supposed for a moment that the doctrine of eternal punishments was of some utility, and that it really restrained a small number of individuals; what are these feeble advantages compared to the numberless evils that flow from it? Against one timid man, whom this idea restrains, there are thousands upon whom it operates nothing; there are

millions whom it makes irrational; whom it renders savage persecutors; whom it converts into useless and wicked fanatics; there are millions whose mind it disturbs, and whom it diverts from their duties towards society; there are an infinity whom it grievously afflicts and troubles, without producing any real good for their associates.[101]

Chapter XIV: Education, Morals, and the Laws, suffice to restrain Man. — Of the Desire of Immortality. — Of Suicide.

It is not then in an ideal world, existing no where but in the imagination of man, that he must seek to collect motives calculated to make him act properly in this; it is in the visible world that will be found incitements to divert him from crime and to rouse him to virtue. It is in nature, in experience, in truth, that he must search out remedies for the evils of his species, and for motives suitable to infuse into the human heart propensities truly useful for society. If attention has been paid to what has been said in the course of this work, it will be seen, that above all it is education that will best furnish the true means of rectifying the wanderings of mankind. It is this that should scatter the seeds in his heart; cultivate the tender shoots; make a profitable use of his dispositions; turn to account those faculties which depend on his organization; which should cherish the fire of his imagination, kindle it for useful objects; damp it, or extinguish it for others; in short, it is this which should make sensible souls contract habits that are advantageous for society, and beneficial to the individual. Brought up in this manner, man would not have occasion for celestial punishments to teach him the value of virtue; he would not need to behold burning gulfs of brimstone under his feet, to induce him to feel horrour for crime; nature, without these fables, would teach him much better what he owes to himself, and the law would point out to him what he owes to the body politic of which he is a member. It is thus that education would form valuable citizens to the state; the depositaries of power would distinguish those whom education should have thus formed, by reason of the advantages which they would procure for their country; they would punish those who should be found injurious to it; it would make the citizens see, that the promises of reward which education and morals held forth, are by no means vain; and that in a state well constituted, virtue is the true and only road to happiness; talents the Way to gain respect; and that inutility and crime lead to contempt and misfortune.

A just, enlightened, virtuous, and vigilant government, who should honestly propose the public good, would have no occasion either for fables or for falsehoods to govern reasonable subjects; it would blush to make use of imposture to deceive citizens who, instructed in their duties, would find their interest in submitting to equitable laws; who would be capable of feeling the benefit these have the power of conferring on them; it would know, that public, esteem has more power over men of elevated minds than the terrour of the laws; it would feel, that habit is sufficient to inspire them with horrour, even for those concealed crimes that escape the eyes of society; it would understand, that the visible, punishments of this world impose much more on the ignorant than those of an uncertain and distant futurity: in short, it would ascertain that the sensible benefits within the compass of the sovereign power to

distribute, touch the imagination of mortals more keenly than those vague recompenses which are held forth to them in a future existence.

Man is almost everywhere so wicked, so corrupt, so rebellious to reason, only because he is not governed according to his nature, nor properly instructed in her necessary laws: he is every where fed with useless chimeras; every where submitted to masters who neglect his instruction, or who only seek to deceive him. On the face of this globe we only see unjust sovereigns, enervated by luxury, corrupted by flattery, depraved by licentiousness, made wicked by impunity, devoid of talents, without morals, destitute of virtue, and incapable of exerting any energy for the benefit of the states they govern; they are consequently but little occupied with the welfare of their people, and indifferent to their duties, of which indeed they are often ignorant. Stimulated by the desire of continually finding means to feed their insatiable ambition, they engage in useless, depopulating wars, and never occupy their mind with those objects which are the most important to the happiness of their nation: interested in maintaining the received prejudices, they never wish to consider the: means of curing them: in short, deprived themselves of that understanding which teaches man that it is his interest to be kind, just, and virtuous, they ordinarily reward only those crimes which their imbecility makes them imagine as useful to them, and they generally punish those virtues which are opposed to their own imprudent passions. Under such masters, is it surprising that society should be ravaged by perverse men who emulate each other in oppressing its members, in sacrificing its dearest interests. The state of society is a state of hostility of the sovereign against the whole, of each of its members the one against the other.[102] Man is wicked, not because he is born so, but because he is rendered so; the great, the powerful, crush with impunity the indigent and the unhappy; these, at the risk of their lives, seek to retaliate the evil they have received: they attack either openly or in secret a country who to them is a stepmother, who gives all to some of her children, and deprives the others of every thing: they punish it for its partiality, and clearly show that the motives borrowed from a life hereafter are impotent against the fury of those passions to which a corrupt administration has given birth in this life; that the terrour of the punishments in this world are too feeble against necessity, against criminal habits; against a dangerous organization uncorrected by education.

In all countries the morals of the people are neglected, and the government is occupied only with rendering them timid and miserable. Man is almost every where a slave; it must then follow, of necessity, that he is base, interested, dissimulating, without honour; in a word, that he has the vices of the state of which he is a citizen. Every where he is deceived, encouraged in ignorance, and prevented from cultivating his reason; of course he must every where be stupid, irrational, and wicked; every where he sees vice and crime applauded and honoured; thence he concludes vice to be a good; virtue only a useless sacrifice of himself: every where he is miserable, therefore he injures his fellow men to relieve his own anguish: it is in vain to show him heaven, in order to restrain him; his views presently descend again to the earth, where he is willing to be happy at any price; therefore the laws, which have neither provided

for his instruction, for his morals, nor his happiness, menace him uselessly, and punish him for the unjust negligence of his legislators. If politics, more enlightened, did seriously occupy itself with the instruction and with the welfare of the people; if laws were more equitable; if each society, less partial, bestowed on its members the care, the education, and the assistance which they have a right to expect; if governments less covetous, and more vigilant, were sedulous to render their subjects more happy, there would not be seen such numbers of malefactors, of robbers, of murderers, who every where infest society; they would no« be obliged to destroy life, in order to punish a wickedness, which is commonly ascribable to the vices of their own institutions: it would be unnecessary to seek in another life for fanciful chimeras, which always prove abortive against the infuriate passions, and against the real wants of man. In short, if the people were better instructed and more happy, politics would no longer be reduced to the exigency of deceiving them in order to restrain them; nor to destroy so many unfortunates for having procured necessaries at the expense of their hardhearted fellow citizens.

When it shall be desired to enlighten man, let him always have truth laid before him. Instead of kindling his imagination by the idea of those pretended goods that a future state has in reserve for him, let him be solaced, let him be succoured; or, at least, let him be permitted to enjoy the fruit of his labour; let not his substance be ravaged from him by cruel imposts; let him not be discouraged from work, by finding all his labour inadequate to support his existence, let him not be driven into that idleness that will surely lead him on to crime: let him consider his present existence, without carrying his views to that which may attend him after his death: let his industry be excited; let his talents be rewarded; let him be rendered active, laborious, beneficent, and virtuous, in the world he inhabits; let it be shown to him that his actions are capable of having an influence over his fellow men, but not on those imaginary beings located in an ideal world. Let him not be menaced with the tortures of a God when he shall be no more; let him behold society armed against those who disturb its repose; let him see the consequence of the hatred of his associates; let him learn to feel the value of their affection; let him be taught to esteem himself; let him understand, that to obtain the esteem of others he most have virtue; above all, that the virtuous in a well constituted society has nothing to fear either from his fellow citizens or from the Gods.

If it be desired to form honest, courageous, industrious citizens, who may be useful to their country, let them beware of inspiring man from his infancy with an ill-founded dread of death — of amusing his imagination with marvellous fables — of occupying his mind with his destiny in a future life, quite useless to be known, and which has nothing in common with his real felicity. Let them speak of immortality to intrepid and noble souls; let them show it as the price of their labours to energetic minds, who, springing forward beyond the boundaries of their actual existence, are little satisfied with eliciting the admiration and with gaining the love of their contemporaries, but are determined also to wrest the homage, to secure the affection of future races. Indeed, there is an immortality to which genius, talents, virtue, have a just right to pretend; do not therefore let them censure or endeavour to stifle so noble a

passion in man, which is founded upon his nature, and from which society gathers the most advantageous fruits.

The idea of being buried in total oblivion; of having nothing in common after his death, with the beings of his species; of losing all possibility of again having any influence over them, is a thought extremely painful to man; it is above all afflicting to those who possess an ardent imagination. The desire of immortality, or of living in the memory of his fellow men, was always the passion of great souls; it was the motive to the actions of all those who have played a great part on the earth. Heroes, whether virtuous or criminal, philosophers as well as conquerors, men of genius, and men of talents, those sublime personages who have done honour to their species, as well as those illustrious villains who have debased and ravaged it, have had an eye to posterity in all their enterprises, and have flattered themselves with the hope of acting upon the souls of men, even when they themselves should no longer exist. If man in general does not carry his views so far, he is at least sensible to the idea of seeing himself regenerated in his children; whom he knows are destined to survive him, to transmit his name, to preserve his memory, and to represent him in society; it is for them that he rebuilds his cottage; it is for them that he plants the tree which his eyes will never behold in its vigour; it is that they may be happy that he labours. The sorrow which imbitters the life of those rich men, frequently so useless to the world, when they hare lost the hope of continuing their race, has its source in the fear of being entirely forgotten: they feel, that the useless man dies entirely. The idea that his name will be in the mouths of men; the thought that it will be pronounced with tenderness, that it will be recollected with kindness, that it will excite in their hearts favourable sentiments, is an illusion that is useful and suitable to flatter even those who know that nothing will result from it. Man pleases himself with dreaming that he shall have power; that he shall pass for something in the universe, even after the term of his human existence; he partakes by imagination in the projects, in the actions, in the discussions of future ages, and would be extremely unhappy if he believed himself entirely excluded from their society. The laws in all countries have entered into these views; they have so far been willing to console their citizens for the necessity of dying, by giving them the means of exercising their will, even for a long time after their death: this condescension goes to that length, that the dead frequently regulate the condition of the living during a long series of years.

Every thing serves to prove the desire in man of surviving himself. Pyramids, mausoleums, monuments, epitaphs, all show that he is willing to prolong his existence, even beyond to decease. He is not insensible to, the judgment of posterity; it is for him, the philosopher writes; it is to astonish him that the monarch erects sumptuous, edifices, it is his praises that the great man already hears echo in his ears; it is to him that the virtuous citizen appeals from prejudiced or unjust contemporaries. Happy chimera! Sweet illusion! that realizes itself to ardent imaginations, and which is calculated to give birth to, and to nurture the enthusiasm of genius, courage, grandeur of soul, and talent; its influence is sometimes able to restrain the excesses of the most powerful men, who are frequently very much disquieted for the

judgment of posterity, from a conviction that this will, sooner or later, avenge the living of the foul injustice which they have made them suffer.

No man, therefore, can consent to be entirely effaced from the remembrance of his fellows; some men have not the temerity to place themselves above the judgment of the future human species, to degrade themselves in its eyes. Where is the being who is insensible to the pleasure of exciting the tears of those who shall survive him; of again acting upon their souls; of once more occupying their thoughts; of exercising upon them his power, even from the bottom of his grave? Let, then, eternal silence be imposed upon those superstitious and melancholy men who censure a sentiment from which society derives so many real advantages; let not mankind listen to those passionless philosophers, who are willing to smother this great, this noble spring of his soul; let him not be seduced by the sarcasms of those voluptuaries, who pretend to despise an immortality towards which they lack the power to set forward. The desire of pleasing posterity and of rendering his name agreeable to generations yet to come, is a laudable motive, when it causes him to undertake those things of which the utility may have an influence over men and nations who have not yet an existence. Let him not treat as irrational the enthusiasm of those beneficent and mighty geniuses, whose keen eyes have foreseen him even in their day; who have occupied themselves of him for his welfare; who have desired his suffrage; who have written for him; who have enriched him by their discoveries; who have cured him of his errours. Let him render them the homage which they have expected at his hands; let him at least reverence their memory for the benefits he has derived from them; let him treat their mouldering remains with respect for the pleasure he receives from their labours; let him pay to their ashes a tribute of grateful recollection for the happiness they have been sedulous to procure for him. Let him sprinkle with his tears the urns of Socrates, of Phocion; let him wash out the stain that their punishment has made on the human species; let him expiate by his regret the Athenian ingratitude; let him learn by their example to dread religious and political fanaticism; let him fear to harass merit and virtue, in persecuting those who may happen to differ from him in his prejudices.

Let him strew flowers over the tombs of a Homer, of a Tasso, of a Milton; let him revere the immortal shades of those happy geniuses, whose harmonious lays excite in his soul the most tender sentiments; let him bless the memory of all those benefactors to the people, who were the delight of the human race; let him adore the virtues of a Titus, of a Trajan, of an Antoninus, of a Julian; let him merit, in his sphere, the eulogies of future ages; and let him always remember, that to carry with him to the grave the regret of his fellow man, he must display talents and practise virtue. The funeral ceremonies of the most powerful monarchs, have rarely been wetted with the tears of the people — they have commonly drained them while living. The names of tyrants excite the horrour of those who hear them pronounced. Tremble, then, cruel kings! ye who plunge your subjects into misery — who bathe them with bitter tears; who ravage nations, who change the fruitful earth into a barren cemetery; tremble for the sanguinary traits under which the future historian will paint you to generations yet

unborn: neither your splendid monuments, your imposing victories, your innumerable armies, nor your sycophant courtiers, can prevent posterity from insulting your odious manes, and from avenging their grandfathers of your transcendent crimes.

Not only man sees his dissolution with pain, but again he wishes his death may be an interesting event for others. But, as we have already said, he must have talents, he must have beneficence, he must have virtue, in order that those who surround him may interest themselves in his condition, and may give regret to his ashes. Is it, then, surprising if the greater number of men, occupied entirely with themselves, completely absorbed by their own vanity, devoted to their own puerile objects, for ever busied with the care of gratifying their vile passions, at the expense of their family happiness, unheedful of the wants of a wife, unmindful of the necessity of their children, careless of the calls of friendship, regardless of their duty to society, do not by their death excite the sensibilities of their survivors, or that they should be presently forgotten? There is an infinity of monarchs of whom history does not tell us any thing, save that they have lived. In despite of the inutility in which men for the most part pass their existence; maugre the little care they bestow to render themselves dear to the beings who environ them; notwithstanding the numerous actions they commit to displease their associates, the self-love of each individual persuades him that his death must be an interesting occurrence: shows him, we may say, the order of things as overturned at his decease. O mortal, feeble and vain! Dost thou not know the Sesostrises, the Alexanders, the Cesars, are dead? Yet the course of the universe is not arrested: the demise of those famous conquerors, afflicting to some few favoured slaves, was a subject of delight for the whole human race. Dost thou, then, foolishly believe, that thy talents ought to interest thy species, and put it into mourning at thy decease? Alas! the Corneilles, the Lockes, the Newtons, the Boyles, the Harveys, the Montesquieus, are no more! Regretted by a small number of friends, who have presently consoled themselves by their necessary avocations, their death was indifferent to the greater number of their fellow citizens. Darest thou, then, flatter thyself, that thy reputation, thy titles, thy riches, thy sumptuous repasts, thy diversified pleasures, will make thy funeral a memorable event! It will be spoken of by some few for two days, and do not be at all surprised: learn that there have died in former ages, in Babylon, in Sardis, in Carthage, in Athens, in Rome, millions of citizens, more illustrious, more powerful, more opulent, more voluptuous than thou art, of whom, however, no one has taken care to transmit to thee even the names. Be then virtuous, O man! in whatever station thy destiny assigns thee, and thou shall be happy in thy lifetime; do thou good, and thou shalt be cherished; acquire talents, and thou shalt be respected; posterity shall admire thee, if those talents, by becoming beneficial to their interests, shall bring them acquainted with the name under which they formerly designated thy annihilated being. But the universe will not be disturbed by thy loss; and when thou comest to die, whilst thy wife, thy children, thy friends, fondly leaning over thy sickly couch, shall be occupied with the melancholy task of closing thine eyes, thy nearest neighbour shall, perhaps, be exulting with, joy!

Let not then man occupy himself with his future condition, but let him sedulously endeavour

to make himself useful to those with whom he lives; let him, for his own peculiar happiness, render himself dutiful to his parents, attentive to his children, kind to his relations, true to his friends, lenient to his servants; let him strive to become estimable in the eyes of his fellow citizens; let him faithfully serve a country which assures to him his welfare; let the desire of pleasing posterity excite him to those labours that shall elicit their eulogies; let a legitimate self-love, when he shall be worthy of it, make him taste in advance those commendations which he is willing to deserve; let him learn to love and esteem himself; but never let him consent that concealed vices, that secret crimes, shall degrade him in his own eyes, and oblige him to be ashamed of his own conduct.

Thus disposed, let him contemplate his own decease with the same indifference that it will be looked upon by the greater number of his fellows; let him expect death with constancy, and wait for it with calm resignation; let him learn to shake off those vain terrours, with which superstition would overwhelm him; let him leave to the enthusiast his vague hopes; to the fanatic his mad- brained speculations; to the bigot those fears with which he ministers to his own melancholy; but let his heart, fortified by reason, no longer dread a dissolution that will destroy all feeling.

Whatever may be the attachment man has to life, whatever may be his fear of death, it is every day seen that habit, that opinion, that prejudice, aw motives sufficiently powerful to annihilate these passions in his breast, to make him brave danger, to cause him to hazard his existence. Ambition, pride, jealousy, love, vanity, avarice, the desire of glory, that deference to opinion which is decorated with the sounding title of a *point of honour*, have the efficacy to make him shut his eyes to danger, and to push him on to death; vexation, anxiety of mind, disgrace, want of success, softens to him its hard features, and makes him regard it as a door that will afford him shelter from the injustice of mankind: indigence, trouble, adversity, familiarizes him with this death, so terrible to the happy. The poor man, condemned to labour, inured to privations, deprived of the comforts of life, views its approach with indifference; the unfortunate, when he is unhappy, when he is without resource, embraces it in despair, and accelerates its march as soon as he sees that happiness is no longer within his grasp.

Man in different ages, and in different countries, has formed opinions extremely various upon the conduct of those who have had the courage to put an end to their own existence. His ideas upon this subject, as upon all others, have taken their tone from his religious and political institutions. The Greeks, the Romans, and other nations, which every thing conspired to render courageous and magnanimous, regarded as heroes and as Gods, those who voluntarily cut the thread of life. In Hindostan, the Brahmin yet knows how to inspire even women with sufficient fortitude to burn themselves upon the dead bodies of their husbands. The Japanese upon the most trifling occasion makes no kind of difficulty in plunging a dagger into his bosom.

Among the people of our own country religion renders man less prodigal of life; it teaches him that his God, who is willing he should suffer, and who is pleased with his torments,

readily consents to his being put to a lingering death, but not that he should free himself from a life of misery by at once cutting the thread of his days. Some moralists, abstracting the height of religious ideas, have held that it never is permitted to man to break the conditions of the covenant that he has made with society. Others have looked upon suicide as cowardice, they have thought that it was weakness, that it displayed pusillanimity, to suffer himself to be overwhelmed with the shafts of his destiny, and have held, that there would be much more courage and elevation of soul, in supporting his afflictions and in resisting the blows of fate. If nature be consulted upon this point, it will be found, that all the actions of man, that feeble plaything in the hands of necessity, are indispensable; that they depend on causes which move him in despite of himself, and that without his knowledge make him accomplish at each moment of his existence some one of its decrees. If the same power that obliges all intelligent beings to cherish their existence, renders that of man so painful and so cruel that he finds it insupportable, he quits his species; order is destroyed for him, and he accomplishes a decree of nature that wills he shall no longer exist. This nature has laboured during thousands of years to form in the bowels of the earth the iron that must number his days.

If the relation of man with nature be examined, it will be found that his engagement was neither voluntary on his part, nor reciprocal on the part of nature or God. The volition of his will had no share in his birth; it is commonly against his will that he is obliged to finish life; and his actions are, as we have proved, only the necessary effects of unknown causes which determine his will. He is, in the hands of nature,. that which a sword is in his own hands; he can fall upon it without its being able to accuse him with breaking his engagements, or of stamping with ingratitude the hand that holds it: man can only love his existence on condition of being happy; as soon as the entire of nature refuses him this happiness; as soon as all that surrounds him becomes incommodious to him; as soon as his melancholy ideas offer nothing but afflicting pictures to his imagination, he already exists no longer; he is suspended in the void; and he may quit a rank which no longer suits him; in which he finds no one interest; which offers him no protection; and in which he can no more be useful either to himself or to others.

If the covenant which unites man to society, be considered, it will be obvious that every contract is conditional, must be reciprocal; that is to say, supposes mutual advantages between the contracting parties. The citizen cannot be bound to his country, to his associates, but by the bonds of happiness. Are these bonds cut asunder? he is restored to liberty. Society, or those who represent it, do they use him with harshness, do they treat him with injustice, do they render his existence painful? Does disgrace hold him out to the finger of scorn; does indigence menace him, in an obdurate world? Perfidious friends, do they forsake him in adversity? An unfaithful wife, does she outrage his heart? Rebellious, ungrateful children, do they afflict his old age? Has he placed his happiness exclusively on some object which it is impossible for him to procure? Chagrin, remorse, melancholy, despair, have they disfigured to him the spectacle of the universe? In short, for whatever cause it may be, if he is not able to support his evils, let him quit a world which from thenceforth is for him only

a frightful desert: let him remove himself for ever from a country he thinks no longer willing to reckon him amongst the number of her children: let him quit a house that to his mind is ready to bury him under its ruins: let him renounce a society to the happiness of which he can no longer contribute; which his own peculiar felicity alone can render dear to him. And could the man be blamed, who finding himself useless, who being without resources in the town where destiny gave him birth, should quit it in his chagrin to plunge himself in solitude? Death is to the wretched the only remedy for despair; the sword is then the only friend — the only comfort that is left to the unhappy: as long as hope remains the tenant of his bosom; as long as his evils appear to him at all supportable; as long as he flatters himself with seeing them brought to a termination; as long as he finds some comfort in existence however slender, he will not consent to deprive himself of life; but when nothing any longer sustains in him the Jove of this existence, then to live, is to him the greatest of evils; to die, the only mode by which he can avoid the excess of despair.[103]

That society who has not the ability, or who is not willing to procure man any one benefit, loses all its rights over him; nature, when it has rendered his existence completely miserable, has in fact ordered him to quit it: in dying he does no more than fulfil one of her decrees, as he did when he first drew his breath. To him who is fearless of death, there is no evil without a remedy; for him. who refuses to die, there yet exist benefits which attach him to the world; in this case let him rally his powers, let him oppose courage to a destiny that oppresses him; let him call forth those resources with which nature yet furnishes him; she cannot have totally abandoned him whilst she yet leaves him the sensation of pleasure, and the hopes of seeing a period to his pains. As to the superstitious, thereas no end to his sufferings, for he is not allowed to abridge them.[104] His religion bids him to continue to groan, and forbids his recurring to death, which would lead him to a miserable state of existence: he would be eternally punished for daring to anticipate the tardy orders of a cruel God, who takes pleasure in seeing him reduced to despair, and who wills that man should not have the audacity to quit, without his consent, the post assigned to him.

Man regulates his judgment on his fellows only by his own peculiar mode of feeling; he deems as folly, he calls delirium, all those violent actions which he believes but little commensurate with their causes, or which appear to him calculated to deprive him of that happiness towards which he supposes a being, in the enjoyment of his senses, cannot cease to have a tendency: he treats his associate as a weak creature when he sees him affected with that which touches him but lightly, or when he is incapable of supporting those evils which his self-love flatters him he would himself be able to endure with more fortitude. He accuses of madness whoever deprives himself of life, for objects that he thinks unworthy so dear a sacrifice; he taxes him with phrensy, because he has himself learned to regard this life as the greatest blessing. It is thus that he always erects himself into a judge of the happiness of others, of their mode of seeing, and of their manner of feeling. A miser who destroys himself after the loss of his treasure, appears a fool in the eyes of him who is less attached to riches; he does not feel, that without money life to this miser is only a continued torture, and that

nothing in the world is capable of diverting him from his painful sensations: he will proudly tell you, that in his place he had not done so much; but to be exactly in the place of another man, it is needful to have his organization, his temperament, his passions, his ideas; it is in fact needful to be that other — to be placed exactly in the same circumstances, to be moved by the same causes; and in this case all men, like the miser, would sacrifice their life after being deprived of the only source of their happiness.

He who deprives himself of his existence, does not adopt this extremity, so repugnant to his natural tendency, but when nothing in this world has the faculty of rejoicing him — when no means are left of diverting his affliction. His misfortune, whatever it may be, for him is real; his organization, be it strong, or be it weak, is his own, not that of another; a man who is sick Only in imagination, really suffers, and even troublesome dreams place him in a very uncomfortable situation. Thus when a man kills himself, it ought to be concluded, that life, in the room of being a benefit, had become a very great evil to him; that existence had lost all its charms in his eyes; that the entire of nature was to him destitute of attraction; that it no longer contained any thing that could seduce him; that after the comparison which his disturbed imagination had made of existence with non-existence, the latter appeared to him preferable to the first.

Many persons will not fail to consider as dangerous these maxims, which, in spite of the received prejudices, authorize the unhappy to cut the thread of life; but *maxims* will never induce a man to adopt such a violent resolution: it is a temperament soured by chagrin, a bilious constitution, a melancholy habit, a defect in the organization, a derangement in the whole machine, it is in fact necessity, and not reasonable speculations, that breed in man the design of destroying himself. Nothing invites him to this step so long as reason remains with him, or whilst he yet possesses hope — that sovereign balm for every evil. As for the unfortunate, who cannot lose sight of his sorrows, who cannot forget his pains, who has his evils always present to his mind; he is obliged to take counsel from these alone. Besides, what assistance or what advantage can society promise to itself from a miserable wretch reduced to despair, from a misanthrope overwhelmed with grief, from a wretch tormented with remorse, who has no longer any motive to render himself useful to others, who has abandoned himself, and who finds no more interest in preserving his life? Those who destroy themselves are such, that had they lived, the offended laws must have ultimately been obliged to remove them from a society which they disgraced.

As life is, commonly, the greatest blessing for man, it is to be presumed that he who deprives himself of it, is impelled thereto by an invincible force. It is the excess of misery, the height of despair, the derangement of his brain caused by melancholy, that urges man on to destroy himself. Agitated by contrary impulsions, he is, as we have before said, obliged to follow a middle course, that conducts him to his death; if man be not a free agent, in any one instant of his life, he is again much less so in the act by which it is terminated.[105]

It will be seen, then, that he who kills himself, does not, as it is pretended, commit an outrage on nature or its author. He follows an impulse of that nature, and thus adopts the only means

left him to quit his anguish; he goes out of a door which she leaves open to him; he cannot offend her in accomplishing a law of necessity; the iron hand of this having broken the spring that renders life desirable to him, and which urged him to self-conservation, shows him he ought to quit a rank or system where he finds himself too miserable to have the desire of remaining. His country or his family have no right to complain of a member whom it has no means of rendering happy, and from whom consequently they have nothing more to hope. To be useful to either, it is necessary he should cherish his own peculiar existence; that he should have an interest in conserving himself; that he should love the bonds by which he is united to others; that he should be capable of occupying himself with their felicity. That the suicide should be punished in another world, and should repent of his precipitancy, he should outlive himself, and should carry with him into his future residence his organs, his senses, his memory, his ideas, his actual mode of existing, his determinate manner of thinking.

In short, nothing is more useful for society than to inspire man with a contempt for death, and to banish from his mind the false ideas he has of its consequences. The fear of death can never do more than make cowards; the fear of its pretended consequences will make nothing but fanatics or melancholy beings, who are useless to themselves and unprofitable to others. Death is a resource that ought not to be taken away from oppressed virtue, which the injustice of man frequently reduces to despair. If man feared death less, he would neither be a slave nor superstitious; truth would find defenders more zealous; the rights of mankind would be more hardily sustained; errour would be more powerfully opposed; tyranny would be banished from nations: cowardice nourishes it, fear perpetuates it. In fact, man can neither be contented nor happy, whilst his opinions shall oblige him to tremble.

Chapter XV: Of Man's true Interest, or of the Ideas he forms to himself of Happiness. — Man cannot be Happy without Virtue.

Utility, as has been before observed, ought to be the only standard of the judgment of man. To be useful, is to contribute to the happiness of his fellow creatures; to be prejudicial, is to further their misery. This granted, let us examine if the principles we have hitherto established be prejudicial or advantageous, useful or useless, to the human race. If man unceasingly seeks after his happiness, he can only approve of that which procures for him his object, or furnishes him the means by which it is to be obtained.

What has been already said will serve in fixing our ideas upon what constitutes this happiness: it has been already shown, that it is only continued pleasure;[106] but in order that an object may please, it is necessary that the impressions it makes, the perceptions it gives, the ideas which it leaves, in short, that the motion it excites in man should be analogous to his organization conformable to his temperament, assimilated to his individual nature: modified as it is by habit, determined as it is by an infinity of circumstances, it is necessary that the action of the object by which he is moved, or of which the idea remains with him, far from enfeebling him, far from annihilating his feelings should tend to strengthen him; it is necessary, that without fatiguing his mind, exhausting his faculties or deranging his organs,

this object should impart to his machine that degree of activity for which it continually has occasion. What is the object that unites all these qualities? Where is the man whose organs are susceptible of continual agitation without being fatigued, without experiencing a painful sensation, without sinking? Man is always willing to be warned of his existence in the most lively manner, as long as he can be so without pain. What do I say? He consents frequently to suffer, rather than not feel. He accustoms himself to a thousand things, which at first must have affected him in a disagreeable manner, and which frequently end, either by converting themselves into wants, or by no longer affecting him any way.[107] Where, indeed, can he always find objects in nature capable of continually supplying the stimulus requisite to keep him in an activity that shall be ever proportioned to the state of his own organization, which his extreme mobility renders subject to perpetual variation? The most lively pleasures are always the least durable, seeing they are those which exhaust him most.

That man should be uninterruptedly happy, it would be requisite that his powers were infinite; it would require, that, to his mobility he joined a vigour, a solidity, which nothing could change; or else it is necessary that the objects from which he receives impulse should either acquire or lose properties, according to the different states through which his machine is successively obliged to pass; it would need that the essences of beings should be changed in the same proportion as his dispositions, and should be submitted to the continual influence of a thousand causes, which modify him without his knowledge, and in despite of himself. If, at each moment his machine undergoes changes, more or less marked, which are ascribable to the different degrees of elasticity, of density, of serenity of the atmosphere, to the portion of igneous fluid circulating through his blood, to the harmony of his organs, to the order that exists between the various parts of his body; if, at every period of his existence, his nerves have not the same tensions, his fibres the same elasticity, his mind the same activity, his imagination the same ardour, &c., it is evident, that the same causes in preserving to him only the same qualities, cannot always affect him in the same manner. Here is (he reason why those objects that please him in one season displease him in another: these objects have not themselves sensibly changed, but his organs, his dispositions, his ideas, his mode of seeing, his manner of feeling, have changed; such is the source of man's inconstancy.

If the same objects are not constantly in that state competent to form the happiness of the same individual, it is easy to perceive that they are yet less in a capacity to please all men; or that the same happiness cannot be suitable to all. Beings already various by their temperament, their faculties, their organization, their imagination, their ideas, of distinct opinions, of contrary habits, which an infinity of circumstances, whether physical or moral, have variously modified, must necessarily form very different notions of happiness. Those of a miser cannot be the same as those of a prodigal; those of the voluptuary, the same as those of one who is phlegmatic; those of an intemperate, the same as those of a rational man who husbands his health. The happiness of each is in consequence composed of his natural organization, and of those circumstances, of those habits, of those ideas, whether true or

false, that have modified him: this organization and these circumstances never being the same in any two men, it follows that what is the object of one man's views, most be indifferent or even displeasing to another; thus, as we have before said, no one can be capable of judging of that which may contribute to the felicity of his fellow man.

Interest, is the object to which each individual, according to his temperament and his own peculiar ideas, attaches his welfare; from which it will be perceived, that this *interest* is never more than that which each contemplates as necessary to his happiness. It must, therefore, be concluded, that no roan is totally without interest. That of the miser, is to amass wealth; that of the prodigal, to dissipate it; the interest of the ambitious, is to obtain power; that of the modest philosopher, to enjoy tranquillity: the interest of the debauchee, is to give himself up without reserve to all sorts of pleasure; that of the prudent man, to abstain from those which may injure him: the interest of the wicked, is to gratify his passions at any price: that of the virtuous, to merit by his conduct the love and the approbation of others; to do nothing that can degrade himself in his own eyes.

Thus, when it is said, that *interest is the only motive of human actions,* it is meant to indicate, that each man labours after his own manner to his own peculiar happiness, which he places in some object, either visible or concealed, either real or imaginary, and that the whole system of his conduct is directed to its attainment. This granted, no man can be called disinterested; this appellation is only applied to those of whose motives we are ignorant, or whose interest we approve. Thus, the man who finds a greater pleasure in assisting his friends in misfortune, than preserving in his coffers useless treasure, is called generous, faithful, and disinterested: in like manner all men are denominated disinterested, who feel their glory far more precious than their fortune. In short, all men are designated disinterested, who place their happiness in making sacrifices which man considers costly, because he does not attach the same value to the object for which the sacrifice is made.

Man frequently judges very erroneously of the interest of others, either because the motives that animate them are too complicated for him to unravel; or, because to be enabled to judge of them fairly, it is needful to have the same eyes, the same organs, the same passions, the same opinions: nevertheless, obliged to form his judgment of we actions of mankind by their effect on himself, he approves the interest that actuates them, whenever the result is advantageous for his species: thus, he admires valour, generosity, the love of liberty, great talents, virtue, &c., he then only approves of the objects, in which the beings he applauds, have placed their happiness; he approves these dispositions even when he is not in a capacity to feel their effects; but in this judgment he is not himself disinterested; experience, reflection, habit, reason, have given him a taste for morals, and he finds as much pleasure in being witness to a great and generous action, as the man of *virtu* finds in the sight of a fine picture of which he is not the proprietor. He who has formed to himself a habit of practising virtue, is a man who has unceasingly before his eyes the interest that he has in meriting the affection, in deserving the esteem, in securing the assistance of others, as well as to love and esteem himself: impressed with these ideas, which have become habitual to him, he abstains

even from concealed crimes, since these would degrade him in his own eyes: he resembles a man, who having from his infancy contracted a habit of cleanliness, would be painfully affected at seeing himself dirty, even when no one should witness it. The honest man is he to whom truth has shown his interest or his happiness in a mode of acting that others are obliged to love and to approve for their own peculiar interest.

These principles, duly developed, are the true basis of morals; nothing is more chimerical than those which are founded upon imaginary motives, placed out of nature; or upon innate sentiments, which some speculators have regarded as anterior to man's experience, and as wholly independent of those advantages which result to him from its use: it is the essence of man to love himself: to tend to his own conservation; to seek to render his existence happy:[108] thus interest, or the desire of happiness, is the only real motive of all his actions; this interest depends upon his natural organization, his wants, his acquired ideas, the habits he has contracted; he is without doubt in errour, when either a vitiated organization or false opinions show him his welfare in objects either useless or injurious to himself, as well as to others; he marches steadily in the paths of virtue, when true ideas have made him rest his happiness on a conduct useful to his species, approved by others, and which renders him an interesting object to his associates. Morals would be a vain science, if it did not incontestably prove to man that *his interest consists in being virtuous.* Obligation, of whatever kind, can only be founded upon the probability or the certitude of either obtaining a good or avoiding an evil. Indeed, in no one instant of his duration, can a sensible and intelligent being either lose sight of his own preservation or forget his own welfare; he owes happiness to himself; but experience quickly proves to him, that bereaved of assistance, he cannot alone procure all those objects which are requisite to his felicity: he lives with sensible, with intelligent beings, occupied like himself with their own peculiar happiness, but capable of assisting him in obtaining those objects he most desires; he discovers that these beings will not be favourable to his views, but when they find their interest involved; from which he concludes, that his own happiness demands that he should conduct himself at all times in a manner suitable to conciliate the attachment, to obtain the approbation, to elicit the esteem, to secure the assistance of those beings who are most capacitated to further his designs. He perceives that it is man who is most necessary to the welfare of man, and that to induce him to join in his interests, he ought to make him find real advantages in seconding his projects: but to procure real advantages to the beings of the human species, is to have virtue; the reasonable man, therefore, is obliged to feel that it is his interest to be virtuous. Virtue is only the art of rendering himself happy, by the felicity of others. The virtuous man is he who communicates happiness to those beings who are capable of rendering his own condition happy, who are necessary to his conservation, who have the ability to procure him a felicitous existence.

Such, then, is the true foundation of all morals; merit and virtue are founded upon the nature of man; have their dependance upon his wants. It is virtue, alone, that can render him truly happy:[109] without virtue, society can neither be useful nor indeed subsist; it can only have real utility when it assembles beings animated with the desire of pleasing each other, and disposed

to labour to their reciprocal advantage: there exists no comfort in those families whose members are not in the happy disposition to lend each other mutual succours; who have not a reciprocity of feeling that stimulates them to assist one the other; that induces them to cling to each other, to support the sorrows of life; to unite their efforts to put away those evils to which nature has subjected them. The conjugal bonds are sweet only in proportion as they identify the interest of two beings, united by the want of legitimate pleasure, from whence results the maintenance of political society, and the means of furnishing it with citizens. Friendship has charms, only when it more particularly associates two virtuous beings; that is to say, two beings animated with the sincere desire of conspiring to their reciprocal happiness. In short, it is only by displaying virtue that man can merit the benevolence, the confidence, the esteem, of all those with whom he has relation; in a word, no man can be independently happy.

Indeed, the happiness of each human individual depends on those sentiments to which he gives birth, on those feelings which he nourishes in the beings amongst whom his destiny has placed him; grandeur may dazzle them; power and force may wrest from them an involuntary homage; opulence may seduce mean and venal souls; but it is humanity, it is benevolence, it is compassion, it is equity, that, unassisted by these, can without efforts obtain for him those delicious sentiments of attachment, of tenderness, of esteem, of which all reasonable men feel the necessity. To be virtuous, then, is to place his interest in that which accords with the interest of others; it is to enjoy those benefits and that pleasure which he himself diffuses over his fellows. He, whom his nature, his education, his reflections, his habits, have rendered susceptible of these dispositions, and to whom his circumstances have given him the faculty of gratifying them, becomes an interesting object to all the who approach him: he enjoys every instant; he reads with satisfaction the contentment and the joy which he has diffused over all countenances: his wife, his children, his friends, his servants, greet him with gay and serene faces, indicative of that content and of that peace which he recognises for his own work: every thing that environs him is ready to partake his pleasures and to share his pains; cherished, respected, looked up to by others, every thing conducts him to agreeable reflections: he knows the rights he has acquired over their hearts; he applauds himself for being the source of a felicity that captivates all the world; his own condition, his sentiments of self-love, become a hundred times more delicious when he sees them participated by all those with whom his destiny has connected him. The habit of virtue creates for him no wants but those which virtue itself suffices to satisfy; it is thus that virtue is always its own peculiar reward, that it remunerates itself with all the advantages it incessantly procures for others.

It will be said, and perhaps even proved, that under the present constitution of things, virtue, far from procuring the welfare of those who practise it, frequently plunges man into misfortune, and often places continual obstacles to his felicity; that almost every where it is without recompense. What do I say? A thousand examples could be adduced as evidence that in almost every country it is hated, persecuted, obliged to lament the ingratitude of human nature. I reply, with avowing, that by a necessary consequence of the wanderings and errours

of his race, virtue rarely conducts man to those objects in which the uninformed make their happiness consist. The greater number of societies, too frequently ruled by those whose ignorance makes them abuse their power, whose prejudices render them the enemies of virtue, who flattered by sycophants, secure in the impunity their actions enjoy, commonly lavish their esteem, bestow their kindness on none but the most unworthy objects, reward only the most frivolous, recompense none but the most prejudicial qualities: and hardly ever accord that justice to, merit which is unquestionably its due. But the truly honest man is neither am bilious of remuneration, nor sedulous of the suffrages of a society thus badly constituted: contented with domestic happiness, he seeks not to augment relations which would do no more than increase his danger; he knows that a vitiated community is a whirlwind, with which an honest man cannot co-order himself; he therefore steps aside, quits the beaten path, by continuing in which he would infallibly be crushed. He does all the good of which he is capable in his sphere; he leaves the road free to the wicked, who are willing to wade through its mire; he laments the heavy strokes they inflict on themselves; he applauds the mediocrity that affords him security; he pities those nations made miserable by their errours; rendered unhappy by those passions which are the fatal but necessary consequence; he sees they contain nothing but wretched citizens, who far from cultivating their true interest, far from labouring to their mutual felicity, far from feeling the real value of virtue, unconscious how dear it ought to be to them, do nothing but either openly attack or secretly injure it; in short, who detest a quality which would restrain their disorderly propensities.

In saying that virtue is its own peculiar reward, it is simply meant to announce, that, in a society whose views were guided by truth, by experience, and by reason, each individual would be acquainted with his real interests, would understand the true end of association, would have sound motives to perform his duties, and find real advantages in fulfilling them; in fact, would be convinced that to render himself solidly happy, he should occupy his actions with the welfare of his fellows, and by their utility, merit their esteem, their kindness, and their assistance. In a well constituted society, the government, the laws, education, example, would all conspire to prove to the citizen, that the nation of which he forms a part is a whole that cannot be happy that cannot subsist without virtue; experience would, at each step, convince him that the welfare of its parts can only result from that of the whole body corporate; justice would make him feel, that no society can be advantageous to its members where the volition of wills in those who act, is not so conformable to the interests of the whole, as to produce an advantageous reaction.

But, alas! by the confusion which the errours of man have carried into his ideas, virtue, disgraced, banished and persecuted, finds not one of those advantages it has a right to expect; man is indeed shown those pretended rewards for it in a future life, of which he is almost always deprived in his actual existence. It is thought necessary to deceive, to seduce, to intimidate him, in order to induce him to follow that virtue which every thing renders incommodious to him; he is fed with distant hopes, in order to solicit him to practise virtue, while contemplation of the world makes it hateful to him; he is alarmed by remote terrours

to deter him from committing evil, which all conspires to render amiable and necessary. It is thus that politics and superstition, by the formation of chimeras, by the creation of fictitious interests, pretend to supply those true and zeal motives which nature furnishes, which experience points out, which an enlightened government should hold forth, which the law ought to enforce, which instruction should sanction, which example should encourage, which rational opinions would render pleasant. Man, blinded by his passions, not less dangerous than necessary, led away by precedent, authorized by custom, enslaved by habit, pays no attention to these uncertain promises and menaces; the actual interest of his immediate pleasures, the force of his passions, the inveteracy of his habits, always rise superior to the distant interests pointed out in his future welfare, or the remote evils with which he is threatened, which always appear doubtful whenever he compares them with present advantages.

Thus superstition, far from making man virtuous by principle, does nothing more than impose upon him a yoke as severe as it is useless: it is borne by none but enthusiasts, or by the pusillanimous, who, without becoming better, tremblingly champ the feeble bit put into their mouth. Indeed, experience incontestably proves, that religion is a dike inadequate to restrain the torrent of corruption to which so many accumulated causes give an irresistible force: nay more, does not this religion itself augment the public disorder, by the dangerous passions which it lets loose and consecrates? Virtue, in almost every climate, is confined to some few rational beings, who have sufficient strength of mind to resist the stream of prejudice; who are contented by remunerating themselves with the benefits they diffuse over society; whose temperate dispositions are gratified with the suffrages of a small number of virtuous approvers: in short, who are detached from those frivolous advantages which the injustice of society but too commonly accords only to baseness, to intrigue, and to crime.

In despite of the injustice that reigns in the world, there are, however, some virtuous men; in the bosom even of the most degenerate nations, there are some benevolent beings, still enamoured of virtue, who are fully acquainted with its true value, who are sufficiently enlightened to know that it exacts homage even from its enemies; who are at least satisfied with those concealed pleasures and recompenses, of which no earthly power is competent to deprive them. The honest man acquires a right to the esteem, the veneration, the confidence, the love, even of those whose conduct is exposed by a contrast with his own. In short, vice is obliged to cede to virtue, of which it blushingly acknowledges the superiority. Independent of this ascendency so gentle, so grand, so infallible, if even the whole universe should be unjust to him, there yet remains to the honest man the advantage of loving his own conduct, of esteeming himself, of diving with satisfaction into the recesses of his own heart, of contemplating his own actions with that delicious complacency that others ought to do, if they were not hoodwinked. No power is adequate to ravish from him the merited esteem of himself; no authority is sufficiently potent to give it to him when he deserves it not; but when it is not well founded it is then a ridiculous sentiment: it ought to be censured when it displays itself in a mode that is mortifying and troublesome to others; it *is* then called

arrogance; if it rest itself upon frivolous actions, it is called *vanity;* but when it cannot be condemned, when it is known for legitimate, when it is discovered to have a solid foundation when it bottoms itself upon talents, when it rises upon great actions that are useful to the community, when it erects its edifice upon virtue, even though society should not set these merits at their just price it is noble pride, elevation of mind, grandeur of soul.

Let us not, then, listen to the preaching of those superstition? which, enemies to man's happiness, have been desirous of destroying it, even in the inmost recesses of his heart; which have prescribed to him hatred of his fellows and contempt for himself; which pretend to wrest from the honest man that self-respect which is frequently the only reward that remains to virtue in a perverse world. To annihilate in him this sentiment so full of justice, this love of himself, is to break the most powerful spring that urges him to act right. What motive, indeed, except it be this, remains for him in the greater part of human societies? Is not virtue discouraged and contemned? Is not audacious crime and cunning vice rewarded? Is not love of the public weal taxed as folly; exactitude in fulfilling duties looked upon as a bubble? Is not compassion, sensibility, tenderness, conjugal fidelity, sincerity, inviolable friendship, treated with ridicule? Man must have motives for action: he neither acts well nor ill, but with a view to his own happiness — to that which he thinks his interest; he does nothing gratuitously; and when reward for useful actions is withheld from him, he is reduced either to become as abandoned as others, or else to remunerate himself with his own applause.

This granted, the honest man can never be completely unhappy; he can never be entirely deprived of the recompense which is his due; virtue can amply make up to him all the happiness denied him by public opinion; but nothing can compensate to him the want of virtue. It does not follow that the honest man will be exempted from afflictions: like the wicked, he is subjected to physical evils; he may be worn down with disease; he may frequently be the subject of calumny of injustice, of ingratitude, of hatred; but in the midst of all his misfortunes, of his sorrows, he finds support in himself, he is contented with his own conduct, he respects himself, he feels his own dignity, he knows the equity of his rights, and consoles himself with the confidence inspired by the justness of his cause. These supports are not calculated for the wicked. Equally liable with the honest man to infirmities and to the caprices of his destiny, he finds the recesses of his own heart filled with dreadful alarms, cares, solicitude, regret, and remorse; he dies within himself; his conscience sustains him not, but loads him with reproach; and his mind, overwhelmed, sinks under the storm. The honest man is not an insensible stoic; virtue does not procure impassibility, but if wretched, it enables him to cast off despair; if infirm, he has less to complain of than the vicious being who is oppressed with sickness; if indigent, he is less unhappy in his poverty; if in disgrace, he is not overwhelmed by its pressure, like the wretched slave to crime.

Thus the happiness of each individual depends on the cultivation of his temperament; nature makes both the happy and the unhappy; it is culture that gives value to the soil nature has formed, and instruction and reflection make it useful. For man to be happily born, is to have received from nature a sound body, organs that act with precision, a just mind, a heart whose

passions and desires are analogous and conformable to the circumstances in which his destiny has placed him. Nature, then, has done every thing for him, when she has joined to these faculties the quantum of vigour and energy sufficient to enable him to obtain those things, which his station, his mode of thinking, his temperament, have rendered desirable. Nature has made him a fatal present, when she has filled his sanguinary vessels with an overheated fluid, given him an imagination too active, desires too impetuous after objects either impossible or improper to be obtained under his circumstances; or which at least he cannot procure without those incredible efforts that either place his own welfare in danger or disturb the repose of society. The most happy man is commonly he who possesses a peaceable mind, who only desires those things which he can procure by labour suitable to maintain his activity, without causing shocks that are either too violent or troublesome. A philosopher, whose wants are easily satisfied, who is a stranger to ambition, who is contented with the limited circle of a small number of friends, is, without doubt, a being much more happily constituted than an ambitious conqueror, whose greedy imagination is reduced to despair by having only one world to ravage. He who is happily born, or whom nature has rendered susceptible of being conveniently modified, is not a being injurious to society: it is generally disturbed by men who are unhappily born, whose organization renders them turbulent, who are discontented with their destiny, who are inebriated with their own licentious passions, who are smitten with difficult enterprises, who set the world in combustion to gather imaginary benefits, in which they make their own happiness consist. An Alexander requires the destruction of empires, nations to be deluged with blood, cities to be laid in ashes, its inhabitants to be exterminated, to content that passion for glory of which he has formed to himself a false idea, but which his too ardent imagination anxiously thirsts after: for a Diogenes there needs only a tub, with the liberty of appearing whimsical: a Socrates wants nothing but the pleasure of forming disciples to virtue.

Man by his organization is a being to whom motion is always necessary, he must therefore always desire it; this is the reason why too much facility in procuring the objects of his search, renders them quickly insipid. To feel happiness, it is necessary to make efforts to obtain it; to find charms in its enjoyment, it is necessary that the desire should be whetted by obstacles; he is presently disgusted with those benefits which have cost him but little pains. The expectations of happiness, the labour requisite to procure it, the varied and multiplied pictures which his imagination forms to him, supply his brain with that motion for which it has occasion; this gives impulse to his organs, puts his whole machine into activity, exercises his faculties, sets all his springs in play; in a word, puts him into that agreeable activity, for the want of which the enjoyment of happiness itself cannot compensate him. Action is the true element of the human mind; as soon as it ceases to act, it sinks into lassitude. His mind has the same occasion for ideas his stomach has for aliment.[110]

Thus the impulse given him by desire is itself a great benefit; it is to the mind what exercise is to the body; without it he would not derive any pleasure in the aliments presented to him; it is thirst that renders the pleasure of drinking so agreeable. Life is a perpetual circle of

regenerated desires and wants satisfied: repose is only a pleasure to him who labours; it is a source of weariness, the cause of sorrow, the spring of vice to him who has nothing to do. To enjoy without interruption is not to enjoy any thing: the man who has nothing to desire is certainly more unhappy than he who suffers.

These reflections, grounded upon experience, ought to prove to man that good as well as evil depends on the essence of things. Happiness to be felt cannot be continued. Labour is necessary to make intervals between his pleasures; his body has occasion for exercise to co-order him with the beings who surround him; his heart must have desires; trouble alone can give him the right relish of his welfare; it is this which puts in the shadows to the picture of human life. By an irrevocable law of his destiny, man is obliged to be discontented with his present condition; to make efforts to change it; to reciprocally envy that felicity which no individual enjoys perfectly. Thus the poor man envies the opulence of the rich, although this one is frequently more unhappy than his needy neighbour; thus the rich man views with pain the advantages of a poverty which he *sees* active, healthy, and frequently jocund even in the bosom of penury.

If man were perfectly contented, there would no longer be any activity in the world; it is necessary that he should desire, act, labour, in order that he may be happy: such is the course of nature, of which the life consists in action. Human societies can only subsist by the continual exchange of those things in which man places his happiness. The poor man is obliged to desire and to labour, that he may procure what he knows is requisite to the preservation of his existence; the primary wants given to him by nature, are to nourish himself, clothe himself, lodge himself, and propagate his species; has he satisfied these? he is quickly obliged to create others entirely new; or rather, his imagination only refines upon the first; he seeks to diversify them; he is willing to give them fresh zest; arrived at opulence, when he has run over the whole circle of wants, when he has completely exhausted their combinations, he falls into disgust. Dispensed from labour, his body amasses humours; destitute of desires, his heart feels a languor; deprived of activity, he is obliged to divide his riches with beings more active, more laborious than himself: these, following their own peculiar interests, take upon themselves the task of labouring for his advantage, of procuring for him means to satisfy his wants, of ministering to his caprices in order to remove the languor that oppresses him. It is thus the great, the rich, excite the energies, the activity, the industry of the indigent; these labour to their own peculiar welfare by working for others: thus the desire of ameliorating his condition, renders man necessary to his fellow man; thus wants, always regenerating, never satisfied, are the principles of life, of activity, the source of health, the basis of society. If each individual were competent to the supply of his own exigencies, there would be no occasion for mm to congregate in society, but his wants, his desires, his whims, place him in a state of dependance on others: these are the causes that each individual, in order to further his own peculiar interest, is obliged to be useful to those who have the capability of procuring for him the objects which he himself has not. A nation is nothing more than the union of a great number of individuals, connected with each other

by the reciprocity of their wants, or by their mutual desire of pleasure; the most happy man is he who has the fewest wants, and the most numerous means of satisfying them.[111]

In the individuals of the human species, as well as in political society, the progression of wants, is a thing absolutely necessary; it is founded upon the essence of man; it is requisite that the natural wants once satisfied, should be replaced by those which he calls *imaginary*, or *wants of the fancy;* these become as necessary to his happiness as the first. Custom, which permits the native American to go quite naked, obliges the more civilized inhabitant of Europe to clothe himself; the poor man contents himself with very simple attire, which equally serves him for winter and for summer; the rich man desires to have garments suitable to each season; he would experience pain if he had not the convenience of changing his raiment with every variation of his climate; he would be unhappy if the expense and variety of his costume did not display to the surrounding multitude his opulence, mark his rank, announce his superiority. It is thus habit multiplies the wants of the wealthy; it is thus that vanity itself becomes a want, which sets a thousand hands in motion, who are all eager to gratify its cravings; in short, this very vanity procures for the necessitous man the means of subsisting at the expense of his opulent neighbour. He who is accustomed to pomp, who is used to ostentatious splendour, whose habits are luxurious, whenever he is deprived of these insignia of opulence to which he has attached the idea of happiness, finds himself just as unhappy as the needy wretch who has not wherewith to cover his nakedness. The civilized nations of the present day were in their origin savages composed of erratick tribes, mere wanderers who were occupied with war and the chase, obliged to seek a precarious subsistence by hunting in those woods: in time they have become stationary; they first applied themselves to agriculture, afterwards to commerce; by degrees they have refined on their primitive wants, extended their sphere of action, given birth to a thousand new wants, imagined a thousand new means to satisfy them; this is the natural and necessary progression of active beings, who cannot live without feeling; who, to be happy, must of necessity diversify their sensations.

In proportion as man's wants multiply, the means to satisfy them becomes more difficult; he is obliged to depend on a greater number of his fellow creatures; his interest obliges him to rouse their activity to engage them to concur with his views, consequently he is obliged to procure for them those objects by which they can be excited. The savage need only put forth his hand to gather the fruit he finds sufficient for his nourishment. The opulent citizen of a flourishing society is obliged to set numerous hands to work to produce the sumptuous repast and to procure the farfetched viands become necessary to revive his languishing appetite, or to flatter his inordinate vanity. From this it will appear, that in the same proportion the wants of man are multiplied, he is obliged to augment the means to satisfy them. Riches are nothing more than the measure of a convention, by the assistance of which man is enabled to make a greater number of his fellows concur in the gratification of his desires; by which he is capacitated to invite them, for their own peculiar interests, to contribute to his pleasures. What, in fact, does the rich man do, except announce to the needy that he can furnish him

with the means of subsistence if he consents to lend himself to his will? What does the man in power except show to others that he is in a state to supply the requisites to render them happy? Sovereigns, nobles, men of wealth, appear to be happy only because they possess the ability, are masters of the motives, sufficient to determine a great number of individuals to occupy themselves with their respective felicity.

The more things are considered, the more man will be convinced that his false opinions are the true source of his misery; and the clearer it will appear to him that happiness is so rare only because he attaches it to objects either indifferent or useless to his welfare, or which, when enjoyed, convert themselves into real evils.

Riches are indifferent in themselves it is only by their application that they either become objects of utility to man or are rendered prejudicial to his welfare. Money, useless to the savage, who understands not its value, is amassed by the miser, (to whom it is useless) lest it should be squandered by the prodigal or by the voluptuary, who makes no other use of it than to purchase infirmities and regret. Pleasures are nothing for the man who is incapable of feeling them; they become real evils when they are too freely indulged; when they are destructive to his health; when they derange the economy of his machine; when they make him neglect his duties, and when they render him despicable in the eyes of others. Power is nothing in itself; it is useless to man if he does not avail himself of it to promote his own peculiar felicity: it becomes fatal to him as soon as he abuses it; it becomes odious whenever he employs it to render others miserable. For want of being enlightened on his true interest, the man who enjoys all the means of rendering himself completely happy, scarcely ever discovers the secret of making those means truly subservient to his own peculiar felicity. The art of enjoying is that which of all others is least understood: man should learn this art before he begins to desire; the earth is covered with individuals who only occupy themselves with the care of procuring the means, without ever being acquainted with the end. All the world desire fortune and power, yet very few indeed are those whom these objects render truly happy.

It is quite natural in man, it is extremely reasonable, it is absolutely necessary, to desire, those things which can contribute to augment the sum of his felicity. Pleasure, riches, power, are objects worthy his ambition, and deserving his most strenuous efforts, when he has learned how to employ them to render his existence really more agreeable. It is impossible to censure him who desires them, to despise him who commands them, to hate him who possesses them, but when to obtain them he employs odious means, or when after he has obtained them he makes a pernicious use of them, injurious to himself, prejudicial to others. Let him wish for power, let him seek after grandeur, let him be ambitious of reputation, when he can obtain them without making the purchase at the expense of his own repose, Or that of the beings with whom he lives: let him desire riches, when he knows how to make a use of them that is truly advantageous for himself, really beneficial for others; but never let him employ those means to procure them with which he may be obliged to reproach himself, or which may draw upon him the hatred of his associates. Let him always recollect, that his solid happiness

should rest its foundations upon his own esteem, and upon the advantages he procures for others; and above all, that of all the objects to which his ambition may point, the most impracticable for a being who lives in society, is that of attempting to render himself exclusively happy.

Chapter XVI: The Errours of Man, upon what constitutes Happiness, the true Source of his Evil. — Remedies that may be applied.

Reason by no means forbids man from forming capacious desires; ambition is a passion useful to his species, when it has for its object the happiness of his race. Great minds are desirous of acting on an extended sphere; geniuses who are powerful, enlightened, beneficent, distribute very widely their benign influence; they must necessarily, in order to promote their own peculiar felicity, render great numbers happy. So many princes fail to enjoy true happiness, only because their feeble, narrow souls, are obliged to act in a sphere too extensive for their, energies: it is thus that by the supineness, the indolence, the incapacity of their chiefs, nations frequently pine in misery, and are often submitted to masters whose exility of mind is as little calculated to promote their own immediate happiness, as it is to further that of their miserable subjects. On the other minds too vehement, too much inflamed, too active, are themselves tormented by the narrow sphere that confines them, and their misplaced ardour becomes the scourge of the human race.[112] Alexander was a monarch, who was as injurious to the earth, as discontented with his condition, as the indolent despot whom he dethroned. — The souls of neither were by any means commensurate with their sphere of action.

The happiness of man will never be more than the result of the harmony that subsists between his desires and his circumstances. The sovereign power, to him who knows not how to apply it to the advantage of his citizens, is as nothing; if it renders him miserable, it is a real evil; if it produces the misfortune of a portion of the human race, it is a detestable abuse. The most powerful princes are ordinarily such strangers to happiness, their subjects are commonly so unfortunate only because they first possess all the means of rendering themselves happy, without ever giving them activity, or because the only knowledge they have of them is their abuse. A wise man, seated on a throne, would be the most happy of mortals. A monarch is a man for whom his power, let it be of whatever extent, cannot procure other organs, other modes of feeling, than the meanest of his subjects; if he has an advantage over them, it is by the grandeur, the variety, the multiplicity of the objects with which he can occupy himself, which, by giving perpetual activity to his mind, can prevent it from decay and from falling into sloth If his mind is virtuous and expansive, his ambition finds continual food in the contemplation of the power he possesses to unite by gentleness and kindness the will of his subjects with his own; to interest them in his own conservation, to merit their affections, to draw forth the respect of strangers, and to elicit the eulogies of all nations. Such are the conquests that reason proposes to all those whose destiny it is to govern the fate of empires:

they are sufficiently grand to satisfy the most ardent imagination, to gratify the most capacious ambition. Kings are the most happy of men only because they have the power of making a great number of other men happy, and thus of multiplying the causes of legitimate content with themselves.

The advantages of the sovereign power are participated by all those who contribute to the government of states. Thus grandeur, rank, reputation, are desirable for all who are acquainted with all the means of rendering them subservient to their own peculiar felicity; they are useless to those ordinary men, who have neither the energy nor the capacity to employ them in a mode advantageous to themselves; they are detestable whenever to obtain them man compromises his own happiness and the welfare of society: this society itself is in an errour every time it respects men who only employ to its destruction a power, the exercise of which it ought never to approve but when it reaps from it substantial benefits.

Riches, useless to the miser, who is no more than their miserable jailer, prejudicial to the debauchee, for whom they only procure infirmities, disgust, and satiety, can, in the hands of the honest man, produce unnumbered means of augmenting the sum of his happiness; but before man covets wealth, it is proper he should know how to employ it; money is only a representative of happiness: to enjoy it so as to make others happy, this is the reality. Money, according to the compact of man, procures for him all those benefits he can desire; there is only one which it will not procure, that is, the knowledge how to apply it properly. For man to have money, without the true secret how to enjoy; it, is to possess the key of a commodious palace to which he is interdicted entrance; to lavish it prodigally, is to throw the key into the river; to make a bad use of it, is only to make it the means of wounding himself. Give the most ample treasures to the enlightened man, he will not be overwhelmed with them; if he has a capacious and noble mind he will only extend more widely his benevolence; he will deserve the affection of a greater number of his fellow men; he will attract the love, and the homage of all those who surround him; he will restrain himself in his pleasures, in order that he may be enabled truly to enjoy them; he will know that money cannot re-establish a mind worn out with enjoyment, enfeebled by excess; cannot invigorate a body enervated by debauchery, from thenceforth become incapable of sustaining him, except by the necessity of privations; he will know that the licentiousness of the voluptuary stifles pleasure in its source, and that all the treasure in the world cannot renew his senses.

From this it will be obvious, that nothing is more frivolous than the declamations of a gloomy philosophy against the desire of power, the pursuit of grandeur, the acquisition of riches, the enjoyment of pleasure. — These objects are desirable for man, whenever his condition permits him to make pretensions to them, or whenever he has acquired the knowledge of making them turn to his own real advantage; reason cannot either censure or despise him, when to obtain them he wounds no one's interest: his associates will esteem him when he employs their agency to secure his own happiness, and that of his fellows. Pleasure is a benefit, it is of the essence of man to love it; it is even rational, when it renders his existence really valuable to himself, when its consequences are not grievous to others. Riches are the

symbols of the great majority of the benefits of this life; they. become a reality in the hands of the man who has the clew to their just application. Power is the most sterling of all benefits, when he who is its depositary has received from nature a mind sufficiently noble, elevated, benevolent, and energetic, which enables him to extend his happy influence over whole nations, which, by this means, he places in a state of legitimate dependance on his will: man only acquires the right of commanding men, when he renders them happy.

The right of man over his fellowman, can only be founded, either upon the actual happiness he secures to him. or that which gives him reason to hope he will procure for him; without this, the power he exercises would be violence, usurpation, manifest tyranny: it is only upon the faculty of rendering him happy that legitimate authority builds its structure. No man derives from nature the right of commanding another; but it is voluntarily accorded to those from whom he expects his welfare. Government is the right of commanding conferred on the sovereign, only for the advantage of those who are governed. Sovereigns are the defenders of the persons, the guardians of the property, the protectors of the liberty of their subjects: it is only on this condition these consent to obey; government would not be better than a robbery whenever it availed itself of the powers confided to it to render society unhappy. The empire of religion is founded on the opinion man entertains of its having power to render nations happy; and the Gods are horrible phantoms if they do render man unhappy.[113] Government and religion, could be reasonable institutions only inasmuch as they equally contributed to the felicity of man: it would be folly in him to submit himself to a yoke from which these resulted nothing but evil: it would be rank injustice to oblige him to renounce his rights, without some corresponding advantage.

The authority which a father exercises over his family, is only founded on the advantages which he is supposed to procure for it. Rank, in political society, has only for its basis the real or imaginary utility of some citizens, for which the others are willing to distinguish, respect, and obey them. The rich acquire rights over the indigent, only by virtue of the welfare they are able to procure them. Genius, talents, science, arts, have rights over man, only in consequence of their utility, of the delight they confer, of the advantages they procure for society. In a word, it is happiness, it is the expectation of happiness, it is its image, that man cherishes, esteems, and unceasingly adores. Gods and monarchs, the rich and the great, may easily impose on him, may dazzle him, may intimidate him, but they will never be able to obtain the voluntary submission of his heart, which alone can confer upon them legitimate rights, without they make him experience real benefits and display virtue. Utility is nothing more than true happiness; to be useful is to be virtuous; to be virtuous is to make others happy.

The happiness which man derives from them, is the invariable and necessary standard of his sentiments for the beings of his species, for the objects he desires, for the opinions he embraces, for those actions on which he decides; he is the dupe of his prejudices every time he ceases to avail himself of this standard to regulate his judgment. He will never run the risk of deceiving himself, when he shall examine strictly what is the real utility resulting to his

species from the religion, from the laws, from the institutions, from the inventions and the various actions of all mankind

A superficial view may sometimes seduce him; but experience, aided by reflection, will re-conduct him to reason, which is incapable of deceiving him. This teaches him that pleasure is a momentary happiness, which frequently becomes an evil; that evil is a fleeting trouble, that frequently becomes a good: it makes him understand the true nature of objects, and enables him to foresee the effects he may expect; it makes him distinguish those desires to which his welfare permits him to lend himself from those to whose seduction he ought to make resistance. In short, it will always convince him, that the true interest of intelligent beings, who love happiness, who desire to render their own existence felicitous, demands that they should root out all those phantoms, abolish all those chimerical ideas, destroy all those prejudices, which obstruct their felicity in this world.

If he consults experience, he will perceive that it is in illusions and opinions looked upon as sacred, that he ought to search out the source of that multitude of evils, which almost every where overwhelms mankind. From ignorance of natural causes, man has created Gods; imposture rendered these Gods terrible to him; and these fatal ideas haunted him without rendering him better, made him tremble without either benefit to himself or to others; filled his mind with chimeras, opposed themselves to the progress of his reason, prevented him from seeking after his happiness. His fears rendered him the slave of those who have deceived him under pretence of consulting his welfare; he committed evil whenever they told him his Gods demanded crimes; he lived in misfortune, because they made him believe these Gods condemned him to be miserable; the slave of these Gods, he never dared to disentangle himself from his chains, because the artful ministers of these Divinities gave him to understand, that stupidity, the renunciation of reason, sloth of mind, abjection of soul, were the sure means of obtaining eternal felicity.

Prejudices, not less dangerous, have blinded man upon the true nature of government; nations are ignorant of the true foundations of authority; they dare not demand happiness from those kings who are charged with the care of procuring it for them: they have believed that their sovereigns were Gods disguised, who received with their birth, the right of commanding the rest of mankind; that they could at their pleasure dispose of the felicity of the people, and that they were not accountable for the misery they engendered. By a necessary consequence of these opinions, politics have almost every where degenerated into the fatal art of sacrificing the interests of the many, either to the caprice of an individual, or to some few privileged rascals. In despite of the evils which assailed them, nations fell down in adoration before the idols they themselves had made, and foolishly respected the instruments of their misery; obeyed their unjust will: lavished their blood, exhausted their treasure, sacrificed their lives, to glut the ambition, the cupidity, the never-ending caprices of these men; they bent the knee to established opinion, bowed to rank, yielded to title, to opulence, to pageantry, to ostentation: at length, victims to their prejudices, they in vain expected their welfare at the hands of men who were themselves unhappy from their own vices, whose neglect of virtue

had rendered them incapable of enjoying true felicity, who were but little disposed to occupy themselves with their prosperity: under such chiefs their physical and moral happiness were equally neglected or even annihilated.

The same blindness may be perceived in the science of morals. Religion, which never had any thing but ignorance for its basis, and imagination for its guide, did not found ethics upon man's nature, upon his relations with his fellows, upon those duties which necessarily flow from these relations, it preferred founding them upon imaginary relations, which it pretended subsisted between him and some invisible powers it had gratuitously imagined, and had falsely been made to speak.[114]

It was these invisible Gods which religion always paints as furious tyrants, who were declared the arbiters of man's destiny — the models of his conduct; when he was willing to imitate these tyrannical Gods, when he was willing to conform himself to the lessons of their interpreters, he became wicked, was an unsociable creature, a useless being, or else a turbulent maniac and a zealous fanatic. It was these alone who profited by religion, who advantaged themselves by the darkness in which it involved the human mind; nations were ignorant of nature, they knew nothing of reason, they understood not truth; they had only a gloomy religion, without one certain idea of either morals or virtue. When man committed evil against his fellow creature, he believed he had offended his God; but he also believed himself forgiven, as soon as he had prostrated himself before him; as soon as he had made him costly presents, and gained over the priest to his interest. Thus religion, far from giving a sure, a natural, and a known basis to morals, only rested it on an unsteady foundation, made it consist in ideal duties, impossible to be accurately understood. What did say? It first corrupted him, and his expiations finished by ruining him Thus when religion was desirous to combat the unruly passions of man, it attempted it in vain; always enthusiastic, and deprived of experience, it knew nothing of the true remedies; those which it applied were disgusting, only suitable to make the sick revolt against them; it made them pass for divine, because they were not made of man; they were inefficacious, because chimeras could effectuate nothing against those substantive passions to which motives more real and more powerful concurred to give birth, which every thing conspired to nourish in his heart. The voice of religion, or of the Gods, could not make itself heard amidst the tumult of society, where all cried out to man, that he could not render himself happy without injuring his fellow creature; these vain clamours only made virtue hateful to him, because they always represented it as the enemy to his happiness — as the bane of human pleasures. He consequently failed in the observation of his duties, because real motives were never held forth to induce him to make the requisite sacrifice: the present prevailed over the future, the visible over the invisible, the known over the unknown; and man became wicked, because every thing informed him he must be so in order to obtain happiness.

Thus, the sum of human misery was never diminished; on the contrary, it was accumulating either by his religion, by his government, by his education, by his opinions, or by the institutions he adopted under the idea of rendering his condition more pleasant. It cannot be

too often repeated, it is in errour that man will find the true spring of those evils with which the human race is afflicted; it is not nature that renders him miserable and unhappy; it is not an irritated Divinity, who is desirous he should live in tears; it is not hereditary depravation that has caused him to be wicked and miserable, it is to errour that these deplorable effects are to be ascribed.

The sovereign good, so much sought after by some philosophers, announced with so much emphasis by others, may be considered as a chimera, like unto that marvellous *panacea,* which some adepts have been willing to pass upon mankind for a universal remedy. All men are diseased; the moment of their birth delivers them over to the contagion of errour; but individuals are variously affected by it, by a consequence of their natural organization and of their peculiar circumstances. If there is a sovereign remedy which can be indiscriminately applied to the diseases of man, there is without doubt only *one,* and this remedy is *truth,* which he must draw from nature.

At the sight of those errours which blind the greater number of mortals — of those delusions which man is doomed to suck in with his mother's milk; at the sight of those desires, of those propensities, by which he is perpetually agitated, of those passions which torment him, of those inquietudes which gnaw his repose, of those evils, as well physical as moral, which assail him on every side, the contemplator of humanity would be tempted to believe that happiness was not made for this world, and that any effort to cure those minds which every thing unites to poison, would be a vain enterprise. When he considers those numerous superstitions by which man is kept in a continual state of alarm, that divide him from his fellow, that render him irrational; when he beholds the many despotic governments that oppress him; when he examines those multitudinous, unintelligible, contradictory laws that torture him; the manifold injustice under which he groans; when he turns his mind to the barbarous ignorance in which he is steeped, almost over the whole surface of the earth; when he witnesses those enormous crimes that debase society, and render it so hateful to almost every individual; he has great difficulty to prevent his mind from embracing the idea, that misfortune is the only appendage of the human species; that this world is made solely to assemble the unhappy; that human felicity is a chimera, or at least a point so fugitive, that it is impossible it can be fixed.

Thus superstitious and atrabilious mortals, nourished in melancholy, unceasingly see either nature or its author exasperated against the human race; they suppose that man is the constant object of heaven's wrath; that he irritates it even by his desires, and renders himself criminal by seeking a felicity which is not made for him. Struck with beholding that those objects which he covets in the most lively manner, are never competent to content his heart, they have decried them as abominations, as things prejudicial to his interest, as odious; they prescribe him that he should entirely shun them; they have endeavoured to put to the rout all his passions, without any distinction even of those which are the most useful to himself, the most beneficial to those beings with whom he lives: they have been willing that man should render himself insensible — should become his own enemy — that he should separate

himself from his fellow creatures — that he should renounce all pleasure — that he should refuse happiness; in short, that he should cease to be a man; that he should become unnatural. "Mortals!" have they said, "ye were born to be unhappy; the author of your existence has destined ye for misfortune; enter then into his views, and render yourselves miserable. Combat those desires which have felicity for their object; renounce those pleasures which it is your essence to love; attach yourselves to nothing in this world; fly a society that only serves to inflame your imagination, to make you sigh after benefits you ought not to enjoy; break up the spring of your souls; repress that activity that seeks to put a period to your sufferings; suffer, afflict yourselves, groan, be wretched; such is for you the true road to happiness."

Blind physicians! who have mistaken for a disease the natural state of man! they have not seen that his desires and his passions were essential to him; that to defend him from loving and desiring, is to deprive him of that activity, which is the vital principle of society; that to tell him to hate and despise himself, is to take from him the most substantive motive that can conduct him to virtue. It is thus, that, by its supernatural remedies, religion, far from curing evils, has only increased them, and made them more desperate; in the room of calming his passions, it gives them inveteracy, makes them more dangerous, renders them more venomous, turns that into a curse which nature has given him for his preservation and happiness. It is not by extinguishing the passions of man that he is to be rendered happier, it is by directing them towards useful objects, which, by being truly advantageous to himself, must of necessity be beneficial to others.

In despite of the errours which blind the human race; in despite of the extravagance of man's religious and political institutions, notwithstanding the complaints and murmurs he is continually breathing forth against his destiny, there are yet happy individuals on the earth. Man has sometimes the felicity to behold sovereigns animated by the noble passion to render nations nourishing and happy; now and then he encounters an Antoninus, a Trajan, a Julian, an Alfred, a Henri IV;[115] he meets with elevated minds, who place their glory in encouraging merit, who rest their happiness in succouring indigence, who think it honourable to lend a helping hand to oppressed virtue: he sees genius, occupied with the desire of eliciting the admiration of his fellow-citizens by serving them usefully, and satisfied with enjoying that happiness he procures for others.

Let it not be believed that the man of poverty himself, is excluded from happiness. Mediocrity and indigence frequently procure for him advantages that opulence and grandeur are obliged to acknowledge. The soul of the needy man, always in action, never ceases to form desires, whilst the rich and the powerful are frequently in the afflicting embarrassment of either not knowing what to wish for, or else of desiring those objects which it is impossible for them to obtain.[116] The poor man's body, habituated to labour, knows the sweets of repose; this repose of the body is the most troublesome fatigue to him who is wearied with his idleness. Exercise and frugality procure for the one vigour, health, and contentment; the intemperance and sloth of the other furnish him only with disgust and infirmities. Indigence

sets all the springs of the soul to work; it is the mother of industry; from its bosom arise genius, talents, and merit, to which opulence and wandeur pay their homage. In short the blows of fate find in the poor man a flexible reed, who bends without breaking..

Thus nature is not a stepmother to the greater number of her children. He whom fortune has placed in an obscure station, is ignorant of that ambition which devours the courtier; knows nothing of the inquietude which deprives the intriguer of his rest; is a stranger to the remorse, disgust, and weariness of the man, who, enriched with the spoils of a nation, does not know how to turn them to his profit. The more the body labours, the more the imagination reposes itself; it is the diversity of the objects man runs over that kindles it; it is the satiety of those objects that causes him disgust; the imagination of the indigent is circumscribed by necessity: he receives but few ideas, he is acquainted with but few objects; in consequence he has but little to desire; he contents himself with that little, whilst the entire of nature with difficulty suffices to satisfy the insatiable desires, to gratify the imaginary wants of the man plunged in luxury, who has run over and exhausted all common objects. Those, whom prejudice contemplates as the most unhappy of men, frequently enjoy advantages more real and much greater those who oppress them, who despise them, but who are nevertheless often reduced to the misery of envying them. Limited desires are a real benefit: the man of meaner condition, in his humble fortune, desires only bread: he obtains it by the sweat of his brow; he would eat it with pleasure if injustice did not almost always render it bitter to him. By the delirium of governments, those who roll in abundance, without for that reason being more happy, dispute with the cultivator even the fruits which the earth yields to the labour of his hands. Princes sacrifice their true happiness, as well as that of their states, to these passions, to those caprices, which discourage the people, which plunge their provinces in misery, which make millions unhappy without any advantage to themselves. Tyrants oblige their subjects to curse their existence, to abandon labour, and take from them the courage of propagating a progeny who would be as unhappy as their fathers: the excess of oppression sometimes obliges them to revolt and to avenge themselves by wicked outrages of the injustice it has heaped on their devoted heads. Injustice, by reducing indigence to despair, obliges it to seek in crime resources against its misery. An unjust government produces discouragement; its vexations depopulate a country; the earth remains without culture; from thence is bred frightful famine, which gives birth to contagion and plague. The misery of a people produce revolutions: soured by misfortunes their minds get into a state of fermentation, and the overthrow of an empire is the necessary effect. It is thus that physics and morals are always connected, or rather are the same thing.

If the bad morals of chiefs do not always produce such marked effects, at least they generate slothfulness, of which the effect is to fill society with mendicants and malefactors, whose vicious course neither religion nor the terrour of the laws can arrest; which nothing can induce to remain the unhappy spectators of a welfare they are not permitted to participate. They seek a fleeting happiness at the expense even of their lives, when injustice has shut up to them the road of labour and industry, which would have rendered them both useful and

honest.

Let it not then be said, that no government can render all its subjects happy: without doubt it cannot flatter itself with contenting the capricious humours of some idle citizens, who are obliged to rack their imagination to appease the disgust arising from lassitude: but it can, and it ought to occupy itself with ministering to the real wants of the multitude. A society enjoys all the happiness of which it is susceptible, whenever the greater number of its members are wholesomely fed, decently clothed, comfortably lodged; in short, when they can without an excess of toil beyond their strength procure wherewith to satisfy those wants which nature has made necessary to their existence. Their minds rest contented as soon as they are convinced no power can ravish from them the fruits of their industry, and that they labour for themselves. By a consequence of human folly, whole nations are obliged to toil incessantly, to waste their strength, to sweat under their burdens, to drench the earth with their tears, in order to maintain the luxury, to gratify the whims, to support the corruption of a small number of irrational beings, of some few useless men, to whom happiness has become impossible, because their bewildered imaginations no longer know any bounds. It is thus that religious and political errours have changed the fair face of nature into a valley of tears.

For want of consulting reason, for want of knowing the value of virtue, for want of being instructed in their true interests, for want of being acquainted with what constitutes solid and real felicity, the prince and the people, the rich and the poor, the great and the little, are unquestionably frequently very far removed from content; nevertheless if an impartial eye be glanced over the human race, it will be found to comprise a greater number of benefits than of evils. No man is entirely happy, but he is so in detail. Those who make the most bitter complaints of the rigour of their fate, are, however, held in existence by threads frequently impereeptible, which prevent the desire of quitting it. In short, habit lightens to man the burden of his troubles; grief suspended becomes true enjoyment; every want is a pleasure in the moment when it is satisfied; freedom from chagrin, the absence of disease, is a happy state which he enjoys secretly and without even perceiving it; hope, which rarely abandons him entirely, helps him to support the most cruel disasters. The prisoner laughs in his irons; the wearied villager returns singing to his cottage; in short, the man who calls himself the most unfortunate, never sees death approach without dismay, at least if despair has not totally disfigured nature in his eyes.[117]

As long as man desires the continuation of his being, he has no right to call himself completely unhappy; whilst hope sustains him, he still enjoys a great benefit. If man was more just in rendering to himself an account of his pleasures and of his pains, he would acknowledge that the sum of the first exceeds by much the amount of the last; he would perceive that he keeps a very exact leger of the evil, but a very unfaithful journal of the good: indeed he would avow, that there are but few days entirely unhappy during the whole course of his existence. His periodical wants procure for him the pleasure of satisfying them: his mind is perpetually moved by a thousand objects, of which the variety, the multiplicity, the novelty, rejoices him, suspends his sorrows, diverts his chagrin. His physical evils, are they

violent? They are not of long duration; they conduct him quickly to his end: the sorrows of his mind conduct him to it equally. At the same time that nature refuses him every happiness, she opens to him a door by which he quits life: does he refuse to enter it? it is that he yet finds pleasure in existence. Are nations reduced to despair? Are they completely miserable? They have recourse to arms; and, at the risk of perishing, they make the most violent efforts to terminate their sufferings.

Thus, as he sees so many of his fellows cling to life, man ought to conclude they are not so unhappy as he thinks. Then let him not exaggerate the evils of the human race; let him impose silence on that gloomy humour, that persuades him these evils are without remedy; let him diminish by degrees the number of his errours, and his calamities will vanish in the same proportion. He is not to conclude himself infelicitous, because his heart never ceases to form new desires. Since his body daily requires nourishment, let him infer that it is sound, that it fulfils its functions. As long as he has desires, the proper deduction ought to be, that his mind is kept in the necessary activity; he should also gather from all this that passions are essential to him, that they constitute the happiness of a being who feels, who thinks, who receives ideas, who must necessarily love and desire that which promises him a mode of existence analogous to his natural energies. As long as he exists, as long as the spring of his mind maintains its elasticity, this mind desires; as long as it desires, he experiences the activity which is necessary to him; as long as he acts, so long he lives. Human life may be compared to a river, of which the waters succeed each other, drive each other forward, and flow on without interruption; these waters obliged to roll over an unequal bed, encounter at intervals those obstacles which prevent their stagnation; they never cease to undulate, recoil, and to rush forward, until they are restored to the ocean of nature.

Chapter XVII: Those Ideas which are true, or founded upon Nature, are the only Remedies for the Evils of Man. — Recapitulation. — Conclusion of the First Part.

Whenever man ceases to take experience for his guide, he falls into errour. His errours become yet more dangerous and assume a more determined inveteracy, when they are clothed with the sanction of religion: it is then that he hardly ever consents to return into the paths of truth; he believes himself deeply interested in no longer seeing clearly that which lies before him; he fancies he has an essential advantage in no longer understanding himself, and that his happiness exacts that he should shut his eyes to truth. If the majority of moral philosophers have mistaken the human heart; if they have deceived themselves upon its diseases and the remedies that are suitable; if the remedies they have administered have been inefficacious or even dangerous, it is because they have abandoned nature, have resisted experience, and have not had sufficient steadiness to consult their reason; because, having renounced the evidence of their senses, they have only followed the caprices of an imagination either dazzled by enthusiasm or disturbed by fear, and have preferred the illusions it has held forth to the realities of nature, who never deceives.

It is for want of having felt, that an intelligent being cannot for an instant lose sight of his own peculiar conservation — of his particular interests, either real or fictitious — of his own welfare, whether permanent or transitory; in short, of his happiness, either true or false; it is for want of having considered that desires and passions are essential and natural, that both the one and the other are motions necessary to the mind of man, that the physicians of the human mind have supposed supernatural causes for his wanderings, and have only applied to his evils topical remedies, either useless or dangerous. Indeed, in desiring him to stifle his desires, to combat his propensities, to annihilate his passions, they have done no more than give him steril precepts, at once vague and impracticable; these vain lessons have influenced no one; they have at most restrained some few mortals, whom a quiet imagination but feebly solicited to evil; the terrours with which they have accompanied them, have disturbed the tranquillity of those persons, who were moderate by their nature, without ever arresting the ungovernable temperament of those who were inebriated by their passions, or hurried along by the torrent of habit. In short, the promises of superstition, as well as the menaces it holds forth, have only formed fanatics and enthusiasts, who are either dangerous or useless to society, without ever making man truly virtuous, that is to say, useful to his fellow creatures. These empirics, guided by a blind routine, have not seen that man, as long as he exists, is obliged to feel, to desire, to have passions, and to satisfy them in proportion to the energy which his organization has given him; they have not perceived that education planted these desires in his heart, that habit rooted them, that his government, frequently vicious, corroborated their growth, that public opinion stamped them with its approbation, that experience rendered them necessary, and that to tell men thus constituted to destroy their passions, was either to plunge them into despair, or else to order them remedies too revolting for their temperament. In the actual state of opulent societies, to say to a man who knows by experience that riches procure every pleasure, that he must not desire them, that he must not make any efforts to obtain them, that he ought to detach himself from them, is to persuade him to render himself miserable. To tell an ambitious man not to desire grandeur and power, which every thing conspires to point out to him as the height of felicity, is to order him to overturn at one blow the habitual system of his ideas; it is to speak to a deaf man. To tell a lover of an impetuous temperament, to stifle his passion for the object that enchants him, is to make him understand that he ought to renounce his happiness. To oppose religion to such puissant interests, is to combat realities by chimerical speculations.

Indeed, if things were examined without prepossession, it would be found that the greater part of the precepts inculcated by religion, or which fanatical and supernatural morals give to man, are as ridiculous as they are impossible to be put into practice. To interdict passion to man, is to desire of him not to be a human creature; to counsel an individual of violent imagination to moderate his desires, is to advise him to change his temperament — to request his blood to flow more sluggishly. To tell a man to renounce his habits, is to be willing that a citizen, accustomed, to clothe himself, should consent to walk quite naked; it would avail as much to desire him to change the lineament of his face, to destroy his configuration, to

extinguish his imagination, to alter the course of his fluids, as to command him not to have passions analogous with his natural energy, or to lay aside those which habit and his circumstances have converted into wants.[118] Such are, however, the so much boasted remedies which the greater number of moral philosophers apply to human depravity. Is it then surprising they do not produce the desired elect, or that they only reduce man to a state of despair, by the effervescence that results from the continual conflict which they excite between the passions of his heart, between his vices and his virtues, between his habits and those chimerical fears with which superstition is at all times ready to overwhelm him? The vices of society, aided by the objects of which it avails itself to whet the desires of man, the pleasures, the riches, the grandeur, which his government holds forth to him as so many seductive magnets, the advantage which education, the benefits, example, public opinion render dear to him, attract him on one side; whilst a gloomy morality vainly solicits him on the other; thus, religion plunges him into misery — holds a violent struggle with his heart, without ever gaining the victory; when by accident it does prevail against so many united forces, it renders him unhappy — it completely destroys the spring of his mind.

Passions are the true counterpoise to passions; then, let him not seek to destroy them, but let him endeavour to direct them; let him balance those which are prejudicial, by those which are useful to society. Reason, the fruit of experience, is only the art of choosing those passions to which, for his own peculiar happiness, he ought to listen. Education is the true art of disseminating, the proper method of cultivating advantageous passions in the heart of man. Legislation is the art of restraining dangerous passions, and of exciting those which may be conducive to the public welfare. Religion is only the art of planting and of nourishing in the mind of man those chimeras, those illusions, those impostures, those incertitudes, from whence spring passions fatal to himself as well as to others: it is only by bearing up with fortitude against these, that he can place himself on the road to happiness.[119]

Reason and morals cannot effect any thing on mankind, if they do not point out to each individual, that his true interest is attached to a conduct useful to others and beneficial to himself; this conduct to be useful must conciliate for him the favour of those beings who are necessary to his happiness: it is then for the interest of mankind, for the happiness of the human race, it is for the esteem of himself, for the love of his fellows, for the advantages which ensue, that education in early life should kindle the imagination of the citizen; this is the true means of obtaining those happy results with which habit should familiarize him, which public opinion should render dear to his heart, for which example ought continually to rouse his faculties. Government, by the aid of recompenses; ought to encourage him to follow this plan; by visiting crime with punishment, it ought to deter those who are willing to interrupt it. Thus the hope of a true welfare, the fear of real evil, will be passions suitable to countervail those which, by their impetuosity, would injure society; these last will at least become very rare, if instead of feeding man's mind with unintelligible speculations, in lieu of vibrating on his ears words void of sense, he is only spoken to of realities, only shown those interests which are in unison with truth.

Man is frequently so wicked, only because he almost always feels himself interested in being so; let him be more enlightened and more happy, and he will necessarily become better. An equitable government, a vigilant administration will presently fill the state with honest citizens; it will hold forth to them present reasons, real and palpable, to be virtuous; it will instruct them in their duties; it will foster them with its cares; it will allure them by the assurance of their own peculiar happiness; its promises and its menaces faithfully executed, will, unquestionably, have much more weight than those of superstition, which never exhibits to their view other than illusory benefits, fallacious punishments, which the man hardened in wickedness will doubt every time he finds an interest in questioning them; present motives will tell more home to his heart, than those which are distant and at best uncertain. The vicious and the wicked are so common upon the earth, so pertinacious in their evil courses, so attached to their irregularities, only because there are but few governments that make man feel the advantage of being just, honest, and benevolent; on the contrary, there is hardly any place where the most powerful interests do not solicit him to crime by favouring the propensities of a vicious organization, which nothing has attempted to rectify or lead towards virtue.[120] A savage, who in his horde, knows not the value of money, certainly would not commit a crime; if transplanted into civilized society, he will presently learn to desire it, will make efforts to obtain it, and, if he can without danger, finish by stealing it, above all if he had not been taught to respect the property of the beings who environ him. The savage and the child are precisely in the same state; it is the negligence of society, of those intrusted with their education, that render both the one and the other wicked. The son of a noble, from his infancy learns to. desire power, at a riper age he becomes ambitious; if he has the address to insinuate himself into favour, he becomes wicked, and he may be so with impunity. It is not therefore nature that makes man wicked, they are his institutions which determine him to vice. The infant brought up amongst robbers, can generally become nothing but a malefactor; if he had been reared with honest people, the chance is he would have been a virtuous man. If the source be traced of that profound ignorance in which man is with respect to his morals, to the motives that can give volition to his will, it will be found in those false ideas which the greater number of speculators have formed to themselves of human nature. The science of morals has become an enigma, which it is impossible to unravel, because man has made himself double, has distinguished his mind from his body, supposed it of a nature different from all known beings, with modes of action, with properties distinct from all other bodies; because he has emancipated this mind from physical laws, in order to submit it to capricious laws derived from imaginary regions. Metaphysicians, seized upon these gratuitous suppositions, and by dint of subtilizing them, have rendered them completely unintelligible. These moralists have not perceived, that motion is essential to the mind as well as to the living body; that both the one and the other are never moved but by material, by physical objects; that the wants of each regenerate themselves unceasingly; that the wants of the mind, as well as those of the body, are purely physical; that the most intimate, the most constant connexion subsists between the mind and the body, or rather they have been unwilling to

allow, that they are only the same thing considered under different points of view. Obstinate in their supernatural or unintelligible opinions, they have refused to open their eyes, which would have convinced them, that the body in suffering rendered the mind miserable; that the mind afflicted undermined the body and brought it to decay; that both the pleasures and agonies of the mind, have an influence over the body, either plunge it into sloth or give it activity: they have rather chosen to believe, that the mind draws its thoughts, whether pleasant or gloomy, from its own peculiar sources; while the fact is, that it derives its ideas only from material objects, that strike on the physical organs; that it is neither determined to gayety nor led on to sorrow, but by the actual state, whether permanent or transitory, in which the fluids and solids of the body are found. In short, they have been loath to acknowledge, that the mind, purely passive, undergoes the same changes which the body experiences; that it is only moved by its intervention, acts only by its assistance, receives its sensations, its perceptions, forms its ideas, derives either its happiness, or its misery, from physical objects, through the medium of the organs of which the body is composed, frequently without its own cognizance, and often in despite of itself.

By a consequence of these opinions, connected with marvellous systems, or systems invented to justify them, they have supposed the human mind to be a free agent; that is to say that it has the faculty of moving itself — that it enjoys the privilege of acting independent of the impulse received from exterior objects through the organs of the body; that regardless of these impulsions, it can even resist them, and follow its own direction by its own energies; that it is not only different in its nature from all other beings, but has also a separate mode of action; in other words, that it is an isolated point, which is not submitted to that uninterrupted chain of motion, which bodies communicate to each other in nature whose parts are always in action. — Smitten with their sublime notions, these speculators were not aware, that in thus distinguishing the soul or mind, from the body and from all known beings, they rendered it an impossibility to form any true idea of it; they were unwilling to perceive the perfect analogy which is found between the manner of the mind's action, and that by which the body is affected; they shut their eyes to the necessary and continual correspondence which is found between the mind and the body; they would not see that like the body it is subjected to the motion of attraction and repulsion, which is ascribable to qualities inherent in those physical substances which give play to the organs of the body; that the volition of its will, the activity of its passions, the continual regeneration of its desires, are never more than consequences of that activity which is produced on the body by material objects which are not under its controul, and that these objects render it either happy or miserable, active or languishing, contented or discontented, in despite of itself and of all the efforts it is capable of making to render it otherwise: they have rather chosen to seek in the heavens for fictitious powers to set it in motion; they have held forth to man only imaginary interests: under the pretext of procuring for him an ideal happiness, he has been prevented from labouring to his true felicity, which has been studiously withheld from his knowledge: his regards have been fixed upon the heavens, that he might lose sight of the earth: truth has been

concealed from him, and it has been pretended he would be rendered happy by dint of terrours, by means of phantoms, and of chimeras. In short, hoodwinked and blind, he was only guided through the flexuous paths of life by men as blind as himself, where both the one and the other were lost in the maze.

From every thing which has been hitherto said, it evidently results that all the errours of mankind, of whatever nature they may be, arise from man's having renounced reason, quitted experience, and refused the evidence of his senses, that he might be guided by imagination, frequently deceitful, and by authority, always suspicious. Man will ever mistake his true happiness, as long as he neglects to study nature, to investigate her immutable laws, to seek in her alone the remedies for those evils which are the consequence of his present errours: he will be an enigma to himself, as long as he shall believe himself double, and that he is moved by an inconceivable power, of the laws and nature of which he is ignorant. His intellectual as well as his moral faculties will remain unintelligible to him if he does not contemplate them with the same eyes as he does his corporeal qualities, and does not view them as submitted in every thing to the same regulations. The system of his pretended free agency is without support; experience contradicts it every instant, and proves that he never ceases to be under the influence of necessity in all his actions; this truth, far from being dangerous to man, far from being destructive of his morals, furnishes him with their true basis, by making him feel the necessity of those relations which subsist between sensible beings united in society, who have congregated with a view of uniting their common efforts for their reciprocal felicity. From the necessity of these relations, spring the necessity of his duties; these point out to him the sentiments of love which he should accord to virtuous conduct, or that aversion he should have for what is vicious. From hence the true foundation of *moral obligation*, will be obvious, which is only the necessity of taking means to obtain the end man proposes to himself by uniting in society, in which each individual for his own peculiar interest, his own particular happiness, his own personal security, is obliged to display and to hold a conduct suitable to the preservation of the community, and to contribute by his actions to the happiness of the whole. In a word, it is upon the necessary action and reaction of the human will, upon the necessary attraction and repulsion of man's mind, that all his morals are bottomed: it is the unison of his will, the concert of his actions, that maintain society: it is rendered miserable by his discordance; it is dissolved by his want of union.

From what has been said it may be concluded, that the names under which man has designated the concealed causes acting in nature, and their various effects, are never more than *necessity* considered under different points of view. It will be found, that what he calls *order*, is a necessary consequence of causes and effects, of which he sees, or believes he sees, the entire connexion, the complete routine, and which pleases him as a whole when he finds it conformable to his existence. In like manner it will be seen that what he calls *confusion*, is a consequence of like necessary causes and effects, which he thinks unfavourable to himself, or but little suitable to his being. He has designated by the name of *intelligence*,

those necessary causes that necessarily operate the chain of events which he comprises under the term *order*. He has called *divinity*, those necessary but invisible causes which give play to nature, in which every thing acts according to immutable and necessary laws: *destiny* or *fatality*, the necessary connexion of those unknown causes and effects which he beholds in the world: *chance*, those effects which he is not able to foresee, or of which he ignores the necessary connexion with their causes. Finally, *intellectual* and *moral faculties*, those effects and those modifications necessary to an organized being, whom he has supposed to be moved by an inconceivable agent, that he has believed distinguished from his body, of a nature totally different from it, and which he has designated by the word *soul*. In consequence, he has believed this agent immortal, and not dissoluble like the body.

It has been shown that the marvellous doctrine of another life, is founded upon gratuitous suppositions, contradicted by reflection. It has been proved, that the hypothesis is not only useless to man's morals, but again, that it is calculated to palsy his exertions, to divert him from actively pursuing the true road to his own happiness, to fill him with romantic caprices, and to inebriate him with opinions prejudicial to his tranquillity; in short, to lull to slumber the vigilance of legislators, by dispensing them from giving to education, to the institutions, to the laws of society, all that attention which it is the duty and for his interest they should bestow. It must have been felt, that politics has unaccountably rested itself upon opinions little capable of satisfying those passions which every thing conspires to kindle in the heart of man, who ceases to view the future, while the present seduces and hurries him along. It has been shown, that contempt of death is an advantageous sentiment, calculated to inspire man's mind with courage to undertake that which may be truly useful to society. In short, from what has preceded, it will be obvious what is competent to conduct man to happiness, and also what are the obstacles that errour opposes to his felicity.

Let us not then be accused of demolishing without rebuilding, with combating errour without substituting truth, with sapping at one and the same time the foundations of religion and of sound morals. The last is necessary to man; it is founded upon his nature; its duties are certain, they must last as long as the human race remains; it imposes obligations on him, because, without it, neither individuals nor society could be able to subsist, either obtain or enjoy those advantages which nature obliges them to desire.

Listen then, O man! to those morals which are established upon experience and upon the necessity of things; do not lend thine ear to those superstitions founded upon reveries, imposture, and the capricious whims of a disordered imagination. Follow the lessons of those humane and gentle morals, which conduct man to virtue by the path of happiness: turn a deaf ear to the inefficacious cries of religion which renders man really unhappy; which can never make him reverence virtue, which it paints in hideous and hateful colours; in short, let him see if reason, without the assistance of a rival who prohibits its use, will not more surely conduct him towards that great end which is the object and tendency of all his views.

Indeed, what benefit has the human race hitherto drawn from those sublime and supernatural notions, with which theology has fed mortals during so many ages? All those phantoms

conjured up by ignorance and imagination; all those hypotheses, as subtile as they are irrational, from which experience is banished; all those words devoid of meaning with which languages are crowded; all those fantastical hopes and panic terrours, which have been brought to operate on the will of man. have they rendered man better, more enlightened to his duties, more faithful in their performance? Have those marvellous systems, or those sophistical inventions by which they have been supported, carried conviction to his mind, reason into his conduct, virtue into his heart"? Alas! all these things have done nothing more than plunge the human understanding into that darkness, from which it is difficult to be withdrawn; sown in man's heart the most dangerous errours, of which it is scarcely possible to divest him; given birth to those fatal passions, in which may be found the true source of those evils with which his species is afflicted.

Cease then, O mortal! to let thyself be disturbed with phantoms, which thine own imagination or imposture hath created. Renounce thy vague hopes; disengage thyself from thine overwhelming fears, follow without inquietude the necessary routine which nature has marked out for thee; strew the road with flowers if thy destiny permits; remove, if thou art able, the thorns scattered over it. Do not attempt to plunge thy views into an impenetrable futurity; its obscurity ought to be sufficient to prove to thee that it is either useless or dangerous to fathorn. Only think then, of making thyself happy in that existence which is known to thee. If thou wouldst preserve thyself, be temperate, moderate, and reasonable: if thou seekest to render thy existence durable, be not prodigal of pleasure. Abstain from every thing that can be hurtful to thyself, or to others. Be truly intelligent; that is to say, learn to esteem thyself, to preserve thy being, to fulfil that end which at each moment thou proposest to thyself. Be virtuous, to the end that thou mayest render thyself solidly happy, that thou mayest enjoy the affections, secure the esteem, partake of the assistance of those beings whom nature has made necessary to thine own peculiar felicity. Even when they should be unjust, render thyself worthy of thine own love and applause, and thou shalt live content, thy serenity shall not be disturbed: the end of thy career shall not slander a life which will be exempted from remorse. Death will be to thee the door to a new existence, a new order in which thou wilt be submitted, as thou art at present, to the eternal laws of fate, which ordains, that to live happy here below, thou must make others happy. Suffer thyself, then, to be drawn gently along thy journey, until thou shalt sleep peaceably on that bosom which has given thee birth.

For thou, wicked unfortunate! who art found in continual contradiction with thyself; them whose disorderly machine can neither accord with thine own peculiar nature, nor with that of thine associates; whatever may be thy crimes, whatever may be thy fears of punishment in another life, thou art at least already cruelly punished in this? Do not thy follies, thy shameful habits, thy debaucheries, damage thine health? Dost thou not linger out life in disgust, fatigued with thine own excesses? Does not listlessness, punish thee for thy satiated passions? Has not thy vigour, thy gayety, already yielded to feebleness, to infirmities, and to regret? Do not thy vices every day dig thy grave? Every time thou hast stained thyself with

crime, hast thou dared without horrour to return into thyself? Hast thou not found remorse, terrour, shame, established in thine heart? Hast thou not dreaded the scrutiny of thy fellow man? Hast thou not trembled when alone, that truth, so terrible for thee, should unveil thy dark transgressions, throw into light thine enormous iniquities? Do not then any longer fear to part with thine existence, it will at least put an end to those richly merited torments thou hast inflicted on thyself; death, in, delivering the earth from an incommodious burden, will also deliver thee thy most cruel enemy, *thyself.*

Chapter XVIII: The Origin of Man's Ideas upon the Divinity.

If man possessed the courage to recur to the source of those opinions which are most deeply engraven on his brain; if he rendered to himself a faithful account of the reasons which make him hold these opinions as sacred; if he coolly examined the basis of his hopes, the foundation of his fears, he would find that it very frequently happens, those objects, or those ideas which move him most powerfully, either have no real existence, are words devoid of meaning, or phantoms engendered by a disordered imagination, modified by ignorance. Distracted by contending passions, which prevent him from either reasoning justly, or consulting experience in his judgment, his intellectual faculties are thrown into confusion, his ideas bewildered.

A sensible being placed in a nature where every part is in motion, has various feelings, in consequence of either the agreeable or disagreeable effects which he is obliged to experience; in consequence he either finds himself happy or miserable; and, according to the quality of the sensations excited in him, he will love or fear, seek after or fly from, the real or supposed causes of such marked effects operated on his machine. But if he is ignorant or destitute of experience, he will frequently deceive himself as to these causes; and he will neither have a true knowledge of their energy, nor a clear idea of their mode of acting: thus until reiterated experience shall have formed his judgment, he will be involved in trouble and incertitude.

Man is a being who brings with him nothing into the world, save an aptitude to feeling in a manner more or less lively according to his individual organization: he has no knowledge of any of the causes that act upon him: by degrees his faculty of feeling discovers to him their various qualities; he learns to judge of them; time familiarizes him with their properties; he attaches ideas to them, according to the manner in which they have affected him; and these ideas are correct or otherwise, in a ratio to the soundness of his organic structure, and in proportion as these organs are competent to afford him sure and reiterated experience.

The first movements of man are marked by his wants; that is to say, the first impulse he receives is to conserve his existence; this he would not be able to maintain without the concurrence of many analogous causes: these wants in a sensible being manifest themselves by a general languor, a sinking, a confusion in his machine, which gives him the consciousness of a painful sensation: this derangement subsists and is augmented, until the cause suitable to remove it re- establishes the harmony so necessary to the existence of the human frame. Want, therefore, is the first evil man experiences; nevertheless it is requisite

to the maintenance of his existence. — Was it not for this derangement of his body, which obliges him to furnish its remedy, he would not be warned of the necessity of preserving the existence he bas received. Without wants man would be an insensible machine, similar to a vegetable, and like it, he would be incapable of preserving himself or of using the means required to conserve his being. To his wants are to be ascribed his passions, his desires, the exercise of his corporeal and intellectual faculties: they are his wants that oblige him to think, to will, to act; it is to satisfy them, or rather to put an end to the painful sensations excited by their presence, that, according to his capacity, to the energies which are peculiar to himself, he exerts the activity of his bodily strength, or displays the extensive powers of his mind. His wants being perpetual, he is obliged to labour without relaxation to procure objects competent to satisfy them. In a word, it is owing to his multiplied, wants that man's energy is kept in a state of continual activity: as soon as he ceases to have wants, he falls into inaction — becomes listless — declines into apathy — sinks into a languor that is incommodious to his feelings or prejudicial to his existence: this lethargic state of weariness lasts until new wants rouse his dormant faculties, and destroy the sluggishness to which he had become a prey.

From hence it will be obvious that *evil* is necessary to man; without it he would neither be in a condition to know that which injures him, to avoid its presence, or to seek his own welfare: he would differ in nothing from insensible, unorganized beings, if those evanescent evils which he calls *wants*, did not oblige him to call forth his faculties, to set his energies in motion, to cull experience, to compare objects, to discriminate them, to separate those which have the capabilities to injure him, from those which possess the means to benefit him. In short, without evil man would be ignorant of good; he would be continually exposed to perish. He would resemble an infant, who, destitute of experience, runs the risk of meeting his destruction at every step he takes: he would be unable to judge of any thing; he would have no preference; his will would be without volition, he would be destitute of passions, of desire: he would not revolt at the most disgusting objects; he would not strive to put them away; he would neither have stimuli to love, nor motives to fear any thing; he would be an insensible automaton — he would no longer be a man.

If no evil had existed in this world, man would never have dreamt of the divinity. If nature had permitted him easily to satisfy all his regenerating wants, if she had given him none but agreeable sensations, his days would have uninterruptedly rolled on in one perpetual uniformity, and he would never have had motives to search after the unknown causes of things. To meditate is pain: therefore man, always contented, would only have occupied himself with satisfying his wants, with enjoying the present, with feeling the influence of objects that would unceasingly warn him of his existence in a mode that he must necessarily approve; nothing would alarm his heart; every thing would be analogous to his existence: he would neither know fear, experience distrust, nor have inquietude for the future: these feelings can only be the consequence of some troublesome sensation, which must have anteriorly affected him, or which, by disturbing the harmony of his machine, has interrupted

the course of his happiness.

Independent of those wants which in man renew themselves every instant, and which he frequently finds it impossible to satisfy, every individual experiences a multiplicity of evils; he suffers from the inclemency of the seasons, he pines in penury, he is infected with plague, he is scourged by war, he is the victim of famine, he is afflicted with disease, he is the sport of a thousand accidents, &c. This is the reason why all men are fearful and diffident. The knowledge he has of pain alarms him upon all unknown causes, that is to say, upon all those of which he has not yet experienced the effect; this experience made with precipitation, or if it be preferred, by instinct, places him on his guard against all those objects from the operation of which he is ignorant what consequences may result to himself. His inquietude and his fears keep pace with the extent of the disorder which these objects produce in him; they are measured by their rarity, that is to say, by the inexperience he has of them; by his natural sensibility, and by the ardour of his imagination. The more ignorant man is, the less experience he has, the more he is susceptible of fear; solitude, the obscurity of a forest, silence, and the darkness of night, the roaring of the wind, sudden, confused noises, are objects of terrour to all who are unaccustomed to these things. The uninformed man is a child whom every thing astonishes; but his alarms disappear, or diminish, in proportion as experience familiarizes him, more or less, with natural effects; his fears cease entirely, as soon as he understands, or believes he understands, the causes that act, and when he knows how to avoid their effects. But if he cannot penetrate the causes which disturb him, or by whom he suffers, if he cannot find to what account to place the confusion he experiences, his inquietude augments; his fears redouble; his imagination leads him astray; it exaggerates his evil; paints in a disorderly manner these unknown objects of his terrour; then making an analogy between them and those terrific objects with whom he is already acquainted, he suggests to himself the means he usually takes to mitigate their anger; he employs similar measures to soften the anger and to disarm the power of the concealed cause which gives birth to his inquietudes, and alarms his fears. It is thus his weakness, aided by ignorance, renders him superstitious.

There are very few men, even in our own day, who have sufficiently studied nature, who are fully apprised of physical causes, or with the effects they must necessarily produce. This ignorance, without doubt, was much greater in the more remote ages of the world, when the human mind, yet in its infancy, had not collected that experience, and made those strides towards improvement, which distinguishes the present from the past. Savages dispersed, knew the course of nature either very imperfectly or not at all; society alone perfects human knowledge: it requires not only multiplied but combined efforts to unravel the secrets of nature. This granted, all natural causes were mysteries to our wandering ancestors; the entire of nature was an enigma to them; all its phenomena were marvellous, every event inspired terrour to beings who were destitute of experience; almost every thing they saw must have appeared to them strange, unusual, contrary to their idea of the order of things.

It cannot then furnish matter for surprise, if we behold men in the present day trembling at

the sight of those objects which have formerly filled their fathers with dismay. Eclipses, comets, meteors, were in ancient days, subjects of alarm to all the people of the earth: these effects so natural in the eyes of the sound philosopher, who has by degrees fathomed their true causes, have yet the right to alarm the most numerous and the least instructed part of modern nations. The people of the present day, as well as their ignorant ancestors, find something marvellous and supernatural in all those objects to which their eyes are unaccustomed, or in all those unknown causes that act with a force of which their mind has no idea it is possible the known agents are capable. The ignorant see wonders, prodigies, miracles, in all those striking effects of which they are unable to render themselves a satisfactory account; all the causes which produce them they think *supernatural;* this, however, really implies nothing more than that they are not familiar to them, or that they have not hitherto witnessed natural agents whose energy was equal to the production of effects so astonishing as those with which their sight has been appalled.

Besides the ordinary phenomena to which nations were witnesses without being competent to unravel the causes, they have, in times very remote from ours, experienced calamities, whether general or local, which filled them with the most cruel inquietude, and plunged them into an abyss of consternation. The traditions and annals of all nations, recall, even at this day, melancholy events, physical disasters, dreadful catastrophes, which had the effect of spreading universal terrour among our forefathers. But when history should be silent on these stupendous revolutions, would not our own reflection on what passes under our eyes be sufficient to convince us, that all parts of our globe have been, and following the course of things, will necessarily be again violently agitated, overturned, changed, overflowed, in a state of conflagration? Vast continents have been inundated: seas breaking their limits have usurped the dominion of the earth; at length, retiring, these waters have left striking proofs of their presence, by the marine vestiges of shells, skeletons of sea-fish, &c. which the attentive observer meets with at every step in the bowels of those fertile countries we now inhabit. Subterraneous fires have opened to themselves the most frightful volcanoes, whose craters frequently issue destruction on every side. In short, the elements unloosed, have, at various times, disputed among themselves the empire of our globe; this exhibits evidence of the fact, by those vast heaps of wreck, those stupendous ruins spread over its surface. What, then, must have been the fears of mankind, who in those countries believed he beheld the entire of nature armed against his peace, and menacing with destruction his very abode? What must have been the inquietude of a people taken thus unprovided, who fancied they saw nature cruelly labouring to their annihilation? Who beheld a world ready to be dashed into atoms, the earth suddenly rent asunder, whose yawning chasm was the grave of large cities, whole provinces, entire nations? What ideas roust mortals, thus overwhelmed with terrour, form to themselves of the irresistible cause that could produce such extended effects? Without doubt they did not attribute these wide-spreading calamities to nature; they could not suspect she was the author, the accomplice of the confusion she herself experienced; they did not see that these tremendous revolutions, these overpowering disorders, were the

necessary result of her immutable laws, and that they contributed to the general order by which she subsists.[121]

It was under these astounding circumstances, that nations, not seeing on this mundane ball causes sufficiently powerful to operate the gigantic phenomena that filled their minds with dismay, carried their streaming and tremulous eyes towards heaven, where they supposed these unknown agents, whose unprovoked enmity destroyed their earthly felicity, could alone reside.

It was in the lap of ignorance, in the season of alarm and calamity, that mankind ever formed his first notions of the Divinity. From hence it is obvious that his ideas on this subject are to be suspected as false, and that they are always afflicting. Indeed, upon whatever part of our sphere we cast our eyes, whether it be upon the frozen climates of the north, upon the parching regions of the south, or under the more temperate zones, we every where behold the people when assailed by misfortunes, have either made to themselves national Gods, or else have adopted those which have been given them by their conquerors; before these beings, either of their own creation or adoption, they have tremblingly prostrated themselves in the hour of calamity. The idea of these powerful agents, was always associated with that of terrour; their name was never pronounced without recalling to man's mind either his own particular calamities or those of his fathers: man trembles at this day, because his progenitors have trembled thousands of years ago. The thought of Gods always awakens in man the most afflicting ideas: if he recurred to the source of his actual fears, to the commencement of those melancholy impressions that stamp themselves in his mind when his name is pronounced, he would find it in the deluges, m the revolutions, in those extended disasters, that have at various times destroyed large portions of the human race, and overwhelmed with dismay those miserable beings who escaped the destruction of the earth; these, in transmitting to posterity the tradition of such afflicting events, have also transmitted to him their fears, and those gloomy ideas which their bewildered imaginations, coupled with their barbarous ignorance of natural causes, had formed to them of the anger of their irritated Gods, to which their alarm falsely attributed these disasters.[122]

If the Gods of nations had their birth in the bosom of alarm, it was again in that of despair that each individual formed the unknown power that he made exclusively for himself. Ignorant of physical causes, unpractised in their mode of action, unaccustomed to their effects, whenever he experienced any serious misfortune, or any grievous sensation, he was at a loss how to account for it. The motion which in despite of himself was excited in his machine, his diseases, his troubles, his passions, his inquietude, the painful alterations his frame underwent without his being able to fathom the true causes, at length death, of which the aspect is so formidable to a being strongly attached to existence, were effects he looked upon as either supernatural, or else he conceived they were repugnant to his actual nature; he attributed them to some mighty cause, which maugre all his efforts, disposed of him at each moment. His imagination, thus rendered desperate by his endurance of evils which he found inevitable, formed to him those phantoms before whom he trembled from a

consciousness of his own weakness. It was then he endeavoured by prostration, by sacrifices, by prayers, to disarm the anger of these imaginary beings to which his trepidation, had given birth; whom he ignorantly imagined to be the cause of his misery, whom his fancy painted to him as endowed with the power of alleviating his sufferings: it was then, in the extremity of his grief, in the exarcerbation of his mind, weighed down with misfortune, that unhappy man fashioned the phantom God.

Man never judges of those objects of which he is ignorant but through the medium of those which come within his knowledge: thus man, taking himself for the model, ascribed will, intelligence, design, projects, passions; in a word, qualities analogous to his own, to all those unknown causes of which he experienced the action. As soon as a visible or supposed cause affects him in an agreeable manner, or in a mode favourable to his existence, he concludes it to be good, to be well intentioned towards him: on the contrary, he judges all those to be bad in their nature, and to have the intention of injuring him, which cause him many painful sensations. He attributes views, plans, a system of conduct like his own, to every thing which to his limited ideas appears of itself to produce connected effects, to act with regularity, to constantly operate in the same manner, that uniformly produces the same sensations in his own person. According to these notions, which he always borrows from himself, from his own peculiar mode of action, he either loves or fears those objects which have affected him: he in consequence approaches them with confidence or timidity; seeks after them or flies from them in proportion as the feelings they have excited are either pleasant or painful. He presently addresses them; he invokes their aid; prays to them for succour; conjures them to cease his afflictions; to forbear tormenting him; as he finds himself sensible to presents, pleased with submission, he tries to win them to his interests by humiliation, by sacrifices; he exercises towards them the hospitality he himself loves; he gives them an asylum; he builds them a dwelling; he furnishes them with all those things which he thinks will please them the most, because he himself places the highest value on them. These dispositions enable us to account for the formation of tutelary Gods, which every man makes to himself in savage and unpolished nations. Thus we perceive that weak mortals, regard as the arbiters of their fate, as the dispensers of good and evil, animals, stones, unformed inanimate substances, which they transform into Gods, whom they invest with intelligence, whom they clothe with desires, and to whom they give volition.

Another disposition which serves to deceive the savage man, which will equally deceive those whom reason shall not enlighten on these subjects, is the fortuitous concurrence of certain effects, with causes which have not produced them, or the co-existence of these effects with certain causes which have not the slightest connexion with them. Thus the savage attributes bounty or the will to render him service, to any object whether animate or inanimate, such as a stone of a certain form, a rock, a mountain, a tree, a serpent, an owl, &c., if every time he encounters these objects in a certain position, it should so happen that he is more than ordinarily successful in hunting, that he should take an unusual quantity of fish, that he should be victorious in war, or that he should compass any enterprise whatever, that

he may at that moment undertake. — The same savage will be quite as gratuitous in attaching malice or wickedness to either the same object in a different position, or any others in a given posture, which may have met his eyes on those days when he shall have suffered some grievous accident: incapable of reasoning he connects these effects with causes that are entirely due to physical causes, to necessary circumstances, over which neither himself nor his omens have the least controul: nevertheless, he finds it much easier to attribute them to these imaginary causes, he therefore *deifies* them, endows them with passions, gives them design, intelligence, will, and invests them with supernatural powers. The savage in this is never more than an infant that is angry with the object that displeases him, just like the dog who gnaws the stone by which he has been wounded, without recurring to the hand by which it was thrown.

Such is the foundation of man's faith in either happy or unhappy omens: devoid of experience, he looks upon them as warnings given him by his ridiculous Gods, to whom he attributes the faculties of sagacity and foresight, of which he is himself deficient. Ignorance, when involved in disaster, when immersed in trouble, believes a stone, a reptile, a bird, much better instructed than himself. The slender observation of the ignorant only serves to render him more superstitious; he sees certain birds announce by their flight, by their cries, certain changes in the weather, such as cold, heal, rain, storms; he beholds at certain periods vapours arise from the bottom of some particular caverns; there needs nothing further to impress upon him the belief, that these beings possess the knowledge of future events and enjoy the gifts of prophecy.

If by degrees experience and reflection arrive at undeceiving him with respect to the power, the intelligence, the virtues, actually residing in these objects; if he at least supposes them put in activity by some secret, some hidden cause, whose instruments they are, to this concealed agent he addresses himself; pays him his vows; implores his assistance; deprecates his wrath; seeks to propitiate him to his interests; is willing to soften his anger; and for this purpose he employs the same means of which he avails himself either to appease or gain over the beings of his own species.

Societies in their origin, seeing themselves frequently afflicted by nature, supposed that either the elements, or the concealed powers who regulated them possessed a will, views, wants, desires, similar to their own. From hence, the sacrifices imagined to nourish them; the libations poured out to them; the steams, the incense to gratify their olfactory nerves. They believed these elements or their irritated movers were to be appeased like irritated man, by prayers, by humiliation, by present? Their imagination was ransacked to discover the presents that would be most acceptable to these mute beings who did not make known their inclinations. Thus some brought the fruits of the earth, others offered sheaves of corn; some strewed flowers over their fanes; some decorated them with tire most costly jewels; some served them with meats; others sacrificed lambs, heifers, bulls. As they appeared to be almost always irritated against man, they stained their altars with human gore, and made oblations of young children. At length, such was their delirium, such the wildness of their imaginations,

that they believed it impossible to appease with oblations from the earth the supposed agents of nature, who therefore required the sacrifice of a God! It was presumed that an infinite being could not be reconciled to the human race but by an infinite victim.

The old men as having the most experience, were usually charged with the conduct of these peace-offerings.[123] These accompanied them with ceremonies, instituted rites, used precautions, adopted formalities, retraced to their fellow citizens the notions transmitted to them by their forefathers; collected the observations made by their ancestors; repeated the fables they had received. It is thus the sacerdotal order was established; thus that, public worship was established; by degrees each community formed a body of tenets to be observed by the citizens; these were transmitted from race to race.[124] Such were the unformed, the precarious elements of which rude nations every where availed themselves to compose their religions: they were always a system of conduct invented by imagination, conceived in ignorance, to render the unknown powers, to whom they believed nature was submitted, favourable to their views. Thus some irascible, at the same time placable being, was always chosen for the basis of the adopted religion; it was upon these puerile tenets, upon these absurd notions, that the priests founded their rights; established their authority: erected temples, raised altars, loaded them with wealth, rested their dogmas. In short, it was from such rude foundations that arose the structure of all religions; under which man trembled for thousands of years: and although these religions were originally invented by savages, they still have the power of regulating the fate of the most civilized nations. These systems, so ruinous in their principles, have been variously modified by the human mind, of which it is the essence to labour incessantly on unknown object:; it always commences by attaching to these a very first-rate importance, which it afterwards never dares coolly to examine.

Such was the fate of man's imagination in the successive ideas which he either formed to himself, or which he received upon the divinity. The first theology of man was grounded on fear, modelled by ignorance: either afflicted or benefited by the elements, he adored these elements themselves, and extended his reverence to every material, coarse object; he afterwards rendered his homage to the agents he supposed presiding over these elements; to powerful genii; to inferior genii; to heroes, or to men endowed with great qualities. By dint of reflection, he believed he simplified the thing in submitting the entire of nature to a single agent — to a sovereign intelligence — to a spirit — to a universal soul, which put this nature and its parts in motion. In recurring from cause to cause, man finished by losing sight of every thing, and in this obscurity, in this dark abyss, he placed his God, and formed new chimeras which will afflict him until a knowledge of natural causes undeceives him with regard to those phantoms he had always so stupidly adored.

If a faithful account was rendered of man's ideas upon the Divinity, he would be obliged to acknowledge, that the word *God* has only been used to express the concealed, remote, unknown causes of the effects he witnessed; he uses this term only when the spring of natural and known causes ceases to be visible: as soon as he loses the thread of these causes, or as soon as his mind can no longer follow the chain, he solves the difficulty, terminates his

research, by ascribing it to God; thus giving a vague definition to an unknown cause, at which either his idleness, or his limited knowledge, obliges him to stop. When, therefore, he ascribes to God the production of some phenomenon, of which his ignorance precludes him from unravelling the true cause, does he, in fact, do any thing more than substitute for the darkness of his own mind, a sound to which he has been accustomed to listen with reverential awe? Ignorance may be said to be the inheritance of the generality of men; these attribute to the Divinity not only those uncommon effects that burst upon their senses with an astounding force, but also the most simple, events, the causes of which are the most easy to be known to whoever shall be willing to meditate upon them.[125] In short, man has always respected those unknown causes, those surprising effects which his ignorance prevented him from fathoming.

It remains, then, to inquire, if man can reasonably flatter himself with obtaining a perfect knowledge of the power of nature;[126] of the properties of the beings she contains; of the effects which may result from their various combinations? Do we know why the magnet attracts iron? Are we better acquainted with the cause of polar attraction? Are we in a condition to explain the phenomena of light, electricity, elasticity? Do we understand the mechanism by which that modification of our brain, which we call volition, puts our arm or our legs into motion? Can we render to ourselves an account of the manner in which our eyes behold objects, in which our ears receive sounds, in which our mind conceives ideas? If then we are incapable of accounting for the most ordinary phenomena, which nature daily exhibits to us, by what chain of reasoning do we refuse to her the power of producing other effects equally incomprehensible to us? Shall we be more instructed, when every time we behold an effect of which we are not in a capacity to develop the cause, we may idly say, this effect is produced by the power, by the will of God? — that is to say, by an agent of which we have no knowledge whatever, and of which we are more ignorant than of natural causes. Does then, a sound, to which we cannot attach any fixed sense, suffice to explain problems? Can the word God signify any thing else but the impenetrable cause of those effects which we cannot explain?

When we shall be ingenuous with ourselves, we shall be obliged to agree that it was uniformly the ignorance in which our ancestors were involved, their want of knowledge of natural causes, their unenlightened ideas on the powers of nature, which gave birth to the Gods; that it is, again, the impossibility which the greater part of mankind find to withdraw themselves out of this ignorance, the difficulty they consequently find to form to themselves simple ideas of the formation of things, the labour that is required to discover the true sources of those events which they either admire or fear, that make them believe the idea of a God is necessary to enable them to render an account of those phenomena, the true cause of which they cannot discover. Here, without doubt, is the reason they treat all those as irrational who do not see the necessity of admitting an unknown agent, or some secret energy, which, for want of being acquainted with nature, they have placed out of herself.

The phenomena of nature necessarily breed various sentiments in man: some he thinks

favourable to him, some prejudicial; some excite his love, his admiration, his gratitude; others fill him with trouble, cause aversion, drive him to despair. According to the various sensations he experiences, he either loves or fears the causes to which he attributes the effects which product: in him these different passions: these sentiments are commensurate with the effects he experiences; his admiration is enhanced, his fears are augmented, in the same ratio as the phenomena which strike his senses are more or less extensive, more or less irresistible or interesting to him. Man necessarily makes himself the centre of nature; indeed he can only judge of things, as he is himself affected by them; he can only love that which he thinks favourable to his, being; he hates, he fears every thing which causes him to suffer: in short, as we have seen, he calls confusion every thing that deranges the economy of his machine, and he believes all is in order, as soon as he experiences nothing but what is suitable to his peculiar mode of existence. By a necessary consequence of these ideas, man firmly believes that the entire of nature was made for him alone; that it was only himself which she had in view in all her works; or rather that the powerful causes to which this nature was subordinate, had only for object man and his convenience, in all the effects which are produced in the universe.

If there existed on this earth other thinking beings besides man, they would fall exactly into similar prejudices with himself; it is a sentiment founded upon that predilection which each individual necessarily has for himself; a predilection that will subsist until reason, aided by experience, shall have rectified his errours.

Thus, whenever man is contented, whenever every thing is in order with respect to himself, he either admires or loves the cause to which he believes he is indebted for his welfare; when he becomes discontented with his mode of existence, he either fears or hates the cause which he supposes has produced these afflicting effects. But his welfare confounds itself with his existence; it ceases to make itself felt when it has become habitual and of long continuance; he then thinks it is inherent to his essence; he concludes from it that he is formed to be always happy; he finds it natural that every thing should concur to the maintenance of his being. It is by no means the same when he experiences a mode of existence that is displeasing to himself: the man who suffers is quite astonished at the change which has taken place in his machine; he judges it to be contrary to nature, because it is incommodious to his own particular nature; he imagines those events by which he is wounded, to be contrary to the order of things; he believes that nature is deranged every time she does not procure for him that mode of feeling which is suitable to his ideas; and he concludes from these suppositions that nature, or the agent who moves her, is irritated against him.

It is thus that man, almost insensible to good, feels evil in a very lively manner; the first he believes natural, the other he thinks opposed to nature. He is either ignorant, or forgets, that he constitutes pan of a whole, formed by the assemblage of substances, of which some are analogous, others heterogeneous; that the various beings of which nature is composed, are endowed with a variety of properties, by virtue of which they act diversely on the bodies who find themselves within the sphere of their action; he does not perceive that these beings,

destitute of goodness, devoid of malice, act only according to their respective essences and the laws their properties impose upon them, without being in a capacity to act otherwise than they do. It is, therefore, for want of being acquainted with these things, that he looks upon the author of nature, as the cause of those evils to which he is submitted, that he judges him to be wicked or exasperated against him.

The fact is, man believes that his welfare is a debt due to him from nature; that when he suffers evil she does him an injustice; fully persuaded that this nature was made solely for himself, he cannot conceive she would make him suffer, if she was not moved thereto by a power who is inimical to his happiness — who has reasons for afflicting and punishing him. From hence it will be obvious, that evil, much more than good, is the true motive of those researches which man has made concerning the Divinity — of those ideas which he has formed of himself — of the conduct he has held towards him. The admiration of the works of nature, or the acknowledgment of its goodness, would never alone have determined the human species to recur painfully by thought to the source of these things; familiarized at once with all those effects which are favourable to his existence, he does not by any means give himself the same trouble to seek the causes, that he does to discover those which disquiet him, or by which he is afflicted. Thus, in reflecting upon the Divinity, it was always upon the cause of his evils that man meditated; his meditations were fruitless, because the evils he experiences, as well as the good he partakes, are equally necessary effects of natural causes, to which his mind ought rather to have bent its force, than to have invented fictitious causes of which he never could form to himself any but false ideas, seeing that he always borrowed them from his own peculiar manner of existing, and feeling. Obstinately refusing to see any thing but himself, he never became acquainted with that universal nature of which he constitutes such a very feeble part.

The slightest reflection, however, would have been sufficient to undeceive him on these erroneous ideas. Every thing tends to prove that good and evil are modes of existence that depend upon causes by which a man is moved, and that a sensible being is obliged to experience them. In a nature composed of a multitude of beings infinitely varied, the shock occasioned by the collision of discordant matter must necessarily disturb the order, derange the mode of existence of those beings who have analogy with them: these act in every thing they do after certain laws; the good or evil, therefore, which man experiences, are necessary consequences of the qualities inherent to the beings, within whose sphere of action he is found. Our birth, which we call a benefit, is an effect as necessary as our death, which we contemplate as an injustice of fate: it is of the nature of all analogous beings to unite themselves to form a whole: it is of the nature of all compound beings to be destroyed, or to dissolve themselves; some maintain their union for a longer period than others, and some disperse very quickly. Every being in dissolving itself gives birth to new beings; these are destroyed in their turn, to execute eternally the immutable laws of a nature that only exists by the continual changes that all its parts undergo. Thus nature cannot be accused of either goodness or malice, since every thing that takes place in it is necessary — is produced by an

invariable system, to which every other being, as well as herself, is eternally subjected. The same igneous matter that in man is the principle of life, frequently becomes the principle of his destruction, either by the conflagration of a city, or the explosion of a volcano. The aqueous fluid that circulates through his machine, so essentially necessary to his actual existence, frequently becomes too abundant, and terminates him by suffocation, is the cause of those inundations which sometimes swallow up both the earth and its inhabitants. The air, without which he is not able to respire, is the cause of those hurricanes, of those tempests, which frequently render useless the labour of mortals. These elements are obliged to burst their bonds, when they are combined in a certain manner, and their necessary consequences are those ravages, those contagions, those famines, those diseases, those various scourges, against which man, with streaming eyes and violent emotions, vainly implores the aid of those powers who are deaf to his cries: his prayers are never granted but when the same necessity which afflicted him, the same immutable laws which overwhelmed him with trouble, replaces things in the order he finds suitable to his species: a relative order of things which was, is, and always will be, the only standard of his judgment.

Man, however, made no such simple reflections; he did not perceive that every thing in nature acted by invariable laws; he continued in contemplating the good of which he was partaker as a favour, and the evil he experienced, as a sign of anger in this nature, which he supposed to be animated by the same passions as himself; or at least that it was governed by a secret agent who obliged it to execute their will, that was sometimes favourable, sometimes inimical to the human species. It was to this supposed agent, with whom in the sunshine of his prosperity he was but little occupied, that in the bosom of his calamity he addressed his prayers; he thanked him, however, for his favours, fearing lest his ingratitude might further provoke his fury: thus when assailed by disaster, when afflicted with disease, he invoked him with fervour: he required him to change in his favour the mode of acting which was the very essence of beings; he was willing that to make the slightest evil that he experienced cease, that the eternal chain of things might be broken or arrested.

It was upon such ridiculous pretensions, that were founded those fervent prayers, which mortals, almost always discontented with their fate, and never in accord in their respective desires addressed to the Divinity. They were unceasingly prostrate before the imaginary power whom they judged had the right of commanding nature; — whom they supposed to have sufficient energy to divert her course; and whom they considered to possess the means to make her subservient to his particular views; thus each hoped by presents, by humiliation, to induce him to oblige this nature to satisfy the discordant desires of their race. The sick man, expiring in his bed, asks that the humours accumulated in his body, should in an instant lose those properties which render them injurious to his existence; that, by an act of his puissance, his God should renew or recreate the springs of a machine worn out by infirmities. The cultivator of a low swampy country, makes complaint of the abundance of rain with which the fields are inundated; whilst the inhabitant of the hill, raises his thanks for the favours he receives, and solicits a continuance of that which causes the despair of his

neighbour. In this, each is willing to have a God for himself, and asks according to his momentary caprices, to his fluctuating wants, that the invariable essence of things should be continually changed in his favour.

From this it must be obvious, that man every moment asks a *miracle* to be wrought in his support. It is not, therefore, at all surprising that he displayed such ready credulity, that he adopted with such facility the relation of the marvellous deeds which were universally announced to him as the acts of the power, or the effects of the benevolence of the Divinity, and as the most indubitable proof of his empire over nature, in the expectation, that if he could gain them over to his interest, this nature, which he found so sullen, so little disposed to lend herself to his views, would then be controuled in his own favour.[127]

By a necessary consequence of these ideas, nature was despoiled of all power; she was contemplated only as a passive instrument, who acted at the will, under the influence of the numerous, all-powerful agents to whom she was subordinate. It was thus for want of contemplating nature under her true point of view, that man has mistaken her entirely, that he believed her incapable of producing any thing by herself; that he ascribed the honour of all those productions, whether advantageous or disadvantageous to the human species, to fictitious powers, whom he always clothed with his own peculiar dispositions, only he aggrandized their force. In short it was upon the ruins of nature, that man erected the imaginary colossus of the Divinity.

If the ignorance of nature gave birth to the Gods, the knowledge of nature is calculated to destroy them. As soon as man becomes enlightened, his powers augment, his resources increase in a ratio with his knowledge; the sciences, the protecting arts, industrious application, furnish him assistance; experience encourages his progress, or procures for him the means of resisting the efforts of many causes, which cease to alarm him as soon as he obtains a correct knowledge of them. In a word, his terrours dissipate in proportion as his mind becomes enlightened. Man, when instructed, ceases to be superstitious.

Chapter XIX: Of Mythology, and Theology.

The elements of nature were, as we have shown, the first divinities of man; he has generally commenced with adoring material beings; each individual, as we have already said, and as may be still seen in savage nations, made to himself a particular God of some physical object, which he supposed to be the cause of those events in which he was himself interested; he never wandered to seek out of visible nature the source either of what happened to himself, or of those phenomena to winch he was a witness. As he every where saw only material effects, he attributed them to causes of the same genus; incapable in his infancy of those profound reveries, of those subtile speculations, which are the result of leisure, he did not imagine any cause distinguished from the objects that met his sight, nor of any essence totally different from every thing he beheld.

The observation of nature was the first study of those who had leisure to meditate: they could not avoid being struck with the phenomena of the visible world. The rising and setting of the

sun, the periodical return of the seasons, the variations of the atmosphere, the fertility and sterility of the earth, the advantages of irrigation, the damages caused by floods, the useful effects of fire, the terrible consequences of conflagration, were proper and suitable objects to occupy their thoughts. It was natural for them to believe that those beings they saw move of themselves, acted by their own peculiar energies; according as their influence over the inhabitants of the earth was either favourable or otherwise, they concluded them to have either the power to injure them, or the disposition to confer benefits. Those who first acquired the knowledge of gaining the ascendency over man, then savage, wandering, unpolished, or dispersed in woods, with but little attachment to the soil, of which he had not yet learned to reap the advantage, were always more practised observers — individuals more instructed in the ways of nature, than the people, or rather the scattered hordes, whom they found ignorant and destitute of experience. Their superior knowledge placed them in a capacity to render them services — to discover to them useful inventions, which attracted the confidence of the unhappy beings to whom they came to offer an assisting hand; savages who were naked, half famished, exposed to the injuries of the weather, and to the attacks of ferocious beasts, dispersed in caverns, scattered in forests, occupied with hunting, painfully labouring to procure themselves a very precarious subsistence, had not sufficient leisure to make discoveries calculated to facilitate their labour, or to render it less incessant. These discoveries are generally the fruit of society: isolated beings, detached families, hardly ever make any discoveries — scarcely ever think of making any. The savage is a being who lives in a perpetual state of infancy, who never reaches maturity unless some one comes to draw him out of his misery. At first repulsive, unsociable, intractable, he by degrees familiarizes himself with those who render him service; once gained by their kindness, he readily lends them his confidence; in the end he goes the length of sacrificing to them his liberty.

It was commonly from the bosom of civilized nations that have issued those personages who have carried sociability, agriculture, arts, laws, Gods, religious opinions, forms of worship, to those families or hordes as yet scattered, who were not formed into nations. These softened their manners — gathered them, together — taught them to reap the advantages of their own powers — to render each other reciprocal assistance — to satisfy their wants with greater facility. In thus rendering their existence more comfortable, they attracted their love, obtained their veneration, acquired the right of prescribing opinions to them, made them adopt such as they had either invented themselves, or else drawn up in the civilized countries from whence they came. History points out to us the most famous legislators as men, who, enriched with useful knowledge they had gleaned in the bosom of polished nations, carried to savages without industry and needing assistance, those arts, of which, until then, these rude people were ignorant: such were the Bacchus's, the Orpheus's, the Triptolemus's, the Moses's, the Numas, the Zamolixis's; in short, all those who first gave to nations their Gods — their, worship — the rudiments of agriculture, of science, of theology, of jurisprudence, of mysteries, &c. It will perhaps be inquired, if those nations which at the present day we see assembled, were all originally dispersed? We reply, that this dispersion may have been

produced at. various times, by those terrible revolutions, of which it has before been remarked our globe has more than once been the theatre, in times so remote that history has not been able to transmit to us the detail. Perhaps the approach of more than one comet may have produced on our earth several universal ravages, which have at each time annihilated the greater portion of the human species. Those who were able to escape from the ruin of the world, filled with consternation, plunged in misery, were but little conditioned to preserve to their posterity a knowledge, effaced by those misfortunes of which they had been both the victims and the witnesses: overwhelmed with dismay, trembling with fear, they were not able to hand down the history of their frightful adventures, except by obscure traditions; much less to transmit to us the opinions, the systems, the arts, the sciences, anterior to these revolutions of our sphere. There have been perhaps men upon the earth from all eternity; but at different periods they may have been nearly annihilated, together with their monuments, their sciences, and their arts; those who outlived these periodical revolutions, each time formed a new race of men, who by dint of time, labour, and experience, have by degrees withdrawn from oblivion the inventions of the primitive races. It is, perhaps, to these periodical revolutions of the human species, that is to be ascribed the profound ignorance in which we see man plunged upon those objects that are the most interesting to him. This is, perhaps, the true source of the imperfection of his knowledge — of the vices of his political and religious institutions over which terrour has always presided; here, in all probability, is the cause of that puerile inexperience, of those jejune prejudices, which every where keep man in a state of infancy, and which render him so little capable of either listening to reason or of consulting truth. To judge by the slowness of his progress, by the feebleness of his advance, in a number of respects, we should be inclined to say, the human race has either just quitted its cradle, or that he was never destined to attain the age of virility or of reason.[128]

However it may be with these conjectures, whether the human race may always have existed upon the earth, or whether it may have been a recent production of nature,[129] it is extremely easy to recur to the origin of many existing nations: we shall find them always in the savage state; that is to say, composed of wandering hordes; these were collected together, at the voice of some missionary or legislator, from whom they received benefits, who gave them Gods, opinions, and laws. These personages, of whom the people, newly congregated, readily acknowledged the superiority, fixed the national Gods, leaving to each individual those which he had formed to himself, according to his own peculiar ideas, or else substituting others brought from those regions from whence they themselves had emigrated.

The better to imprint their lessons on the minds of their new subjects, these men became the guides, the priests, the sovereigns, the masters, of these infant societies; they spoke to the imagination of their auditors. — Poetry, by its images, its fictions, its numbers, its rhyme, its harmony, conspired to please their fancy, and to render permanent the impressions it made: thus, the entire of nature, as well as all its parts, was personified; at its voice, trees, stones, rocks, earth, air, fire, water, took intelligence, held conversation with man, and with themselves; the elements were deified. — The sky, which, according to the then philosophy,

was an arched concave, spreading over the earth, which was supposed to be a level plain, was itself made a God; Time, under the name of Saturn, was pictured as the son of heaven;[130] the igneous matter, the ethereal electric fluid, that invisible fire which vivifies nature, that penetrates all beings, that fetilizes the earth, which is the great principle of motion, the source of heat, was deified under the name of Jupiter: his combination with every being in nature was expressed by his metamorphoses — by the frequent adulteries imputed to him. He was armed with thunder, to indicate he produced meteors, to typify the electric fluid that is called lightning. He married the winds, which were designated under the name of Juno, therefore called the Goddess of the Winds; their nuptials were celebrated with great solemnity.[131] Thus, following the same fictions, the sun, that beneficent star which has such a marked influence over the earth, became an Osiris, a Belus, a Mithras, an Adonis, an Apollo. Nature, rendered sorrowful by his periodical absence, was an Isis, an Astarte, a Venus, a Cybele.[132]

In short, every thing was personified: the sea was under the empire of Neptune; fire was adored by the Egyptians under the name of Serapis; by the Persians, under that of Ormus or Oromaze; and by the Romans, under that of Vesta and Vulcan.

Such was the origin of mythology: it may be said to be the daughter of natural philosophy, embellished by poetry, and only destined to describe nature and its parts. If antiquity is consulted, it will be perceived without much trouble, that those famous sages, those legislators, those priests, those conquerors, who were the instructors of infant nations, themselves adored active nature, or the great whole considered relatively to its different operations or qualities; that this was what caused the ignorant savages whom they had gathered together to adore.[133] It was the great whole they deified; it was its various parts which they made their inferior gods; it was from the necessity of her laws they made fate. Allegory masked its mode of action: it was at length parts of this great whole that idolatry represented by statues and symbols.[134]

To complete the proofs of what has been said; to show distinctly that it was the great whole, the universe, the nature of things, which was the real object of the worship of Pagan antiquity, we shall here give the hymn of Orpheus addressed to the God Pan: —

"O Pan! I invoke thee, O powerful God! O universal nature! the heavens, the sea, the earth, who nourish all, and the eternal fire, because these are thy members, O all powerful Pan," &c. Nothing can be more suitable to confirm these ideas, than the ingenious explanation which is given of the fable of Pan, as well as of the figure under which he is represented. It is said. "Pan, according to the signification of his name, is the emblem by which the ancients have designated the great assemblage of things: he represents the universe; and, in the mind of the wisest philosophers of antiquity, he passed for the greatest and most ancient of the Gods. The features under which he is delineated form the portrait of nature, and of the savage state in which she was found in the beginning. The spotted skin of the leopard, which serves him for a mantle, represented the heavens filled with stars and constellations. His person was compounded of parts, some of which were suitable to a reasonable animal, that is to say, to man; and others to the animal destitute of reason, such as the goat. It is thus," says he, "that

the universe is composed of an intelligence that governs the whole, and of the prolific, fruitful elements of fire, water, earth, air. Pan, loved to drink and to follow the nymphs; this announces the occasion nature has for humidity in all her productions, and that this God, like nature, is strongly inclined to propagation. According to the Egyptians, and the most ancient Grecian philosophers, Pan had neither father nor mother; he came out of Demogorgon at the same moment with the Destinies, his fatal sisters; a fine method of expressing that the universe was the work of an unknown power, and that it was formed after the invariable relations, the eternal laws of necessity; but his most significant symbol, that most suitable to express the harmony of the universe, is his mysterious pipe, composed of seven unequal tubes, but calculated to produce the nicest and most perfect concord. The orbs which compose the seven planets of our solar system, are of different diameters; being bodies of unequal mass, they describe their revolutions round the sun in various periods; nevertheless it is from the order of their motion that results the harmony of the spheres." &c.[135]

Here then is the great macrocosm, the mighty whole, the assemblage of things, adored and deified by the philosophers of antiquity, whilst the uninformed stopped at the emblem under which this nature was depicted, at the symbols under which its various parts, its numerous functions were personified; his narrow mind, his barbarous ignorance, never permitted him to mount higher; they alone were deemed worthy of being initiated into the mysteries, who knew the realities masked under these emblems.

Indeed, the first institutors of nations, and their immediate successors in authority, only spoke to the people by fables, allegories, enigmas, of which they reserved to themselves the right of giving an explanation. This mysterious tone they considered necessary, whether it were to mask their own ignorance, or whether it were to preserve their power over the uninformed, who for the most part only respect that which is above their comprehension. Their explications were always dictated either by interest, by a delirious imagination, or by imposture; thus from age to age, they did no more than render nature and its parts, which they had originally depicted, more unknown, until they completely lost sight of the primitive ideas; these were replaced by a. multitude of fictitious personages, under whose features this nature had primarily been represented to them. The people adored these personages, without penetrating into the true sense of the emblematical fables recounted to them. These ideal beings, with material figures, in whom they believed there resided a mysterious virtue, a divine power, were the objects of their worship, of their fears, of their hopes. The wonderful, the incredible actions ascribed to these fancied divinities were an inexhaustible fund of admiration, which gave perpetual play to the fancy; which delighted not only the people of those days, but even the children of latter ages. Thus were transmitted from age to age those marvellous accounts, which, although necessary to the existence of the ministers of the Gods, did nothing more than confirm the blindness of the ignorant: these never supposed that it was nature, its various operations, the passions of man and his divers faculties, that lay buried under a heap of allegories;[136] they had no eyes but for these emblematical persons, under which nature was masked: they attributed to their influence the good, to their displeasure the

evil which they experienced: they entered into every kind of folly, into the most delirious acts of madness, to render them propitious to their views; thus, for want of being acquainted with the reality of things, their worship frequently degenerated into the most cruel extravagance, into the most ridiculous folly.

Thus it is obvious, that every thing proves nature and its various parts to have every where been the first divinities of man. Natural philosophers studied them either superficially or profoundly, explained some of their properties; detailed some of their modes of action. Poets painted them to the imagination of mortals, imbodied them, and furnished them with reasoning faculties. The statuary executed the ideas of the poets. The priests decorated these Gods with a thousand marvellous qualities — with the most terrible passions — with the most inconceivable attributes. The people adored them; prostrated themselves before these Gods, who were neither susceptible of love or hatred, goodness, or malice; and they became persecuting malevolent, cruel, unjust, in order to render themselves acceptable to powers generally described to them under the most odious features.

By dint of reasoning upon nature thus decorated, or rather disfigured, subsequent speculators no longer recollected the source from whence their predecessors had drawn their Gods, and the fantastic ornaments with which they had embellished them. Natural philosophers and poets were transformed by leisure into metaphysicians and theologians; tired with contemplating what they could have understood, they believed they had made an important discovery by subtilly distinguishing nature from herself — from her own peculiar energies — from her faculty of action. By degrees they made an incomprehensible being of this energy, which as before they personified: this they called the mover of nature, or God. This abstract, metaphysical being, or rather, word, became the subject of their continual contemplation;[137] they looked upon it not only as a real being, but also as the most important of beings; and by thus dreaming, nature quite disappeared; she was despoiled of her rights; she was considered as nothing more than an unwieldy mass, destitute of power, devoid of energy, and as a heap of ignoble matter purely passive, who, incapable of acting by herself, was not competent to any of the operations they beheld, without the direct, the immediate agency of the moving power they had associated with her. Thus man ever preferred an unknown power, to that of which he was enabled to have some knowledge if he had only deigned to consult his experience; but he presently ceases to respect that which he understands, and to estimate those objects which are familiar to him: he figures to himself something marvellous in every thing he does not comprehend; his mind, above all, labours to seize upon that which appears to escape his consideration; and, in default of experience, he no longer consults any thing but his imagination, which feeds him with chimeras. In consequence, those speculators who have subtilly distinguished nature from her own powers, have successively laboured to clothe the powers thus separated with a thousand incomprehensible qualities: as they did not see this being, which is only a mode, they made it a spirit — an intelligence — an incorporeal being; that is to say, of a substance totally different from every thing of which we have a knowledge. They never perceived that all their

inventions, that all the words which they imagined, only served to mask their real ignorance; and that all their pretended science was limited to saying, in what manner nature acted, by a thousand subterfuges which they themselves found it impossible to comprehend. Man always deceives himself for want of studying nature; he leads himself astray, every time he is disposed to go out of it; he is always quickly necessitated to return or to substitute words which he does not himself understand for things which he would much better comprehend if he was willing to look at them without prejudice.

Can a theologian ingenuously believe himself more enlightened, for having substituted the vague words, *spirit, incorporeal substance, Divinity, &c.* to the more intelligible terms nature, matter, mobility, necessity? However this may be, these obscure words once imagined, it was necessary to attach ideas to them; in doing this, he has not been able to draw them from any other source than the beings of this despised nature, which are ever the only beings of which he is enabled to have any knowledge. Man, consequently, drew them up in himself; his own mind served for the model of the universal mind of which indeed according to some it only formed a portion; his own mind was the standard of the mind that regulated nature; his own passions, his own desires, were the prototypes of those by which he actuated this being; his own intelligence was that from which he formed that of the supposed mover of nature; that which was suitable to himself, he called the order of nature; this pretended order was the scale by which he measured the wisdom of this being; how, those qualities which he calls perfections in himself, were the archetypes, in miniature, of the Divine perfections. It was thus, that in despite of all their efforts, the theologians were, and always will be true Anthropomorphites. Indeed, it is very difficult, if not impossible to prevent man from making himself the sole model of his divinity.[138] Indeed, man sees in his God nothing but a man. Let him subtilize as lie will, let him extend his own powers as he may, let him swell his own perfections to the utmost, he will have done nothing more than make a gigantic, exaggerated man, whom he will render illusory by dint of heaping together incompatible qualities. He will never see in God, but a being of the human species, in whom he will strive to aggrandize the proportions, until he has formed a being totally inconceivable. It is according to these dispositions that he attributes intelligence, wisdom, goodness, justice, science, power, to the Divinity, because he is himself intelligent; because he has the idea of wisdom in some beings of his own species; because he loves to find in them ideas favourable to himself: because he esteems those who display equity; because he has a knowledge, which he holds more extensive in some individuals than himself; in short, because he enjoys certain faculties which depend on his own organization. He presently extends or exaggerates all these qualities; the sight of the phenomena, of nature, which he feels he is himself incapable of either producing or imitating, obliges him to make this difference between his God and himself; but he knows not at what point to stop; he fears lest he should deceive himself if he should see any limits to the qualities he assigns; the word infinite, therefore, is the abstract, the vague term which he uses to characterize them. He says that his power is infinite, which signifies that when he beholds those stupendous effects which nature produces, he has no

conception at what point his power can rest; that his goodness, his wisdom, his knowledge are infinite: this announces that he is ignorant how far these perfections may be carried in a being whose power so much surpasses his own. He says that his God is eternal, that is, of infinite duration, because he is not capable of conceiving he could have had a beginning or can ever cease to be, and this he considers a defect in those transitory beings of whom he beholds the dissolution, whom he sees are subjected to death. He presumes the cause of those effects to which he is a witness, is immutable, permanent, not subjected to change like all the evanescent beings whom he knows are submitted to dissolution, to destruction, to change of form. This pretended mover of nature being always invisible to man, his mode of action being impenetrable, he believes that, like the concealed principle which animates his own body, this God is the moving power of the universe. Thus when by dint of subtilizing, he has arrived at believing the principle by which his body is moved is a spiritual, immaterial substance, he makes his God spiritual or immaterial in like manner: he makes it immense, although without extent; immoveable, although capable of moving nature: immutable, although he supposes him to be the author of all the changes operated in the universe.

The idea of the unity of God, wag a consequence of the opinion that this God was soul of the universe; however it was only the tardy fruit of human meditation.[139] The sight of those opposite, frequently contradictory effects, which man saw take place in the world, had a tendency to persuade him. there must be a number of distinct powers or causes independent of each other. He was unable to conceive that the various phenomena he beheld, sprung from a single, from a unique cause; he therefore admitted many causes or Gods, acting upon different principles; some of which he considered friendly, others as inimical to his race. Such is the origin of that doctrine, so ancient, so universal, which supposed two principles in nature, or two powers of opposite interest, who were perpetually at war with each other; by the assistance of this he explained that constant mixture of good and evil, that blending of prosperity with misfortune, in a word, those eternal vicissitudes to which in this world the human being is subjected. This is the source of those combats which all antiquity has supposed to exist between good and wicked Gods, between an Osiris and a Typhceus; between an Orosmadis and an Arimanis; between a Jupiter and the Titanes; between a Jehovah and a Satan. In these rencounters man for his own peculiar interest always gave the palm of victory to the beneficent Deity; this, according to all the traditions handed down, ever remained in possession of the field of battle; it was evidently for the benefit of mankind that the good God should prevail over the wicked.

Even when man acknowledged only one God, he always supposed the different departments of nature were confided to powers subordinate to his supreme orders, under whom the sovereign of the Gods discharged his care in the administration of the world. — These subaltern Gods were prodigiously multiplied; each man, each town, each country, had their local, their tutelary Gods; every event, whether fortunate or unfortunate, had a divine cause, and was the consequence of a sovereign decree; each natural effect, every operation of nature, each passion, depended upon a Divinity, which theological imagination, disposed to

see Gods every where, and always mistaking nature, either embellished or disfigured. Poetry tuned its harmonious lays on these occasions, exaggerated the details, animated its pictures; credulous ignorance received the portraits with eagerness, and heard the doctrines with submission.

Such is the origin of Polytheism: such are the foundations, such the titles of the hierarchy, which man established between himself and the Gods, because he felt he was incapable of immediately addressing himself to the incomprehensible being whom he had acknowledged for the only sovereign of nature, without even having any distinct idea on the subject. Such is the true genealogy of those inferior Gods whom the uninformed place as a proportional means between themselves and the first of all other causes. In consequence, among the Greeks and the Romans, we see the deities divided into two classes: the one were called *great Gods*,[140] who formed a kind of aristocratic order distinguished from the minor Gods, or from the multitude of ethnic divinities. Nevertheless, the first rank of these Pagan divinities, like the latter, were submitted to Fate, that is, to destiny, which obviously is nothing more than nature acting by immutable, rigorous, and necessary laws; this destiny was looked upon as the God of Gods; it is evident that this was nothing more than necessity personified, and that therefore it was a weakness in the heathens to fatigue with their sacrifices, to solicit with their prayers, those Divinities whom they themselves believed were submitted to the decrees of an inexorable destiny, of which it was never possible for them to alter the mandates. But man ceases always to reason whenever his theological notions are brought into question.

What has been already said, serves to show the common source of that multitude of intermediate powers, subordinate to the Gods, but superior to man, with which he filled the universe:[141] they were venerated under the names of nymphs, demi-gods, angels, demons, good and evil genii, spirits, heroes, saints, &c. These constitute different classes of intermediate divinities, who became either the foundation of their hopes, the object of their fears, the means of consolation, or the source of dread to those very mortals who only invented them when they found it impossible to form to themselves distinct, perspicuous ideas of the incomprehensible Being who governed the world in chief, or when they despaired of being able to hold communication with him directly.

By dint of meditation and reflection some, who gave the subject more consideration than others, reduced the whole to one all-powerful Divinity, whose power and wisdom sufficed to govern it. This God was looked upon as a monarch jealous of nature. They persuaded themselves that to give rivals and associates to the monarch to whom all homage was due would offend him — that he could not bear a division of empire — that infinite power and unlimited wisdom had no occasion for a division of power nor for any assistance. Thus some would-be-thought-profound- thinkers have admitted one God, and in doing so have flattered themselves with having achieved a most important discovery. And yet, they must at once have been most sadly perplexed by the contradictory actions of this *one* God; so much so that they were obliged to heap on him the most incompatible and extravagant qualities to account for those contradictory effects which so palpably and clearly gave the lie to some of the

attributes they assigned to him. In supposing a God, the author of every thing, man is obliged to attribute to him unlimited goodness, wisdom, and power, agreeable to the kindness, to the order he fancied he saw in the universe, and according to the wonderful effects he witnessed; but, on the other hand, how could he avoid attributing to this God malice, improvidence, and caprice, seeing the frequent disorders and numberless evils to which the human race is so often liable? How can man avoid taxing him with improvidence, seeing that he is continually employed in destroying the work of his own hands? How is it possible not to suspect his impotence, seeing the perpetual non-performance of those projects of which he is supposed to be the contriver?

To solve these difficulties, man created enemies to the Divinity, who although subordinate to the supreme God, were nevertheless competent to disturb his empire, to frustrate his views; he had been made a king, and adversaries, however impotent, were found willing to dispute his diadem. Such is the origin of the fable of the Titanes, or of the *rebellious angels*, whose presumption caused them to be plunged into the abyss of misery — who were changed into *demons*, or into evil genii: these had no other functions, than to render abortive the projects of the Almighty, and to seduce, to raise to rebellion, those who were his subjects.[142]

In consequence of this ridiculous fable the monarch of nature was represented as perpetually in a scuffle with the enemies he had himself created; notwithstanding his infinite power, either he would not or could not totally subdue them; he was in a continual state of hostility, rewarding those who obeyed his laws, and punishing those who had the misfortune to enter into the conspiracies of the enemies of his glory. As a consequence of these ideas, borrowed from the conduct of earthly monarchs who are almost always in a state of war, some men claimed to be the ministers of God: they made him speak; they unveiled his concealed intentions, and denounced the violation of his laws as the most horrible crime: the ignorant multitude received these without examination; they did not perceive that it was man and not a God who thus spoke to them; they did not reflect that it was impossible for weak creatures to act contrary to the will of a God whom they supposed to be the creator of all beings, and therefore who could have no enemies in nature but those he himself had created. It was pretended that man, spite of his natural dependance and the infinite power of his God, was able to offend him, was capable of thwarting him, of declaring war against him, of overthrowing his designs, and of disturbing the order he had established. This God, no doubt, to make a parade of his power, was supposed to have created enemies against himself, so that he might have the pleasure of fighting them, although he is not willing either to destroy them or to change their bad dispositions. In fine, it was believed that he had granted to his rebellious enemies, as well as to all mankind, the liberty of violating his commands, of annihilating his projects, of kindling his wrath, and of arresting his goodness. Hence, all the benefits of this life were considered as rewards, and its evils as merited punishments. In fact, the system of man's free will seems to have been invented only to enable him to sin against God, and to acquit this last of the evil he brings upon man for exercising the fatal liberty given him.

These ridiculous and contradictory notions served nevertheless for the basis of all the superstitions of the world, believing that they thereby accounted for the origin of evil and the cause of man's misery. And yet man could not but see that he frequently suffered or earth without having committed any crime, without any known transgression to provoke the anger of his God; he perceived that even those who complied in the most faithful manner with his pretended orders were often involved in the same ruin with the boldest violator of his laws. In the habit of bending to power, to tremble before his terrestrial sovereign, to whom he allowed the privilege of being iniquitous, never disputing his titles, nor ever criticising the conduct of those who had the power in their hands, man dared still less to examine into the conduct of his God, or to accuse him of motiveless cruelty. Besides, the ministers, the celestial monarch invented means of justifying him, and of making the cause of those evils, or of those punishments which men experience fall upon themselves; in consequence of the liberty which they pretended was given to creatures, they supposed that man had sin, that his nature was perverted, that the whole human race carried with it the punishment incurred by the faults of his ancestors, which their implacable monarch still avenged upon their innocent posterity. Men found this vengeance perfectly legitimate, because according to the most disgraceful prejudices they proportioned the punishments much more to the power and dignity of the offended, than to the magnitude or reality of the offence. In consequence of this principle they thought that a God had an indubitable right to avenge, without proportion and without end, the outrages committed against his divine majesty. In a word, the theological mind tortured itself to find men culpable, and to exculpate the Divinity from the evils which nature made the former necessarily experience. Man invented a thousand fables to give a reason for the mode in which evil entered into this world; and the vengeance of heaven always appeared to have sufficient motives, because he believed that crimes committed against a being infinitely great and powerful ought to be infinitely punished.

Moreover, man saw that the earthly powers, even when they committed the most barefaced injustice, never suffered him to tax them with being unjust, to entertain a doubt of their wisdom, to murmur at their conduct. He was not going then to accuse of injustice the despot of the universe, to doubt his rights, or to complain of his rigour: he believed that God could commit every thing against the feeble work of his hands, that he owed nothing to his creatures, that he had a right to exercise over them an absolute and unlimited dominion. It is thus that the tyrants of the earth act; and their arbitrary conduct serves for the model of that which they accord to the Divinity: it was upon their absurd and unreasonable mode of governing, that they made a peculiar jurisprudence for God. — Hence we see that the most wicked of men have served as a model for God, and that the most unjust governments were made the model of his divine administration. In despite of his cruelty and his unreasonableness, man never ceases to say, that he is most just and full of wisdom.

Men, in all countries, have paid adoration to fantastical, unjust, sanguinary, implacable Gods, whose rights they have never dared to examine. — These Gods were every where cruel, dissolute, and partial; they resembled those unbridled tyrants who riot with impunity in the

misery of their subjects, who are too weak, or too much hoodwinked to resist them, or to withdraw themselves from under that yoke with which they are overwhelmed. It is a God of this hideous character which they make us adore, even at the present day; the God of the Christians, like those of the Greeks and Romans, punishes us in this world, and will punish us in another, for those faults of which the nature he hath given us has rendered us susceptible. Like a monarch, inebriated with his authority, he makes a vain parade of his power, and appears only to be occupied with the puerile pleasure of showing that he is master, and that he is not subjected to any law. He punishes us for being ignorant of his inconceivable essence and his obscure will. He punishes us for the transgressions of our fathers; his despotic caprice decides upon our eternal destiny; it is according to his fatal decrees, that we become, in despite of ourselves, either his friends or his enemies: he makes us free only that he may have the barbarous pleasure of chastising us for those necessary abuses which our passions or our errours cause us to make of our liberty. In short, theology shows us, in all ages, mortals punished for inevitable and necessary faults, and as the unfortunate playthings of a tyrannical and wicked God.[143]

It was upon these unreasonable notions that the theologians throughout the whole earth, founded the worship which man ought to render to the Divinity, who, without being attached to them, had the right of binding them to himself: his supreme power dispensed him from all duty towards his creatures; and they obstinately persisted in looking upon themselves as culpable every time they experienced calamities. Do not let us then be at all astonished if the religious man was in continual fears; the idea of God always recalled to him that of a pitiless tyrant, who sported with the miseries of his subjects and these, even without knowing it, could, at each moment, incur his displeasure; yet they never dared tax him with injustice, because they believed that justice was not made to regulate the actions of an all-powerful monarch, whose elevated rank placed him infinitely above the human species, although they had imagined, that he had formed the universe entirely for man.

It is then for want of considering good and evil as effects equally necessary; it is for want of attributing them to their true cause, that men have created to themselves fictitious causes, and malicious divinities, respecting whom nothing is able to undeceive them. — In considering nature they however would have seen that physical evil is a necessary consequence of the particular properties of some beings; they would have acknowledged that plagues, contagions, diseases, are due to physical causes and particular circumstances — to combinations which, although extremely natural, are fatal to their species; and they would have sought in nature herself the remedies suitable to diminish or cause those under which they suffer to cease. They would have seen in like manner that moral evil was only a necessary consequence of their bad institutions; that it was not to the God of heaven, but to the injustice of the princes of the earth to which those wars, that poverty, those famines, those reverses, those calamities, those vices, and those crimes under which they groan so frequently, were to be ascribed. Thus to throw aside these evils they should not have uselessly extended their trembling hands towards phantoms incapable of relieving them, and

who were not the authors of their sorrows; they should have sought in a more rational administration, in more equitable laws, in more reasonable institutions, the remedies for these misfortunes which they falsely attributed to the vengeance of a God, who is painted to them under the character of a tyrant, at the same time that they are defended from entertaining a doubt of his justice and his goodness.

Indeed priests never cease repeating that their God is infinitely good; that he only wishes the good of his creatures; that he has made every thing only for them: and in despite of these assurances, so flattering, the idea of his wickedness will necessarily be the strongest; it is much more likely to fix the attention of mortals than that of his goodness; this gloomy idea is always the first that presents itself to the human mind, whenever it is occupied with the Divinity. The idea of evil necessarily makes a much more lively impression upon man than that of good; in consequence, the beneficent God will always be eclipsed by the dreadful God. Thus, whether they admit a plurality of Gods of opposite interests, whether they acknowledge only one monarch in the universe, the sentiment of tear will necessarily prevail over love; they will only adore the good God that they may prevent him from exercising his caprice, his phantasms, his malice; it is always inquietude and terrour that throws man at his feet; it is his rigour and his severity which they seek to disarm. In short, although they every where assure us that the Divinity is full of compassion, of clemency, and of goodness, ft is always a malicious genius, a capricious master, a formidable demon, to whom every where they render servile homage, and a worship dictated by fear.

These dispositions have nothing in them that ought to surprise us; we can accord with sincerity our confidence and our love only to those in whom we find a permanent will to render us service; as soon as we have reason to suspect in them the will, the power, or the right to injure us, their idea afflicts us, we fear them, we mistrust them, and we take precautions against them; we hate them from the bottom of our hearts, even without daring to avow our sentiments. If the Divinity must be looked upon as the common source of the good and evil which happens in this world; if he has the will sometimes to render men happy, and sometimes to plunge them in misery, or punish them with rigour, men must necessarily dread his caprice or his severity, and be much more occupied with these, which they see him resolved upon so frequently, than with his goodness. Thus the idea of their celestial monarch must always make man uneasy; the severity of his judgments must cause him to tremble much oftener than his goodness is able to console or encourage him.

If we pay attention to this truth, we shall feel why all the nations of the earth have trembled before their Gods and have rendered them the most fantastical, irrational, mournful and cruel worship; they have served them as they would despots but little in accord with themselves, knowing no other rule than their fantasies, sometimes favourable, and more frequently prejudicial to their subjects; in short, like inconstant masters, who are less amiable by their kindness, than dreadful by their punishments, by their malice, and by those rigours which they still never dared to find unjust or excessive. Here is the reason why we see the adorers of a God, whom they unceasingly show to mortals as the model of goodness, of equity, and

every perfection, deliver themselves up to the most cruel extravagances against themselves, with a view of punishing themselves, and of preventing the celestial vengeance, and at the same time commit the most hideous crimes against others, when they believe that by so doing they can disarm the anger, appease the justice, and recall the clemency of their God. All the religious systems of men, their sacrifices, their prayers, their customs and their ceremonies have never had for object any thing else than to avert the fury of the Divinity, prevent his caprice, and excite in him those sentiments of goodness, from which they see him deviate every instant. All the efforts, all the subtilties of theology have never had any other end than to reconcile in the sovereign of nature those discordant ideas which it has itself given birth to in the minds of mortals. We might justly define this end the art of composing chimeras, by combining together qualities which it is impossible to reconcile with each other.

End of Volume First.

Notes

1. A person by the name of Robinet, wrote a work of a similar tendency, called *De la Nature*, which should not be confounded with that of Baron d'Holbach.

2. Vide R. A. Davenport's *Dictionary of Biography*, Boston edition, page 324, Article, Holbach. Perhaps it may be well to add that he was born in 1723, in Heidesheim, Germany, though he was educated at Paris, where he spent the greatest part of his life. He was a distinguished member of many European academies, and peculiarly conversant with mineralogy. He died in 1789.

3. Vide *A Discourse of Natural Theology*, by Henry Lord Brougham, F.R.S., &c. Philadelphia: Carey, Lea, and Blanchard. 1835. Pages 146 and 147.

4. It is impossible to peruse the ancient and modern theological works without feeling disgusted at the contemptible invention of those gods which have been made objects of terrour or love to mankind. To begin with the inhabitants of India and Egypt, of Greece and Rome, what littleness and foolery in their worship — what rascality and infamy in their priests! Are our own any better? No! Cicero said, that two Augurs could not look at each other without laughing; but he little thought that a time would come when a set of *mean wretches*, *Des misérables*. assuming the title of *Reverend*, would endeavour to persuade their fellow men that they represented the Divinity on earth!

5. This truth, which is still denied by many metaphysicians, has been conclusively established by the celebrated Toland, in a work which appeared in the beginning of the eighteenth century, entitled *Letters to Serena.* Those who can procure this scarce work will do well to refer to it, and their doubts on the subject, if they have any, will be removed.

6. Actioni aequalis et contraria est reactio. *V. Bilfinger, de Deo, Anima et Mundo.* §ccxviii. page 241. Upon which the Commentator adds, — Reactio dicitur actio patientis in agens, seu corporis in quod agitur actio in illud quod in ipsum agit. Nulla autem datur in corporibus actio sine reactione, dum enim corpus ad motum sollicitatur, resistit motui, atque hâc ipsâ resistentiâ reagit in agens. Nisus se exerens adversus nisum agentis, seu vis illa corporis, quatenus resistit, internum resistentiae principium, vocatur vis inertiae, seu passiva. Ergo corpus reagit vi inertiae. Vis igitur inertiae et vis motrix in corporibus una eademque est vis, diverso tamen modo se exerens. Vis autem inertiae consistit in nisi adversus nisum agentis se exerente, &c, *ibidem.*

7. Natural philosophers, and Newton himself, have considered the cause of *gravitation* to be inexplicable; yet it appears that it may be deduced from the motion of matter by which bodies are diversely determined. Gravitation is only a mode of moving — a tendency towards a centre. But, to speak correctly, all motion is relative *gravitation:* that which fails relatively to us, ascends with relation to other bodies. Hence it follows, that every motion in the universe is the effect of *gravitation;* for, in the universe, there is neither *up* nor *down*, nor positive centre. It appears that the weight of bodies depend on the configuration, both exterior and interior, which gives them that motion called *gravitation.* A ball of lead being spherical, falls quickly; but this ball being reduced into very thin plates, will be sustained for a longer time in the air; and the action of fire will cause this lead to rise in the atmosphere. Here the same lead, variously modified, will act after modes entirely different.

8. See the Microscopical Observations of Mr. Needham, which fully confirm the above statement of the author.

9 In fact, the human mind is not adequate to conceive a moment when all was nothing, or when all shall have passed away; even admitting this to be a truth, it is no truth for us, because by the very nature of our organization we cannot admit positions as facts, of which no evidence can be adduced that has relation to our senses: we may, indeed, consent to believe it, because others say it; but will any rational being be satisfied with such an admission?´ Can any moral good spring from such blind confidence? Is it consistent with sound doctrine, with philosophy, with reason? Do we, in fact, pay any respect to the understanding of another when we say to him, I will believe this, because in all the at tempts you have ventured for the purpose of proving what you say, you have entirely failed; and have been at last obliged to acknowledge, *you know nothing about the matter*? What moral reliance ought we to have on such people? Hypothesis may succeed hypothesis; system may destroy system; a new set of idea? may overturn the ideas of a former day. Other Galileos may be condemned to death — other Newtons may arise — we may reason; we may argue; we may dispute; we may quarrel; we may punish; we may destroy; we may even exterminate those who differ from us in opinion; but when we have done all this, we shall be obliged to fall back on our original darkness; to confess, that that which has no relation with our senses,

which cannot manifest itself to us by some of the ordinary modes by which other things are manifested, has. no existence for us; is not comprehensible by us; can never entirely remove our doubts; can never seize on our steadfast belief; seeing it is that of which we cannot form even an idea; in short, that it is *that,* which as long as we remain what we are, must be hidden from us by a veil which no power, no faculty, no energy we possess, is able to remove; All who are not enslaved by prejudice, agree to the truth of the position: that *nothing can be made of nothing.*

Many theologians have acknowledged nature to be an active whole. Almost all the ancient philosophers were agreed to regard the world as eternal. Ocellus Lucanos, speaking of the universe, says: "*it has always been, and it always will be*." Vatable and Grotius assure us, that, to render correctly the Hebrew phrase in the first chapter of *Genesis,* we must say: "*When God made heaven and earth, matter was without form*:" if this be true, and every Hebraist can judge for himself, then the word which has been rendered c*reated,* means only to fashion, form, arrange. We know that the Greek words *create* and *form,* have always indicated the same thing. According to St. Jerome, *creare* has the same meaning as *condere,* to found, to build. The bible does not any where say in a clear manner, that the world was made of nothing. Tertullian, and the father Petau, both admit that, "*this is a truth established more by reasoning, than by authority*." St. Justin seems to nave contemplated matter as eternal, since he commends Plato for having said that "*God in the creation of the world only gave impulse to matter, and fashioned it.* Burnet and Pythagoras were entirely of this opinion, and even the church service may be adduced in support; for although it admits by implication a beginning, it expressly denies an end: "*As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end*." It is easy to perceive, that that which cannot cease to exist, must have always been.

10 Those who have observed nature closely, know that two grains of sand are not strictly alike. As soon as the circumstances or the modifications are not the same for the beings of the same species, there cannot be an exact resemblance between them. See chap. vi. This truth was well understood by the profound and subtle Leibnitz. This *is* the manner in which one of his disciples explained himself: Ex principio indiscernibilium patet elementa rerum materialium singula singulis esse dissimilia, adeo que unum ab altero distingui, convenienter omnia extra se invicem existere, in quo differunt a punctis mathematicis, cum ilia uti haec nunquam coincidere possint. Bilfinger, *De Deo, Anima Et Mundo,* page 276.

11 If it were true that every thing has a tendency to form one unique or single mass, and in that unique mass the instant should; arrive when all was in *nisus,* all would eternally remain in this state — to all eternity there would be but one effort, and this would be eternal and universal death. Natural philosophers understand by *nisus* the effort of one body against another body, without local translation. This granted, there could be no cause of dissolution, for, according to chymists, bodies act only when dissolved. *Corpora non agunt nisi sint*

soluta.

12. Omnium quae in sempiterno isto mundo semper fuerunt futuraque sunt, aiunt principium fuisse nullum, sed orbem esse quemdam generantium nascentiumque, in quo uniuscujusque geniti initium simul et finis esse videtur. — *V.* Censorin. *De Die Natali.*

The poet Manilius expresses himself in the same manner in these beautiful lines: —

Omnia mutantur mortali legi creata,
Nec se cognoscunt terrae vertentibua annis,
Exutas variam faciem per saecula gentes.
At manet incolumis mundus suaque omnia servat,
Quae nec longa dies auget, minuitque senectus,
Nec motus puncto currit, cursusque fatigat:
Idem semper erit, quoniam semper fuit idem.
Manilii Astronom. Lib. I.

This also was the opinion of Pythagoras, such as it is set forth by Ovid, in the fifteenth Book of his Metamorphoses, verse 165, and the following: —

Omnia mutantur, nihil intent; errat et illinc.
Huc venit, hinc illuc, &c.

13. We may here remark, that all spirituous substances (that is to say, those containing a great proportion of inflammable and igneous matter, such as wine, brandy, liquors, &c.) are those that accelerate most the organic notion of animals, by communicating to them heat. Thus, wine generates courage, and even wit. In spring and summer myriads of insects are hatched, and a luxuriant vegetation springs into life, because the matter of fire is then more abundant than in winter. This *igneous matter* is evidently the cause of fermentation, of generation, and of life — the Jupiter of the ancients.

14. Destructio unius, generatio alterius. Thus to speak strictly, nothing in nature is either born, or dies, according to the common acceptation of those terms. This truth was felt by many of the ancient philosophers Plato tells us, that according to an old tradition, the living were born of the dead, the same as the dead did come of the living; and that this is the constant routine of nature." He adds from himself, "Who knows if to live, be not to die; and if to die, be not to live?" This was the doctrine of Pythagoras, a man of great talent and no less note. Empedocles says, "There is neither birth nor death for any mortal, but only a combination and a separation of that which was combined, and this is what amongst men they call birth and death." Again he remarks, "Those are infants, or short-sighted persons with very contracted understandings, who imagine any thing is born which did not exist before, or that any thing can die or perish totally."

15. It required the keen, the penetrating mind of a Franklin, to throw light on the nature of this subtile fluid; to develop the means by which its effects might be rendered harmless; to turn to useful purposes a phenomenon that made the ignorant tremble, that filled their minds with terrour, their hearts with dismay, as indicating the anger of the gods: impressed with this idea, they prostrated themselves, they sacrificed for Jupiter or Jehovah, to deprecate their wrath.

16. This system of attraction and repulsion is very ancient, although it required a Newton to develop it. That love, to which the ancients attributed the unfolding or disentanglement of chaos, appears to have been nothing more than a personification of the principle of attraction. All their allegories and fables upon chaos, evidently indicate nothing more than the accord or union that exists between analogous and homogeneous substances, from whence resulted the existence of the universe: while discord or repulsion, which they called σοις was the cause of dissolution, confusion, and disorder. There can scarcely remain a doubt but this was the origin of the doctrine of the two principles. According to Diogenes Laeertius, the philosopher, Empedocles asserted, "*that there is a kind of affection, by which the elements unite themselves; and a sort of discord, by which they separate or remove themselves.*"

17. St. Augustine admits this tendency for self-preservation in all beings, whether organized or not. — See his tractate *De Civitate Dei*, lib. xi. cap. 28.

18. This was the decided opinion of Plato, who says, "*Matter and necessity are the same thing; this necessity is the mother of the world.* In point of fact we cannot go beyond this aphorism, *Matter acts because it exists, and exists to act.* If it be inquired how, or why, matter exists? We answer, we know not: but reasoning by analogy of what we do not know by that which we do, we are of opinion it exists necessarily, or because it contains within itself a sufficient reason for its existence. In supposing it to be created or produced by a being distinguished from it, or less known than itself, we must still admit that this being is necessary, and includes a sufficient reason for his own existence. We have not then removed any of the difficulty, we have not thrown a clearer light on the subject, we have not advanced a single step; we have simply laid aside an agent of which we know some of the properties, to have recourse to a power of which it is utterly impossible we can form any distinct idea, and whose existence cannot be demonstrated. As therefore these must be at best out speculative points of belief, which each individual, by reason of its obscurity, may contemplate with different optics and under various aspects; they surely ought to be left free for each to judge after his own fashion: the Deist can nave no just cause of enmity against the Atheist for his want of faith; and the numerous sects of each of the various persuasions spread over the face of the earth ought to make it a creed, to look with an eye of complacency on the deviation of the other; and rest upon that great moral axiom, which is strictly conformable to nature, which contains the nucleus of man's happiness — "*Do not unto another, that which you do not wish another should do unto you*;" for it is evident, according to their own

doctrines, that out of all their multifarious systems, one only can be right.

19. Centrifugal force is a philosophical term, used to describe that force by which all bodies which move round any other body in a circle or an ellipsis, do endeavour to fly off from the axis of their motion in a tangent to the periphery or circumference of it.

20. A miracle, according to some metaphysicians, is an effect produced by a power not to be found in nature. — Miraculum vocamus effectum qui nullas suî vires sufficientes in naturâ agnoscit. — *See Bilfinger, De Deo, Animo et Mundo.* From this it has been concluded that the cause must be looked for beyond or out of nature; but reason bids us not to recur to *supernatural causes,* to explain the phenomena we behold, before we have become fully acquainted with *natural causes* — in other words, with the powers and capabilities which nature herself contains.

21. In other words, when all the impulse he receives, all the motion he communicates, tends to preserve his health and to render him happy, by promoting the happiness of his fellow men.

22. "We have accustomed ourselves to think," says an anonymous author, "that life is the contrary of death; and this appearing to us under the idea of absolute destruction, we have been eager at least to exempt the soul from it, as if the soul, or mind, was essentially any thing else but the result of life, whose opposites are *animate* and *inanimate.* Death is so little opposed to life, that it is the principle of it. From the body of a single animal that ceases to live, a thousand other living beings are formed." See *Miscellaneous Dissertations:* Amsterdam. 1740 pp. 252, 253.

23. We always compare the intelligence of other beings with our own, and if it be not the same, we deny its existence, which is a very gross errour; for, although a being may appear deprived of our own intelligence, the nevertheless has one peculiar to his organization, which leads him, with the greatest impulse possible, towards an end we do not see; and all beings, with regard to the end Nature proposes to herself, are provided with that degree of intelligence necessary to obtain it. To assume that a being is deprived of intelligence, is merely to say that his intelligence is not like ours, and that we do not understand it: — to say that a being acts by *chance,* is merely to confess that we do not see its end, and the place it occupies in the universal chain of existences. It is quite certain that all beings are possessed of intelligence, albeit we may not understand it; and it is no less certain that all beings tend to an end, albeit we may not perceive it.

24. Anaxagoras is said to have been the first who supposed the universe created and governed by an intelligence. Aristotle reproaches him with having made an automaton of this intelligence; that is, with ascribing to it the production of things only when he was at a loss, for good reasons, to account for their appearance. — See Bayle's Dictionary, *Art. Anaxagoras, Note E.*

25. Unable to reconcile this seeming confusion with the benevolence he attaches to this cause, he had recourse to another effort of his imagination; he made a new cause, to whom he ascribed all the evil, all the misery, resulting from this confusion: still, his own person served for the model, to which he added those deformities which he had learned to hold in disesteem: in multiplying these counter or destroying causes, he peopled Pandemonium.

26. "We must," says an anonymous writer, "define life, before we can reason upon the soul: but this is what I esteem impossible, because there are things in nature so simple that imagination cannot divide them, nor reduce them to any thing more simple than themselves: such is *life, whiteness,* and *light,* which we have not been able to define but by their effects." — *See Miscellaneous Dissertations, printed at Amsterdam,* 1740, page 232. — Life is the assemblage of motion natural to an organized being, and motion can only be a property of matter.

27. When man once imbibes an idea he cannot comprehend, he meditates upon it until he has given it a complete personification. Thus he saw, or fancied he saw, the igneous matter pervade every thing; he conjectured that it was the only principle of life and activity; and proceeding to imbody it, he gave it his own form, called it Jupiter, and ended by worshipping this image of his own creation as the power from whom he derived every good he experienced, every evil he sustained.

28. Theologians will, without hesitation, answer this question in the most dogmatic and positive manner. Not only they will tell you *whence* man came, but also *how* and *who* brought him into existence; and what he said and what he did when he first walked the earth. However, true philosophy says — "*I do not know*."

29. How do we know that the various beings and productions said to have been created at the same time with man, are not the posterior and spontaneous production of Nature? Four thousand years ago man became acquainted with the lion: — well! what. are four thousand years? Who can prove that the lion, seen for the first time by man four thousand years ago, had not *then* been in existence thousands of years? or again, that this lion was not produced thousands of years after the proud biped who arrogantly calls himself *king of the universe*?

30 Ut Tragici poetae confugiunt ad Deum aliquem, cum aliter explicare argumenti exitura non ´ possunt. *Cicero, de, Divinatione* Lib. 2. He again says, magna stulititia est earum rerum Deos facere enectores, causas rerum non quaerere. — *Ib.*

31. In Nature nothing; is mean or contemptible, and it is only pride, originating in a false idea of our superiority, which causes our con tempt for some of her productions. In the eyes of Nature, however, the oyster that vegetates at the bottom of the sea is as dear and perfect as the proud biped who devours it.

32. A very cogent question presents itself on this occasion: if this distinct substance, said to form one of the component parts of man, be really what it is reported, and if it be not, it is not what it is described; if it be unknown, if it be not pervious to the senses; if it be invisible,

by what means did the metaphysicians themselves become acquainted with it? How did they form ideas of a substance, that, taking their own account of it, is not, under any of its circumstances, either directly or by analogy cognizable to the mind of man? If they could positively achieve this, there would no longer be any mystery in nature: it would be as easy to conceive the time when all was nothing, when all shall have passed away, to account for the production of every thing we behold, as to dig in a garden, or read a lecture. Doubt would vanish from the human species; there could no longer be any difference of opinion, since all must necessarily be of one mind on a subject so accessible to every inquirer.

But it will be replied, the materialist himself admits, the natural philosophers of all ages have admitted, elements, atoms, beings simple and indivisible, of which bodies are composed: — granted; they have no more: they have also admitted that many of these atoms, many of these elements, if not all, are unknown to them: nevertheless, these simple beings, these atoms of the materialist, are not the same thing with the spirit, or the soul of the metaphysician. When the natural philosopher talks of atoms; when he describes them as simple beings, he indicates nothing more than that they are homogeneous, pure, without mixture: but then he allows that they have extent consequently parts are separable by thought, although no other natural agent with which he is acquainted is capable of dividing them — that the simple beings of this genus are susceptible of motion, can impart action, receive impulse, are material, are placed in nature, are indestructible; that consequently, if he cannot know them from themselves, he can form some idea of them by analogy; thus he has done that intelligibly which the metaphysician would do unintelligibly: the latter, with a view to render man immortal, finding difficulties to his wish, from seeing that the body decayed — that it submitted to the great, the universal law — has, to solve the difficulty, to remove the impediment, given him a soul, distinct from the body, which he says is exempted from the action of the general law: to account for this, he has called it a *spiritual being*, whose properties are the negation of all known properties, consequently inconceivable: had he, however, had recourse to the atoms of the former; had he made this substance the last possible term of the division of matter, it would at least have been intelligible; it would also have been immortal, since, according to the reasonings of all men, whether metaphysicians, theologians, or natural philosophers, an atom is an indestructible element, that must exist to all eternity.

33. As man, in all his speculations, takes himself for the model, he no sooner imagined a spirit within himself, than giving it extent, he made it universal, then ascribed to it all those causes with which his ignorance prevents him from becoming acquainted: thus he identified himself with the supposed author of nature; then availed himself of the supposition to explain the connexion of the soul with the body. His self-complacency prevented his perceiving that he was only enlarging the circle of his errours, by pretending to understand that which it is more than probable he will never know: his self-love prevented him from feeling, that, whenever he punished another for not thinking as he did, he committed the greatest injustice,

unless he was satisfactorily able to prove that other wrong — himself right: that if he himself was obliged to have recourse to hypothesis, to gratuitous suppositions, whereon to found his doctrine, that from the very fallibility of his nature these might be erroneous: thus Galileo was persecuted, because the metaphysicians and the theologians of his day chose to make others believe what it was evident they did not themselves understand. As to our modern metaphysicians, they may dream of a *universal spirit* after the manner of the human soul — of an *infinite intelligence* after the manner of a finite intelligence, but in so doing they do not perceive that this *spirit* or *intelligence,* whether they suppose it finite or infinite, will not be more convenient or fit to move matter.

34. According to this answer an infinity of unextended substance, or the same unextended substance repeated an infinity of times, would constitute a substance that has extent, which is absurd; for, according to this principle, the human soul would then be as infinite as God, since it is assumed that God is a being without extent, who is an infinity of times whole in each part of the universe — and the same is stated of the human soul; from whence we must necessarily conclude that God and the soul of man are equally infinite, unless we suppose unextended substances of *different* extents, or a God without extent more extended than the human soul. Such are, however, the rhapsodies which some of our theological metaphysicians would have thinking beings believe! With a view of making the human soul immortal, these theologians have spiritualized it, and thus rendered it an unintelligible being; had they said that the soul was the minutest division of matter, it would then have been intelligible — and immortal too, since it would have been an *atom,* an indissoluble element.

35. The Hebrew word *Ruach,* signifies breath, respiration. The Greek word Πνευμα, means the same thing, and is derived from πνευω, *spiro.* Lactantius states that the Latin word *anima* comes from the Greek word ἄνεμος which signifies wind. Some metaphysicians fearful of seeing too far into human nature, have compounded man of three substances, *body, soul,* and intellect — Ζωμχ, ψυχη, Νος. — See *Marc. Antonin., Lib.* liii. §16.

36. According; to Orioen, ατωματος, *incorporeus,* an epithet given to, God, signifies a substance more subtile than that of gross bodies. Terlullian says, Quis autem negabit deum esse corpus, etsi deus spiritus? The same Tertullian says, Nos autem animam corporalem et hic profitemur, et in suo volumine probamus, habentem proprium genus substantiae, soliditatis, per quam quid et sentire et pati possit. V. *De Resurrectione Carnis.*

37. The system of spirituality, such as it is admitted at this day, owes all its pretended proofs to Descartes. Although before him the soul had been considered spiritual, he was the first who established that "*that which thinks ought to be distinguished from matter*;" from whence he concludes that the soul, or that which thinks in man, is a spirit — that is to say, a simple and indivisible substance. Would it not have been more consistent with logic and reason to have said that, since man, who is matter and who has no idea but of matter, enjoys the faculty

of thought, matter can think — that is, it is susceptible of that particular modification called *thought.* — See *Bayle's Dictionary,* Art. *Pomponatius* and *Simonides.*

38. Although there is so little reason and philosophy in the system of spirituality, yet we must confess that it required deep cunning on the part of the selfish theologians who invented it. To render man susceptible of rewards and punishments after death, it was necessary to exempt some portion of him from corruption and dissolution — a doctrine extremely useful to priests, whose great aim is to intimidate, govern, and plunder the ignorant — a doctrine which enables them even to perplex many enlightened persons, who are equally incapable of comprehending the "*sublime truths*" about the soul and the Divinity! These honest priests tell us, that this *immaterial* soul shall be burnt, or, in other words, shall experience in hell the action of the *material* element of fire, and we believe them upon their word!!!

39. Those who wish to form an idea of the shackles imposed by theology on the genius of philosophers born under the "*Christian dispensation,*" let them read the metaphysical romances of Leibnitz, Descartes, Malebranche, Cudworth, etc. and coolly examine the ingenious but rhapsodical systems entitled *the Pre-established harmony of occasional causes; Physical pre-motion,* etc.

40. When a theologian, obstinately bent *on* admitting into man two substances essentially different, is asked why he multiplies beings without necessity? he will reply, "*Because thought cannot be a property of matter*." If, then, it be inquired of him, "*Cannot God give to matter the faculty of thought?*" he will answer, "No! seeing that *God cannot do impossible things!*" But this is atheism, for, according to his principles, it is as impossible that spirit or thought can produce matter, as it is impossible that matter can produce spirit or thought: it must, therefore, be concluded against him, that the world was not made by a spirit, any more than a spirit was made by the world; that the world is eternal, and if an eternal spirit exists, then we have two eternal beings, which is absurd. If, therefore, there is only *one* eternal substance, it is the world, whose existence cannot be doubted or denied.

41. It is evident that the notion of *spirits,* imagined by savages and adopted by me ignorant, is calculated to retard the progress of knowledge, since it precludes our researches into the true cause of the effects which we see, by keeping the human mind in apathy and sloth. This state of ignorance may be very useful to crafty theologians, but very injurious to society. This is the reason, however, why in all ages priests have persecuted those who have been the first to give natural explanations of the phenomena of nature — as witness Anaxagoras, Aristotle, Galileo, Descartes — and, more recently, Richard Carlile, William Lawrence, Robert Taylor, and Abner Kneeland; to which we may add the name of the learned and venerable Thomas Cooper, M.D., lately president of Columbia College, South Carolina.

42. A proof of this is afforded in the Transactions of the Royal Academy of Sciences at Paris: they inform us of a man, who had his scull taken off, in the room of which his brain was re-covered with skin; and in proportion as a pressure was made by the hand on his brain, the

man fell into a kind of insensibility which deprived him of all feeling. Bartolin says, the brain of a man is twice as big as that of an ox. This observation had been already made by Aristotle. In the dead body of an idiot dissected by Willis, the brain was found smaller than ordinary: he says, the greatest difference he found between the parts of the body of this idiot, and those of wiser men, was, that the plexus of the intercostal nerves, which is the mediator between the brain and the heart, was extremely small, accompanied by a less number of nerves than usual. According to Willis, the ape is of all animals that which has the largest brain, relatively to his size: he is also, after man, that which has the most intelligence; and this is further confirmed by the name he bears in the soil to which he is indigenous, which is *orang: outanag* or the man beast. There is, therefore, every reason to believe that it is entirely in the brain that consists the difference that is found not only between man and beasts, but also between the man of wit and the fool; between the thinking man and he who is ignorant; between the man of sound understanding and the madman. And again, a multitude of experience proves that those persons who are most accustomed to use their intellectual faculties, have their brain more extended than others: the same has been remarked of watermen or rowers, that they have arms much larger than other men.

43. All the parts of nature enjoy the capability to arrive at animation; the obstacle is only in the state not in the quality. Life is the perfection of nature: she has no parts which do not tend to it, and which do not attain it by the same means. Life, in an insect, a dog, a man, has no other difference than that this act is more perfect, relatively to ourselves, in proportion to the structure of the organs: if, therefore, it be asked, what is requisite to animate a body? we reply, it needs no foreign aid, it is sufficient that the power of nature be joined to its organisation.

44. Doctor Clarke says, *Conscience is the act of reflecting, by means of which I know that I think; and that my thoughts, or my actions, belong to me, and not to another. — See his letter against Dodwell.*

45. From this it is sufficiently proved that thought has a commencement, a duration, an end, or rather, a generation, a succession, a dissolution, like all the other modifications of matter; like them, thought is excited, is determined, is increased, is divided, is compounded, is simplified, &c. If, therefore, the soul, or the principle that thinks, be indivisible, how does it happen that the soul has the faculty of memory and of forgetfulness; is capacitated to think successively, to divide, to abstract, to combine, to extend its ideas, to retain them, to lose them? How can it cease to think? If forms appear divisible in matter, it is only in considering them by abstraction, after the method of geometricians; but this divisibility of form exists not in nature, in which there is neither a point, an atom, nor form perfectly regular; it must therefore be concluded, that the forms of matter are not less indivisible than thought.

46. A being composed of a man and a horse.

47. A being composed of a horse with wings.

48. A *nondescript!*
49. A *gentleman* with two horns, a tail, and a cloven foot.
50. It would not be unreasonable to suppose, that what physicians call the nervous fluid; which so promptly gives notice to the brain of all that happens to the body, is nothing more than electric matter; that the various proportions of this matter, diffused through his system, is the cause of that great diversity to be discovered in the human being, and in the faculties he possesses.
51. If we reflect a little we shall find that *heat* is the principle of life. It is by means of heat that beings pass from inaction into motion — from repose into fermentation — from a state of torpor into that of active life. This is proved by the egg, which heat hatches into a chicken; and this example, among thousands which we might cite, must suffice to establish the fact, that without heat, there is no generation.
52. Compassion depends on physical sensibility, which is never the same in all men. How absurd, then, to make compassion the source of all our moral ideas, and of those feelings which we experience for our fellow creatures. Not only all men are not alike sensible, but there are many in whom sensibility has not been developed — such as in kings, priests, statesmen, —

"And the hired bravoes who defend
The tyrant's throne — the bullies of his fear!"

53. Experience proves that the first crime is always accompanied by more pangs of remorse than the second; this again, by more than the third, and so on to those that follow. A first action is the commencement of a habit; those which succeed confirm it: by force of combating the obstacles that prevent the commission of criminal actions, man arrives at the power of vanquishing them with ease and with facility. Thus he frequently becomes wicked from habit.
54. Hobbes says that, "It is the nature of all corporeal beings, who have been frequently moved in the same manner, to continually receive a greater aptitude, or to produce the same motions with more facility. It is this which constitutes habit as well in morals as in physics. *V. Hobbes's Essay on Human Nature.*
55. Assiduitate quotidiana et consuetudine oculorum assuescunt animi, neque admirantur, neque requirunt rationes earam rerum quas vident. *Cicero de Natur: Deorum Lib. ii. Cap.* 2.
56. There ought to be a reciprocity of interest between the governed and the governor: whenever this reciprocity is wanting, society is in that state of confusion, spoken of in the fifth chapter, — it is verging on destruction.
57. An ancient poet has justly said, *Servonum nulla est unquam civitas.*
58. Seneca has said with great reason, — Erras si existimes vitia nobiscum nasci; supervenerunt, ingesta aunt. V. *Sebec. Epist.* 91, 95, 124.

59. In some nations they kill the old men; in some the children strangle their fathers. The Phenicians and the Carthagenians immolated their children to their Gods. Europeans approve duels; and those who refuse to blow out the brains of another are contemplated by them as dishonoured. The Spaniards, the Portuguese, think it meritorious to burn a heretic. Christians deem it right to cut the throats of those who differ from them in opinion. In some countries women prostitute themselves without dishonour; in others it *is* the height of hospitality for man to present his wife to the embraces of the stranger: the refusal to accept this, elicits his scorn, calls forth his resentment.

60. Some ancient philosophers have held, that the soul originally contains the principles of several notions or doctrines: the Stoics designated this by the term Προληψις *antinpated opinions;* the Greek mathematicians Κοινας Εννοιας, *universal ideas.* The Jews have a similar doctrine which they borrowed from the Chaldeans; their Rabbins taught that each soul, before it was united to the seed that must form an infant in the womb of a woman, is confided to the care of an angel, which causes him to behold heaven earth, and hell: this, they pretend, is done by the assistance of a lamp which extinguishes itself, as soon as the infant comes into the world. *See Gaulmin. De ciia et morte Mosis.*

61. Extravagant as this doctrine of the bishop of Cloyne may appear, it cannot well be more so than that of Malebranche, the champion of innate ideas, who makes the divinity the common bond between the soul and the body: or than that of those metaphysicians who maintain, that the soul is a substance heterogeneous to the body, and, who, by ascribing to this soul the thoughts of man, have, in fact, rendered the body superfluous. They have not perceived, they were liable to one solid objection, which is, that if the ideas of man are innate, if he derives them from a superior being, independent of exterior causes, if he sees every thing in God; how comes it that *so* many false ideas are afloat, that *so* many errours prevail with which the human mind is saturated? From whence come those opinions which, according to the theologians, are so displeasing to God? Might it not be a question to the Malebranchists, was it in the Divinity that Spinosa beheld his system?

62. A being supposed by the poets to have a head and face like a woman, a body like a dog, wings like a bird, and claws like a lion, who put forth riddles and killed those who could not expound them.

63. This principle, so true, so luminous, so important in its consequence, has been set forth in all its lustre by a great number of philosophers; among the rest, by the great Locke.

64. Morals is a science of facts: to found it, therefore, on an hypothesis inaccessible to his senses, of which he has no means of proving the reality, is to render it uncertain; it is to cast the log of discord into his lap; to cause him unceasingly to dispute upon that which he can never understand. To assert that the ideas of morals are *innate,* or the effect of *instinct,* is to pretend that man knows how to read before he has learned the letters of the alphabet; that he is acquainted with the laws of society, before they are either made or promulgated.

65. See Vol. II., Chapter iv.
66. Nothing but the height of folly can refuse intellectual faculties to animals; they feel, choose, deliberate, express love, show hatred; in many instances their senses are much keener than those of man. Fish will return periodically to the spot where it is the custom to throw them bread.
67. It appears that the most skilful practitioners in medicine have been men endowed with very acute feelings, similar to those of the physiognomists, by the assistance of which they judged with great facility of diseases, and very promptly drew their prognostics.
68. "We think," says La Motte Le Vayer, "quite otherwise of things at one time than at another: when young than when old — when hungry than when our appetite is satisfied — in the night than in the day — when peevish than when cheerful; thus varying every hour, by a thousand other circumstances which keep us in a state of perpetual inconstancy and instability."
69. See Vol. II., Chap. iv.
70. *See Chapter* xiv. — Man is oftener induced to destroy himself by mental than by bodily pains. A thousand things may cause him to forget his bodily sufferings, whilst in those of the mind his brain is wholly absorbed; and this is the reason why intellectual pleasures are superior to all others.
71. Man passes a great portion of his life without even willing. His will depends on the motive by which he is determined. If he were to render an exact account of every thing he does in the course of each day — from rising in the morning to lying down at night — he would find that not one of his actions have been in the least voluntary; that they have been mechanical, habitual, determined by causes he was not able to foresee; to which he was either obliged to yield, or with which he was allured to acquiesce: he would discover, that j all the motives of his labours, of his amusements, of his discourses, of his thoughts, have been necessary; that they have evidently either seduced him or drawn him along.
72. St. Augustine says: "Non enim cuiquam in Potentate est quid veniat in mentem."
73. There is, in point of fact, no difference between the man that is cast out of the window by another, and the man who throws himself out of it, except that the impulse in the first instance comes immediately from without, whilst that which determines the fall in the second case, springs from within his own peculiar machine, having its more remote cause also exterior. When Mutius Scavola held his hand in the fire, he was as much acting under the influence of necessity (caused by interior motives) that urged him to this strange action, as if his arm had been held by strong men: pride, despair, the desire of braving his enemy, a wish to astonish him, an anxiety to intimidate him, &c., were the invisible chains that held his hand bound to the fire. The love of glory, enthusiasm for their country, in like manner caused Codras and Decius to devote themselves for their fellow-citizens. The Indian Colanus and the philosopher Peregrinus were equally obliged to burn themselves, by desire of exciting

the astonishment of the Grecian assembly.

74. Many authors have acknowledged the importance of a good education, and that youth was the season to feed the human heart with wholesome diet; but they have not felt that a good education is incompatible, nay impossible, with the superstition of man, since this commences with giving his mind a false bias; that it is equally inconsistent with arbitrary government, because this always dreads, lest he should become enlightened, and is ever sedulous to render him servile, mean, contemptible, and cringing; that it is incongruous with laws that are too frequently bottomed on injustice; that it cannot obtain with those received customs that are opposed to good sense; that it cannot exist whilst public opinion is unfavourable to virtue; above all, that it is absurd to expect it from incapable instructors, from masters with weak minds, who have only the ability to infuse into their scholars those false ideas with which they are themselves infected.

75. We can scarcely conceive a more baneful doctrine than that which inculcates the natural corruption of man, and the absolute need of the grace of God to make him good. Such a doctrine tends necessarily to discourage him; it either makes him sluggish or drives him to despair whilst waiting for this grace. What a strange system of morals is that of theologians, who attribute all moral evil to an original sin, and all moral good to the pardon of it! But it ought certainly not to excite surprise that a moral system, founded upon such ridiculous hypotheses, is of no efficacy. — *See* Vol. II. chap. viii.

76. Theologians themselves, have felt, they have acknowledged, the necessity of the passions: many of the fathers of the church have broached this doctrine; among the rest Father Senault has written a book expressly on the subject, entitled, *Of the Use of the Passions.*

77. Every religion is evidently founded upon fatalism. Among the Greeks they supposed men were punished for their *necessary* faults — as may be seen in Orestes, in Œdipus, etc., who only committed crimes predicted by the oracles. Christians have made vain efforts to justify God Almighty in throwing the faults of men on their *free will*, which is opposed to *Predestination*, another name for *fatalism.* However, their system of *Grace* will by no means obviate the difficulty, for God gives grace only to those whom he pleases. In all countries religion has no other foundation than the fatal decrees of an irresistible being who arbitrarily decides the fate of his creatures. All theological hypotheses turn upon this point; and yet those theologians who regard the system of fatalism as false or dangerous, do not see that the Fall of Angels, Original Sin, Predestination, the System of Grace, the small number of the Elect, etc. incontestably prove that religion is a true system of fatalism.

78. The question of *Free Will* may be reduced to this: — Liberty, or Free Will, cannot be associated with any known functions of the soul; for the soul, at the moment in which it acts, deliberates, or wills, cannot act, deliberate, or will otherwise than it does, because a thing cannot exist and not exist at the same time. Now, it is my will, such as it is, that makes me deliberate; my deliberation, that makes me choose; my choice that makes me act; my

determination that makes me execute that which my deliberation has made me choose, and I have only deliberated because I have had motives which rendered it impossible for me not to be willing to deliberate. Thus liberty is not found either in the will, in the deliberation, in the choice, or in the action. Theologians must not, therefore, connect liberty with these operations of the soul, otherwise there will be a contradiction of ideas. If the soul is not free when it wills, deliberates, chooses, or acts, will theologians tell us when it can exercise its liberty?

It is evident that the system of liberty, or free will, has been invented to exonerate God from the evil that is done in this world. But is it not from God man received this liberty? Is it not from God he received the faculty of choosing evil and rejecting the good? If so, God created him with a determination to sin, else liberty is essential to man and independent of *God* — *See* "*Treatise of Systems*," *p.* 124.

79. Man's nature always revolts against that which opposes it: there are men so choleric, that they infuriate themselves even against insensible and inanimate objects; reflection on their own impotence to modify these objects ought to conduct them back to reason. Parents are frequently very much to be blamed for correcting their children with anger: they should be contemplated as beings who are not yet modified, or who have, perhaps, been very badly modified by themselves: nothing is more common in life, than to see men punish faults of which they are themselves the cause.

80. The greater number of criminals only look upon death as a *bad quarter of an hour*. A thief seeing one of his comrades display a want of firmness under the punishment, said to him: "*Is not this what I have often told you, that in our business we have one evil more than the rest of mankind?*" Robberies are daily committed even at the foot of the scaffolds where criminals are punished. In those nations, where the penalty of death is so lightly inflicted, has sufficient attention been paid to the fact, that society is yearly deprived of a great number of individuals who would be able to render it very useful service, if made to work, and thus indemnify the community for the injuries they have committed? The facility with which the lives of men are taken away, proves the tyranny and incapacity of legislators: they find it a much shorter road to destroy the citizens, than to seek after the means to render them better.

81. A society punishing excesses to which it has itself given birth, may be compared to a man attacked with the *lousy* disorder, who is obliged to kill the insects, although it is his own diseased constitution which every moment produces them.

82. By a strange coincidence, Napoleon Buonaparte was born the same year in which the *System of Nature* was first published.

83. It appears that Moses believed, with the Egyptians, the divine emanation of souls: according to him, "*God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul:*" Gen. ii. 7. — nevertheless Christians at this day reject this system of *Divine emanation*, seeing that it supposes the Divinity divisible;

besides, their religion having need of a Hell to torment the souls of the damned, it would have been necessary to send a portion of the Divinity to Hell, conjointly with the souls of those victims that were sacrificed to his own vengeance. Although Moses, in the above quotation, seems to indicate that the soul was a portion of the Divinity, it does not appear that the doctrine of the *immortality of the soul* was established in any one of the books attributed to him. It was during the Babylonish captivity that the Jews learned the doctrine of future rewards and punishments, taught by Zoroaster to the Persians, but which the Hebrew Legislator did not understand, or at least he left his people ignorant on the subject.

84. Cicero before Abbadie had declared the immortality of the soul to be an innate idea in man; yet, strange to tell, in another part of his works he considers Pherecydes as the inventor of the doctrine — Naturam ipsam de immortalitate animarum tacitam judicare; nescio quomodo inhaeret in mentibus quasi saeculorum quodam augurium. Permanere animos arbitramur consensu nationum omnium. — *Tusculam Disputat,* lib. i.

85. The partisans of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, reason thus: "All men desire to live for ever; therefore they will live for ever." Suppose the argument retorted on them: "All men naturally desire to be rich; therefore, all men will one day be rich."

86. Nam veluti pueri trepidant, alque omnia caesis
In tenebris metuunt: sic nos in luce timemus
Interdum, nihilo quae sunt metuenda magis quam
Quae pueri in tenebris pavitant, finguntque futura.
Lucretius, Lib. III. v. 87, *et seq.*

87. Nec videt in vera nullum fore morte alium, *se:*
Qui possit vivus sibi *se* lugere peremptum,
Stansque jacentum. nec lacerari, urive dolore.
Lucret. Lib. III.

88. Μελὲτη το θάνατο. And Lucan has said; Scire mori sors prima viris.

89. Quid de rerum natura querimur, illa se bene gessit; vita si scias uti, longa est. — V. *Smec. de Brevitate Vitae.* Man complains of the short duration of life — of the rapidity With which time flies away; yet the greater number of men do not know how to employ either time or life.

90. Those who dare to think for themselves — those who have refused to listen to their enthusiastic guides — those who have no reverence for the Bible — those who have had the audacity to consult their reason — those who have boldly ventured to detect impostors — those who have doubted the divine mission of Jesus Christ — those who believe that Jehovah violated decency in his visit to the carpenters wife — those who look upon Mary as no better than a strolling wench — those who think that St Paul was an arch knave, — are to smart everlastingly in flaming oceans of burning sulphur, are to float to all eternity in the most excruciating agonies, on seas of liquid brimstone, wailing and gnashing their teeth: what wonder, then, if man dreads to be cast into these hideous gulfs — if his mind loathes the

horrific picture — if he wishes to defer for a season these dreadful punishments — if he clings to an existence, painful, as it may be, rather than encounter such revolting cruelties.
91. Such were Moses, Samuel, and David, among the Jews; Mahomet amongst the Mussulmen; amongst the Christians, Constantine, St. Cyril, St. Athanasius, St. Dominic, and a great many more pious robbers and zealous persecutors, *whom the Church reveres!* We may also add to this list the Crusaders, Leaguers, Puritans, and our modern heterodox Saints, the *Unitarian Inquisitors of* Massachusetts, who, if they had had the power, would have condemned Abner Kneeland to the devouring flames.
92. A virtuous and good man has nothing to fear, but every thing to hope; for, if contrary to what he is able to judge, there should be a hereafter existence, will not his actions have been so regulated by virtue, will he not have so comported himself in his present existence, as to stand a fair chance of enjoying in their fullest extent those felicities prepared for his species?
93. Let us review the history of Priestcraft in all ages, and we shall invariably find it the same crafty and contemptible system. Tantalus, for divulging their secrets, must eternally fear, engulfed in burning sulphur, the stone ready to fall on his devoted head; whilst Romulus was beatified and worshipped as a God under the name of Quirinus. The same system of Priestcraft caused the philosopher Callisthenes to be put to death, for opposing the worship of Alexander, and elevated the monk Athanasius to be a saint in heaven!
94. Has sufficient attention been paid to the fact that results as a necessary consequence from this reasoning, which on examination will be found to have rendered the first place entirely useless, seeing that by the number and contradiction of these various systems, let man believe which ever he may, let him follow it in the most faithful manner, still he must be ranked as an infidel, as a rebel to the Divinity, because he cannot believe in all; and those from which he dissents, by a consequence of their own creed, condemn him to the prison-house?
95. The doctrine of the *resurrection* appears perfectly useless to all those who believe in the existence of a soul, that feels, thinks, suffers, and enjoys after a separation from the body: indeed, there are already sects who begin to maintain, that the body is not necessary, that therefore it will never be resurrected. — Like Berkeley, they conceive that "the soul has need neither of body nor any exterior being, either to experience sensations, or to have ideas." The *Malebranchists*, in particular, must suppose that the rejected souls will see hell in the Divinity, and will feel themselves burn without having occasion for bodies for that purpose.
96. It is no doubt to this we owe the atonements by fire used by a great number of oriental nations, and practised at this very day by the priests of the *God of Peace*, who are so cruel as to consign to the flames all those who differ from them in their ideas of the Divinity. As a consequence of this absurd system, the civil magistrates condemn to the fire the sacrilegious and the blasphemer — that is to say, persons who do no harm to any one; whilst they are content to punish more mildly those who do a real injury to society. So much for religion and its effects!

97. If, as Christians assume, the torments in hell are to be infinite in their duration and intenseness, we must conclude that man, who is a finite being, cannot suffer infinitely. God himself, in despite of the efforts he might make to punish eternally for faults which are limited by time, cannot communicate infinity to man. The same may be said of the joys of Paradise, where a finite being will no more comprehend an infinite God, than he does in this world. On the other hand, if God perpetuates the existence of the damned, as Christianity teaches, he perpetuates the existence of sin, which is not very consistent with his supposed love of order.

98. When the doctrine of the immortality of the soul first came out of the school of Plato, and first diffused itself among the Greeks, it caused the greatest ravages; it determined a multitude of men, who were discontented with their condition, to terminate their existence. Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, seeing the effect this doctrine, which at the present day is looked upon as so salutary, produced on the brains of his subjects, defended the teaching of it, under the penalty of death.

99. The idea of Divine Mercy cheers up the wicked, and makes him forget Divine Justice. And indeed, these two attributes, supposed to be equally infinite in God, must counterbalance each other in such a manner, that neither the one nor the other are able to act. Yet, the wicked reckon upon an *immoveable* God, or at least flatter themselves to escape from the effects of his justice by means of his mercy. The highwayman, who knows that sooner or later he must perish on the gallows, says, that he has nothing to fear, as he will then have an opportunity of *making a good end.* Every Christian believes that *true repentance* blots out all their sins. The East Indian attributes the same virtues to the waters of the Ganges.

100. It will be said, that the fear of another life is a curb useful at least to restrain princes and nobles, who have no other; and that this curb, such as it is, is better than none. But it has been sufficiently proved that the belief in a future life does not controul the actions of sovereigns. The only way to prevent sovereigns from injuring society, *is*, to make them subservient to the laws, and to prevent their ever having the right or power of enslaving and oppressing nations according to the whim or caprice of the moment. Therefore, a good political constitution, founded upon natural rights and a sound education, is the only efficient check to the malpractices of the rulers of nations.

101. Many persons, convinced of the utility of the belief in another life, consider those who do not fall in with this doctrine as the enemies of society. However, it will be found on examination that the wisest and the most enlightened men of antiquity have believed, not only that the soul is material and perishes with the body, but also that they have attacked without hesitation and without subterfuge the opinion of future punishments. This sentiment was not peculiar to the Epicureans, but was adopted by philosophers of all sects, by Pythagoreans, by Stoics, by Peripatetics, by Academics; in short, by the most godly and the most virtuous men of Greece and Rome. Pythagoras, according to Ovid, speaks thus: —

O Genus attonitum gelidae formidine Mortis,
Quid stiga, quid tenebras, et nomina vana timetis
Materiem vatum, falsique pericula mundi?

Timseus of Locris, who was a Pythagorean, admits that the doctrine of future punishments was fabulous, solely destined for the imbecility of the uninformed, and but little calculated for those who cultivate their reason.

Aristotle expressly says, that, "Man has neither good to hope, nor evil to fear after death."

The Platonists, who made the soul immortal, could not have any idea of future punishments, because the soul according to them was a portion of the Divinity, which, after the dissolution of the body, it returned to rejoin. Now, a portion of the Divinity could not be subject to suffer.

Zeno, according to Cicero, supposed the soul to be an igneous substance, from whence he concluded it destroyed itself. — Zenoni Stoico animus ignis videtur. Si sit ignie, extinguetur; interibit cum reliquo corpore.

This philosophical orator, who was of the sect of the Academics, is not always in accord with himself; however, on several occasions he treats openly as fables the torments of Hell, and looks upon death as the end of every thing for man. — *Vide Tusculan.*, C. 38.

Seneca is filled with passages which contemplate death as a state of total annihilation: — Mors est non esse. Id quale sit jam scio; hoc erit post me quod ante me fuit. Si quid in hac re tormenti est, necesse est et fuisse antequam prodiremus in lucem; atqui nulliim sensimus tunc vexationem. Speaking of the death of his brother, he says: — Quid itaque ejas desiderio maceror, qui aut beatus, aut nullus est? But nothing can be more decisive than what he writes to Marcia to console him. (chap. 19.) — Cogita nullis defunctum malia affici: illa quae nobis inferos faciunt terribiles, fabulam esse: nullas imminere mortuis tenebras, nec carcerem, nec flumina flagrantia igne, nec oblivionis amnem, nec tribunalia, et reors et in illa libertate tam laxa iterum tyrannos: lusrerunt ista poetae et vanis nos agitavere terroribus. Mors omnium dolorum et solutio est et finis: ultra quam mala nostra non exeunt, quae nos in illam tranquilitatem, in qua antequam nasceremur, jacuimus, reponit.

Here is also another conclusive passage from this philosopher, which is deserving of the attention of the reader: — Si animus fortuita contempsit; si deprum hominumque formidinem ejecit, et scit non multum ab homine timendurn, a deo nihil; si contemptor omnium quibus torquetur vita eo perductus est ut illi liqueat mortem nullius mali esse materiam, multorum finem. — *V. De Beneficiis, VII.* i.

Seneca, the tragedian, explains himself in the same manner as the philosopher: —

Post mortem nihil est, ipsaque mors nihil.
Velocis spatii meta novissima.
Quaeris quo jaceas post obitum loco?
Quo non nata jacent.

Mors individua est noxia corpori,
Nec parcens animae.
Troades.

Epictetus has the same idea. In a passage reported by Arrian, he says: — "But where are you going? It cannot be to a place of suffering: you will only return to the place from whence you came; you are about to be again peaceably associated with the elements from whence you are derived.. That which in your composition is of the nature of fire, will return to the element of fire; that which is of the nature of earth, will rejoin itself to the earth; that which is air, will reunite itself with air; that which is water, will resolve itself into water; there is no Hell, no Acheron, no Cocytus, no Phlegethon." — *See Arrian. in Epictet. lib.* iii. *cap.* 13. In another place he says: "The hour of death approaches; but do not aggravate your evil, nor render things worse than they are: represent them to yourself under their true point of view. The time is come when the materials of which you are composed, go to resolve themselves into the elements from whence they were originally borrowed. What is there that is terrible or grievous in that? Is there any thing in the world, that perishes totally?" — *See Arrian. lib*. iv. *cap. 7.* §1.

The sage and pious Antoninns says: "He who fears death, either fears to be deprived of all feeling, or dreads to experience different sensations. If you lose all feeling, you will no longer be subject either to pain or to misery. If you are provided with other senses of a different nature, yon will become a creature of a different species." This great emperor further says: "that we must expect death with tranquillity, seeing that it is only a dissolution of the elements of which each animal is composed." — *See the Moral Reflections of Marcus Antoninus, lib.* ii.

To the evidence of so many great men of Pagan antiquity, may be joined that of the author of Ecclesiastes, who speaks of death and of the condition of the human soul, like an Epicurean; he says: "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the on« dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast; for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again." And further, "wherefore I perceive, that there is nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for that is his portion: for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?"

In short, how can Christians reconcile the utility or the necessity of this doctrine with the fact, that the legislator of the Jews, inspired by the Divinity, remained silent on a subject that in said to be of so much importance?

102. It must be observed I do not say here, like Hobbes, that the state of nature is a state of war, but that men, by their nature, are neither good nor wicked; in fact, man will be either good or bad, according as he is modified. If men are so ready to injure one another, it is only because every thing conspires to give them different interests. Each one, if I may say so, lives

isolated in society, and their chiefs avail themselves of their divisions to subdue the whole. *Divide et impera* is the maxim that all bad governments follow by instinct. Tyrants would be badly off if they had to rule over virtuous men only.

103. This has been me opinion of many great men: Seneca, the moralist, whom Lactantiug calls the divine Pagan, who has been praised equally by St. Austin and by St. Augustine, endeavours by every kind of argument to make death a matter of indifference to man: — Malum est in necessitate vivere: sed in necessitate vivere, necessitas nulla est. Quidni nulla sit? Patent undique ad libertatem via multae, breves, faciles. Agamus Deo gratias, quod nemo in vita tenen possit. — V. *Senec. Epist.* xii. Cato has always been commended, because he would not survive the cause of liberty, — for that he would not live a slave. Curtius, who rode voluntarily into the gap to save his country, has always been held forth as a model of heroic virtue. Is it not evident that those martyrs who have delivered themselves up to punishment, have preferred quitting the world, to living in it contrary to their own ideas of happiness? When the fabulous Samson wished to be revenged on the Philistines, did he not consent to die with them as the only means? If our country is attacked, do we not voluntarily sacrifice our lives in its defence?

104. Christianity, and the civil laws of Christians, are very inconsistent in censuring suicide. The Old Testament furnishes examples in Samson and Eleazar — that is to say, in men who stood very high with God. The *Messiah, or* the son of the Christians' God, if it be true that he died of his own accord, was evidently a *suicide.* The same may be said of those penitents who have made it a merit of gradually destroying themselves.

105. Suicide is said to be very common in England, whose climate produces melancholy in its inhabitants. In that country those who kill themselves are looked upon as *lunatics;* — their disease does not seem more blameable than any other delirium.

106. See Chapter IX.

107. Of this truth, tobacco, coffee, and above all, brandy, furnish examples. It was this last which enabled the Europeans to enslave the negro and to subdue the savage. This is also the reason man runs to see tragedies and to witness the execution of criminals. In short, the desire of feeling, or of being powerfully moved, appears to be the principle of curiosity — of that avidity with which we seize on the marvellous, the supernatural, the incomprehensible, and on every thing that excites the imagination. Men cling to their religions as the savage does to brandy.

108. Seneca says: Modus ergo diligendi praecipiendus est homini, id est quomodo se diligat aut prosit sibi; quin autem diligat aut prosit sibi, dubitare dementis est.

109. Est autem virtus nihil aliud quam in *se* perfecta et ad summum perducta natura.. — *Cicero. De Legibus 1.* He says elsewhere Virtus rationis absolutio definitur.

110. The advantage which philosophers and men of letters have over the ignorant and the idle, or over those that neither think nor study, is owing to the variety as well as quantity of ideas furnished to the mind by study and reflection. The mind of a man who thinks finds more delight in a good book than can be obtained by all the riches at the command of the ignorant. To study is to amass ideas; and the number and combination of ideas make that difference between man and man which we observe, besides giving him an advantage over all other animals.

111. The man who would be truly rich, has no need to increase his fortune, it suffices he should diminish his wants.

112. Æstuat infelix augusto limite mundi. — Seneca says of Alexander, Post Darium and Indos pauper est Alexander; inventus est qui concupiscent aliquid post omnia. V *Senec. Epiit.* 120.

113. Cicero says — Nisi homini placuerit, Deus non erit. — "God cannot oblige men to obey him, unless he proves to them that he has the power of rendering them happy or unhappy." See the *Defence of Religion,* Vol. I. p. 433. From this we must conclude that we are right in judging of religion and of the Gods by the advantages or disadvantages they procure to society.

114. Thus Trophonius, from his cave, made affrighted mortals tremble, shook the stoutest nerves, made them turn pale with fear; his miserable, deluded supplicants, who were obliged to sacrifice to him, anointed their bodies with oil, bathed in certain rivers, and after they had offered their cake of honey and received their destiny, became so dejected, so wretchedly forlorn, that to this day their descendants, when they behold a melancholy man, exclaim, "*He has consulted the oracle of Trophonius*."

115. To this scanty list may now be added the names of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson.

116 Petronius says: Nescio quomodo bonae mentis soror est paupertas.

117. See what has been said on suicide in chapter xiv.

118. It is evident that these counsels, extravagant as they are, have been suggested to many all religions. The Indian, the Japanese, the Mahometan, the Christian, the Jew, each, according to his superstition, has made perfection to consist in fasting, mortification, abstinence from the most rational pleasures, retirement from the busy world, and in labouring without ceasing to counteract nature. Among the Pagans the priests of the Syrian Goddess were not more rational — their piety *led* them to mutilate themselves.

119. To these we may add philosophy, which is the art of advocating truth, of renouncing errour, of contemplating reality, of drawing wisdom from experience, of cultivating man's nature to his own felicity, by teaching him to contribute to that of his associates; in short, it is reason, education, and legislation, united to further the great end of human existence, by causing the passions of man to flow in a current genial to his own happiness.

120. Sallust says, Nemo gratuito malus est. We can say in the same manner. Nemo gratuito bonus est.

121. In point of fact, there is nothing more surprising in the inundation of large portion? of the earth, in the swallowing up an entire nation, in a volcanic conflagration, spreading destruction over whole provinces, than there is in a stone falling to the earth, or the death of a fly: each equally has its spring in the necessity of things.

122. An English author has very correctly remarked that the universal deluge has been perhaps no less fatal to the moral than to the physical world, the human brain retaining to this day an impression of the shock it then received. Sec *Philemon and Hydaspis,* p. 355.

It is not at all probable that the deluge mentioned in the sacred books of the Jews and Christians, was universal; but there is every reason to believe that all parts of the earth have at different times been inundated. This is proved by the uniform tradition of every nation in the world, and also by the remains of marine bodies found in every country, imbedded to greater or less depths. Yet it might be possible that a comet coming in contact with our globe, should have produced such a shock as to submerge at once whole continents! for this a miracle was not necessary!

123. The Greek word Πρεσβυς from whence is derived the name *priest,* signifies an old man. Men have always felt respect for that which bore the character of antiquity, as they have always associated with it the idea of wisdom and consummate experience. It is probably in consequence of this prejudice that men, when in doubt, generally prefer the authority of antiquity and the decisions of their ancestors to those of good sense and reason. This we see every day in matters appertaining to religion, which is supposed to have been pure I and undefiled in its infancy, although this idea is certainly without foundation.

124. At length it was deemed sacrilege even to doubt these pandects in any one particular; he that ventured to reason upon them, was looked upon as an enemy to the commonwealth; as one whose impiety drew down upon them the vengeance of these adored beings, to which alone imagination had given birth. Not contented with adopting rituals, with following the ceremonies invented by themselves, one community waged war against another, to oblige it to receive their particular creeds; which the knaves who regulated them, declared would infallibly win them the favour of their tutelary Deities: thus very often to conciliate their favour, the victorious party immolated on the altars of their Gods, the bodies of their unhappy captives; and frequently they carried their savage barbarity the length of exterminating whole nations, who happened to worship Gods different from their own: thus it frequently happened, that the friends of the serpent, when victorious, covered his altars with the mangled carcasses of the worshippers of the stone whom the fortune of war hail placed in their hands.

125. If there be a God, can it be possible we are acting rationally, eternally to make him the agent of our stupidity, of our sloth, of our want of information on natural causes? Do we, in fact, pay any kind of adoration to this being, by thus bringing him forth on every trifling occasion, to solve the difficulties ignorance throws in our way? Of whatever nature the *Cause of causes* may be, it is evident to the slightest reflection that it has been sedulous to conceal itself from our view; that it has rendered it impossible for us to have the least acquaintance with it, except through the medium of nature, which is unquestionably competent to every thing: this is the rich banquet spread before man; he *is* invited to partake, with a welcome he has no right to dispute; to enjoy therefore is to obey; *to be happy himself is to make others happy; to make others happy is to be virtuous; to be virtuous he must revere truth: to know what truth is, he must examine with caution, scrutinize with severity, every opinion ha adopts;* this granted, is it not insulting to a God to clothe him with our wayward passions; to ascribe to him designs similar to our narrow view of things; to give him our filthy desires; to suppose he can be guided by our finite conceptions; to bring him on a level with frail humanity, by investing him with our qualities, however much we may exaggerate them; to indulge an opinion that he can either act or think as we do; to imagine he can in any manner resemble such a feeble plaything, as is the greatest, the most distinguished man? No! it is to fall back into the depth of Cimmerian darkness. Let man therefore sit down cheerfully to the feast; let him contentedly partake of what he finds; but let him not worry his *may-be-God* with his useless prayers: these supplications are, in fact, at once to say, that with our limited experience, with our slender knowledge, we better understand what is suitable to our condition, what *is* convenient to our welfare, than the *Cause of all causes* who has left us in the hands of nature.

126 How many discoveries in the great science of natural philosophy has mankind progressively made, which the ignorant prejudices of our forefathers on their first announcement considered as impious, as displeasing to the Divinity, as heretical profanations, which could only be expiated by the sacrifice of the inquiring individuals, to whose labour their posterity owes such an infinity of gratitude. Even in modern days we have seen a Socrates destroyed, a Galileo condemned, whilst multitudes of other benefactors to mankind have been held in contempt by their uninformed contemporaries for those very researches into nature which the present generation hold in the highest veneration. *Whenever ignorant priests are permitted to guide the opinions of nations, science can make but a very slender progress:* natural discoveries will be always held inimical to the interest of bigoted religious men. It may, to the minds of infatuated mortals, to the shallow comprehension of prejudiced beings, appear very pious to reply on every occasion, our God do this, our God do that; but to the contemplative philosopher, to the man of reason, it will never be convincing that a sound, a mere word, can attach the reason of things; can have more than a fixed sense; can suffice to explain problems. The word God is used to denote the

impenetrable cause of those effects which astonish mankind; which man is not competent to explain. But is not this wilful idleness? Is it not inconsistent with our nature thus to give the answer of a child to every thing we do not understand; or rather which our own sloth, or our own want of industry has prevented us from knowing? Ought we not rather to redouble our efforts to penetrate the cause of those phenomena which strike our mind? When we have given this answer what have we said? Nothing but what every one knows.

127. It was easy to perceive that nature was deaf, or at least that it never interrupted its march; therefore men deemed it their interest to submit the entire of nature to an intelligent agent, whom, reasoning by analogy, they supposed better disposed to listen to them than an insensible nature which they were not able to controul. Now it remains to be shown, whether the selfish interest of man is a proof sufficient of the existence of an agent endowed with intelligence — whether, because a thing may be very convenient, it follows that it is so!

128. These hypotheses will unquestionably appear bold to those who have not sufficiently meditated on nature, but to the philosophic inquirer they are by no means inconsistent. There may have not only have been one general deluge, but even a great number since the existence of our planet; this globe itself may have been a new production in nature; it may not always have occupied the place it does at present. — *See Ch. VI.* Whatever idea may be adopted on this subject, it is very certain that, independent of those exterior causes which are competent to totally change its face, as the impulse of a comet may do, this globe contains within itself a cause adequate to alter it entirely, since, besides the diurnal and sensible motion of the earth, it has one extremely slow, almost imperceptible, by which every thing must eventually be changed in it: this is the motion from whence depends the precession of the equinoctial points, observed by Hipparchus and other mathematicians; by this motion, the earth must at the end of several thousand years change totally: this motion will at length cause the ocean to occupy that space which at present forms the lands or continents. From this it will be obvious that our globe, as well as all the beings in nature, has a continual disposition to change. This motion was known to the ancients, and was what gave rise to what they called their great year, which the Egyptians fixed at thirty-six thousand, five hundred and twenty-five years: the Sabines at thirty-six thousand, four hundred and twenty-five, whilst others have extended it to one hundred thousand, some to even seven hundred and fifty-three thousand years. — Again, to those general revolutions which our planet has at different times experienced, may be added those that have been partial, such as inundations of the sea, earthquakes, subterraneous conflagrations, which have sometimes had the effect of dispersing particular nations, and to make them forget all those sciences with which they were before acquainted. It is also probable that the first volcanic fires, having had no previous vent, were more central, and greater in quantity, before they burst the crust of earth; as the sea washed the whole, it must have rapidly sunk down into every opening, where, falling on the boiling lava, it was instantly expanded into steam, producing irresistible explosion; whence it is

reasonable to conclude, that the primeval earthquakes were more widely extended, and of much greater force, than those which occur in our days. Other vapours may be produced by intense heat, possessing a much greater elasticity, from substances that evaporate, such as mercury, diamonds, &c.; the expansive force of these vapours would be much greater than the steam of water, even at redhot heat; consequently they may have had sufficient energy to raise islands, continents, or even to have detached the moon from the earth; if the moon, as has been supposed by some philosophers, were thrown out of the great cavity which now contains the South Sea; the immense quantity of water flowing in from the original ocean, and which then covered the earth, would much contribute to leave the continents and islands, which might be raised at the same time, above the surface of the water. In later days we have accounts of huge stones falling from the firmament, which may have been thrown by explosion from some distant earthquake, without having been impelled with a force sufficient to cause them to circulate round the earth, and thus produce numerous small moons or satellites.

129. It may be that the larger animals we now behold were originally derived from the smallest microscopic ones, who have increased in bulk with the progression of time, or that, as the Egyptian philosophers thought, mankind were originally hermaphrodites, who, like the *aphis,* produced the sexual distinction after some generations. This was also the opinion of Plato, and seems to have been that of Moses, who was educated amongst the Egyptians, as may be gathered from the 27th and 28th verses of the first chapter of Genesis: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth:” it is not therefore presuming too much to suppose, as the Egyptians were a nation very fond of explaining their opinions by hieroglyphics, that that part which describes Eve as taken out of Adam’s rib, was an hieroglyphic emblem, showing that mankind were in the Primitive state of both sexes, united, who were afterwards divided into males and females.

130. Saturn was represented as an inexorable divinity — naturally artful, who devoured his own children — who revenged the anger of his mother upon his father, for which purpose she armed him with a scythe, formed of metals drawn from her own bowels, with which he struck Coelus, in the act of uniting himself to Thea, and so mutilated him that he was ever after incapacitated to increase the number of his children: he was said to have divided the throne with Janus, king of Italy, whose reign seems to have been so mild, so beneficent, that it was called the *golden age;* human victims were sacrificed on his altars, until abolished by Hercules, who substituted small images of clay. Festivals in honour of this God, called Saturnalia, were instituted long antecedent to the foundation of Rome: they were celebrated about the middle of December, either on the 16th, 17th. or 18th; they lasted in latter times

several days, originally but one. Universal liberty prevailed at the celebration, slaves were permitted to ridicule their masters — to speak freely on every subject — no criminals were executed — war never declared; the priests made their human offerings with their heads uncovered; a circumstance peculiar to the Saturnalia, not adopted at other festivals.

131. All the Gods, the entire brute creation, and the whole of mankind attended these nuptials, except one young woman named Chelone, who laughed at the ceremonies, for which impiety she was changed by Mercury into a tortoise, and condemned to perpetual silence. He was the most powerful of all the Gods, and considered as the king and father both of Gods and men: his worship was very extended, performed with greater solemnity, than that of any other God. Upon his altars smoked goats, sheep, and white bulls, in which he is said to have particularly delighted: the oak was rendered sacred to him, because he taught mankind to live upon acorns; he had many oracles where his precepts were delivered: the most celebrated of these were at Dodona and Ammon in Libya; He was supposed to be invisible to the inhabitants of the earth; the Lacedemonians erected his statue with four heads, thereby indicating that he listened readily to the solicitations of every quarter of the earth. — Minerva is represented as having no mother, but to have come completely armed from his brains, when his head was opened by Vulcan; by which it is meant to infer that wisdom is the result of this ethereal fluid.

132. Astarte had a magnificent temple at Hieropolis, served by three hundred priests, who were always employed in offering sacrifices. The priests of Cybele, called Corybantes, also Galli, were not admitted to their sacred functions without previous mutilation. In the celebration of their festivals these priests used all kinds of indecent expressions, beat drams, cymbals, and behaved just like madmen: his worship extended all over Phrygia, and was established in Greece under the name of *Eleusinian mysteries.*

133. The Greeks called nature a divinity who had a thousand names (Μπζιονομα). All the divinities of Paganism, were nothing more than nature considered according to its different functions, and under its different points of view. The emblems with which they decorated these divinities again prove this truth. These different modes of considering nature have given birth to Polytheism and idolatry. See the critical remarks against Toland by M. Benoist, page 258.

134 To convince ourselves of this truth, we have only to open the ancient authors. “I believe,” says Varro, “that God is the soul of the universe, which the Greeks have called ΚΟΣΜΟΣ, and that the universe itself is God.” Cicero says, “cos qui dii appellantur rerum natura esse.” See de Natura Deorum, lib. iii. cap. 24. The same Cicero says, that in the mysteries of Samothracia, of Lemnos, of Eleusis, it was nature much more than the Gods they explained to the initiated. Rerum magis natura cognoscitur quam deorum. Join to these authorities the Book of Wisdom, chap. xiii. ver. 10, and xiv. 15 and 22. Pliny says, in a very dogmatical style, “We must believe that the world, or that which is contained under the vast

extent, of the heavens, is the DIVINITY itself, eternal, immense, without beginning or end." *See Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. ii. cap.* 1, *init.*

135 This passage is taken from an English book entitled, *Letters concerning Mythology.* We can hardly doubt that the wisest among the Pagans adored nature, which mythology, or the Pagan theology, designated under an infinity of names and different emblems. Apuleius, although he was a Platonist and accustomed to the mysterious and unintelligible notions of his master, calls nature "rerum natura parens, elementorum omnium Domina, saeculorum progenies initialis..... Matrem siderum, parentem temporum, orbisque totius dominam." It is this nature that some adored under the name of the mother of the Gods, others under the names of Ceres, Venus, Minerva, &c. In short, the Pantheism of the Pagans is clearly proved by these remarkable words in the maxims of Medaura, who in speaking of nature says, "ita fit ut; dum ejus quasi membra carptim, variis supplicationibus prosequimur, totum colere profecto videamur."

136. The passions and faculties of human nature were used as emblems, because man was ignorant of the true cause of the phenomena he beheld. As strong passions seemed to hurry man along, in despite of himself, they either attributed these passions to a God, or deified them; it was thus love became a deity; that eloquence, poetry, industry, were transformed into Gods under the names of Hermes, Mercury, Apollo; the stings of conscience were called Furies. Christians have also deified reason under the name of *the clerical word.*

137. The Greek word ΘΕΟΣ comes from πίθημι, *pono* or rather from QEAOMDI, s*pecto, contemplor,* to take a view of hidden and secret things.

138. Montaign says, "Man is not able to be other than he is, nor imagine but after his capacity; let him take what pains he may, he will never have a knowledge of any soul but his own." Xenophanes said, "If the ox or the elephant understood either sculpture or painting, they would not fail to represent the Divinity under their own peculiar figure; that in this, they would have as much reason aa Polyclitus or Phidias, who gave him the human form." It was said to a very celebrates man that "God made man after his own image;" "Man has returned the compliment," replied the philosopher; and L'amotte le Vayer used to remark, that "*theanthropy was the foundation of every system of Christianity*."

139. The idea of the unity of God cost Socrates his life. The Athenians treated as an atheist a man who believed only in one God. Plato did not dare to break entirely with the doctrine of Polytheism; he preserved Venus, an all-powerful Jupiter, and a Pallas, who was the Goddess of the country. The Christians were looked upon as Atheists by Pagans, because they adored only one God.

140. The Greeks called the great Gods θεοι καβιροι — *Cabin;* the Romans called them *Dii majorum gentium or Dii consentes,* because the whole world were in accord in deifying the most striking and active parts of nature, such as the sun, fire, the sea, time, &c., whilst the other Gods were entirely local, that is to say, were reverenced only in particular countries,

or by individuals, as in Rome, where every citizen had Gods for himself alone, whom he adored under the names of *Penates, Lares,* &c.

141 Among the Romans they were called *Dii medioximi* — intermediate Gods; they were looked upon as mediators, or intercessors; as powers whom it was necessary to reverence in order either to obtain their favour, appease their anger, or divert their malignant intentions.

142. The fable of the Titanes, or *rebellious angels,* is extremely ancient and very generally diffused over the world; it serves for the foundation of the theology of the Brahmins of Hindostan, as well as for that of the European priesthood. According to the Brahmins, all living bodies are animated by fallen angels, who, under these forms, expiate their rebellion. This fable, as well as that of *demons,* makes the Divinity play a very ridiculous part; in fact it supposes that God gives existence to adversaries to keep himself employed, or *in training,* and to show his power. Yet there is no display whatever of this power, since, according to theological notions, the Devil has many more adherents than the Divinity.

143. The Pagan theology never showed the people in the persons of their Gods any thing more than men who were dissolute, adulterers, vindictive, and punishing with rigour those necessary crimes which were predicted by the oracles. The Judaical and Christian theology shows us a partial God who chooses or rejects, who loves or hates, according to his caprice; in short, a tyrant who plays with his creatures; who punishes in this world the whole human species for the crimes of a single man; *who predestinates* the greater number of mortals to be his enemies, to the end that he may punish them to all eternity, for having received from him the liberty of declaring against him. All the religions of the world have for basis the omnipotence of God over men; his despotism over men, and his Divine injustice. From thence, among the Christians, the doctrine of *original sin;* from thence, the theological notions upon pardon, upon the necessity of a mediator; in short, hence that ocean of absurdities with which *Christian theology is* filled. It appears, generally, that a reasonable God would not be convenient to the interests of priests.