

THE RUINS,

OR, MEDITATION ON THE REVOLUTIONS OF EMPIRES:

AND

THE LAW OF NATURE,

by

C. F. VOLNEY,

COMTE ET PAIR DE FRANCE. COMMANDEUR DE LA LEGION D'HONNEUR, MEMBRE DE L'ACADEMIE FRANCAISE, ET DE PLUSIEURS AUTRES SOCIETES SAVANTES.

DEPUTY TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF 1789, AND AUTHOR OF "TRAVELS IN EGYPT AND SYRIA," "NEW RESEARCHES ON ANCIENT HISTORY," ETC.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

VOLNEY'S ANSWER TO DR. PRIESTLY, A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE BY COUNT DARU, AND THE ZODIACAL SIGNS AND CONSTELLATIONS BY THE EDITOR.

I will cherish in remembrance the love of man, I will employ myself on the means of effecting good for him, and build my own happiness on the promotion of his.--Volney.

NEW YORK,
TWENTIETH CENTURY PUB. CO., 4 WARREN ST.
1890.

PUBLISHER'S PREFACE.

Having recently purchased a set of stereotyped plates of Volney's Ruins, with a view of reprinting the same, I found, on examination, that they were considerably worn by the many editions that had been printed from them and that they greatly needed both repairs and corrections. A careful estimate showed that the amount necessary for this purpose would go far towards reproducing this standard work in modern type and in an improved form. After due reflection this course was at length decided upon, and all the more readily, as by discarding the old plates and resetting the entire work, the publisher was enabled to greatly enhance its value, by inserting the translator's preface as it appeared in the original edition, and also to restore many notes and other valuable material which

had been carelessly omitted in the American reprint.

An example of an important omission of this kind may be found on the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth pages of this volume, which may be appropriately referred to, in this connection. It is there stated, in describing the ancient kingdom of Ethiopia, and the ruins of Thebes, her opulent metropolis, that "There a people, now forgotten, discovered, while others were yet barbarians, the elements of the arts and sciences. A race of men, now rejected from society for their sable skin and frizzled hair, founded on the study of the laws of nature, those civil and religious systems which still govern the universe."

A voluminous note, in which standard authorities are cited, seems to prove that this statement is substantially correct, and that we are in reality indebted to the ancient Ethiopians, to the fervid imagination of the persecuted and despised negro, for the various religious systems now so highly revered by the different branches of both the Semitic and Aryan races. This fact, which is so frequently referred to in Mr. Volney's writings, may perhaps solve the question as to the origin of all religions, and may even suggest a solution to the secret so long concealed beneath the flat nose, thick lips, and negro features of the Egyptian Sphinx. It may also confirm the statement of Diodorus, that "the Ethiopians conceive themselves as the inventors of divine worship, of festivals, of solemn assemblies, of sacrifices, and of every other religious practice."

That an imaginative and superstitious race of black men should have invented and founded, in the dim obscurity of past ages, a system of religious belief that still enthalls the minds and clouds the intellects of the leading representatives of modern theology,--that still clings to the thoughts, and tinges with its potential influence the literature and faith of the civilized and cultured nations of Europe and America, is indeed a strange illustration of the mad caprice of destiny, of the insignificant and apparently trivial causes that oft produce the most grave and momentous results.

The translation here given closely follows that published in Paris by Levrault, Quai Malaquais, in 1802, which was under the direction and careful supervision of the talented author; and whatever notes Count Volney then thought necessary to insert in his work, are here carefully reproduced without abridgment or modification.

The portrait, maps and illustrations are from a French edition of Volney's complete works, published by Bossange Freres at No. 12 Rue de Seine, Paris, in 1821,--one year after the death of Mr. Volney. It is a presentation copy "on the part of Madame, the Countess de

Volney, and of the nephew of the author," and it may therefore be taken for granted that Mr. Volney's portrait, as here given, is correct, and was satisfactory to his family.

An explanation of the figures and diagrams shown on the map of the Astrological Heaven of the Ancients has been added in the appendix by the publisher.

PETER ECKLER.

New York, January 3, 1890.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

OF THE ENGLISH EDITION PUBLISHED IN PARIS.

To offer the public a new translation of Volney's Ruins may require some apology in the view of those who are acquainted with the work only in the English version which already exists, and which has had a general circulation. But those who are conversant with the book in the author's own language, and have taken pains to compare it with that version, must have been struck with the errors with which the English performance abounds. They must have regretted the loss of many original beauties, some of which go far in composing the essential merits of the work.

The energy and dignity of the author's manner, the unaffected elevation of his style, the conciseness, perspicuity and simplicity of his diction, are everywhere suited to his subject, which is solemn, novel, luminous, affecting,--a subject perhaps the most universally interesting to the human race that has ever been presented to their contemplation. It takes the most liberal and comprehensive view of the social state of man, develops the sources of his errors in the most perspicuous and convincing manner, overturns his prejudices with the greatest delicacy and moderation, sets the wrongs he has suffered, and the rights he ought to cherish, in the clearest point of view, and lays before him the true foundation of morals--his only means of happiness.

As the work has already become a classical one, even in English, and as it must become and continue to be so regarded in all languages in which it shall be faithfully rendered, we wish it to suffer as little as possible from a change of country;--that as much of the spirit of the original be transfused and preserved as is consistent with the nature of translation.

How far we have succeeded in performing this service for the

English reader we must not pretend to determine. We believe, however, that we have made an improved translation, and this without claiming any particular merit on our part, since we have had advantages which our predecessor had not. We have been aided by his labors; and, what is of still more importance, our work has been done under the inspection of the author, whose critical knowledge of both languages has given us a great facility in avoiding such errors as might arise from hurry or mistake.

Paris, November 1, 1802.

PREFACE OF THE LONDON EDITION.*

* Published by T. Allman, 42 Holborn Hill, London, 1851.

The plan of this publication was formed nearly ten years ago; and allusions to it may be seen in the preface to *Travels in Syria and Egypt*, as well as at the end of that work, (published in 1787). The performance was in some forwardness when the events of 1788 in France interrupted it. Persuaded that a development of the theory of political truth could not sufficiently acquit a citizen of his debt to society, the author wished to add practice; and that particularly at a time when a single arm was of consequence in the defence of the general cause.

The same desire of public benefit which induced him to suspend his work, has since engaged him to resume it, and though it may not possess the same merit as if it had appeared under the circumstances that gave rise to it, yet he imagines that at a time when new passions are bursting forth,--passions that must communicate their activity to the religious opinions of men,--it is of importance to disseminate such moral truths as are calculated to operate as a curb and restraint. It is with this view he has endeavored to give to these truths, hitherto treated as abstract, a form likely to gain them a reception.

It was found impossible not to shock the violent prejudices of some readers; but the work, so far from being the fruit of a disorderly and perturbed spirit, has been dictated by a sincere love of order and humanity.

After reading this performance it will be asked, how it was possible in 1784 to have had an idea of what did not take place till the year 1790? The solution is simple. In the original plan the legislator was a fictitious and hypothetical being: in the present, the author has substituted an existing legislator; and the reality has only made the subject additionally interesting.

PREFACE OF THE AMERICAN EDITION.*

* The copy from which this preface is reprinted was published in Boston by Charles Gaylord, in 1833. It was given to the writer, when a mere lad, by a lady--almost a stranger--who was traveling through the little hamlet on the banks of the Hudson where he then resided. This lady assured me that the book was of great value, containing noble and sublime truths; and the only condition she attached to the gift was, that I should read it carefully and endeavor to understand its meaning. This I willingly promised and faithfully performed; and all who have "climbed the heights," and escaped from the thralldom of superstitious faith, will concede the inestimable value of such a gift--rich with the peace and consolation that the truth imparts.--Pub.

If books were to be judged of by their volume, the following would have but little value; if appraised by their contents, it will perhaps be reckoned among the most instructive.

In general, nothing is more important than a good elementary book; but, also, nothing is more difficult to compose and even to read: and why? Because, as every thing in it should be analysis and definition, all should be expressed with truth and precision. If truth and precision are wanting, the object has not been attained; if they exist, its very force renders it abstract.

The first of these defects has been hitherto evident in all books of morality. We find in them only a chaos of incoherent maxims, precepts without causes, and actions without a motive. The pedants of the human race have treated it like a little child: they have prescribed to it good behavior by frightening it with spirits and hobgoblins. Now that the growth of the human race is rapid, it is time to speak reason to it; it is time to prove to men that the springs of their improvement are to be found in their very organization, in the interest of their passions, and in all that composes their existence. It is time to demonstrate that morality is a physical and geometrical science, subject to the rules and calculations of the other mathematical sciences: and such is the advantage of the system expounded in this book, that the basis of morality being laid in it on the very nature of things, it is both constant and immutable; whereas, in all other theological systems, morality being built upon arbitrary opinions, not demonstrable and often absurd, it changes, decays, expires with them, and leaves men in an absolute depravation. It is true that because our system is founded on facts and not on reveries, it will with much greater difficulty be extended and adopted: but it will derive strength from this very struggle, and sooner or later the eternal religion

of Nature must overturn the transient religions of the human mind.

This book was published for the first time in 1793, under the title of The French Citizen's Catechism. It was at first intended for a national work, but as it may be equally well entitled the Catechism of men of sense and honor, it is to be hoped that it will become a book common to all Europe. It is possible that its brevity may prevent it from attaining the object of a popular classical work, but the author will be satisfied if he has at least the merit of pointing out the way to make a better.

Advertisement of the American Edition.

VOLNEY'S RUINS;

OR MEDITATION ON THE REVOLUTIONS OF EMPIRES.

The superior merits of this work are too well known to require commendation; but as it is not generally known that there are in circulation three English translations of it, varying materially in regard to faithfulness and elegance of diction, the publisher of the present edition inserts the following extracts for the information of purchasers and readers:

PARIS TRANSLATION,

First published in this Country by Dixon and Sickels.

INVOCATION.

Hail, solitary ruins! holy sepulchres, and silent walls! you I invoke; to you I address my prayer. While your aspect averts, with secret terror, the vulgar regard, it excites in my heart the charm of delicious sentiments--sublime contemplations. What useful lessons! what affecting and profound reflections you suggest to him who knows how to consult you. When the whole earth, in chains and silence, bowed the neck before its tyrants, you had already proclaimed the truths which they abhor, and confounding the dust of the king with that of the meanest slave, had announced to man the sacred dogma of Equality! Within your pale, in solitary adoration of Liberty, I saw her Genius arise from the mansions of the dead; not such as she is painted by the impassioned multitude, armed with fire and sword, but under the august aspect of justice, poising in her hand the sacred balance, wherein are weighed the actions of men

at the gates of eternity.

O Tombs! what virtues are yours! you appal the tyrant's heart, and poison with secret alarm his impious joys; he flies, with coward step, your incorruptible aspect, and erects afar his throne of insolence.

LONDON TRANSLATION.

INVOCATION.

Solitary ruins, sacred tombs, ye mouldering and silent walls, all hail! To you I address my invocation. While the vulgar shrink from your aspect with secret terror, my heart finds in the contemplation a thousand delicious sentiments, a thousand admirable recollections. Pregnant, I may truly call you, with useful lessons, with pathetic and irresistible advice to the man who knows how to consult you. A while ago the whole world bowed the neck in silence before the tyrants that oppressed it; and yet in that hopeless moment you already proclaimed the truths that tyrants hold in abhorrence: mixing the dust of the proudest kings with that of the meanest slaves, you called upon us to contemplate this example of Equality. From your caverns, whither the musing and anxious love of Liberty led me, I saw escape its venerable shade, and with unexpected felicity, direct its flight and marshal my steps the way to renovated France.

Tombs! what virtues and potency do you exhibit! Tyrants tremble at your aspect--you poison with secret alarm their impious pleasures--they turn from you with impatience, and, coward like, endeavor to forget you amid the sumptuousness of their palaces.

PHILADELPHIA TRANSLATION.

INVOCATION.

Hail, ye solitary ruins, ye sacred tombs, and silent walls! 'Tis your auspicious aid that I invoke; 'tis to you my soul, wrapt in meditation, pours forth its prayers! What though the profane and vulgar mind shrinks with dismay from your august and awe-inspiring aspect; to me you unfold the sublimest charms of contemplation and sentiment, and offer to my senses the luxury of a thousand delicious and enchanting thoughts! How sumptuous the feast to a being that has a taste to relish, and an understanding to consult you! What rich and noble admonitions; what exquisite and pathetic

lessons do you read to a heart that is susceptible of exalted feelings! When oppressed humanity bent in timid silence throughout the globe beneath the galling yoke of slavery, it was you that proclaimed aloud the birthright of those truths which tyrants tremble at while they detect, and which, by sinking the loftiest head of the proudest potentate, with all his boasted pageantry, to the level of mortality with his meanest slave, confirmed and ratified by your unerring testimony the sacred and immortal doctrine of Equality.

Musing within the precincts of your inviting scenes of philosophic solitude, whither the insatiate love of true-born Liberty had led me, I beheld her Genius ascending, not in the spurious character and habit of a blood-thirsty Fury, armed with daggers and instruments of murder, and followed by a frantic and intoxicated multitude, but under the placid and chaste aspect of Justice, holding with a pure and unsullied hand the sacred scales in which the actions of mortals are weighed on the brink of eternity.

The first translation was made and published in London soon after the appearance of the work in French, and, by a late edition, is still adopted without alteration. Mr. Volney, when in this country in 1797, expressed his disapprobation of this translation, alleging that the translator must have been overawed by the government or clergy from rendering his ideas faithfully; and, accordingly, an English gentleman, then in Philadelphia, volunteered to correct this edition. But by his endeavors to give the true and full meaning of the author with great precision, he has so overloaded his composition with an exuberance of words, as in a great measure to dissipate the simple elegance and sublimity of the original. Mr. Volney, when he became better acquainted with the English language, perceived this defect; and with the aid of our countryman, Joel Barlow, made and published in Paris a new, correct, and elegant translation, of which the present edition is a faithful and correct copy.

CONTENTS

Publisher's Preface
Translator's Preface
Preface of London Edition
Preface of the American Edition
Advertisement of the American Edition
The Life of Volney
A List of Volney's Works
Invocation
Chap. I. The Journey
II. The Reverie

- III. The Apparition
- IV. The Exposition
- V. Condition of Man in the Universe
- VI. The Primitive State of Man
- VII. Principles of Society
- VIII. Sources of the Evils of Societies
- IX. Origin of Governments and Laws
- X. General Causes of the Prosperity of Ancient States
- XI. General Causes of the Revolutions and Ruin of Ancient States
- XII. Lessons of Times Past repeated on the Present
- XIII. Will the Human Race Improve
- XIV. The Great Obstacle to Improvement
- XV. The New Age
- XVI. A Free and Legislative People
- XVII. Universal Basis of all Right and all Law
- XVIII. Consternation and Conspiracy of Tyrants
- XIX. General Assembly of the Nations
- XX. The Search of Truth
- XXI. Problem of Religious Contradictions
- XXII. Origin and Filiation of Religious Ideas
 - I. Origin of the Idea of God: Worship of the Elements and of the Physical Powers of Nature
 - II. Second System. Worship of the Stars, or Sabeism
 - III. Third System. Worship of Symbols, or Idolatry
 - IV. Fourth System. Worship of two Principles, or Dualism
 - V. Moral and Mystical Worship, or System of a Future State
 - VI. Sixth System. The Animated World, or Worship of the Universe under diverse Emblems
 - VII. Seventh System. Worship of the Soul of the World, that is to say, the Element of Fire, Vital Principle of the Universe
 - VIII. Eighth System. The World Machine: Worship of the Demi-Ourgos, or Grand Artificer
 - IX. Religion of Moses, or Worship of the Soul of the World (You-piter)
 - X. Religion of Zoroaster
 - XI. Budsoism, or Religion of the Samaneans
 - XII. Brahmism, or Indian System
 - XIII. Christianity, or the Allegorical Worship of the Sun under the cabalistic names of Chrish-en or Christ and Yesus or Jesus
- XXIII. All Religions have the same Object
- XXIV. Solution of the Problem of Contradictions

THE LAW OF NATURE.

- Chap. I. Of the Law of Nature
- II. Characters of the Law of Nature
- III. Principles of the Law of Nature relating to Man
- IV. Basis of Morality: of Good, of Evil, of Sin, of Crime,

of Vice, and of Virtue
V. Of Individual Virtues
VI. On Temperance
VII. On Continenence
VIII. On Courage and Activity
IX. On Cleanliness
X. On Domestic Virtues
XI. The Social Virtues; Justice
XII. Development of the Social Virtues

Volney's Answer to Dr. Priestly.

Appendix: The Zodiacal Signs and Constellations

LIFE OF VOLNEY.

BY COUNT DARU.

Constantine Francis Chassebeuf De Volney was born in 1757 at Craon, in that intermediate condition of life, which is of all the happiest, since it is deprived only of fortune's too dangerous favors, and can aspire to the social and intellectual advantages reserved for a laudable ambition.

From his earliest youth, he devoted himself to the search after truth, without being disheartened by the serious studies which alone can initiate us into her secrets. After having become acquainted with the ancient languages, the natural sciences and history, and being admitted into the society of the most eminent literary characters, he submitted, at the age of twenty, to an illustrious academy, the solution of one of the most difficult problems that the history of antiquity has left open for discussion. This attempt received no encouragement from the learned men who were appointed his judges; and the author's only appeal from their sentence was to his courage and his efforts.

Soon after, a small inheritance having fallen to his lot, the difficulty was how to spend it (these are his own words.) He resolved to employ it in acquiring, by a long voyage, a new fund of information, and determined to visit Egypt and Syria. But these countries could not be explored to advantage without a knowledge of the language. Our young traveller was not to be discouraged by this difficulty. Instead of learning Arabic in Europe, he withdrew to a convent of Copts, until he had made himself master of an idiom that is spoken by so many nations of the East. This resolution showed one of those undaunted spirits that remain unshaken amid the trials of life.

Although, like other travellers, he might have amused us with an account of his hardships and the perils surmounted by his courage, he overcame the temptation of interrupting his narrative by personal adventures. He disdained the beaten track. He does not tell us the road he took, the accidents he met with, or the impressions he received. He carefully avoids appearing upon the stage; he is an inhabitant of the country, who has long and well observed it, and who describes its physical, political, and moral state. The allusion would be entire if an old Arab could be supposed to possess all the erudition, all the European philosophy, which are found united and in their maturity in a traveller of twenty-five.

But though a master in all those artifices by which a narration is rendered interesting, the young man is not to be discerned in the pomp of labored descriptions. Although possessed of a lively and brilliant imagination, he is never found unwarily explaining by conjectural systems the physical or moral phenomena he describes. In his observations he unites prudence with science. With these two guides he judges with circumspection, and sometimes confesses himself unable to account for the effects he has made known to us.

Thus his account has all the qualities that persuade--accuracy and candor. And when, ten years later, a vast military enterprise transported forty thousand travellers to the classic ground, which he had trod unattended, unarmed and unprotected, they all recognized a sure guide and an enlightened observer in the writer who had, as it seemed, only preceded them to remove or point out a part of the difficulties of the way.

The unanimous testimony of all parties proved the accuracy of his account and the justness of his observations; and his Travels in Egypt and Syria were, by universal suffrage, recommended to the gratitude and the confidence of the public.

Before the work had undergone this trial it had obtained in the learned world such a rapid and general success, that it found its way into Russia. The empress, then (in 1787) upon the throne, sent the author a medal, which he received with respect, as a mark of esteem for his talents, and with gratitude, as a proof of the approbation given to his principles. But when the empress declared against France, Volney sent back the honorable present, saying: "If I obtained it from her esteem, I can only preserve her esteem by returning it."

The revolution of 1789, which had drawn upon France the menaces of Catharine, had opened to Volney a political career. As deputy in the assembly of the states-general, the first words he uttered there were in favor of the publicity of their deliberations. He also supported the organization of the national guards, and that of the communes and departments.

At the period when the question of the sale of the domain lands was agitated (in 1790), he published an essay in which he lays down the following principles: "The force of a State is in proportion to its population; population is in proportion to plenty; plenty is in proportion to tillage; and tillage, to personal and immediate interest, that is to the spirit of property. Whence it follows, that the nearer the cultivator approaches the passive condition of a mercenary, the less industry and activity are to be expected from him; and, on the other hand, the nearer he is to the condition of a free and entire proprietor, the more extension he gives to his own forces, to the produce of his lands, and the general prosperity of the State."

The author draws this conclusion, that a State is so much the more powerful as it includes a greater number of proprietors,--that is, a greater division of property.

Conducted into Corsica by that spirit of observation which belongs only to men whose information is varied and extensive, he perceived at the first glance all that could be done for the improvement of agriculture in that country: but he knew that, for a people firmly attached to ancient customs, there can exist no other demonstration or means of persuasion than example. He purchased a considerable estate, and made experiments on those kinds of tillage that he hoped to naturalize in that climate. The sugar-cane, cotton, indigo and coffee soon demonstrated the success of his efforts. This success drew upon him the notice of the government. He was appointed director of agriculture and commerce in that island, where, through ignorance, all new methods are introduced with such difficulty.

It is impossible to calculate all the good that might have resulted from this peaceable magistracy; and we know that neither instruction, zeal, nor a persevering courage was wanting to him who had undertaken it. Of this he had given convincing proofs. It was in obedience to another sentiment, no less respectable, that he voluntarily interrupted the course of his labors. When his fellow citizens of Angers appointed him their deputy in the constituent assembly, he resigned the employment he held under government, upon the principle that no man can represent the nation and be dependent for a salary upon those by whom it is administered.

Through respect for the independence of his legislative functions, he had ceased to occupy the place he possessed in Corsica before his election, but he had not ceased to be a benefactor of that country. He returned thither after the session of the constituent assembly. Invited into that island by the principal inhabitants, who were anxious to put into practice his lessons, he spent there a part of the years 1792 and 1793.

On his return he published a work entitled: An Account of the Present State of Corsica. This was an act of courage; for it was not a physical description, but a political review of the condition of a population divided into several factions and distracted by violent animosities. Volney unreservedly revealed the abuses, solicited the interest of France in favor of the Corsicans, without flattering them, and boldly denounced their defects and vices; so that the philosopher obtained the only recompense he could expect from his sincerity--he was accused by the Corsicans of heresy.

To prove that he had not merited this reproach, he published soon after a short treatise entitled: The Law of Nature, or Physical Principles of Morality.

He was soon exposed to a much more dangerous charge, and this, it must be confessed, he did merit. This philosopher, this worthy citizen, who in our first National assembly had seconded with his wishes and his talents the establishment of an order of things which he considered favorable to the happiness of his country, was accused of not being sincerely attached to that liberty for which he had contended; that is to say, of being averse to anarchy. An imprisonment of ten months, which only ended after the 9th of Thermidor, was a new trial reserved for his courage.

The moment at which he recovered his liberty, was when the horror inspired by criminal excesses had recalled men to those noble sentiments which fortunately are one of the first necessities of civilized life. They sought for consolations in study and literature after so many misfortunes, and organized a plan of public instruction.

It was in the first place necessary to insure the aptitude of those to whom education should be confided; but as the systems were various, the best methods and a unity of doctrine were to be determined. It was not enough to interrogate the masters, they were to be formed, new ones were to be created, and for that purpose a school was opened in 1794, wherein the celebrity of the professors promised new instruction even to the best informed. This was not, as was objected, beginning the edifice at the roof, but creating architects, who were to superintend all the arts requisite for constructing the building.

The more difficult their functions were, the greater care was to be taken in the choice of the professors; but France, though then accused of being plunged in barbarism, possessed men of transcendent talents, already enjoying the esteem of all Europe, and we may be bold to say, that by their labors, our literary glory had likewise extended its conquests. Their names were proclaimed by the public voice, and Volney's was associated with those of the men most illustrious in science and in literature.*

* Lagrange, Laplace, Berthollet, Garat, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, Daubenton, Hauy, Volney, Sicard, Monge, Thouin, La Harpe, Buache Mentelle.

This institution, however, did not answer the expectations that had been formed of it, because the two thousand students that assembled from all parts of France were not equally prepared to receive these transcendent lessons, and because it had not been sufficiently ascertained how far the theory of education should be kept distinct from education itself.

Volney's Lectures on History, which were attended by an immense concourse of auditors, became one of his chief claims to literary glory. When forced to interrupt them, by the suppression of the Normal school, he might have reasonably expected to enjoy in his retirement that consideration which his recent functions had added to his name. But, disgusted with the scenes he had witnessed in his native land, he felt that passion revive within him which, in his youth, had led him to visit Africa and Asia. America, civilized within a century, and free only within a few years, fixed his attention. There every thing was new,--the inhabitants, the constitution, the earth itself. These were objects worthy of his observation. When embarking for this voyage, however, he felt emotions very different from those which formerly accompanied him into Turkey. Then in the prime of life, he joyfully bid adieu to a land where peace and plenty reigned, to travel amongst barbarians; now, mature in years, but dismayed at the spectacle and experience of injustice and persecution, it was with diffidence, as we learn from himself, that he went to implore from a free people an asylum for a sincere friend of that liberty that had been so profaned.

Our traveller had gone to seek for repose beyond the seas. He there found himself exposed to aggression from a celebrated philosopher, Dr. Priestley. Although the subject of this discussion was confined to the investigation of some speculative opinions, published by the French writer in his work entitled The Ruins, the naturalist in this attack employed a degree of violence which added nothing to the force of his arguments, and an acrimony of expression not to be expected from a philosopher. M. Volney, though accused of Hottentotism and ignorance, preserved in his defence, all the advantages that the scurrility of his adversary gave over him. He replied in English, and Priestley's countrymen could only recognize the Frenchman in the refinement and politeness of his answer.

Whilst M. Volney was travelling in America, there had been formed in France a literary body which, under the name of Institute, had attained in a very few years a distinguished rank amongst the learned societies of Europe. The name of the illustrious traveller

was inscribed in it at its formation, and he acquired new rights to the academical honors conferred on him during his absence, by the publication of his observations On the Climate and Soil of the United States.

These rights were further augmented by the historical and physiological labors of the Academician. An examination and justification of The Chronology of Herodotus, with numerous and profound researches on The History of the most Ancient Nations, occupied for a long time him who had observed their monuments and traces in the countries they inhabited. The trial he had made of the utility of the Oriental languages inspired him with an ardent desire to propagate the knowledge of them; and to be propagated, he felt how necessary it was to render it less difficult. In this view he conceived the project of applying to the study of the idioms of Asia, a part of the grammatical notions we possess concerning the languages of Europe. It only appertains to those conversant with their relations of dissimilitude or conformity to appreciate the possibility of realizing this system. The author has, however, already received the most flattering encouragement and the most unequivocal appreciation, by the inscription of his name amongst the members of the learned and illustrious society founded by English commerce in the Indian peninsula.

M. Volney developed his system in three works,* which prove that this idea of uniting nations separated by immense distances and such various idioms, had never ceased to occupy him for twenty-five years. Lest those essays, of the utility of which he was persuaded, should be interrupted by his death, with the clay-cold hand that corrected his last work, he drew up a will which institutes a premium for the prosecution of his labors. Thus he prolonged, beyond the term of a life entirely devoted to letters, the glorious services he had rendered to them.

* On the Simplification of Oriental Languages, 1795.

The European Alphabet Applied to the Languages of Asia, 1819.

Hebrew Simplified, 1820.

This is not the place, nor does it belong to me to appreciate the merit of the writings which render Volney's name illustrious. His name had been inscribed in the list of the Senate, and afterwards of the House of Peers. The philosopher who had travelled in the four quarters of the world, and observed their social state, had other titles to his admission into this body, than his literary glory. His public life, his conduct in the constituent assembly, his independent principles, the nobleness of his sentiments, the wisdom and fixity of his opinions, had gained him the esteem of those who can be depended upon, and with whom it is so agreeable to discuss political interests.

Although no man had a better right to have an opinion, no one was more tolerant for the opinions of others. In State assemblies as well as in Academical meetings, the man whose counsels were so wise, voted according to his conscience, which nothing could bias; but the philosopher forgot his superiority to hear, to oppose with moderation, and sometimes to doubt. The extent and variety of his information, the force of his reason, the austerity of his manners, and the noble simplicity of his character, had procured him illustrious friends in both hemispheres; and now that this erudition is extinct in the tomb,* we may be allowed at least to predict that he was one of the very few whose memory shall never die.

* He died in Paris on the 20th of April, 1820.

A list of the Works Published by Count Volney.

TRAVELS IN EGYPT AND SYRIA during the years 1783, 1784, and 1785: 2 vols. 8vo.--1787.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE TWELVE CENTURIES that preceded the entrance of Xerxes into Greece.

CONSIDERATIONS ON THE TURKISH WAR, in 1788.

THE RUINS, or Meditations on the Revolutions of Empires--1791.

ACCOUNT OF THE PRESENT STATE OF CORSICA--1793.

THE LAW OF NATURE, or Physical Principles of Morality--1793.

ON THE SIMPLIFICATION OF ORIENTAL LANGUAGES--1795.

A LETTER TO DR. PRIESTLEY--1797.

LECTURES ON HISTORY, delivered at the Normal School in the year 3--1800.

ON THE CLIMATE AND SOIL OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, to which is added an account of Florida, of the French colony of Scioto, of some Canadian Colonies, and of the Savages--1803.

REPORT MADE TO THE CELTIC ACADEMY ON THE RUSSIAN WORK OF PROFESSOR PALLAS, entitled "A Comparative Vocabulary of all the Languages in the World."

THE CHRONOLOGY OF HERODOTUS conformable with his Text--1808 and 1809.

NEW RESEARCHES ON ANCIENT HISTORY, 3 vols. 8vo.--1814

THE EUROPEAN ALPHABET Applied to the Languages of Asia--1819.

A HISTORY OF SAMUEL--1819.

HEBREW SIMPLIFIED--1820.

INVOCATION.

Hail solitary ruins, holy sepulchres and silent walls! you I invoke; to you I address my prayer. While your aspect averts, with secret terror, the vulgar regard, it excites in my heart the charm of delicious sentiments--sublime contemplations. What useful lessons, what affecting and profound reflections you suggest to him who knows how to consult you! When the whole earth, in chains and silence bowed the neck before its tyrants, you had already proclaimed the truths which they abhor; and confounding the dust of the king with that of the meanest slave, had announced to man the sacred dogma of Equality. Within your pale, in solitary adoration of Liberty, I saw her Genius arise from the mansions of the dead; not such as she is painted by the impassioned multitude, armed with fire and sword, but under the august aspect of Justice, poising in her hand the sacred balance wherein are weighed the actions of men at the gates of eternity!

O Tombs! what virtues are yours! You appal the tyrant's heart, and poison with secret alarm his impious joys. He flies, with coward step, your incorruptible aspect, and erects afar his throne of insolence.* You punish the powerful oppressor; you wrest from avarice and extortion their ill-gotten gold, and you avenge the feeble whom they have despoiled; you compensate the miseries of the poor by the anxieties of the rich; you console the wretched, by opening to him a last asylum from distress; and you give to the soul that just equipoise of strength and sensibility which constitutes wisdom--the true science of life. Aware that all must return to you, the wise man loadeth not himself with the burdens of grandeur and of useless wealth: he restrains his desires within the limits of justice; yet, knowing that he must run his destined course of life, he fills with employment all its hours, and enjoys the comforts that fortune has allotted him. You thus impose on the impetuous sallies of cupidity a salutary rein! you calm the feverish ardor of enjoyments which disturb the senses; you free the soul from the fatiguing conflict of the passions; elevate it above the paltry interests which torment the crowd; and surveying, from your commanding position, the expanse of ages and nations, the mind

is only accessible to the great affections--to the solid ideas of virtue and of glory.

* The cathedral of St. Denis is the tomb of the kings of France; and it was because the towers of that edifice are seen from the Castle of St. Germain, that Louis XIV. quitted that admirable residence, and established a new one in the savage forests of Versailles.

(This note, like many others, has been omitted from the American editions. It seems pertinent to the subject, and is explanatory of the text.--Pub.)

Ah! when the dream of life is over, what will then avail all its agitations, if not one trace of utility remains behind?

O Ruins! to your school I will return! I will seek again the calm of your solitudes; and there, far from the afflicting spectacle of the passions, I will cherish in remembrance the love of man, I will employ myself on the means of effecting good for him, and build my own happiness on the promotion of his.

THE RUINS OF EMPIRES.

CHAPTER I.

THE JOURNEY.

In the eleventh year of the reign of Abd-ul-Hamid, son of Ahmid, emperor of the Turks; when the Nogais-Tartars were driven from the Crimea, and a Mussulman prince of the blood of Gengis-Kahn became the vassal and guard of a Christian woman and queen,* I was travelling in the Ottoman dominions, and through those provinces which were anciently the kingdoms of Egypt and Syria.

* In the eleventh year of Abd-ul-Hamid, that is 1784 of the Christian era, and 1198 of the Hegira. The emigration of the Tartars took place in March, immediately on the manifesto of the empress, declaring the Crimea to be incorporated with Russia. The Mussulman prince of the blood of Gengis-khan was Chahin-Guerai. Gengis-Khan was borne and served by the kings whom he conquered: Chahin, on the contrary, after selling his country for a pension of eighty thousand roubles, accepted the commission of captain of

guards to Catherine II. He afterwards returned home, and according to custom was strangled by the Turks.

My whole attention bent on whatever concerns the happiness of man in a social state, I visited cities, and studied the manners of their inhabitants; entered palaces, and observed the conduct of those who govern; wandered over fields, and examined the condition of those who cultivated them: and nowhere perceiving aught but robbery and devastation, tyranny and wretchedness, my heart was oppressed with sorrow and indignation.

I saw daily on my road fields abandoned, villages deserted, and cities in ruin. Often I met with ancient monuments, wrecks of temples, palaces and fortresses, columns, aqueducts and tombs. This spectacle led me to meditate on times past, and filled my mind with contemplations the most serious and profound.

Arrived at the city of Hems, on the border of the Orontes, and being in the neighborhood of Palmyra of the desert, I resolved to visit its celebrated ruins. After three days journeying through arid deserts, having traversed the Valley of Caves and Sepulchres, on issuing into the plain, I was suddenly struck with a scene of the most stupendous ruins--a countless multitude of superb columns, stretching in avenues beyond the reach of sight. Among them were magnificent edifices, some entire, others in ruins; the earth every where strewn with fragments of cornices, capitals, shafts, entablatures, pilasters, all of white marble, and of the most exquisite workmanship. After a walk of three-quarters of an hour along these ruins, I entered the enclosure of a vast edifice, formerly a temple dedicated to the Sun; and accepting the hospitality of some poor Arabian peasants, who had built their hovels on the area of the temple, I determined to devote some days to contemplate at leisure the beauty of these stupendous ruins.

Daily I visited the monuments which covered the plain; and one evening, absorbed in reflection, I had advanced to the Valley of Sepulchres. I ascended the heights which surround it from whence the eye commands the whole group of ruins and the immensity of the desert. The sun had sunk below the horizon: a red border of light still marked his track behind the distant mountains of Syria; the full-orbed moon was rising in the east, on a blue ground, over the plains of the Euphrates; the sky was clear, the air calm and serene; the dying lamp of day still softened the horrors of approaching darkness; the refreshing night breezes attempered the sultry emanations from the heated earth; the herdsmen had given their camels to repose, the eye perceived no motion on the dusky and uniform plain; profound silence rested on the desert; the howlings only of the jackal,* and the solemn notes of the bird of night, were heard at distant intervals. Darkness now increased, and through the dusk could only be discerned the pale phantasms of

columns and walls. The solitude of the place, the tranquillity of the hour, the majesty of the scene, impressed on my mind a religious pensiveness. The aspect of a great city deserted, the memory of times past, compared with its present state, all elevated my mind to high contemplations. I sat on the shaft of a column, my elbow reposing on my knee, and head reclining on my hand, my eyes fixed, sometimes on the desert, sometimes on the ruins, and fell into a profound reverie.

* An animal resembling a dog and a fox. It preys on other small animals, and upon the bodies of the dead on the field of battle. It is the *Canis aureus* of Linnaeus.

CHAPTER II.

THE REVERIE.

Here, said I, once flourished an opulent city; here was the seat of a powerful empire. Yes! these places now so wild and desolate, were once animated by a living multitude; a busy crowd thronged in these streets, now so solitary. Within these walls, where now reigns the silence of death, the noise of the arts, and the shouts of joy and festivity incessantly resounded; these piles of marble were regular palaces; these fallen columns adorned the majesty of temples; these ruined galleries surrounded public places. Here assembled a numerous people for the sacred duties of their religion, and the anxious cares of their subsistence; here industry, parent of enjoyments, collected the riches of all climes, and the purple of Tyre was exchanged for the precious thread of Serica;* the soft tissues of Cassimere for the sumptuous tapestry of Lydia; the amber of the Baltic for the pearls and perfumes of Arabia; the gold of Ophir for the tin of Thule.

* The precious thread of Serica.--That is, the silk originally derived from the mountainous country where the great wall terminates, and which appears to have been the cradle of the Chinese empire. The tissues of Cassimere.--The shawls which Ezekiel seems to have described under the appellation of Choud-choud. The gold of Ophir.-- This country, which was one of the twelve Arab cantons, and which has so much and so unsuccessfully been sought for by the antiquarians, has left, however, some trace of itself in Ofor, in the province of Oman, upon the Persian Gulf, neighboring on one side to the Sabeans, who are celebrated by Strabo for their abundance of gold, and on the other to Aula or Hevila, where the pearl fishery was carried on. See the 27th chapter of Ezekiel, which gives a very curious and extensive

picture of the commerce of Asia at that period.

And now behold what remains of this powerful city: a miserable skeleton! What of its vast domination: a doubtful and obscure remembrance! To the noisy concourse which thronged under these porticoes, succeeds the solitude of death. The silence of the grave is substituted for the busy hum of public places; the affluence of a commercial city is changed into wretched poverty; the palaces of kings have become a den of wild beasts; flocks repose in the area of temples, and savage reptiles inhabit the sanctuary of the gods. Ah! how has so much glory been eclipsed? how have so many labors been annihilated? Do thus perish then the works of men--thus vanish empires and nations?

And the history of former times revived in my mind; I remembered those ancient ages when many illustrious nations inhabited these countries; I figured to myself the Assyrian on the banks of the Tygris, the Chaldean on the banks of the Euphrates, the Persian reigning from the Indus to the Mediterranean. I enumerated the kingdoms of Damascus and Idumea, of Jerusalem and Samaria, the warlike states of the Philistines, and the commercial republics of Phoenicia. This Syria, said I, now so depopulated, then contained a hundred flourishing cities, and abounded with towns, villages, and hamlets.* In all parts were seen cultivated fields, frequented roads, and crowded habitations. Ah! whither have flown those ages of life and abundance?--whither vanished those brilliant creations of human industry? Where are those ramparts of Nineveh, those walls of Babylon, those palaces of Persepolis, those temples of Balbec and of Jerusalem? Where are those fleets of Tyre, those dock-yards of Arad, those work-shops of Sidon, and that multitude of sailors, of pilots, of merchants, and of soldiers? Where those husbandmen, harvests, flocks, and all the creation of living beings in which the face of the earth rejoiced? Alas! I have passed over this desolate land! I have visited the palaces, once the scene of so much splendor, and I beheld nothing but solitude and desolation. I sought the ancient inhabitants and their works, and found nothing but a trace, like the foot-prints of a traveller over the sand. The temples are fallen, the palaces overthrown, the ports filled up, the cities destroyed; and the earth, stripped of inhabitants, has become a place of sepulchres. Great God! whence proceed such fatal revolutions? What causes have so changed the fortunes of these countries? Wherefore are so many cities destroyed? Why has not this ancient population been reproduced and perpetuated?

* According to Josephus and Strabo, there were in Syria twelve millions of souls, and the traces that remain of culture and habitation confirm the calculation.

Thus absorbed in meditation, a crowd of new reflections continually poured in upon my mind. Every thing, continued I, bewilders my judgment, and fills my heart with trouble and uncertainty. When these countries enjoyed what constitutes the glory and happiness of man, they were inhabited by infidel nations: It was the Phoenician, offering human sacrifices to Moloch, who gathered into his stores the riches of all climates; it was the Chaldean, prostrate before his serpent-god,* who subjugated opulent cities, laid waste the palaces of kings, and despoiled the temples of the gods; it was the Persian, worshipper of fire, who received the tribute of a hundred nations; they were the inhabitants of this very city, adorers of the sun and stars, who erected so many monuments of prosperity and luxury. Numerous herds, fertile fields, abundant harvests-- whatsoever should be the reward of piety--was in the hands of these idolaters. And now, when a people of saints and believers occupy these fields, all is become sterility and solitude. The earth, under these holy hands, produces only thorns and briers. Man soweth in anguish, and reapeth tears and cares. War, famine, pestilence, assail him by turns. And yet, are not these the children of the prophets? The Mussulman, Christian, Jew, are they not the elect children of God, loaded with favors and miracles? Why, then, do these privileged races no longer enjoy the same advantages? Why are these fields, sanctified by the blood of martyrs, deprived of their ancient fertility? Why have those blessings been banished hence, and transferred for so many ages to other nations and different climes?

* The dragon Bell.

At these words, revolving in my mind the vicissitudes which have transmitted the sceptre of the world to people so different in religion and manners from those in ancient Asia to the most recent of Europe, this name of a natal land revived in me the sentiment of my country; and turning my eyes towards France, I began to reflect on the situation in which I had left her.*

* In the year 1782, at the close of the American war.

I recalled her fields so richly cultivated, her roads so admirably constructed, her cities inhabited by a countless people, her fleets spread over every sea, her ports filled with the produce of both the Indies: and then comparing the activity of her commerce, the extent of her navigation, the magnificence of her buildings, the arts and industry of her inhabitants, with what Egypt and Syria had once possessed, I was gratified to find in modern Europe the departed splendor of Asia; but the charm of my reverie was soon dissolved by a last term of comparison. Reflecting that such had

once been the activity of the places I was then contemplating, who knows, said I, but such may one day be the abandonment of our countries? Who knows if on the banks of the Seine, the Thames, the Zuyder-Zee, where now, in the tumult of so many enjoyments, the heart and the eye suffice not for the multitude of sensations,--who knows if some traveller, like myself, shall not one day sit on their silent ruins, and weep in solitude over the ashes of their inhabitants, and the memory of their former greatness.

At these words, my eyes filled with tears: and covering my head with the fold of my mantle, I sank into gloomy meditations on all human affairs. Ah! hapless man, said I in my grief, a blind fatality sports with thy destiny!* A fatal necessity rules with the hand of chance the lot of mortals! But no: it is the justice of heaven fulfilling its decrees!--a God of mystery exercising his incomprehensible judgments! Doubtless he has pronounced a secret anathema against this land: blasting with maledictions the present, for the sins of past generations. Oh! who shall dare to fathom the depths of the Omnipotent?

* Fatality is the universal and rooted prejudice of the East. "It was written," is there the answer to every thing. Hence result an unconcern and apathy, the most powerful impediments to instruction and civilization.

And sunk in profound melancholy, I remained motionless.

CHAPTER III.

THE APPARITION.

While thus absorbed, a sound struck my ear, like the agitation of a flowing robe, or that of slow footsteps on dry and rustling grass. Startled, I opened my mantle, and looking about with fear and trembling, suddenly, on my left, by the glimmering light of the moon, through the columns and ruins of a neighboring temple, I thought I saw an apparition, pale, clothed in large and flowing robes, such as spectres are painted rising from their tombs. I shuddered: and while agitated and hesitating whether to fly or to advance toward the object, a distinct voice, in solemn tones, pronounced these words:

How long will man importune heaven with unjust complaint? How long, with vain clamors, will he accuse Fate as the author of his calamities? Will he forever shut his eyes to the light, and his heart to the admonitions of truth and reason? The light of truth

meets him everywhere; yet he sees it not! The voice of reason strikes his ear; and he hears it not! Unjust man! if for a moment thou canst suspend the delusion which fascinates thy senses, if thy heart can comprehend the language of reason, interrogate these ruins! Read the lessons which they present to thee! And you, evidences of twenty centuries, holy temples! venerable tombs! walls once so glorious, appear in the cause of nature herself! Approach the tribunal of sound reason, and bear testimony against unjust accusations! Come and confound the declamations of a false wisdom or hypocritical piety, and avenge the heavens and the earth of man who calumniates them both!

What is that blind fatality, which without order and without law, sports with the destiny of mortals? What is that unjust necessity, which confounds the effect of actions, whether of wisdom or of folly? In what consist the anathemas of heaven over this land? Where is that divine malediction which perpetuates the abandonment of these fields? Say, monuments of past ages! have the heavens changed their laws and the earth its motion? Are the fires of the sun extinct in the regions of space? Do the seas no longer emit their vapors? Are the rains and the dews suspended in the air? Do the mountains withhold their springs? Are the streams dried up? And do the plants no longer bear fruit and seed? Answer, generation of falsehood and iniquity, hath God deranged the primitive and settled order of things which he himself assigned to nature? Hath heaven denied to earth, and earth to its inhabitants, the blessings they formerly dispensed? If nothing hath changed in the creation, if the same means now exist which before existed, why then are not the present what former generations were? Ah! it is falsely that you accuse fate and heaven! it is unjustly that you accuse God as the cause of your evils! Say, perverse and hypocritical race! if these places are desolate, if these powerful cities are reduced to solitude, is it God who has caused their ruin? Is it his hand which has overthrown these walls, destroyed these temples, mutilated these columns, or is it the hand of man? Is it the arm of God which has carried the sword into your cities, and fire into your fields, which has slaughtered the people, burned the harvests, rooted up trees, and ravaged the pastures, or is it the hand of man? And when, after the destruction of crops, famine has ensued, is it the vengeance of God which has produced it, or the mad fury of mortals? When, sinking under famine, the people have fed on impure aliments, if pestilence ensues, is it the wrath of God which sends it, or the folly of man? When war, famine and pestilence, have swept away the inhabitants, if the earth remains a desert, is it God who has depopulated it? Is it his rapacity which robs the husbandman, ravages the fruitful fields, and wastes the earth, or is it the rapacity of those who govern? Is it his pride which excites murderous wars, or the pride of kings and their ministers? Is it the venality of his decisions which overthrows the fortunes of families, or the corruption of the organs of the law? Are they his passions which, under a thousand forms, torment

individuals and nations, or are they the passions of man? And if, in the anguish of their miseries, they see not the remedies, is it the ignorance of God which is to blame, or their ignorance? Cease then, mortals, to accuse the decrees of Fate, or the judgments of the Divinity! If God is good, will he be the author of your misery? If he is just, will he be the accomplice of your crimes? No, the caprice of which man complains is not the caprice of fate; the darkness that misleads his reason is not the darkness of God; the source of his calamities is not in the distant heavens, it is beside him on the earth; it is not concealed in the bosom of the divinity; it dwells within himself, he bears it in his own heart.

Thou murmurest and sayest: What! have an infidel people then enjoyed the blessings of heaven and earth? Are the holy people of God less fortunate than the races of impiety? Deluded man! where then is the contradiction which offends thee? Where is the inconsistency which thou imputest to the justice of heaven? Take into thine own hands the balance of rewards and punishments, of causes and effects. Say: when these infidels observed the laws of the heavens and the earth, when they regulated well-planned labors by the order of the seasons and the course of the stars, should the Almighty have disturbed the equilibrium of the universe to defeat their prudence? When their hands cultivated these fields with toil and care, should he have diverted the course of the rains, suspended the refreshing dews, and planted crops of thorns? When, to render these arid fields productive, their industry constructed aqueducts, dug canals, and led the distant waters across the desert, should he have dried up their sources in the mountains? Should he have blasted the harvests which art had nourished, wasted the plains which peace had peopled, overthrown cities which labor had created, or disturbed the order established by the wisdom of man? And what is that infidelity which founded empires by its prudence, defended them by its valor, and strengthened them by its justice--which built powerful cities, formed capacious ports, drained pestilential marshes, covered the ocean with ships, the earth with inhabitants; and, like the creative spirit, spread life and motion throughout the world? If such be infidelity, what then is the true faith? Doth sanctity consist in destruction? The God who peoples the air with birds, the earth with animals, the waters with fishes--the God who animates all nature--is he then a God of ruins and tombs? Demands he devastation for homage, and conflagration for sacrifice? Requires he groans for hymns, murderers for votaries, a ravaged and desolate earth for his temple? Behold then, holy and believing people, what are your works! behold the fruits of your piety! You have massacred the people, burned their cities, destroyed cultivation, reduced the earth to a solitude; and you ask the reward of your works! Miracles then must be performed! The people whom you extirpated must be recalled to life, the walls rebuilt which you have overthrown, the harvests reproduced which you have destroyed, the waters regathered which you have dispersed; the laws, in fine, of

heaven and earth reversed; those laws, established by God himself, in demonstration of his magnificence and wisdom; those eternal laws, anterior to all codes, to all the prophets those immutable laws, which neither the passions nor the ignorance of man can pervert. But that passion which mistaketh, that ignorance which observeth neither causes nor effects, hath said in its folly: "All things flow from chance; a blind fatality poureth out good and evil upon the earth; success is not to the prudent, nor felicity to the wise;" or, assuming the language of hypocrisy, she hath said, "all things are from God; he taketh pleasure in deceiving wisdom and confounding reason." And Ignorance, applauding herself in her malice, hath said, "thus will I place myself on a par with that science which confounds me--thus will I excel that prudence which fatigues and torments me." And Avarice hath added: "I will oppress the weak, and devour the fruits of his labors; and I will say, it is fate which hath so ordained." But !! I swear by the laws of heaven and earth, and by the law which is written in the heart of man, that the hypocrite shall be deceived in his cunning--the oppressor in his rapacity! The sun shall change his course, before folly shall prevail over wisdom and knowledge, or ignorance surpass prudence, in the noble and sublime art of procuring to man his true enjoyments, and of building his happiness on an enduring foundation.

CHAPTER IV.

THE EXPOSITION

Thus spoke the Phantom. Confused with this discourse, and my heart agitated with different reflections, I remained long in silence. At length, taking courage, I thus addressed him: Oh, Genius of tombs and ruins! Thy presence, thy severity, hath disordered my senses; but the justice of thy discourse restoreth confidence to my soul. Pardon my ignorance. Alas, if man is blind, shall his misfortune be also his crime? I may have mistaken the voice of reason; but never, knowingly, have I rejected its authority. Ah! if thou readest my heart, thou knowest with what enthusiasm it seeketh truth. Is it not in its pursuit that thou seest me in this sequestered spot? Alas! I have wandered over the earth, I have visited cities and countries; and seeing everywhere misery and desolation, a sense of the evils which afflict my fellow men hath deeply oppressed my soul. I have said, with a sigh: is man then born but for sorrow and anguish? And I have meditated upon human misery that I might discover a remedy. I have said, I will separate myself from the corruption of society; I will retire far from palaces where the mind is depraved by satiety and from the hovel where it is debased by misery. I will go into the desert and dwell among ruins; I will interrogate ancient monuments on the

wisdom of past ages; I will invoke from the bosom of the tombs the spirit which once in Asia gave splendor to states, and glory to nations; I will ask of the ashes of legislators, by what secret causes do empires rise and fall; from what sources spring the Prosperity and misfortunes of nations, on what principles can the Peace of Society, and the happiness of man be established?

I ceased, and with submissive look awaited the answer of the Genius.

Peace and happiness, said he, attend those who practice justice! Since thy heart, O mortal, with sincerity seeketh truth; since thine eyes can still recognize her through the mist of prejudice, thy prayer shall not be in vain. I will unfold to thy view that truth thou invokest; I will teach thy reason that knowledge thou seekest; I will reveal to thee the science of ages and the wisdom of the tombs.

Then approaching and laying his hand on my head, he said:

Rise, mortal, and extricate thy senses from the dust in which thou movest.

Suddenly a celestial flame seemed to dissolve the bands which held us to the earth; and, like a light vapor, borne on the wings of the Genius, I felt myself wafted to the regions above. Thence, from the aerial heights, looking down upon the earth, I perceived a scene altogether new. Under my feet, floating in the void, a globe like that of the moon, but smaller and less luminous, presented to me one of its phases; and that phase* had the aspect of a disk variegated with large spots, some white and nebulous, others brown, green or gray, and while I strained my sight to distinguish what they were, the Genius exclaimed:

* See Plate representing half the terrestrial globe, opposite page 10.

Disciple of Truth, knowest thou that object?

O Genius, answered I, if I did not see the moon in another quarter of the heavens, I should have supposed that to be her globe. It has the appearance of that planet seen through the telescope during the obscuration of an eclipse. These variegated spots might be mistaken for seas and continents.

They are seas and continents, said he, and those of the very hemisphere which you inhabit.

What! said I, is that the earth--the habitation of man?

Yes, replied he, that brown space which occupies irregularly a great portion of the disk, and envelops it almost on every side, is what you call the great ocean, which advancing from the south pole towards the equator, forms first the great gulf of India and Africa, then extends eastward across the Malay islands to the confines of Tartary, while towards the west it encircles the continents of Africa and of Europe, even to the north of Asia.

That square peninsula under our feet is the arid country of the Arabs; the great continent on its left, almost as naked in its interior, with a little verdure only towards its borders, is the parched soil inhabited by black-men.* To the north, beyond a long, narrow and irregular sea,** are the countries of Europe, rich in meadows and cultivated fields. On its right, from the Caspian Sea, extend the snowy and naked plains of Tartary. Returning in this direction that white space is the vast and barren desert of Cobi, which separates China from the rest of the world. You see that empire in the furrowed plain which obliquely rounds itself off from our sight. On yonder coasts, those ragged tongues of land and scattered points are the peninsulas and islands of the Malays, the wretched possessors of the spices and perfumes. That triangle which advances so far into the sea, is the too famous peninsula of India.*** You see the winding course of the Ganges, the rough mountains of Thibet, the lovely valley of Cachemere, the briny deserts of Persia, the banks of the Euphrates and Tygris, the deep bed of the Jordan and the canals of the solitary Nile.

* Africa.

** The Mediterranean.

*** Of what real good has been the commerce of India to the mass of the people? On the contrary, how great the evil occasioned by the superstition of this country having been added the general superstition!

O Genius, said I, interrupting him, the sight of a mortal reaches not to objects at such a distance. He touched my eyes, and immediately they became piercing as those of an eagle; nevertheless the rivers still appeared like waving lines, the mountains winding furrows, and the cities little compartments like the squares of a chess-board.

And the Genius proceeded to enumerate and point out the objects to me: Those piles of ruins, said he, which you see in that narrow valley watered by the Nile, are the remains of opulent cities, the pride of the ancient kingdom of Ethiopia.* Behold the wrecks of her metropolis, of Thebes with her hundred palaces,** the parent of

cities, and monument of the caprice of destiny. There a people, now forgotten, discovered, while others were yet barbarians, the elements of the arts and sciences. A race of men now rejected from society for their sable skin and frizzled hair, founded on the study of the laws of nature, those civil and religious systems which still govern the universe. Lower down, those dusky points are the pyramids whose masses have astonished you. Beyond that, the coast, hemmed in between the sea and a narrow ridge of mountains, was the habitation of the Phoenicians. These were the famous cities of Tyre, of Sidon, of Ascalon, of Gaza, and of Berytus. That thread of water with no outlet, is the river Jordan; and those naked rocks were once the theatre of events that have resounded throughout the world. Behold that desert of Horeb, and that Mount Sinai; where, by means beyond vulgar reach, a genius, profound and bold, established institutions which have weighed on the whole human race. On that dry shore which borders it, you perceive no longer any trace of splendor; yet there was an emporium of riches. There were those famous Ports of Idumea, whence the fleets of Phoenicia and Judea, coasting the Arabian peninsula, went into the Persian gulf, to seek there the pearls of Hevila, the gold of Saba and of Ophir. Yes, there on that coast of Oman and of Barhain was the seat of that commerce of luxuries, which, by its movements and revolutions, fixed the destinies of ancient nations.*** Thither came the spices and precious stones of Ceylon, the shawls of Cassimere, the diamonds of Golconda, the amber of Maldivia, the musk of Thibet, the aloes of Cochin, the apes and peacocks of the continent of India, the incense of Hadramaut, the myrrh, the silver, the gold dust and ivory of Africa; thence passing, sometimes by the Red Sea on the vessels of Egypt and Syria, these luxuries nourished successively the wealth of Thebes, of Sidon, of Memphis and of Jerusalem; sometimes, ascending the Tygris and Euphrates, they awakened the activity of the Assyrians, Medes, Chaldeans, and Persians; and that wealth, according to the use or abuse of it, raised or reversed by turns their domination. Hence sprung the magnificence of Persepolis, whose columns you still perceive; of Ecbatana, whose sevenfold wall is destroyed; of Babylon,**** now leveled with the earth; of Nineveh, of which scarce the name remains; of Thapsacus, of Anatho, of Gerra, and of desolated Palmyra. O names for ever glorious! fields of renown! countries of never-dying memory! what sublime lessons doth your aspect offer! what profound truths are written on the surface of your soil! remembrances of times past, return into my mind! places, witnesses of the life of man in so many different ages, retrace for me the revolutions of his fortune! say, what were their springs and secret causes! say, from what sources he derived success and disgrace! unveil to himself the causes of his evils! correct him by the spectacle of his errors! teach him the wisdom which belongeth to him, and let the experience of past ages become a means of instruction, and a germ of happiness to present and future generations.

* In the new Encyclopedia 3rd vol. Antiquities is published a memoir, respecting the chronology of the twelve ages anterior to the passing of Xerxes into Greece, in which I conceive myself to have proved that upper Egypt formerly composed a distinct kingdom known to the Hebrews by the name of Kous and to which the appellation of Ethiopia was specially given. This kingdom preserved its independence to the time of Psammeticus; at which period, being united to the Lower Egypt, it lost its name of Ethiopia, which thenceforth was bestowed upon the nations of Nubia and upon the different tribes of blacks, including Thebes, their metropolis.

** The idea of a city with a hundred gates, in the common acceptation of the word, is so absurd, that I am astonished the equivoque has not before been felt.

It has ever been the custom of the East to call palaces and houses of the great by the name of gates, because the principal luxury of these buildings consists in the singular gate leading from the street into the court, at the farthest extremity of which the palace is situated. It is under the vestibule of this gate that conversation is held with passengers, and a sort of audience and hospitality given. All this was doubtless known to Homer; but poets make no commentaries, and readers love the marvellous.

This city of Thebes, now Lougsor, reduced to the condition of a miserable village, has left astonishing monuments of its magnificence. Particulars of this may be seen in the plates of Norden, in Pocock, and in the recent travels of Bruce. These monuments give credibility to all that Homer has related of its splendor, and lead us to infer its political power and external commerce.

Its geographical position was favorable to this twofold object. For, on one side, the valley of the Nile, singularly fertile, must have early occasioned a numerous population; and, on the other, the Red Sea, giving communication with Arabia and India, and the Nile with Abyssinia and the Mediterranean, Thebes was thus naturally allied to the richest countries on the globe; an alliance that procured it an activity so much the greater, as Lower Egypt, at first a swamp, was nearly, if not totally, uninhabited. But when at length this country had been drained by the canals and dikes which Sesostris constructed, population was introduced there, and wars arose which proved fatal to the power of Thebes. Commerce then took another route, and descended to the point of the Red Sea, to the canals of Sesostris (see Strabo), and wealth and activity were transferred to Memphis. This is manifestly what Diodorus means when he tells us (lib. i. sect. 2), that as soon as Memphis was established and made a wholesome and delicious abode, kings abandoned Thebes to fix themselves there. Thus Thebes continued to

decline, and Memphis to flourish, till the time of Alexander, who, building Alexandria on the border of the sea, caused Memphis to fall in its turn; so that prosperity and power seem to have descended historically step by step along the Nile; whence it results, both physically and historically, that the existence of Thebes was prior to that of the other cities. The testimony of writers is very positive in this respect. "The Thebans," says Diodorus, "consider themselves as the most ancient people of the earth, and assert, that with them originated philosophy and the science of the stars. Their situation, it is true, is infinitely favorable to astronomical observation, and they have a more accurate division of time into months and years than other nations" etc.

What Diodorus says of the Thebans, every author, and himself elsewhere, repeat of the Ethiopians, which tends more firmly to establish the identity of this place of which I have spoken. "The Ethiopians conceive themselves," says he, lib. iii., "to be of greater antiquity than any other nation: and it is probable that, born under the sun's path, its warmth may have ripened them earlier than other men. They suppose themselves also to be the inventors of divine worship, of festivals, of solemn assemblies, of sacrifices, and every other religious practice. They affirm that the Egyptians are one of their colonies, and that the Delta, which was formerly sea, became land by the conglomeration of the earth of the higher country which was washed down by the Nile. They have, like the Egyptians, two species of letters, hieroglyphics, and the alphabet; but among the Egyptians the first was known only to the priests, and by them transmitted from father to son, whereas both species were common among the Ethiopians."

"The Ethiopians," says Lucian, page 985, "were the first who invented the science of the stars, and gave names to the planets, not at random and without meaning, but descriptive of the qualities which they conceived them to possess; and it was from them that this art passed, still in an imperfect state, to the Egyptians."

It would be easy to multiply citations upon this subject; from all which it follows, that we have the strongest reasons to believe that the country neighboring to the tropic was the cradle of the sciences, and of consequence that the first learned nation was a nation of Blacks; for it is incontrovertible, that, by the term Ethiopians, the ancients meant to represent a people of black complexion, thick lips, and woolly hair. I am therefore inclined to believe, that the inhabitants of Lower Egypt were originally a foreign colony imported from Syria and Arabia, a medley of different tribes of savages, originally shepherds and fishermen, who, by degrees formed themselves into a nation, and who, by nature and descent, were enemies of the Thebans, by whom they were no doubt despised and treated as barbarians.

I have suggested the same ideas in my Travels into Syria, founded upon the black complexion of the Sphinx. I have since ascertained that the antique images of Thebias have the same characteristic; and Mr. Bruce has offered a multitude of analogous facts; but this traveller, of whom I heard some mention at Cairo, has so interwoven these facts with certain systematic opinions, that we should have recourse to his narratives with caution.

It is singular that Africa, situated so near us, should be the least known country on the earth. The English are at this moment making explorations, the success of which ought to excite our emulation.

*** Ailah (Eloth), and Atsiom-Gaber (Hesien-Geber.) The name of the first of these towns still subsists in its ruins, at the point of the gulf of the Red Sea, and in the route which the pilgrims take to Mecca. Hesien has at present no trace, any more than Quolzoum and Faran: it was, however, the harbor for the fleets of Solomon. The vessels of this prince conducted by the Tyrians, sailed along the coast of Arabia to Ophir, in the Persian Gulf, thus opening a communication with the merchants of India and Ceylon. That this navigation was entirely of Tyrian invention, appears both from the pilots and shipbuilders employed by the Jews, and the names that were given to the trading islands, viz. Tyrus and Aradus, now Barhain. The voyage was performed in two different modes, either in canoes of osier and rushes, covered on the outside with skins done over with pitch: (these vessels were unable to quit the Red Sea, or so much as to leave the shore.) The second mode of carrying on the trade was by means of vessels with decks of the size of our river boats, which were able to pass the strait and to weather the dangers of the ocean; but for this purpose it was necessary to bring the wood from Mount Libanus and Cilicia, where it is very fine and in great abundance. This wood was first conveyed in floats from Tarsus to Phoenicia, for which reason the vessels were called ships of Tarsus; from whence it has been ridiculously inferred, that they went round the promontory of Africa as far as Tortosa in Spain. From Phoenicia it was transported on the backs of camels to the Red Sea, which practice still continues, because the shores of this sea are absolutely unprovided with wood even for fuel. These vessels spent a complete year in their voyage, that is, sailed one year, sojourned another, and did not return till the third. This tediousness was owing first to their cruising from port to port, as they do at present; secondly, to their being detained by the Monsoon currents; and thirdly, because, according to the calculations of Pliny and Strabo, it was the ordinary practice among the ancients to spend three years in a voyage of twelve hundred leagues. Such a commerce must have been very expensive, particularly as they were obliged to carry with them their provisions, and even fresh water. For this reason Solomon made himself master of Palmyra, which was at that time inhabited, and was already the magazine and high road of

merchants by the way of the Euphrates. This conquest brought Solomon much nearer to the country of gold and pearls. This alternative of a route either by the Red Sea or by the river Euphrates was to the ancients, what in later times has been the alternative in a voyage to the Indies, either by crossing the isthmus of Suez or doubling the cape of Good Hope. It appears that till the time of Moses, this trade was carried on across the desert of Syria and Thebais; that afterwards it fell into the hands of the Phoenicians, who fixed its site upon the Red Sea; and that it was mutual jealousy that induced the kings of Nineveh and Babylon to undertake the destruction of Tyre and Jerusalem. I insist the more upon these facts, because I have never seen any thing reasonable upon the subject.

**** It appears that Babylon occupied on the eastern banks of the Euphrates a space of ground six leagues in length. Throughout this space bricks are found by means of which daily additions are made to the town of Helle. Upon many of these are characters written with a nail similar to those of Persepolis. I am indebted for these facts to M. de Beauchamp, grand vicar of Babylon, a traveller equally distinguished for his knowledge of astronomy and for his veracity.

CHAPTER V.

CONDITION OF MAN IN THE UNIVERSE.

The Genius, after some moments of silence, resumed in these words:

I have told thee already, O friend of truth! that man vainly ascribes his misfortunes to obscure and imaginary agents; in vain he seeks as the source of his evils mysterious and remote causes. In the general order of the universe his condition is, doubtless, subject to inconveniences, and his existence governed by superior powers; but those powers are neither the decrees of a blind fatality, nor the caprices of whimsical and fantastic beings. Like the world of which he forms a part, man is governed by natural laws, regular in their course, uniform in their effects, immutable in their essence; and those laws,--the common source of good and evil,--are not written among the distant stars, nor hidden in codes of mystery; inherent in the nature of terrestrial beings, interwoven with their existence, at all times and in all places, they are present to man; they act upon his senses, they warn his understanding, and give to every action its reward or punishment. Let man then know these laws! let him comprehend the nature of the elements which surround him, and also his own nature, and he will know the regulators of his destiny; he will know the causes of his evils and the remedies he should apply.

When the hidden power which animates the universe, formed the globe which man inhabits, he implanted in the beings composing it, essential properties which became the law of their individual motion, the bond of their reciprocal relations, the cause of the harmony of the whole; he thereby established a regular order of causes and effects, of principles and consequences, which, under an appearance of chance, governs the universe, and maintains the equilibrium of the world. Thus, he gave to fire, motion and activity; to air, elasticity; weight and density to matter; he made air lighter than water, metal heavier than earth, wood less cohesive than steel; he decreed flame to ascend, stones to fall, plants to vegetate; to man, who was to be exposed to the action of so many different beings, and still to preserve his frail life, he gave the faculty of sensation. By this faculty all action hurtful to his existence gives him a feeling of pain and evil, and all which is salutary, of pleasure and happiness. By these sensations, man, sometimes averted from that which wounds his senses, sometimes allured towards that which soothes them, has been obliged to cherish and preserve his own life; thus, self-love, the desire of happiness, aversion to pain, become the essential and primary laws imposed on man by nature herself--the laws which the directing power, whatever it be, has established for his government--and which laws, like those of motion in the physical world, are the simple and fruitful principle of whatever happens in the moral world.

Such, then, is the condition of man: on one side, exposed to the action of the elements which surround him, he is subject to many inevitable evils; and if, in this decree, nature has been severe, on the other hand, just and even indulgent she has not only tempered the evils with equivalent good, she has also enabled him to increase the good and alleviate the evil. She seems to say:

"Feeble work of my hands, I owe thee nothing, and I give thee life; the world wherein I placed thee was not made for thee, yet I give thee the use of it; thou wilt find in it a mixture of good and evil; it is for thee to distinguish them; for thee to guide thy footsteps in a path containing thorns as well as roses. Be the arbiter of thine own fate; I put thy destiny into thine own hands!"

Yes, man is made the architect of his own destiny; he, himself, hath been the cause of the successes or reverses of his own fortune; and if, on a review of all the pains with which he has tormented his own life, he finds reason to weep over his own weakness or imprudence yet, considering the beginnings from which he sat out, and the height attained, he has, perhaps, still reason to presume on his strength, and to pride himself on his genius.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PRIMITIVE STATE OF MAN.

Formed naked in body and in mind, man at first found himself thrown, as it were by chance, on a rough and savage land: an orphan, abandoned by the unknown power which had produced him, he saw not by his side beings descended from heaven to warn him of those wants which arise only from his senses, nor to instruct him in those duties which spring only from his wants. Like to other animals, without experience of the past, without foresight of the future, he wandered in the bosom of the forest, guided only and governed by the affections of his nature. By the pain of hunger, he was led to seek food and provide for his subsistence; by the inclemency of the air, he was urged to cover his body, and he made him clothes; by the attraction of a powerful pleasure, he approached a being like himself, and he perpetuated his kind.

Thus the impressions which he received from every object, awakening his faculties, developed by degrees his understanding, and began to instruct his profound ignorance: his wants excited industry, dangers formed his courage; he learned to distinguish useful from noxious plants, to combat the elements, to seize his prey, to defend his life; and thus he alleviated its miseries.

Thus self-love, aversion to pain, the desire of happiness, were the simple and powerful excitements which drew man from the savage and barbarous condition in which nature had placed him. And now, when his life is replete with enjoyments, when he may count each day by the comforts it brings, he may applaud himself and say:

"It is I who have produced the comforts which surround me; it is I who am the author of my own happiness; a safe dwelling, convenient clothing, abundant and wholesome nourishment, smiling fields, fertile hills, populous empires, all is my work; without me this earth, given up to disorder, would have been but a filthy fen, a wild wood, a dreary desert."

Yes, creative man, receive my homage! Thou hast measured the span of the heavens, calculated the volume of the stars, arrested the lightning in its clouds, subdued seas and storms, subjected all the elements. Ah! how are so many sublime energies allied to so many errors?

CHAPTER VII.

PRINCIPLES OF SOCIETY.

Wandering in the woods and on the banks of rivers in pursuit of game and fish, the first men, beset with dangers, assailed by enemies, tormented by hunger, by reptiles, by ravenous beasts, felt their own individual weakness; and, urged by a common need of safety, and a reciprocal sentiment of like evils, they united their resources and their strength; and when one incurred a danger, many aided and succored him; when one wanted subsistence, another shared his food with him. Thus men associated to secure their existence, to augment their powers, to protect their enjoyments; and self-love thus became the principle of society.

Instructed afterwards by the experience of various and repeated accidents, by the fatigues of a wandering life, by the distress of frequent scarcity, men reasoned with themselves and said:

"Why consume our days in seeking scattered fruits from a parsimonious soil? why exhaust ourselves in pursuing prey which eludes us in the woods or waters? why not collect under our hands the animals that nourish us? why not apply our cares in multiplying and preserving them? We will feed on their increase, be clothed in their skins, and live exempt from the fatigues of the day and solicitude for the morrow."

And men, aiding one another, seized the nimble goat, the timid sheep; they tamed the patient camel, the fierce bull, the impetuous horse; and, applauding their own industry, they sat down in the joy of their souls, and began to taste repose and comfort: and self-love, the principle of all reasoning, became the incitement to every art, and every enjoyment.

When, therefore, men could pass long days in leisure, and in communication of their thoughts, they began to contemplate the earth, the heavens, and their own existence as objects of curiosity and reflection; they remarked the course of the seasons, the action of the elements, the properties of fruits and plants; and applied their thoughts to the multiplication of their enjoyments. And in some countries, having observed that certain seeds contained a wholesome nourishment in a small volume, convenient for transportation and preservation, they imitated the process of nature; they confided to the earth rice, barley, and corn, which multiplied to the full measure of their hope; and having found the means of obtaining within a small compass and without removal, plentiful subsistence and durable stores, they established themselves in fixed habitations; they built houses, villages, and towns; formed societies and nations; and self-love produced all the developments of genius and of power.

Thus by the aid of his own faculties, man has raised himself to the astonishing height of his present fortune. Too happy if, observing scrupulously the law of his being, he had faithfully fulfilled its

only and true object! But, by a fatal imprudence, sometimes mistaking, sometimes transgressing its limits, he has launched forth into a labyrinth of errors and misfortunes; and self-love, sometimes unruly, sometimes blind, became a principle fruitful in calamities.

CHAPTER VIII.

SOURCES OF THE EVILS OF SOCIETY.

In truth, scarcely were the faculties of men developed, when, inveigled by objects which gratify the senses, they gave themselves up to unbridled desires. The sweet sensations which nature had attached to their real wants, to endear to them their existence, no longer satisfied them. Not content with the abundance offered by the earth or produced by industry, they wished to accumulate enjoyments and coveted those possessed by their fellow men. The strong man rose up against the feeble, to take from him the fruit of his labor; the feeble invoked another feeble one to repel the violence. Two strong ones then said:

"Why fatigue ourselves to produce enjoyments which we may find in the hands of the weak? Let us join and despoil them; they shall labor for us, and we will enjoy without labor."

And the strong associating for oppression and the weak for resistance, men mutually afflicted each other; and a general and fatal discord spread over the earth, in which the passions, assuming a thousand new forms, have generated a continued chain of misfortunes.

Thus the same self-love which, moderate and prudent, was a principle of happiness and perfection, becoming blind and disordered, was transformed into a corrupting poison; and cupidity, offspring and companion of ignorance, became the cause of all the evils that have desolated the earth.

Yes, ignorance and cupidity! these are the twin sources of all the torments of man! Biased by these into false ideas of happiness, he has mistaken or broken the laws of nature in his own relation with external objects; and injuring his own existence, has violated individual morality; shutting through these his heart to compassion, and his mind to justice, he has injured and afflicted his equal, and violated social morality. From ignorance and cupidity, man has armed against man, family against family, tribe against tribe; and the earth is become a theatre of blood, of discord, and of rapine. By ignorance and cupidity, a secret war, fermenting in the bosom of every state, has separated citizen from

citizen; and the same society has divided itself into oppressors and oppressed, into masters and slaves; by these, the heads of a nation, sometimes insolent and audacious, have forged its chains within its own bowels; and mercenary avarice has founded political despotism. Sometimes, hypocritical and cunning, they have called from heaven a lying power, and a sacrilegious yoke; and credulous cupidity has founded religious despotism. By these have been perverted the ideas of good and evil, just and unjust, vice and virtue; and nations have wandered in a labyrinth of errors and calamities.

The cupidity of man and his ignorance,--these are the evil genii which have wasted the earth! These are the decrees of fate which have overthrown empires! These are the celestial anathemas which have smitten these walls once so glorious, and converted the splendor of a populous city into a solitude of mourning and of ruins! But as in the bosom of man have sprung all the evils which have afflicted his life, there he also is to seek and to find their remedies.

CHAPTER IX.

ORIGIN OF GOVERNMENT AND LAWS.

In fact, it soon happened that men, fatigued with the evils they reciprocally inflicted, began to sigh for peace; and reflecting on their misfortunes and the causes of them, they said:

"We are mutually injuring each other by our passions; and, aiming to grasp every thing, we hold nothing. What one seizes to-day, another takes to-morrow, and our cupidity reacts upon ourselves. Let us establish judges, who shall arbitrate our rights, and settle our differences! When the strong shall rise against the weak, the judge shall restrain him, and dispose of our force to suppress violence; and the life and property of each shall be under the guarantee and protection of all; and all shall enjoy the good things of nature."

Conventions were thus formed in society, sometimes express, sometimes tacit, which became the rule for the action of individuals, the measure of their rights, the law of their reciprocal relations; and persons were appointed to superintend their observance, to whom the people confided the balance to weigh rights, and the sword to punish transgressions.

Thus was established among individuals a happy equilibrium of force and action, which constituted the common security. The name of equity and of justice was recognized and revered over the earth;

every one, assured of enjoying in peace, the fruits of his toil, pursued with energy the objects of his attention; and industry, excited and maintained by the reality or the hope of enjoyment, developed, all the riches of art and of nature. The fields were covered with harvests, the valleys with flocks, the hills with fruits, the sea with vessels, and man became happy and powerful on the earth. Thus did his own wisdom repair the disorder which his imprudence had occasioned; and that wisdom was only the effect of his own organization. He respected the enjoyments of others in order to secure his own; and cupidity found its corrective in the enlightened love of self.

Thus the love of self, the moving principle of every individual, becomes the necessary foundation of every association; and on the observance of that law of our nature has depended the fate of nations. Have the factitious and conventional laws tended to that object and accomplished that aim? Every one, urged by a powerful instinct, has displayed all the faculties of his being; and the sum of individual felicities has constituted the general felicity. Have these laws, on the contrary, restrained the effort of man toward his own happiness? His heart, deprived of its exciting principle, has languished in inactivity, and from the oppression of individuals has resulted the weakness of the state.

As self-love, impetuous and improvident, is ever urging man against his equal, and consequently tends to dissolve society, the art of legislation and the merit of administrators consists in attempering the conflict of individual cupidities, in maintaining an equilibrium of powers, and securing to every one his happiness, in order that, in the shock of society against society, all the members may have a common interest in the preservation and defence of the public welfare.

The internal splendor and prosperity of empires then, have had for their efficient cause the equity of their laws and government; and their respective external powers have been in proportion to the number of persons interested, and their degree of interest in the public welfare.

On the other hand, the multiplication of men, by complicating their relations, having rendered the precise limitation of their rights difficult, the perpetual play of the passions having produced incidents not foreseen--their conventions having been vicious, inadequate, or nugatory--in fine, the authors of the laws having sometimes mistaken, sometimes disguised their objects; and their ministers, instead of restraining the cupidity of others, having given themselves up to their own; all these causes have introduced disorder and trouble into societies; and the viciousness of laws and the injustice of governments, flowing from cupidity and ignorance, have become the causes of the misfortunes of nations, and the subversion of states.

