

IGNORANCE.

Question. What is Ignorance?

Answer. It is a vice contrary to the science of good government.

Q. How does the law of nature forbid ignorance?

A. By the grievous detriments resulting from it to our existence; for the ignorant man, who knows neither causes nor effects, commits every instant errors most pernicious to himself and to others; he resembles a blind man groping his way at random, and who at every step, jostles or is jostled by every one he meets.

Q. What difference is there between an ignorant and a silly man?

A. The same difference is there between him who frankly avows his blindness, and the blind man who pretends to sight; silliness is the reality of ignorance, to which is superadded the vanity of knowledge.

Q. Are ignorance and silliness common?

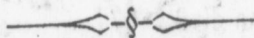
A. Yes, very common; they are the usual and general distempers of mankind; more than three thousand years ago the wisest of men said, the number of fools is infinite; and the world has not changed.

Q. What is the reason of it?

A. Because much labor and time are necessary to acquire instruction, and because men born ignorant, and averse to trouble, find it more convenient to remain blind and to pretend to see clear.

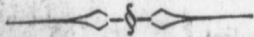
Q. When the Gospel say: "happy are the poor of spirit," does it mean the ignorant and imprudent?

A. No: for at the same time that it recommends the simplicity of doves, it adds the prudent cunning of serpents. By simplicity of mind is meant uprightness, and the precept of the Gospel is that of nature.



THE CHINESE are said to be the most ancient Almanack makers. The first of their Emperor's privilege is that of sending his Calendar to his vassals and neighbours; their refusal of which would be considered as a bravado, and war would forthwith be made upon them, as it used to be made in Europe on feudal lords who refused their homage.

When the Emperor Kam-hi wished to employ the Jesuit missionaries in making the almanack, they are said to have excused themselves at first, on account of the extravagant superstitions with which it must be filled. "I have much less faith than you in the superstitions," replied the Emperor; "only make me a good calendar, and leave it for my learned men to fill up the book with their foolery."



To fortel the weather 'tis folly we know,
For it may freeze on the mountain, in the valley it may thaw.