a thousand years has this question been debated. Ask the rich for an answer, they all prefer aristocracy; question the people, they want democracy: only kings prefer royalty. How then is it that nearly the whole world is governed by monarchs? Ask the rats who proposed to hang a bell round the cat's neck. But in truth, the real reason is, as has been said, that men are very rarely worthy of governing themselves.

It is sad that in order to be a good patriot one often has to be the enemy of the rest of mankind. Whenever old Cato, that excellent citizen, spoke before the Roman senate, he always used to say: "Such is my opinion, and Carthage must be destroyed." To be a good patriot is to wish that one's city may be enriched by trade, and be powerful by arms. It is clear that one country cannot gain without another's losing, and that one cannot conquer without bringing misery to another. Such then is the human state, that to wish greatness for one's country is to wish harm to one's neighbors. He who wished that his fatherland might never be greater, smaller, richer, or poorer, would be a citizen of the world.

FREE WILL

Ever since men have been able to reason, philosophers have obscured the question of free will; but the theologians have rendered it unintelligible by absurd subtleties about grace. Locke was perhaps the first man to find a thread in the labyrinth, for he was the first who, instead of arrogantly setting out from a general principle, examined human nature by analysis. For three thousand years people have disputed whether or not the will is free. In the *Essay on the Human Understanding*, Locke shows that the question is fundamentally

absurd, and that liberty can no more belong to the will than can color and movement.

What is the meaning of this phrase "to be free"? It means "to be able," or else it has no meaning. To say that the will "can" is as ridiculous at bottom as to say that the will is yellow or blue, round or square. Will is wish, and liberty is power. Let us examine step by step the chain of our inner processes without befuddling our minds with scholastic terms or antecedent principles.

It is proposed to you that you mount a horse. You must absolutely make a choice, for it is quite clear that you either will go or that you will not go. There is no middle way. You must wish yes or no. Up to this point it is clear that the will is not free. You wish to mount the horse. Why? An ignoramus will say: "Because I wish it." This answer is idiotic. Nothing happens or can happen without a reason, a cause; so there must be one for your wish. What is it? It is the agreeable idea of going on horseback, which presents itself in your brain as the dominant idea, the determinant idea. But, you will say, can I not resist an idea which dominates me? No, for what would be the cause of your resistance? None. Your will could "resist" only by obeying a still more despotic idea.

Now you receive all your ideas; therefore you receive your "wish," you "wish" by necessity. The word "liberty" does not therefore belong in any way to your will.

You ask me how thought and wish are formed in us. I answer you that I have not the remotest idea. I do not know how ideas are made any more than how the world was made. All we can do is to grope in darkness for the springs of our incomprehensible machine.

Will, therefore, is not a faculty that can be called free. A free will is an expression absolutely void of sense, and

what the scholastics have called "will of indifference," that is to say, willing without cause, is a chimera unworthy of being combated.

In what, then does liberty consist? In the power to do what one wills. I wish to leave my study, the door is open, I am free to leave it.

But, you say, suppose the door is closed, and I wish to stay where I am. Then I stay there freely. Let us be explicit. In this case you exercise the power that you have of staying; for you have this power, but not that of going out.

Liberty, then, about which so many volumes have been written is, when accurately defined, only the power of acting.

In what sense then must one utter the phrase: "Man is free"? In the same sense that one uses the words, "health," "strength," and "happiness." Man is not always strong, always healthy, nor always happy. A great passion, a great obstacle, may deprive him of his liberty, his power of action.

The words "liberty," and "free will," are therefore abstract words, general words, like beauty, goodness, justice. These terms do not signify that all men are always beautiful, good, and just; similarly, they are not always free.

Let us go further. If liberty is only the power of acting, what is this power? It is the effect of the constitution and the actual state of our organs. Leibnitz wishes to solve a geometrical problem, but he has an apoplectic fit, and in this condition he certainly is not free to solve his problem. Is a vigorous young man, madly in love, who holds his willing mistress in his arms, free to tame his passion? Undoubtedly not. He has the power of enjoying, and has not the power of refraining. Locke, then, is quite right when he calls liberty "power." When can

this young man refrain despite the violence of his passion? Only when a stronger, contradictory idea determines the activity of his body and his soul.

But does this mean that the other animals have the same liberty, the same power? Why not? They have senses, memory, feeling, perceptions, as we have. They act with spontaneity as we act. They must also have, as we have, the power of acting by virtue of their perceptions, by virtue of the play of their organs.

Someone cries: "If all this is true, all things are only machines, everything in the universe is subjected to eternal laws." Well, would you have everything subject to a million blind caprices? Either everything is a necessary consequence of the nature of things, or everything is the effect of the eternal order of an absolute master. In either case we are only cogs in the machine of the world.

It is a foolish commonplace to assert that without the pretended liberty of the will, all pains and rewards are useless. Reason, and you will come to a quite contrary conclusion.

If, when a brigand is executed, his accomplice who sees him expire has the liberty of not being frightened at the punishment; if his will is determined by itself, he will go from the foot of the scaffold to commit murder on the broad highway. But if his organs, stricken with horror, make him experience an unconquerable terror, he will abandon crime. His companion's punishment becomes useful to him, and an insurance for society, only so long as his will is not free.

Liberty, then, is only and can be only the power to do what one wills. This is what philosophy teaches us. But if one considers liberty in the theological sense, it is a matter so sublime that profane eyes dare not look so high.

ery possible that some
fanatics thought ... o present themselves to the Deity in the state in which He formed them, than in the disguise invented by man. It is possible that they showed all out of piety. There are so few well-made persons of both sexes, that nakedness might have inspired chastity, or rather disgust, instead of increasing desire.

It is said particularly that the Abelians renounced marriage. If there were any fine lads and pretty lasses among them, they were at least comparable to St. Adhelme and to blessed Robert d'Arbisselle, who slept with the most attractive girls, so that their continence might triumph the more.

But I admit that it must have been very entertaining to see a hundred Helens and Parises singing anthems, giving each other the kiss of peace, and making *agapae*.

All of which shows that there is no singularity, no extravagance, no superstition which has not passed through the heads of mankind. Happy the day when these superstitions cease to trouble society and make it a scene of disorder, hatred, and fury! It is better, no doubt, to pray God stark naked than to stain His altars and the public places with human blood.

NATURAL LAW

B: What is natural law?

A: The instinct which makes us feel justice.

B: What do you call just and unjust?

A: What appears so to the entire universe.

B: The universe is composed of many heads. It is said that Sparta applauded thefts for which Athenians were condemned to the mines.

A: Abuse of words, logomachy, equivocation; theft

could not be committed in Sparta, when everything was common property. What you call theft was the punishment for avarice.

B: It was forbidden to marry one's sister in Rome. It was allowed among the Egyptians, the Athenians and even among the Jews, to marry one's sister on the father's side. It is with regret that I cite that wretched little Jewish people, who should certainly not serve as a model for anyone, and who (putting religion aside) were never anything but a race of ignorant and fanatic brigands. But still, according to their books, the young Tamar, before being ravished by her brother Amnon, says to him: "Nay, my brother, do not thou this folly, but speak unto the king; for he will not withhold me from thee."

A: All that is conventional law, arbitrary customs, passing fashions; the essential remains always. Show me a country where it was honorable to rob me of the fruit of my toil, to break one's promise, to lie in order to hurt, to calumniate, to assassinate, to poison, to be ungrateful toward a benefactor, to beat one's father and one's mother when they offer you food.

B: Have you forgotten that Jean Jacques, one of the fathers of the modern Church, has said that "the first man who dared enclose and cultivate a piece of land" was the enemy "of the human race," that he should have been exterminated, and that "the fruits of the earth are for all, and the land belongs to none"? Have we not already examined together this lovely proposition which is so useful to society?

A: Who is this Jean Jacques? He is certainly not either John the Baptist, nor John the Evangelist, nor James the Greater, nor James the Less; it must be some Hunnish wit who wrote that abominable impertinence or some mischievous wag who wanted to laugh at what

the whole world regards most seriously. For instead of going to spoil the land of a wise and industrious neighbor, he had only to imitate him; and when every father of a family followed this example, it did not take long to establish a very pretty village. The author of this passage seems to me a very unsociable animal.

B: You think then that by outraging and robbing the good man who has surrounded his garden and chicken-run with a hedge, he has been wanting in respect toward the requirements of natural law?

A: Yes, yes. There is a natural law, and it does not consist either in doing harm to others or in rejoicing thereat.

B: I imagine that man likes and does harm only for his own advantage. But so many people are led to look for their own interest in the misfortune of others, vengeance is so violent a passion, there are such disastrous examples of it; ambition, still more fatal, has inundated the world with so much blood, that when I retrace for myself the horrible picture, I am tempted to avow that man is very diabolical. In vain do I carry the notion of justice and injustice in my heart. An Attila courted by St. Leo; a Phocas flattered by St. Gregory with the most cowardly baseness; an Alexander VI sullied with so many incests, so many murders, so many poisonings, with whom weak Louis XII (called "the good") makes the most infamous and intimate alliance; a Cromwell whose protection is sought by Cardinal Mazarin, and for whose sake the cardinal drives out of France the heirs of Charles I, Louis XIV's first cousins—a hundred examples of this sort upset my ideas completely and I no longer know where I am.

A: Well, do storms stop our enjoyment of today's beautiful sun? Did the earthquake which destroyed half the city of Lisbon stop your traveling very comfortably

to Madrid? If Attila was a brigand and Cardinal Mazarin a rogue, are there not princes and ministers who are honest people? Has it not been remarked that in the war of 1701, Louis XIV's council was composed of the most virtuous men? The Duc de Beauvilliers, the Marquis de Torci, the Maréchal de Villars, and last of all Chamillart, who was supposed to be incompetent, but never dishonest. Does not the idea of justice subsist always? It is upon justice that all laws are founded. The Greeks called laws "daughters of heaven," which means only daughters of nature. Have you no laws in your country?

B: Yes, some good, some bad.

A: Where, if not in the notion of natural law, did you obtain the idea that is natural to every man when his mind is well made? You must have obtained it there, or nowhere.

B: You are right, there is a natural law; but it is still more natural to many people to forget it.

A: It is natural also to be one-eyed, hump-backed, lame, deformed, unhealthy; but one prefers people who are well made and healthy.

B: Why are there so many one-eyed and deformed minds?

A: Pax! But turn to the article on "Power."

NATURE

(*Dialogue between the Philosopher and Nature.*)

THE PHILOSOPHER: Who are you, Nature? I live in you; for fifty years I have been seeking you, and I have not found you yet.

NATURE: The ancient Egyptians, who it is said lived some twelve hundred years, reproached me on the same grounds. They called me Isis; they put a great veil

on my head, and they said that nobody could lift it.

THE PHILOSOPHER: That is why I am appealing to you. I have been able to measure some of your globes, know their paths, assign the laws of motion; but I have not been able to learn who you are. Are you always active? Are you always passive? Did your elements arrange themselves, as water deposits itself on sand, oil on water, air on oil? Have you a mind which directs all your operations, as councils are inspired as soon as they are assembled, although their members are sometimes fools? Please tell me the answer to your riddle.

NATURE: I am the great everything. I know no more about it. I am not a mathematician; and everything in my world is arranged according to mathematical laws. Guess, if you can, how it is all done.

THE PHILOSOPHER: Certainly, since your great everything does not know mathematics, and since all your laws are most profoundly geometrical, there must be an eternal geometer who directs you, a supreme intelligence who presides over your operations.

NATURE: You are right. I am water, earth, fire, atmosphere, metal, mineral, stone, vegetable, and animal. I am quite sure that I possess an intelligence. You have an intelligence, but you do not see it. I do not see mine either. I feel this invisible power but I cannot know it. Why should you, who are but a small part of me, want to know what I do not know?

THE PHILOSOPHER: We are curious. I should like to know why you are so unsubtle in your mountains, your deserts, and your seas, when you exhibit such ingenuity in your animals and in your vegetables?

NATURE: My poor child, do you wish me to tell you the truth? The fact is that I have been given a name which does not suit me. They call me Nature, when I am all art.

THE PHILOSOPHER: That word upsets all my ideas. Do you mean to say that nature is only art?

NATURE: Yes, without doubt. Do you not realize that there is an infinity of art in those seas and those mountains that you find so unsubtly made? Do you not realize that all those waters gravitate toward the center of the earth, and rise only by immutable laws; that those mountains which crown the earth are the immense reservoirs of the eternal snows which unceasingly produce those fountains, lakes, and rivers without which my animal species and my vegetable species would perish? And as for what are called my animal kingdom, my vegetable kingdom, and my mineral kingdom, you see here only three; but you should realize that I have millions of kingdoms. If you consider only the creation of an insect, of an ear of corn, of gold, or of copper, everything will appear as a marvel of art.

THE PHILOSOPHER: It is true. The more I think about it, the more I see that you are only the art of some superlatively potent and ingenious mighty being, who hides himself while he makes you appear. All thinkers since Thales, and probably long before him, have played at blind man's buff with you. They have said: "I have you!" And they had nothing. We all resemble Ixion: he thought he was kissing Juno, and he was embracing only a cloud.

NATURE: Since I am all that there is, how can a being such as you, so small a part of myself, comprehend me? Be content, atoms who are my children, with understanding a few atoms that surround you, with drinking a few drops of my milk, with nourishing yourself briefly on my breast, and with dying without having known your mother or your nurse.

THE PHILOSOPHER: My dear mother, tell me something of why you exist, of why there is anything.

NATURE: I will answer you as, for so many centuries, I have answered all those who have asked me about first principles: I Know Nothing About Them.

THE PHILOSOPHER: Would not nothingness be better than this multitude of existences made only for continual dissolution, this host of animals born only to devour and to be devoured, this host of sentient beings created to endure so much pain, and that other crowd of rational beings by whom reason is so rarely heard? Tell me, Nature, what good is there in all that?

NATURE: Oh! go and ask Him who made me.

NEW NOVELTIES

It seems that the first words of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, *In nova fert animus*, are the motto of the human race. Nobody is moved by the wonderful spectacle of the sun which rises, or rather appears to rise, every day; everybody runs to see the tiniest meteor which flames for an instant in that accumulation of vapors, called the sky, which surrounds the earth.

An itinerant bookseller does not burden himself with a Virgil, with a Horace, but with a new book, even though it be detestable. He draws you aside and says to you: "Sir, do you want some books from Holland?"

From the beginning of time, women have complained that men have been unfaithful to them for the sake of novelty, for the sake of other women whose novelty was their only merit. Many ladies (it must be confessed, despite the infinite respect we have for them) have treated men as they complain they have themselves been treated; and the story of Gioconda is much older than Ariosto.

Perhaps this universal taste for novelty is one of nature's blessings. People cry to us: "Be content with what you have, desire nothing that is above your station, restrain your curiosity, curb your intellectual activity." These are excellent maxims, but if we had always followed them, we should still be eating acorns, we should still be sleeping in the open air, and we should not have had Corneille, Racine, Molière, Poussin, Lebrun, Lemoine, or Pigalle.

POWER, OMNIPOTENCE

I suppose that anyone who reads this article is convinced that this world has been created by an intelligence, and that a little knowledge of astronomy and anatomy is enough to make this universal and supreme intelligence admired. But can he know by himself that this intelligence is omnipotent, that is to say, infinitely powerful? Has he the least notion of the infinite, or the ability to understand what is an infinite power?

The celebrated historian philosopher, David Hume, says: "A weight of ten ounces is lifted in a balance by another weight; therefore this other weight is of more than ten ounces; but one can adduce no reason why it should weigh a hundred ounces."

One can argue likewise: You recognize a supreme intelligence strong enough to create you, to preserve you for a limited time, to reward you, to punish you. Do you know enough of this intelligence to demonstrate that it can do still more?

How can you prove by your reason that this being can do more than he has done?

The life of all animals is short. Could he make it longer?

All animals are the prey of one another; everything is born to be devoured. Could he create without destroying?

"She soon became a monarchy, then," said the Brahmin.

"You have guessed right," said the other. "But this monarchy fell, and we busy ourselves composing fine dissertations in order to explain the cause of its decadence and downfall."

"You take needless trouble," said the Indian. "This empire fell because it existed. Everything has to fall. I hope as much will happen to the Grand Mogul's empire."

"By the way," said the European, "do you think that there is more honor in a despotic state, and more virtue in a republic?"

The Indian, having had explained to him what we mean by honor, answered that honor was more necessary in a republic, and that virtue was more needed in a monarchy. "For," said he, "a man who is elected by the people, will not be elected if he is dishonored; whereas at court he could easily obtain a place, in accordance with a great prince's maxim, that in order to succeed a courtier should have neither honor nor character. As regards virtue, one must be prodigiously virtuous to dare to speak the truth. The virtuous man is much more at his ease in a republic, he does not have to flatter anyone."

"Do you think," said the European, "that laws and religions are made for climates, just as one has to have furs in Moscow, and thin stuffs in Delhi?"

"Without a doubt," answered the Brahmin. "All the laws which concern material things are calculated for the meridian one lives in. A German needs only one wife, and a Persian three or four.

"The rites of religion are of the same nature. Now, if I were Christian, should I say mass in my province where there is neither bread nor wine? As regards dogmas, that is another matter; the climate has nothing to do with them. Did not your religion begin in Asia, whence it was driven out? Does it not exist near the Baltic Sea, where it was unknown?"

"In what state, under what rule, would you like best to live?" asked the councilor.

"Anywhere but where I do live," answered his companion. "And I have met many Siamese, Tonkinese, Persians, and Turks who said the same thing."

"But," persisted the European, "what state would you choose?"

The Brahmin answered, "The state where only the laws are obeyed."

"That is an old answer," said the councilor.

"It is none the worse for that," said the Brahmin.

"Where is that country?" asked the councilor.

"We must look for it," answered the Brahmin.

SUPERSTITION

The superstitious man is to the rogue what the slave is to the tyrant. Further, the superstitious man is governed by the fanatic and becomes a fanatic. Superstition born in paganism, and adopted by Judaism, invested the Christian Church from the earliest times. All the fathers of the Church, without exception, believed in the power of magic. The Church always condemned magic, but she always believed in it: she did not excommunicate sorcerers as madmen who were mistaken, but as men who were really in communication with the devil.

Today one half of Europe thinks that the other half has long been and still is superstitious. The Protestants regard the relics, the indulgences, the mortifications, the prayers for the dead, the holy water, and almost all

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the rites of the Roman Church, as evidences of superstitious dementia. Superstition, according to them, consists in taking useless practices for necessary practices. Among the Roman Catholics there are some more enlightened than their ancestors, who have renounced many of these usages formerly considered sacred; and they defend themselves against the others who have retained them, by saying: "They are unimportant, and what is merely unimportant cannot be an evil."

It is difficult to set the limits of superstition. A Frenchman traveling in Italy finds almost everything superstitious, and he is right. The Archbishop of Canterbury maintains that the Archbishop of Paris is superstitious; the Presbyterians direct the same reproach against His Grace of Canterbury, and are in their turn treated as superstitious by the Quakers, who are the most superstitious of all in the eyes of other Christians.

In Christian societies, therefore, no one agrees as to what superstition is. The sect which seems to be the least attacked by this malady of the intelligence is that which has the fewest rites. But if, with few ceremonies, it is still strongly attached to an absurd belief, this absurd belief is equivalent alone to all the superstitious practices observed from the time of Simon the magician to that of Father Gauffridi.

It is therefore clear that it is the fundamentals of the religion of one sect which are considered as superstition by another sect.

The Moslems accuse all Christian societies of it, and are themselves accused. Who will judge this great matter? Will it be reason? But each sect claims to have reason on its side. It will therefore be force which will judge, while awaiting the time when reason can penetrate a sufficient number of heads to disarm force.

Up to what point can statecraft permit superstition

to be destroyed? This is a very thorny question. It is like asking to what depth should one make an incision in a dropsical person, who may die under the operation. It is a matter for the doctor's discretion.

Can there exist a people free from all superstitious prejudices? This is equivalent to asking: Can there exist a nation of philosophers? It is said that there is no superstition in the magistracy of China. It is probable that some day none will remain in the magistracy of a few towns of Europe.

Then the magistrates will stop the superstition of the people from being dangerous. These magistrates' example will not enlighten the mob, but the leading citizens of the middle class will hold the mob in check. There is perhaps not a single riot, a single religious outrage in which the middle classes were not once involved; because these same middle classes were then the mob. But reason and time will have changed them. Their softened manners will soften those of the lowest and most savage populace. We have had striking examples of this in more than one country. In a word, less superstition, less fanaticism; and less fanaticism, less misery.

THEIST

The theist is a man firmly persuaded of the existence of a Supreme Being, as good as He is powerful, who has created all beings that are extensive, vegetative, sentient, and reflective; who perpetuates their species, who punishes crimes without cruelty, and rewards virtuous actions with kindness.

The theist does not know how God punishes, how he protects, how he pardons, for he is not bold enough to flatter himself that he knows how God acts, but he knows that God acts and that He is just. Arguments

against Providence do not shake him in his faith, because they are merely great arguments, and not proofs. He submits to this Providence, although he perceives only a few effects and a few signs of this Providence: and—judging of the things he does not see by the things he does see—he considers that this Providence extends to all time and space.

United by this principle with the rest of the universe, he does not embrace any of the sects, all of which contradict one another. His religion is the most ancient and the most widespread, for the simple worship of a God has preceded all the systems of the world. He speaks a language that all peoples understand, while they do not understand one another. He has brothers from Pekin to Cayenne, and he counts all wise men as his brethren. He believes that religion does not consist either in the opinions of an unintelligible metaphysic, or in vain display, but in worship and justice. The doing of good, there is his service; being submissive to God, there is his doctrine. The Mohammedan cries to him: "Have a care if you do not make the pilgrimage to Mecca!" "Woe unto you," says a Recollet, "if you do not make a journey to Our Lady of Loretto!" He laughs at Loretto and at Mecca; but he succors the needy and he defends the oppressed.

TESTICLES

I. This word is scientific, and a trifle obscene: it signifies *little witnesses*. Sixtus V, a Cordelier become pope, declared, by his letter of June 25, 1587, to his nuncio in Spain, that he must unmarry all those who were not possessed of testicles. It seems by this order, which was executed by Philip II, that there were many husbands in Spain deprived of these two organs. But

how could a man, who had been a Cordelier, be ignorant of the fact that the testicles of men are often hidden in the abdomen, and that in that situation they are even more fit for conjugal action? We have beheld in France three brothers of the highest rank, one of whom possessed three, the other only one, while the third possessed no appearance of any, and yet was the most vigorous of the three.

The angelic doctor, who was simply a Jacobin, decides that two testicles are *de essentia matrimonii* (of the essence of marriage); in which opinion he is followed by Ricardus, Scotus, Durandus, and Sylvius. If you are not able to obtain a sight of the pleadings of the advocate Sebastian Rouillard, in 1600, in favor of the testicles of his client, concealed in his abdomen, at least consult the dictionary of Bayle, at the article "Quellenec." You will there discover that the wicked wife of the client of Sebastian Rouillard wished to render her marriage void, on the plea that her husband could not exhibit testicles. The defendant replied, that he had perfectly fulfilled his matrimonial duties. He specified intromission and ejaculation, and offered a repeat performance in the presence of witnesses. The jade replied that this trial was too offensive to her modesty, and was, moreover, superfluous, since the defendant was visibly deprived of testicles, and the gentlemen of the assembly were fully aware that testicles are essential to ejaculation.

I am unacquainted with the result of this process, but I suspect that her husband was non-suited and lost his cause. What induces me to think so is that the same Parliament of Paris, on January 8, 1665, issued a decree, asserting the necessity of two visible testicles, without which marriage was not to be contracted. Had there been any member in the assembly in the situation de-