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S K E T C H E S

CHIEFLY RELATING TO THE
HISTORY, RELIGION, LEARNING,
AND MANNERS,
OF THE
H I N D O O S.

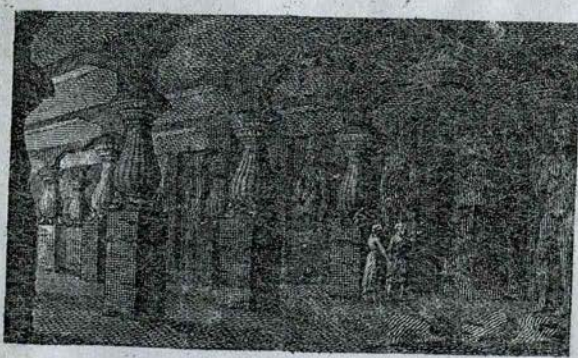
WITH
A concise Account of the PRESENT STATE of the
NATIVE POWERS of HINDOSTAN.

THE SECOND EDITION, ENLARGED.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

Q. Crawford.



Sketches relating to the History, Religion, Learning and Manners
the Hindoos. Vol. 1.

L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL, IN THE STRAND.

MDCCXCH.

(1)



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RARE

SKETCHES

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INDIA

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A Concise Account of the History of the
Native People of India

THE SECOND EDITION
IN TWO VOLUMES
VOLUME I

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INDIA

PRINTED FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

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IT is not my intention in the following sheets, to add to the number of authors who have devoted their labours to the history of the conquerors of Hindostan ; but to draw the attention of the Public, for a moment, from the exploits of Mahomedans and Europeans, and direct it to the original inhabitants of that country. If this attempt should lead to further inquiry upon so interesting a subject, or be productive of any pleasure or information to the Reader, I shall think my pains well bestowed, as my wishes will be accomplished.

THE AUTHOR.

N. B. *In reading the names of persons and places, the vowels are understood to be pronounced as in Italian.*



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 *The Vignette in the Title-page is a View
in the subterraneous Temple in the Island
of Elephanta.*



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RARE

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OF THE
FIRST VOLUME.

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S K E T C H



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TO THIS

SECOND EDITION.

SINCE the First Edition of this Work was published, I have read in the Second Volume of the Transactions of the Royal Society at Edinburgh, *Remarks on the Astronomy of the Brabmans*, by Mr. Playfair; and in the First Volume of the Asiatic Researches, *Remarks on the Gods of Greece, Italy, and India*, by Sir William Jones. I regret that I had not seen these works in time to have made that use of them in the First Edition, which I have taken the liberty of doing in this.

From the materials furnished by Monsieur le Gentil and Monsieur Bailly, Mr. Playfair has even gone beyond those authors, in establishing, by scientific proof, the originality



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ginality of the Hindoo astronomy, and its superior antiquity to any other that is known ; while Sir William Jones has made great progress to shew, that the mythology of the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, derived its origin from the fertile imaginations of the Hindoos.

The Edition I now offer to the Public was already prepared for the press, and given into the hands of a friend to read, when I was informed, that an Historical Disquisition concerning India, by Dr. Robertson, would soon be published. The name of a man so eminent in the literary world, naturally made me anxious to see this work, and easily induced me to suspend the publication of my own. It is needless to say how much I was flattered by the notice Dr. Robertson has taken of the *SKETCHES CONCERNING HINDOSTAN*. But, after due consideration, I thought it best to suffer this Edition to go to the press *exactly* such



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such as it was previous to my perusal of the Disquisition of the elegant Historian, and to reserve to myself the liberty of making such remarks upon it in the Notes, as might appear necessary.

An apology is certainly due from me to the Purchasers of the First Edition, for not having the new matter, that is introduced into the Second, printed separately, for their accommodation : and I cannot help expressing my regret that this was rendered impossible, by the necessity of intermixing the greatest part of it with what was already published.

The most considerable Additions have been made in the First Sketch, on the History and Religion of Mankind ; in the Seventh, on the Mythology ; and in the Eleventh, on the Astronomy of the Brahmans. The Thirteenth and Fourteenth Sketches are entirely new. For the account of the Manners



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ners and Religion of Thibet, which appears in the Thirteenth Sketch, I am indebted to the kindness of Robert Bogle Esquire, who, in the politest manner, permitted me to make what use I pleased of the interesting manuscripts of his brother, the late Mr. James Bogle. I thought it, however, my duty to restrain my inclination to communicate the whole to the Public, and have inserted only such extracts as tended to elucidate the immediate object of my enquiry.

Q. CRAUFURD.

LONDON,
June 12, 1791.



S K E T C H I.

*General Reflections on the History and
Religion of Mankind.*

THERE is perhaps no subject which has given rise to more speculative inquiry, than the formation of the earth, and the origin of the human race: still the most ingenious systems are, in reality, but *philosophical romances*; they have never risen above probable conjecture, unsubstantiated by proof. In few instances we can trace the period when even those nations were formed, who, in their progress or their

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decline,



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decline, have filled an important place in history ; while the origin of the greatest part of the inhabitants of the earth is entirely hid in obscurity. Inquiry has in vain attempted to ascertain from whence the innumerable tribes and powerful nations came, that were found established in the western hemisphere ; to find out who gave inhabitants to the many detached islands discovered in ancient and modern times ; and to account for the difference of features, of complexion, and of hair, existing between the European, the Hindoo, the Caffer, and the American.

We are told that Manco Capac civilized a tribe of wild Peruvians, which afterwards became a numerous and happy nation ; that this nation was subdued, its princes and nobles destroyed, its people massacred, with the ferocity of beasts of prey, by men who professed a religion, the chief characteristic



GENERAL REFLECTIONS. 3

teristic of whose doctrines is meekness and humanity *.

Perhaps the origin of all nations, though their subsequent history may be different, is similar to that of the Peruvians. A number of persons, by accident or compact, associate and form a tribe; others unite with it, or are compelled to submit to its increasing power: but how the individuals came into the country, is generally a problem which cannot be solved; and though philosophy may attempt to explain, and in the fruitfulness of imagination may find connexions and resemblances, after the most laborious research, we must stop, and rest satisfied with this truth, That the Supreme Being, who created the universe, peopled *our* planet in a manner conformable to his

* The enormities which were then committed, cannot be attributed to the character of the nation, but to the reigning fanaticism of the time, and the avarice of particular leaders.



4 GENERAL REFLECTIONS.

wisdom, though hid from its short-sighted inhabitants.

In endeavouring to trace the rise and progress of religion and laws, of arts and sciences, we are likewise frequently stopped in our inquiries, or led into error, by the gloom that in general hides their first origin. We may sometimes imagine that we have discovered analogies, and may argue in consequence of them, when perhaps no other analogy exists, than that which arises, from those innate faculties and principles which nature has implanted in the mind of man, and are common to every people and climate.

There is no nation, I believe, however barbarous it may be*, nor any individual, whatever for the sake of false celebrity he may

* Though some writers have mentioned nations so barbarous, as to have no idea of a Supreme Being, or of a future existence, yet I am inclined to believe that
this



GENERAL REFLECTIONS. 5

may pretend, who has not a sense, inseparable from his existence, of a supreme ruling power; and this internal evidence of the dependence of the human race upon a superior Being, is a natural and sufficient basis to support a system of religious worship.

this opinion has arisen from a want of sufficient acquaintance with the nations they speak of; as I have myself known many instances, in which an opinion, hastily received, has, upon nearer connexion, been found to be erroneous. An eminent Author, Dr. Robertson, has said, that tribes have been discovered in America who have no idea of a Supreme Being, and no rites of religious worship; but he has afterwards also said, that "the idea of the immortality of the soul can be traced from one extremity of America to the other, and that the most uncivilized of its savage tribes do not apprehend death to be the extinction of being." Garcilasso de la Vega, who was born at Cuzco shortly after its conquest, who was of the family of the Incas, but brought up a Christian, says, that the Peruvians believed in the existence of a Supreme Being, and in a state of rewards and punishments. The same is asserted by many authors with respect to the Mexicans.



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The necessity of established rules for the government of every society or class of people, is so evident, that the rudest tribes must have soon perceived, that they neither could enjoy internal peace and safety without them, nor be in a state to defend themselves against attacks from abroad: and hence the origin of laws and government.

When tribes or societies are formed, and their immediate wants supplied, as men live and communicate with each other, the mode of providing for them is improved; less urgent and nicer wants succeed; thought is exerted; the faculties of the mind unfold, by being employed; talents are awakened, by being called for and encouraged; and nations, from their real and imaginary wants, and exertions to supply them, gradually go on to luxury and to refinement. When the inventions that took their rise from necessity and convenience,



GENERAL REFLECTIONS. 7

nience, have been carried so far, as to leave genius at leisure to gratify itself with subjects of curiosity and amusement, it takes a more exalted course; the liberal arts follow, and proceed on towards perfection; until some of those revolutions to which nations are subject, arrest their progress, and again bury them in oblivion. Such was their fate in Egypt, in Greece, and in Italy.

All the religions we are acquainted with, lay claim to a divine origin: all that are found established in civilized nations, ordain the adoration of God, and, with little other variation, than such as may depend on climate or local circumstances, inculcate such duties of morality, as tend to preserve order in society, and procure happiness to the individual. It might be expected, that an institution in its nature so sacred, and so evidently necessary to the peace and welfare of mankind, would be less liable than any

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other



8 GENERAL REFLECTIONS.

other to perversion or abuse : but though nothing can more strongly evince the dominion of our passions over our reason, we every where find that religion has, more or less, been made subservient to their gratification, and employed to impose on the credulous multitude. If we see the Brahman in Hindostan using the superstition he has created, to procure to himself and his order certain distinctions and privileges, we have seen the Christian priest doing the same : and, however melancholy the reflection may be, the decline of respect for that religion, which in itself is so pure, may principally be ascribed to the pride and misconduct of its ministers.

The professors of the Christian, the Mahomedan, and the Hindoo religion *, form
by

* There are many reasons which lead us to suppose, that the inhabitants of Pegu, Siam, Thibet, and even
China



GENERAL REFLECTIONS. 9

by far the greatest portion of the inhabitants of the globe. In comparison with the number of the followers of any of these, every other religious denomination, as far as has been hitherto ascertained, may be looked upon as inconsiderable. History has recorded the origin, and marked the progress, of the two former; but the rise of the latter, and the changes it may have undergone, are placed at a period so remote, and we are yet so defective in materials, that it is impossible to follow its steps with the same precision, that may be expected in treating of the others.

The effects of the doctrines of the Khoran are too well known to require a parti-

China and Japan, derived their religion from the same source with the Hindoos. The analogy between the worship of the people of Pegu and Siam, and that of the Hindoos, is so palpably evident, as not to leave any doubt of their common origin. See SKETCH XIII, &c.

cular



10 GENERAL REFLECTIONS.

cular discussion. They were delivered to an unenlightened people, by a daring and artful man, who profanely affected to have an intercourse with the Deity, and to be particularly selected by him to convey his will to mankind. He supported this fabulous revelation with pretended visions and miracles, which, though despised by us for their grossness and absurdity, operated with great effect on the more ignorant Arabians. He commanded belief, punished disobedience, and every faithful Mussulman thought it a pious duty to subdue those by the sword, who refused to embrace his religion. The leaders of the early Mahomedans, being active and intrepid warriors, at the head of a hardy race of men, whom they had inspired with fanatic courage, like a torrent bore down all who attempted to oppose them, and in an astonishingly short space of time carried their dominion and their faith into every quarter of the then known world.

Science,



GENERAL REFLECTIONS. II

Science, as far as the Mahomedan religion spread, felt its baneful influence; and still wherever we find the banner of the crescent raised, we see it followed by an enslaved, ignorant, and bigotted race of men, whose history, excepting where it is faintly enlightened by a few Arabian writers, creeps through one continued gloom of cherished barbarism.

At a time when the Roman empire was at the summit of its power, when learning and the arts were admired and encouraged, and the worship of the gods in its utmost splendor, the Christian religion was ushered into the world in a remote and inconsiderable province, under the mildest and most humble aspect.

Those who were chosen to promulgate it to mankind, were taken from the lowest classes of a people, who had scarcely excited the attention of their more polished conquerors, by any thing but their turbulence
and



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and obstinacy. The Apostles, now so justly held in high veneration by us, then unknown and undistinguished, except within the humble sphere of their Christian converts, were, with their opinions, little noticed, and are but barely mentioned by the writers of those times *. At first, they seem

* It appears, that the Christians, till the reign of Trajan, had been so little noticed, that no law had been established for their trial or punishment. When Pliny was governor of Pontus, he applied to his friend and master for instructions how to proceed against them. The letter is curious, and the answer contains sentiments of justice that do honour to the great man who wrote it. They are the 97th and 98th in the collection of Pliny's correspondence.

Tacitus mentions the Christians as having been accused of setting fire to Rome in the reign of Nero. He says, "Ergo abolendo rumori Nero subdidit reos, et quæsitissimis pœnis affecit, quos per flagitia invidiosos, vulgus Christianos appellabat."—And, after having recounted the excruciating tortures by which many of that religion were put to death, he proceeds,—"Ergo quamquam adversus fontes, et novissima exempla meritos, miseratio oriebatur, tanquam non utilitate publica, sed in sævitiam unius absumerentur." See Tacit. Ann. Lib. XV.

to



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to have been imprisoned and punished by the magistrates, as men who, according to the then prevailing notions, were blasphemers of the gods. Equally exposed to the aversion of their countrymen and their conquerors, no teachers of any new religion ever began their mission with less apparent probability of success. But, by their confidence in him they worshipped, and their unremitting perseverance, they gradually gained admittance among all ranks of men, from the cottage to the palace. Then, enemies to pride and violence, with the language of persuasion, they taught duties that were agreeable to the soundest principles of morality; they recommended obedience, rather than opposition, to the established government; and by these mild means, their doctrines, in little more than three hundred years after the death of Christ, had made so great a progress, that they were embraced by the Roman Emperor himself. The system of heathen mythology,



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mythology, adorned with all the elegance in its rites that a refined and luxurious people could invent, and which had so much contributed to the perfection of the arts, fell before the gentle but prevailing force of Christianity; and the eagle of Jove, under which the victorious legions had been led, through a series of ages, to unparalleled renown, was changed for the Cross, the symbol of the faith which their sovereign had adopted.

But besides the internal purity of the new doctrine, a variety of combined circumstances contributed to its rapid advancement; and I hope it will not be thought out of place cursorily to notice them.

Mr. Gibbon, in his *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, in following the course of human reasoning, and arguing from apparent causes, has observed, that the writings of Pagan sceptics had prepared



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prepared the way, and the doctrine of the immortality of the soul principally contributed, to the success of the Christian religion.

An examination of the writings of the ancients on the subject of their theology, will shew that polytheism was almost universally considered, by men of learning, as a fable fabricated to amuse the superstitious multitude, and calculated to maintain the influence and authority of the priesthood. We find that many of the most celebrated philosophers, both before, during, and after the Augustan age, made it the subject of their animadversion: and as Mr. Gibbon very justly remarks, the opinions and examples of men eminent for their rank and learning, must have considerably influenced the opinions of the people. Few men either take the pains, or are possessed of sufficient knowledge, fairly to examine the religion in which they were born; they



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in general follow it, and believe it preferable to any other, from habit and education. But when it was known, that those who held the highest ranks in the state, and who, in consequence thereof, even officiated in the priesthood, in their hearts despised those ceremonies which they performed with apparent solemnity; and made devotion, and the devout, the objects of their wit and ridicule; others, from vanity, or deference to their judgment, imitated their example; respect for religion was gradually undermined; and the prejudice of education being removed, the mind, left without any fixed system, lay open to receive new opinions, and to embrace new doctrines.

In tracing the progress of a more rational and pure idea of the Supreme Ruler of the universe, than was entertained from the earliest times by the *many*, we shall find, that the EAST shed the first light under whose influence the variety of systems that afterwards



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GENERAL REFLECTIONS. 17

afterwards prevailed, grew up. Pherecides seems to have been the first who introduced into Greece a regular notion of a state of rewards and punishments, in the doctrine of the metempsychosis, which, many ages previous to his time, prevailed, not only in Egypt, but among several more Eastern nations.

Pythagoras*, the disciple of Pherecides, travelled into Egypt and Chaldea, and, on his return from Babylon, extended and improved the doctrines of his predecessor. It is a doubt among ancient writers, whe-

* Diogenes Laertius, Porphyry, and Jamblichus, who have written his life, speak only of his travels in Chaldea, Egypt, Greece, and Italy; but from the testimony of other authors it appears more than probable, that he extended his travels to India, and that his philosophical opinions, and especially his doctrine of the transmigration of souls, were derived from the instructions of the Brachmanes. See Eusebii Prep. Evang. cap. 10. 4. Alex. Polyhist. Apul. S. Clem. of Alexandria.



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ther he left any works behind him, or not; but by what may be collected from the writings of his disciples, it appears that he taught the existence of a Supreme Being, by whom the universe was created, and by whose providence it is preserved: that the souls of mankind are emanations of that Being*: that, on their separation from the body, they go to places destined for their reception; the souls of the virtuous, after having been purified from every propensity to the things of this world, being re-admitted into the divine source from whence they flowed; and the souls of the wicked sent back to animate other bodies of men or beasts, according to the degree and nature of their vices, until, in a course perhaps of many transmigrations, they have expiated their crimes. Abstinence from animal food was a natural consequence of these doctrines; but the Pythagoreans re-

* See Hindoo Philosophy, SKETCH X.

frained



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frained likewise from every sort of intoxicating liquor, and from eating beans, for which they seem to have entertained a superstitious respect, though we are unacquainted with the cause. Besides theology, Pythagoras is said to have instructed his scholars in arithmetic, mathematics, natural history, and music. His school formed a kind of community, into which he admitted the women and children of his followers. He exacted from his disciples a voluntary poverty; or rather that they should divest themselves of property individually, and live upon one common stock. He imposed secrecy; and, in order to teach them patience and perseverance, they were prohibited from speaking for a greater or less space of time, as he thought they stood in need of trial and exertion*. They were divided into two classes.

* Some of the ancients, in speaking of the education given to the children of the Brachmanes, say, that while



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classes. Those who had made a certain progress, were admitted about his person, and with them he used plain and natural language; but to the rest, who were separated from him by a curtain, he spoke in metaphors and symbols. His doctrines made a considerable progress in Greece and Italy, and probably gave birth to many of the more rational systems of philosophy that succeeded them.

SOCRATES, who was perhaps the wisest of all the ancient philosophers, confined his doctrines chiefly to maxims of morality. He endeavoured to bring men back from the wild and speculative notions which

the masters were teaching, the scholars listened with silent attention; that they were not only forbidden to speak, but even to cough or spit; that all the scholars eat in common; that their meals were preceded by bathings and purifications; and that before the first meal they were obliged to render an account how the morning had been employed. Vide Strabo, 15. Apul. Floridor. 1.

charac-



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GENERAL REFLECTIONS. 21

characterised the learning of his countrymen at that time, and to confine the studies of his disciples to their own breasts, in which benevolence and virtue could not fail of producing happiness.

His opinions, as handed down to us by those who constantly attended him, declare his belief in the unity of God, and in the immortality of the soul. He taught, that though God has not revealed to us, in what manner he exists, his power, his wisdom, and never-ceasing providence, are exhibited in all we see: that the order and harmony which reign throughout the universe announce a Supreme Being, by which every thing is conducted and preserved: that the religion of every country ordains his worship, let it be in ever so varied a manner; and that it is the duty of all to respect their national religion, except in such points as may be contrary to the laws of nature, or may divert the attention

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from



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from God to other objects. He seems to have believed that the soul existed before the body *; and that death relieves it from those seeming contrarieties to which it is subject, by its union with our material part. He taught, that the souls of the virtuous return to their former state of happiness, while those of the wicked are doomed to punishments proportionate to their crimes; that happiness, both in this and in a future state of existence, depends on the practice of virtue, and that the basis of virtue is justice. He comprised his idea of virtue in this maxim: "Adore God, "honor your parents, and do good to "all men. Such is the law of nature and "reason." In society, he thought that every private consideration ought to yield

* This idea seems evidently to have been borrowed from Pythagoras, who supposed the souls of men to have pre-existed in the divine soul, into which they at last return.



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GENERAL REFLECTIONS. 23

to what could promote the good and safety of the community to which we belong; and notwithstanding the mildness of his disposition, his love of tranquillity, and general good-will to mankind, he entered into the bustle of arms, and served during three years in the Lacedæmonian war, with distinguished reputation. Although he thought it not only weakness, but even impiety, to be afraid of death, he condemned suicide, as a proof of cowardice rather than of courage, and as a desertion of the post assigned to us by Providence. He strongly recommended perseverance, sedateness, and modesty; and of the last of these virtues he was himself a distinguished example, often declaring, that the utmost extent of his researches had only taught him, "that he knew nothing." He opposed the corruption of the magistrates, and the superstition and hypocrisy of the priesthood: and at last fell a victim to their machinations, for practising virtues which

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have



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have rendered his name sacred to posterity.

PLATO, a disciple of Socrates, travelled into Egypt and Italy *, and upon his return established his school at the Academy. Like Socrates, he believed in the unity of the Supreme Being, without beginning or end; but asserted, at the same time, the eternity of matter. He taught, that the elements being mixed together in chaos, were, by the will of God, separated, and reduced into order, and that thus the world was formed: that God infused into matter a portion of his divine spirit †, which animates and moves it; and that he committed the care of this world, and the creation of

* It appears that Plato once intended to visit India.
—*Ad Indos et Magos intendisset animum, nisi eum bella tunc vetuissent Asiatica.* Apul. de dogm. Plat.

† This is conformable to the opinions of the learned Hindoos. See SKETCH X.

mankind,



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GENERAL REFLECTIONS. 25

mankind, to beings who are constantly subject to his will. That mankind have two souls, of separate and different natures, the one corruptible, the other immortal : That the latter is a portion of the divine spirit, resides in the brain, and is the source of reason : that the former, the mortal soul, is divided into two parts, one of which, residing in the heart, produces passions and desires ; the other, between the diaphragm and navel, governs the animal functions : That the mortal soul ceases to exist with the life of the body, but that the divine soul, no longer clogged by its union with matter, continues its existence, either in a state of happiness or punishment : That the souls of the virtuous—of those whose actions are guided by their reason—return after death into the source from whence they flowed*, while the souls of those who submitted to

* In this he likewise agrees with the doctrines of the Hindoos.

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the government of the passions, after being for a certain time confined to a place destined for their reception, are sent back to earth, to animate other bodies.

The above idea of a future state appears to be the most prevalent in the works of this philosopher, and to form what may be called his *system*: But at the same time it must be confessed, that he broaches so many notions of a different or contrary nature, that we are frequently left at large in regard to his real sentiments. A passion for brilliant and novel doctrines, and too great a desire to acquire fame, even at the expence of truth, seem to have been the cause of this evident inconsistency in so great and wise a man*.

ARISTOTLE,

* The learned Monsieur Freret in speaking of Plato observes :

Il dit si souvent, et à si peu de distance, le pour et le contre lorsqu'il parle de l'état de l'ame après cette vie, que

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GENERAL REFLECTIONS. 27

ARISTOTLE, who studied at the Academy, has been perhaps unjustly accused of ingratitude to Plato. He undoubtedly used the privilege of every philosopher, in advancing his own opinions, and differing from those of others, but yet he always admired the talents, and did justice to the merits of Plato. He even pronounced an oration in his praise, and erected an altar to his memory.

que ceux qui regardent les sentimens de ce philosophe avec respect, ne peuvent s'empêcher d'être choqués et scandalisés. Tantôt il est de l'opinion de la metempsychose, tantôt de celle des enfers, et tantôt de toutes les deux il en compose une troisième. Ailleurs il avoit imaginé une manière de faire revivre les hommes, qui n'a nul rapport avec aucun autre de ses systèmes. Dans un endroit il condamne les scélérats à rester dans le Tartare pendant toute l'éternité, dans un autre il les en tire au bout de mille ans, pour les faire passer dans d'autres corps. En un mot, tout est traité chez lui d'une manière problématique, incertaine, peu décidée, et qui laisse à ses lecteurs un juste sujet de douter, qu'il ait été lui-même persuadé de la vérité de ce qu'il avançoit.

Aristotle



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Aristotle opened his school at the Lyceum; and, from his manner of teaching, his disciples became known by the name of Peripatetics. He has by some been charged with atheism, but I am at a loss upon what grounds, as a firm belief in the existence of a Supreme Being is clearly asserted by him, and not any where contradicted*.

He taught, that the universe, and motion, are eternal, having for ever existed, and being without end; and that although this world may have undergone, and be still subject to convulsions, yet motion, being

* Timée, Platon, et Aristote, ont établi formellement l'unité d'un Dieu : et ce n'est pas en passant, c'est dans des ouvrages suivis, et dans l'exposition de leurs systèmes fondés sur ce dogme. Aristote n'a pas hésité à reconnaître Dieu comme première cause du mouvement, et Platon comme l'unique ordonnateur de l'univers.

Voyage du jeune Anacharsis en Grèce.

regular



GENERAL REFLECTIONS. 29

regular in its operation, brings back the elements into their proper relative situations, and preserves the whole : that even these convulsions have their source in nature ; that the idea of a *Chaos*, or the existence of the elements without form or order, is contrary to her laws, which we every where see established, and which, constantly guiding the principle of motion, must from eternity have produced, and to eternity preserve, the present harmony of the universe : that in every thing we are able to discover a train of *motive* principles, an uninterrupted chain of causes and effects ; and that as nothing can happen without a cause, the word *chance* is an unmeaning expression, employed in speaking of effects, of whose causes we are ignorant* ; that in following this chain we are led up to the primitive cause, the Supreme Being, the universal Soul, who, as

* See Hindoo Philosophy, SKETCH X.



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the will moves the body, moves the whole system of the universe: That God, therefore, is the author of nature's laws.—He supposed the souls of mankind to be portions or emanations of the divine spirit, which at death quit the body, and, like a drop of water falling into the ocean, are absorbed in the divinity. Though he thus admitted the immortality of human souls, yet, as he did not suppose them to exist individually, he consequently denied a future state of rewards and punishments. “Of all things,” says he, “the most terrible is death, after which we have neither to hope for good, nor to dread evil.”

His maxims of morality were of the purest kind. He taught, that the great end of philosophy is to engage men to do that by choice, which the legislature would obtain from them by fear: That we should honour our parents, love our children, and do good to all men: That societies, or
5 states,



GENERAL REFLECTIONS. 31

states, are an aggregation of individual families, bound together by compacts and laws for their mutual interests; and that it is the duty of every member of society, not only to be obedient to those laws, but to neglect no opportunity of contributing to the general welfare of the society or state to which he belongs.

After the death of Aristotle, the Peripatetics seem to have been divided in their opinions concerning the soul, some continuing to assert that it was a part of the divine and eternal Spirit; others contending, that, being united with the body, their existence mutually depended upon one another, and that both were mortal.

ZENO of Cyprus, the founder of the Stoic sect, had first studied under Crates the Cynic, from whom he perhaps imbibed those notions of austerity which afterwards characterised his doctrines.

He



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He believed in the unity of the Supreme Being, and that the names of the other deities of his countrymen were only symbols of his different attributes.

He taught, that throughout nature there are two eternal qualities; the one active, the other passive: That the former is a pure and subtle æther, the divine spirit; and that the latter is in itself entirely inert, until united with the active principle: That the divine spirit, acting upon matter, produced fire, air, water, and earth; or separated the elements from each other: That it cannot however be said, that God created the world by a voluntary determination, but by the effect of established principles, which have ever existed and will for ever continue: Yet as the divine spirit is the efficient principle, the world could neither have been formed nor preserved without him, all nature being moved and conducted by him, while nothing can move
or



GENERAL REFLECTIONS. 33

or affect God : That matter may be divided, measured, calculated, and formed into innumerable shapes ; but the divine spirit is indivisible, infinite, unchangeable, and omnipresent.

He believed that the universe, comprehending matter and space, is without bounds ; but that the *world* is confined to certain limits, and suspended in infinite space : That the seeds of all things existed in the primitive elements, and that by means of the efficient principle they were brought forward and animated : That mankind come into the world without any innate ideas, the mind being like a smooth surface, upon which the objects of nature are gradually engraven by means of the senses : That the soul of man being a portion of the *Universal Soul*, returns, after death, to its first source, where it will remain until the destruction of the world, a period at which the elements, being once

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more



more confounded, will again be restored to their present state of order and harmony.

Zeno taught, that virtue alone is the source of happiness, and that vice, notwithstanding the temporary pleasures that it may afford, is the certain cause of pain, anxiety, and wretchedness: That as men have it in their power to be virtuous, happiness may be acquired by all; and that those who by vice and intemperance become miserable, have no right to complain of their sufferings: That a virtuous man adores the Supreme Being, restrains his passions, and enjoys the goods of this world, as if nothing belonged particularly to himself; he considers all mankind with the same degree of affection, and having no strong partialities to individuals, he comforts indiscriminately those who are afflicted, receives such as want an asylum, and feeds those who hunger; all this he does undisturbed by strong emotion; he beholds
the



GENERAL REFLECTIONS. 35

the divine will in all things, and, amidst the tumults of this world, preserves a mind serene and unruffled ! neither reproach nor praise affect him, nor doth he indulge repentment on account of injuries ; in retirement, and in the obscurity of the night, he examines the actions of the day, avows his faults, and endeavours to amend them ; and when he finds the hour of dissolution approaching, he is not afraid of death, but either awaits, or voluntarily embraces it.

These seem to have been the principal outlines of the doctrines of Zeno ; although many of the Stoics carried the idea of the necessity of mortification and abstinence to a much greater length, than appears to have been the intention of their founder.

Epicurus, whose notions were so opposite to those of the Stoic philosophers, attempted to account for the various operations in nature, without having recourse to a Supreme



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preme Being. "There is no occasion," says he, "to ascribe to the gods what may be explained by philosophy." But in this bold assertion he betrays only presumption and vanity; as in the place of a rational system, allowing the agency of the divine will, he has substituted an hypothesis too fanciful and imaginary to support any clear and decided opinion.

He observes that, before we can form a fit idea of a substance that is distinguished by any particular shape, or that possesses any particular qualities, we must first have an idea of its primitive constituent parts. He therefore supposes, as the basis upon which his whole system rests, That every thing is composed of atoms, differing in shape, but each indivisible, and possessing a natural tendency to unite, the exertion of which is the primary cause of motion in the whole system of nature, and of the first formation of all bodies. He says, that
matter



GENERAL REFLECTIONS. 37

matter enables us to conceive an idea of certain portions of space, as different events do, of time; but it is impossible to imagine space to be bounded by any limits, or time to have had a beginning: That the universe must from eternity have been the same in its nature, its extent and quantity: That the world—our system—has its limits, and is suspended in infinite space, in which myriads of other worlds may likewise exist: That when we confine our ideas to the world we inhabit, we may form distinct notions of its duration, and suppose it to have a beginning and an end; but if we extend them to the universe, and to eternity, we find no resting-place, and they must necessarily be lost and confounded in the contemplation: That nothing can be properly said to be annihilated, for though things may be dissolved from their particular forms, and their component parts separated, their atoms remain what they

D 3

were



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were from eternity, their quantity being liable neither to increase nor diminution.

He supposes the soul of man to be likewise composed of atoms *indescribably* small, igneous, and volatile: That the principal seat of it is in the heart, and that in it originate pleasure, pain, fear, and anger: That it is moved to action by the objects conveyed to it by the senses, its chief affections being pain and pleasure, whence arise aversion and desire: That the soul being engendered with the body, grows up and declines with it; that their mutual faculties depend upon their union; and upon their separation, action being at an end, thought and memory cease.

A total disbelief in a state of future rewards and punishments, was the natural consequence of these dogmas. Epicurus thought the notions entertained in this respect



GENERAL REFLECTIONS. 39

spect by his countrymen, of Tartarus, of Elysian fields, and of a future judge of human actions, very unworthy of philosophy, and unnecessary to our happiness. He taught, that the study of nature, and of her laws, will produce tranquillity and peace, undisturbed by vain and imaginary terrors: That we must not however expect to be perfectly happy; *we are men, and not gods*, and should be contented with that degree of happiness our imperfect being will admit of: that nature doth not require to be corrected, but to be guided: that happiness and pleasure are synonymous; and that the practice of virtue affords the highest and most permanent happiness, which alone possesses this peculiar property, that it may be constantly enjoyed: that the good of society, and the love of mankind in general, ought to direct all our actions: that he who practises any one virtue to excess, neglecting his other duties, cannot be properly called



40 GENERAL REFLECTIONS.

virtuous;—our actions must be in harmony; the musician does not content himself with tuning one particular string, all the tones must be in concord: that we may freely indulge those pleasures, that are not likely to produce any ill; and that a temporary ill must be suffered, in order to ensure a greater and more lasting pleasure; but that it is the excess of weakness to yield to the temptation of any gratification, which may leave a greater or more permanent evil behind: That, to preserve to ourselves the power of enjoying sensual pleasures, we ought to be temperate in the use of them: That among civilized nations, men, actuated by the public good, ought to be decent in their conduct; and scrupulously observe such rules and customs as are established to preserve order and harmony in the community to which they belong.

The doctrines of Epicurus were so popular, that the Athenians erected a statue to his



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his memory; they made a very rapid progress, and were soon carried into Italy. They were greatly admired by the Romans, and suited perhaps the feelings of a refined and luxurious people better than those of Zeno. Lucretius, Celsus, Pliny the elder, Lucan, and many other distinguished Roman names, may be reckoned in the list of Epicureans; and the friend of Cicero, Pomponius Atticus, was a disciple of the Epicurean Zeno of Sidon.

Such are the chief features of those doctrines in philosophy which from the bosom of Athens spread themselves over Greece and Italy, and at last found their way into the remotest parts of the Roman empire. Though several Greeks had written in favour of atheism, yet it seems to have made but little progress: even most of the Epicureans so far modified the original tenets of the sect as to acknowledge the existence of a Supreme Being; and upon
the



the whole we may venture to conclude, that, towards the time of the appearance of Christ, men of learning, in general, were *deists*, and that only the people, and the ignorant, retained any respect for the ancient theology.

But however unanimous they may have been in their belief of the existence and unity of one Supreme Being, they were exceedingly divided in their sentiments concerning the nature and immortality of the soul *. Many of the most eminent philosophers treated the idea of a future state as
a fable,

* Plato dixit animam essentiam se moventem ; Xenocrates numerum se moventem ; Aristoteles, intellectum seu motum perpetuum ; Pythagoras et Philolaus, harmoniam ; Posidonius, ideam ; Asclepiades, quinque sensuum exercitium sibi consonum ; Hippocrates, spiritum tenuem per omne corpus diffusum ; Heraclitus Ponticus, lucem ; Heraclitus Physicus, scintillam stellaris essentiae ; Zenon, concretum corpori spiritum ; Democritus, spiritum infertum atomis ; Critolaus Peripateticus, constare eam de quinta essentia ; Hipparchus,
ignem ;



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a fable, and those who professed to believe in it, disagreed so widely among themselves, that no clear and decided opinion can be collected from their works. We find it a common maxim, that those could not suffer, who did not exist; and, taking consolation from an idea, from which nature recoils, they compared death to a profound sleep, undisturbed by dreams, when we are unconscious of existence. Innumerable instances might be quoted, of the prevalence of these doubts among the philosophers that flourished shortly before, and soon after, the appearance of the christian doctrines.—A few, however, may suffice.

When Cæsar pleaded for some of those that were engaged in the conspiracy of

ignem; Anaximenes, aëra; Empedocles et Critias, sanguinem; Parmenides, ex terrâ et igne; Xenophanes, ex terrâ et aquâ; Epicurus, speciem ex igne & aere & spiritu mixtam.

MACROBIUS in *Sat. Scip. lib. i. cap. 14.*

Catiline,

55



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Catiline, he said, "that death was not, in fact, any punishment, as it put an end to thought and pain."

Even Cicero, after having shewn the errors and uncertainty of those who had treated of a future state, says, in an epistle to Torquatus, that "death puts an end to thought and sentiment;" in one to Terentius, "that death is the end of every thing:" in another place, that "a firm and elevated mind is free from care and uneasiness, and despises death, which only places us in the state in which we lay before we were born:" and publicly before the judges and people he asserted, that, "by death, we lose all sense of pain*."

Epicætetus

* Nam nunc quidem, quid tandem illi mali mors attulit? Nisi forte ineptiis et fabulis ducimur, ut existimemus illum apud inferos impiorum supplicia perferre, ac plures illic offendisse inimicos, quàm hic reliquisse: a focus, ab uxorum, a fratris, a liberum poenis, actum esse præcipitem in sceleratorum sedem
atque



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Epicætetus was of opinion, that after death we shall return to the source from whence we came, and be united with our primitive elements.

Strabo, in speaking of the Brachmanes, says, "Texere etiam fabulas quasdam, quemadmodum Plato, de immortalitate animæ, et de judiciis quæ apud inferos fiunt, et alia hujusmodi non pauca." STRABO, *lib.* xv.

Seneca writes in a letter to Marcia: "Cogita nullis defunctos malis affici illam quæ nobis inferos faciunt terribiles, fabulam esse, nullas imminere mortuis tenebras nec carcerem, nec flumina fla-

atque regionem, quæ si falsa sunt, *id quod omnes intelligunt*, quid ei tandem aliud mors eripuit, præter sensum doloris.

CICERO *pro Cluent.*

Yet Cicero says, in another place, "*Naturam ipsam de immortalitate animorum agere, quod si omnium consensus naturæ vox est, &c.*"

CIC. *Tusc. qu. i.*

"grantia



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“grantia igne, nec oblivionis amnem, nec
“tribunalia et reos. Luferunt ista poetæ,
“et vanis nos agitavere terroribus. Mors
“omnium dolorum et solutio est et finis,
“ultra quam mala nostra non exeunt, quæ
“nos in illam tranquillitatem, in qua ante-
“quam nasceremur jacuimus reponit. Si
“mortuorum aliquis miseretur cur et non
“natorum misereatur.” SENECA, *de Consol.*
ad Marciam, cap. 19.

The same philosopher in one of his tra-
gedies, publicly exhibited before the people,
avows the same opinion*.

* Verum est? an timidos fabula decipit?

Umbras corporibus vivere conditis?

An toti morimur, nullaue pars manet nostri?

S. Post mortem nihil est, ipsaque mors nihil:

Velocis spatii meta novissima.

Spem ponant avidi, solliciti metum

Quæris quo jaceas post obitum loco?

Quo non nata jacent. —

Mors individua est, noxia corpori

Nec parcens animæ. *Trag. AÆ II. Chorus.*

The

58



GENERAL REFLECTIONS. 47

The sentiments of Pliny are very plainly expressed in the following passage: "Om-
" nibus a suprema die eadem, quæ ante
" primum, nec magis a morte sensus ullus,
" aut corporis, aut animæ, quam ante
" natalem. Eadem enim vanitas in fu-
" turum etiam se propagat, et in mortis
" quoque tempora ipsa sibi vitam mentitur,
" alias immortalitatem animæ, alias transf-
" figurationem, alias sensum inferis dando,
" & manes colendo:—ceu vera ullo modo
" spirandi ratio homini a ceteris animalibus
" distet."

PLIN. *Hist. lib. 7. cap. 56.*

Many other instances might be adduced, to prove that the belief of the mortality of the soul was very prevalent; and that the notions of those who professed a contrary opinion were often contradictory and confused, and always without rational proof. Yet every one who reflected, must have been conscious of an intelligent principle within him, anxious to explore this im-
portant

portant but impenetrable secret, and in some measure intuitively convinced of a superiority to its present state, and of an existence in another. But though the consciousness of such a principle, and the variety of reasons it could discover to prove its immortality, might lead him to believe it; other arguments must have offered doubt—he saw the mortal frame constantly exposed to danger, natural dissolution gradually approaching, and even the faculties of the mind partaking of the decay of the body—he saw the friend that he cherished, or the object that he loved, consumed to ashes, or exposed to more humiliating corruption.—Did they exist who were gone?—Was he yet to see them?—Was he to exist himself?—Or was the scene to be eternally closed, and all our affections, and those mental powers on which we vainly pride ourselves, to be dissolved in nothing? A variety of anxious thoughts must have pressed upon the mind; and, in
the



GENERAL REFLECTIONS. 49

the impatience of agonizing doubt, it was perhaps disposed to arraign the justice of the Supreme Being, for having given faculties to inquire into that awful question, yet insufficient to resolve it.

In the midst of this solicitude, Christianity was announced, declaring the veil which covered that mystery to be removed, and, out of compassion to the human race, the certainty of a future state to be revealed by God himself. The pleasing prospect was held out to all classes of men indifferently; no distinction was made between the emperor and the slave; happiness and misery depended on the firmness of belief in the doctrines, and the practice of the injunctions, of Christ, the morality of which, though consonant to, perhaps surpassed in purity, the precepts of those wise and virtuous philosophers who had already instructed mankind.

Not less flattering than the prospect of the immortality of the soul, was that of the re-

E furrection



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urrection of the body; and this doctrine may likewise have considerably assisted the rapid advancement of Christianity*. It was better adapted to the capacities of the illiterate, than the abstruse notions of the heathen philosophers, and was acceptable to the feelings of all. Such is our dread of dissolution, that even those who were not decidedly convinced of the certainty, were flattered with the idea, of a future state, where they were again to appear in the form they then enjoyed, and see and converse with those they loved, in the shape they had already known them.

The greatest difficulty in the way of conversion, seems to have been the mystery by

* Though the belief of the resurrection of the body was professed by all the Jews, except the Sadducees, it does not seem to have been entertained by any of the Greeks and Romans.—Many of the Jews, after their return from Chaldea, believed in the Metempsychosis.

which



5-X

The early Christians supported their faith with great purity of manners; which, with the examples of the martyrs, must have greatly contributed to obtain belief, and to supply the place of argument. The mind is naturally disposed to compassionate those who suffer; their words and actions have more than ordinary weight. The martyrs submitted to all the torments which cruelty could invent, with patience and resignation; rejected every offer of relief, when proposed to them on condition of their denying their faith in Christ: they met death itself with indifference, and in

E 2 their



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their last moments shewed the fullest persuasion, that they were only going to quit a mortal and inconvenient frame, to enjoy more perfect happiness.

That the abovementioned causes forwarded the success of Christianity, may be observed from the little progress it has made in Hindoostan. The Hindoos respect their own religion, believe in a future state, and persecution is entirely contrary to their doctrines. Notwithstanding the labours of missionaries; therefore, for upwards of two centuries, and the establishments of different Christian nations, who support and protect them, out of at least thirty millions of Hindoos, that are in the possessions of the English and of the Princes who are dependant on them, there are not, perhaps, above twelve thousand Christians, and those almost entirely *Chandalabs*, or outcasts *.

The

* " Tout Indien, qui embrasse le Christianisme, est
" absolument banni de sa tribu, est abandonné aux
" insultes



The early Christians seem to have been without any settled hierarchy, and without any established forms of religious worship. Dispersed in the different cities of the Roman empire, they formed themselves into societies, which were only connected with each other by professing the same belief, and being exposed to equal danger. When the members of these societies occasionally met together, any one spoke who felt himself so disposed; and the first appearance of distinction or precedence we can find, was the choosing of presbyters or elders, to whom was entrusted the care of assembling the members at fit times; of watching over their manners; and of assisting their distressed brethren from the voluntary contributions of the society. As the number

“ insultes de toute la nation : Aussi ne trouvent-on
“ point que la religion Chretienne ait fait de grands
“ progrès en ce pais la, quoiqu'en disent les mission-
“ naires Romains.”

La Croze, tome ii. liv. 6. p. 296. Ed. de la Haye, 1758.



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of profelytes increased, further and more permanent regulations were thought necessary; and the next step to higher preferment that is recorded, was the election of certain persons among the presbyters, to preside at the assemblies, to collect the result of their deliberations, and who, in the interim of their meetings, had the power of receiving and applying alms, and of corresponding with the societies established in other places. The name given to these was *Episcopi*, a term we find equally applied to persons in different trusts, and which literally signified an inspector or superintendant *. In the process of time, the functions of religious worship were entirely committed to those inspectors and to their inferior

* The title of Pope (*Papa*) was originally given indiscriminately to all bishops and patriarchs, and it was only towards the end of the 11th century that Gregory the VIIth obtained, at a council held at Rome, that this appellation should be confined to that see. In the Greek church the ancient mode continues to this day.

assistants;



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assistants; and hence arose the distinction of the *clergy*, from the *laity*, or great bulk of the Christians. With the augmentation of the number and quality of the Christians, the situation of the clergy became naturally more important; fresh ceremonies were gradually introduced, to render the worship more splendid. From the supposed examples in the early ages of Christianity, and by forced interpretations of the sacred writings, a variety of pious duties was invented, of little real use perhaps to mankind, but calculated to obtain and preserve that dominion of the priesthood, by which it so long kept every other order of men in a state of the most abject subjection.—It was the slavery of the mind.—Philosophy and the arts, which had already been considerably affected by the influence of the new religion, were lost under the inundations of barbarians that overwhelmed the Roman empire. The small degree of uncouth learning which yet remained, being



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entirely in possession of the priests, considerably contributed to confirm their influence over the rude and uninstructed laity, and to maintain and extend superstition, which, from the earliest times, they seem to have fostered with unwearied pains. Their ascendancy being established without opposition or control, they not only commanded in spiritual matters, but directed in worldly affairs with imperious interference. Intoxicated with the submission that was every where shewn to them, they often committed such wanton and extravagant acts of authority, that we are frequently lost in amazement, between the insolence of those who commanded, and the folly of those who obeyed. But in the plenitude of their power, and in the enjoyment of the immense wealth they had by various means acquired, they neglected to observe that exterior decorum with which their conduct had been formerly clothed, and furnished examples



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examples of very licentious and disorderly manners. These did not escape observation; the people in some countries, notwithstanding their infatuation, began to murmur; while the higher ranks of men were already disposed to resistance. The invention of printing, about the middle of the fifteenth century, brought forth science from its dark retreats within the walls of monasteries, from whence it had shed but a faint and partial light upon the universal barbarism of the age. Superstition declined, in proportion to the progress made by letters; phænomena, that had been employed to awe the ignorant, were found to proceed from natural causes; and the minds of every class of men imbibed some part of that knowledge, which now began to diffuse itself all over Europe.

Controversy seems to have been the constant companion of religion:—it was almost coëval with our faith. But early in the sixteenth century it broke out with uncommon violence; and the disputes of churchmen



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men were carried on with so much acrimony and imprudence, that by means of the press, the whole arcana of the policy and abuses of the priesthood were laid open to the inquiry and judgment of the laity.

In order to crush the new opinions, which, in consequence of these disputes, began to appear and to spread themselves in many parts of Europe, the Roman pontiff had recourse to violent and injudicious measures. Anathemas and excommunications were pronounced against all who encouraged or professed them; and the princes of Christendom were called upon to exert their power and authority to eradicate and destroy them. But, as is generally the case when persecution is employed to oppose reason, it decided those who were wavering, and made men more positive in their resistance. The protestant doctrines spread with uncommon rapidity, and operated, wherever they gained ground, not only



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only to effect ecclesiastical, but likewise the most important political, changes. During the struggle that preceded them, Europe, for a long space of time, exhibited the most extraordinary and melancholy scene that is to be found in the history of mankind: a state of religious frenzy universally prevailed. The fire of persecution was lighted up from one extremity of Christendom to the other; and men saw their fellow-creatures and citizens committed to the flames, not only without remorse, but with pleasure and exultation. All the bonds of social life were broken; and bigotry and fanaticism were busily employed to smother the feelings of nature, and the sentiments of loyalty, of gratitude, and of friendship. Sovereigns descended from the throne to be the bloody assassins of their people*, or drove them to abandon their

* Fifty thousand inhabitants of the Low Countries are supposed to have been put to death on account of their



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their own, and seek refuge in other countries. Confidence and safety were nowhere to be found; for neither rank nor merit, obligations conferred, nor connections of blood, afforded any security. The ostensible cause of these enormities was religion, while the real and true objects of religion were forgotten. Men, apparently deprived of their reason, in the wild course of their mistaken zeal, never stopped to recollect that they were acting in disobedience to the laws of that God whom they pretended to serve, and in opposition to the doctrines they affected to profess, which inculcate charity, benevolence, compassion, and indulgence for the errors and infirmities of others.

their religious principles, during the reign of Charles V. only. The number seems almost incredible, but it is affirmed by several cotemporary historians. Yet Charles was milder and less bigotted than his son and successor Philip. The massacre in the night of St. Bartholomew at Paris, and similar scenes of horror in different parts of Europe, shew to what length a blind zeal can carry an unenlightened people.

But



GENERAL REFLECTIONS. 61

But the charm, that formerly rendered the minds of men capable of receiving with reverence any dogma that was prescribed to them, being broken, every one who was so inclined, commented upon and explained the sacred writings according to his own particular notions: and from among the Reformers arose a variety of sects, as intolerant towards each other, as the church of Rome was towards those who had emancipated themselves from its authority. The laity, who hitherto had been kept in profound ignorance, especially on religious matters, eagerly read the books of controversy, and felt their vanity considerably flattered, in being at liberty to discuss and give their opinions on subjects which but lately it would have been criminal for them to have inquired into. They became accustomed to study and investigation. The liberty that was given to the press in the countries where the Protestant religion prevailed, and especially in those which enjoyed



joyed a free government, enabled men of genius to examine things with freedom, and to express themselves without restraint. Philosophy and the sciences, even in the midst of civil and religious revolutions, were making considerable progress; and these, with the improvements in navigation, which led to the discovery of other countries and other people, tended to expand the mind, and make men more liberal in their notions. The increase of circulating wealth, produced by the extension of commerce, and the gold and silver that were poured into Europe from America; the easy communication that was established between different countries, and the facility of exchanging their respective productions, produced new and varied wants and pleasures. The studious, the industrious, and the dissipated part of mankind, found each sufficient occupation. The sweets of social life became more numerous and refined; public tranquillity was necessary to the enjoyment of
5 them;



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them; and men grew averse to fierce civil broils, and indifferent about religious contests. But as they unfortunately often proceed from one extreme to the other; as formerly it was the fashion to seek fame by wild and extravagant acts of devotion, so of late years some have imagined that they evince a superiority of genius, by affecting to have no religion. But without entering into the arguments either of sceptics or divines, it will always afford comfort to the humble believer, to reflect, that the most profound metaphysicians, the best philosophers of this or any age, and those who have made the greatest progress in the sciences, were not only exemplary in their moral characters, but that their writings tend, while they enlighten the mind, to increase our veneration for the Supreme Being. The farther they proceeded in their discoveries, the more they adored the Creator of the universe, and perceived the
insuf-