advises that all the citizens should be armed as a militia, and that the principal towns should be fortified, and consequently, as it seems, in their power. A monarchy thus constituted would probably not degenerate into the despotic form. Spinosa appeals to the ancient government of Aragon, as a proof of the possibility of carrying his theory into execution.

79. From this imaginary monarchy he comes to an aristocratical republic. In this he seems to have taken Venice, the idol of theoretical politicians, as his primary model, but with such deviations as affect the whole scheme of government. He objects to the supremacy of an elective doge, justly observing that the precautions adopted in the election of that magistrate show the danger of the office itself, which was rather retained in the aristocratical polity as an ancient institution than from any persuasion of its usefulness. But the most remarkable discrepancy between the aristocracy of Spinosa and that of Venice is, that his great council, which ought, as he strongly urges, not to consist of less than 5000, the greatness of its number being the only safeguard against the close oligarchy of a few families, is not to be hereditary, but its vacancies to be filled up by self-election. In this election, indeed, he considers the essence of aristocracy to consist, being, as is implied in its meaning, a government by the best, who can only be pronounced such by the choice of many. It is singular that he never adverts to popular representation, of which he must have known examples. Democracy, on the contrary, he defines to be a government where political power falls to men by chance of birth, or by some means which has rendered them citizens, and who can claim it as their right, without regard to the choice of others. And a democracy, according to Spinosa, may exist, if the law should limit this privilege of power to the seniors in age, or to the elder branches of families, or to those who pay a certain amount in taxation; although the numbers enjoying it should be a smaller portion of the community than in an aristocracy of the form he has recommended. His treatise breaks off near the beginning of the chapters intended to delineate the best model of democracy, which he declares to be one wherein all persons, in their own power, and not infamous by crime, should have a share

in the public government. I do not know that it can be inferred from the writings of Spinosa, nor is his authority, perhaps, sufficient to render the question of any interest, to which of the three plans devised by him as the best in their respective forms, he would have ascribed the preference.

Amelot de la Houssaye.

80. The condition of France under Louis XIV. was not very tempting to speculators on political theory. Whatever short remarks may be found in those excellent writers on other subjects who distinguish this period, we can select no one book that falls readily into this class. For Télémaque we must find another place. It is scarcely worth while to mention the political discourses on Tacitus, by Amelot de la Houssaye. These are a tedious and pedantic running commentary on Tacitus, affecting to deduce general principles, but much unlike the short and poignant observations of Machiavel and Bacon. A whole volume on the reign alone of Tiberius, and printed at Paris, is not likely to repay a reader's trouble; at least I have found nothing in it above the common level. I have no acquaintance with the other political writings of Amelot de la Houssaye, one of those who thought they could make great discoveries by analysing the constitution of Venice and other states.

Harrington's Oceana.

81. England, thrown at the commencement of this period upon the resources of her own invention to replace an ancient monarchy by something new, and rich at that time in reflecting as well as learned men, with an unshackled press, and a growing disdain of authority as opposed to argument, was the natural soil of political theory. The earliest fruit was Sir James Harrington's Oceana, published in 1656. This once famous book is a political allegory, partly suggested, perhaps, by the Dodona's Grove of Howell, or by Barclay's Argenis, and a few other fictions of the preceding age. His Oceana represents England, the history of which is shadowed out with fictitious names. But this is preliminary to the great object, the scheme of a new commonwealth, which, under the auspices of Olphaus Megaletor, the Lord Archon, meaning, of course, Cromwell, not as he was, but as he ought to have been, the author feigns to have been established. The various

laws and constitutions of this polity occupy the whole work.

82. The leading principle of Harrington is that power depends on property; denying the common saying that knowledge or prudence is power. But this property must be in land, "because, as to property producing empire, it is required that it should have some certain root or foothold, which except in land it cannot have, being otherwise, as it were, upon the wing. Nevertheless, in such cities as subsist mostly by trade, and have little or no land, as Holland and Genoa, the balance of treasure may be equal to that of land."[c] The law fixing the balance of lands is called by him agrarian; and without an agrarian law he holds that no government, whether monarchical, aristocratic, or popular, has any long duration: this is rather paradoxical; but his distribution of lands varies according to the form of the commonwealth. In one best constituted the possession of lands is limited to 2000*l*. a-year; which, of course, in his time was a much greater estate than at present.

83. Harrington's general scheme of a good government is one "established upon an equal agrarian arising into the superstructure, or three orders, the senate debating and proposing, the people resolving, and the magistracy executing by an equal rotation through the suffrage of the people given by the ballot." His more particular form of polity, devised for his Oceana, it would be tedious to give in detail; the result is a moderate aristocracy; property, though under the control of his agrarian, which prevents its excess, having so great a share in the elections that it must predominate. But it is an aristocracy of what we should call the middle ranks, and might not be unfit for a small state. In general it may be said of Harrington that he is prolix, dull, pedantic, and seldom profound; but sometimes redeems himself by just observations. Like most theoretical politicians of that age, he had an excessive admiration for the republic of Venice.[d] His other political writings are in the same spirit as the Oceana, but still less interesting.

[c] P. 38, edit. 1771.

[d] "If I be worthy to give advice to a man that would study politics, let him understand Venice; he that understands Venice right, shall go nearest to judge, notwithstanding the difference that is in every policy, right of any government in the world." Harrington's Works, p. 292.

84. The manly republicanism of Harrington, though sometimes visionary and perhaps impracticable, shines by comparison with a very opposite theory, which, having been countenanced in the early part of the century by our clergy, revived with additional favour after the Restoration. This was maintained in the Patriarcha of Sir Robert Filmer, written, as it appears, in the reign of Charles I., but not published till 1680, at a time when very high notions of royal prerogative were as well received by one party as they were indignantly rejected by another. The object, as the author declares, was to prove that the first kings were fathers of families; that it is unnatural for the people to govern or to choose governors; that positive laws do not infringe the natural and fatherly power of kings. He refers the tenet of natural liberty and the popular origin of government to the schoolmen, allowing that all papists and the reformed divines have imbibed it, but denying that it is found in the fathers. He seems, however, to claim the credit of an original hypothesis; those who have vindicated the rights of kings in most points not having thought of this, but with one consent admitted the natural liberty and equality of mankind. It is certain, nevertheless, that the patriarchal theory of government as the basis of actual right was laid down as explicitly as by himself in what is called Bishop Overall's Convocation Book, at the beginning of the reign of James I. But this book had not been published when Filmer wrote. His arguments are singularly insufficient; he quotes nothing but a few irrelevant texts from Genesis; he seems not to have known at all the strength, whatever it may be, of his own case, and it is hardly possible to find a more trifling and feeble work. It had however the advantage of opportunity to be received by a party with approbation.

Patriarcha of Filmer.

85. Algernon Sidney was the first who devoted his time to a refutation of this patriarchal theory, propounded as it was, not as a plausible hypothesis to explain the origin of civil communities, but as a paramount title, by virtue of which all actual sovereigns, who were not manifest usurpers, were to reign with an unmitigated despotism. Sidney's Discourses on Government, not published till 1698, are

Sidney's Discourses on Government.

a diffuse reply to Filmer. They contain indeed many chapters full of historical learning and judicious reflection; yet the constant anxiety to refute that which needs no refutation renders them a little tedious. Sidney does not condemn a limited monarchy like the English, but his partiality is for a form of republic which would be deemed too aristocratical for our popular theories.

86. Locke, immediately after the Revolution, attacked the Patriarcha with more brevity, and laid down his own celebrated theory of government. The fundamental principle of Filmer is, that paternal authority is naturally absolute. Adam received it from God, exercised it over his own children, and transmitted it to the eldest born for ever. This assumption Locke combats rather too diffusely, according to our notions. Filmer had not only to show this absolute monarchy of a lineal ancestor, but his power of transmitting it in course of primogeniture. Locke denies that there is any natural right of this kind, maintaining the equality of children. The incapacity of Filmer renders his discomfiture not difficult. Locke, as will be seen, acknowledges a certain *de facto* authority in fathers of families, and possibly he might have found, as indeed he seems to admit, considerable traces of a regard to primogeniture in the early ages of the world. It is the question of natural right with which he is here concerned; and as no proof of this had been offered, he had nothing to answer.

Locke on Government.

87. In the second part of Locke's Treatise on Civil Government, he proceeds to lay down what he holds to be the true principles upon which society is founded. A state of nature is a state of perfect freedom and equality; but within the bounds of the law of nature, which obliges every one, and renders a state of liberty no state of licence. And the execution of this law, in such a state, is put into every one's hands, so that he may punish transgressors against it, not merely by way of reparation for his own wrongs, but for those of others. "Every offence that can be committed in the state of nature may, in the state of nature, be punished equally, and as far forth, as it may in a commonwealth." And not only independent communities, but all men, as he thinks, till

they voluntarily enter into some society, are in a state of nature.[e]

88. Whoever declares by word or action a settled design against another's life, puts himself in a state of war against him, and exposes his own life to be taken away, either by the other party, or by any one who shall espouse his cause. And he who endeavours to obtain absolute power over another may be construed to have a design on his life, or at least to take away his property. Where laws prevail, they must determine the punishment of those who injure others; but if the law is silenced, it is hard to think but that the appeal to Heaven returns, and the aggressor may be treated as one in a state of war.[f]

89. Natural liberty is freedom from any superior power except the law of nature. Civil liberty is freedom from the dominion of any authority except that which a legislature, established by consent of the commonwealth, shall confirm. No man, according to Locke, can by his own consent enslave himself, or give power to another to take away his life. For slavery, in a strict sense, is but a continuance of the state of war between a conqueror and his captive.[g]

90. The excellent chapter on property which follows would be sufficient, if all Locke's other writings had perished, to leave him a high name in philosophy. Nothing can be more luminous than his deduction of the natural right of property from labour, not merely in gathering the fruits of the earth, or catching wild animals, but in the cultivation of land, for which occupancy is but the preliminary, and gives as it were an inchoate title. "As much land as a man tills, plants, improves, cultivates, and can use the product of, so much is his property. He by his labour does, as it were, inclose it from the common." Whatever is beyond the scanty limits of individual or family labour, has been appropriated under the authority of civil society. But labour is the primary basis of natural right. Nor can it be thought unreasonable that labour should confer an exclusive right, when it is remembered how much of every thing's value depends upon labour alone. "Whatever bread is more worth than acorns, wine than water,

[e] L. ii. c. 2. [f] C. 3. [g] C. 4.

and cloth or silk than leaves, skins, or moss, that is wholly owing to labour and industry." The superiority in good sense and satisfactory elucidation of his principle, which Locke has manifested in this important chapter over Grotius and Puffendorf, will strike those who consult those writers, or look at the brief sketch of their theories in the foregoing pages. It is no less contrasted with the puerile rant of Rousseau against all territorial property. That property owes its origin to occupancy accompanied with labour, is now generally admitted; the care of cattle being of course to be considered as one species of labour, and requiring at least a temporary ownership of the soil.[h]

91. Locke, after acutely remarking that the common arguments for the power of a father over his children would extend equally to the mother, so that it should be called parental power, reverts to the train of reasoning in the first book of this treatise against the regal authority of fathers. What they possess is not derived from generation, but from the care they necessarily take of the infant child, and during his minority; the power then terminates, though reverence, support, and even compliance are still due. Children are also held in subordination to their parents by the institutions of property, which commonly make them dependent both as to maintenance and succession. But Locke, which is worthy to be remarked, inclines to derive the origin of civil government from the patriarchal authority; one not strictly coercive, yet voluntarily conceded by habit and family consent. "Thus the natural fathers of families, by an insensible change, became the politic monarchs of them too; and as they chanced to live long, and leave worthy and able heirs for several successions or otherwise, so they laid the foundations of hereditary or elective kingdoms."[i]

92. The necessity that man should not live alone, produced the primary society of husband and wife, parent and children, to which that of master and servant was early added; whether of freemen engaging their service for hire, or of slaves taken in just war, who are by the right of nature subject to the absolute dominion of the captor. Such a family may sometimes resemble a little

h C. 5. i C. 6.

commonwealth by its numbers, but is essentially distinct from one, because its chief has no imperial power of life and death except over his slaves, nature having given him none over his children, though all men have a right to punish breaches of the law of nature in others according to the offence. But this natural power they quit and resign into the hands of the community, when civil society is instituted; and it is in this union of the several rights of its members that the legislative right of the commonwealth consists, whether this be done by general consent at the first formation of government, or by the adhesion which any individual may give to one already established. By either of these ways men pass from a state of nature to one of political society, the magistrate having now that power to redress injuries which had previously been each man's right. Hence absolute monarchy, in Locke's opinion, is no form of civil government; for there being no common authority to appeal to, the sovereign is still in a state of nature with regard to his subjects.[k]

93. A community is formed by the unanimous consent of any body of men; but when thus become one body, the determination of the majority must bind the rest, else it would not be one. Unanimity, after a community is once formed, can no longer be required; but this consent of men to form a civil society is that which alone did or could give beginning to any lawful government in the world. It is idle to object that we have no records of such an event; for few commonwealths preserve the tradition of their own infancy; and whatever we do know of the origin of particular states gives indications of this mode of union. Yet he again inclines to deduce the usual origin of civil societies from imitation of patriarchal authority, which having been recognised by each family in the arbitration of disputes and even punishment of offences, was transferred with more readiness to some one person, as the father and representative head of the infant community. He even admits that this authority might tacitly devolve upon the eldest son. Thus the first governments were monarchies, and those with no express limitations of power, till exposure of its abuse gave occasion to social laws, or to co-ordinate authority.

[k] C. 7.

In all this he follows Hooker, from the first book of whose Ecclesiastical Polity he quotes largely in his notes.[m]

94. A difficulty commonly raised against the theory of compact is, that all men being born under some government, they cannot be at liberty to erect a new one, or even to make choice whether they will obey or no. This objection Locke does not meet, like Hooker and the jurists, by supposing the agreement of a distant ancestor to oblige all his posterity. But explicitly acknowledging that nothing can bind freemen to obey any government save their own consent, he rests the evidence of a tacit consent on the enjoyment of land, or even on mere residence within the dominions of the community; every man being at liberty to relinquish his possessions, or change his residence, and either incorporate himself with another commonwealth, or, if he can find an opportunity, set up for himself in some unoccupied part of the world. But nothing can make a man irrevocably a member of one society, except his own voluntary declaration; such perhaps as the oath of allegiance, which Locke does not mention, ought to be reckoned.[n]

95. The majority having, in the first constitution of a state, the whole power, may retain it themselves, or delegate it to one or more persons.[o] And the supreme power is, in other words, the legislature, sacred and unalterable in the hands where the community have once placed it, without which no law can exist, and in which all obedience terminates. Yet this legislative authority itself is not absolute or arbitrary over the lives and fortunes of its subjects. It is the joint power of individuals surrendered to the state; but no man has power over his own life or his neighbour's property. The laws enacted by the legislature must be conformable to the will of God, or natural justice. Nor can it take any part of the subject's property without his own consent, or that of the majority. "For if any one shall claim a power to lay and levy taxes on the people by his own authority, and without such consent of the people, he thereby invades the fundamental law of property, and subverts the end of government. For what property have I in that which another may by right take, when he pleases, to himself?"

[m] C. 8. [n] C. 8. [o] C. 10.

Lastly, the legislative power is inalienable; being but delegated from the people, it cannot be transferred to others.[p] This is the part of Locke's treatise which has been open to most objection, and which in some measure seems to charge with usurpation all the established governments of Europe. It has been a theory fertile of great revolutions, and perhaps pregnant with more. In some part of this chapter also, though by no means in the most practical corollaries, the language of Hooker has led onward his more hardy disciple.

96. Though the legislative power is alone supreme in the constitution, it is yet subject to the people themselves, who may alter it whenever they find that it acts against the trust reposed in it; all power given in trust for a particular end being evidently forfeited when that end is manifestly disregarded or obstructed. But while the government subsists the legislature is alone sovereign, though it may be the usage to call a single executive magistrate sovereign, if he has also a share in legislation. Where this is not the case, the appellation is plainly improper. Locke has in this chapter a remarkable passage, one perhaps of the first declarations in favour of a change in the electoral system of England. "To what gross absurdities the following of custom, when reason has left it, may lead, we may be satisfied when we see the bare name of a town, of which there remains not so much as the ruins, where scarce so much housing as a sheep-cote or more inhabitants than a shepherd is to be found, send as many representatives to the grand assembly of law-makers as a whole county, numerous in people, and powerful in riches. This strangers stand amazed at, and every one must confess needs a remedy, though most think it hard to find one, because the constitution of the legislative being the original and supreme act of the society, antecedent to all positive laws in it, and depending wholly on the people, no inferior power can alter it." But Locke is less timid about a remedy, and suggests that the executive magistrate might regulate the number of representatives, not according to old custom but reason, which is not setting up a new legislature, but restoring an old one. "Whatsoever shall be done manifestly for the good of the people and the establishing

[p] C. 11.

the government on its true foundation, is, and always will be, just prerogative;"[q] a maxim of too dangerous latitude for a constitutional monarchy.

97. Prerogative he defines to be "a power of acting according to discretion for the public good without the prescription of the law, and sometimes even against it." This, however, is not by any means a good definition in the eyes of a lawyer; and the word, being merely technical, ought not to have been employed in so partial if not so incorrect a sense. Nor is it very precise to say, that in England the prerogative was always largest in the hands of our wisest and best princes, not only because the fact is otherwise, but because he confounds the legal prerogative with its actual exercise. This chapter is the most loosely reasoned of any in the treatise.[r]

98. Conquest, in an unjust war, can give no right at all, unless robbers and pirates may acquire a right. Nor is any one bound by promises which unjust force extorts from him. If we are not strong enough to resist, we have no remedy save patience; but our children may appeal to Heaven, and repeat their appeals till they recover their ancestral right, which was to be governed by such a legislation as themselves approve. He that appeals to Heaven must be sure that he has right on his side, and right too that is worth the trouble and cost of his appeal, as he will answer at a tribunal that cannot be deceived. Even just conquest gives no further right than to reparation of injury; and the posterity of the vanquished, he seems to hold, can forfeit nothing by their parent's offence, so that they have always a right to throw off the yoke. The title of prescription, which has commonly been admitted to silence the complaints, if not to heal the wounds, of the injured, finds no favour with Locke.[s] But hence it seems to follow that no state composed, as most have been, out of the spoils of conquest, can exercise a legitimate authority over the latest posterity of those it has incorporated. Wales, for instance, has an eternal right to shake off the yoke of England; for what Locke says of consent to laws by representatives, is of little weight when these must be outnumbered in the general legislature of both countries;

[q] C. 13. [r] C. 14. [s] C. 16.

and indeed the first question for the Cambro-Britons would be to determine whether they would form part of such a common legislation.

99. Usurpation, which is a kind of domestic conquest, gives no more right to obedience than unjust war; it is necessary that the people should both be at liberty to consent, and have actually consented to allow and confirm a power which the constitution of their commonwealth does not recognise.[t] But tyranny may exist without usurpation, whenever the power reposed in any one's hands for the people's benefit is abused to their impoverishment or slavery. Force may never be opposed but to unjust and unlawful force: in any other case, it is condemned before God and man. The king's person is in some countries sacred by law; but this, as Locke thinks, does not extend to the case where, by putting himself in a state of war with his people, he dissolves the government.[u] A prince dissolves the government by ruling against law, by hindering the regular assembly of the legislature, by changing the form of election, or by rendering the people subject to a foreign power. He dissolves it also by neglecting or abandoning it, so that the laws cannot be put into execution. The government is also dissolved by breach of trust in either the legislature or the prince; by the former when it usurps an arbitrary power over the lives, liberties, and fortunes of the subject; by the latter, when he endeavours to corrupt the representatives or to influence the choice of the electors. If it be objected that no government will be able long to subsist, if the people may set up a new legislature whenever they take offence at the old one, he replies that mankind are too slow and averse to quit their old institutions for this danger to be apprehended. Much will be endured from rulers without mutiny or murmur. Nor is anything more likely to restrain governments than this doctrine of the right of resistance. It is as reasonable to tell men they should not defend themselves against robbers, because it may occasion disorder, as to use the same argument for passive obedience to illegal dominion. And he observes, after quoting some other writers, that Hooker alone might be enough to satisfy those who rely on him for their ecclesiastical polity.[x]

[t] C. 17. [u] C. 18. [x] C. 19.

100. Such is, in substance, the celebrated treatise of Locke on civil government, which, with the favour of political circumstances, and the authority of his name, became the creed of a numerous party at home; while silently spreading the fibres from its root over Europe and America, it prepared the way for theories of political society, hardly bolder in their announcement, but expressed with more passionate ardour, from which the great revolutions of the last and present age have sprung. But as we do not launch our bark upon a stormy sea, we shall merely observe that neither the Revolution of 1688, nor the administration of William III., could have borne the test by which Locke has tried the legitimacy of government. There was certainly no appeal to the people in the former, nor would it have been convenient for the latter to have had the maxim established, that an attempt to corrupt the legislature entails a forfeiture of the intrusted power. Whether the opinion of Locke, that mankind are slow to political change, be conformable to an enlarged experience, must be judged by every one according to his reading and observation; it is at least very different from that which Hooker, to whom he defers so greatly in most of his doctrine, has uttered in the very first sentence of his Ecclesiastical Polity. For my own part I must confess, that in these latter chapters of Locke on Government I see, what sometimes appears in his other writings, that the influence of temporary circumstances on a mind a little too susceptible of passion and resentment, had prevented that calm and patient examination of all the bearings of this extensive subject which true philosophy requires.

Observations on this Treatise.

101. But whatever may be our judgment of this work, it is equally true that it opened a new era of political opinion in Europe. The earlier writings on the side of popular sovereignty, whether those of Buchanan and Languet, of the Jesuits, or of the English republicans, had been either too closely dependent on temporary circumstances, or too much bound up with odious and unsuccessful factions, to sink very deep into the hearts of mankind. Their adversaries, with the countenance of every government on their side, kept possession of the field; and no later jurist, nor theologian, nor philo-

sopher on the Continent, while they generally followed their predecessors in deriving the origin of civil society from compact, ventured to moot the delicate problem of resistance to tyranny, or of the right to reform a constitution, except in the most cautious and indefinite language. We have seen this already in Grotius and Puffendorf. But the success of the English Revolution, the necessity which the powers allied against France found of maintaining the title of William, the peculiar interest of Holland and Hanover (states at that time very strong in the literary world) in our new scheme of government, gave a weight and authority to principles which, without some such application, it might still have been thought seditious to propound. Locke too, long an exile in Holland, was intimate with Le Clerc, who exerted a considerable influence over the Protestant part of Europe. Barbeyrac, some time afterwards, trod nearly in the same steps, and without going all the lengths of Locke, did not fail to take a very different tone from the two older writers upon whom he has commented.

Avis aux Refugiéz, perhaps by Bayle.

102. It was very natural that the French Protestants, among whom traditions of a turn of thinking not the most favourable to kings may have been preserved, should, in the hour of severe persecution, mutiny in words and writings against the despotism that oppressed them. Such, it appears, had been the language of those exiles, as it is of all exiles, when an anonymous tract, entitled Avis aux Refugiéz, was published with the date of Amsterdam, in 1690. This, under pretext of giving advice, in the event of their being permitted to return home, that they should get rid of their spirit of satire, and of their republican theories, is a bitter and able attack on those who had taken refuge in Holland. It asserts the principle of passive obedience, extolling also the King of France and his government, and censuring the English Revolution. Public rumour ascribed this to Bayle; it has usually passed for his, and is even inserted in the collection of his miscellaneous works. Some, however, have ascribed it to Pelisson, and others to Larroque; one already, and the other soon after, proselytes to the church of Rome. Basnage thought it written by the

latter, and published by Bayle, to whom he ascribed the preface. This is apparently in a totally opposite strain, but not without strong suspicion of irony or ill faith. The style and manner of the whole appear to suggest Bayle; and though the supposition is very discreditable to his memory, the weight of presumption seems much to incline that way.

103. The separation of political economy from the general science which regards the well-being of communities, was not so strictly made by the earlier philosophers as in modern times. It does not follow that national wealth engaged none of their attention. Few, on the contrary, of those who have taken comprehensive views could have failed to regard it. In Bodin, Botero, Bacon, Hobbes, Puffendorf, we have already seen proofs of this. These may be said to have discussed the subject, not systematically, nor always with thorough knowledge, but with acuteness and in a philosophical tone. Others there were of a more limited range, whose habits of life and experience led them to particular departments of economical inquiry, especially as to commerce, the precious metals, and the laws affecting them. The Italians led the way; Serra has been mentioned in the last period, and a few more might find a place in this. De Witt's Interest of Holland can hardly be reckoned among economical writings; and it is said by Morhof, that the Dutch were not fond of promulgating their commercial knowledge;[y] little at least was contributed from that country, even at a later period, towards the theory of becoming rich. But England now took a large share in this new literature. Free, inquisitive, thriving rapidly in commerce, so that her progress even in the nineteenth century has hardly been in a greater ratio than before and after the middle of the seventeenth, if we may trust the statements of contemporaries, she produced some writers who, though few of them merit the name of philosophers, yet may not here be overlooked, on account of their influence, their reputation, or their position as links in the chain of science.

Political economists.

104. The first of these was Thomas Mun, an intelli-

[y] Polyhistor, part iii. lib. iii. § 3

gent merchant in the earlier part of the century, whose posthumous treatise, England's Treasure by Foreign Trade, was published in 1664, but seems to have been written soon after the accession of Charles I.[z] Mun is generally reckoned the founder of what has been called the mercantile system. His main position is that "the ordinary means to increase our wealth and treasure is by foreign trade, wherein we must ever observe this rule, to sell more to strangers yearly than we consume of theirs in value."[a] We must therefore sell as cheap as possible; it was by underselling the Venetians of late years, that we had exported a great deal of cloth to Turkey.[b] It is singular that Mun should not have perceived the difficulty of selling very cheap the productions of a country's labour, whose gold and silver were in great abundance. He was, however, too good a merchant not to acknowledge the inefficacy and impolicy of restraining by law the exportation of coin, which is often a means of increasing our treasure in the long run; advising instead a due regard to the balance of trade, or general surplus of exported goods, by which we shall infallibly obtain a stock of gold and silver. These notions have long since been covered with ridicule; and it is plain that, in a merely economical view, they must always be delusive. Mun, however, looked to the accumulation of a portion of this imported treasure by the state; a resource in critical emergencies which we have now learned to despise since others have been at hand, but which in reality had made a great difference in the events of war, and changed the balance of power between many commonwealths. Mun was followed, about 1670, by Sir Josiah Child, in a discourse on Trade, written on the same principles of the mercantile system, but more copious and varied. The chief aim of Child is to effect a reduction of the legal interest of money from six to four per cent., drawing an erroneous inference from the increase of wealth which had followed similar enactments.

Mun on foreign trade.

Child on Trade.

105. Among the many difficulties with which the

[z] Mr. M'Culloch says (Introductory Discourse to Smith's Wealth of Nations) it had most probably been written about 1635 or 1640. I remarked some things which serve to carry it up a little higher.

[a] P. 11 (edit. 1664).

[b] P. 18.

government of William III. had to contend, one of the most embarrassing was the scarcity of the precious metals and depreciated condition of the coin. This opened the whole field of controversy in that province of political economy; and the bold spirit of inquiry, unshackled by prejudice in favour of ancient custom, which in all respects was characteristic of that age, began to work by reasonings on general theorems, instead of collecting insulated and inconclusive details. Locke stood forward on this, as on so many subjects, with his masculine sense and habitual closeness of thinking. His "Considerations of the Consequences of lowering Interest, and raising the Value of Money" were published in 1691. Two further treatises are in answer to the pamphlets of Lowndes. These economical writings of Locke are not in all points conformable to the modern principles of the science. He seems to incline rather too much towards the mercantile theory, and to lay too much stress on the possession of the precious metals. From his excellent sense, however, as well as from some expressions, I should conceive that he only considers them, as they doubtless are, a portion of the exchangeable wealth of the nation, and by their inconsumable nature, as well as by the constancy of the demand for them, one of the most important. "Riches do not consist," he says, "in having more gold and silver, but in having more in proportion than the rest of the world or than our neighbours, whereby we are enabled to procure to ourselves a greater plenty of the conveniences of life."

Locke on the Coin.

106. Locke had the sagacity to perceive the impossibility of regulating the interest of money by law. It was an empirical proposition at that time, as we have just seen, of Sir Josiah Child, to render loans more easy to the borrower by reducing the legal rate to four per cent. The whole drift of his reasoning is against any limitation, though, from fear of appearing too paradoxical, he does not arrive at that inference. For the reasons he gives in favour of a legal limit of interest, namely, that courts of law may have some rule where nothing is stipulated in the contract, and that a few money lenders in the metropolis may not have the monopoly of all loans in England, are, especially the

first, so trifling, that he could not have relied upon them; and indeed he admits that, in other circumstances, there would be no danger from the second. But his prudence having restrained him from speaking out, a famous writer almost a century afterwards came forward to assert a paradox, which he loved the better for seeming such, and finally to convince the thinking part of mankind.

107. Laws fixing the value of silver Locke perceived to be nugatory, and is averse to prohibiting its exportation. The value of money, he maintains, does not depend on the rate of interest, but on its plenty relatively to commodities. Hence the rate of interest, he thinks, but perhaps erroneously, does not govern the price of land; arguing from the higher rate of land relatively to money, that is, the worse interest it gave, in the reigns of Elizabeth and James, than in his own time. But one of Locke's positions, if generally received, would alone have sufficed to lower the value of land. "It is in vain," he says, "in a country whose great fund is land, to hope to lay the public charges of the government on anything else; there at last it will terminate." The legislature soon proceeded to act on this mistaken theory in the annual land-tax; an impost of tremendous severity at that time, the gross unfairness, however, of which has been compensated in later times by the taxes on personal succession.

108. In such a monetary crisis as that of his time, Locke was naturally obliged to consider the usual resource of raising the denomination of the coin. This, he truly says, would be to rob all creditors of such a proportion of their debts. It is probable that his influence, which was very considerable, may have put a stop to the scheme. He contends in his Further Considerations, in answer to a tract by Lowndes, that clipped money should go only by weight. This seems to have been agreed by both parties; but Lowndes thought the loss should be defrayed by a tax, Locke that it should fall on the holders. Honourably for the government, the former opinion prevailed.

Statistical tracts.

109. The Italians were the first who laid anything like a foundation for statistics or political arithmetic; that which is to the political economist

what general history is to the philosopher. But their numerical reckonings of population, houses, value of lands or stock, and the like, though very curious, and sometimes taken from public documents, were not always more than conjectural, nor are they so full and minute as the spirit of calculation demands. England here again took the lead in Graunt's Observations on the Bills of Mortality, 1661, in Petty's Political Arithmetic (posthumous in 1691), and other treatises of the same ingenious and philosophical person, and, we may add, in the Observations of Gregory King on the Natural and Political State of England; for though these were not published till near the end of the eighteenth century, the manuscripts had fallen into the hands of Dr. Charles Davenant, who has made extracts from them in his own valuable contributions to political arithmetic. King seems to have possessed a sagacity which has sometimes brought his conjectures nearer to the mark, than from the imperfection of his data it was reasonable to expect. Yet he supposes that the population of England, which he estimated, perhaps rightly, at five millions and a half, would not reach the double of that number before A.D. 2300. Sir William Petty, with a mind capable of just and novel theories, was struck by the necessary consequences of an uniformly progressive population. Though the rate of movement seemed to him, as in truth it then was, much slower than we have latterly found it, he clearly saw that its continuance would in an ascertainable length of time overload the world. "And then, according to the prediction of the Scriptures, there must be wars and great slaughter." He conceived that, in the ordinary course of things, the population of a country would be doubled in two hundred years; but the whole conditions of the problem were far less understood than at present. Davenant's Essay on Ways and Means, 1693, gained him a high reputation, which he endeavoured to augment by many subsequent works, some falling within the seventeenth century. He was a man of more enlarged reading than his predecessors, with the exception of Petty, and of close attention to the statistical documents which were now more copiously published than before; but he seldom launches into any extensive theory, confining

himself rather to the accumulation of facts and to the immediate inferences, generally for temporary purposes, which they supplied.

SECT. III.—ON JURISPRUDENCE.

Works of Leibnitz on Roman law.

110. IN 1667, a short book was published at Frankfort, by a young man of twenty-two years, entitled Methodi Novæ discendæ docendæque Jurisprudentiæ. The science which of all others had been deemed to require the most protracted labour, the ripest judgment, the most experienced discrimination, was, as it were, invaded by a boy, but by one who had the genius of an Alexander, and for whom the glories of an Alexander were reserved. This is the first production of Leibnitz; and it is probably in many points of view the most remarkable work that has prematurely united erudition and solidity. We admire in it the vast range of learning (for though he could not have read all the books he names, there is evidence of his acquaintance with a great number, and at least with a well-filled chart of literature), the originality of some ideas, the commanding and comprehensive views he embraces, the philosophical spirit, the compressed style in which it is written, the entire absence of juvenility, of ostentatious paradox,[c] of imagination, ardour, and enthusiasm, which, though Leibnitz did not always want them, would have been wholly misplaced on such a subject. Faults have been censured in this early performance, and the author declared himself afterwards dissatisfied with it.[d]

[c] I use the epithet ostentatious, because some of his original theories are a little paradoxical; thus he has a singular notion that the right of bequeathing property by testament is derived from the immortality of the soul; the living heirs being, as it were, the attorneys of those we suppose to be dead. Quia mortui revera adhuc vivunt, ideo manent domini rerum, quos vero hæredes reliquerunt, concipiendi sunt ut procuratores in rem suam. In our own discussions on the law of entail, I am not aware that this argument has ever been explicitly urged, though the advocates of perpetual control seem to have none better.

[d] This tract, and all the other works of Leibnitz on Jurisprudence, will be found in the fourth volume of his works by Dutens. An analysis by Bon, professor of law at Turin, is prefixed to the Methodi Novæ, and he has pointed out

111. Leibnitz was a passionate admirer of the Roman jurisprudence; he held the great lawyers of antiquity second only to the best geometers for strong, and subtle, and profound reasoning; not even acknowledging, to any considerable degree, the contradictions (antinomiæ juris) which had perplexed their disciples in later times, and on which many volumes had been written. But the arrangement of Justinian he entirely disapproved; and in another work, Corporis Juris reconcinnandi Ratio, published in 1668, he pointed out the necessity and what he deemed the best method of a new distribution. This appears to be not quite like what he had previously sketched, and which was rather a philosophical than a very convenient method;[e] in this new arrangement he proposes to retain the texts of the Corpus Juris Civilis, but in a form rather like that of the Pandects than of the Institutes; to the latter of which, followed as it has been among us by Hale and Blackstone, he was very averse.

112. There was only one man in the world who could have left so noble a science as philosophical jurisprudence for pursuits of a still more exalted nature, and for which he was still more fitted; and that man was Leibnitz himself. He passed onward to reap the golden harvests of other fields. Yet the study of law has owed much to him; he did much to unite it with moral philosophy on the one hand, and with history on the other; a great master of both, he exacted perhaps a more comprehensive course of legal studies than the capacity of ordinary lawyers could grasp. In England also, its conduciveness to professional excellence might be hard to prove. It is however certain that, in Germany at least, philology, history, and philosophy have more or less since the time of Leibnitz marched together under the robe of law. "He did but pass over that

a few errors. Leibnitz says in a letter about 1676, that his book was effusus potius quam scriptus, in itinere, sine libris, &c., and that it contained some things he no longer would have said, though there were others of which he did not repent. Lerminier, Hist. du Droit, p. 150.

[e] In his Methodi Novæ he divides law, in the didactic part, according to the several sources of rights; namely, 1. Nature, which gives us right over res nullius, things where there is no prior property. 2. Succession. 3. Possession. 4. Contract. 5. Injury, which gives right to reparation.

kingdom," says Lerminier, "and he has reformed and enlarged it."[f]

113. James Godefroy was thirty years engaged on an edition of the Theodosian Code, published several years after his death, in 1665. It is by far the best edition of that body of laws, and retains a standard value in the historical department of jurisprudence. Domat, a French lawyer, and one of the Port-Royal connexion, in his Loix Civiles dans leur Ordre Naturel, the first of five volumes of which appeared in 1689, carried into effect the project of Leibnitz, by re-arranging the laws of Justinian, which, especially the Pandects, are well known to be confusedly distributed, in a more regular method, prefixing a book of his own on the nature and spirit of law in general. This appears to be an useful digest or abridgment, something like those made by Viner and earlier writers of our own text-books, but perhaps with more compression and choice; two editions of an English translation were published. Domat's Public Law, which might, perhaps, in our language, have been called constitutional, since we generally confine the epithet public to the law of nations, forms a second part of the same work, and contains a more extensive system, wherein theological morality, ecclesiastical ordinances, and the fundamental laws of the French monarchy are reduced into method. Domat is much extolled by his countrymen; but in philosophical jurisprudence, he seems to display little force or originality. Gravina, who obtained a high name in this literature at the beginning of the next century, was known merely as a professor at the close of this; but a Dutch jurist, Gerard Noodt, may deserve mention for his treatise on Usury, in 1698, wherein he both endeavours to prove its natural and religious lawfulness, and traces its history through the Roman law. Several other works of Noodt on subjects of historical jurisprudence seem to fall within this century, though I do not find their exact dates of publication.

Civil Jurists—Godefroy—Domat.

Noodt on Usury.

114. Grotius was the acknowledged master of all who

[f] Biogr. Univ.; Lerminier, Hist. du Droit, p. 142.

studied the theory of international right. It was, perhaps, the design of Puffendorf, as we may conjecture by the title of his great work on the Law of Nature and Nations, to range over the latter field with as assiduous diligence as the former. But from the length of his prolix labour on natural law and the rights of sovereigns, he has not more than one twentieth of the whole volume to spare for international questions; and this is in great measure copied or abridged from Grotius. In some instances he disagrees with his master. Puffendorf singularly denies that compacts made during war are binding by the law of nature, but for weak and unintelligible reasons.[g] Treaties of peace extorted by unjust force, he denies with more reason to be binding; though Grotius had held the contrary.[h] The inferior writers on the law of nations, or those who, like Wicquefort, in his Ambassador, confined themselves to merely conventional usages, it is needless to mention.

Law of Nations.—Puffendorf.

[g] B. viii. chap. 7.

[h] Chap. 8.

CHAPTER V.

HISTORY OF POETRY, FROM 1650 TO 1700.

SECT. I.—ON ITALIAN POETRY.

Filicaja — Guidi — Menzini — Arcadian Society.

Improved tone of Italian poetry.

1. THE imitators of Marini, full of extravagant metaphors, and the false thoughts usually called *concetti*, were in their vigour at the commencement of this period. But their names are now obscure, and have been overwhelmed by the change of public taste, which has condemned and proscribed what it once most applauded. This change came on long before the close of the century, though not so decidedly but that some traces of the former manner are discoverable in the majority of popular writers. The general characteristics, however, of Italian poetry were now a more masculine tone; a wider reach of topics, and a selection of the most noble; an abandonment, except in the lighter lyrics, of amatory strains, and especially of such as were languishing and querulous; an anticipation, in short, as far as the circumstances of the age would permit, of that severe and elevated style which has been most affected for the last fifty years. It would be futile to seek an explanation of this manlier spirit in any social or political causes; never had Italy in these respects been so lifeless; but the world of poets is often not the world around them, and their stream of living waters may flow, like that of Arethusa, without imbibing much from the surrounding brine. Chiabrera had led the way by the Pindaric majesty of his odes, and had disciples of at least equal name with himself.

2. Florence was the mother of one who did most to invigorate Italian poetry, Vincenzo Filicaja; a man gifted with a serious, pure, and noble spirit, from which congenial thoughts spontaneously arose, and with an imagination rather vigorous than fertile. The siege of Vienna in 1683, and its glorious deliverance by Sobieski, are the subjects of six odes. The third of these, addressed to the King of Poland himself, is generally most esteemed, though I do not perceive that the first or second are inferior. His ode to Rome, on Christina's taking up her residence there, is in many parts highly poetical; but the flattery of representing this event as sufficient to restore the eternal city from decay is too gross. It is not on the whole so successful as those on the siege of Vienna. A better is that addressed to Florence, on leaving it for a rural solitude, in consequence of his poverty and the neglect he had experienced. It breathes an injured spirit, something like the Complaint of Cowley, with which posterity are sure to sympathise. The sonnet of Filicaja, "Italia mia," is known by every one who cares for this poetry at all. This sonnet is conspicuous for its depth of feeling, for the spirit of its commencement, and above all, for the noble lines with which it ends; but there are surely awkward and feeble expressions in the intermediate part. *Armenti* for regiments of dragoons could only be excused by frequent usage in poetry, which, I presume, is not the case, though we find the same word in one of Filicaja's odes. A foreigner may venture upon this kind of criticism.

Filicaja.

3. Filicaja was formed in the school of Chiabrera; but with his pomp of sound and boldness of imagery he is animated by a deeper sense both of religion and patriotism. We perceive more the language of the heart; the man speaks in his genuine character, not with assumed and mercenary sensibility, like that of Pindar and Chiabrera. His genius is greater than his skill; he abandons himself to an impetuosity which he cannot sustain, forgetful of the economy of strength and breath, as necessary for a poet as a race-horse. He has rarely or never any conceits or frivolous thoughts, but the expression is sometimes rather feeble. There is a general want of sunshine in Filicaja's poetry; unprosperous

himself, he views nothing with a worldly eye; his notes of triumph are without brilliancy, his predictions of success are without joy. He seems also deficient in the charms of grace and felicity. But his poetry is always the effusion of a fine soul; we venerate and love Filicaja as a man, but we also acknowledge that he was a real poet.

4. Guidi, a native of Pavia, raised himself to the highest point that any lyric poet of Italy has attained. His odes are written at Rome from about the year 1685 to the end of the century. Compared with Chiabrera, or even Filicaja, he may be allowed the superiority; if he never rises to a higher pitch than the latter, if he has never chosen subjects so animating, if he has never displayed so much depth and truth of feeling, his enthusiasm is more constant, his imagination more creative, his power of language more extensive and more felicitous. "He falls sometimes," says Corniani, "into extravagance, but never into affectation. . . . . His peculiar excellence is poetical expression, always brilliant with a light of his own. The magic of his language used to excite a lively movement among the hearers when he recited his verses in the Arcadian society." Corniani adds that he is sometimes exuberant in words and hyperbolical in images.[i]

Guidi.

5. The ode of Guidi on Fortune appears to me at least equal to any in the Italian language. If it has been suggested by that of Celio Magno, entitled Iddio, the resemblance does not deserve the name of imitation; a nobleness of thought, imagery, and language prevails throughout. But this is the character of all his odes. He chose better subjects than Chiabrera; for the ruins of Rome are more glorious than the living house of Medici. He resembles him, indeed, rather than any other poet, so that it might not always be easy to discern one from the other in a single stanza; but Guidi is a bolder, a more imaginative, a more enthusiastic poet. Both adorn and amplify a little to excess; and it may be imputed to Guidi that he has abused an advantage which his native language afforded. The Italian is rich in words, where the sound so well answers to the meaning, that it is hardly possible to hear them without an

i Vol. viii. p. 224.

associated sentiment; their effect is closely analogous to musical expression. Such are the adjectives denoting mental elevation, as *superbo*, *altiero*, *audace*, *gagliardo*, *indomito*, *maestoso*. These recur in the poems of Guidi with every noun that will admit of them; but sometimes the artifice is a little too transparent, and though the meaning is not sacrificed to sound, we feel that it is too much enveloped in it, and are not quite pleased that a great poet should rely so much on a resource which the most mechanical slave of music can employ.

Menzini.

6. The odes of Benedetto Menzini are elegant and in poetical language, but such as does not seem very original, nor do they strike us by much vigour or animation of thought. The allusions to mythology, which we never find in Filicaja, and rarely in Guidi, are too frequent. Some of these odes are of considerable beauty, among which we may distinguish that addressed to Magalotti, beginning, "Un verde ramuscello in piaggia aprica." Menzini was far from confining himself to this species of poetry; he was better known in others. As an Anacreontic poet he stands, I believe, only below Chiabrera and Redi. His satires have been preferred by some to those of Ariosto; but neither Corniani nor Salfi acquiesce in this praise. Their style is a mixture of obsolete phrases from Dante with the idioms of the Florentine populace; and, though spirited in substance, they are rather full of commonplace invective. Menzini strikes boldly at priests and governments, and, what was dangerous to Orpheus, at the whole sex of women. His Art of Poetry, in five books, published in 1681, deserves some praise. As his atrabilious humour prompted, he inveighs against the corruption of contemporary literature, especially on the stage, ridiculing also the Pindaric pomp that some affected, not perhaps without allusion to his enemy Guidi. His own style is pointed, animated, sometimes poetical, where didactic verse will admit of such ornament, but a little too diffuse and minute in criticism.

Salvator Rosa—Redi.

7. These three are the great restorers of Italian poetry after the usurpation of false taste. And it is to be observed that they introduced a new manner, very different from that of the sixteenth century. Several others deserve to be mentioned,

though we can only do so briefly. The Satires of Salvator Rosa, full of force and vehemence, more vigorous than elegant, are such as his ardent genius and rather savage temper would lead us to expect. A far superior poet was a man not less eminent than Salvator, the philosophical and every way accomplished Redi. Few have done so much in any part of science who have also shone so brightly in the walks of taste. The sonnets of Redi are esteemed; but his famous dithyrambic, Bacco in Toscana, is admitted to be the first poem of that kind in modern language, and is as worthy of Monte Pulciano wine as the wine is worthy of it.

Other poets.

8. Maggi and Lemene bore an honourable part in the restoration of poetry, though neither of them is reckoned altogether to have purified himself from the infection of the preceding age. The sonnet of Pastorini on the imagined resistance of Genoa to the oppression of Louis XIV. in 1684, though not borne out by historical truth, is one of those breathings of Italian nationality which we always admire, and which had now become more common than for a century before. It must be confessed, in general, that when the protestations of a people against tyranny become loud enough to be heard, we may suspect that the tyranny has been relaxed.

Christina's patronage of letters.

9. Rome was to poetry in this age what Florence had once been, though Rome had hitherto done less for the Italian muses than any other great city. Nor was this so much due to her bishops and cardinals, as to a stranger and a woman. Christina finally took up her abode there in 1688. Her palace became the resort of all the learning and genius she could assemble round her; a literary academy was established, and her revenue was liberally dispensed in pensions. If Filicaja and Guidi, both sharers of her bounty, have exaggerated her praises, much may be pardoned to gratitude, and much also to the natural admiration which those who look up to power must feel for those who have renounced it. Christina died in 1690, and her own academy could last no longer; but a phœnix sprang at once from its ashes. Crescimbeni, then young, has the credit of having planned the Society of Arcadians, which began in 1690, and has eclipsed in cele-

Society of Arcadians.

brity most of the earlier academies of Italy. Fourteen, says Corniani, were the original founders of this society; among whom were Crescimbeni, and Gravina, and Zappi. In course of time the Arcadians vastly increased, and established colonies in the chief cities of Italy. They determined to assume every one a pastoral name and a Greek birthplace, to hold their meetings in some verdant meadow, and to mingle with all their compositions, as far as possible, images from pastoral life; images always agreeable, because they recall the times of primitive innocence. This poetical tribe adopted as their device the pipe of seven reeds bound with laurel, and their president or director was denominated general shepherd or keeper (custode generale).[k] The fantastical part of the Arcadian society was common to them with all similar institutions; and mankind has generally required some ceremonial follies to keep alive the wholesome spirit of association. Their solid aim was to purify the national taste. Much had been already done, and in great measure by their own members, Menzini and Guidi; but their influence, which was of course more felt in the next century, has always been reckoned both important and auspicious to Italian literature.

SECT. II.—ON FRENCH POETRY.

La Fontaine—Boileau—Minor French Poets.

10. WE must pass over Spain and Portugal as absolutely destitute of any name which requires commemoration. In France it was very different; if some earlier periods had been not less rich in the number of versifiers, none had produced poets who have descended with so much renown to posterity. The most popular of these was La Fontaine. Few writers have left such a number of verses which, in the phrase of his country, have made their fortune, and been like ready money, always at hand for prompt quotation. His lines have at once a proverbial truth and a humour of ex-

La Fontaine.

k Corniani, viii. 301; Tiraboschi, xi. 43; Crescimbeni, Storia d'Arcadia (reprinted by Mathias).

pression which render them constantly applicable. This is chiefly true of his Fables; for his Tales, though no one will deny that they are lively enough, are not reckoned so well written, nor do they supply so much for general use.

11. The models of La Fontaine's style were partly the ancient fabulists whom he copied, for he pretends to no originality; partly the old French poets, especially Marot. From the one he took the real gold of his fables themselves; from the other he caught a peculiar archness and vivacity, which some of them had possessed, perhaps, in no less degree, but which becomes more captivating from his intermixture of a solid and serious wisdom. For notwithstanding the common anecdotes (sometimes, as we may suspect, rather exaggerated) of La Fontaine's simplicity, he was evidently a man who had thought and observed much about human nature, and knew a little more of the world than he cared to let the world perceive. Many of his fables are admirable; the grace of the poetry, the happy inspiration that seems to have dictated the turns of expression, place him in the first rank among fabulists. Yet the praise of La Fontaine should not be indiscriminate. It is said that he gave the preference to Phædrus and Æsop above himself; and some have thought that in this he could not have been sincere. It was at least a proof of his modesty. But though we cannot think of putting Phædrus on a level with La Fontaine, were it only for this reason, that in a work designed for the general reader (and surely fables are of this description), the qualities that please the many are to be valued above those that please the few, yet it is true that the French poet might envy some talents of the Roman. Phædrus, a writer scarcely prized enough, because he is an early school-book, has a perfection of elegant beauty which very few have rivalled. No word is out of its place, none is redundant, or could be changed for a better; his perspicuity and ease make everything appear unpremeditated, yet everything is wrought by consummate art. In many fables of La Fontaine this is not the case; he beats round the subject, and misses often before he hits. Much, whatever La Harpe may assert to the contrary, could be retrenched; in much the exigencies of rhyme

Character of his Fables.

and metre are too manifest.[m] He has, on the other hand, far more humour than Phædrus; and, whether it be praise or not, thinks less of his fable and more of its moral. One pleases by enlivening; the other pleases but does not enliven; one has more felicity, the other more skill; but in such skill there is felicity.

Boileau. His epistles.

12. The first seven satires of Boileau appeared in 1666; and these, though much inferior to his later productions, are characterised by La Harpe as the earliest poetry in the French language where the mechanism of its verse was fully understood, where the style was always pure and elegant, where the ear was uniformly gratified. The Art of Poetry was published in 1673, the Lutrin in 1674; the Epistles followed at various periods. Their elaborate though equable strain, in a kind of poetry which, never requiring high flights of fancy, escapes the censure of mediocrity and monotony which might sometimes fall upon it, generally excites more admiration in those who have been accustomed to the numerous defects of less finished poets, than it retains in a later age, when others have learned to emulate and preserve the same uniformity. The fame of Pope was transcendant for this reason; and Boileau is the analogue of Pope in French literature.

His Art of Poetry.

13. The Art of Poetry has been the model of the Essay on Criticism; few poems more resemble each other. I will not weigh in opposite scales two compositions, of which one claims an advantage from its having been the original, the other from the youth of its author. Both are uncommon efforts of critical good sense; and both are distinguished by their short and pointed language, which remains in the memory. Boileau has very well incorporated the thoughts of Horace with

[m] Let us take, for example, the first lines of L'Homme et la Couleuvre.

> Un homme vit une couleuvre.
> Ah méchante, dit-il, je m'en vais faire un œuvre
> Agréable à tout l'univers!
> A ces mots l'animal pervers
> (C'est le serpent que je veux dire,
> *Et non l'homme, on pourroit aisément s'y tromper*)
> A ces mots le serpent se laissant attraper
> Est pris, mis en un sac; et, ce qui fut le pire,
> On résolut sa mort, *fût il coupable ou non*.

None of these lines appear to me very happy; but there can be no doubt about that in italics, which spoils the effect of the preceding, and is feebly redundant. The last words are almost equally bad; no question could arise about the serpent's guilt, which had been assumed before. But these petty blemishes are abundantly redeemed by the rest of the fable, which is beautiful in choice of thoughts and language, and may be classed with the best in the collection.

his own, and given them a skilful adaptation to his own times. He was a bolder critic of his contemporaries than Pope. He took up arms against those who shared the public favour, and were placed by half Paris among great dramatists and poets, Pradon, Desmarests, Brebœuf. This was not true of the heroes of the Dunciad. His scorn was always bitter, and probably sometimes unjust; yet posterity has ratified almost all his judgments. False taste, it should be remembered, had long infected the poetry of Europe; some steps had been lately taken to repress it; but extravagance, affectation, and excess of refinement are weeds that can only be eradicated by a thorough cleansing of the soil, by a process of burning and paring, which leaves not a seed of them in the public mind. And when we consider the gross blemishes of this description that deform the earlier poetry of France, as of other nations, we cannot blame the severity of Boileau, though he may occasionally have condemned in the mass what contained some intermixture of real excellence. We have become of late years in England so enamoured of the beauties of our old writers (and certainly they are of a superior kind) that we are sometimes more than a little blind to their faults.

Comparison with Horace.

14. By writing satires, epistles, and an Art of Poetry, Boileau has challenged an obvious comparison with Horace. Yet they are very unlike; one easy, colloquial, abandoning himself to every change that arises in his mind, the other uniform as a regiment under arms, always equal, always laboured, incapable of a bold neglect. Poetry seems to have been the delight of one, the task of the other. The pain that Boileau must have felt in writing communicates itself in some measure to the reader; we are fearful of losing some point, of passing over some epithet without sufficiently perceiving its selection; it is as with those pictures, which are to be viewed long and attentively, till our admiration of detached proofs of skill becomes wearisome by repetition.

The Lutrin.

15. The Lutrin is the most popular of the poems of Boileau. Its subject is ill chosen; neither interest nor variety could be given to it. Tassoni and Pope have the advantage in this respect; if their leading theme is trifling, we lose sight of it in the gay

liveliness of description and episode. In Boileau, after we have once been told that the canons of a church spend their lives in sleep and eating, we have no more to learn, and grow tired of keeping company with a race so stupid and sensual. But the poignant wit and satire, the elegance and correctness of numberless couplets, as well as the ingenious adaptation of classical passages, redeem this poem, and confirm its high place in the mock-heroic line.

General character of his poetry.

16. The great deficiency of Boileau is in sensibility. Far below Pope or even Dryden in this essential quality, which the moral epistle or satire not only admits but requires, he rarely quits two paths, those of reason and of raillery. His tone on moral subjects is firm and severe, but not very noble; a trait of pathos, a single touch of pity or tenderness, will rarely be found. This of itself serves to give a dryness to his poetry; and it may be doubtful, though most have read Boileau, whether many have read him twice.

Lyric poetry lighter than before.

17. The pompous tone of Ronsard and Du Bartas had become ridiculous in the reign of Louis XIV. Even that of Malherbe was too elevated for the public taste; none at least imitated that writer, though the critics had set the example of admiring him. Boileau, who had done much to turn away the world from imagination to plain sense, once attempted to emulate the grandiloquent strains of Pindar in an ode on the taking of Namur, but with no such success as could encourage himself or others to repeat the experiment. Yet there was no want of gravity or elevation in the prose writers of France, nor in the tragedies of Racine. But the French language is not very well adapted for the higher kind of lyric poetry, while it suits admirably the lighter forms of song and epigram. And their poets, in this age, were almost entirely men living at Paris, either in the court, or at least in a refined society, the most adverse of all to the poetical character. The influence of wit and politeness is generally directed towards rendering enthusiasm or warmth of fancy ridiculous; and without these no great energy of genius can be displayed. But in their proper department several poets of considerable merit appeared.

18. Benserade was called peculiarly the poet of the court; for twenty years it was his business to compose verses for the ballets represented before the king. His skill and tact were shown in delicate contrivances to make those who supported the characters of gods and goddesses, in these fictions, being the nobles and ladies of the court, betray their real inclinations, and sometimes their gallantries. He even presumed to shadow in this manner the passion of Louis for Mademoiselle La Valière, before it was publicly acknowledged. Benserade must have had no small ingenuity and adroitness; but his verses did not survive those who called them forth. In a different school, not essentially, perhaps, much more vicious than the court, but more careless of appearances, and rather proud of an immorality which it had no interest to conceal, that of Ninon l'Enclos, several of higher reputation grew up; Chapelle (whose real name was L'Huillier), La Fare, Bachaumont, Lainezer, and Chaulieu. The first, perhaps, and certainly the last of these, are worthy to be remembered. La Harpe has said that Chaulieu alone retains a claim to be read in a style where Voltaire has so much left all others behind, that no comparison with him can ever be admitted. Chaulieu was an original genius: his poetry has a marked character, being a happy mixture of a gentle and peaceable philosophy with a lively imagination. His verses flow from his soul; and though often negligent through indolence, are never in bad taste or affected. Harmony of versification, grace and gaiety, with a voluptuous and Epicurean, but mild and benevolent, turn of thought, belong to Chaulieu; and these are qualities which do not fail to attract the majority of readers.[n]

Benserade

Chaulieu.

19. It is rather singular that a style so uncongenial to the spirit of that age as pastoral poetry appears was quite as much cultivated as before. But it is still true that the spirit of the age gained the victory, and drove the shepherds from their shady bowers, though without substituting anything more rational in the fairy tales which superseded the pastoral romance. At the middle of the century, and partially till near its close,

Pastoral poetry.

[n] La Harpe; Bouterwek, vi. 127; Biogr. Univ

the style of D'Urfé and Scudery retained its popularity.

Segrais.

Three poets of the age of Louis were known in pastoral: Segrais, Madame Deshoulières, and Fontenelle. The first belongs most to the genuine school of modern pastoral; he is elegant, romantic, full of complaining love; the Spanish and French romances had been his model in invention, as Virgil was in style. La Harpe allows him nature, sweetness, and sentiment; but he cannot emulate the vivid colouring of Virgil, and the language of his shepherds, though simple, wants elegance and harmony. The tone of his pastorals seems rather insipid, though La Harpe has quoted some pleasing lines.

Deshoulières.

Madame Deshoulières, with a purer style than Segrais, according to the same critic, has less genius. Others have thought her Idylls the best in the language.[o] But these seem to be merely trivial moralities addressed to flowers, brooks, and sheep, sometimes expressed in a manner both ingenious and natural, but on the whole too feeble to give much pleasure. Bouterwek observes that her poetry is to be considered as that of a woman, and that its pastoral morality would be somewhat childish in the mouth of man; whether this says more for the lady, or against her sex, I must leave to the reader. She has occasionally some very pleasing and even poetical passages.[p] The third among these poets of the pipe is Fontenelle.

Fontenelle.

But his pastorals, as Bouterwek says, are too artificial for the ancient school, and too cold for the romantic. La Harpe blames, besides this general fault, the negligence and prosaic phrases of his style. The best is that entitled Ismene. It is, in fact, a poem for the world; yet as love and its artifices are found everywhere, we cannot censure any passage as absolutely unfit for pastoral, save a certain refinement which belonged to the author in everything, and which interferes with our sense of rural simplicity.

Bad epic poems.

20. In the superior walks of poetry France had nothing of which she has been inclined to boast. Chapelain, a man of some credit as a critic, produced his long-laboured epic, La Pucelle, in 1656, which is only remembered by the insulting ridicule of Boileau. A similar fate has fallen on the Clovis of Desmarests, pub-

[o] Biogr. Univ.

[p] Bouterwek, vi. 152.

lished in 1684, though the German historian of literature has extolled the richness of imagination it shows, and observed that if those who saw nothing but a fantastic writer in Desmarests had possessed as much fancy, the national poetry would have been of a higher character.[q] Brebœuf's translation of the Pharsalia is spirited, but very extravagant.

German poetry.

21. The literature of Germany was now more corrupted by bad taste than ever. A second Silesian school, but much inferior to that of Opitz, was founded by Hoffmanswaldau and Lohenstein. The first had great facility, and imitated Ovid and Marini with some success. The second, with worse taste, always tumid and striving at something elevated, so that the Lohenstein swell became a byword with later critics, is superior to Hoffmanswaldau in richness of fancy, in poetical invention, and in warmth of feeling for all that is noble and great. About the end of the century arose a new style, known by the unhappy name spiritless (geistlos), which, avoiding the tone of Lohenstein, became wholly tame and flat.[r]

SECT. III.—ON ENGLISH POETRY.

Waller—Butler—Milton—Dryden—The Minor Poets.

Waller.

22. WE might have placed Waller in the former division of the seventeenth century with no more impropriety than we might have reserved Cowley for the latter; both belong by the date of their writings to the two periods. And, perhaps, the poetry of Waller bears rather the stamp of the first Charles's age than of that which ensued. His reputation was great, and somewhat more durable than that of similar poets has generally been; he did not witness its decay in his own protracted life, nor was it much diminished at the beginning of the next century. Nor was this wholly undeserved. Waller has a more uniform elegance, a more sure facility and happiness of expression, and, above all,

[q] Bouterwek, vi. 157.

[r] Id., vol. x. p. 288; Heinsius, iv. 287; Eichhorn, Geschichte der Cultur, iv. 776.

a greater exemption from glaring faults, such as pedantry, extravagance, conceit, quaintness, obscurity, ungrammatical and unmeaning constructions, than any of the Caroline era with whom he would naturally be compared. We have only to open Carew or Lovelace to perceive the difference; not that Waller is wholly without some of these faults, but that they are much less frequent. If others may have brighter passages of fancy or sentiment, which is not difficult, he husbands better his resources, and though left behind in the beginning of the race, comes sooner to the goal. His Panegyric on Cromwell was celebrated. "Such a series of verses," it is said by Johnson, "had rarely appeared before in the English language. Of these lines some are grand, some are graceful, and all are musical. There is now and then a feeble verse, or a trifling thought; but its great fault is the choice of its hero." It may not be the opinion of all that Cromwell's actions were of that obscure and pitiful character which the majesty of song rejects, and Johnson has before observed, that Waller's choice of encomiastic topics in this poem is very judicious. Yet his deficiency in poetical vigour will surely be traced in this composition; if he rarely sinks, he never rises very high; and we find much good sense and selection, much skill in the mechanism of language and metre, without ardour and without imagination. In his amorous poetry he has little passion or sensibility; but he is never free and petulant, never tedious, and never absurd. His praise consists much in negations; but in a comparative estimate perhaps negations ought to count for a good deal.

Butler's Hudibras.

23. Hudibras was incomparably more popular than Paradise Lost; no poem in our language rose at once to greater reputation. Nor can this be called ephemeral, like that of most political poetry. For at least half a century after its publication it was generally read, and perpetually quoted. The wit of Butler has still preserved many lines; but Hudibras now attracts comparatively few readers. The eulogies of Johnson seem rather adapted to what he remembered to have been the fame of Butler than to the feelings of the surrounding generation; and since his time new sources of amusement have sprung up, and writers of a more intelligible pleasantry have superseded those of the seven-

teenth century. In the fiction of Hudibras there was never much to divert the reader, and there is still less left at present. But what has been censured as a fault, the length of dialogue, which puts the fiction out of sight, is in fact the source of all the pleasure that the work affords. The sense of Butler is masculine, his wit inexhaustible, and it is supplied from every source of reading and observation. But these sources are often so unknown to the reader that the wit loses its effect through the obscurity of its allusions, and he yields to the bane of wit, a purblind mole-like pedantry. His versification is sometimes spirited, and his rhymes humorous; yet he wants that ease and flow which we require in light poetry.

Paradise Lost—Choice of subject.

24. The subject of Paradise Lost is the finest that has ever been chosen for heroic poetry; it is also managed by Milton with remarkable skill. The Iliad wants completeness; it has an unity of its own, but it is the unity of a part where we miss the relation to a whole. The Odyssey is not imperfect in this point of view; but the subject is hardly extensive enough for a legitimate epic. The Æneid is spread over too long a space, and perhaps the latter books, by the diversity of scene and subject, lose part of that intimate connexion with the former which an epic poem requires. The Pharsalia is open to the same criticism as the Iliad. The Thebaid is not deficient in unity or greatness of action; but it is one that possesses no sort of interest in our eyes. Tasso is far superior, both in choice and management of his subject, to most of these. Yet the Fall of Man has a more general interest than the Crusade.

Open to some difficulties.

25. It must be owned, nevertheless, that a religious epic labours under some disadvantages; in proportion as it attracts those who hold the same tenets with the author, it is regarded by those who dissent from him with indifference or aversion. It is said that the discovery of Milton's Arianism, in this rigid generation, has already impaired the sale of Paradise Lost. It is also difficult to enlarge or adorn such a story by fiction. Milton has done much in this way; yet he was partly restrained by the necessity of conforming to Scripture.

26. The ordonnance or composition of the Paradise Lost is admirable; and here we perceive the advantage which Milton's great familiarity with the Greek theatre, and his own original scheme of the poem, had given him. Every part succeeds in an order, noble, clear, and natural. It might have been wished indeed that the vision of the eleventh book had not been changed into the colder narrative of the twelfth. But what can be more majestic than the first two books which open this great drama? It is true that they rather serve to confirm the sneer of Dryden that Satan is Milton's hero; since they develop a plan of action in that potentate, which is ultimately successful; the triumph that he and his host must experience in the fall of man being hardly compensated by their temporary conversion into serpents; a fiction rather too grotesque. But it is, perhaps, only pedantry to talk about the hero, as if a high personage were absolutely required in an epic poem to predominate over the rest. The conception of Satan is doubtless the first effort of Milton's genius. Dante could not have ventured to spare so much lustre for a ruined archangel, in an age when nothing less than horns and a tail were the orthodox creed.*

Its arrangement.

* Coleridge has a fine passage which I cannot resist my desire to transcribe. "The character of Satan is pride and sensual indulgence, finding in itself the motive of action. It is the character so often seen in little on the political stage. It exhibits all the restlessness, temerity, and cunning which have marked the mighty hunters of mankind from Nimrod to Napoleon. The common fascination of man is that these great men, as they are called, must act from some great motive. Milton has carefully marked in his Satan the intense selfishness, the alcohol of egotism, which would rather reign in hell than serve in heaven. To place this lust of self in opposition to denial of self or duty, and to show what exertions it would make, and what pains endure, to accomplish its end, is Milton's particular object in the character of Satan. But around this character he has thrown a singularity of daring, a grandeur of sufferance, and a ruined splendour, which constitute the very height of poetic sublimity." Coleridge's Remains, p. 176.

In reading such a paragraph as this we are struck by the vast improvement of the highest criticism, the philosophy of æsthetics, since the days of Addison. His papers in the Spectator on Paradise Lost were perhaps superior to any criticism that had been written in our language; and we must always acknowledge their good sense, their judiciousness, and the vast service they did to our literature, in settling the Paradise Lost on its proper level. But how little they satisfy us, even in treating of the *natura naturata*, the poem itself! and how little conception they show of the *natura naturans*, the individual genius of the author! Even in the periodical criticism of the present day, in the midst of much that is affected, much that is precipitate, much that is written for mere display, we find occasional reflections of a pro-

27. Milton has displayed great skill in the delineations of Adam and Eve; he does not dress them up, after the fashion of orthodox theology, which had no spell to bind his free spirit, in the fancied robes of primitive righteousness. South, in one of his sermons, has drawn a picture of unfallen man, which is even poetical; but it might be asked by the reader, Why then did he fall? The first pair of Milton are innocent of course, but not less frail than their posterity; nor, except one circumstance, which seems rather physical intoxication than anything else, do we find any sign of depravity superinduced upon their transgression. It might even be made a question for profound theologians whether Eve, by taking amiss what Adam had said, and by self-conceit, did not sin before she tasted the fatal apple. The necessary paucity of actors in Paradise Lost is perhaps the apology of Sin and Death; they will not bear exact criticism, yet we do not wish them away.

Characters of Adam and Eve.

28. The comparison of Milton with Homer has been founded on the acknowledged pre-eminence of each in his own language, and on the lax application of the word epic to their great poems. But there was not much in common either between their genius or its products; and Milton has taken less in direct imitation from Homer than from several other poets. His favourites had rather been Sophocles and Euripides; to them he owes the structure of his blank verse, his swell and dignity of style, his grave enunciation of moral and abstract sentiment, his tone of description, neither condensed like that of Dante, nor spread out with the diffuseness of the other Italians and of Homer himself. Next to these Greek tragedians, Virgil seems to have been his model; with the minor Latin poets, except Ovid, he does not, I think, show

He owes less to Homer than the tragedians.

fundity and discrimination which we should seek in vain through Dryden or Addison, or the two Wartons, or even Johnson, though much superior to the rest. Hurd has perhaps the merit of being the first who in this country aimed at philosophical criticism; he had great ingenuity, a good deal of reading, and a facility in applying it; but he did not feel very deeply, was somewhat of a coxcomb, and having always before his eyes a model neither good in itself, nor made for him to emulate, he assumes a dogmatic arrogance, which, as it always offends the reader, so for the most part stands in the way of the author's own search for truth.

any great familiarity; and though abundantly conversant with Ariosto, Tasso, and Marini, we cannot say that they influenced his manner, which, unlike theirs, is severe and stately, never light, nor, in the sense we should apply the words to them, rapid and animated.[1]

29. To Dante, however, he bears a much greater likeness. He has in common with that poet an uniform seriousness, for the brighter colouring of both is but the smile of a pensive mind, a fondness for argumentative speech, and for the same strain of argument. This indeed proceeds in part from the general similarity, the religious and even theological cast of their subjects; I advert particularly to the last part of Dante's poem. We may almost say, when we look to the resemblance of their prose writings, in the proud sense of being born for some great achievement, which breathes through the Vita Nuova, as it does through Milton's earlier treatises, that they were twin spirits, and that each might have animated the other's body, that each would, as it were, have been the other, if he had lived in the other's age. As it is, I incline to prefer Milton, that is, the Paradise Lost, both because the subject is more extensive, and because the resources of his genius are more multifarious. Dante sins more against good taste, but only perhaps because there was no good taste in his time; for Milton has also too much a disposition to make the grotesque accessory to the terrible. Could Milton have written the lines on Ugolino? Perhaps he could. Those on Francesca? Not, I think, every line. Could Dante have planned such a poem as Paradise Lost? Not certainly, being Dante in 1300; but living when Milton did, perhaps he could. It is, however, useless to go on with questions that no one can fully answer. To compare the two poets, read two or three cantos of the Purgatory or Paradise, and then two or three hundred lines of Paradise Lost. Then take Homer, or even Virgil, the difference will be striking. Yet notwithstanding this analogy of their minds, I have not perceived that Milton imitates Dante very

Compared with Dante.

[1] The solemnity of Milton is striking in those passages where some other poets would indulge a little in voluptuousness, and the more so, because this is not wholly uncongenial to him. A few lines in Paradise Lost are rather too plain and their gravity makes them worse.

often, probably from having committed less to memory while young (and Dante was not the favourite poet of Italy when Milton was there), than of Ariosto and Tasso.

30. Each of these great men chose the subject that suited his natural temper and genius. What, it is curious to conjecture, would have been Milton's success in his original design, a British story? Far less, surely, than in Paradise Lost; he wanted the rapidity of the common heroic poem, and would always have been sententious, perhaps arid and heavy. Yet even as religious poets, there are several remarkable distinctions between Milton and Dante. It has been justly observed that, in the Paradise of Dante, he makes use of but three leading ideas, light, music, and motion, and that Milton has drawn heaven in less pure and spiritual colours.[u] The philosophical imagination of the former, in this third part of his poem, almost defecated from all sublunary things by long and solitary musing, spiritualises all that it touches. The genius of Milton, though itself subjective, was less so than that of Dante; and he has to recount, to describe, to bring deeds and passions before the eye. And two peculiar causes may be assigned for this difference in the treatment of celestial things between the Divine Comedy and the Paradise Lost; the dramatic form which Milton had originally designed to adopt, and his own theological bias towards anthropomorphism, which his posthumous treatise on religion has brought to light. This was no doubt in some measure inevitable in such a subject as that of Paradise Lost; yet much that is ascribed to God, sometimes with the sanction of Scripture, sometimes without it, is not wholly pleasing; such as "the oath that shook Heaven's whole circumference," and several other images of the same kind, which bring down the Deity in a manner not consonant to philosophical religion, however it may be borne out by the sensual analogies or mythic symbolism of Oriental writing.[x]

[u] Quarterly Review, June, 1825. This article contains some good and some questionable remarks on Milton; among the latter I reckon the proposition that his contempt for women is shown in the delineation of Eve; an opinion not that of Addison or of many others, who have thought her exquisitely drawn.

[x] Johnson thinks that Milton should have secured the consistency of this poem by keeping immateriality out of sight, and enticing his reader to drop it from

Elevation of his style.

31. We rarely meet with feeble lines in Paradise Lost,[y] though with many that are hard, and in a common use of the word, might be called prosaic. Yet few are truly prosaic; few wherein the tone is not some way distinguished from prose. The very artificial style of Milton, sparing in English idiom, and his study of a rhythm, not always the most grateful to our ears, but preserving his blank verse from a trivial flow, is the cause of this elevation. It is at least more removed from a prosaic cadence than the slovenly rhymes of such contemporary poets as Chamberlayne. His versification is entirely his own, framed on a Latin and chiefly a Virgilian model, the pause less frequently resting on the close of the line than in Homer, and much less than in our own dramatic poets. But it is also possible that the Italian and Spanish blank verse may have had some effect upon his ear.

His blindness.

32. In the numerous imitations, and still more numerous traces of older poetry which we perceive in Paradise Lost, it is always to be kept in mind that he had only his recollection to rely upon. His blindness seems to have been complete before 1654; and I scarcely think that he had begun his poem, before the anxiety and trouble into which the public strife of the Commonwealth and the Restoration had thrown him gave leisure for immortal occupations. Then the remembrance of early reading came over his dark and lonely path like the moon emerging from the clouds. Then it was that the muse was truly his; not only as she poured her creative inspiration into his mind, but as the daughter of Memory, coming with fragments of

his thoughts. But here the subject forbad him to preserve consistency, if indeed there be inconsistency in supposing a rapid assumption of form by spiritual beings. For though the instance that Johnson alleges of inconsistency in Satan's animating a toad was not necessary, yet his animation of the serpent was absolutely indispensable. And the same has been done by other poets, who do not scruple to suppose their gods, their fairies or devils, or their allegorical personages, inspiring thoughts, and even uniting themselves with the soul, as well as assuming all kinds of form, though their natural appearance is almost always anthropomorphic. And, after all, Satan does not animate a real toad, but takes the shape of one. "Squat like a toad close by the ear of Eve." But he does enter a real serpent, so that the instance of Johnson is ill chosen. If he had mentioned the serpent, every one would have seen that the identity of the animal serpent with Satan is part of the original account.

[y] One of the few exceptions is in the sublime description of Death, where a wretched hemistich, "Fierce as ten furies," stands as an unsightly blemish.

ancient melodies, the voice of Euripides, and Homer, and Tasso; sounds that he had loved in youth, and treasured up for the solace of his age. They who, though not enduring the calamity of Milton, have known what it is, when afar from books, in solitude or in travelling, or in the intervals of worldly care, to feed on poetical recollections, to murmur over the beautiful lines whose cadence has long delighted their ear, to recall the sentiments and images which retain by association the charm that early years once gave them — they will feel the inestimable value of committing to the memory, in the prime of its power, what it will easily receive and indelibly retain. I know not indeed whether an education that deals much with poetry, such as is still usual in England, has any more solid argument among many in its favour, than that it lays the foundation of intellectual pleasures at the other extreme of life.

His passion for music.

33. It is owing, in part, to his blindness, but more perhaps to his general residence in a city, that Milton, in the words of Coleridge, is "not a picturesque but a musical poet;" or as I would prefer to say, is the latter more of the two. He describes visible things, and often with great powers of rendering them manifest, what the Greeks called ἐνάργεια, though seldom with so much circumstantial exactness of observation as Spenser or Dante, but he feels music. The sense of vision delighted his imagination, but that of sound wrapped his whole soul in ecstasy. One of his trifling faults may be connected with this, the excessive passion he displays for stringing together sonorous names, sometimes so obscure that the reader associates nothing with them, as the word Namancos in Lycidas, which long baffled the commentators. Hence his catalogues, unlike those of Homer and Virgil, are sometimes merely ornamental and misplaced. Thus the names of unbuilt cities come strangely forward in Adam's vision,[1] though he has afterwards gone over the same ground with better effect in Paradise Regained. In this there was also a mixture of his pedantry. But, though he was rather too ostentatious of learning, the nature of his subject demanded a good deal of episodical ornament.

[1] Par. Lost, xi. 386.

And this, rather than the precedents he might have alleged from the Italians and others, is perhaps the best apology for what some grave critics have censured, his frequent allusions to fable and mythology. These give much relief to the severity of the poem, and few readers would dispense with them. Less excuse can be made for some affectation of science which has produced hard and unpleasing lines; but he had been born in an age when more credit was gained by reading much than by writing well. The faults, however, of Paradise Lost are in general less to be called faults than necessary adjuncts of the qualities we most admire, and idiosyncrasies of a mighty genius. The verse of Milton is sometimes wanting in grace, and almost always in ease; but what better can be said of his prose? His foreign idioms are too frequent in the one; but they predominate in the other.

Faults in Paradise Lost.

34. The slowness of Milton's advance to glory is now generally owned to have been much exaggerated; we might say that the reverse was nearer the truth. "The sale of 1300 copies in two years," says Johnson, "in opposition to so much recent enmity, and to a style of versification new to all and disgusting to many, was an uncommon example of the prevalence of genius. The demand did not immediately increase; for many more readers than were supplied at first the nation did not afford. Only 3000 were sold in eleven years." It would hardly however be said, even in this age, of a poem 3000 copies of which had been sold in eleven years, that its success had been small; and some, perhaps, might doubt whether Paradise Lost, published eleven years since, would have met with a greater demand. There is sometimes a want of congeniality in public taste which no power of genius will overcome. For Milton it must be said by every one conversant with the literature of the age that preceded Addison's famous criticism, from which some have dated the reputation of Paradise Lost, that he took his place among great poets from the beginning. The fancy of Johnson that few dared to praise it, and that "the revolution put an end to the secrecy of love," is without foundation; the Government of Charles II. was not so absurdly tyrannical, nor did Dryden, the court's own poet, hesitate, in his

Its progress to fame.

preface to the State of Innocence, published soon after Milton's death, to speak of its original, Paradise Lost, as "undoubtedly one of the greatest, most noble, and most sublime poems which either this age or nation has produced."

35. The neglect which Paradise Lost never experienced seems to have been long the lot of Paradise Regained. It was not popular with the world; it was long believed to manifest a decay of the poet's genius, and in spite of all that the critics have written, it is still but the favourite of some whose predilections for the Miltonic style are very strong. The subject is so much less capable of calling forth the vast powers of his mind, that we should be unfair in comparing it throughout with the greater poem; it has been called a model of the shorter epic, an action comprehending few characters and a brief space of time.[a] The love of Milton for dramatic dialogue, imbibed from Greece, is still more apparent than in Paradise Lost; the whole poem, in fact, may almost be accounted a drama of primal simplicity, the narrative and descriptive part serving rather to diversify and relieve the speeches of the actors, than their speeches, as in the legitimate epic, to enliven the narration. Paradise Regained abounds with passages equal to any of the same nature in Paradise Lost; but the argumentative tone is kept up till it produces some tediousness, and perhaps on the whole less pains have been exerted to adorn and elevate that which appeals to the imagination.

Paradise Regained.

36. Samson Agonistes is the latest of Milton's poems; we see in it, perhaps more distinctly than in Paradise Regained, the ebb of a mighty tide. An air of uncommon grandeur prevails throughout, but the language is less poetical than in Paradise Lost; the vigour of thought remains, but it wants much of its ancient eloquence. Nor is the lyric tone well kept up by the chorus; they are too sententious, too slow in movement, and, except by the metre, are not easily distinguishable from the other personages. But this metre is itself infelicitous, the lines being frequently of a number of syllables not recognised in the usage of Eng-

Samson Agonistes.

[a] Todd's Milton, vol. v. p. 308.

lish poetry, and, destitute of rhythmical measure, fall into prose. Milton seems to have forgotten that the ancient chorus had a musical accompaniment.

37. The style of Samson, being essentially that of Paradise Lost, may show us how much more the latter poem is founded on the Greek tragedians than on Homer. In Samson we have sometimes the pompous tone of Æschylus, more frequently the sustained majesty of Sophocles; but the religious solemnity of Milton's own temperament, as well as the nature of the subject, have given a sort of breadth, an unbroken severity, to the whole drama. It is perhaps not very popular even with the lovers of poetry; yet upon close comparison we should find that it deserves a higher place than many of its prototypes. We might search the Greek tragedies long for a character so powerfully conceived and maintained as that of Samson himself; and it is but conformable to the sculptural simplicity of that form of drama which Milton adopted, that all the rest should be kept in subordination to it. "It is only," Johnson says, "by a blind confidence in the reputation of Milton, that a drama can be praised in which the intermediate parts have neither cause nor consequence, neither hasten nor retard the catastrophe." Such a drama is certainly not to be ranked with Othello and Macbeth, or even with the Œdipus or the Hippolytus; but a similar criticism is applicable to several famous tragedies in the less artificial school of antiquity, to the Prometheus and the Persæ of Æschylus, and, if we look strictly, to not a few of the two other masters.

Dryden. His earlier poems.

38. The poetical genius of Dryden came slowly to perfection. Born in 1631, his first short poems, or, as we might rather say, copies of verses, were not written till he approached thirty; and though some of his dramas, not indeed of the best, belong to the next period of his life, he had reached the age of fifty before his high rank as a poet had been confirmed by indubitable proof. Yet he had manifested a superiority to his immediate contemporaries; his Astræa Redux, on the Restoration, is well versified; the lines are seldom weak; the couplets have that pointed manner which Cowley and Denham had taught the world to require; they are harmonious, but not so varied as the

style he afterwards adopted. The Annus Mirabilis, in 1667, is of a higher cast; it is not so animated as the later poetry of Dryden, because the alternate quatrain, in which he followed Davenant's Gondibert, is hostile to animation; but it is not unfavourable to another excellence, condensed and vigorous thought. Davenant indeed and Denham may be reckoned the models of Dryden, so far as this can be said of a man of original genius, and one far superior to theirs. The distinguishing characteristic of Dryden, it has been said by Scott, was the power of reasoning and expressing the result in appropriate language. This indeed was the characteristic of the two whom we have named, and so far as Dryden has displayed it, which he eminently has done, he bears a resemblance to them. But it is insufficient praise for this great poet. His rapidity of conception and readiness of expression are higher qualities. He never loiters about a single thought or image, never labours about the turn of a phrase. The impression upon our minds that he wrote with exceeding ease is irresistible; and I do not know that we have any evidence to repel it. The admiration of Dryden gains upon us, if I may speak from my own experience, with advancing years, as we become more sensible of the difficulty of his style, and of the comparative facility of that which is merely imaginative.

Absalom and Achitophel.

39. Dryden may be considered as a satirical, a reasoning, a descriptive and narrative, a lyric poet, and as a translator. As a dramatist we must return to him again. The greatest of his satires is Absalom and Achitophel, that work in which his powers became fully known to the world, and which, as many think, he never surpassed. The admirable fitness of the English couplet for satire had never been shown before; in less skilful hands it had been ineffective. He does not frequently, in this poem, carry the sense beyond the second line, which, except when skilfully contrived, as it often is by himself, is apt to enfeeble the emphasis; his triplets are less numerous than usual, but energetic. The spontaneous ease of expression, the rapid transitions, the general elasticity and movement, have never been excelled. It is superfluous to praise the discrimination and vivacity of the chief characters, espe-

cially Shaftesbury and Buckingham. Satire, however, is so much easier than panegyric, that with Ormond, Ossory, and Mulgrave he has not been quite so successful. In the second part of Absalom and Achitophel, written by Tate, one long passage alone is inserted by Dryden. It is excellent in its line of satire, but the line is less elevated; the persons delineated are less important, and he has indulged more his natural proneness to virulent ribaldry. This fault of Dryden's writings, it is just to observe, belonged less to the man than to the age. No libellous invective, no coarseness of allusion, had ever been spared towards a private or political enemy. We read with nothing but disgust the satirical poetry of Cleveland, Butler, Oldham, and Marvell, or even of men whose high rank did not soften their style, Rochester, Dorset, Mulgrave. In Dryden there was, for the first time, a poignancy of wit which atones for his severity, and a discretion even in his taunts which made them more cutting.

Mac Flecknoe.

40. The Medal, which is in some measure a continuation of Absalom and Achitophel, since it bears wholly on Shaftesbury, is of unequal merit, and on the whole falls much below the former. In Mac Flecknoe, his satire on his rival Shadwell, we must allow for the inferiority of the subject, which could not bring out so much of Dryden's higher powers of mind; but scarcely one of his poems is more perfect. Johnson, who admired Dryden almost as much as he could any one, has yet, from his proneness to critical censure, very much exaggerated the poet's defects. "His faults of negligence are beyond recital. Such is the unevenness of his compositions, that ten lines are seldom found together without something of which the reader is ashamed." This might be true, or more nearly true, of other poets of the seventeenth century. Ten good consecutive lines will, perhaps, rarely be found, except in Denham, Davenant, and Waller. But it seems a great exaggeration as to Dryden. I would particularly instance Mac Flecknoe as a poem of about four hundred lines, in which no one will be condemned as weak or negligent, though three or four are rather too ribaldrous for our taste. There are also passages, much exceeding ten lines, in Absalom and Achitophel, as well as in the

later works, the Fables, which excite in the reader none of the shame for the poet's carelessness with which Johnson has furnished him.

The Hind and Panther.

41. The argumentative talents of Dryden appear, more or less, in the greater part of his poetry; reason in rhyme was his peculiar delight, to which he seems to escape from the mere excursions of fancy. And it is remarkable that he reasons better and more closely in poetry than in prose. His productions more exclusively reasoning are the Religio Laici and the Hind and Panther. The latter is every way an extraordinary poem. It was written in the hey-day of exultation, by a recent proselyte to a winning side, as he dreamed it to be, by one who never spared a weaker foe, nor repressed his triumph with a dignified moderation. A year was hardly to elapse before he exchanged this fulness of pride for an old age of disappointment and poverty. Yet then too his genius was unquenched, and even his satire was not less severe.

Its singular fable.

42. The first lines in the Hind and Panther are justly reputed among the most musical in our language; and perhaps we observe their rhythm the better because it does not gain much by the sense; for the allegory and the fable are seen, even in this commencement, to be awkwardly blended. Yet, notwithstanding their evident incoherence, which sometimes leads to the verge of absurdity, and the facility they give to ridicule, I am not sure that Dryden was wrong in choosing this singular fiction. It was his aim to bring forward an old argument in as novel a style as he could; a dialogue between a priest and a parson would have made but a dull poem, even if it had contained some of the excellent paragraphs we read in the Hind and Panther. It is the grotesqueness and originality of the fable that give this poem its peculiar zest, of which no reader, I conceive, is insensible; and it is also by this means that Dryden has contrived to relieve his reasoning by short but beautiful touches of description, such as the sudden stream of light from heaven which announces the victory of Sedgmoor near the end of the second book.[b]

[b] [I am indebted to a distinguished friend for the explanation of this line, which I had misunderstood.—1853.]

43. The wit in the Hind and Panther is sharp, ready, and pleasant, the reasoning is sometimes admirably close and strong; it is the energy of Bossuet in verse. I do not know that the main argument of the Roman church could be better stated: all that has been well said for tradition and authority, all that serves to expose the inconsistencies of a vacillating Protestantism, is in the Hind's mouth. It is such an answer as a candid man should admit to any doubts of Dryden's sincerity. He who could argue as powerfully as the Hind may well be allowed to have thought himself in the right. Yet he could not forget a few bold thoughts of his more sceptical days; and such is his bias to sarcasm that he cannot restrain himself from reflections on kings and priests when he is most contending for them.[e]

Its reasoning.

44. The Fables of Dryden, or stories modernised from Boccaccio and Chaucer, are at this day probably the most read and the most popular of Dryden's poems. They contain passages of so much more impressive beauty, and are altogether so far more adapted to general sympathy than those we have mentioned, that I should not hesitate to concur in this judgment. Yet Johnson's accusation of negligence is better supported by these than by the earlier poems. Whether it were that age and misfortune, though they had not impaired the poet's vigour, had rendered its continual exertion more wearisome, or, as is perhaps the better supposition, he reckoned an easy style, sustained above prose, in some places, rather by metre than expression, more fitted to narration, we find much which might appear slovenly to critics of Johnson's temper. The latter seems, in fact, to have conceived, like Milton, a theory, that good writing, at least in verse, is never either to follow the change of fashion, or to sink into familiar phrase, and that any deviation from this rigour should be branded as low and colloquial. But Dryden wrote on a different plan. He thought, like Ariosto, and like Chaucer himself, whom he had to improve, that

The Fables.

[e] By education most have been misled;
So they believe because they so were bred.
The priest continues what the nurse began,
And thus the child imposes on the man.—Part iii.

"Call you this backing of your friends?" his new allies might have said.

a story, especially when not heroic, should be told in easy and flowing language, without too much difference from that of prose, relying on his harmony, his occasional inversions, and his concealed skill in the choice of words, for its effect on the reader. He found also a tone of popular idiom, not perhaps old English idiom, but such as had crept into society, current among his contemporaries; and though this has in many cases now become insufferably vulgar, and in others looks like affectation, we should make some allowance for the times in condemning it. This last blemish, however, is not much imputable to the Fables. Their beauties are innumerable; yet few are very well chosen; some, as Guiscard and Sigismunda, he has injured through coarseness of mind, which neither years nor religion had purified; and we want in all the power over emotion, the charm of sympathy, the skilful arrangement and selection of circumstance, which narrative poetry claims as its highest graces.

His Odes—Alexander's Feast.

45. Dryden's fame as a lyric poet depends a very little on his Ode on Mrs. Killigrew's death, but almost entirely on that for St. Cecilia's Day, commonly called Alexander's Feast. The former, which is much praised by Johnson, has a few fine lines, mingled with a far greater number ill conceived and ill expressed; the whole composition has that spirit which Dryden hardly ever wanted, but it is too faulty for high praise. The latter used to pass for the best work of Dryden, and the best ode in the language. Many would now agree with me that it is neither one nor the other, and that it was rather overrated during a period when criticism was not at a high point. Its beauties indeed are undeniable; it has the raciness, the rapidity, the mastery of language which belong to Dryden; the transitions are animated, the contrasts effective. But few lines are highly poetical, and some sink to the level of a common drinking song. It has the defects as well as the merits of that poetry which is written for musical accompaniment.

His translation of Virgil.

46. Of Dryden as a translator it is needless to say much. In some instances, as in an ode of Horace, he has done extremely well; but his Virgil is, in my apprehension, the least successful of his chief works. Lines of consummate excellence are fre-

quently shot, like threads of gold, through the web, but the general texture is of an ordinary material. Dryden was little fitted for a translator of Virgil; his mind was more rapid and vehement than that of his original, but by far less elegant and judicious. This translation seems to have been made in haste; it is more negligent than any of his own poetry, and the style is often almost studiously, and as it were spitefully, vulgar.

Decline of poetry from the Restoration.

47. The supremacy of Dryden from the death of Milton in 1674 to his own in 1700 was not only unapproached by any English poet, but he held almost a complete monopoly of English poetry. This latter period of the seventeenth century, setting aside these two great names, is one remarkably sterile in poetical genius. Under the first Stuarts, men of warm imagination and sensibility, though with deficient taste and little command of language, had done some honour to our literature; though once neglected, they have come forward again in public esteem, and if not very extensively read, have been valued by men of kindred minds full as much as they deserve. The versifiers of Charles II. and William's days have experienced the opposite fate; popular for a time, and long so far known, at least by name, as to have entered rather largely into collections of poetry, they are now held in no regard, nor do they claim much favour from just criticism. Their object in general was to write like men of the world—with ease, wit, sense, and spirit, but dreading any soaring of fancy, any ardour of moral emotion, as the probable source of ridicule in their readers. Nothing quenches the flame of poetry more than this fear of the prosaic multitude—unless it is the community of habits with this very multitude, a life such as these poets generally led, of taverns and brothels, or, wha came much to the same, of the court. We cannot say of Dryden, that "he bears no traces of those sable streams;" they sully too much the plumage of that stately swan, but his indomitable genius carries him upwards to a purer empyrean. The rest are just distinguishable from one another, not by any high gifts of the muse, but by degrees of spirit, of ease, of poignancy, of skill and harmony in versification, of good sense and acuteness. They may easily be disposed of. Cleveland

is sometimes humourous, but succeeds only in the lightest kinds of poetry. Marvell wrote sometimes with more taste and feeling than was usual, but his satires are gross and stupid. Oldham, far superior in this respect, ranks perhaps next to Dryden; he is spirited and pointed, but his versification is too negligent, and his subjects temporary. Roscommon, one of the best for harmony and correctness of language, has little vigour, but he never offends, and Pope has justly praised his "unspotted bays." Mulgrave affects ease and spirit, but his Essay on Satire belies the supposition that Dryden had any share in it. Rochester, endowed by nature with more considerable and varied genius, might have raised himself to a higher place than he holds. Of Otway, Duke, and several more, it is not worth while to give any character. The Revolution did nothing for poetry; William's reign, always excepting Dryden, is our *nadir* in works of imagination. Then came Blackmore with his epic poems of Prince Arthur and King Arthur, and Pomfret with his Choice, both popular in their own age, and both intolerable by their frigid and tame monotony in the next. The lighter poetry, meantime, of song and epigram did not sink along with the serious; the state of society was much less adverse to it. Rochester, Dorset, and some more whose names are unknown, or not easily traced, do credit to the Caroline period.

Some minor poets enumerated.

48. In the year 1699, a poem was published, Garth's Dispensary, which deserves attention, not so much for its own merit, though it comes nearest to Dryden, at whatever interval, as from its indicating a transitional state in our versification. The general structure of the couplet through the seventeenth century may be called abnormous; the sense is not only often carried beyond the second line, which the French avoid, but the second line of one couplet and the first of the next are not seldom united in a single sentence or a portion of one, so that the two, though not rhyming, must be read as a couplet. The former, when as dexterously managed as it was by Dryden, adds much to the beauty of the general versification; but the latter, a sort of adultery of the lines already wedded to other companions at rhyme's altar, can scarcely ever be pleasing, unless it

be in narrative poetry, where it may bring the sound nearer to prose. A tendency, however, to the French rule of constantly terminating the sense with the couplet will be perceived to have increased from the Restoration. Roscommon seldom deviates from it, and in long passages of Dryden himself there will hardly be found an exception. But, perhaps, it had not been so uniform in any former production as in the Dispensary. The versification of this once famous mock-heroic poem is smooth and regular, but not forcible; the language clear and neat; the parodies and allusions happy. Many lines are excellent in the way of pointed application, and some are remembered and quoted, where few call to mind the author. It has been remarked that Garth enlarged and altered the Dispensary in almost every edition, and what is more uncommon, that every alteration was for the better. This poem may be called an imitation of the Lutrin, inasmuch as but for the Lutrin it might probably not have been written, and there are even particular resemblances. The subject, which is a quarrel between the physicians and apothecaries of London, may vie with that of Boileau in want of general interest; yet it seems to afford more diversity to the satirical poet. Garth, as has been observed, is a link of transition between the style and turn of poetry under Charles and William, and that we find in Addison, Prior, Tickell, and Pope, during the reign of Anne.

SECT. IV.—ON LATIN POETRY.

Latin poets of Italy.

49. THE Jesuits were not unmindful of the credit their Latin verses had done them in periods more favourable to that exercise of taste than the present. Even in Italy, which had ceased to be a very genial soil, one of their number, Ceva, may deserve mention. His Jesus Puer is a long poem, not inelegantly written, but rather singular in some of its descriptions, where the poet has been more solicitous to adorn his subject than attentive to its proper character; and the same objection might be made to some of its episodes. Ceva wrote also a phi-

Ceva.

losophical poem, extolled by Corniani, but which has not fallen into my hands.[d] Averani, a Florentine of various erudition, Cappellari, Strozzi, author of a poem on chocolate, and several others, both within the order of Loyola and without it, cultivated Latin poetry with some success.[e] But, though some might be superior as poets, none were more remarkable or famous than Sergardi, best known by some biting satires under the name of Q. Sectanus, which he levelled at his personal enemy Gravina. The reputation, indeed, of Gravina with posterity has not been affected by such libels; but they are not wanting either in poignancy and spirit, or in a command of Latin phrase.[f]

Sergardi.

50. The superiority of France in Latin verse was no longer contested by Holland or Germany. Several poets of real merit belong to this period. The first in time was Claude Quillet, who, in his Callipædia, bears the Latinised name of Leti. This is written with much elegance of style and a very harmonious versification. No writer has a more Virgilian cadence. Though inferior to Sammarthanus, he may be reckoned high among the French poets. He has been reproached with too open an exposition of some parts of his subject; which applies only to the second book.

Of France —Quillet.

51. The Latin poems of Menage are not unpleasing; he has indeed no great fire or originality, but the harmonious couplets glide over the ear, and the mind is pleased to recognise the tesselated fragments of Ovid and Tibullus. His affected passion for Mademoiselle Lavergne and lamentations about her cruelty are ludicrous enough, when we consider the character of the man, as Vadius in the Femmes Savantes of Molière. They are perfect models of want of truth; but it is a want of truth to nature, not to the conventional forms of modern Latin verse.

Menage.

52. A far superior performance is the poem on gardens by the Jesuit Réné Rapin. For skill in varying and adorning his subject, for a truly Virgilian spirit in expression, for the exclusion of feeble, prosaic, or awkward lines, he may perhaps be equal to

Rapin on gardens.

[d] Corniani, viii. 214; Salfi, xiv. 257.

[e] Bibl. Choisie, vol. xxii.; Salfi, xiv. 238, et post.

[f] Salfi, xiv. 299; Corniani, viii. 280.

any poet, to Sammarthanus, or to Sannazarius himself. His cadences are generally very gratifying to the ear, and in this respect he is much above Vida.[g] But his subject, or his genius, has prevented him from rising very high; he is the poet of gardens, and what gardens are to nature, that is he to mightier poets. There is also too monotonous a repetition of nearly the same images, as in his long enumeration of flowers in the first book; the descriptions are separately good, and great artifice is shown in varying them; but the variety could not be sufficient to remove the general sameness that belongs to an horticultural catalogue. Rapin was a great admirer of box and all topiary works, or trees cut into artificial forms.

53. The first book of the Gardens of Rapin is on flowers, the second on trees, the third on waters, and the fourth on fruits. The poem is of about 3000 lines, sustained with equable dignity. All kinds of graceful associations are mingled with the description of his flowers, in the fanciful style of Ovid and Darwin; the violet is Ianthis, who lurked in valleys to shun the love of Apollo, and stained her face with purple to preserve her chastity; the rose is Rhodanthe, proud of her beaut·, and worshipped by the people in the place of Diana, but changed by the indignant Apollo to a tree, while the populace, who had adored her, are converted into her thorns, and her chief lovers into snails and butterflies. A tendency to conceit is perceived in Rapin, as in the

[g] As the poem of Rapin is not in the hands of every one who has taste for Latin poetry, I will give as a specimen the introduction to the second book:—

Me nemora atque omnis nemorum pulcherrimus ordo,
Et spatia umbrandum latè fundanda per hortum
Invitant; hortis nam si florentibus umbra
Abfuerit, reliquo deerit sua gratia ruri.
Vos grandes luci et silvæ aspirate canenti;
Is mihi contingat vestro de munere ramus,
Unde sacri quando velant sua tempora vates,
Ipse et amem meritam capiti imposuisse coronam.
Jam se cantanti frondosa cacumina quercus
Inclinant, plauduntque comis nemora alta coruscis.
Ipsa mihi læto fremitu, assensuque secundo
E totis plausum responsat Gallia silvis.
Nec me deinde suo teneat clamore Cithæron,
Mænalaque Arcadicis toties lustrata deabus,
Non Dodonæi saltus, silvæque Molorchi,
Aut nigris latè ilicibus nemorosa Calydne,
Et quos carminibus celebravit fabula lucos:
Una meos cantus tellus jam Franca moretur,
Quæ tot nobilibus passim lætissima silvis,
Conspicienda sui latè miracula ruris
Ostendit, lucisque solum commendat amœnis.

One or two words in these lines are not strictly correct; but they are highly Virgilian, both in manner and rhythm.

two poets to whom we have just compared him. Thus, in some pretty lines, he supposes Nature to have "tried her 'prentice hand" in making a convolvulus before she ventured upon a lily.[h]

54. In Rapin there will generally be remarked a certain redundancy, which fastidious critics might call tautology of expression. But this is not uncommon in Virgil. The Georgics have rarely been more happily imitated, especially in their didactic parts, than by Rapin in the Gardens; but he has not the high flights of his prototype; his digressions are short, and belong closely to the subject; we have no plague, no civil war, no Eurydice. If he praises Louis XIV., it is more as the founder of the garden of Versailles, than as the conqueror of Flanders, though his concluding lines emulate, with no unworthy spirit, those of the last Georgic.[i] It may be added, that some French critics have thought the famous poem of Delille on the same subject inferior to that of Rapin.

Santeul.

55. Santeul (or Santolius) has been reckoned one of the best Latin poets whom France ever produced. He began by celebrating the victories of Louis and the virtues of contemporary heroes. A nobleness of thought and a splendour of language distinguish the poetry of Santeul, who furnished many inscriptions for public monuments. The hymns which he afterwards wrote for the breviary of the church of Paris have been still more admired, and at the request of others he enlarged his collection of sacred verse. But I have not read the poetry of Santeul, and give only the testimony of French critics.[k]

Latin poetry in England.

56. England might justly boast, in the earlier part of the century, her Milton; nay, I do not know that, with the exception of a well-known and very pleasing poem, though perhaps hardly of classical simplicity, by Cowley on himself, Epitaphium

[h] Et tu rumpis humum, et multo te flore profundis,
Qui riguas inter serpis, convolvule, valles;
Dulce rudimentum meditantis lilia quondam
Naturæ, cum sese opera ad majora pararet.

[i] Hæc magni insistens vestigia sacra Maronis,
Re super hortensi, Claro de monte canebam,
Lutetia in magna; quo tempore Francica tellus
Rege beata suo, rebusque superba secundis,
Et sua per populos latè dare jura volentes
Cœperat, et toti jam morem imponere mundo.

[k] Baillet; Biogr. Universelle.

Vivi Auctoris, we can produce anything equally good in this period. The Latin verse of Barrow is forcible and full of mind, but not sufficiently redolent of antiquity.[m] Yet versification became, about the time of the Restoration, if not the distinctive study, at least the favourite exercise, of the university of Oxford. The collection entitled Musæ Anglicanæ, published near the end of the century, contains little from any other quarter. Many of these poems relate to the political themes of the day, and eulogise the reigning king, Charles, James, or William; others are on philosophical subjects, which they endeavour to decorate with classical phrase. Their character does not, on the whole, pass mediocrity; they are often incorrect and somewhat turgid, but occasionally display a certain felicity in adapting ancient lines to their subject, and some liveliness of invention. The golden age of Latin verse in England was yet to come.

[m] The following stanzas on an erring conscience will sufficiently prove this:—

Tyranne vitæ, fax temeraria,
Infide dux, ignobile vinculum,
Sidus dolosum, ænigma præsens,
Ingenui labyrinthe voti,

Assensus errans, invalidæ potens
Mentis propago, quam vetuit Deus
Nasci, sed ortæ principatum
Attribuit, regimenque sanctum, &c.

CHAPTER VI.

HISTORY OF DRAMATIC LITERATURE, FROM 1650 TO 1700.

SECTION I.

Racine — Minor French Tragedians — Molière — Regnard, and other Comic Writers

1. FEW tragedies or dramatic works of any kind are now recorded by historians of Italian literature; those of Delfino, afterwards patriarch of Aquileia, which are esteemed among the best, were possibly written before the middle of the century, and were not published till after its termination. The Corradino of Caraccio, in 1694, was also valued at the time.[a] Nor can Spain arrest us longer; the school of Calderon in national comedy extended no doubt beyond the death of Philip IV. in 1665, and many of his own religious pieces are of as late a date; nor were names wholly wanting, which are said to merit remembrance, in the feeble reign of Charles II., but they must be left for such as make a particular study of Spanish literature.[b] We are called to a nobler stage.

Italian and Spanish drama.

2. Corneille belongs in his glory to the earlier period of this century, though his inferior tragedies, more numerous than the better, would fall within the later. Fontenelle, indeed, as a devoted admirer, attributes considerable merit to those which the general voice both of critics and of the public had condemned.[c] Meantime, another luminary arose on

Racine's first tragdies.

[a] Walker's Memoir on Italian Tragedy, p. 201; Salfi, xii. 57.

[b] Bouterwek.

[c] Hist. du Théâtre François, in Œuvres de Fontenelle, iii. 111. St. Evremond also despised the French public for not admiring the Sophonisbe of Corneille, which he had made too Roman for their taste.

the opposite side of the horizon. The first tragedy of Jean Racine, Les Frères Ennemis, was represented in 1664, when he was twenty-five years of age. It is so far below his great works as to be scarcely mentioned, yet does not want indications of the genius they were to display. Alexandre, in 1665, raised the young poet to more distinction. It is said that he showed this tragedy to Corneille, who praised his versification, but advised him to avoid a path which he was not fitted to tread. It is acknowledged by the advocates of Racine that the characters are feebly drawn, and that the conqueror of Asia sinks to the level of a hero in one of those romances of gallantry which had vitiated the taste of France.

Andromaque.

3. The glory of Racine commenced with the representation of his Andromaque in 1667, which was not printed till the end of the following year. He was now at once compared with Corneille, and the scales long continued to oscillate. Criticism, satire, epigrams, were unsparingly launched against the rising poet. But his rival pursued the worst policy by obstinately writing bad tragedies. The public naturally compare the present with the present, and forget the past. When he gave them Pertharite, they were dispensed from looking back to Cinna. It is acknowledged even by Fontenelle that, during the height of Racine's fame, the world placed him at least on an equality with his predecessor; a decision from which that critic, the relation and friend of Corneille, appeals to what he takes to be the verdict of a later age.

4. The Andromaque was sufficient to show that Racine had more skill in the management of a plot, in the display of emotion, in power over the sympathy of the spectator, at least where the gentler feelings are concerned, in beauty and grace of style, in all except nobleness of character, strength of thought, and impetuosity of language. He took his fable from Euripides, but changed it according to the requisitions of the French theatre and of French manners. Some of these changes are for the better, as the substitution of Astyanax for an unknown Molossus of the Greek tragedian, the supposed son of Andromache by Pyrrhus. "Most of those," says Racine

himself very justly, "who have heard of Andromache, know her only as the widow of Hector and the mother of Astyanax. They cannot reconcile themselves to her loving another husband and another son." And he has finely improved this happy idea of preserving Astyanax, by making the Greeks, jealous of his name, send an embassy by Orestes to demand his life; at once deepening the interest and developing the plot.

5. The female characters, Andromache and Hermione, are drawn with all Racine's delicate perception of ideal beauty; the one, indeed, prepared for his hand by those great masters in whose school he had disciplined his own gifts of nature, Homer, Euripides, Virgil; the other more original and more full of dramatic effect. It was, as we are told, the fine acting of Mademoiselle de Champmelé in this part, generally reckoned one of the most difficult on the French stage, which secured the success of the play. Racine, after the first representation, threw himself at her feet in a transport of gratitude, which was soon changed to love. It is more easy to censure some of the other characters. Pyrrhus is bold, haughty, passionate, the true son of Achilles, except where he appears as the lover of Andromache. It is inconceivable and truly ridiculous that a Greek of the heroic age, and such a Greek as Pyrrhus is represented by those whose imagination has given him existence, should feel the respectful passion towards his captive which we might reasonably expect in the romances of chivalry, or should express it in the tone of conventional gallantry that suited the court of Versailles. But Orestes is far worse; love-mad, and yet talking in gallant conceits, cold and polite, he discredits the poet, the tragedy, and the son of Agamemnon himself. It is better to kill one's mother than to utter such trash. In hinting that the previous madness of Orestes was for the love of Hermione, Racine has presumed too much on the ignorance, and too much on the bad taste, of his audience. But far more injudicious is his fantastic remorse and the supposed vision of the Furies in the last scene. It is astonishing that Racine should have challenged comparison with one of the most celebrated scenes of Euripides in circumstances that deprived him of the possibility of rendering his own effec-

tive. For the style of the Andromaque, it abounds with grace and beauty; but there are, to my apprehension, more insipid and feeble lines, and a more effeminate tone, than in his later tragedies.

Britannicus.

6. Britannicus appeared in 1669; and in this admirable play Racine first showed that he did not depend on the tone of gallantry usual among his courtly hearers, nor on the languid sympathies that it excites. Terror and pity, the twin spirits of tragedy, to whom Aristotle has assigned the great moral office of purifying the passions, are called forth in their shadowy forms to sustain the consummate beauties of his diction. His subject was original and happy; with that historic truth which usage required, and that poetical probability which fills up the outline of historic truth without disguising it. What can be more entirely dramatic, what more terrible in the sense that Aristotle means (that is, the spectator's sympathy with the dangers of the innocent), than the absolute master of the world, like the veiled prophet of Khorasan, throwing off the appearances of virtue, and standing out at once in the maturity of enormous guilt? A presaging gloom, like that which other poets have sought by the hacknied artifices of superstition, hangs over the scenes of this tragedy, and deepens at its close. We sympathise by turns with the guilty alarms of Agrippina, the virtuous consternation of Burrhus, the virgin modesty of Junia, the unsuspecting ingenuousness of Britannicus. Few tragedies on the French stage, or indeed on any stage, save those of Shakspeare, display so great a variety of contrasted characters. None, indeed, are ineffective, except the confidante of Agrippina; for Narcissus is very far from being the mere confidant of Nero; he is, as in history, his preceptor in crime; and his cold villany is well contrasted with the fierce passion of the despot. The criticisms of Fontenelle and others on small incidents in the plot, such as the concealment of Nero behind a curtain that he may hear the dialogue between Junia and Britannicus, which is certainly more fit for comedy,[d] ought not to weigh against such excellence as we find in all the more essential requisites of a tragic drama. Racine

[d] It is, however, taken from Tacitus.

had much improved his language since Andromaque; the conventional phraseology about flames and fine eyes, though not wholly relinquished, is less frequent; and if he has not here reached, as he never did, the peculiar impetuosity of Corneille, nor given to his Romans the grandeur of his predecessor's conception, he is full of lines wherein, as every word is effective, there can hardly be any deficiency of vigour. It is the vigour indeed of Virgil, not of Lucan.

7. In one passage, Racine has, I think, excelled Shakspeare. They have both taken the same idea from Plutarch. The lines of Shakspeare are in Antony and Cleopatra:—

> Thy demon, that 's the spirit that keeps thee, is
> Noble, courageous, high, unmatchable,
> Where Cæsar's is not; but near him, thy angel
> Becomes a fear, as being o'erpowered.

These are, to my apprehension, not very forcible, and obscure even to those who know, what many do not, that by "a fear" he meant a common goblin, a supernatural being of a more plebeian rank than a demon or angel. The single verse of Racine is magnificent:—

> Mon génie étonné tremble devant le sien.

8. Berenice, the next tragedy of Racine, is a surprising proof of what can be done by a great master; but it must be admitted that it wants many of the essential qualities that are required in the drama. It might almost be compared with Timon of Athens, by the absence of fable and movement. For nobleness and delicacy of sentiment, for grace of style, it deserves every praise; but is rather tedious in the closet, and must be far more so on the stage. This is the only tragedy of Racine, unless perhaps we except Athalie, in which the story presents an evident moral; but no poet is more uniformly moral in his sentiments. Corneille, to whom the want of dramatic fable was never any great objection, attempted the subject of Berenice about the same time with far inferior success. It required what he could not give, the picture of two hearts struggling against a noble and a blameless love.

Berenice.

9. It was unfortunate for Racine that he did not more

frequently break through the prejudices of the French theatre in favour of classical subjects. A field was open of almost boundless extent, the mediæval history of Europe, and especially of France herself. His predecessor had been too successful in the Cid to leave it doubtful whether an audience would approve such an innovation at the hands of a favoured tragedian. Racine however did not venture on a step which in the next century Voltaire turned so much to account, and which made the fortune of some inferior tragedies. But considering the distance of place equivalent, for the ends of the drama, to that of time, he founded on an event in the Turkish history not more than thirty years old, his next tragedy, that of Bajazet. The greater part indeed of the fable is due to his own invention. Bajazet is reckoned to fall below most of his other tragedies in beauty of style; but the fable is well connected; there is a great deal of movement, and an unintermitting interest is sustained by Bajazet and Atalide, two of the noblest characters that Racine has drawn. Atalide has not the ingenuous simplicity of Junie, but displays a more dramatic flow of sentiment and not less dignity or tenderness of soul. The character of Roxane is conceived with truth and spirit; nor is the resemblance some have found in it to that of Hermione greater than belongs to forms of the same type. Acomat, the vizir, is more a favourite with the French critics; but in such parts Racine does not rise to the level of Corneille. No poet is less exposed to the imputation of bombastic exaggeration; yet in the two lines with which Acomat concludes the fourth act, there is at least an approach to burlesque; and one can hardly say that they would have been out of place in Tom Thumb:—

Bajazet.

> Mourons, moi, cher Osmin, comme un vizir, et toi,
> Comme le favori d'un homme tel que moi.

10. The next tragedy was Mithridate; and in this Racine has been thought to have wrestled against Corneille on his own ground, the display of the unconquerable mind of a hero. We find in the part of Mithridate a great depth of thought in compressed and energetic language. But, unlike the masculine characters of Corneille, he is not merely senten-

Mithridate.

tious. Racine introduces no one for the sake of the speeches he has to utter. In Mithridates he took what history has delivered to us, blending with it no improbable fiction according to the manners of the East. His love for Monime has nothing in it extraordinary, or unlike what we might expect from the king of Pontus; it is a fierce, a jealous, a vindictive love; the necessities of the French language alone, and the usages of the French theatre, could make it appear feeble. His two sons are naturally less effective; but the loveliness of Monime yields to no female character of Racine. There is something not quite satisfactory in the stratagems which Mithridates employs to draw from her a confession of her love for his son. They are not uncongenial to the historic character, but, according to our chivalrous standard of heroism, seem derogatory to the poetical.

Iphigénie.

11. Iphigénie followed in 1674. In this Racine had again to contend with Euripides in one of his most celebrated tragedies. He had even, in the character of Achilles, to contend, not with Homer himself, yet with the Homeric associations familiar to every classical scholar. The love, in fact, of Achilles, and his politeness towards Clytemnestra, are not exempt from a tone of gallantry a little repugnant to our conception of his manners. Yet the Achilles of Homer is neither incapable of love nor of courtesy, so that there is no essential repugnance to his character. That of Iphigenia in Euripides has been censured by Aristotle as inconsistent; her extreme distress at the first prospect of death being followed by an unusual display of courage. Hurd has taken upon him the defence of the Greek tragedian, and observes, after Brumoy, that the Iphigenia of Racine being modelled rather according to the comment of Aristotle than the example of Euripides, is so much the worse.[e] But his apology is too subtle, and requires too long reflection, for the ordinary spectator; and though Shakspeare might have managed the transition of feeling with some of his wonderful knowledge of human nature, it is certainly presented too crudely by Euripides, and much in the style which I have elsewhere observed to be too

[e] Hurd's Commentary on Horace, vol. i. p. 115.

usual with our old dramatists. The Iphigenia of Racine is not a character, like those of Shakspeare, and of him, perhaps, alone, which nothing less than intense meditation can develop to the reader, but one which a good actress might compass, and a common spectator understand. Racine, like most other tragedians, wrote for the stage; Shakspeare aimed at a point beyond it, and sometimes too much lost sight of what it required.

12. Several critics have censured the part of Eriphile. Yet Fontenelle, prejudiced as he was against Racine, admits that it is necessary for the catastrophe, though he cavils, I think, against her appearance in the earlier part of the play, laying down a rule, by which our own tragedians would not have chosen to be tried, and which seems far too rigid, that the necessity of the secondary characters should be perceived from their first appearance.[f] The question for Racine was in what manner he should manage the catastrophe. The *fabulous truth*, the actual sacrifice of Iphigenia, was so revolting to the mind, that even Euripides thought himself obliged to depart from it. But this he effected by a contrivance impossible on the French stage, and which would have changed Racine's tragedy to a common melodrame. It appears to me that he very happily substituted the character of Eriphile, who, as Fontenelle well says, is the hind of the fable; and whose impetuous and somewhat disorderly passions both furnish a contrast to the ideal nobleness of Iphigenia throughout the tragedy, and reconcile us to her own fate at the close.

Phèdre.

13. Once more, in Phèdre, did the great disciple of Euripides attempt to surpass his master. In both tragedies the character of Phædra herself throws into shade all the others, but with this important difference, that in Euripides her death occurs about the middle of the piece, while she continues in Racine till the conclusion. The French poet has borrowed much from the Greek, more, perhaps, than in any former drama, but has surely heightened the interest, and produced a more splendid work of genius. I have never read the particular criticism in which Schlegel has endeavoured to elevate the Hippolytus above the

[f] Réflexions sur la Poëtique; Œuvres de Fontenelle, vol. iii. p. 149.

Phédre. Many, even among French critics, have objected to the love of Hippolytus for Aricia, by which Racine has deviated from the older mythological tradition, though not without the authority of Virgil. But we are hardly tied to all the circumstance of fable; and the cold young huntsman loses nothing in the eyes of a modern reader by a virtuous attachment. This tragedy is said to be more open to verbal criticism than the Iphigénie; but in poetical beauty I do not know that Racine has ever surpassed it. The description of the death of Hippolytus is, perhaps, his masterpiece. It is true that, according to the practice of our own stage, long descriptions, especially in elaborate language, are out of use; but it is not, at least, for the advocates of Euripides to blame them.

Esther.

14. The Phédre was represented in 1677; and after this its illustrious author seemed to renounce the stage. His increasing attachment to the Jansenists made it almost impossible, with any consistency, to promote an amusement which they anathematised. But he was induced, after many years, in 1689, by Madame de Maintenon, to write Esther for the purpose of representation by the young ladies whose education she protected at St. Cyr. Esther, though very much praised for beauty of language, is admitted to possess little merit as a drama. Much, indeed, could not be expected in the circumstances. It was acted at St. Cyr; Louis applauded, and it is said that the Prince de Condé wept. The greatest praise of Esther is that it encouraged its author to write Athalie. Once more restored to dramatic conceptions, his genius revived from sleep with no loss of the vigour of yesterday. He was even more in Athalie than in Iphigénie and Britannicus. This great work, published in 1691, with a royal prohibition to represent it on any theatre, stands by general consent at the head of all the tragedies of Racine, for the grandeur, simplicity, and interest of the fable, for dramatic terror, for theatrical effect, for clear and judicious management, for bold and forcible, rather than subtle delineation of character, for sublime sentiment and imagery. It equals, if it does not, as I should incline to think, surpass, all the rest in the perfection of style, and is far more free from every defect, especially from feeble

Athalie.

politeness and gallantry, which of course the subject could not admit. It has been said that he himself gave the preference to Phédre; but it is more extraordinary that not only his enemies, of whom there were many, but the public itself, was for some years incapable of discovering the merit of Athalie. Boileau declared it to be a masterpiece, and one can only be astonished that any could have thought differently from Boileau. It doubtless gained much in general esteem when it came to be represented by good actors; for no tragedy in the French language is more peculiarly fitted for the stage.

15. The chorus, which he had previously introduced in Esther, was a very bold innovation (for the revival of what is forgotten must always be classed as innovation), and it required all the skill of Racine to prevent its appearing in our eyes an impertinent excrescence. But though we do not, perhaps, wholly reconcile ourselves to some of the songs, which too much suggest, by association, the Italian opera, the chorus of Athalie enhances the interest as well as the splendour of the tragedy. It was, indeed, more full of action and scenic pomp than any he had written, and probably than any other which up to that time had been represented in France. The part of Athalie predominates, but not so as to eclipse the rest. The high-priest Joad is drawn with a stern zeal, admirably dramatic, and without which the idolatrous queen would have trampled down all before her during the conduct of the fable, whatever justice might have ensued at the last. We feel this want of an adequate resistance to triumphant crime in the Rodogune of Corneille. No character appears superfluous or feeble; while the plot has all the simplicity of the Greek stage, it has all the movement and continual excitation of the modern.

Racine's female characters.

16. The female characters of Racine are of the greatest beauty; they have the ideal grace and harmony of ancient sculpture, and bear somewhat of the same analogy to those of Shakspeare which that art does to painting. Andromache, Monimia, Iphigenia, we may add Junia, have a dignity and faultlessness neither unnatural nor insipid, because they are only the ennobling and purifying of human passions. They are the forms of possible excellence, not from individual

models, nor likely, perhaps, to delight every reader, for the same reason that more eyes are pleased by Titian than by Raffaelle. But it is a very narrow criticism which excludes either school from our admiration, which disparages Racine out of idolatry of Shakspeare. The latter, it is unnecessary for me to say, stands out of reach of all competition. But it is not on this account that we are to give up an author so admirable as Racine.

Racine compared with Corneille.

17. The chief faults of Racine may partly be ascribed to the influence of national taste, though we must confess that Corneille has better avoided them. Though love, with the former, is always tragic and connected with the heroic passions, never appearing singly, as in several of our own dramatists, yet it is sometimes unsuitable to the character, and still more frequently feeble and courtier-like in the expression. In this he complied too much with the times; but we must believe that he did not entirely feel that he was wrong. Corneille had, even while Racine was in his glory, a strenuous band of supporters. Fontenelle, writing in the next century, declares that time has established a decision in which most seem to concur, that the first place is due to the elder poet, the second to the younger; every one making the interval between them a little greater or less according to his taste. But Voltaire, La Harpe, and in general, I apprehend, the later French critics, have given the preference to Racine. I presume to join my suffrage to theirs. Racine appears to me the superior tragedian; and I must add that I think him next to Shakspeare among all the moderns. The comparison with Euripides is so natural that it can hardly be avoided. Certainly no tragedy of the Greek poet is so skilful or so perfect as Athalie or Britannicus. The tedious scenes during which the action is stagnant, the impertinences of useless, often perverse morality, the extinction, by bad management, of the sympathy that had been raised in the earlier part of a play, the foolish alternation of repartees in a series of single lines, will never be found in Racine. But, when we look only at the highest excellences of Euripides, there is, perhaps, a depth of pathos and an intensity of dramatic effect which Racine himself has not attained. The difference

between the energy and sweetness of the two languages is so important in the comparison, that I shall give even this preference with some hesitation.

Beauty of his style.

18. The style of Racine is exquisite. Perhaps he is second only to Virgil among all poets. But I will give the praise of this in the words of a native critic. "His expression is always so happy and so natural, that it seems as if no other could have been found; and every word is placed in such a manner that we cannot fancy any other place to have suited it as well. The structure of his style is such that nothing could be displaced, nothing added, nothing retrenched; it is one unalterable whole. Even his incorrectnesses are often but sacrifices required by good taste, nor would anything be more difficult than to write over again a line of Racine. No one has enriched the language with a greater number of turns of phrase; no one is bold with more felicity and discretion, or figurative with more grace and propriety; no one has handled with more command an idiom often rebellious, or with more skill an instrument always difficult; no one has better understood that delicacy of style which must not be mistaken for feebleness, and is, in fact, but that air of ease which conceals from the reader the labour of the work and the artifices of the composition; or better managed the variety of cadences, the resources of rhythm, the association and deduction of ideas. In short, if we consider that his perfection in these respects may be opposed to that of Virgil, and that he spoke a language less flexible, less poetical, and less harmonious, we shall readily believe that Racine is, of all mankind, the one to whom nature has given the greatest talent for versification." [g]

Thomas Corneille—his Ariane.

19. Thomas, the younger and far inferior brother of Pierre Corneille, was yet by the fertility of his pen, by the success of some of his tragedies, and by a certain reputation which two of them have acquired, the next name, but at a vast interval, to Racine. Voltaire says he would have enjoyed a great reputation but for that of his brother—one of those pointed sayings which seem to convey something, but are really devoid of meaning. Thomas Corneille is never compared with

[g] La Harpe, Éloge de Racine as quoted by himself in Cours de Littérature, vol. vi.

his brother; and probably his brother has been rather serviceable to his name with posterity than otherwise. He wrote with more purity, according to the French critics, and it must be owned that, in his Ariane, he has given to love a tone more passionate and natural than the manly scenes of the older tragedian ever present. This is esteemed his best work, but it depends wholly on the principal character, whose tenderness and injuries excite our sympathy, and from whose lips many lines of great beauty flow. It may be compared with the Berenice of Racine, represented but a short time before; there is enough of resemblance in the fables to provoke comparison. That of Thomas Corneille is more tragic, less destitute of theatrical movement, and consequently better chosen; but such relative praise is of little value, where none can be given, in this respect, to the object of comparison. We feel that the prose romance is the proper sphere for the display of an affection, neither untrue to nature, nor unworthy to move the heart, but wanting the majesty of the tragic muse. An effeminacy uncongenial to tragedy belongs to this play; and the termination, where the heroine faints away instead of dying, is somewhat insipid. The only other tragedy of the younger Corneille that can be mentioned is the Earl of Essex. In this he has taken greater liberties with history than his critics approve; and though love does not so much predominate as in Ariane, it seems to engross, in a style rather too romantic, both the hero and his sovereign.

Manlius of La Fosse.

20. Neither of these tragedies, perhaps, deserves to be put on a level with the Manlius of La Fosse, to which La Harpe accords the preference above all of the seventeenth century after those of Corneille and Racine. It is just to observe, what is not denied, that the author has borrowed the greater part of his story from the Venice Preserved of Otway. The French critics maintain that he has far excelled his original. It is possible that we might hesitate to own this general superiority; but several blemishes have been removed, and the conduct is perhaps more noble, or at least more fitted to the French stage. But when we take from La Fosse what belongs to another—characters strongly marked, sympathies powerfully contrasted, a develop-

ment of the plot probable and interesting, what will remain that is purely his own? There will remain a vigorous tone of language, a considerable power of description, and a skill in adapting, we may add with justice, in sometimes improving, what he found in a foreign language. We must pass over some other tragedies which have obtained less honour in their native land, those of Duché, Quinault, and Campistron.

21. Molière is perhaps, of all French writers, the one whom his country has most uniformly admired, and in whom her critics are most unwilling to acknowledge faults; though the observations of Schlegel on the defects of Molière, and especially on his large debts to older comedy, are not altogether without foundation. Molière began with L'Etourdi in 1653, and his pieces followed rapidly till his death in 1673. About one half are in verse; I shall select a few without regard to order of time, and first one written in prose, L'Avare.

Molière.

22. Plautus first exposed upon the stage the wretchedness of avarice, the punishment of a selfish love of gold, not only in the life of pain it has cost to acquire it, but in the terrors that it brings, in the disordered state of mind, which is haunted, as by some mysterious guilt, by the consciousness of secret wealth. The character of Euclio in the Aulularia is dramatic, and, as far as we know, original; the moral effect requires perhaps some touches beyond absolute probability, but it must be confessed that a few passages are overcharged. Molière borrowed L'Avare from this comedy; and I am not at present aware that the subject, though so well adapted for the stage, had been chosen by any intermediate dramatist. He is indebted not merely for the scheme of his play, but for many strokes of humour, to Plautus. But this takes off little from the merit of this excellent comedy. The plot is expanded without incongruous or improbable circumstances; new characters are well combined with that of Harpagon, and his own is at once more diverting and less extravagant than that of Euclio. The penuriousness of the latter, though by no means without example, leaves no room for any other object than the concealed treasure, in which his thoughts are concentred. But Molière had conceived a

L'Avare.

more complicated action. Harpagon does not absolutely starve the rats; he possesses horses, though he feeds them ill; he has servants, though he grudges them clothes; he even contemplates a marriage supper at his own expense, though he intends to have a bad one. He has evidently been compelled to make some sacrifices to the usages of mankind, and is at once a more common and a more theatrical character than Euclio. In other respects they are much alike: their avarice has reached that point where it is without pride; the dread of losing their wealth has overpowered the desire of being thought to possess it; and though this is a more natural incident in the manners of Greece than in those of France, yet the concealment of treasure, even in the time of Molière, was sufficiently frequent for dramatic probability. A general tone of selfishness, the usual source and necessary consequence of avarice, conspires with the latter quality to render Harpagon odious; and there wants but a little more poetical justice in the conclusion, which leaves the casket in his possession.

23. Hurd has censured Molière without much justice. "For the picture of the avaricious man, Plautus and Molière have presented us with a fantastic, unpleasing draught of the passion of avarice." It may be answered to this, that Harpagon's character is, as has been said above, not so mere a delineation of the passion as that of Euclio. But as a more general vindication of Molière, it should be kept in mind, that every exhibition of a predominant passion within the compass of the five acts of a play must be coloured beyond the truth of nature, or it will not have time to produce its effect. This is one great advantage that romance possesses over the drama.

L'Ecole des Femmes.

24. L'Ecole des Femmes is among the most diverting comedies of Molière. Yet it has in a remarkable degree what seems inartificial to our own taste, and contravenes a good general precept of Horace; the action passes almost wholly in recital. But this is so well connected with the development of the plot and characters, and produces such amusing scenes, that no spectator, at least on the French theatre, would be sensible of any languor. Arnolphe is an excellent modification of the type which Molière loved to reproduce; the

selfish and morose cynic whose pretended hatred of the vices of the world springs from an absorbing regard to his own gratification. He has made him as malignant as censorious; he delights in tales of scandal; he is pleased that Horace should be successful in gallantry, because it degrades others. The half-witted and ill-bred child, of whom he becomes the dupe, as well as the two idiot servants, are delineated with equal vivacity. In this comedy we find the spirited versification, full of grace and humour, in which no one has rivalled Molière, and which has never been attempted on the English stage. It was probably its merit which raised a host of petty detractors, on whom the author revenged himself in his admirable piece of satire, La Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes. The affected pedantry of the Hôtel Rambouillet seems to be ridiculed in this retaliation; nothing in fact could be more unlike than the style of Molière to their own.

Le Misanthrope.

25. He gave another proof of contempt for the false taste of some Parisian circles in the Misanthrope; though the criticism of Alceste on the wretched sonnet forms but a subordinate portion of that famous comedy. It is generally placed next to Tartuffe among the works of Molière. Alceste is again the cynic, but more honourable and less openly selfish, and with more of a real disdain of vice in his misanthropy. Rousseau, upon this account, and many others after him, have treated the play as a vindication of insincerity against truth, and as making virtue itself ridiculous on the stage. This charge however seems uncandid; neither the rudeness of Alceste, nor the misanthropy from which it springs, are to be called virtues; and we may observe that he displays no positively good quality beyond sincerity, unless his ungrounded and improbable love for a coquette is to pass for such. It is true that the politeness of Philinthe, with whom the Misanthrope is contrasted, borders a little too closely upon flattery; but no oblique end is in his view; he flatters to give pleasure; and if we do not much esteem his character, we are not solicitous for his punishment. The dialogue of the Misanthrope is uniformly of the highest style; the female, and indeed all the characters, are excellently conceived and sustained: if this comedy fails of anything at pre-

sent, it is through the difference of manners, and, perhaps, in representation, through the want of animated action on the stage.

26. In Les Femmes Savantes, there is a more evident personality in the characters, and a more malicious exposure of absurdity, than in the Misanthrope; but the ridicule, falling on a less numerous class, is not so well calculated to be appreciated by posterity. It is, however, both in reading and representation, a more amusing comedy: in no one instance has Molière delineated such variety of manners, or displayed so much of his inimitable gaiety and power of fascinating the audience with very little plot, by the mere exhibition of human follies. The satire falls deservedly on pretenders to taste and literature, for whom Molière always testifies a bitterness of scorn in which we perceive some resentment of their criticisms. The shorter piece, entitled Les Précieuses Ridicules, is another shaft directed at the literary ladies of Paris. They had provoked a dangerous enemy; but the good taste of the next age might be ascribed in great measure to his unmerciful exposure of affectation and pedantry.

Les Femmes Savantes.

27. It was not easy, so late as the age of Molière, for the dramatist to find any untrodden field in the follies and vices of mankind. But one had been reserved for him in Tartuffe—religious hypocrisy. We should have expected the original draft of such a character on the English stage; nor had our old writers been forgetful of their inveterate enemies, the Puritans, who gave such full scope for their satire. But choosing rather the easy path of ridicule, they fell upon the starch dresses and quaint language of the fanatical party; and where they exhibited these in conjunction with hypocrisy, made the latter more ludicrous than hateful. The Luke of Massinger is deeply and villanously dissembling, but does not wear so conspicuous a garb of religious sanctity as Tartuffe. The comedy of Molière is not only original in this character, but is a new creation in dramatic poetry. It has been doubted by some critics, whether the depth of guilt that it exhibits, the serious hatred that it inspires, are not beyond the strict province of comedy. But this seems rather a technical cavil. If subjects such as the Tartuffe are not fit for

Tartuffe.

comedy, they are at least fit for dramatic representation, and some new phrase must be invented to describe their class.

28. A different kind of objection is still sometimes made to this play, that it brings religion itself into suspicion. And this would no doubt have been the case, if the contemporaries of Molière in England had dealt with the subject. But the boundaries between the reality and its false appearances are so well guarded in this comedy, that no reasonable ground of exception can be thought to remain. No better advice can be given to those who take umbrage at the Tartuffe than to read it again. For there may be good reason to suspect that they are themselves among those for whose benefit it was intended; the Tartuffes, happily, may be comparatively few, but while the Orgons and Pernelles are numerous, they will not want their harvest. Molière did not invent the prototypes of his hypocrite; they were abundant at Paris in his time.

29. The interest of this play continually increases, and the fifth act is almost crowded by a rapidity of events, not so usual on the French stage as our own. Tartuffe himself is a masterpiece of skill. Perhaps in the cavils of La Bruyère there may be some justice; but the essayist has forgotten that no character can be rendered entirely effective to an audience without a little exaggeration of its attributes. Nothing can be more happily conceived than the credulity of the honest Orgon, and his more doting mother; it is that which we sometimes witness, incurable except by the evidence of the senses, and fighting every inch of ground against that. In such a subject there was not much opportunity for the comic talent of Molière; yet in some well-known passages, he has enlivened it as far as was possible. The Tartuffe will generally be esteemed the greatest effort of this author's genius; the Misanthrope, the Femmes Savantes, and the Ecole des Femmes will follow in various order, according to our tastes. These are by far the best of his comedies in verse. Among those in prose we may give the first place to L'Avare, and the next either to Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, or to George Dandin.

30. These two plays have the same objects of moral

satire; on one hand the absurd vanity of plebeians in seeking the alliance or acquaintance of the nobility; on the other, the pride and meanness of the nobility themselves. They are both abundantly diverting; but the sallies of humour are, I think, more frequent in the first three acts of the former. The last two acts are improbable and less amusing. The shorter pieces of Molière border very much upon farce; he permits himself more vulgarity of character, more grossness in language and incident, but his farces are seldom absurd, and never dull.

Bourgeois Gentilhomme. George Dandin.

31. The French have claimed for Molière, and few perhaps have disputed the pretension, a superiority over all earlier and later writers of comedy. He certainly leaves Plautus, the original model of the school to which he belonged, at a vast distance. The grace and gentlemanly elegance of Terence he has not equalled; but in the more appropriate merits of comedy, just and forcible delineation of character, skilful contrivance of circumstances, and humorous dialogue, we must award him the prize. The Italian and Spanish dramatists are quite unworthy to be named in comparison; and if the French theatre has, in later times, as is certainly the case, produced some excellent comedies, we have, I believe, no reason to contradict the suffrage of the nation itself, that they owe almost as much to what they have caught from this great model, as to the natural genius of their authors. But it is not for us to abandon the rights of Shakspeare. In all things most essential to comedy, we cannot acknowledge his inferiority to Molière. He had far more invention of characters, with an equal vivacity and force in their delineation. His humour was at least as abundant and natural, his wit incomparably more brilliant; in fact, Molière hardly exhibits this quality at all.[h] The Merry Wives of Windsor, almost the only pure comedy of Shakspeare, is surely not disadvantageously compared with George Dandin or Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, or even with L'Ecole des Femmes For the Tartuffe or the Misanthrope it is vain to seek a proper counterpart in

Character of Molière.

[h] [A French critic upon the first edition of this work has supposed *wit* to be the same as *esprit*, and is justly astonished that I should deny the latter quality to Molière, especially after the eulogies I have been passing on him.—1842.]

Shakspeare; they belong to a different state of manners. But the powers of Molière are directed with greater skill to their object; none of his energy is wasted; the spectator is not interrupted by the serious scenes of tragi-comedy, nor his attention drawn aside by poetical episodes. Of Shakspeare we may justly say that he had the greater genius, but perhaps of Molière, that he has written the best comedies. We cannot at least put any third dramatist in competition with him. Fletcher and Jonson, Wycherley and Congreve, Farquhar and Sheridan, with great excellences of their own, fall short of his merit as well as of his fame. Yet in humorous conception, our admirable play, the Provoked Husband, the best parts of which are due to Vanbrugh, seems to be equal to anything he has left. His spirited and easy versification stands of course untouched by any English rivalry; we may have been wise in rejecting verse from our stage, but we have certainly given the French a right to claim all the honour that belongs to it.

Les Plaideurs of Racine.

32. Racine once only attempted comedy. His wit was quick and sarcastic, and in epigram he did not spare his enemies. In his Plaideurs there is more of humour and stage-effect than of wit. The ridicule falls happily on the pedantry of lawyers and the folly of suitors; but the technical language is lost in great measure upon the audience. This comedy, if it be not rather a farce, is taken from The Wasps of Aristophanes; and that Rabelais of antiquity supplied an extravagance very improbably introduced into the third act of Les Plaideurs, the trial of the dog. Far from improving the humour, which had been amusingly kept up during the first two acts, this degenerates into absurdity.

Regnard—Le Joueur.

33. Regnard is always placed next to Molière among the comic writers of France in this, and perhaps in any age. The plays, indeed, which entitle him to such a rank are but few. Of these the best is acknowledged to be Le Joueur. Regnard, taught by his own experience, has here admirably delineated the character of an inveterate gamester; without parade of morality, few comedies are more usefully moral. We have not the struggling virtues of a Charles Surface, which the dramatist may feign that he may reward at the fifth

act; Regnard has better painted the selfish ungrateful being, who, though not incapable of love, pawns his mistress's picture, the instant after she has given it to him, that he may return to the dice-box. Her just abandonment, and his own disgrace, terminate the comedy with a moral dignity which the stage does not always maintain, and which in the first acts the spectator does not expect. The other characters seem to me various, spirited, and humorous; the valet of Valère the gamester is one of the best of that numerous class, to whom comedy has owed so much; but the pretended marquis, though diverting, talks too much like a genuine coxcomb of the world. Molière did this better in Les Précieuses Ridicules. Regnard is in this play full of those gay sallies which cannot be read without laughter; the incidents follow rapidly; there is more movement than in some of the best of Molière's comedies, and the speeches are not so prolix.

His other plays.

34. Next to Le Joueur among Regnard's comedies it has been usual to place Le Légataire, not by any means inferior to the first in humour and vivacity, but with less force of character, and more of the common tricks of the stage. The moral, instead of being excellent, is of the worst kind, being the success and dramatic reward of a gross fraud, the forgery of a will by the hero of the piece and his servant. This servant is however a very comical rogue, and we should not perhaps wish to see him sent to the galleys. A similar censure might be passed on the comedy of Regnard which stands third in reputation, Les Menechmes. The subject, as explained by the title, is old—twin-brothers, whose undistinguishable features are the source of endless confusion; but what neither Plautus nor Shakspeare have thought of, one avails himself of the likeness to receive a large sum of money due to the other, and is thought very generous at the close of the play when he restores a moiety. Of the plays founded on this diverting exaggeration, Regnard's is perhaps the best; he has more variety of incident than Plautus; and by leaving out the second pair of twins, the Dromio servants, who render the Comedy of Errors almost too inextricably confused for the spectator or reader, as well as by making one of the brothers aware of the mistake, and a party in

the deception, he has given an unity of plot instead of a series of incoherent blunders.

35. The Mère Coquette of Quinault appears a comedy of great merit. Without the fine traits of nature which we find in those of Molière, without the sallies of humour which enliven those of Regnard, with a versification perhaps not very forcible, it pleases us by a fable at once novel, as far as I know, and natural, by the interesting characters of the lovers, by the decency and tone of good company, which are never lost in the manners, the incidents, or the language. Boursault, whose tragedies are little esteemed, displayed some originality in Le Mercure Galant. The idea is one which has not unfrequently been imitated on the English as well as French stage, but it is rather adapted to the shorter drama than to a regular comedy of five acts. The Mercure Galant was a famous magazine of light periodical amusement, such as was then new in France, which had a great sale, and is described in a few lines by one of the characters in this piece.[1] Boursault places his hero, by the editor's consent, as a temporary substitute in the office of this publication, and brings, in a series of detached scenes, a variety of applicants for his notice. A comedy of this kind is like a compound animal; a few chief characters must give unity to the whole, but the effect is produced by the successive personages who pass over the stage, display their humour in a single scene, and disappear. Boursault has been in some instances successful; but such pieces generally owe too much to temporary sources of amusement.

Quinault. Boursault.

36. Dancourt, as Voltaire has said, holds the same rank relatively to Molière in farce, that Regnard does in the higher comedy. He came a little after the former, and when the prejudice that had been created against comedies in prose by the great success of the other kind had begun to subside. The Chevalier à la

Dancourt.

[1] Le Mercure est une bonne chose;
Ou y trouve de tout, fable, histoire, vers, prose,
Siéges, combats, procès, mort, mariage, amour,
Nouvelles de province, et nouvelles de cour—
Jamais livre à mon gré ne fut plus nécessaire.
Act i. scene 2.

The Mercure Galant was established in 1672 by one Visé: it was intended to fill the same place as a critical record of polite literature, which the Journal des Sçavans did in learning and science.

Mode is the only play of Dancourt that I know; it is much above farce, and if length be a distinctive criterion, it exceeds most comedies. This would be very slight praise, if we could not add that the reader does not find it one page too long, that the ridicule is poignant and happy, the incidents well contrived, the comic situations amusing, the characters clearly marked. La Harpe, who treats Dancourt with a sort of contempt, does not so much as mention this play. It is a satire on the pretensions of a class then rising, the rich financiers, which long supplied materials, through dramatic caricature, to public malignity, and the envy of a less opulent aristocracy.

Brueys.

37. The life of Brueys is rather singular. Born of a noble Huguenot family, he was early devoted to Protestant theology, and even presumed to enter the lists against Bossuet. But that champion of the faith was like one of those knights in romance, who first unhorse their rash antagonists, and then make them work as slaves. Brueys was soon converted, and betook himself to write against his former errors. He afterwards became an ecclesiastic. Thus far there is nothing much out of the common course in his history. But grown weary of living alone, and having some natural turn to comedy, he began, rather late, to write for the stage, with the assistance, or perhaps only under the name, of a certain Palaprat. The plays of Brueys had some success; but he was not in a position to delineate recent manners, and in the only comedy with which I am acquainted, Le Muet, he has borrowed the leading part of his story from Terence. The language seems deficient in vivacity, which, when there is no great naturalness or originality of character, cannot be dispensed with.

Operas of Quinault.

38. The French opera, after some ineffectual attempts by Mazarin to naturalise an Italian company, was successfully established by Lulli in 1672. It is the prerogative of music in the melo-drame to render poetry its dependent ally; but the airs of Lulli have been forgotten and the verses of his coadjutor Quinault remain. He is not only the earliest, but by general consent the unrivalled poet of French music. Boileau indeed treated him with undeserved scorn, but probably

through dislike of the tone he was obliged to preserve, which in the eyes of so stern a judge, and one so insensible to love, appeared languid and effeminate. Quinault nevertheless was not incapable of vigorous and impressive poetry; a lyric grandeur distinguishes some of his songs; he seems to possess great felicity of adorning every subject with appropriate imagery and sentiment; his versification has a smoothness and charm of melody which has made some say that the lines were already music before they came to the composer's hands; his fables, whether taken from mythology or modern romance, display invention and skill. Voltaire, La Harpe, Schlegel, and the author of the life of Quinault in the Biographie Universelle, but most of all, the testimony of the public, have compensated for the severity of Boileau. The Armide is Quinault's latest and also his finest opera.

SECT. II.—ON THE ENGLISH DRAMA.

State of the Stage after the Restoration — Tragedies of Dryden, Otway, Southern — Comedies of Congreve and others.

39. THE troubles of twenty years, and, much more, the fanatical antipathy to stage-plays which the predominant party affected, silenced the muse of the buskin, and broke the continuity of those works of the older dramatists, which had given a tone to public sentiment as to the drama from the middle of Elizabeth's reign. Davenant had, by a sort of connivance, opened a small house for the representation of plays, though not avowedly so called, near the Charter House in 1656. He obtained a patent after the Restoration. By this time another generation had arisen, and the scale of taste was to be adjusted anew. The fondness for the theatre revived with increased avidity; more splendid decoration, actors probably, especially Betterton, of greater powers, and above all, the attraction of female performers, who had never been admitted on the older stage, conspired with the keen appetite that long restraint produced, and with the general gaiety, or rather dissoluteness, of manners. Yet the multitude of places for

Revival of the English theatre.

such amusement was not as great as under the first Stuarts. Two houses only were opened under royal patents, granting them an exclusive privilege, one by what was called the King's Company, in Drury Lane, another by the Duke of York's Company, in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Betterton, who was called the English Roscius, till Garrick claimed that title, was sent to Paris by Charles II., that, taking a view of the French stage, he might better judge of what would contribute to the improvement of our own. It has been said, and probably with truth, that he introduced moveable scenes, instead of the fixed tapestry that had been hung across the stage; but this improvement he could not have borrowed from France. The king not only countenanced the theatre by his patronage, but by so much personal notice of the chief actors, and so much interest in all the affairs of the theatre, as elevated their condition.

Change of public taste.

40. An actor of great talents is the best friend of the great dramatists; his own genius demands theirs for its support and display; and a fine performer would as soon waste the powers of his hand on feeble music, as a man like Betterton or Garrick represent what is insipid or in bad taste. We know that the former, and some of his contemporaries, were celebrated in the great parts of our early stage, in those of Shakspeare and Fletcher. But the change of public taste is sometimes irresistible by those who, as, in Johnson's antithesis, they "live to please, must please to live." Neither tragedy nor comedy was maintained at its proper level; and as the world is apt to demand novelty on the stage, the general tone of dramatic representation in this period, whatever credit it may have done to the performers, reflects little, in comparison with our golden age, upon those who wrote for them.

Its causes.

41. It is observed by Scott, that the French theatre, which was now thought to be in perfection, guided the criticism of Charles's court, and afforded the pattern of those tragedies which continued in fashion for twenty years after the Restoration, and which were called rhyming or heroic plays. Though there is a general justice in this remark, I am not aware that the inflated tone of these plays is imitated from any French tragedy; certainly there was a nobler model in

the best works of Corneille. But Scott is more right in deriving the unnatural and pedantic dialogue which prevailed through these performances from the romances of Scudery and Calprenède. These were, about the era of the Restoration, almost as popular among our indolent gentry as in France; and it was to be expected that a style would gain ground in tragedy, which is not so widely removed from what tragedy requires, but that an ordinary audience would fail to perceive the difference. There is but a narrow line between the sublime and the tumid; the man of business or of pleasure who frequents the theatre must have accustomed himself to make such large allowances, to put himself into a state of mind so totally different from his every-day habits, that a little extraordinary deviation from nature, far from shocking him, will rather show like a further advance towards excellence. Hotspur and Almanzor, Richard and Aurungzebe, seem to him cast in the same mould; beings who can never occur in the common walks of life, but whom the tragedian has, by a tacit convention with the audience, acquired a right of feigning like his ghosts and witches.

Heroic tragedies of Dryden.

42. The first tragedies of Dryden were what was called heroic, and written in rhyme*; an innovation which, of course, must be ascribed to the influence of the French theatre. They have occasionally much vigour of sentiment and much beautiful poetry, with a versification sweet even to lusciousness. The Conquest of Grenada is, on account of its extravagance, the most celebrated of these plays; but it is inferior to the Indian Emperor, from which it would be easy to select passages of perfect elegance. It is singular that although the rhythm of dramatic verse is commonly permitted to be the most lax of any, Dryden has in this play availed himself of none of his wonted privileges. He regularly closes the sense with the couplet, and falls into a smoothness of cadence which, though exquisitely mellifluous, is perhaps too uniform. In the Conquest of Grenada the versification is rather more broken.

His later tragedies.

43. Dryden may probably have been fond of this species of tragedy, on account of his own facility in rhyming, and his habit of condensing his

sense. Rhyme, indeed, can only be rejected in our language from the tragic scene, because blank verse affords wider scope for the emotions it ought to excite; but for the tumid rhapsodies which the personages of his heroic plays utter, there can be no excuse. He adhered to this tone, however, till the change in public taste, and especially the ridicule thrown on his own plays by the Rehearsal, drove him to adopt a very different, though not altogether faultless, style of tragedy. His principal works of this latter class are All for Love, in 1678, the Spanish Friar, commonly referred to 1682, and Don Sebastian, in 1690. Upon these the dramatic fame of Dryden is built; while the rants of Almanzor and Maximin are never mentioned but in ridicule. The chief excellence of the first tragedy appears to consist in the beauty of the language, that of the second in the interest of the story, and that of the third in the highly finished character of Dorax. Dorax is the best of Dryden's tragic characters, and perhaps the only one in which he has applied his great knowledge of the human mind to actual delineation. It is highly dramatic, because formed of those complex passions which may readily lead either to virtue or to vice, and which the poet can manage so as to surprise the spectator without transgressing consistency. The Zanga of Young, a part of some theatrical effect, has been compounded of this character, and of that of Iago. But Don Sebastian is as imperfect as all plays must be in which a single personage is thrown forward in too strong relief for the rest. The language is full of that rant which characterised Dryden's earlier tragedies, and to which a natural predilection seems, after some interval, to have brought him back. Sebastian himself may seem to have been intended as a contrast to Muley Moloch; but if the author had any rule to distinguish the blustering of the hero from that of the tyrant, he has not left the use of it in his reader's hands. The plot of this tragedy is ill conducted, especially in the fifth act. Perhaps the delicacy of the present age may have been too fastidious in excluding altogether from the drama this class of fables; because they may often excite great interest, give scope to impassioned poetry, and are admirably calculated for the ἀναγνώρισις, or discovery, which is so much dwelt

Don Sebastian.

upon by the critics; nor can the story of Œdipus, which has furnished one of the finest and most artful tragedies ever written, be well thought an improper subject even for representation. But they require, of all others, to be dexterously managed; they may make the main distress of a tragedy, but not an episode in it. Our feelings revolt at seeing, as in Don Sebastian, an incestuous passion brought forward as the make-weight of a plot, to eke out a fifth act, and to dispose of those characters whose fortune the main story has not quite wound up.

Spanish Friar.

44. The Spanish Friar has been praised for what Johnson calls the "happy coincidence and coalition of the two plots." It is difficult to understand what can be meant by a compliment which seems either ironical or ignorant. Nothing can be more remote from the truth. The artifice of combining two distinct stories on the stage is, we may suppose, either to interweave the incidents of one into those of the other, or at least so to connect some characters with each intrigue, as to make the spectator fancy them less distinct than they are. Thus in the Merchant of Venice, the courtship of Bassanio and Portia is happily connected with the main plot of Antonio and Shylock by two circumstances: it is to set Bassanio forward in his suit that the fatal bond is first given; and it is by Portia's address that its forfeiture is explained away. The same play affords an instance of another kind of underplot, that of Lorenzo and Jessica, which is more episodical, and might perhaps be removed without any material loss to the fable; though even this serves to account for, we do not say to palliate, the vindictive exasperation of the Jew. But to which of these do the comic scenes in the Spanish Friar bear most resemblance? Certainly to the latter. They consist entirely of an intrigue which Lorenzo, a young officer, carries on with a rich usurer's wife; but there is not, even by accident, any relation between his adventures and the love and murder which go forward in the palace. The Spanish Friar, so far as it is a comedy, is reckoned the best performance of Dryden in that line. Father Dominic is very amusing, and has been copied very freely by succeeding dramatists, especially in the Duenna. But Dryden has no great abundance of wit in

this or any of his comedies. His jests are practical, and he seems to have written more for the eye than the ear. It may be noted as a proof of this, that his stage directions are unusually full. In point of diction, the Spanish Friar in its tragic scenes, and All for Love, are certainly the best plays of Dryden. They are the least infected with his great fault, bombast, and should perhaps be read over and over by those who would learn the true tone of English tragedy. In dignity, in animation, in striking images and figures, there are few or none that excel them; the power indeed of impressing sympathy, or commanding tears, was seldom placed by nature within the reach of Dryden.

Otway.

45. The Orphan of Otway, and his Venice Preserved, will generally be reckoned the best tragedies of this period. They have both a deep pathos, springing from the intense and unmerited distress of women; both, especially the latter, have a dramatic eloquence, rapid and flowing, with less of turgid extravagance than we find in Otway's contemporaries, and sometimes with very graceful poetry. The story of the Orphan is domestic, and borrowed, as I believe, from some French novel, though I do not at present remember where I have read it; it was once popular on the stage, and gave scope for good acting, but is unpleasing to the delicacy of our own age. Venice Preserved is more frequently represented than any tragedy after those of Shakspeare; the plot is highly dramatic in conception and conduct; even what seems, when we read it, a defect, the shifting of our wishes, or perhaps rather of our ill wishes, between two parties, the senate and the conspirators, who are redeemed by no virtue, does not, as is shown by experience, interfere with the spectator's interest. Pierre indeed is one of those villains for whom it is easy to excite the sympathy of the half-principled and the inconsiderate. But the great attraction is in the character of Belvidera; and when that part is represented by such as we remember to have seen, no tragedy is honoured by such a tribute, not of tears alone, but of more agony than many would seek to endure. The versification of Otway, like that of most in this period, runs almost to an excess into the

line of eleven syllables, sometimes also into the *sdrucciolo* form, or twelve syllables with a dactylic close. These give a considerable animation to tragic verse.

46. Southern's Fatal Discovery, latterly represented under the name of Isabella, is almost as familiar to the lovers of our theatre as Venice Preserved itself; and for the same reason, that whenever an actress of great tragic powers arises, the part of Isabella is as fitted to exhibit them as that of Belvidera. The choice and conduct of the story are, however, Southern's chief merits; for there is little vigour in the language, though it is natural, and free from the usual faults of his age. A similar character may be given to his other tragedy, Oroonoko; in which Southern deserves the praise of having, first of any English writer, denounced the traffic in slaves, and the cruelties of their West Indian bondage. The moral feeling is high in this tragedy, and it has sometimes been acted with a certain success; but the execution is not that of a superior dramatist. Of Lee nothing need be said, but that he is, in spite of his proverbial extravagance, a man of poetical mind and some dramatic skill. But he has violated historic truth in Theodosius without gaining much by invention. The Mourning Bride of Congreve is written in prolix declamation, with no power over the passions. Johnson is well known to have praised a few lines in this tragedy as among the finest descriptions in the language; while others, by a sort of contrariety, have spoken of them as worth nothing. Truth is in its usual middle path; many better passages may be found, but they are well written and impressive.[k]

Southern.

Lee.

Congreve.

47. In the early English comedy, we find a large intermixture of obscenity in the lower characters, nor always confined to them, with no infrequent scenes of licentious incident and language. But these are invariably so brought forward as to manifest the dramatist's scorn of vice, and to excite no other sentiment in a spectator of even an ordinary degree of moral purity. In the plays that appeared after the Restoration, and that from the beginning, a

Comedies of Chas. II.'s reign.

[k] Mourning Bride, act ii. scene 3; Johnson's Life of Congreve.

different tone was assumed. Vice was in her full career on the stage, unchecked by reproof, unshamed by contrast, and for the most part unpunished by mortification at the close. Nor are these less coarse in expression, or less impudent in their delineation of low debauchery, than those of the preceding period. It may be observed, on the contrary, that they rarely exhibit the manners of truly polished life, according to any notions we can frame of them, and are, in this respect, much below those of Fletcher, Massinger, and Shirley. It might not be easy perhaps to find a scene in any comedy of Charles II.'s reign where one character has the behaviour of a gentleman, in the sense which we attach to the word. Yet the authors of these were themselves in the world, and sometimes men of family and considerable station. The cause must be found in the state of society itself, debased as well as corrupted, partly by the example of the court, partly by the practice of living in taverns, which became much more inveterate after the Restoration than before. The contrast with the manners of Paris, as far as the stage is their mirror, does not tell to our advantage. These plays, as it may be expected, do not aim at the higher glories of comic writing; they display no knowledge of nature, nor often rise to any other conception of character than is gained by a caricature of some known class, or perhaps of some remarkable individual. Nor do they in general deserve much credit as comedies of intrigue; the plot is seldom invented with much care for its development; and if scenes follow one another in a series of diverting incidents, if the entanglements are such as produce laughter, above all, if the personages keep up a well-sustained battle of repartee, the purpose is sufficiently answered. It is in this that they often excel; some of them have considerable humour in the representation of character, though this may not be very original, and a good deal of wit in their dialogue.

Wycherley.

48. Wycherley is remembered for two comedies, the Plain Dealer, and the Country Wife, the latter represented with some change, in modern times, under the name of the Country Girl. The former has been frequently said to be taken from the Misanthrope of Molière; but this, like many current asser-

tions, seems to have little if any foundation. Manly, the Plain Dealer, is, like Alceste, a speaker of truth; but the idea is at least one which it was easy to conceive without plagiarism, and there is not the slightest resemblance in any circumstance or scene of the two comedies. We cannot say the same of the Country Wife; it was evidently suggested by L'Ecole des Femmes; the character of Arnolphe has been copied; but even here the whole conduct of the piece of Wycherley is his own. It is more artificial than that of Molière, wherein too much passes in description; the part of Agnes is rendered still more poignant; and among the comedies of Charles's reign, I am not sure that it is surpassed by any.

49. Shadwell and Etherege, and the famous Afra Behn, have endeavoured to make the stage as grossly immoral as their talents permitted; but the two former, especially Shadwell, are not destitute of humour. At the death of Charles it had reached the lowest point; after the Revolution, it became not much more a school of virtue, but rather a better one of polished manners than before; and certainly drew to its service some men of comic genius whose names are now not only very familiar to our ears, as the boasts of our theatre, but whose works have not all ceased to enliven its walls.

Improvement after the Revolution.

50. Congreve, by the Old Bachelor, written, as some have said, at twenty-one years of age, but in fact not quite so soon, and represented in 1693, placed himself at once in a rank which he has always retained. Though not, I think, the first, he is undeniably among the first names. The Old Bachelor was quickly followed by the Double Dealer, and that by Love for Love, in which he reached the summit of his reputation. The last of his four comedies, the Way of the World, is said to have been coldly received; for which it is hard to assign any substantial cause, unless it be some want of sequence in the plot. The peculiar excellence of Congreve is his wit, incessantly sparkling from the lips of almost every character, but on this account it is accompanied by want of nature and simplicity. Nature indeed and simplicity do not belong as proper attributes to that comedy which, itself the crea-

Congreve.

ture of an artificial society, has for its proper business to exaggerate the affectation and hollowness of the world. A critical code which should require the comedy of polite life to be natural would make it intolerable. But there are limits of deviation from likeness which even caricature must not transgress; and the type of truth should always regulate the playful aberrations of an inventive pencil. The manners of Congreve's comedies are not, to us at least, like those of reality; I am not sure that we have any cause to suppose that they much better represent the times in which they appeared. His characters, with an exception or two, are heartless and vicious; which, on being attacked by Collier, he justified, probably by an afterthought, on the authority of Aristotle's definition of comedy; that it is *μίμησις φαυλοτέρων*, an imitation of what is the worse in human nature.[m] But it must be acknowledged that, more than any preceding writer among us, he kept up the tone of a gentleman; his men of the world are profligate, but not coarse; he rarely, like Shadwell, or even Dryden, caters for the populace of the theatre by such indecencies as they must understand; he gave, in fact, a tone of refinement to the public taste, which it never lost, and which, in its progression, has almost banished his own comedies from the stage.

Love for Love.

51. Love for Love is generally reputed the best of these. Congreve has never any great success in the conception or management of his plot; but in this comedy there is least to censure; several of the characters are exceedingly humorous; the incidents are numerous and not complex; the wit is often admirable. Angelica and Miss Prue, Ben and Tattle, have been repeatedly imitated; but they have, I think, a considerable degree of dramatic originality in themselves. Johnson has observed that "Ben the sailor is not reckoned over natural, but he is very diverting." Possibly he may be quite as natural a portrait of a mere sailor, as that to which we have become used in modern comedy.

His other comedies.

52. The Way of the World I should perhaps incline to place next to this; the coquetry of Millamant, not without some touches of delicacy and

[m] Congreve's Amendments of Mr. Collier's false citations.

affection, the impertinent coxcombry of Petulant and Witwood, the mixture of wit and ridiculous vanity in Lady Wishfort, are amusing to the reader. Congreve has here made more use than, as far as I remember, had been common in England, of the all-important soubrette, on whom so much depends in French comedy. The manners of France happily enabled her dramatists to improve what they had borrowed with signal success from the ancient stage, the witty and artful servant, faithful to his master while he deceives every one besides, by adding this female attendant, not less versed in every artifice, nor less quick in repartee. Mincing and Foible, in this play of Congreve, are good specimens of the class; but speaking with some hesitation, I do not think they will be found, at least not so naturally drawn, in the comedies of Charles's time. Many would, perhaps not without cause, prefer the Old Bachelor, which abounds with wit, but seems rather deficient in originality of character and circumstance. The Double Dealer is entitled to the same praise of wit, and some of the characters, though rather exaggerated, are amusing; but the plot is so entangled towards the conclusion, that I have found it difficult, even in reading, to comprehend it.

Farquhar. Vanbrugh.

53. Congreve is not superior to Farquhar and Vanbrugh, if we might compare the whole of their works. Never has he equalled in vivacity, in originality of contrivance, or in clear and rapid development of intrigue, the Beaux' Stratagem of the one, and much less the admirable delineation of the Wronghead family in the Provoked Husband of the other. But these were of the eighteenth century. Farquhar's Trip to the Jubilee, though once a popular comedy, is not distinguished by more than an easy flow of wit, and perhaps a little novelty in some of the characters; it is indeed written in much superior language to the plays anterior to the Revolution. But the Relapse and the Provoked Wife of Vanbrugh have attained a considerable reputation. In the former, the character of Amanda is interesting, especially in the momentary wavering and quick recovery of her virtue. This is the first homage that the theatre had paid, since the Restoration, to female chastity; and notwithstanding the vicious

tone of the other characters, in which Vanbrugh has gone as great lengths as any of his contemporaries, we perceive the beginnings of a re-action in public spirit, which gradually reformed and elevated the moral standard of the stage.[n] The Provoked Wife, though it cannot be said to give any proofs of this sort of improvement, has some merit as a comedy; it is witty and animated, as Vanbrugh usually was; the character of Sir John Brute may not have been too great a caricature of real manners, such as survived from the debased reign of Charles; and the endeavour to expose the grossness of the older generation was itself an evidence that a better polish had been given to social life.

[n] This purification of English comedy has sometimes been attributed to the effects of a famous essay by Collier on the immorality of the English stage. But if public opinion had not been prepared to go along, in a considerable degree, with Collier, his animadversions could have produced little change. In point of fact, the subsequent improvement was but slow, and, for some years, rather shown in avoiding coarse indecencies than in much elevation of sentiment. Steele's Conscious Lovers is the first comedy which can be called moral; Cibber, in those Parts of the Provoked Husband that he wrote, carried this farther, and the stage afterwards grew more and more refined, till it became languid and sentimental.

CHAPTER VII.

HISTORY OF POLITE LITERATURE IN PROSE FROM 1650 TO 1700.

SECTION I.

Italy — High Refinement of French Language — Fontenelle — St. Evremond — Sévigné — Bouhours and Rapin — Miscellaneous writers — English Style — and Criticism — Dryden.

Low state of literature in Italy.

1. IF Italy could furnish no long list of conspicuous names in this department of literature to our last period, she is far more deficient in the present. The Prose Fiorentine of Dati, a collection of what seemed the best specimens of Italian eloquence in this century, served chiefly to prove its mediocrity, nor has that editor, by his own panegyric on Louis XIV. or any other of his writings, been able to redeem its name.[a] The sermons of Segneri have already been mentioned; the eulogies bestowed on them seem to be founded, in some measure, on the surrounding barrenness. The letters of Magalotti, and still more of Redi, themselves philosophers, and generally writing on philosophy, seem to do more credit than anything else to this period.[b]

Crescimbeni.

2. Crescimbeni, the founder of the Arcadian Society, has made an honourable name by his exertions to purify the national taste, as well as by his diligence in preserving the memory of better ages than his own. His History of National Poetry is a laborious and useful work, to which I have sometimes been indebted. His treatise on the beauty of that poetry is only known to me through Salfi. It is written in dialogue, the speakers being Arcadians. Anxious to extir-

[a] Salfi, xiv. 25; Tiraboschi, xi. 412. [b] Salfi, xiv. 17; Corniani, viii. 71.

pate the school of the Marinists, without falling back altogether into that of Petrarch, he set up Costanzo as a model of poetry. Most of his precepts, Salfi observes, are very trivial at present; but at the epoch of its appearance his work was of great service towards the reform of Italian literature.[c]

Age of Louis XIV. in France.

3. This period, the second part of the seventeenth century, comprehends the most considerable, and in every sense the most important and distinguished portion of what was once called the great age in France, the reign of Louis XIV. In this period the literature of France was adorned by its most brilliant writers; since, notwithstanding the genius and popularity of some who followed, we generally find a still higher place awarded by men of fine taste to Bossuet and Pascal than to Voltaire and Montesquieu. The language was written with a care that might have fettered the powers of ordinary men, but rendered those of such as we have mentioned more resplendent. The laws of taste and grammar, like those of nature, were held immutable; it was the province of human genius to deal with them, as it does with nature, by a skilful employment, not by a preposterous and ineffectual rebellion against their control. Purity and perspicuity, simplicity and ease, were conditions of good writing; it was never thought that an author, especially in prose, might transgress the recognised idiom of his mother-tongue, or invent words unknown to it, for the sake of effect or novelty; or, if in some rare occurrence so bold a course might be forgiven, these exceptions were but as miracles in religion, which would cease to strike us, or be no miracles at all, but for the regularity of the laws to which they bear witness even while they infringe them. We have not thought it necessary to defer the praise which some great French writers have deserved on the score of their language for this chapter. Bossuet, Malebranche, Arnauld, and Pascal, have already been commemorated; and it is sufficient to point out two causes in perpetual operation during this period which ennobled and preserved in purity the literature of France; one, the salutary influence of the Academy, the other, that

[c] Salfi, xiii. 450

emulation between the Jesuits and Jansenists for public esteem, which was better displayed in their politer writings than in the abstruse and endless controversy of the five propositions. A few remain to be mentioned; and as the subject of this chapter, in order to avoid frequent subdivisions, is miscellaneous, the reader must expect to find that we do not, in every instance, confine ourselves to what he may consider as polite letters.

Fontenelle—his character.

4. Fontenelle, by the variety of his talents, by their application to the pursuits most congenial to the intellectual character of his contemporaries, and by that extraordinary longevity which made those contemporaries not less than three generations of mankind, may be reckoned the best representative of French literature. Born in 1657, and dying within a few days of a complete century, in 1757, he enjoyed the most protracted life of any among the modern learned; and that a life in the full sunshine of Parisian literature, without care and without disease. In nothing was Fontenelle a great writer; his mental and moral disposition resembled each other; equable, without the capacity of performing, and hardly of conceiving, anything truly elevated, but not less exempt from the fruits of passion, from paradox, unreasonableness, and prejudice. His best productions are, perhaps, the eulogies on the deceased members of the Academy of Sciences, which he pronounced during almost forty years, but these nearly all belong to the eighteenth century; they are just and candid, with sufficient, though not very profound, knowledge of the exact sciences, and a style pure and flowing, which his good sense had freed from some early affectation, and his cold temper as well as sound understanding restrained from extravagance. In his first works we have symptoms of an infirmity belonging more frequently to age than to youth; but Fontenelle was never young in passion. He there affects the tone of somewhat pedantic and frigid gallantry which seems to have survived the society of the Hôtel Rambouillet who had countenanced it, and which borders too nearly on the language which Molière and his disciples had well exposed in their coxcombs on the stage.

5. The Dialogues of the Dead, published in 1683, are

condemned by some critics for their false taste and perpetual strain at something unexpected and paradoxical. The leading idea is, of course, borrowed from Lucian; but Fontenelle has aimed at greater poignancy by contrast; the ghosts in his dialogues are exactly those who had least in common with each other in life, and the general object is to bring, by some happy analogy which had not occurred to the reader, or by some ingenious defence of what he had been accustomed to despise, the prominences and depressions of historic characters to a level. This is what is always well received in the kind of society for which Fontenelle wrote; but if much is mere sophistry in his dialogues, if the general tone is little above that of the world, there is also, what we often find in the world, some acuteness and novelty, and some things put in a light which it may be worth while not to neglect.

His Dialogues of the Dead.

6. Fenelon, not many years afterwards, copied the scheme, though not the style, of Fontenelle in his own Dialogues of the Dead, written for the use of his pupil the Duke of Burgundy. Some of these dialogues are not truly of the dead; the characters speak as if on earth, and with earthly designs. They have certainly more solid sense and a more elevated morality than those of Fontenelle, to which La Harpe has preferred them. The noble zeal of Fenelon not to spare the vices of kings, in writing for the heir of one so imperious and so open to the censure of reflecting minds, shines throughout these dialogues; but designed as they were for a boy, they naturally appear in some places rather superficial.

Those of Fenelon.

7. Fontenelle succeeded better in his famous dialogues on the Plurality of Worlds, Les Mondes; in which, if the conception is not wholly original, he has at least developed it with so much spirit and vivacity, that it would show as bad taste to censure his work, as to reckon it a model for imitation. It is one of those happy ideas which have been privileged monopolies of the first inventor; and it will be found accordingly that all attempts to copy this whimsical union of gallantry with science have been insipid almost to a ridiculous degree. Fontenelle throws so much gaiety and wit into his compliments to the lady

Fontenelle's Plurality of Worlds.

whom he initiates into his theory, that we do not confound them with the nonsense of coxcombs; and she is herself so spirited, unaffected, and clever, that no philosopher could be ashamed of gallantry towards so deserving an object. The fascinating paradox, as then it seemed, though our children are now taught to lisp it, that the moon, the planets, the fixed stars, are full of inhabitants, is presented with no more show of science than was indispensable, but with a varying liveliness that, if we may judge by the consequences, has served to convince as well as amuse. The plurality of worlds had been suggested by Wilkins, and probably by some Cartesians in France; but it was first rendered a popular tenet by this agreeable little book of Fontenelle, which had a great circulation in Europe. The ingenuity with which he obviates the difficulties that he is compelled to acknowledge, is worthy of praise; and a good deal of the popular truths of physical astronomy is found in these dialogues.

His History of Oracles.

8. The History of Oracles, which Fontenelle published in 1687, is worthy of observation as a sign of the change that was working in literature. In the provinces of erudition and of polite letters, long so independent, perhaps even so hostile, some tendency towards a coalition began to appear. The men of the world especially, after they had acquired a free temper of thinking in religion, and become accustomed to talk about philosophy, desired to know something of the questions which the learned disputed; but they demanded this knowledge by a short and easy road, with no great sacrifice of their leisure or attention. Fontenelle, in the History of Oracles, as in the dialogues on the Plurality of Worlds, prepared a repast for their taste. A learned Dutch physician, Van Dale, in a dull work, had taken up the subject of the ancient oracles, and explained them by human imposture instead of that of the devil, which had been the more orthodox hypothesis. A certain degree of paradox, or want of orthodoxy, already gave a zest to a book in France; and Fontenelle's lively manner, with more learning than good society at Paris possessed, and about as much as it could endure, united to a clear and acute line of argument, created a popu-

larity for his History of Oracles, which we cannot reckon altogether unmerited.[d]

9. The works of St. Evremond were collected after his death in 1705; but many had been printed before, and he evidently belongs to the latter half of the seventeenth century. The fame of St. Evremond as a brilliant star, during a long life, in the polished aristocracy of France and England, gave for a time a considerable lustre to his writings, the greater part of which are such effusions as the daily intercourse of good company called forth. In verse or in prose, he is the gallant friend, rather than lover, of ladies who, secure probably of love in some other quarter, were proud of the friendship of a wit. He never, to do him justice, mistakes his character, which, as his age was not a little advanced, might have incurred ridicule. Hortense Mancini, Duchess of Mazarin, is his heroine; but we take little interest in compliments to a woman neither respected in her life, nor remembered since. Nothing can be more trifling than the general character of the writings of St. Evremond; but sometimes he rises to literary criticism, or even civil history; and on such topics he is clear, unaffected, cold, without imagination or sensibility; a type of the frigid being whom an aristocratic and highly polished society is apt to produce. The chief merit of St. Evremond is in his style and manner. He has less wit than Voiture, who contributed to form him, or than Voltaire, whom he contributed to form; but he shows neither the effort of the former, nor the restlessness of the latter. Voltaire, however, when he is most quiet, as in the earliest and best of his historical works, seems to bear a considerable resemblance to St. Evremond, and there can be no doubt that he was familiar with the latter's writings.

St. Evremond.

10. A woman has the glory of being full as conspicuous in the graces of style as any writer of this famous age. It is evident that this was Madame de Sévigné. Her letters indeed were not published till the eighteenth century, but they were written in the mid-day of Louis's reign. Their ease and free-

Madame de Sévigné.

[d] I have not compared, or indeed read, Dale's work; but I rather suspect that some of the reasoning, not the learning, of Fontenelle is original.

dom from affectation are more striking by contrast with the two epistolary styles which had been most admired in France, that of Balzac, which is laboriously tumid, and that of Voiture, which becomes insipid by dint of affectation. Every one perceives that in the Letters of a mother to her daughter the public, in a strict sense, is not thought of; and yet the habit of speaking and writing what men of wit and taste would desire to hear and read, gives a certain mannerism, I will not say air of effort, even to the letters of Madame de Sévigné. The abandonment of the heart to its casual impulses is not so genuine as in some that have since been published. It is at least clear that it is possible to become affected in copying her unaffected style; and some of Walpole's letters bear witness to this. Her wit and talent of painting by single touches are very eminent; scarcely any collection of letters, which contain so little that can interest a distant age, are read with such pleasure; if they have any general fault, it is a little monotony and excess of affection towards her daughter, which is reported to have wearied its object, and, in contrast with this, a little want of sensibility towards all beyond her immediate friends, and a readiness to find something ludicrous in the dangers and sufferings of others.[e]

The French Academy.

11. The French Academy had been so judicious both in the choice of its members, and in the general tenor of its proceedings, that it stood very high in public esteem, and a voluntary deference was commonly shown to its authority. The favour of Louis XIV., when he grew to manhood, was accorded as amply as that of Richelieu. The Academy was received by

[e] The proofs of this are numerous enough in her letters. In one of them she mentions, that a lady of her acquaintance, having been bitten by a mad dog, had gone to be dipped in the sea, and amuses herself by taking off the provincial accent with which she will express herself on the first plunge. She makes a jest of La Voisin's execution; and though that person was as little entitled to sympathy as any one, yet, when a woman is burned alive, it is not usual for another woman to turn it into drollery.

Madame de Sévigné's taste has been arraigned for slighting Racine; and she has been charged with the unfortunate prediction: Il passera comme le café. But it is denied that these words can be found, though few like to give up so diverting a miscalculation of futurity. In her time, Corneille's party was so well supported, and he deserved so much gratitude and reverence, that we cannot much wonder at her being carried a little too far against his rival. Who has ever seen a woman just towards the rivals of her friends, though many are just towards their own?

the king, when they approached him publicly, with the same ceremonies as the superior courts of justice. This body had, almost from its commencement, undertaken a national dictionary, which should carry the language to its utmost perfection, and trace a road to the highest eloquence that depended on purity and choice of words; more than this could not be given by man. The work proceeded very slowly; and dictionaries were published in the mean time, one by Richelet in 1680, another by Furetière. The former seems to be little more than a glossary of technical or otherwise doubtful words;[f] but the latter, though pretending to contain only terms of art and science, was found, by its definitions and by the authorities it quoted, to interfere so much with the project of the academicians, who had armed themselves with an exclusive privilege, that they not only expelled Furetière from their body, on the allegation that he had availed himself of materials entrusted to him by the Academy for its own dictionary, but instituted a long process at law to hinder its publication. This was in 1685, and the dictionary of Furetière only appeared after his death at Amsterdam in 1690.[g] Whatever may have been the delinquency, moral or legal, of this compiler, his dictionary is praised by Goujet as a rich treasure, in which almost everything is found that we can desire for a sound knowledge of the language. It has been frequently reprinted, and continued long in esteem. But the dictionary of the Academy, which was published in 1694, claimed an authority to which that of a private man could not pretend. Yet the first edition seems to have rather disappointed the public expectation. Many objected to the want of quotations, and to the observance of an orthography that had become obsolete. The Academy undertook a revision of its work in 1700; and finally, profiting by the public opinion on which it endeavoured to act, rendered this dictionary the most received standard of the French language.[h]

French Grammars.

12. The Grammaire Générale et Raisonnée of Lancelot, in which Arnauld took a considerable share, is rather a treatise on the philosophy of all

[f] Goujet, Baillet, n. 762.

[g] Pelisson, Hist. de l'Académie (continuation par Olivet), p. 47. Goujet, Bibliothèque Française, i. 232, et post. Biogr. Univers., art. Furetière.

[h] Pelisson, p. 69; Goujet, p. 261.

language than one peculiar to the French. "The best critics," says Baillet, "acknowledge that there is nothing written by either the ancient or the modern grammarians with so much justness and solidity."[i] Vigneul-Marville bestows upon it an almost equal eulogy.[k] Lancelot was copied in a great degree by Lami, in his Rhetoric or Art of Speaking, with little of value that is original.[m] Vaugelas retained his place as the founder of sound grammatical criticism, though his judgments have not been uniformly confirmed by the next generation. His remarks were edited with notes by Thomas Corneille, who had the reputation of an excellent grammarian.[n] The observations of Ménage on the French language, in 1675 and 1676, are said to have the fault of reposing too much on obsolete authorities, even those of the sixteenth century, which had long been proscribed by a politer age.[o] Notwithstanding the zeal of the Academy, no critical laws could arrest the revolutions of speech. Changes came in with the lapse of time, and were sanctioned by the imperious rule of custom. In a book on grammar, published as early as 1688, Balzac and Voiture, even Patru and the Port-Royal writers, are called semi-moderns;[p] so many new phrases had since made their way into composition, so many of theirs had acquired a certain air of antiquity.

Bouhours' Entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugène.

13. The genius of the French language, as it was estimated in this age by those who aspired to the character of good critics, may be learned from one of the dialogues in a work of Bouhours, Les Entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugène. Bouhours was a Jesuit, who affected a polite and lively tone, according to the fashion of his time, so as to warrant some degree of ridicule; but a man of taste and judgment, whom, though La Harpe speaks of him with disdain, his contemporaries quoted with respect. The first, and the most interesting at present, of these conversations, which are feigned to take place between two gentlemen of literary taste, turns on the French language.[q] This he

[i] Jugemens des Sçavans, n. 606. Goujet copies Baillet's words.

[k] Mélanges de Littérature, i. 124.

[m] Goujet, i. 56; Gibert, p. 351.

[n] Goujet, 146; Biogr. Univ.

[o] Id. 153.

[p] Bibliothèque Universelle, xv. 351. Perrault makes a similar remark on Patru.

[q] Bouhours points out several inno-

presumes to be the best of all modern—deriding the Spanish for its pomp, the Italian for its finical effeminacy.[r] The French has the secret of uniting brevity with clearness and purity with politeness. The Greek and Latin are obscure where they are concise. The Spanish is always diffuse. The Spanish is a turbid torrent, often overspreading the country with great noise; the Italian a gentle rivulet, occasionally given to inundate its meadows; the French a noble river, enriching the adjacent lands, but with an equal majestic course of waters that never quits its level.[s] Spanish again he compares to an insolent beauty, that holds her head high, and takes pleasure in splendid dress; Italian to a painted coquette, always attired to please; French to a modest and agreeable lady, who, if you may call her a prude, has nothing uncivil or repulsive in her prudery. Latin is the common mother; but while Italian has the sort of likeness to Latin which an ape bears to a man, in French we have the dignity, politeness, purity, and good sense of the Augustan age. The French have rejected almost all the diminutives once in use, and do not, like the Italians, admit the right of framing others. This language does not tolerate rhyming sounds in prose, nor even any kind of assonance, as *amertume* and *fortune*, near together. It rejects very bold metaphors, as the zenith of virtue, the *apogée* of glory; and it is remarkable that its poetry is almost as hostile to metaphor as its prose.[t] "We have very few words merely poetical, and the language of our poets is not very different from that of the world. Whatever be the cause, it is certain that a figurative style is neither good among us in verse nor in prose." This is evidently much exaggerated, and in contradiction to the known examples, at least, of dramatic poetry. All affectation and labour, he proceeds to

vations which had lately come into use. He dislikes *avoir des ménagemens*, or *avoir de la considération*, and thinks these phrases would not last; in which he was mistaken. *Tour de visage* and *tour d'esprit* were new: the words *fonds*, *mesures*, *amitiés*, *compte*, and many more, were used in new senses. Thus also *assez* and *trop*; as the phrase *je ne suis pas trop de votre avis*. It seems on reflection, that some of the expressions he animadverts upon must have been affected while they were new, being in opposition to the correct meaning of words; and it is always curious, in other languages as well as our own, to observe the comparatively recent *nobility* of many things quite established by present usage. Entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugène, p. 95.

[r] P. 52 (edit. 1671).

[s] P. 77.

[t] P. 60.

say, are equally repugnant to a good French style. "If we would speak the language well, we should not try to speak it too well. It detests excess of ornament; it would almost desire that words should be as it were naked; their dress must be no more than necessity and decency require. Its simplicity is averse to compound words; those adjectives which are formed by such a juncture of two have long been exiled both from prose and verse." "Our own pronunciation," he affirms, "is the most natural and pleasing of any. The Chinese and other Asiatics sing; the Germans rattle (rallent); the Spaniards spout; the Italians sigh; the English whistle; the French alone can properly be said to speak; which arises, in fact, from our not accenting any syllable before the penultimate. The French language is best adapted to express the tenderest sentiments of the heart; for which reason our songs are so impassioned and pathetic, while those of Italy and Spain are full of nonsense. Other languages may address the imagination, but ours alone speaks to the heart, which never understands what is said in them." [u] This is literally amusing; and with equal patriotism Bouhours, in another place, has proposed the question, whether a German can, by the nature of things, possess any wit.

Attacked by Barbier d'Aucour.

14. Bouhours, not deficient, as we may perceive, in self-confidence and proneness to censure, presumed to turn into ridicule the writers of Port-Royal, at that time of such distinguished reputation as threatened to eclipse the credit which the Jesuits had always preserved in polite letters. He alludes to their long periods, and the exaggerated phrases of invective which they poured forth in controversy.[x] But the Jansenist party was well able to defend itself. Barbier d'Aucour retaliated on the vain Jesuit by his Sentimens de Cleanthe sur les Entretiens

[u] P. 68.

[x] P. 150. Vigneul-Marville observes that the Port-Royal writers formed their style originally on that of Balzac (vol. i. p. 107); and that M. d'Andilly, brother of Antony Arnauld, affected at one time a grand and copious manner like the Spaniards, as being more serious and imposing, especially in devotional writings; but afterwards finding the French were impatient of this style, that party abandoned it for one more concise, which it is by no means less difficult to write well, p. 139. Baillet seems to refer their love of long periods to the famous advocate Le Maistre, who had employed them in his pleadings, not only as giving more dignity, but also because the public taste at that time favoured them. Jugemens des Sçavans, n. 953.

d'Ariste et d'Eugène. It seems to be the general opinion of French critics, that he has well exposed the weak parts of his adversary, his affected air of the world, the occasional frivolity and feebleness of his observations; yet there seems something morose in the censures of the supposed Cleanthe, which renders this book less agreeable than that on which it animadverts.

La Manière de Bien Penser.

15. Another work of criticism by Bouhours, La Manière de Bien Penser, which is also in dialogue, contains much that shows acuteness and delicacy of discrimination, though his taste was deficient in warmth and sensibility, which renders him somewhat too strict and fastidious in his judgments. He is an unsparing enemy of obscurity, exaggeration, and nonsense, and laughs at the hyperbolical language of Balzac, while he has rather overpraised Voiture.[y] The affected, inflated thoughts, of which the Italian and Spanish writers afford him many examples, Bouhours justly condemns, and by the correctness of his judgment may deserve, on the whole, a respectable place in the second order of critics.

Rapin's Reflections on Eloquence and Poetry.

16. The Réflexions sur l'Eloquence et sur la Poësie of Rapin, another Jesuit, whose Latin poem on Gardens has already been praised, are judicious, though perhaps rather too diffuse; his criticism is what would appear severe in our times; but it was that of a man formed by the ancients, and who lived also in the best and most critical age of France. The reflections on poetry are avowedly founded

[y] Voiture, he says, always takes a tone of raillery when he exaggerates. Le faux devient vrai à la faveur de l'ironie, p. 29. But we can hardly think that Balzac was not gravely ironical in some of the strange hyperboles which Bouhours quotes from him.

In the fourth dialogue, Bouhours has many just observations on the necessity of clearness. An obscurity arising from allusion to things now unknown, such as we find in the ancients, is rather a misfortune than a fault; but this is no excuse for one which may be avoided, and arises from the writer's indistinctness of conception or language. Cela n'est pas intelligible, dit Philinthe (after hearing a foolish rhapsody extracted from a funeral sermon on Louis XIII.). Non, répondit Eudoxe, ce n'est pas tout-à-fait de galimatias, ce n'est que du phébus. Vous mettez donc, dit Philinthe, de la différence entre le galimatias et le phébus? Oui, repartit Eudoxe, le galimatias renferme une obscurité profonde, et n'a de soi-même nul sens raisonnable. Le phébus n'est pas si obscur, et a un brillant qui signifie, ou semble signifier, quelque chose; le soleil y entre d'ordinaire, et c'est peut-être ce qui a donné lieu en notre langue au nom de phébus. Ce n'est pas que quelquefois le phébus ne devienne obscur, jusqu'à n'être pas entendu; mais alors le galimatias s'en joint; ce ne sont que brillans et que ténèbres de tous côtés. p. 342.

on Aristotle, but with much that is new, and with examples from modern poets to confirm and illustrate it. The practice at this time in France was to depreciate the Italians; and Tasso is often the subject of Rapin's censure; for want, among other things, of that grave and majestic character which epic poetry demands. Yet Rapin is not so rigorous, but that he can blame the coldness of modern precepts in regard to French poetry. After condemning the pompous tone of Brebœuf in his translation of the Pharsalia, he remarks that "we have gone since to an opposite extreme by too scrupulous a care for the purity of the language; for we have begun to take from poetry its force and dignity by too much reserve and a false modesty, which we have established as characteristics of our language, so as to deprive it of that judicious boldness which true poetry requires; we have cut off the metaphors and all those figures of speech which give force and spirit to words, and reduced all the artifices of words to a pure, regular style, which exposes itself to no risk by bold expression. The taste of the age, the influence of women who are naturally timid, that of the court which had hardly anything in common with the ancients, on account of its usual antipathy for learning, accredited this manner of writing."[z] In this Rapin seems to glance at the polite but cold criticism of his brother Jesuit, Bouhours.

His Parallels of Great Men.

17. Rapin, in another work of criticism, the Parallels of Great Men of Antiquity, has weighed in the scales of his own judgment Demosthenes and Cicero, Homer and Virgil, Thucydides and Livy, Plato and Aristotle. Thus eloquence, poetry, history, and philosophy pass under review. The taste of Rapin is for the Latins; Cicero he prefers to Demosthenes, Livy on the whole to Thucydides, though this he leaves more to the reader; but is confident that none except mere grammarians have ranked Homer above Virgil.[a] The loquacity of the older poet, the frequency of his moral reflections, which Rapin thinks misplaced in an epic poem, his similes, the sameness of his transitions, are treated very freely; yet he gives him the preference over Virgil for grandeur and nobleness of nar-

[z] P. 147.

[a] P. 158.

ration, for his epithets, and the splendour of his language. But he is of opinion that Æneas is a much finer character than Achilles. These two epic poets he holds, however, to be the greatest in the world; as for all the rest, ancient and modern, he enumerates them one after another, and can find little but faults in them all.[b] Nor does he esteem dramatic and lyric poets, at least modern, much better.

Bossu on epic poetry.

18. The treatise on Epic Poetry by Bossu was once of some reputation. An English poet has thought fit to say that we should have stared, like Indians, at Homer, if Bossu had not taught us to understand him.[c] The book is, however, long since forgotten; and we fancy that we understand Homer not the worse. It is in six books, which treat of the fable, the action, the narration, the manners, the machinery, the sentiments and expressions of an epic poem. Homer is the favourite poet of Bossu, and Virgil next to him; this preference of the superior model does him some honour in a generation which was becoming insensible to its excellence. Bossu is judicious and correct in taste, but without much depth, and he seems to want the acuteness of Bouhours.

Fontenelle's critical writings.

19. Fontenelle is a critic of whom it may be said, that he did more injury to fine taste and sensibility in works of imagination and sentiment than any man without his good sense and natural acuteness could have done. He is systematically cold; if he seems to tolerate any flight of the poet, it is rather by caprice than by a genuine discernment of beauty; but he clings, with the unyielding claw of a cold-blooded animal, to the faults of great writers, which he exposes with reason and sarcasm. His Reflections on Poetry relate mostly to dramatic composition, and to that of the French stage. Theocritus is his victim in the Dissertation on Pastoral Poetry; but Fontenelle gave the Sicilian his revenge; he wrote pastorals himself; and we have altogether forgotten, or, when we again look at, can very partially approve, the idylls of the Boulevards, while those Doric

[b] P. 175.

[c] Had Bossu never writ, the world had still,
Like Indians, view'd this mighty piece of wit.
MULGRAVE's *Essay on Poetry.*

dactyls of Theocritus linger still, like what Schiller has called soft music of yesterday, from our schoolboy reminiscences on our aged ears.

Preference of French language to Latin.

20. The reign of mere scholars was now at an end; no worse name than that of pedant could be imposed on those who sought for glory; the admiration of all that was national in arts, in arms, in manners, as well as in speech, carried away like a torrent those prescriptive titles to reverence which only lingered in colleges. The superiority of the Latin language to French had long been contested; even Henry Stephens has a dissertation in favour of the latter; and in this period, though a few resolute scholars did not retire from the field, it was generally held either that French was every way the better means of expressing our thoughts, or at least so much more convenient as to put nearly an end to the use of the other. Latin had been the privileged language of stone; but Louis XIV., in consequence of an essay by Charpentier, in 1676, replaced the inscriptions on his triumphal arches by others in French.[d] This of course does not much affect the general question between the two languages.

General superiority of ancients disputed.

21. But it was not in language alone that the ancients were to endure the aggression of a disobedient posterity. It had long been a problem in Europe whether they had not been surpassed —one perhaps which began before the younger generations could make good their claim. But time, the nominal ally of the old possessors, gave his more powerful aid to their opponents; every age saw the proportions change, and new men rise up to strengthen the ranks of the assailants. In mathematical science, in natural knowledge, the ancients had none but a few mere pedants, or half-read lovers of paradox, to maintain their superiority; but in the beauties of language, in eloquence and poetry, the suffrage of criticism had long been theirs. It seemed time to dispute even this. Charles Perrault, a man of some learning, some variety of acquirement, and a good deal of ingenuity and quickness, published, in 1687, his famous "Parallel of the Ancients and Moderns in all that regards Arts

Charles Perrault.

[d] Goujet, i. 13.

and Sciences." This is a series of dialogues, the parties being, first, a president, deeply learned and prejudiced in all respects for antiquity; secondly, an abbé, not ignorant, but having reflected more than read, cool and impartial, always made to appear in the right, or, in other words, the author's representative; thirdly, a man of the world, seizing the gay side of every subject, and apparently brought in to prevent the book from becoming dull. They begin with architecture and painting, and soon make it clear that Athens was a mere heap of pigsties in comparison with Versailles; the ancient painters fare equally ill. They next advance to eloquence and poetry, and here, where the strife of war is sharpest, the defeat of antiquity is chanted with triumph. Homer, Virgil, Horace, are successively brought forward for severe and often unjust censure: but of course it is not to be imagined that Perrault is always in the wrong; he had to fight against a pedantic admiration which surrenders all judgment; and having found the bow bent too much in one way, he forced it himself too violently into another direction. It is the fault of such books to be one-sided; they are not unfrequently right in censuring blemishes, but very uncandid in suppressing beauties. Homer has been worst used by Perrault, who had not the least power of feeling his excellence; but the advocate of the newer age in his dialogue admits that the Æneid is superior to any modern epic. In his comparison of eloquence Perrault has given some specimens of both sides in contrast; comparing, by means however of his own versions, the funeral orations of Pericles and Plato with those of Bourdaloue, Bossuet, and Fléchier, the description by Pliny of his country seat with one by Balzac, an epistle of Cicero with another of Balzac. These comparisons were fitted to produce a great effect among those who could neither read the original text, nor place themselves in the midst of ancient feelings and habits. It is easy to perceive that a vast majority of the French in that age would agree with Perrault; the book was written for the times.

22. Fontenelle, in a very short digression on the ancients and moderns, subjoined to his Discourse on Pastoral Poetry, followed the steps of Perrault. "The whole question as to pre-eminence be

Fontenelle.

tween the ancients and moderns," he begins, "reduces itself into another, whether the trees that used to grow in our woods were larger than those which grow now. If they were, Homer, Plato, Demosthenes, cannot be equalled in these ages; but if our trees are as large as trees were of old, then there is no reason why we may not equal Homer, Plato, and Demosthenes." The sophistry of this is glaring enough; but it was logic for Paris. In the rest of this short essay there are the usual characteristics of Fontenelle, cool good sense, and an incapacity, by natural privation, of feeling the highest excellence in works of taste.

Boileau's defence of antiquity.

23. Boileau, in observations annexed to his translation of Longinus, as well as in a few sallies of his poetry, defended the great poets, especially Homer and Pindar, with dignity and moderation; freely abandoning the cause of antiquity where he felt it to be untenable. Perrault replied with courage, a quality meriting some praise where the adversary was so powerful in sarcasm and so little accustomed to spare it; but the controversy ceased in tolerable friendship.

First Reviews—Journal des Sçavans.

24. The knowledge of new accessions to literature which its lovers demanded had hitherto been communicated only through the annual catalogues published at Frankfort or other places. But these lists of title-pages were unsatisfactory to the distant scholar, who sought to become acquainted with the real progress of learning, and to know what he might find it worth while to purchase. Denis de Sallo, a member of the parliament of Paris, and not wholly undistinguished in literature, though his other works are not much remembered, by carrying into effect a happy project of his own, gave birth, as it were, to a mighty spirit which has grown up in strength and enterprise, till it has become the ruling power of the literary world. Monday, the 5th of January, 1665, is the date of the first number of the first review, the Journal des Sçavans, published by Sallo under the name of the Sieur de Hedouville, which some have said to be that of his servant.[e]

[e] Camusat, in his Histoire Critique des Journaux, in two volumes, 1734, which, notwithstanding its general title, is chiefly confined to the history of the Journal des Sçavans, and wholly to such as appeared in France, has not been able to clear up this interesting point; for there are not wanting those who assert

It was printed weekly, in a duodecimo or sexto-decimo form, each number containing from twelve to sixteen pages. The first book ever reviewed (let us observe the difference of subject between that and the last, whatever the last may be) was an edition of the works of Victor Vitensis and Vigilius Tapsensis, African bishops of the fifth century, by Father Chiflet, a Jesuit.[f] The second is Spelman's Glossary. According to the prospectus prefixed to the Journal des Sçavans, it was not designed for a mere review, but a literary miscellany; composed, in the first place, of an exact catalogue of the chief books which should be printed in Europe; not content with the mere titles, as the majority of bibliographers had hitherto been, but giving an account of their contents, and their value to the public; it was also to contain a necrology of distinguished authors, an account of experiments in physics and chemistry, and of new discoveries in arts and sciences, with the principal decisions of civil and ecclesiastical tribunals, the decrees of the Sorbonne and other French or foreign universities; in short, whatever might be interesting to men of letters. We find therefore some piece of news, more or less of a literary or scientific nature, subjoined to each number. Thus in the first number we have a double-headed child born near Salisbury; in the second, a question of legitimacy decided in the parliament of Paris; in the third, an experiment on a new ship or boat constructed by Sir William Petty; in the fourth, an account of a discussion in the college of Jesuits on the nature of comets. The scientific articles, which bear a large proportion to the rest, are illustrated by engravings. It was complained that the Journal des Sçavans did not pay much regard to polite or amusing literature; and this led to the publication of the Mercure Galant, by Visè, which gave reviews of poetry and of the drama.

25. Though the notices in the Journal des Sçavans are

that Hedouville was the name of an estate belonging to Sallo; and he is called in some public description, without reference to the Journal, Dominus de Sallo d'Hedouville in Parisiensi curia senator. Camusat, i. 13. Notwithstanding this, there is evidence that leads us to the valet; so that "ampliùs deliberandum censeo; Res magna est."

[f] Victoris Vitensis et Vigilii Tapsensis, Provinciæ Bisacenæ Episcoporum Opera, edente R. P. Chifletio, Soc. Jesu. Presb., in 4to. Divione. The critique, if such it be, occupies but two pages in small duodecimo. That on Spelman's Glossary, which follows, is but in half a page.

very short, and when they give any character, for the most part of a laudatory tone, Sallo did not fail to raise up enemies by the mere assumption of power which a reviewer is prone to affect. Menage, on a work of whose he had made some criticism, and by no means, as it appears, without justice, replied in wrath; Patin and others rose up as injured authors against the self-erected censor; but he made more formidable enemies by some rather blunt declarations of a Gallican feeling, as became a counsellor of the parliament of Paris, against the court of Rome; and the privilege of publication was soon withdrawn from Sallo.[g] It is said that he had the spirit to refuse the offer of continuing the journal under a previous censorship; and it passed into other hands, those of Gallois, who continued it with great success.[h] It is remarkable that the first review, within a few months of its origin, was silenced for assuming too imperious an authority over literature, and for speaking evil of dignities. "In cunis jam Jove dignus erat." The Journal des Sçavans, incomparably the most ancient of living reviews, is still conspicuous for its learning, its candour, and its freedom from those stains of personal and party malice which deform more popular works.

Reviews established by Bayle.

26. The path thus opened to all that could tempt a man who made writing his profession—profit, celebrity, a perpetual appearance in the public eye, the facility of pouring forth every scattered thought of his own, the power of revenge upon every enemy—could not fail to tempt more conspicuous men than Sallo or his successor Gallois. Two of very high reputation, at least of reputation that hence became very high, entered it, Bayle and Le Clerc. The former, in 1684, commenced a new review, Nouvelles de la République des Lettres. He saw, and was well able to improve, the opportunities which periodical criticism furnished to a mind eminently qualified for it; extensively, and, in some points, deeply learned; full of wit, acuteness, and a happy talent of writing in a lively tone

[g] Camusat, p. 28. Sallo had also attacked the Jesuits.

[h] 'Eloge de Gallois, par Fontenelle, in the latter's works, vol. v. p. 168. Biographie Universelle, arts. Sallo and Gallois. Gallois is said to have been a coadjutor of Sallo from the beginning, and some others are named by Camusat as its contributors, among whom were Gomberville and Chapelain.

without the insipidity of affected politeness. The scholar and philosopher of Rotterdam had a rival, in some respects, and ultimately an adversary, in a neighbouring city. Le Clerc, settled at Amsterdam as professor of belles lettres and of Hebrew in the Arminian seminary, undertook in 1686, at the age of twenty-nine, the first of those three celebrated series of reviews, to which he owes so much of his fame. This was the Bibliothèque Universelle, in all the early volumes of which La Croze, a much inferior person, was his coadjutor, published monthly in a very small form. Le Clerc had afterwards a disagreement with La Croze, and the latter part of the Bibliothèque Universelle (that after the tenth volume) is chiefly his own. It ceased to be published in 1693; and the Bibliothèque Choisie, which is, perhaps, even a more known work of Le Clerc, did not commence till 1703. But the fulness, the variety, the judicious analysis and selection, as well as the value of the original remarks, which we find in the Bibliothèque Universelle, render it of signal utility to those who would embrace the literature of that short but not unimportant period which it illustrates.

and Le Clerc.

27. Meantime a less brilliant, but by no means less erudite, review, the Leipsic Acts, had commenced in Germany. The first volume of this series was published in 1682. But being written in Latin, with more regard to the past than to the growing state of opinions, and consequently almost excluding the most attractive, and, indeed, the most important subjects, with a Lutheran spirit of unchangeable orthodoxy in religion, and with an absence of anything like philosophy or even connected system in erudition, it is one of the most unreadable books, relatively to its utility in learning, which has ever fallen into my hands. Italy had entered earlier on this critical career; the Giornale de' Litterati was begun at Rome in 1668; the Giornale Veneto de' Litterati at Venice in 1671. They continued for some time, but with less conspicuous reputation than those above mentioned. The Mercure Savant, published at Amsterdam in 1684, was an indifferent production, which induced Bayle to set up his own Nouvelles de la République des Lettres in opposition to it. Two reviews were commenced in the German language within

Leipsic Acts.

the seventeenth century, and three in English. The first of these latter was the Weekly Memorials for the Ingenious, London, 1682. This, I believe, lasted but a short time. It was followed by one entitled The Works of the Learned, in 1691; and by another, called History of the Works of the Learned, in 1699.[1]

Bayle's Thoughts on the Comet.

28. Bayle had first become known in 1682 by the Pensées Diverses sur la Comète de 1680; a work which I am not sure that he ever decidedly surpassed. Its purpose is one hardly worthy, we should imagine, to employ him; since those who could read and reason were not likely to be afraid of comets, and those who could do neither would be little the better for his book. But with this ostensible aim Bayle had others in view; it gave scope to his keen observation of mankind, if we may use the word observation for that which he chiefly derived from modern books, and to the calm philosophy which he professed. There is less of the love of paradox, less of a cavilling pyrrhonism, and though much diffuseness, less of pedantry and irrelevant instances in the Pensées Diverses than in his greater work. It exposed him, however, to controversy; Jurieu, a French minister in Holland, the champion of Calvinistic orthodoxy, waged a war that was only terminated with their lives; and Bayle's defence of the Thoughts on the Comet is full as long as the original performance, but far less entertaining.

His Dictionary.

29. He now projected an immortal undertaking, the Historical and Critical Dictionary. Moreri, a laborious scribe, had published, in 1673, a kind

[1] Jugler, Hist. Litteraria, cap. 9. Bibliothèque Universelle, xiii. 41.—[The first number of Weekly Memorials for the Ingenious is dated Jan. 16, 1681-2, and the first book reviewed is, Christiani Liberii Βιβλιοφιλια, Utrecht, 1681. The editor proposes to transcribe from the Journal des Sçavans whatever is most valuable, and by far the greater part of the articles relate to foreign books. This review seems to have lasted but a year; at least there is only one volume in the British Museum. The Universal Historical Bibliothèque, which began in January, 1686, and expired in March, is scarcely worth notice: it is professedly a compilation from the foreign reviews. The History of the Works of the Learned, published monthly from 1699 to 1711, is much more respectable; though in this also a very large proportion is given to foreign works, and probably on the credit of continental journals. The books reviewed are numerous and commonly of a learned class. The accounts given of them are chiefly analytical, the reviewer seldom interposing his judgment: if any bias is perceptible, it is towards what was then called the liberal side; but for the most part the rule adopted is to speak favourably of every one.—1842.]

of encyclopedic dictionary, biographical, historical, and geographical; Bayle professed to fill up the numerous deficiencies, and to rectify the errors of this compiler. It is hard to place his dictionary, which appeared in 1694, under any distinct head in a literary classification which does not make a separate chapter for lexicography. It is almost equally difficult to give a general character of this many-coloured web, which great erudition and still greater acuteness and strength of mind wove for the last years of the seventeenth century. The learning of Bayle was copious, especially in what was most peculiarly required, the controversies, the anecdotes, the miscellaneous facts and sentences, scattered over the vast surface of literature for two preceding centuries. In that of antiquity he was less profoundly versed, yet so quick in application of his classical stores that he passes for a better scholar than he was. His original design may have been only to fill up the deficiencies of Moreri; but a mind so fertile and excursive could not be restrained in such limits. We may find, however, in this an apology for the numerous omissions of Bayle, which would, in a writer absolutely original, seem both capricious and unaccountable. We never can anticipate with confidence that we shall find any name in his dictionary. The notes are most frequently unconnected with the life to which they are appended; so that, under a name uninteresting to us, or inapposite to our purpose, we may be led into the richest vein of the author's fine reasoning or lively wit. Bayle is admirable in exposing the fallacies of dogmatism, the perplexities of philosophy, the weaknesses of those who affect to guide the opinions of mankind. But, wanting the necessary condition of good reasoning, an earnest desire to reason well, a moral rectitude from which the love of truth must spring, he often avails himself of petty cavils, and becomes dogmatical in his very doubts. A more sincere spirit of inquiry could not have suffered a man of his penetrating genius to acquiesce, even contingently, in so superficial a scheme as the Manichean. The sophistry of Bayle, however, bears no proportion to his just and acute observations. Still less excuse can be admitted for his indecency, which almost assumes the character of monomania, so invariably does it recur, even where there is least pretext for it.

30. The Jugemens des Sçavans by Baillet, published in 1685 and 1686, the Polyhistor of Morhof in 1689, are certainly works of criticism as well as of bibliography.

Baillet. Morhof.

But neither of these writers, especially the latter, are of much authority in matters of taste; their erudition was very extensive, their abilities respectable, since they were able to produce such useful and comprehensive works; but they do not greatly serve to enlighten or correct our judgments, nor is the original matter in any considerable proportion to that which they have derived from others. I have taken notice of both these in my preface.

31. France was very fruitful of that miscellaneous

The Ana.

literature which, desultory and amusing, has the advantage of remaining better in the memory than more systematic books, and in fact is generally found to supply the man of extensive knowledge with the materials of his conversation, as well as to fill the vacancies of his deeper studies. The memoirs, the letters, the travels, the dialogues, and essays which might be ranged in so large a class as that we now pass in review, are too numerous to be mentioned, and it must be understood that most of them are less in request even among the studious than they were in the last century. One group has acquired the distinctive name of Ana; the reported conversation, the table-talk of the learned. Several of these belong to the last part of the sixteenth century, or the first of the next; the Scaligerana, the Perroniana, the Pithæana, the Naudæana, the Casauboniana; the last of which are not conversational, but fragments collected from the common-place books and loose papers of Isaac Casaubon. Two collections of the present period are very well known; the Menagiana, and the Mélanges de Littérature par Vigneul-Marville; which differs, indeed, from the rest in not being reported by others, but published by the author himself, yet comes so near in spirit and manner that we may place it in the same class. The Menagiana has the common fault of these Ana, that it rather disappoints expectation, and does not give us as much new learning as the name of its author seems to promise; but it is amusing, full of light anecdote of a literary kind, and interesting to all who love the recollections of that generation. Vigneul-Mar-

ville is an imaginary person; the author of the Mélanges de Littérature is D'Argonne, a Benedictine of Rouen. This book has been much esteemed; the mask gives courage to the author, who writes not unlike a Benedictine, but with a general tone of independent thinking, united to good judgment and a tolerably extensive knowledge of the state of literature. He had entered into the religious profession rather late in life. The Chevræana and Segraisiana, especially the latter, are of little value. The Parrhasiana of Le Clerc are less amusing and less miscellaneous than some of the Ana; but in all his writings there is a love of truth and a zeal against those who obstruct inquiry, which to congenial spirits is as pleasing as it is sure to render him obnoxious to opposite tempers.

English style in this period.

32. The characteristics of English writers in the first division of the century were not maintained in the second, though the change, as was natural, did not come on by very rapid steps. The pedantry of unauthorised Latinisms, the affectation of singular and not generally intelligible words from other sources, the love of quaint phrases, strange analogies, and ambitious efforts at antithesis, gave way by degrees; a greater ease of writing was what the public demanded, and what the writers after the Restoration sought to attain; they were more strictly idiomatic and English than their predecessors. But this ease sometimes became negligence and feebleness, and often turned to coarseness and vulgarity. The language of Sévigné and Hamilton is eminently colloquial; scarce a turn occurs in their writings which they would not have used in familiar society; but theirs was the colloquy of the gods, ours of men: their idiom, though still simple and French, had been refined in the saloons of Paris, by that instinctive rejection of all that is low which the fine tact of accomplished women dictates; while in our own contemporary writers, with little exception, there is what defaces the dialogue of our comedy, a tone not so much of provincialism, or even of what is called the language of the common people, as of one much worse, the dregs of vulgar ribaldry, which a gentleman must clear from his conversation before he can assert that name. Nor was this confined to those who

led irregular lives; the general manners being unpolished, we find in the writings of the clergy, wherever they are polemic or satirical, the same tendency to what is called *slang;* a word which, as itself belongs to the vocabulary it denotes, I use with some unwillingness. The pattern of bad writing in this respect was Sir Roger L'Estrange; his Æsop's Fables will present everything that is hostile to good taste; yet by a certain wit and readiness in raillery L'Estrange was a popular writer, and may even now be read, perhaps, with some amusement. The translation of Don Quixote, published in 1682, may also be specified as incredibly vulgar, and without the least perception of the tone which the original author has preserved.

Hobbes.

33. We can produce nevertheless several names of those who laid the foundations at least, and indeed furnished examples, of good style; some of them among the greatest, for other merits, in our literature. Hobbes is perhaps the first of whom we can strictly say that he is a good English writer; for the excellent passages of Hooker, Sidney, Raleigh, Bacon, Taylor, Chillingworth, and others of the Elizabethan or the first Stuart period are not sufficient to establish their claim; a good writer being one whose composition is nearly uniform, and who never sinks to such inferiority or negligence as we must confess in most of these. To make such a writer, the absence of gross faults is full as necessary as actual beauties; we are not judging as of poets, by the highest flight of their genius, and forgiving all the rest, but as of a sum of positive and negative quantities, where the latter counterbalance and efface an equal portion of the former. Hobbes is clear, precise, spirited, and, above all, free, in general, from the faults of his predecessors; his language is sensibly less obsolete; he is never vulgar, rarely, if ever, quaint or pedantic.

Cowley.

34. Cowley's prose, very unlike his verse, as Johnson has observed, is perspicuous and unaffected. His few essays may even be reckoned among the earliest models of good writing. In that, especially, on the death of Cromwell, till, losing his composure, he falls a little into the vulgar style towards the close, we find an absence of pedantry, an ease and graceful

choice of idiom, an unstudied harmony of periods, which had been perceived in very few writers of the two preceding reigns. "His thoughts," says Johnson, "are natural, and his style has a smooth and placid equability which has never yet attained its due commendation. Nothing is far-sought or hard-laboured; but all is easy without feebleness, and familiar without grossness."

Evelyn.

35. Evelyn wrote in 1651 a little piece, purporting to be an account of England by a Frenchman. It is very severe on our manners, especially in London; his abhorrence of the late revolutions in church and state conspiring with his natural politeness, which he had lately improved by foreign travel. It is worth reading as illustrative of social history; but I chiefly mention it here on account of the polish and gentlemanly elegance of the style, which very few had hitherto regarded in such light compositions. An answer by some indignant patriot has been reprinted together with this pamphlet of Evelyn, and is a good specimen of the bestial ribaldry which our ancestors seem to have taken for wit.[k] The later writings of Evelyn are such as his character and habits would lead us to expect, but I am not aware that they often rise above that respectable level, nor are their subjects such as to require an elevated style.

Dryden.

36. Every poem and play of Dryden, as they successively appeared, was ushered into the world by one of those prefaces and dedications which have made him celebrated as a critic of poetry and a master of the English language. The Essay on Dramatic Poesy, and its subsequent Defence, the Origin and Progress of Satire, the Parallel of Poetry and Painting, the Life of Plutarch, and other things of minor importance, all prefixed to some more extensive work, complete the catalogue of his prose. The style of Dryden was very superior to any that England had seen. Not conversant with our old writers, so little, in fact, as to find the common phrases of the Elizabethan age unintelligible,[m] he followed the taste of Charles's reign in emu-

[k] Both these will be found in the late edition of Evelyn's Miscellaneous Works.

[m] Malone has given several proofs of this. Dryden's Prose Works, vol. i. part 2, p. 136, et alibi. Dryden thought expressions wrong and incorrect in Shakspeare and Jonson, which were the current language of their age.

lating the politest and most popular writers in the French language. He seems to have formed himself on Montaigne, Balzac, and Voiture; but so ready was his invention, so vigorous his judgment, so complete his mastery over his native tongue, that, in point of style, he must be reckoned above all the three. He had the ease of Montaigne without his negligence and embarrassed structure of periods; he had the dignity of Balzac, with more varied cadences, and without his hyperbolical tumour; the unexpected turns of Voiture without his affectation and air of effort. In the dedications, especially, we find paragraphs of extraordinary gracefulness, such as possibly have never been surpassed in our language. The prefaces are evidently written in a more negligent style; he seems, like Montaigne, to converse with the reader from his arm-chair, and passes onward with little connexion from one subject to another.[n] In addressing a patron, a different line is observable; he comes with the respectful air which the occasion seems to demand; but, though I do not think that Dryden ever, in language, forgets his own position, we must confess that the flattery is sometimes palpably untrue, and always offensively indelicate. The dedication of the Mock Astrologer to the Duke of Newcastle is a masterpiece of fine writing; and the subject better deserved these lavish commendations than most who received them. That of the State of Innocence to the Duchess of York is also very well written; but the adulation is excessive. It appears to me that, after the Revolution, Dryden took less pains with his style; the colloquial vulgarisms, and these are not wanting even in his earlier prefaces, become more frequent; his periods are often of more slovenly construction; he forgets even in his dedications that he is standing before a lord. Thus, remarking on the account Andromache gives to Hector of her own history, he observes, in a style rather unworthy of him, "The devil was in Hector if he knew not all this matter as well as she who told it him, for she had been his bed-fellow for many years together; and if he knew it then, it must be confessed that Homer in

[n] This is his own account. "The nature of a preface is rambling, never wholly out of the way, nor in it. . . This I have learned from the practice of honest Montaigne." Vol. iii. p. 605.

this long digression has rather given us his own character than that of the fair lady whom he paints."[o]

37. His Essay on Dramatic Poesy, published in 1668, was reprinted sixteen years afterwards, and it is curious to observe the changes which Dryden made in the expression. Malone has carefully noted all these; they show both the care the author took with his own style, and the change which was gradually working in the English language.[p] The Anglicism of terminating the sentence with a preposition is rejected.[q] Thus "I cannot think so contemptibly of the age I live in," is exchanged for "the age in which I live." "A deeper expression of belief than all the actor can persuade us to," is altered, "can insinuate into us." And, though the old form continued in use long after the time of Dryden, it has of late years been reckoned inelegant, and proscribed in all cases, perhaps with an unnecessary fastidiousness, to which I have not uniformly deferred; since our language is of a Teutonic structure, and the rules of Latin or French grammar are not always to bind us.

His Essay on Dramatic Poesy.

38. This Essay on Dramatic Poesy is written in dialogue; Dryden himself, under the name of Neander, being probably one of the speakers. It turns on the use of rhyme in tragedy, on the observation of the unities, and on some other theatrical questions. Dryden, at this time, was favourable to rhymed tragedies, which his practice supported. Sir Robert Howard having written some observations on that essay, and taken a different view as to rhyme, Dryden published a defence of his essay in a masterly style of cutting scorn, but one hardly justified by the tone of the criticism, which had been very civil towards him; and as he was apparently in the wrong, the air of superiority seems the more misplaced.

Improvements in his style.

[o] Vol. iii. p. 286. This is in the dedication of his third Miscellany to Lord Ratcliffe.

[p] Vol. i. pp. 136-142.

[q] "The preposition in the end of the sentence, a common fault with him (Ben Jonson), and which I have but lately observed in my own writings," p. 237. The form is, in my opinion, sometimes emphatic and spirited, though its frequent use appears slovenly. I remember my late friend, Mr. Richard Sharp, whose good taste is well known, used to quote an interrogatory of Hooker: "Shall there be a God to swear by, and none to pray to?" as an instance of the force which this arrangement, so eminently idiomatic, sometimes gives. In the passive voice, I think it better than in the active; nor can it always be dispensed with, unless we choose rather the feeble encumbering pronoun *which*.

39. Dryden, as a critic, is not to be numbered with those who have sounded the depths of the human mind, hardly with those who analyse the language and sentiments of poets, and teach others to judge by showing why they have judged themselves. He scatters remarks sometimes too indefinite, sometimes too arbitrary; yet his predominating good sense colours the whole; we find in them no perplexing subtilty, no cloudy nonsense, no paradoxes and heresies in taste to revolt us. Those he has made on translation in the preface to that of Ovid's Epistles are valuable. "No man," he says, "is capable of translating poetry, who, besides a genius *to* that art, is not a master both of his author's language and of his own. Nor must we understand the language only of the poet, but his particular turn of thoughts and expression, which are the characters that distinguish and as it were individuate him from all other writers."[r] We cannot pay Dryden the compliment of saying that he gave the example as well as precept, especially in his Virgil. He did not scruple to copy Segrais in his discourse on Epic Poetry. "Him I follow, and what I borrow from him am ready to acknowledge *to* him; for, impartially speaking, the French are as much better critics than the English as they are worse poets."[s]

His critical character.

40. The greater part of his critical writings relates to the drama, a subject with which he was very conversant; but he had some considerable prejudices: he seems never to have felt the transcendent excellence of Shakspeare; and sometimes perhaps his own opinions, if not feigned, are biassed by that sort of self-defence to which he thought himself driven in the prefaces to his several plays. He had many enemies on the watch: the Duke of Buckingham's Rehearsal, a satire of great wit, had exposed to ridicule the heroic tragedies,[t] and many were afterwards ready to forget the merits of the poet in the delinquencies of the politician. "What Virgil wrote,"

r Vol. iii. p. 19.

s P. 460.

t This comedy was published in 1672; the parodies are amusing; and though parody is the most unfair weapon that ridicule can use, they are in most instances warranted by the original. Bayes, whether he resembles Dryden or not, is a very comic personage: the character is said by Johnson to have been sketched for Davenant, but I much doubt this report. Davenant had been dead some years before the Rehearsal was published, and could have been in no way obnoxious to its satire.

he says, "in the vigour of his age, in plenty and in ease, I have undertaken to translate in my declining years; struggling with wants, oppressed by sickness, curbed in my genius, liable to be misconstrued in all I write; and my judges, if they are not very equitable, already prejudiced against me by the lying character which has been given them of my morals." [u]

Rymer on Tragedy.

41. Dryden will hardly be charged with abandoning too hastily our national credit, when he said the French were better critics than the English. We had scarcely anything worthy of notice to allege beyond his own writings. The Theatrum Poetarum by Philips, nephew of Milton, is superficial in every respect. Thomas Rymer, best known to mankind as the editor of the Fœdera, but a strenuous advocate for the Aristotelian principles in the drama, published in 1678, "The Tragedies of the last Age considered and examined by the Practice of the Ancients, and by the Common Sense of all Ages." This contains a censure of some plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, Shakspeare and Jonson. "I have chiefly considered the fable or plot, which all conclude to be the soul of a tragedy, which with the ancients is always found to be a reasonable soul, but with us for the most part a brutish, and often worse than brutish." [x] I have read only his criticisms on the Maid's Tragedy, King and No King, and Rollo; and as the conduct and characters of all three are far enough from being invulnerable, it is not surprising that Rymer has often well exposed them.

Sir William Temple's Essays.

42. Next to Dryden, the second place among the polite writers of the period from the Restoration to the end of the century has commonly been given to Sir William Temple. His Miscellanies, to which principally this praise belongs, are not recommended by more erudition than a retired statesman might acquire with no great expense of time, nor by much originality of reflection. But if Temple has not profound knowledge, he turns all he possesses well to account; if his thoughts are not very striking, they are commonly just. He has less eloquence than Bolingbroke, but is also free from his restlessness and osten-

[u] Vol. iii. p. 557.

[x] P. 4.

tation. Much also, which now appears superficial in Temple's historical surveys, was far less familiar in his age; he has the merit of a comprehensive and a candid mind. His style, to which we should particularly refer, will be found in comparison with his contemporaries highly polished, and sustained with more equability than they preserve, remote from anything either pedantic or humble. The periods are studiously rhythmical; yet they want the variety and peculiar charm that we admire in those of Dryden.

Style of Locke.

43. Locke is certainly a good writer, relatively to the greater part of his contemporaries; his plain and manly sentences often give us pleasure by the wording alone. But he has some defects; in his Essay on the Human Understanding he is often too figurative for the subject. In all his writings, and especially in the Treatise on Education, he is occasionally negligent, and though not vulgar, at least according to the idiom of his age, slovenly in the structure of his sentences as well as the choice of his words; he is not, in mere style, very forcible, and certainly not very elegant.

Sir George Mackenzie's Essays.

44. The Essays of Sir George Mackenzie are empty and diffuse; the style is full of pedantic words to a degree of barbarism; and though they were chiefly written after the Revolution, he seems to have wholly formed himself on the older writers, such as Sir Thomas Browne, or even Feltham. He affects the obsolete and unpleasing termination of the third person of the verb in *eth*, which was going out of use even in the pulpit, besides other rust of archaism.[y] Nothing can be more unlike the manner of Dryden, Locke, or Temple. In his matter he seems a mere declaimer, as if the world would any longer endure the trivial morality which the sixteenth century had borrowed from Seneca, or the dull ethics of sermons. It is probable that, as Mackenzie was a man who had seen and read much, he must have some better passages than I have found in glancing shortly at his works. His

[y] [It must be confessed that instances of this termination, though not frequent, may be found in the first years of George III., or even later. In the auxiliary *hath*, it is scarcely yet disused, at least in very grave writings. But the unpleasing sound of *th* is a sufficient objection.—1842.]

countryman, Andrew Fletcher, is a better master of English style; he writes with purity, clearness, and spirit; but the substance is so much before his eyes that he is little solicitous about language. And a similar character may be given to many of the political tracts in the reign of William. They are well expressed for their purpose; their English is perspicuous, unaffected, often forcible, and upon the whole much superior to that of similar writings in the reign of Charles; but they do not challenge a place of which their authors never dreamed; they are not to be counted in the polite literature of England.

Andrew Fletcher.

45. I may have overlooked, or even never known, some books of sufficient value to deserve mention; and I regret that the list of miscellaneous literature should be so short. But it must be confessed that our golden age did not begin before the eighteenth century, and then with him who has never since been rivalled in grace, humour, and invention. Walton's Complete Angler, published in 1653, seems by the title a strange choice out of all the books of half a century; yet its simplicity, its sweetness, its natural grace, and happy intermixture of graver strains with the precepts of angling, have rendered this book deservedly popular, and a model which one of the most famous among our late philosophers, and a successful disciple of Isaac Walton in his favourite art, has condescended to imitate.

Walton's Complete Angler.

46. A book, not indeed remarkable for its style, but one which I could hardly mention in any less miscellaneous chapter than the present, though, since it was published in 1638, it ought to have been mentioned before, is Wilkins's "Discovery of a New World, or a Discourse tending to prove that it is probable there may be another habitable World in the Moon, with a Discourse concerning the Possibility of a Passage thither." This is one of the births of that inquiring spirit, that disdain of ancient prejudice, which the seventeenth century produced. Bacon was undoubtedly the father of it in England; but Kepler, and above all Galileo, by the new truths they demonstrated, made men fearless in investigation and conjecture. The geographical discoveries indeed of Columbus and Ma-

Wilkins's New World.

gellan had prepared the way for conjectures, hardly more astonishing in the eyes of the vulgar than those had been. Wilkins accordingly begins by bringing a host of sage writers who had denied the existence of antipodes. He expressly maintains the Copernican theory, but admits that it was generally reputed a novel paradox. The arguments on the other side he meets at some length, and knew how to answer, by the principles of compound motion, the plausible objection that stones falling from a tower were not left behind by the motion of the earth. The spots in the moon he took for sea, and the brighter parts for land. A lunar atmosphere he was forced to hold, and gives reasons for thinking it probable. As to inhabitants he does not dwell long on the subject. Campanella, and long before him Cardinal Cusanus, had believed the sun and moon to be inhabited,[x] and Wilkins ends by saying: "Being content for my own part to have spoken so much of it as may conduce to show the opinion of others concerning the inhabitants of the moon, I dare not myself affirm anything of these Selenites, because I know not any ground whereon to build any probable opinion. But I think that future ages will discover more, and our posterity perhaps may invent some means for our better acquaintance with those inhabitants." To this he comes as his final proposition, that it may be possible for some of our posterity to find out a conveyance to this other world; and if there be inhabitants there, to have communication with them. But this chapter is the worst in the book, and shows that Wilkins, notwithstanding his ingenuity, had but crude notions on the principles of physics. He followed this up by what I have not seen, a "Discourse concerning a new Planet; tending to prove that it is possible our Earth is one of the Planets." This appears to be a regular vindication of the Copernican theory, and was published in 1640.

Antiquity defended by Temple.

47. The cause of antiquity, so rudely assailed abroad by Perrault and Fontenelle, found support in Sir William Temple, who has defended it in one of his essays with more zeal than prudence

[x] Suspicamur in regione solis magis esse solares, claros et illuminatos intellectuales habitatores, spiritualiores etiam quam in luna, ubi magis lunatici, et in terra magis materiales et crassi, ut illi intellectualis naturæ solares sint multum in actu et parum in potentiâ, terreni vero magis in potentiâ et parum in actu, lunares in medio fluctuantes, &c. Cusanus apud Wilkins, p. 103 (edit. 1802)

or knowledge of the various subjects on which he contends for the rights of the past. It was in fact such a credulous and superficial view as might have been taken by a pedant of the sixteenth century. For it is in science, taking the word largely, full as much as in works of genius, that he denies the ancients to have been surpassed. Temple's Essay, however, was translated into French, and he was supposed by many to have made a brilliant vindication of injured antiquity. But it was soon refuted in the most solid book that was written in any country upon this famous dispute. William Wotton published in 1694 his Reflections on Ancient and Modern Learning.[a] He draws very well in this the line between Temple and Perrault, avoiding the tasteless judgment of the latter in poetry and eloquence, but pointing out the superiority of the moderns in the whole range of physical science.

Wotton's Reflections.

SECT. II.—ON FICTION.

French Romances — La Fayette and others — Pilgrim's Progress — Turkish Spy.

48. SPAIN had about the middle of this century a writer of various literature, who is only known in Europe by his fictions, Quevedo. His visions and his life of the great Tacaño were early translated, and became very popular.[b] They may be reckoned superior to anything in comic romance, except Don Quixote, that the seventeenth century produced; and yet this commendation is not a high one. In the picaresque style, the life of Tacaño is tolerably amusing; but Quevedo, like others, has long since been surpassed. The Sueños, or Visions, are better; they show spirit and

Quevedo's Visions.

[a] Wotton had been a boy of astonishing precocity; at six years old he could readily translate Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; at seven he added some knowledge of Arabic and Syriac. He entered Catherine Hall, Cambridge, in his tenth year; at thirteen, when he took the degree of bachelor of arts, he was acquainted with twelve languages. There being no precedent of granting a degree to one so young, a special record of his extraordinary proficiency was made in the registers of the university. Monk's Life of Bentley, p. 7.

[b] The translation of this, "made English by a person of honour," takes great liberties with the original, and endeavours to excel it in wit by means of frequent interpolation.

sharpness with some originality of invention. But Las Zahurdas de Pluton, which, like the other Visions, bears a general resemblance to the Pilgrim's Progress, being an allegorical dream, is less powerfully and graphically written; the satire is also rather too obvious. "Lucian," says Bouterwek, "furnished him with the original idea of satirical visions; but Quevedo's were the first of their kind in modern literature. Owing to frequent imitations, their faults are no longer disguised by the charm of novelty, and even their merits have ceased to interest."[c]

French heroic romances.

49. No species of composition seems less adapted to the genius of the French nation in the reign of Louis XIV. than the heroic romances so much admired in its first years. It must be confessed that this was but the continuance, and in some respect, possibly, an improvement of a long-established style of fiction. But it was not fitted to endure reason or ridicule, and the societies of Paris knew the use of both weapons. Molière sometimes tried his wit upon the romances; and Boileau, rather later in the day, when the victory had been won, attacked Mademoiselle Scuderi with his sarcastic irony in a dialogue on the heroes of her invention.

Novels of Madame La Fayette.

50. The first step in descending from the heroic romance was to ground not altogether dissimilar. The feats of chivalry were replaced by less wonderful adventures; the love became less hyperbolical in expression, though not less intensely engrossing the personages; the general tone of manners was lowered down better to that of nature, or at least of an ideality which the imagination did not reject; a style already tried in the minor fictions of Spain. The earliest novels that demand attention in this line are those of the Countess de la Fayette, celebrated, while Mademoiselle de la Vergne, under the name of Laverna in the Latin poetry of Menage.[d] Zayde, the first of

[c] Hist. of Spanish Literature, p. 471.

[d] The name Laverna, though well-sounding, was in one respect unlucky, being that given by antiquity to the goddess of thieves. An epigram on Menage, almost, perhaps, too trite to be quoted, is *piquant* enough:—

Lesbia nulla tibi, nulla est tibi dicta Corinna;
Carmine laudatur Cynthia nulla tuo.
Sed cum doctorum compilas scrinia vatum,
Nil mirum, si sit culta Laverna tibi.

these, is entirely in the Spanish style; the adventures are improbable, but various and rather interesting to those who carry no scepticism into fiction; the language is polished and agreeable, though not very animated and it is easy to perceive that while that kind of novel was popular, Zayde would obtain a high place. It has, however, the usual faults; the story is broken by intervening narratives, which occupy too large a space; the sorrows of the principal characters excite, at least as I should judge, little sympathy; and their sentiments and emotions are sometimes too much refined in the alembic of the Hôtel Rambouillet. In a later novel, the Princess of Cleves, Madame La Fayette threw off the affectation of that circle to which she had once belonged, and though perhaps Zayde is, or was in its own age, the more celebrated novel, it seems to me that in this she has excelled herself. The story, being nothing else than the insuperable and insidious, but not guilty, attachment of a married lady to a lover, required a delicacy and correctness of taste which the authoress has well displayed in it. The probability of the incidents, the natural course they take, the absence of all complication and perplexity, give such an inartificial air to this novel, that we can scarcely help believing it to shadow forth some real event. A modern novelist would probably have made more of the story; the style is always calm, sometimes almost languid; a tone of decorous politeness, like that of the French stage, is never relaxed; but it is precisely by this means that the writer has kept up a moral dignity, of which it would have been so easy to lose sight. The Princess of Cleves is perhaps the first work of mere invention (for though the characters are historical, there is no known foundation for the story) which brought forward the manners of the aristocracy; it may be said, the contemporary manners; for Madame La Fayette must have copied her own times. As this has become a popular style of fiction, it is just to commemorate the novel which introduced it.

Scarron's Roman Comique.

51. The French have few novels of this class in the seventeenth century which they praise; those of Madame Villedieu, or Des Jardins, may deserve to be excepted; but I have not seen them. Scarron, a man deformed and diseased, but en-

dowed with vast gaiety, which generally exuberated in buffoon jests, has the credit of having struck out into a new path by his Roman Comique. The Spaniards however had so much like this that we cannot perceive any great originality in Scarron. The Roman Comique is still well known, and if we come to it in vacant moments, will serve its end in amusing us; the story and characters have no great interest, but they are natural; yet, without the least disparagement to the vivacity of Scarron, it is still true that he has been left at an immense distance in observation of mankind, in humorous character, and in ludicrous effect, by the novelists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is said that Scarron's romance is written in a pure style; and some have even pretended that he has not been without effect in refining the language. The Roman Bourgeois of Furetière appears to be a novel of middle life; it had some reputation, but I cannot speak of it with any knowledge.

Cyrano de Bergerac.

52. Cyrano de Bergerac had some share in directing the public taste towards those extravagances of fancy which were afterwards highly popular. He has been imitated, as some have observed, by Swift and Voltaire, and I should add, to a certain degree, by Hamilton; but all the three have gone far beyond him. He is not himself a very original writer. His Voyage to the Moon, and History of the Empire of the Sun, are manifestly suggested by the True History of Lucian; and he had modern fictions, especially the Voyage to the Moon by Godwin, mentioned in our last volume, which he had evidently read, to imp the wings of an invention not perhaps eminently fertile. Yet Bergerac has the merit of being never wearisome; his fictions are well conceived, and show little effort, which seems also the character of his language in this short piece; though his letters had been written in the worst style of affectation, so as to make us suspect that he was turning the manner of some contemporaries into ridicule. The

Segrais.

novels of Segrais, such at least as I have seen, are mere pieces of light satire, designed to amuse by transient allusions the lady by whom he was patronised, Mademoiselle de Montpensier. If they deserve any regard at all, it is as links in the history of fiction between the mock-heroic romance, of which

Voiture had given an instance, and the style of fantastic invention, which was perfected by Hamilton.

53. Charles Perrault may, so far as I know, be said to have invented a kind of fiction which became extremely popular, and has had, even after it ceased to find direct imitators, a perceptible influence over the lighter literature of Europe. The idea was original, and happily executed. Perhaps he sometimes took the tales of children, such as the tradition of many generations had delivered them; but much of his fairy machinery seems to have been his own, and I should give him credit for several of the stories, though it is hard to form a guess. He gave to them all a real interest, as far as could be, with a naturalness of expression, an arch naïveté, a morality neither too obvious nor too refined, and a slight poignancy of satire on the world, which render the Tales of Mother Goose almost a counterpart in prose to the Fables of La Fontaine.

Perrault.

54. These amusing fictions caught the fancy of an indolent but not stupid nobility. The court of Versailles and all Paris resounded with fairy tales; it became the popular style for more than half a century. But few of these fall within our limits. Perrault's immediate followers, Madame Murat and the Countess D'Aunoy, especially the latter, have some merit; but they come very short of the happy simplicity and brevity we find in Mother Goose's Tales. It is possible that Count Antony Hamilton may have written those tales which have made him famous before the end of the century, though they were published later. But these, with many admirable strokes of wit and invention, have too forced a tone in both these qualities; the labour is too evident, and, thrown away on such trifling, excites something like contempt; they are written for an exclusive coterie, not for the world; and the world in all such cases will sooner or later take its revenge. Yet Hamilton's tales are incomparably superior to what followed; inventions alternately dull and extravagant, a style negligent or mannered, an immorality passing onward from the licentiousness of the Regency to the debased philosophy of the ensuing age, became the general characteristics of these fictions, which finally expired in the neglect and scorn of the world.

Hamilton.

Télémaque of Fenelon.

55. The Télémaque of Fenelon, after being suppressed in France, appeared in Holland clandestinely without the author's consent in 1699. It is needless to say that it soon obtained the admiration of Europe, and perhaps there is no book in the French language that has been more read. Fenelon seems to have conceived that, metre not being essential, as he assumed, to poetry, he had, by imitating the Odyssey in Télémaque, produced an epic of as legitimate a character as his model. But the boundaries between epic poetry, especially such epics as the Odyssey, and romance were only perceptible by the employment of verse in the former; no elevation of character, no ideality of conception, no charm of imagery or emotion had been denied to romance. The language of poetry had for two centuries been seized for its use. Télémaque must therefore take its place among romances; but still it is true that no romance had breathed so classical a spirit, none had abounded so much with the richness of poetical language (much, in fact, of Homer, Virgil, and Sophocles having been woven in with no other change than verbal translation), nor had any preserved such dignity in its circumstances, such beauty, harmony, and nobleness in its diction. It would be as idle to say that Fenelon was indebted to D'Urfè and Calprenède, as to deny that some degree of resemblance may be found in their poetical prose. The one belonged to the morals of chivalry, generous but exaggerated; the other to those of wisdom and religion. The one has been forgotten because its tone is false; the other is ever admired, and is only less regarded because it is true in excess, because it contains too much of what we know. Télémaque, like some other of Fenelon's writings, is to be considered in reference to its object; an object of all the noblest, being to form the character of one to whom many must look up for their welfare, but still very different from the inculcation of profound truth. The beauties of Télémaque are very numerous, the descriptions, and indeed the whole tone of the book, have a charm of grace something like the pictures of Guido; but there is also a certain languor which steals over us in reading, and though there is no real want of variety in the narration, it reminds us so continually of its source, the Homeric legends, as to

become rather monotonous. The abandonment of verse has produced too much diffuseness; it will be observed, if we look attentively, that where Homer is circumstantial, Fenelon is more so; in this he sometimes approaches the minuteness of the romancers. But these defects are more than compensated by the moral, and even æsthetic excellence of this romance.

Deficiency of English romances.

56. If this most fertile province of all literature, as we have now discovered it to be, had yielded so little even in France, a nation that might appear eminently fitted to explore it, down to the close of the seventeenth century, we may be less surprised at the deficiency of our own country. Yet the scarcity of original fiction in England was so great as to be inexplicable by any reasoning. The public taste was not incapable of being pleased; for all the novels and romances of the Continent were readily translated. The manners of all classes were as open to humorous description, the imagination was as vigorous, the heart as susceptible, as in other countries. But not only we find nothing good; it can hardly be said that we find anything at all that has ever attracted notice in English romance. The Parthenissa of Lord Orrery, in the heroic style, and the short novels of Afra Behn, are nearly as many, perhaps, as could be detected in old libraries. We must leave the beaten track before we can place a single work in this class.

Pilgrim's Progress.

57. The Pilgrim's Progress essentially belongs to it, and John Bunyan may pass for the father of our novelists. His success in a line of composition like the spiritual romance or allegory, which seems to have been frigid and unreadable in the few instances where it had been attempted, is doubtless enhanced by his want of all learning and his low station in life. He was therefore rarely, if ever, an imitator; he was never enchained by rules. Bunyan possessed in a remarkable degree the power of representation; his inventive faculty was considerable, but the other is his distinguishing excellence. He saw, and makes us see, what he describes; he is circumstantial without prolixity, and in the variety and frequent change of his incidents never loses sight of the unity of his allegorical fable. His invention was enriched, and rather his choice determined, by one rule

he had laid down to himself, the adaptation of all the incidental language of Scripture to his own use. There is scarce a circumstance or metaphor in the Old Testament which does not find a place, bodily and literally, in the story of the Pilgrim's Progress; and this peculiar artifice has made his own imagination appear more creative than it really is. In the conduct of the romance no rigorous attention to the propriety of the allegory seems to have been uniformly preserved. Vanity Fair, or the cave of the two giants, might, for anything we see, have been placed elsewhere; but it is by this neglect of exact parallelism that he better keeps up the reality of the pilgrimage, and takes off the coldness of mere allegory. It is also to be remembered that we read this book at an age when the spiritual meaning is either little perceived or little regarded. In his language, nevertheless, Bunyan sometimes mingles the signification too much with the fable; we might be perplexed between the imaginary and the real Christian; but the liveliness of narration soon brings us back, or did at least when we were young, to the fields of fancy. Yet the Pilgrim's Progress, like some other books, has of late been a little overrated; its excellence is great, but it is not of the highest rank, and we should be careful not to break down the landmarks of fame, by placing the John Bunyans and the Daniel De Foes among the Dii Majores of our worship.

Turkish Spy.

58. I am inclined to claim for England not the invention, but, for the most part, the composition of another book, which, being grounded on fiction, may be classed here, The Turkish Spy. A secret emissary of the Porte is supposed to remain at Paris in disguise for above forty years, from 1635 to 1682. His correspondence with a number of persons, various in situation, and with whom, therefore, his letters assume various characters, is protracted through eight volumes. Much, indeed most, relates to the history of those times and to the anecdotes connected with it; but in these we do not find a large proportion of novelty. The more remarkable letters are those which run into metaphysical and theological speculation. These are written with an earnest seriousness, yet with an extraordinary freedom, such as the feigned garb of a Mohammedan could hardly

have exempted from censure in Catholic countries. Mahmud, the mysterious writer, stands on a sort of eminence above all human prejudice; he was privileged to judge as a stranger of the religion and philosophy of Europe; but his bold spirit ranges over the field of Oriental speculation. The Turkish Spy is no ordinary production, but contains as many proofs of a thoughtful, if not very profound mind, as any we can find. It suggested the Persian Letters to Montesquieu, and the Jewish to Argens; the former deviating from his model with the originality of talent, the latter following it with a more servile closeness. Probability, that is, a resemblance to the personated character of an Oriental, was not to be attained, nor was it desirable, in any of these fictions; but Mahmud has something not European, something of a solitary insulated wanderer, gazing on a world that knows him not, which throws, to my feelings, a striking charm over the Turkish Spy; while the Usbek of Montesquieu has become more than half Parisian; his ideas are neither those of his birthplace, nor such as have sprung up unbidden from his soul, but those of a polite, witty, and acute society; and the correspondence with his harem in Persia which Montesquieu has thought attractive to the reader, is not much more interesting than it is probable, and ends in the style of a common romance. As to the Jewish Letters of Argens, it is far inferior to the Turkish Spy, and, in fact, rather an insipid book.

Chiefly of English origin.

59. It may be asked why I dispute the claim made by all the foreign biographers in favour of John Paul Marana, a native of Genoa, who is asserted to have published the first volume of the Turkish Spy at Paris in 1684, and the rest in subsequent years.[e]

[e] The first portion was published at Paris, and also at Amsterdam. Bayle gives the following account:—Cet ouvrage a été contrefait à Amsterdam du consentement du libraire de Paris, qui l'a le premier imprimé. Il sera composé de plusieurs petits volumes qui contiendront les événemens les plus considérables de la chrétienté en général, et de la France en particulier, depuis l'année 1637 jusqu'en 1682. Un Italien, natif de Gênes, Marana, donne ces relations pour des lettres écrites aux ministres de la Porte par un espion Turc qui se tenoit caché à Paris. Il prétend les avoir traduites de l'Arabe en Italien: et il raconte fort en long comment il les a trouvées. On soupçonne avec beaucoup d'apparence, que c'est un tour d'esprit Italien, et une fiction ingénieuse semblable à celle dont Virgile s'est servi pour louer Auguste, &c. Nouvelles de la République des Lettres; Mars, 1684; in Œuvres diverses de Bayle, vol. i. p. 20. The Espion Turc is not to be traced in the index to the Journal des Sçavans; nor is it noticed in the Bibliothèque Universelle.

But I am not disputing that Marana is the author of the thirty letters, published in 1684, and of twenty more in 1686, which have been literally translated into English, and form about half the first volume in English of our Turkish Spy.[f] Nor do I doubt in the least that the remainder of that volume had a French original, though I have never seen it. But the later volumes of the Espion Turc, in the edition of 1696, with the date of Cologne, which, according to Barbier, is put for Rouen,[g] are avowedly translated from the English. And to the second volume of our Turkish Spy, published in 1691, is prefixed an account, not very credible, of the manner in

[f] Salfi, xiv. 61; Biograph. Univers.

[g] Dictionnaire des Anonymes, vol. i. p. 406. Barbier's notice of L'Espion, dans les cours des princes Chrétiens, ascribes four volumes out of six, which appear to contain as much as our eight volumes, to Marana, and conjectures that the last two are by another hand; but does not intimate the least suspicion of an English original. And as his authority is considerable, I must fortify my own opinion by what evidence I can find.

The preface to the second volume (English) of the Turkish Spy begins thus: "Three years are now elapsed since the first volume of letters written by a Spy at Paris was published in English. And it was expected that a second should have come out long before this. The favourable reception which that found amongst all sorts of readers would have encouraged a speedy translation of the rest, had there been extant any French edition of more than the first part. *But after the strictest inquiry none could be heard of;* and, as for the Italian, our booksellers have not that correspondence in those parts as they have in the more neighbouring countries of France and Holland. So that it was a work despaired of to recover any more of this Arabian's memoirs. We little dreamed that the Florentines had been so busy in printing and so successful in selling the continued translation of these Arabian epistles, till it was the fortune of an English gentleman to travel in those parts last summer, and discover the happy news. I will not forestall his letter, which is annexed to this preface." A pretended letter with the signature of Daniel Saltmarsh follows, in which the imaginary author tells a strange tale of the manner in which a certain learned physician of Ferrara, Julio de Medici, descended from the Medicean family, put these volumes, in the Italian language, into his hands. This letter is dated Amsterdam, Sept. 9, 1690, and as the preface refers it to the last summer, I hence conclude that the first edition of the second volume of the Turkish Spy was in 1691; for I have not seen that, nor any other edition earlier than the fifth, printed in 1702.

Marana is said by Salfi and others to have left France in 1689, having fallen into a depression of spirits. Now the first thirty letters, about one thirty-second part of the entire work, were published in 1684, and about an equal length in 1686. I admit that he had time to double these portions, and thus to publish one-eighth of the whole; but is it likely that between 1686 and 1689 he could have given the rest to the world? If we are not struck by this, is it likely that the English translator should have fabricated the story above mentioned, when the public might know that there was actually a French original which he had rendered? The invention seems without motive. Again, how came the French edition of 1696 to be an avowed translation from the English, when, according to the hypothesis of M. Barbier, the volumes of Marana had all been published in France? Surely, till these appear, we have reason to suspect their existence; and the *onus probandi* lies *now* on the advocates of Marana's claim.

which the volumes subsequent to the first had been procured by a traveller, in the original Italian; no French edition, it is declared, being known to the booksellers. That no Italian edition ever existed is, I apprehend, now generally admitted; and it is to be shown by those who contend for the claims of Marana to seven out of the eight volumes, that they were published in France before 1691 and the subsequent years, when they appeared in English. The Cologne or Rouen edition of 1696 follows the English so closely, that it has not given the original letters of the first volume, published with the name of Marana, but rendered them back from the translation.

60. In these early letters, I am ready to admit, the scheme of the Turkish Spy may be entirely traced. Marana appears not only to have planned the historical part of the letters, but to have struck out the more original and striking idea of a Mohammedan wavering with religious scruples, which the English continuator has followed up with more philosophy and erudition. The internal evidence for their English origin, in all the latter volumes, is to my apprehension exceedingly strong; but I know the difficulty of arguing from this to convince a reader. The proof we demand is the production of these volumes in French, that is, the specification of some public or private library where they may be seen, in any edition anterior to 1691, and nothing short of this can be satisfactory evidence.[h]

[h] I shall now produce some direct evidence for the English authorship of seven out of eight parts of the Turkish Spy.

"In the life of Mrs. Manley, published under the title of 'The Adventures of Rivella,' printed in 1714, in pages 14 and 15 it is said, That her father, Sir Roger Manley, was the genuine author of the first volume of the Turkish Spy. Dr. Midgley, an ingenious physician, related to the family by marriage, had the charge of looking over his papers, among which he found that manuscript, which he easily reserved to his proper use; and both by his own pen and the assistance of some others continued the work until the eighth volume, without ever having the justice to name the author of the first." MS. note in the copy of the Turkish Spy (edit. 1732) in the British Museum.

Another MS. note in the same volume gives the following extract from Dunton's Life and Errors:—"Mr. Bradshaw is the best accomplished hackney writer I have met with; his genius was quite above the common size, and his style was incomparably fine. . . . So soon as I saw the first volume of the Turkish Spy, the very style and manner of writing convinced me that Bradshaw was the author. . . . Bradshaw's wife owned that Dr. Midgley had engaged him in a work which would take him some years to finish, for which the Doctor was to pay him 40s. per sheet . . . so that 'tis very probable (for I cannot swear I saw him write it) that Mr. William Bradshaw was the author of the Turkish Spy; were it

61. It would not, perhaps, be unfair to bring within the pale of the seventeenth century an effusion of genius sufficient to redeem our name in its annals of fiction. The Tale of a Tub, though not published till 1704, was chiefly written, as the author declares, eight years before; and the Battle of the Books subjoined to it has every appearance of recent animosity against the opponents of Temple and Boyle, in the question of Phalaris. The Tale of a Tub is, in my apprehension, the masterpiece of Swift; certainly Rabelais has nothing superior, even in invention, nor anything so condensed, so pointed, so full of real meaning, of biting satire, of felicitous analogy. The Battle of the Books is such an improvement of the similar combat in the Lutrin that we can hardly own it is an imitation.

Swift's Tale of a Tub.

not for this discovery, Dr. Midgley had gone off with the honour of that performance." It thus appears that in England it was looked upon as an original work; though the authority of Dunton is not very good for the facts he tells, and that of Mrs. Manley much worse. But I do not quote them as evidence of such facts, but of common report. Mrs. Manley, who claims for her father the first volume, certainly written by Marana, must be set aside; as to Dr. Midgley and Mr. Bradshaw, I know nothing to confirm or refute what is here said.

[The hypothesis of these notes, that all the Turkish Spy, after the first of *our* eight volumes, is of English origin, has been controverted in the Gentleman's Magazine by persons of learning and acuteness. I would surrender my own opinion, if I could see sufficient grounds for doing so; but as yet Marana's pretensions are not substantiated by the evidence which I demanded, the proof of any edition in French anterior to that of our Turkish Spy, the second volume of which (there is no dispute about Marana's authorship of the first) appeared in 1691, with a preface denying the existence of a French original. Those who have had recourse to the arbitrary supposition that Marana communicated his manuscript to some English translator, who published it as his own, should be aware that a mere possibility, without a shadow of evidence, even if it served to explain the facts, cannot be received in historical criticism as truth.—1842.]

CHAPTER VIII.

HISTORY OF PHYSICAL AND OTHER LITERATURE FROM 1650 TO 1700.

SECT. I.—ON EXPERIMENTAL PHILOSOPHY.

Institutions for Science at Florence —London — Paris — Chemistry — Boyle and others.

Reasons for omitting mathematics.

1. WE have now arrived, according to the method pursued in corresponding periods, at the history of mathematical and physical science in the latter part of the seventeenth century. But I must here entreat my readers to excuse the omission of that which ought to occupy a prominent situation in any work that pretends to trace the general progress of human knowledge. The length to which I have found myself already compelled to extend these volumes might be an adequate apology; but I have one more insuperable in the slightness of my own acquaintance with subjects so momentous and difficult, and upon which I could not write without presumptuousness and much peril of betraying ignorance. The names, therefore, of Wallis and Huygens, Newton and Leibnitz, must be passed with distant reverence.

Academy del Cimento.

2. This was the age when the experimental philosophy to which Bacon had held the torch, and which had already made considerable progress, especially in Italy, was finally established on the ruins of arbitrary figments and partial inductions. This philosophy was signally indebted to three associations, the eldest of which did not endure long; but the others have remained to this day the perennial fountains of science; the Academy del Cimento at Florence, the

Royal Society of London, the Academy of Sciences at Paris. The first of these was established in 1657, with the patronage of the Grand Duke Ferdinand II., but under the peculiar care of his brother Leopold. Both were, in a manner at that time remarkable, attached to natural philosophy; and Leopold, less engaged in public affairs, had long carried on a correspondence with the learned of Europe. It is said that the advice of Viviani, one of the greatest geometers that Europe has produced, led to this institution. The name which this Academy assumed gave promise of their fundamental rule, the investigation of truth by experiment alone. The number of Academicians was unlimited; and all that was required as an article of faith was the abjuration of all faith, a resolution to inquire into truth without regard to any previous sect of philosophy. This Academy lasted unfortunately but ten years in vigour: it is a great misfortune for any literary institution to depend on one man, and especially on a prince, who, shedding a factitious, as well as sometimes a genuine lustre round it, is not easily replaced without a diminution of the world's regard. Leopold, in 1667, became a cardinal, and was thus withdrawn from Florence; others of the Academy del Cimento died or went away, and it rapidly sunk into insignificance. But a volume containing reports of the yearly experiments it made, among others the celebrated one proving, as was then supposed, the incompressibility of water, is generally esteemed.[a]

Royal Society.

3. The germ of our Royal Society may be traced to the year 1645, when Wallis, Wilkins, Glisson, and others less known, agreed to meet weekly at a private house in London, in order to converse on subjects connected with natural, and especially experimental, philosophy. Some of these soon afterwards settled in Oxford; and thus arose two little societies in connexion with each other, those at Oxford being recruited by Ward, Petty, Willis, and Bathurst. They met at Petty's lodgings till he removed to Ireland in 1652; afterwards at those of Wilkins, in Wadham College, till he became Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1659; about which time most of the Oxford philosophers

[a] Galluzzi, Storia del Gran Ducato, vol. vii. p. 240; Tiraboschi, xi. 204; Corniani, viii. 29.

came to London, and held their meetings in Gresham College. They became more numerous after the Restoration, which gave better hope of a tranquillity indispensable for science; and on the 28th of November, 1660, agreed to form a regular society, which should meet weekly for the promotion of natural philosophy: their registers are kept from this time.[b] The king, rather fond himself of these subjects, from the beginning afforded them his patronage; their first charter is dated 15th July, 1662, incorporating them by the style of the Royal Society, and appointing Lord Brouncker the first president, assisted by a council of twenty, the conspicuous names among which are Boyle, Kenelm Digby, Wilkins, Wren, Evelyn, and Oldenburg.[c] The last of these was secretary, and editor of the Philosophical Transactions, the first number of which appeared March 1, 1665, containing sixteen pages in quarto. These were continued monthly, or less frequently, according to the materials he possessed. Oldenburg ceased to be the editor in 1667, and was succeeded by Grew, as he was by Hooke. These early transactions are chiefly notes of conversations and remarks made at the meetings, as well as of experiments either then made or reported to the Society.[d]

Academy of Sciences at Paris.

4. The Academy of Sciences at Paris was established in 1666, under the auspices of Colbert. The king assigned to them a room in the royal library for their meetings. Those first selected were all mathematicians; but other departments of science, especially chemistry and anatomy, afterwards furnished associates of considerable name. It seems, nevertheless, that this Academy did not cultivate experimental philosophy with such unremitting zeal as the Royal Society, and that abstract mathematics have always borne a larger proportion to the rest of their inquiries. They published in this century ten volumes, known as Anciens Mémoires de l'Académie. But near its close, in 1697, they received a regular institution from the king, organising them in a manner analogous

[b] Birch's Hist. of Royal Society, vol. i. p. 1.
[c] Id. p. 88.
[d] Id. vol. ii. p. 18; Thomson's Hist. of Royal Society, p. 7

to the two other great literary foundations, the French Academy, and that of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres.[e]

State of Chemistry.

5. In several branches of physics, the experimental philosopher is both guided and corrected by the eternal laws of geometry. In others he wants this aid, and, in the words of his master, "knows and understands no more concerning the order of nature than, as her servant and interpreter, he has been taught by observation and tentative processes." All that concerns the peculiar actions of bodies on each other was of this description; though in our own times even this has been in some degree brought under the omnipotent control of the modern analysis. Chemistry, or the science of the molecular constituents of bodies, manifested in such peculiar and reciprocal operations, had never been rescued from empirical hands till this period. The transmutation of metals, the universal medicine, and other inquiries utterly unphilosophical in themselves, because they assumed the existence of that which they sought to discover, had occupied the chemists so much that none of them had made any further progress than occasionally, by some happy combination or analysis, to contribute an useful preparation to pharmacy, or to detect an unknown substance. Glauber and Van Helmont were the most active and ingenious of these elder chemists; but the former has only been remembered by having long given his name to sulphate of soda, while the latter wasted his time on experiments from which he knew not how to draw right inferences, and his powers on hypotheses which a sounder spirit of the inductive philosophy would have taught him to reject.[f]

Becker.

6. Chemistry, as a science of principles, hypothetical, no doubt, and in a great measure unfounded, but cohering in a plausible system, and better than the reveries of the Paracelsists and Behmenists, was founded by Becker in Germany, by Boyle and his contemporaries of the Royal Society in England. Becker, a native of Spire, who, after wandering from one city of Germany to another, died in London in 1685, by his Physica Subterranea, published in 1669, laid the foun-

[e] Fontenelle, vol. v. p. 23. Montucla, Hist. des Mathématiques, vol. ii. p. 557.
[f] Thomson's Hist. of Chemistry, i. 183.

dation of a theory which, having in the next century been perfected by Stahl, became the creed of philosophy till nearly the end of the last century. "Becker's theory," says an English writer, "stripped of everything but the naked statement, may be expressed in the following sentence: besides water and air there are three other substances, called earths, which enter into the composition of bodies, namely, the fusible or vitrifiable earth, the inflammable or sulphureous, and the mercurial. By the intimate combination of earths with water is formed an universal acid, from which proceed all other acid bodies; stones are produced by the combination of certain earths, metals by the combination of all the three earths in proportions which vary according to the metal." [g]

7. No one Englishman of the seventeenth century after Lord Bacon raised to himself so high a reputation in experimental philosophy as Robert Boyle; it has even been remarked that he was born in the year of Bacon's death, as the person destined by nature to succeed him. An eulogy which would be extravagant, if it implied any parallel between the genius of the two; but hardly so if we look on Boyle as the most faithful, the most patient, the most successful disciple who carried forward the experimental philosophy of Bacon. His works occupy six large volumes in quarto. They may be divided into theological or metaphysical and physical or experimental. Of the former, we may mention as the most philosophical his Disquisition into the Final Causes of Natural Things, his Free Inquiry into the received Notion of Nature, his Discourse of Things above Reason, his Considerations about the Reconcileableness of Reason and Religion, his Excellency of Theology, and his Considerations on the Style of the Scriptures; but the latter, his chemical and experimental writings, form more than two-thirds of his prolix works.

Boyle.

8. The metaphysical treatises, to use that word in a large sense, of Boyle, or rather those concerning Natural Theology, are very perspicuous, very free from system, and such as bespeak an

His metaphysical works.

[g] Thomson's Hist. of Royal Society, p. 468.

independent lover of truth. His Disquisition on Final Causes was a well-timed vindication of that palmary argument against the paradox of the Cartesians, who had denied the validity of an inference from the manifest adaptation of means to ends in the universe to an intelligent Providence. Boyle takes a more philosophical view of the principle of final causes than had been found in many theologians, who weakened the argument itself by the presumptuous hypothesis, that man was the sole object of Providence in the creation.[h] His greater knowledge of physiology led him to perceive that there are both animal, and what he calls cosmical, ends, in which man has no concern.

Extract from one of them.

9. The following passage is so favourable a specimen of the philosophical spirit of Boyle, and so good an illustration of the theory of *idols* in the Novum Organum, that, although it might better, perhaps, have deserved a place in a former chapter, I will not refrain from inserting it:—"I know not," he says, in his Free Inquiry into the received Notion of Nature, "whether it be a prerogative in the human mind, that as it is itself a true and positive being, so is it apt to conceive all other things as true and positive beings also; but whether or no this propensity to frame such kind of ideas supposes an excellency, I fear it occasions mistakes, and makes us think and speak after the manner of true and positive beings, of such things as are but chimerical, and some of them negations or privations themselves; as death, ignorance, blindness, and the like. It concerns us therefore to stand very carefully upon our guard, that we be not insensibly misled by such an innate and unheeded temptation to error, as we bring into the world with us."[i]

His merits in physics and chemistry.

10. Boyle improved the air-pump and the thermometer, though the latter was first made an accurate instrument of investigation by Newton. He also discovered the law of the air's elasticity, namely, that its bulk is inversely as the pressure upon it. For some of the principles of hydrostatics we are indebted to him, though he did not possess much mathematical knowledge. The Philosophical Transac-

[h] Boyle's Works, vol. v. p. 394.

[i] Vol. v. p. 161.

tions contain several valuable papers by him on this science.[k] By his "Sceptical Chemist," published in 1661, he did much to overturn the theories of Van Helmont's school, that commonly called of the iatro-chemists, which was in its highest reputation; raising doubts as to the existence not only of the four elements of the peripatetics, but of those which these chemists had substituted. Boyle holds the elements of bodies to be atoms of different shapes and sizes, the union of which gives origin to what are vulgarly called elements.[m] It is unnecessary to remark that this is the prevailing theory of the present age.

11. I shall borrow the general character of Boyle and of his contemporaries in English chemistry from a modern author of credit. "Perhaps Mr. Boyle may be considered as the first person neither connected with pharmacy nor mining, who devoted a considerable degree of attention to chemical pursuits. Mr. Boyle, though in common with the literary men of his age he may be accused of credulity, was both very laborious and intelligent; and his chemical pursuits, which were various and extensive, and intended solely to develope the truth without any regard to previously conceived opinions, contributed essentially to set chemistry free from the trammels of absurdity and superstition in which it had been hitherto enveloped, and to recommend it to philosophers as a science deserving to be studied on account of the important information which it was qualified to convey. His refutation of the alchemistical opinions respecting the constituents of bodies, his observations on cold, on the air, on phosphorus, and on ether, deserve particularly to be mentioned as doing him much honour. We have no regular account of any one substance or of any class of bodies in Mr. Boyle, similar to those which at present are considered as belonging exclusively to the science of chemistry. Neither did he attempt to systematise the phenomena, nor to subject them to any hypothetical explanation.

General character of Boyle.

12. "But his contemporary Dr. Hooke, who had a particular predilection for hypothesis, sketched in his Micrographia a very beautiful theoretical

Of Hooke and others.

[k] Thomson's Hist. of Royal Society. pp. 400, 411.

[m] Thomson's Hist. of Chemistry, i. 205.

explanation of combustion, and promised to develope his doctrine more fully in a subsequent book; a promise which he never fulfilled; though in his Lampas, published about twenty years afterwards, he has given a very beautiful explanation of the way in which a candle burns. Mayow, in his Essays, published at Oxford about ten years after the Micrographia, embraced the hypothesis of Dr. Hooke without acknowledgment; but clogged it with so many absurd additions of his own as greatly to obscure its lustre and diminish its beauty. Mayow's first and principal Essay contains some happy experiments on respiration and air, and some fortunate conjectures respecting the combustion of the metals; but the most valuable part of the whole is the chapter on affinities, in which he appears to have gone much farther than any other chemist of his day, and to have anticipated some of the best established doctrines of his successors. Sir Isaac Newton, to whom all the sciences lie under such great obligations, made two most important contributions to chemistry, which constitute as it were the foundation-stones of its two great divisions. The first was pointing out a method of graduating thermometers, so as to be comparable with each other in whatever part of the world observations with them are made The second was by pointing out the nature of chemical affinity, and showing that it consisted in an attraction by which the constituents of bodies were drawn towards each other and united; thus destroying the previous hypothesis of the hooks, and points, and rings, and wedges, by means of which the different constituents of bodies were conceived to be kept together." [n]

Lemery.

13. Lemery, a druggist at Paris, by his Cours de Chymie in 1675, is said to have changed the face of the science; the change nevertheless seems to have gone no deeper. "Lemery," says Fontenelle, "was the first who dispersed the real or pretended obscurities of chemistry, who brought it to clearer and more simple notions, who abolished the gross barbarisms of its language, who promised nothing but what he knew the art could perform; and to this he owed the success of his book. It shows not only a sound understanding,

[n] Thomson's Hist. of Royal Society, p. 466.

but some greatness of soul, to strip one's own science of a false pomp."[o] But we do not find that Lemery had any novel views in chemistry, or that he claims with any irresistible pretension the title of a philosopher. In fact, his chemistry seems to have been little more than pharmacy.

SECT. II.—ON NATURAL HISTORY.

Zoology — Ray — Botanical Classifications — Grew — Geological Theories.

Slow progress of zoology.

14. THE accumulation of particular knowledge in Natural History must always be progressive, where any regard is paid to the subject; every traveller in remote countries, every mariner may contribute some observation, correct some error, or bring home some new species. Thus zoology had made a regular advance from the days of Conrad Gesner; yet with so tardy a step, that, reflecting on the extensive intercourse of Europe with the Eastern and Western world, we may be surprised to find how little Jonston, in the middle of the seventeenth century, had added, even in the most obvious class, that of quadrupeds, to the knowledge collected one hundred years before. But hitherto zoology, confined to mere description, and that often careless or indefinite, unenlightened by anatomy, unregulated by method, had not merited the name of a science. That name it owes to John Ray.

Before Ray.

15. Ray first appeared in Natural History as the editor of the Ornithology of his highly accomplished friend Francis Willoughby, with whom he had travelled over the Continent. This was published in 1676; and the History of Fishes followed in 1686. The descriptions are ascribed to Willoughby, the arrangement to Ray, who might have considered the two works as in great part his own, though he has not interfered with the glory of his deceased friend. Cuvier observes, that the History of Fishes is the more perfect work of the two, that many species are described which will

[o] Eloge de Lemery, in Œuvres de Fontenelle, v. 361; Biogr. Universelle.

not be found in earlier ichthyologists, and that those of the Mediterranean especially are given with great precision.[p]

His Synopsis of Quadrupeds.

16. Among the original works of Ray we may select the Synopsis Methodica Animalium Quadrupedum et Serpentini Generis, published in 1693. This book makes an epoch in zoology, not for the additions of new species it contains, since there are few wholly such, but as the first classification of animals that can be reckoned both general and grounded in nature. He divides them into those with blood and without blood. The former are such as breathe through lungs, and such as breathe through gills. Of the former of these some have a heart with two ventricles, some have one only. And among the former class of these some are viviparous, some oviparous. We thus come to the proper distinction of Mammalia. But in compliance with vulgar prejudice, Ray did not include the cetacea in the same class with quadrupeds, though well aware that they properly belonged to it, and left them as an order of fishes.[q] Quadrupeds he was the first to divide into *ungulate* and *unguiculate*, hoofed and clawed, having himself invented the Latin words.[r] The former are *solidipeda*, *bisulca*, or *quadrisulca*; the latter are *bifida* or *multifida*; and these latter with undivided or with partially divided toes; which latter again may have broad claws, as monkeys, or narrow claws; and these with narrow claws he arranges according to their teeth, as either *carnivora* or *leporina*, now generally called *rodentia*. Besides all these quadrupeds which he calls *analoga*, he has a general division called *anomala*, for those without teeth or with such peculiar arrangements of teeth as we find in the insectivorous genera, the hedgehog and mole.[s]

Merits of this work.

17. Ray was the first zoologist who made use of comparative anatomy; he inserts at length every account of dissections that he could find; several had been made at Paris. He does not appear to be very

[p] Biographie Universelle, art. Ray.

[q] Nos ne a communi hominum opinione nimis recedamus, et ut affectatæ novitatis notam evitemus, cetaceum aquatilium genus, quamvis cum quadrupedibus vivi paris in omnibus fere præterquam in pilis et pedibus et elemento in quo degunt convenire videantur, piscibus annumerabimus. P. 55.

[r] P. 50.

[s] P. 56

anxious about describing every species; thus in the simian family he omits several well known.[t] I cannot exactly determine what quadrupeds he has inserted that do not appear in the earlier zoologists; according to Linnæus, in the twelfth edition of the Systema Naturæ, if I have counted rightly, they amount to thirty-two; but I have found him very careless in specifying the synonyms of his predecessors, and many, for which he only quotes Ray, are in Gesner or Jonston. Ray has however much the advantage over these in the brevity and closeness of his specific characters. "The particular distinction of his labours," says Cuvier, "consists in an arrangement more clear, more determinate than those of any of his predecessors, and applied with more consistency and precision. His distribution of the classes of quadrupeds and birds has been followed by the English naturalists almost to our own days; and we find manifest traces of that he has adopted as to the latter class in Linnæus, in Brisson, in Buffon, and in all other ornithologists."[u]

Redi.

18. The bloodless animals, and even those of cold blood, with the exception of fishes, had occupied but little attention of any good zoologists till after the middle of the century. They were now studied with considerable success. Redi, established as a physician at Florence, had yet time for that various literature which has immortalised his name. He opposed, and in a great degree disproved by experiment, the prevailing doctrine of the equivocal generation of insects, or that from corruption; though where he was unable to show the means of reproduction, he had recourse to a paradoxical hypothesis of his own. Redi also enlarged our knowledge of intestinal animals, and made some good experiments on the poison of vipers.[x] Malpighi, who combated, like Redi, the theory of the reproduction of organised bodies from mere corruption, has given one of the most complete treatises on the silkworm that we

[t] Hoc genus animalium tum caudatorum tum cauda carentium species valde numerosæ sunt; non tamen multæ apud autores fide dignos descriptæ occurrunt. He only describes those species he has found in Clusius or Marcgrave, and what he calls Parisiensis, such, I presume, as he had found in the Memoirs of the Académie des Sciences. But he does not mention the Simia Inuus, or the S. Hamadryas, and several others of the most known species.

[u] Biogr. Univ.

[x] Biogr. Univ.; Tiraboschi, xi. 252.

possess.[y] Swammerdam, a Dutch naturalist, abandoned his pursuits in human anatomy to follow up that of insects, and by his skill and patience in dissection made numerous discoveries in their structure. His General History of Insects, 1669, contains a distribution into four classes, founded on their bodily forms and the metamorphoses they undergo. A posthumous work, Biblia Naturæ, not published till 1738, contains, says the Biographie Universelle, "a multitude of facts wholly unknown before Swammerdam; it is impossible to carry farther the anatomy of these little animals, or to be more exact in the description of their organs."

Swammerdam.

19. Lister, an English physician, may be reckoned one of those who have done most to found the science of conchology by his Historia sive Synopsis Conchyliorum, in 1685; a work very copious and full of accurate delineations; and also by his three treatises on English animals, two of which relate to fluviatile and marine shells. The third, which is on spiders, is not less esteemed in entomology. Lister was also perhaps the first to distinguish the specific characters, such at least as are now reckoned specific, though probably not in his time, of the Asiatic and African elephant. "His works in natural history and comparative anatomy are justly esteemed, because he has shown himself an exact and sagacious observer, and has pointed out with correctness the natural relations of the animals that he describes."[z]

Lister.

20. The beautiful science which bears the improper name of comparative anatomy, had but casually occupied the attention of the medical profession.[a] It was to them, rather than to mere zoologists, that it owed, and indeed strictly must always owe, its discoveries, which had hitherto been very few. It was now more cultivated; and the relations of structure to

Comparative anatomy.

[y] Biogr. Univ.; Tiraboschi, xi. 252.

[z] Biogr. Univ.; Chalmers.

[a] It is most probable that this term was originally designed to express a comparison between the human structure and that of brutes, though it might also mean one between different species of the latter. In the first sense it is never now used, and the second is but a part, though an important one, of the science. *Zootomy* has been suggested as a better name, but it is not quite analogical to anatomy; and on the whole it seems as if we must remain with the old word, protesting against its propriety.

the capacities of animal life became more striking as their varieties were more fully understood; the grand theories of final causes found their most convincing arguments. In this period, I believe, comparative anatomy made an important progress, which in the earlier part of the eighteenth century was by no means equally rapid. France took the lead in these researches. "The number of papers on comparative anatomy," says Dr. Thomson, "is greater in the Memoirs of the French Academy than in our national publication. This was owing to the pains taken during the reign of Louis XIV. to furnish the Academy with proper animals, and the number of anatomists who received a salary, and of course devoted themselves to anatomical subjects." There are, however, about twenty papers in the Philosophical Transactions before 1700 on this subject.[b]

Botany.

21. Botany, notwithstanding the gleams of philosophical light which occasionally illustrate the writings of Cæsalpin and Columna, had seldom gone farther than to name, to describe, and to delineate plants with a greater or less accuracy and copiousness. Yet it long had the advantage over zoology, and now, when the latter made a considerable step in advance, it still continued to keep ahead. This is a period of great importance in botanical science. Jungius of Hamburgh, whose posthumous Isagoge Phytoscopica was published in 1679, is said to have been the first in the seventeenth century who led the way to a better classification than that of Lobel; and Sprengel thinks that the English botanists were not unacquainted with his writings; Ray indeed owns his obligations to them.[c]

Jungius.

Morison.

22. But the founder of classification, in the eyes of the world, was Robert Morison, of Aberdeen, professor of botany at Oxford; who, by his Hortus Blesensis, in 1669; by his Plantarum Umbelliferarum Distributio Nova, in 1672; and chiefly by his great work, Historia Plantarum Universalis, in 1678, laid the basis of a systematic classification, which he partly founded, not on trivial distinctions of appearance, as the older botanists, but, as Cæsalpin had first done, on the fructifying organs.

[b] Thomson's Hist. of Royal Society, p. 114.

[c] Sprengel, Hist. Rei Herbariæ, vol. ii. p. 32.

He has been frequently charged with plagiarism from that great Italian, who seems to have suffered, as others have done, by failing to carry forward his own luminous conceptions into such details of proof as the world justly demands; another instance of which has been seen in his very striking passages on the circulation of the blood. Sprengel, however, who praises Morison highly, does not impute to him this injustice towards Cæsalpin, whose writings might possibly be unknown in Britain.[d] And it might be observed also, that Morison did not, as has sometimes been alleged, establish the fruit as the sole basis of his arrangement. Out of fifteen classes, into which he distributes all herbaceous plants, but seven are characterised by this distinction.[e] "The examination of Morison's works," says a late biographer, "will enable us to judge of the service he rendered in the reformation of botany. The great botanists, from Gesner to the Bauhins, had published works, more or less useful by their discoveries, their observations, their descriptions, or their figures. Gesner had made a great step in considering the fruit as the principal distinction of genera. Fabius Columna adopted this view; Cæsalpin applied it to a classification which should be regarded as better than any that preceded the epoch of which we speak. Morison had made a particular study of fruits, having collected 1500 different species of them, though he did not neglect the importance of the natural affinities of other parts. He dwells on this leading idea, insists on the necessity of establishing generic characters, and has founded his chief works on this basis. He has therefore done real service to the science; nor should the vanity which has made him conceal his obligations to Cæsalpin induce us to refuse him justice."[f] Morison speaks of his own theory with excessive vanity, and depreciates all earlier botanists as full of confusion. Several English writers have been unfavourable to Morison, out of partiality to Ray, with whom he was on bad terms; but Tournefort declares that if he had not enlightened botany, it would still have been in darkness.

[d] Sprengel, p. 34.

[e] Pulteney, Historical Progress of Botany in England, vol. i. p. 307.

[f] Biogr. Universelle.

23. Ray, in his Methodus Plantarum Nova, 1682, and in his Historia Plantarum Universalis, in three volumes, the first published in 1686, the second in 1688, and the third, which is supplemental, in 1704, trod in the steps of Morison, but with more acknowledgment of what was due to others, and with some improvements of his own. He described 6900 plants, many of which are now considered as varieties.[g] In the botanical works of Ray we find the natural families of plants better defined, the difference of complete and incomplete flowers more precise, and the grand division of monocotyledons and dicotyledons fully established. He gave much precision to the characteristics of many classes, and introduced several technical terms very useful for the perspicuity of botanical language; finally, he established many general principles of arrangement which have since been adopted.[h] Ray's method of classification was principally by the fruit, though he admits its imperfections. "In fact, his method," says Pulteney, "though he assumes the fruit as the foundation, is an elaborate attempt, for that time, to fix natural classes."[i]

Ray.

24. Rivinus, in his Introductio in Rem Herbariam, Leipsic, 1690, a very short performance, struck into a new path, which has modified to a great degree the systems of later botanists. Cæsalpin and Morison had looked mainly to the fruit as the basis of classification; Rivinus added the flower, and laid down as a fundamental rule that all plants which resemble each other both in the flower and in the fruit, ought to bear the same generic name.[k] In some pages of this Introduction we certainly find the basis of the Critica Botanica of Linnæus.[m] Rivinus thinks the arrangement of Cæsalpin the best, and that Morison has only spoiled what he took; of Ray he speaks in terms of eulogy, but blames some part of his method. His own is primarily founded on the flower, and thus he forms eighteen classes, which, by considering the differences of the fruits, he subdivides into ninety-one genera. The specific distinctions he founded on the general habit and appearance of the plant. His method is more thoroughly artificial, as

Rivinus.

[g] Pulteney. The account of Ray's life and botanical writings in this work occupies nearly 100 pages.

[h] Biogr. Universelle.

[i] P. 259.

[k] Biogr. Universelle.

[m] Id.

opposed to natural; that is, more established on a single principle, which often brings heterogeneous plants and families together, than that of any of his predecessors; for even Ray had kept the distinction of trees from shrubs and herbs, conceiving it to be founded in their natural fructification. Rivinus set aside wholly this leading division. Yet he had not been able to reduce all plants to his method, and admitted several anomalous divisions.[n]

25. The merit of establishing an uniform and consistent system was reserved for Tournefort. His Elémens de la Botanique appeared in 1694; the Latin translation, Institutiones Rei Herbariæ, in 1700. Tournefort, like Rivinus, took the flower or corolla as the basis of his system; and the varieties in the structure, rather than number, of the petals furnish him with his classes. The genera—for, like other botanists before Linnæus, he has no intermediate division—are established by the flower and fruit conjointly, or now and then by less essential differences, for he held it better to constitute new genera than, as others had done, to have anomalous species. The accessory parts of a plant are allowed to supply specific distinctions. But Tournefort divides vegetables, according to old prejudice—which it is surprising that, after the precedent of Rivinus to the contrary, he should have regarded—into herbs and trees; and thus he has twenty-two classes. Simple flowers, monopetalous or polypetalous, form eleven of these; composite flowers, three; the apetalous, one; the cryptogamous, or those without flower or fruit, make another class; shrubs or *suffrutices* are placed in the seventeenth; and trees, in five more, are similarly distributed, according to their floral characters.[o] Sprengel extols much of the system of Tournefort, though he disapproves of the selection of a part so often wanting as the corolla for the sole basis; nor can its various forms be comprised in Tournefort's classes. His orders are well marked, according to the same author; but he multiplied both his genera and species too much, and paid too little attention to the stamina. His method was less repugnant to natural affinities and more convenient in

Tournefort.

[n] Biogr. Univ.; Sprengel, p. 56.

[o] Biogr. Univ.; Thomson's Hist. of Royal Society, p. 34; Sprengel, p. 64.

practice than any which had come since Lobel. Most of Tournefort's generic distinctions were preserved by Linnæus, and some which had been abrogated without sufficient reason have since been restored.[p] Ray opposed the system of Tournefort, but some have thought that in his later works he came nearer to it, so as to be called magis corollista quam fructista.[q] This, however, is not acknowledged by Pulteney, who has paid great attention to Ray's writings.

26. The classification and description of plants constitute what generally is called botany. But these began now to be studied in connexion with the anatomy and physiology of the vegetable world; terms not merely analogical, because as strictly applicable as to animals, but which had never been employed before the middle of the seventeenth century. This interesting science is almost wholly due to two men, Grew and Malpighi. Grew first directed his thoughts towards the anatomy of plants in 1664, in consequence of reading several books of animal anatomy, which suggested to him that plants, being the works of the same Author, would probably show similar contrivances. Some had introduced observations of this nature, as Highmore, Sharrock, and Hooke, but only collaterally; so that the systematic treatment of the subject, following the plant from the seed, was left quite open for himself. In 1670 he presented the first book of his work to the Royal Society, who next year ordered it to be printed. It was laid before the society in print, December, 1671; and on the same day a manuscript by Malpighi on the same subject was read. They went on from this time with equal steps; Malpighi, however, having caused Grew's book to be translated for his own use. Grew speaks very honourably of Malpighi, and without claiming more than the statement of facts permits him.[r]

Vegetable physiology.

Grew.

27. The first book of his Anatomy of Plants, which is the title given to three separate works when published collectively in 1682, contains the whole of his physiological theory, which is developed at length in those that follow. The nature of

His Anatomy of Plants.

[p] Biogr. Universelle.

[q] Id.

[r] Pulteney; Chalmers; Biogr. Univ. Sprengel calls Grew's book opus absolutum et immortale.

vegetation and its processes seem to have been unknown when he began; save that common observation and the more accurate experience of gardeners and others must have collected the obvious truths of vegetable anatomy. He does not quote Cæsalpin, and may have been unacquainted with his writings. No man perhaps who created a science has carried it farther than Grew; he is so close and diligent in his observations, making use of the microscope, that comparatively few discoveries of great importance have been made in the mere anatomy of plants since his time;[s] though some of his opinions are latterly disputed by Mirbel and others of a new botanical school.

He discovers the sexual system.

28. The great discovery ascribed to Grew is of the sexual system in plants. He speaks thus of what he calls the attire, though rather, I think, in obscure terms:—"The primary and chief use of the attire is such as hath respect to the plant itself, and so appears to be very great and necessary. Because even those plants which have no flower or foliature are yet some way or other attired, either with the seminiform or the floral attire; so that it seems to perform its service to the seeds as the foliature to the fruit. In discourse hereof with our learned Savilian professor Sir Thomas Millington, he told me he conceived that the attire doth serve, as the male, for the generation of the seed. I immediately replied that I was of the same opinion, and gave him some reasons for it, and answered some objections which might oppose them. But withal, in regard every plant is ἀρρενόθηλυς, or male and female, that I was also of opinion that it serveth for the separation of some parts as well as the affusion of others."[t] He proceeds to explain his notion of vegetable impregnation. It is singular that he should suppose all plants to be hermaphrodite; and this shows he could not have recollected what had long been known as to the palm, or the passages in Cæsalpin relative to the subject.

29. Ray admitted Grew's opinion cautiously at first: Nos ut verisimilem tantum admittimus. But in his Sylloge Stirpium, 1694, he fully accedes to it. The real

[s] Biogr. Universelle.

[t] Book iv. ch. 1. He had hinted at some "primary and private use of the attire," in book i. ch. 5.

establishment of the sexual theory, however, is due to Camerarius, professor of botany at Tübingen, whose letter on that subject, published 1694, in the work of another, did much to spread the theory over Europe. His experiments, indeed, were necessary to confirm what Grew had rather hazarded as a conjecture than brought to a test; and he showed that flowers deprived of their stamina do not produce seeds capable of continuing the species.[u] Woodward, in the Philosophical Transactions, illustrated the nutrition of plants by putting sprigs of vegetables in phials filled with water, and after some time determining the weight they had gained and the quantity they had imbibed.[x] These experiments had been made by Van Helmont, who had inferred from them that water is convertible into solid matter.[y]

Camerarius confirms this.

30. It is just to observe that some had preceded Grew in vegetable physiology. Aromatari, in a letter of only four pages, published at Venice in 1625, on the generation of plants from seeds, which was reprinted in the Philosophical Transactions, showed the analogy between grains and eggs, each containing a minute organised embryo, which employs the substances enclosing it for its own development. Aromatari has also understood the use of the cotyledons.[z] Brown, in his Inquiry into Vulgar Errors, has remarks on the budding of plants, and on the quinary number which they affect in their flower. Kenelm Digby, according to Sprengel, first explained the necessity in vegetation for oxygen, or vital air, which had lately been discovered by Bathurst.[a] Hooke carried the discoveries hitherto made in vegetable anatomy much further in his Micrographia. Sharrock and Lister contributed some knowledge; but they were rather later than Grew. None of these deserve such a place as Malpighi, who, says Sprengel, was not inferior to Grew in acuteness, though, probably, through some illusions of prejudice, he has not so well understood and

Predecessors of Grew.

Malpighi.

[u] Sprengel; Biogr. Univ.; Pulteney, p. 338.

[x] Thomson's Hist. of Royal Society, p. 58.

[y] Thomson's Hist. of Chemistry.

[z] Sprengel; Biogr. Univ

[a] Sprengel, iii. 176. [It will be understood that the name oxygen, though Sprengel uses it, is modern; and also that this gas is properly said to have been discovered in 1774 by Priestley, who exhibited it in a separate state.—1842.]

explained many things. But the structure and growth of seeds he has explained better, and Grew seems to have followed him. His book is also better arranged and more concise.[b] The Dutch did much to enlarge botanical science. The Hortus Indicus Malabaricus of Rheede, who had been a governor in India, was published at his own expense in twelve volumes, the first appearing in 1686; it contains an immense number of new plants.[c] The Herbarium Amboinense of Rumphius was collected in the seventeenth century, though not published till 1741.[d] Several botanical gardens were formed in different countries; among others that of Chelsea was opened in 1686.[e]

Early notions of geology.

31. It was impossible that men of inquiring tempers should not have been led to reflect on those remarkable phænomena of the earth's visible structure, which being in course of time accurately registered and arranged, have become the basis of that noble science, the boast of our age, geology. The first thing which must strike the eyes of the merest clown, and set the philosopher thinking, is the irregularity of the surface of our globe; the more this is observed, the more signs of violent disruption appear. Some, indeed, of whom Ray seems to have been one,[f] were so much impressed by the theory of final causes that, perceiving the fitness of the present earth for its inhabitants, they thought it might have been created in such a state of physical ruin. But the contrary inference is almost irresistible. A still more forcible argument for great revolutions in the history of the earth is drawn from a second phænomenon of very general occurrence, the marine and other fossil relics of organised beings, which are dug up in strata far remote from the places where these bodies could now exist. It was common to account for them by the Mosaic deluge. But the depth at which they are found was incompatible with this hypothesis. Others fancied them to be not really organised, but sports of nature, as they were called, the casual resemblances of shells and fishes in stone. The

[b] Sprengel, p. 15.

[c] Biogr. Univ. The date of the first volume is given erroneously in the B. U.

[d] Id.

[e] Sprengel; Pulteney.

[f] See Ray's Three Physico-Theological Discourses on the Creation, Deluge, and final Conflagration. 1692.

Italians took the lead in speculating on these problems; but they could only arrive now and then at a happier conjecture than usual, and do not seem to have planned any scheme of explaining the general structure of the earth.[g] The Mundus Subterraneus of Athanasius Kircher, famous for the variety and originality of his erudition, contains probably the geology of his age, or at least his own. It was published in 1662. Ten out of twelve books relate to the surface or the interior of the earth, and to various terrene productions; the remaining two to alchemy and other arts connected with mineralogy. Kircher seems to have collected a great deal of geographical and geological knowledge. In England, the spirit of observation was so strong after the establishment of the Royal Society, that the Philosophical Transactions in this period contain a considerable number of geognostic papers, and the genius of theory was aroused, though not at first in his happiest mood.[h]

Burnet's Theory of Earth.

32. Thomas Burnet, master of the Charterhouse, a man fearless and somewhat rash, with more imagination than philosophy, but ingenious and eloquent, published in 1694 his Theoria Telluris Sacra, which he afterwards translated into English. The primary question for the early geologists had always been how to reconcile the phænomena with which they were acquainted to the Mosaic narratives of the creation and deluge. Every one was satisfied that his own theory was the best; but in every case it has hitherto proved, whatever may take place in future, that the proposed scheme has neither kept to the letter of Scripture nor to the legitimate deductions of philosophy. Burnet gives the reins to his imagination more than any other writer on that which, if not argued upon by inductive reasoning, must be the dream of one man, little better in reality, though it may be more amusing, than the dream of another. He seems to be eminently ignorant of geological facts, and has hardly ever recourse to them as evidence. And, accordingly, though his book drew some attention as an ingenious romance, it does not appear that he made a single disciple. Whiston opposed Burnet's theory, but with one not less unfounded, nor

[g] Lyell's Principles of Geology, vol. i. p. 25.
[h] Thomson's Hist. of Royal Society.

with less ignorance of all that required to be known.

Other geologists.

Hooke, Lister, Ray, and Woodward came to the subject with more philosophical minds, and with a better insight into the real phænomena. Hooke seems to have displayed his usual sagacity in conjecture; he saw that the common theory of explaining marine fossils by the Mosaic deluge would not suffice, and perceived that at some time or other a part of the earth's crust must have been elevated and another part depressed by some subterraneous power. Lister was aware of the continuity of certain strata over large districts, and proposed the construction of geological maps. Woodward had a still more extensive knowledge of stratified rocks; he was in a manner the founder of scientific mineralogy in England, but his geological theory was not less chimerical than those of his contemporaries.[i] It was first published in the Philosophical Transactions for 1695.[k]

Protogæa of Leibnitz.

33. The Protogæa of Leibnitz appears, in felicity of conjecture and minute attention to facts, far above any of these. But this short tract was only published in 1749; and on reading it I have found an intimation that it was not written within the seventeenth century. Yet I cannot refrain from mentioning that his hypothesis supposes the gradual cooling of the earth from igneous fusion; the formation of a vast body of water to cover the surface, a part of his theory but ill established, and apparently the weakest of the whole; the subsidence of the lower parts of the earth, which he takes to have been once on the level of the highest mountains, by the breaking in of vaulted caverns within its bosom:[m] the deposition of sedimentary strata from inundations, their induration, and the subsequent covering of these by other strata through fresh inundations; with many other notions which have been gradually matured and rectified in the process of the science.[n] No

i Lyell, p. 31.

k Thomson, p. 207.

m Sect. 21. He admits also a partial elevation by intumescence, but says, ut vastissimæ Alpes ex solidâ jam terrâ eruptione surrexerint, minus consentaneum puto. Scimus tamen et in illis deprehendi reliquias maris. Cum ergo alterutrum factum oporteat, credibilius multo arbitror defluxisse aquas spontaneo nisu, quam ingentem terrarum partem incredibili violentiâ tam alte ascendisse. Sect. 22.

n Facies teneri adhuc orbis sæpius novata est; donec quiescentibus causis atque æquilibratis, consistentior emer-

one can read the Protogæa without perceiving that of all the early geologists, or indeed of all down to a time not very remote, Leibnitz came nearest to the theories which are most received in the English school at this day. It is evident that if the literal interpretation of Genesis, by a period of six natural days, had not restrained him, he would have gone much farther in his views of the progressive revolutions of the earth.[o] Leibnitz had made very minute inquiries for his age into fossil species, and was aware of the main facts which form the basis of modern geology.[p]

SECT. III.—ON ANATOMY AND MEDICINE.

34. PORTAL begins the history of this period, which occupies more than 800 pages of his voluminous work, by announcing it as the epoch most favourable to anatomy: in less than fifty years the science put on a new countenance; nature is interrogated, every part of the body is examined with an observing spirit; the mutual intercourse of nations diffuses the light on every side; a number of great men appear, whose genius and industry excite our admiration.[q] But for this very reason I must in these concluding pages glide over a subject rather foreign to my own studies, and to those of the generality of my readers, with a very brief enumeration of names.

Circulation of blood established.

35. The Harveian theory gained ground, though obstinate prejudice gave way but slowly. It was confirmed by the experiment of transfusing blood, tried on dogs, at the instance of Sir

geret status rerum. Unde jam duplex origo intelligitur firmorum corporum; una cum ignis fusione refrigescerent, altera cum reconcrescerent ex solutione aquarum. Neque igitur putandum est *lapides ex solâ esse fusione*. Id enim potissimum de primâ tantum massâ ex terræ basi accipio; Nec dubito, postea materiam liquidam in superficie telluris procurrentem, quiete mox redditâ, ex ramentis subactis ingentem materiæ vim deposuisse, quorum alia varias terræ species formarunt, alia in saxa induruere, e quibus strata diversa sibi super imposita diversas præcipitationum vices atque intervalla testantur. Sect. 4.

This he calls the incunabula of the world, and the basis of a new science, which might be denominated "naturalis geographia." But wisely adds, licet conspirent vestigia veteris mundi in præsenti facie rerum, tamen rectius omnia definient posteri, ubi curiositas eo processerit, ut per regiones procurrentia soli genera et strata describant. Sect. 5.

[o] See sect. 21, et alibi.

[p] Sect. 24, et usque ad finem libri.

[q] Hist. de l'Anatomie, vol. iii. p. 1.

Christopher Wren, in 1657, and repeated by Lower in 1661.[r] Malpighi in 1661, and Leeuwenhoek in 1690, by means of their microscopes, demonstrated the circulation of the blood in the smaller vessels, and rendered visible the anastomoses of the arteries and veins, upon which the theory depended.[s] From this time it seems to have been out of doubt. Pecquet's discovery of the thoracic duct (or rather of its uses, as a reservoir of the chyle from which the blood is elaborated, for the canal itself had been known to Eustachius) stands next to that of Harvey, which would have thrown less light on physiology without it, and like his was perseveringly opposed.[t]

Willis. Vieussens.

36. Willis, a physician at Oxford, is called by Portal, who thinks all mankind inferior to anatomists, one of the greatest geniuses that ever lived; his bold systems have given him a distinguished place among physiologers.[u] His Anatomy of the Brain, in which, however, as in his other works, he was much assisted by an intimate friend and anatomist of the first character, Lower, is, according to the same writer, a masterpiece of imagination and labour. He made many discoveries in the structure of the brain, and has traced the nerves from it far better than his predecessors, who had in general very obscure ideas of their course. Sprengel says that Willis is the first who has assigned a peculiar mental function to each of the different parts of the brain; forgetting, as it seems, that this hypothesis, the basis of modern phrenology, had been generally received, as I understand his own account, in the sixteenth century.[x] Vieussens of Montpellier carried on the discoveries in the anatomy of the nerves in his Neurographia Universalis, 1684; tracing those arising from the spinal marrow, which Willis had not done, and following the minute ramifications of those that are spread over the skin.[y]

Malpighi.

37. Malpighi was the first who employed good microscopes in anatomy, and thus revealed the secrets, we may say, of an invisible world, which Leeu-

[r] Sprengel, Hist. de la Médecine, vol. iv p. 120.

[s] Ib., pp. 126, 142.

[t] Portal; Sprengel.

[u] P. 88. Biogr. Univ.

[x] Sprengel, vol. iv. p. 250. Compare vol. iii. p. 204.

[y] Portal, vol. iv. p. 5; Sprengel, p. 256 Biogr. Univ.

wenhoek afterwards, probably using still better instruments, explored with surprising success. To Malpighi anatomists owe their knowledge of the structure of the lungs.[z] Graaf has overthrown many errors, and suggested many truths in the economy of generation.[a] Malpighi prosecuted this inquiry with his microscope, and first traced the progress of the egg during incubation. But the theory of evolution, as it is called, proposed by Harvey, and supported by Malpighi, received a shock by Leeuwenhoek's or Hartsoeker's discovery of spermatic animalcules, which apparently opened a new view of reproduction. The hypothesis they suggested became very prevalent for the rest of the seventeenth century, though it is said to have been shaken early in the next.[b] Borelli applied mathematical principles to muscular movements in his treatise De Motu Animalium. Though he is a better mathematician than anatomist, he produces many interesting facts, the mechanical laws are rightly applied, and his method is clear and consequent.[c] Duverney, in his Treatise on Hearing, in 1683, his only work, obtained a considerable reputation; it threw light on many parts of a delicate organ, which by their minuteness had long baffled the anatomist.[d] In Mayow's Treatise on Respiration, published in London, 1668, we find the necessity of what is now called oxygen to that function laid down; but this portion of the atmosphere had been discovered by Bathurst and Henshaw in 1654, and Hooke had shown by experiment that animals die when the air is deprived of it.[e] Ruysch, a Dutch physician, perfected the art of injecting anatomical preparations, hardly known before, and thus conferred an inestimable benefit on the science. He possessed a celebrated cabinet of natural history.[f]

Other anatomists.

38. The chemical theory of medicine which had descended from Paracelsus through Van Helmont, was propagated chiefly by Sylvius, a physician of Holland, who is reckoned the founder of what was called the chemiatric school. His works were printed at Amsterdam in 1679, but he had promulgated his

Medical theories.

[z] Portal, vol. iii. p. 120; Sprengel, p. 578.

[a] Portal, iii. 219; Sprengel, p. 303.

[b] Sprengel, p. 309.

[c] Portal, iii. 246; Biogr. Univ.

[d] Portal, p. 464. Sprengel, p. 288.

[e] Sprengel, iii. 176, 181.

[f] Id. p. 259; Biogr. Univ.

theory from the middle of the century. His leading principle was that a perpetual fermentation goes on in the human body, from the deranged action of which diseases proceed; most of them from excess of acidity, though a few are of alkaline origin. "He degraded the physician," says Sprengel, "to the level of a distiller or a brewer."[g] This writer is very severe on the chemiatric school, one of their offences in his eyes being their recommendation of tea; "the cupidity of Dutch merchants conspiring with their medical theories." It must be owned that when we find them prescribing also a copious use of tobacco, it looks as if the trade of the doctor went hand in hand with those of his patients. Willis, in England, was a partisan of the chemiatrics,[h] and they had a great influence in Germany; though in France the attachment of most physicians to the Hippocratic and Galenic methods, which brought upon them so many imputations of pedantry, was little abated. A second school of medicine, which superseded this, is called the iatro-mathematical. This seems to have arisen in Italy. Borelli's application of mechanical principles to the muscles has been mentioned above. These physicians sought to explain everything by statical and hydraulic laws; they were therefore led to study anatomy, since it was only by an accurate knowledge of all the parts that they could apply their mathematics. John Bernouilli even taught them to employ the differential calculus in explaining the bodily functions.[i] But this school seems to have had the same leading defect as the chemiatric; it forgot the peculiarity of the laws of organisation and life which often render those of inert matter inapplicable. Pitcairn and Boerhaave were leaders of the iatro-mathematicians; and Mead was reckoned the last of its distinguished patrons.[k] Meantime, a third school of medicine grew up, denominated the empirical; a name to be used in a good sense, as denoting their regard to observation and experience, or the Baconian principles of philosophy. Sydenham was the first of these in England; but they gradually prevailed, to the exclusion of all systematic theory. The

[g] Vol. v. p. 59; Biogr. Univ.

[h] Sprengel, p. 73.

[i] Id. p. 159.

[k] Id. p. 182. See Biographie Universelle, art. Boerhaave, for a general criticism of the iatro-mathematicians.

discovery of several medicines, especially the Peruvian bark, which was first used in Spain about 1640, and in England about 1654, contributed to the success of the empirical physicians, since the efficacy of some of these could not be explained on the hypotheses hitherto prevalent.[m]

SECT. IV.—ON ORIENTAL LITERATURE.

Polyglott of Walton.

39. THE famous Polyglott of Brian Walton was published in 1657; but few copies appear to have been sold before the restoration of Charles II. in 1660, since those are very scarce which contain in the preface the praise of Cromwell for having facilitated and patronised the undertaking; praise replaced in the change of times by a loyal eulogy on the king. This Polyglott is in nine languages; though no one book of the Bible is printed in so many. Walton's Prolegomena are in sixteen chapters or dissertations. His learning perhaps was greater than his critical acuteness or good sense; such at least is the opinion of Simon and Le Long. The former, in a long examination of Walton's Prolegomena, treats him with all the superiority of a man who possessed both. Walton was assailed by some bigots at home for acknowledging various readings in the Scriptures, and for denying the authority of the vowel punctuation. His Polyglott is not reckoned so magnificent as the Parisian edition of Le Long; but it is fuller and more convenient.[n] Edmund Castell, the coadjutor of Walton in this work, published his Lexicon Heptaglotton in 1669, upon which he had consumed eighteen years and the whole of his substance. This is frequently sold together with the Polyglott.

Hottinger.

40. Hottinger of Zurich, by a number of works on the Eastern languages, and especially by the Bibliotheca Orientalis, in 1658, established a reputation which these books no longer retain since the whole field of Oriental literature has been more fully explored. Spencer, in a treatise of great

Spencer.

[m] Sprengel, p. 413.

[n] Simon, Hist. Critique du Vieux Testament, p. 541; Chalmers; Biogr. Britan.; Biogr. Univ.; Brunet, Man. du Libraire.

erudition, De Legibus Hebræorum, 1685, gave some offence by the suggestion that several of the Mosaic institutions were borrowed from the Egyptian, though the general scope of the Jewish law was in opposition to the idolatrous practices of the neighbouring nations.

Bochart.

The vast learning of Bochart expanded itself over Oriental antiquity, especially that of which the Hebrew nation and language is the central point; but his etymological conjectures have long since been set aside, and he has not in other respects escaped the fate of the older Orientalists.

Pococke.

41. The great services of Pococke to Arabic literature, which had commenced in the earlier part of the century, were extended to the present. His edition and translation of the Annals of Eutychius in 1658, that of the History of Abulfaragius in 1663, with many other works of a similar nature, bear witness to his industry; no Englishman probably has ever contributed so much to that province of learning.[o] A fine edition of the Koran, and still esteemed the best, was due to Marracci, professor of Arabic in the Sapienza or university of Rome, and published at the expense of Cardinal Barbadigo, in 1698.[p] But France had an Orientalist of the most extensive learning in D'Herbelot, whose Bibliothèque Orientale must be considered as making an epoch in this literature. It was published in 1697, after his death, by Galland, who had also some share in arranging the materials. This work, it has been said, is for the seventeenth century what the History of the Huns by De Guignes is for the eighteenth; with this difference, that D'Herbelot opened the road, and has often been copied by his successor.[q]

D'Herbelot.

Hyde.

42. Hyde, in his Religionis Persarum Historia, published in 1700, was the first who illustrated in a systematic manner the religion of Zoroaster, which he always represents in a favourable manner. The variety and novelty of its contents gave this book a credit which in some degree it preserves; but Hyde was ignorant of the ancient language of Persia, and is said to have been often misled by Mohammedan authorities.[r] The vast increase of Oriental information in

[o] Chalmers; Biogr. Univ.
[p] Tiraboschi, xi. 398.
[q] Biographie Universelle.
[r] Id.

modern times, as has been intimated above, renders it difficult for any work of the seventeenth century to keep its ground. In their own times, the writings of Kircher on China, and still more those of Ludolf on Abyssinia, which were founded on his own knowledge of the country, claimed a respectable place in Oriental learning. It is remarkable that very little was yet known of the Indian languages, though grammars existed of the Tamul, and perhaps some others, before the close of the seventeenth century.[a]

SECT. V.—ON GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY.

Maps of the Sansons.

43. THE progress of geographical science long continued to be slow. If we compare the map of the world in 1651, by Nicolas Sanson, esteemed on all sides the best geographer of his age, with one by his son in 1692, the differences will not appear, perhaps, so considerable as we might have expected. Yet some improvement may be detected by the eye. Thus the Caspian sea has assumed its longer diameter from north to south, contrary to the old map. But the sea of Aral is still wanting. The coasts of New Holland, except to the east, are tolerably laid down, and Corea is a peninsula instead of an island. Cambalu, the imaginary capital of Tartary, has disappeared;[1] but a vast lake is placed in the centre of that region; the Altai range is carried far too much to the north, and the name of Siberia seems unknown. Africa and America have nearly the same outline as before; in the former, the empire of Monomotopa stretches to join that of Abyssinia in about the 12th degree of south latitude; and the Nile still issues, as in all the old maps, from a lake Zayre, in nearly the same parallel. The coasts of Europe, and especially of Scandinavia, are a little more accurate than before. The Sanson family, of whom several were publishers of maps, did not take pains enough to improve what their father had executed, though they might have

[a] Eichhorn, Gesch. der Cultur, v. 269.

[1] The Cambalu of Marco Polo is probably Pekin; but the geographers frequently placed this capital of Cathay north of the wall of China.]

had material helps from the astronomical observations which were now continually made in different parts of the world.

De Lisle's map of the world.

44. Such was the state of geography when, in 1699, De Lisle, the real founder of the science, at the age of twenty-four, published his map of the world. He had been guided by the observations, and worked under the directions of Cassini, whose tables of the emersion of Jupiter's satellites, calculated for the meridian of Bologna, in 1668, and, with much improvement, for that of Paris, in 1693, had prepared the way for the perfection of geography. The latitudes of different regions had been tolerably ascertained by observation; but no good method of determining the longitude had been known before this application of Galileo's great discovery. It is evident that the appearance of one of those satellites at Paris being determined by the tables to a precise instant, the means were given, with the help of sufficient clocks, to find the longitudinal distance of other places by observing the difference of time; and thus a great number of observations having gradually been made, a basis was laid for an accurate delineation of the surface of the globe. The previous state of geography and the imperfect knowledge which the mere experience of navigators could furnish, may be judged by the fact that the Mediterranean sea was set down with an excess of 300 leagues in length, being more than one-third of the whole. De Lisle reduced it within its bounds, and cut off at the same time 500 leagues from the longitude of Eastern Asia. This was the commencement of the geographical labours of De Lisle, which reformed, in the first part of the eighteenth century, not only the general outline of the world, but the minuter relations of various countries. His maps amount to more than one hundred sheets.[u]

Voyages and Travels.

45. The books of travels, in the last fifty years of the seventeenth century, were far more numerous and more valuable than in any earlier period, but we have no space for more than a few names. Gemelli Carreri, a Neapolitan, is the first who

[u] Eloge de De Lisle, in Œuvres de Fontenelle, vol. vi. p. 253; Eloge de Cassini, in vol. v. p. 328; Biogr. Univ.

claims to have written an account of his own travels round the world, describing Asia and America with much detail. His Giro del Mondo was published in 1699. Carreri has been strongly suspected of fabrication, and even of having never seen the countries which he describes; but his character, I know not with what justice, has been latterly vindicated.[x] The French justly boast the excellent travels of Chardin, Bernier, Thevenot, and Tavernier in the East; the account of the Indian archipelago and of China by Nieuhoff, employed in a Dutch embassy to the latter empire, is said to have been interpolated by the editors, though he was an accurate and faithful observer.[y] Several other relations of voyages were published in Holland, some of which can only be had in the native language. In English there were not many of high reputation: Dampier's Voyage Round the World, the first edition of which was in 1697, is better known than any which I can call to mind.

Historians.

46. The general characteristics of historians of this period are neither a luminous philosophy, nor a rigorous examination of evidence. But, as before, we mention only a few names in this extensive province of literature. The History of the Conquest of Mexico by Antonio De Solis is "the last good work," says Sismondi, perhaps too severely as to others, "that Spain has produced; the last where purity of taste, simplicity, and truth are preserved; the imagination, of which the author had given so many proofs, does not appear."[z] Bouterwek is not less favourable; but Robertson, who holds De Solis rather cheap as an historian, does not fail to censure even his style.

De Solis.

Memoirs of De Retz.

47. The French have some authors of history who, by their elegance and perspicuity, might deserve notice; such as St. Real, Father D'Orleans, and even Varillas, proverbially discredited as he is for want of veracity. The Memoirs of Cardinal De Retz rise above these; their animated style, their excellent portraitures of character, their acute and brilliant remarks distinguish their pages, as much as the similar

[x] Tiraboschi, xi. 86; Salfi, xi. 442.

[y] Biogr. Univ.

[z] Littérature du Midi, iv. 101.

qualities did their author. "They are written," says Voltaire, "with an air of greatness, an impetuosity and an inequality which are the image of his life; his expression, sometimes incorrect, often negligent, but almost always original, recalls continually to his readers what has been so frequently said of Cæsar's Commentaries, that he wrote with the same spirit that he carried on his wars."[a] The Memoirs of Grammont, by Antony Hamilton, scarcely challenge a place as historical, but we are now looking more at the style than the intrinsic importance of books. Every one is aware of the peculiar felicity and fascinating gaiety which they display.

Bossuet on universal history.

48. The Discourse of Bossuet on Universal History is perhaps the greatest effort of his wonderful genius. Every preceding abridgment of so immense a subject had been superficial and dry. He first irradiated the entire annals of antiquity down to the age of Charlemagne with flashes of light that reveal an unity and coherence which had been lost in their magnitude and obscurity. It is not perhaps an unfair objection that, in a history calling itself that of all mankind, the Jewish people have obtained a disproportionate regard; and it might be almost as reasonable, on religious grounds, to give Palestine an ampler space in the map of the world, as, on a like pretext, to make the scale of the Jewish history so much larger than that of the rest of the human race. The plan of Bossuet has at least divided his book into two rather heterogeneous portions. But his conceptions of Greek, and still more of Roman history, are generally magnificent; profound in philosophy, with an outline firm and sufficiently exact, never condescending to trivial remarks or petty details; above all, written in that close and nervous style which no one certainly in the French language has ever surpassed. It is evident that Montesquieu in all his writings, but especially in the Grandeur et Décadence des Romains, had the Discourse of Bossuet before his eyes; he is more acute, sometimes, and ingenious, and has reflected longer on particular topics of inquiry, but he wants the simple majesty, the comprehensive eagle-like glance of the illustrious prelate.

[a] Biogr. Univ., whence I take the quotation.

49. Though we fell short in England of the historical reputation which the first part of the century might entitle us to claim, this period may be reckoned that in which a critical attention to truth, sometimes rather too minute, but always praiseworthy, began to be characteristic of our researches into fact. The only book that I shall mention is Burnet's History of the Reformation, written in a better style than those who know Burnet by his later and more negligent work are apt to conceive, and which has the signal merit of having been the first in English, as far as I remember, which is fortified by a large appendix of documents. This, though frequent in Latin, had not been so usual in the modern languages. It became gradually very frequent and almost indispensable in historical writings, where the materials had any peculiar originality.

English historical works.

Burnet.

* * * * * *

50. The change in the spirit of literature and of the public mind in general, which had with gradual and never receding steps been coming forward in the seventeenth century, but especially in the latter part of it, has been so frequently pointed out to the readers of this and the last volume, that I shall only quote an observation of Bayle. "I believe," he says, "that the sixteenth century produced a greater number of learned men than the seventeenth; and yet the former of these ages was far from being as enlightened as the latter. During the reign of criticism and philology, we saw in all Europe many prodigies of erudition. Since the study of the new philosophy and that of living languages has introduced a different taste, we have ceased to behold this vast and deep learning. But in return there is diffused through the republic of letters a more subtle understanding and a more exquisite discernment; men are now less learned but more able."[b] The volumes which are now submitted to the public contain sufficient evidence of this intellectual progress both in philosophy and in polite literature.

General character of 17th century.

51. I here terminate a work, which, it is hardly ne-

[b] Dictionnaire de Bayle, art. Aconce, note D.

cessary to say, has furnished the occupation of not very few years, and which, for several reasons, it is not my intention to prosecute any farther. The length of these volumes is already greater than I had anticipated: yet I do not perceive much that could have been retrenched without loss to a part, at least, of the literary world. For the approbation which the first of them has received I am grateful: for the few corrections that have been communicated to me I am not less so; the errors and deficiencies of which I am not specially aware may be numerous; yet I cannot affect to doubt that I have contributed something to the general literature of my country, something to the honourable estimation of my own name, and to the inheritance of those, if it is for me still to cherish that hope, to whom I have to bequeath it.

Conclusion.

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