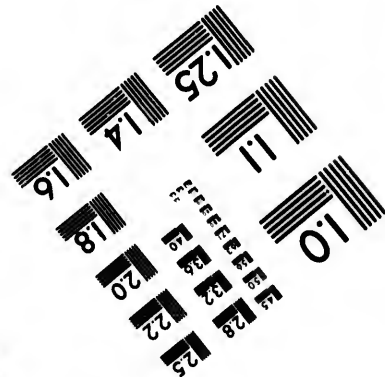
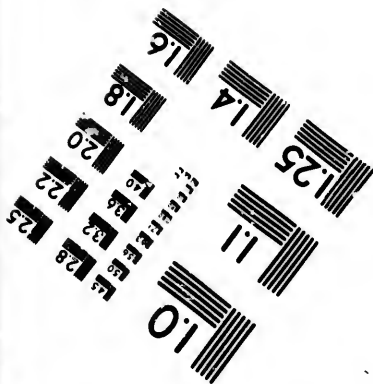
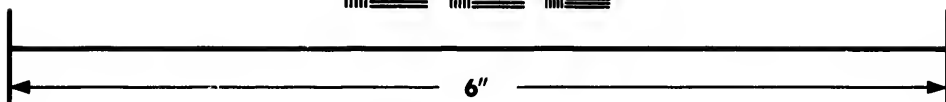
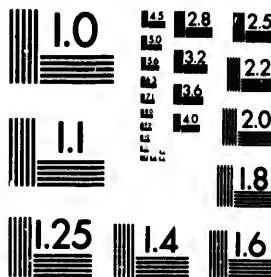


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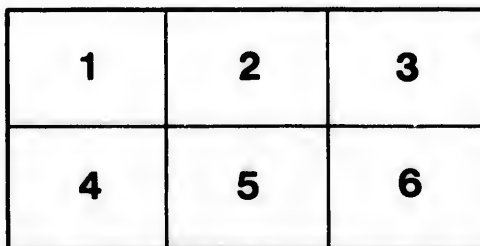
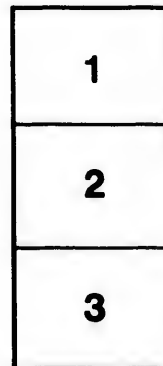
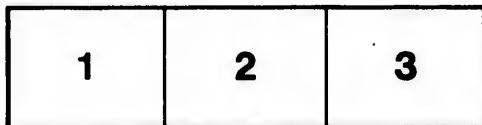
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THE
LAW
OF
NATURE;
OR,
CATECHISM OF FRENCH CITIZENS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

C. F. VOLNEY,

AUTHOR OF

THE RUINS OF EMPIRES, &c. &c.

AND

PROFESSOR, SINCE THE REVOLUTION, AT PARIS.



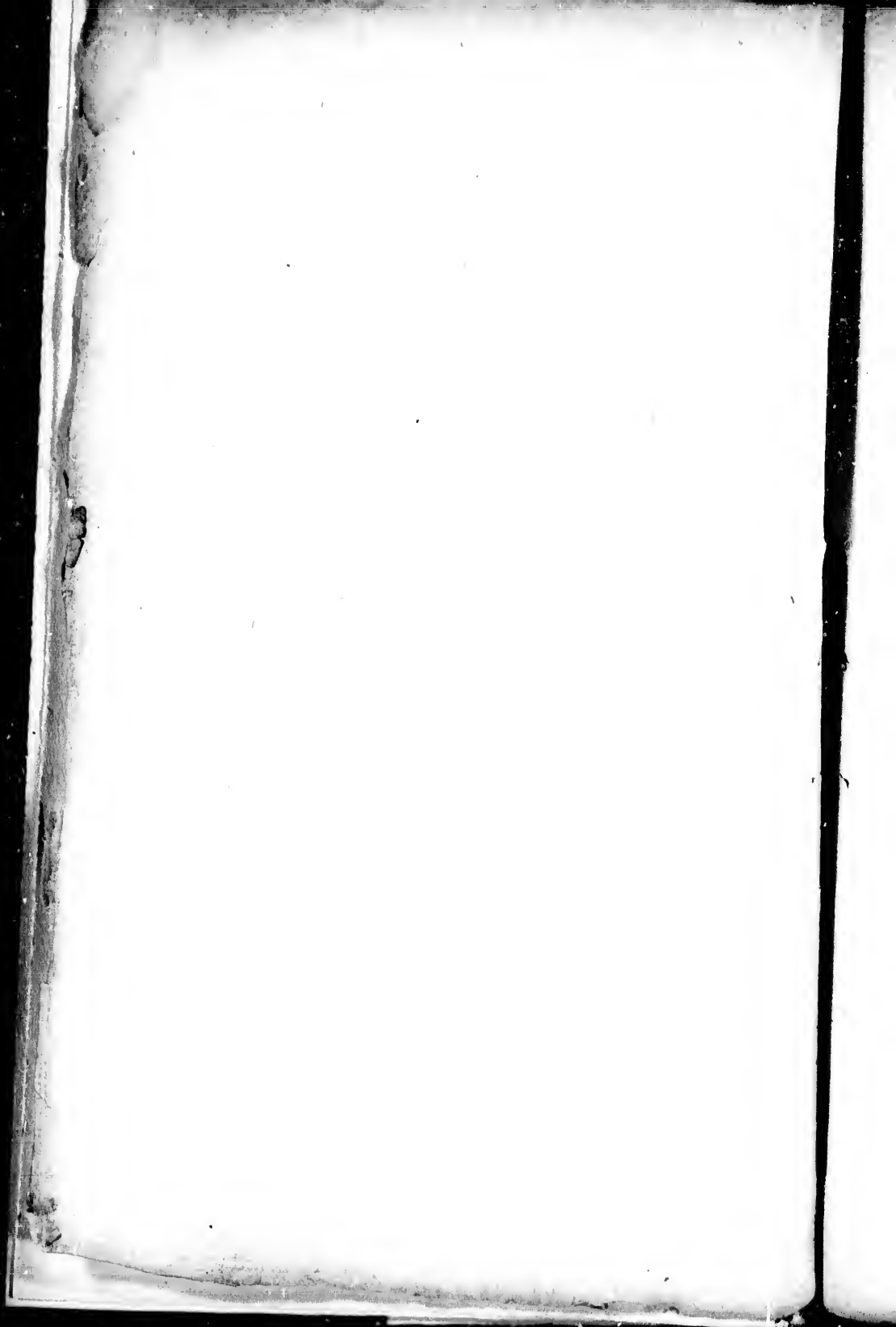
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THE

THE
LAW OF NATURE,
OR,
CATECHISM OF REASON.

CHAPTER I.

Q: **W**HAT is the law of Nature ?

A. It is the *constant* and *regular* order of action by which God governs the universe; an order which his *wisdom* presents to the senses and to the reason of men, as an equal and common rule for their actions, to guide them, without distinction of country or of sect, towards perfection and happiness.

Q. Define clearly to me the word law ?

A. The word law, taken literally, signifies *lecture*,* because, originally, *ordinances* and *regulations* were the lectures, preferably to all others, made to the people, in order that they might observe them, and not incur the penalties attached to the infraction of them. Whence it follows, that the original custom explaining the true idea, or the definition of law, is, "An order or a prohibition to act, with the express clause of a penalty at-

* From the Latin word *lex*, *lectio*. *Alcoran* likewise signifies *lecture*, and is only a literal translation of the word *law*.

tached to the infraction, or of a recompence attached to the observance of that order."

Q. Do such orders exist in Nature? What does the word *nature* signify?

A. The word *nature* bears three different senses:

1st, It signifies the universe, the material world: in this first sense they say, "the *beauty of Nature*, the *richness of Nature*;" i. e. the objects in the heavens and on the earth exposed to our sight.

2dly, It signifies the power that animates, that moves the universe, considering it as a distinct being, such as the soul is to the body. In this second sense they say, "the *intentions of Nature*, the *incomprehensible secrets of Nature*."

3dly, It signifies the operations of that power on each being, or on each class of beings; and in this third sense they say, the *nature of man* is an enigma; every being acts according to its *nature*.

Wherefore, as the actions of each being, or of each species of beings are subjected to constant and general rules, which cannot be infringed without interrupting and troubling the general or particular order, those rules of actions and of motions are called the *natural laws*, or *laws of Nature*.

Q. Give me examples of those laws?

A. It is a law of Nature that the sun illuminates successively the surface of the terrestrial globe;— that its presence causes both light and heat;— that heat acting upon water, causes vapours;— that

that those vapours rising in clouds into the regions of the air, dissolve into rain or snow, which renews incessantly the waters of fountains and of rivers.

It is a law of nature that water flows downwards; that it seeks after its level; that it is heavier than air:—that all bodies tend towards the earth;—that flame ascends towards the heavens;—that it disorganizes vegetables and animals;—that air is necessary to the life of certain animals; that in certain circumstances water suffocates and kills them; that certain juices of plants, certain minerals attack their organs, and destroy their life, and so on in a multitude of other instances.

Wherefore, as all those and similar facts are immutable, constant, and regular, so many real *orders* result from them for man to conform himself to, with the express clause of punishment attached to the infraction of them, or of welfare attached to the observance of them; that, if man pretends to see clear in darkness; if he goes in contradiction to the course of the seasons, the action of the elements; if he pretends to remain under water without being drowned, to touch fire without burning himself, to deprive himself of air without being suffocated, to swallow poison without destroying himself, he receives from each of those infractions of the laws of Nature, a corporal punishment proportionate to his fault. If, on the contrary, he

observes and practises each of those laws, according to the regular and exact relations they have to him, he preserves his existence, and renders it as happy as it can be. And as the only and common end of all those laws, considered relatively to the human species, is to preserve it, and render it happy; it has been agreed upon to reduce the idea to one simple expression, and to call them collectively, the *law of Nature*.

C H A P. II.

Characters of the Law of Nature.

Q. *What are the characters of the law of Nature?*

A. There can be assigned ten principal ones.

Q. *Which is the first?*

A. To be **INHERENT** to the existence of things, and consequently *primitive* and anterior to every other law; so that all those which men have received, are only imitations of it, and their perfection is ascertained by the resemblance they bear to this primordial model.

Q. *Which is the second?*

A. To derive **IMMEDIATELY** from God to be presented by him to each man; whereas all other laws are presented to us by men, who may be either deceived, or deceivers.

Q. *Which*

Q. *Which is the third ?*

A. To be COMMON to all times, and to all countries : that is to say, one and universal.

Q. *Is no other law universal ?*

A. No : for no other law is agreeable, or applicable to all the people of the earth ; all of them are local and accidental, originating from circumstances of places and of persons ; so that if such a man had not existed, such an event had not taken place—such a law would never have been made.

Q. *Which is the fourth character ?*

A. To be UNIFORM and INVARIABLE.

Q. *Is no other law uniform and invariable ?*

A. No : for what is *good* and *virtue* according to one, is *evil* and *vice* according to another ; and what one and the same law approves of at one time, it often condemns afterwards.

Q. *Which is the fifth character ?*

A. To be EVIDENT and PALPABLE, because it consists entirely of facts incessantly present to the senses, and to demonstration.

Q. *Are not other laws evident ?*

A. No : for they are founded on past and doubtful facts, on equivocal and suspicious testimonies, and on proofs inaccessible to the senses.

Q. *Which is the sixth character ?*

A. To be REASONABLE, because its precepts and entire doctrine are conformable to reason, and to the human understanding.

Q. *Is*

Q. Is no other law reasonable ?

A. No: for all are in contradiction to the reason and the understanding of men, and tyrannically impose on him a blind and impracticable belief.

Q. Which is the seventh character ?

A. To be JUST, because in that law, the penalties are proportionate to the infractions.

Q. Are not other laws just ?

A. No: for they often exceed bounds, either in rewarding deserts, or in punishing delinquencies; and they often impule to meritorious, or criminal intentions, null or indifferer actions.

Q. Which is the eighth character ?

A. To be PACIFIC and TOLERANT, because in the law of nature, all men being brothers, and equal in rights, it recommends to them, peace and toleration, even for errors.

Q. Are not other laws pacific ?

A. No: for all preach diffention, discord, and war; and divide mankind by exclusive pretensions of truth and domination.

Q. Which is the ninth character ?

A. To be equally BENEFICENT to all men, in teaching them the true means of becoming better and happier.

Q. Are not other laws beneficent likewise ?

A. No: for not one of them teaches the means of attaining happinets—all are confined to pernicious and futile practices; this is evident from facts,
since

since, after so many laws, so many religions, so many legislators and prophets, men are still as unhappy and as ignorant, as they were five thousand years back.

Q. Which is the last character of the law of Nature ?

A. That it is alone SUFFICIENT to render men happier and better, because it contains all that is good and useful in other laws, either civil or religious ; that is to say, it constitutes essentially the moral part of them ; so that if other laws were divested of it, they would be reduced to chimerical and imaginary opinions, devoid of any practical utility.

Q. Resume all those characters for me.

A. We have said that the law of Nature is,

- 1st, PRIMITIVE,
- 2dly, IMMEDIATE,
- 3dly, UNIVERSAL,
- 4thly, INVARIABLE,
- 5thly, EVIDENT,
- 6thly, REASONABLE,
- 7thly, JUST,
- 8thly, PACIFIC,
- 9thly, BENEFICENT,
- AND,
- 10thly, ALONE SUFFICIENT.

And it is because it unites all those attributes of perfection, and of truth, that the French have adopted it, and profess it as being the most suitable
to

to man; and most worthy of the author of Nature, from whom it emanates.

Q. *If, as you say, it emanates immediately from God, does it teach his existence?*

A. Yes, most positively: for, to any man whatever, who observes with reflection the astonishing spectacle of the universe, the more he meditates on the properties and attributes of each being, on the admirable order and harmony of their motions; the more it is demonstrated that there exists a *supreme agent*, an *universal and identic mover*, designated by the appellation of GOD; and so true it is, that the law of Nature suffices to elevate him to the knowledge of God, that all which men have pretended to know by supernatural means, has constantly turned out ridiculous and absurd, and that they have been ever obliged to recur to the immutable conceptions of natural reason.

Q. *It is not therefore true, that the followers of the law of Nature are atheists?*

A. No, it is not true; on the contrary, they entertain stronger and nobler ideas of the Divinity, than most other men: for they do not sully him with the foul ingredients of all the weaknesses, and of all the passions entailed on humanity.

Q. *What worship do they pay to him?*

A. A worship wholly of action; the practice and observance of all the rules which the *supreme wisdom* has imposed on the motion of each being,
eternal

eternal and unalterable rules by which it maintains the order and harmony of the universe, and which, in their relations to man, constitute the law of Nature.

Q. Has the law of Nature been known before this period?

A. It has been at all times spoken of: most legislators, according to themselves, took it as a basis to build their laws on; but they have only quoted some precepts of it, and have had only vague ideas of its totality.

Q. Why?

A. Because, though simple in its basis, it forms in its developements and consequences, a complicated whole, which requites an extensive knowledge of things, joined to all the sagacity of reason.

Q. Does not instinct alone teach the law of Nature?

A. No: for by instinct is meant nothing more than that blind sentiment by which we are actuated indiscriminately towards every thing that flatters the senses.

Q. Why then is it said, that the law of Nature is engraved in the hearts of all men?

A. It is said for two reasons; 1st, because it has been remarked, that there are acts and sentiments common to all men. This proceeds from their common organization. 2^{dly}, Because the first philosophers have believed that men were born with ideas already formed, which is now demonstrated to be erroneous.

B

Q. Phi-

Q. *Philosophers then are fallible ?*

A. Yes, it is sometimes the case with them.

Q. *Why so ?*

A. 1st, Because they are men. 2dly, Because the ignorant call all those who reason well or ill, philosophers. 3dly, Because those who reason on many subjects, and which they themselves have first started, are liable to be deceived.

Q. *If the law of Nature be not written, must it not become arbitrary and ideal.*

A. No; because it consists entirely in facts, the demonstration of which can be incessantly renewed to the senses, and constitutes a science as accurate and as precise as geometry, or as mathematics; and it is on the very account of its forming an exact science, that men, born ignorant, and living unattentive and heedless, have had hitherto only a superficial knowledge of it.

C H A P. III.

Principles of the Law of Nature with Relation to Man.

Q. *Explain to me the principles of the law of Nature with relation to man ?*

A. They are simple; all of them are comprised in one fundamental and single precept.

Q. *What is that precept ?*

A. It is *self-preservation.*

Q. *How*

Q. How does Nature order man to preserve himself?

A. By two powerful and involuntary sensations, which it has attached, as two guides, two *guardian geniuses* to all his actions:—the one, the sensation of pain, by which it admonishes him of, and deters him from, every thing that tends to destroy him; the other, the sensation of pleasure, by which it attracts and carries him towards every thing that tends to preserve, unfold, or explain his existence.

Q. Pleasure, therefore, is not an evil, a sin, as casuists pretend.

A. No, only inasmuch as it tends to destroy life and health, which, by the avowal of those same casuists, derive to us from God himself.

Q. Is pleasure the principal object of our existence, as some philosophers have asserted?

A. No, not more than pain; pleasure is an incitement to live, as pain is a repulsion from death.

Q. How do you prove this assertion?

A. By two palpable facts: the one, that pleasure, if more than is necessary be taken of it, leads to destruction: for example, a man who abuses the pleasure of eating or drinking, attacks his health, and injures his life. The other, that pain sometimes leads to self-preservation: for example, a man who suffers a mortified member to be cut off, endures pain in order not to perish totally.

Q. But does not even that prove, that our sensa-

tions can deceive us respecting the end of our preservation?

A. Yes; they can momentarily.

Q. *How do our sensations deceive us?*

A. In two ways: by ignorance, and by passion.

Q. *When do they deceive us by ignorance?*

A. When we act without knowing the action and effect of objects on our senses: for example, when a man touches NETTLES without knowing their stinging quality, or when he swallows opium without knowing its soporiferous effect.

Q. *When do they deceive us by passion?*

A. When, conscious of the pernicious action of objects, we abandon ourselves, notwithstanding, to the impetuosity of our desires, and of our appetites: for example, when a man who knows that wine intoxicates, does nevertheless drink it to excess.

Q. *What is the result?*

A. It results, that the ignorance in which we are born, and the unbridled appetites to which we abandon ourselves, are contrary to our preservation: that consequently, the instruction of our minds, and the moderation of our passions, are two obligations, two laws which derive immediately from the first law of preservation.

Q. *But if we are born ignorant, is not ignorance a law of Nature?*

A. Not

A. Not more than it is to remain in the naked and feeble state of infancy. Far from being a law of Nature, ignorance is an obstacle to the practice of all its laws. IT IS THE REAL ORIGINAL SIN.

Q. *Why then have there been moralists who have looked upon it as a virtue and a perfection?*

A. Because, from caprice, or extravagance of disposition, or through misanthropy, they have confounded the abuse of knowledge with knowledge itself; as if, because men abuse the power of speech, their tongues should be cut out: as if perfection and virtue consisted in the nullity, and not in the unfolding expansion, and proper employ of our faculties.

Q. *Instruction then is of indisputable necessity to the existence of man?*

A. Yes, so indispensable, that without it he is every instant assailed and wounded by all the beings that surround him; for if he does not know the effects of fire, he burns himself; those of water, he drowns himself; those of opium, he poisons himself: if, in the savage state, he does not know the cunning of animals, and the art of seizing game, he perishes through hunger; if, in the social state, he does not know the course of the seasons, he can neither cultivate the ground, nor procure himself aliment; and so, in the same manner, of all his actions, respecting all the wants of his preservation.

Q. *But can man separately by himself acquire*
all

all this knowledge necessary to his existence, and to the development of his faculties ?

A. No; he can only by the help of his own species, and by living in *society*.

Q. *But is not society to man a state against Nature ?*

A. No: on the contrary, it is a want which Nature imposes on him by the very act of his organization; for, first, Nature has so constituted man, that he sees not his species of another sex without feeling emotions, and an attraction, the consequences of which induce him to live in a family, which is a state of society; secondly, by forming him with a sensible and feeling mind, it has organised him in such a manner, that the sensations of others reflect within him, and excite reciprocal sentiments of pleasure, of grief, of pity, which are attractions, and indissoluble ties of society; thirdly and finally, the state of society founded on the wants of man, is only a further means of fulfilling the law of preservation: and to pretend that this state is out of Nature, because it is more perfect, is the same as to say, that a bitter and wild fruit of the wood is no longer the produce of Nature, when rendered sweet and delicious by being cultivated in a garden.

Q. *Why then have philosophers called the savage state, the state of perfection ?*

A. Because, as I have told you, the vulgar have often given the name of philosophers to whimsical
extravagant

extravagant geniuses, who, from moroseness, from wounded vanity, or from a disgust to the vices of society, have conceived to themselves chimerical ideas of the savage state, contradictory to their own system of a perfect man.

Q. *What is the real meaning of the word philosopher?*

A. The word philosopher signifies a *lover of wisdom*: wherefore as wisdom consists in the practice of the laws of Nature, the true philosopher is he who knows those laws extensively and accurately, and who conforms the whole tenor of his conduct to them.

Q. *What is man in the savage state?*

A. A brutal, ignorant animal, a wicked and ferocious beast, such as are bears, and Ouran-Outangs.

Q. *Is he happy in that state?*

A. No: for he feels sensations of the moment only; and those sensations are, habitually, of violent wants which he cannot satisfy, from his being ignorant by Nature, and weak by being isolated from his species.

Q. *Is he free?*

A. No: he is the most abject slave in being: for his life depends on every thing that surrounds him: he is not free to eat when hungry, to rest when tired, to warm himself when cold; he is every instant in danger of perishing: neither has nature afforded but fortuitous examples of such beings; and we see
that

that all the efforts of the human species, since its origin, have been wholly directed towards the extricating itself from that violent state, by the pressing want of its preservation.

Q. But does not this want of preservation engender in individuals egotism; that is to say, self-love, and is not egotism contrary to the social state?

A. No: for, if by egotism you mean the propensity to hurt our neighbour, it is no more self-love, it is the hatred of others. Self-love, taken in its right sense, not only is not contrary to society, but is the most firm support of it, by the necessity we lie under of not hurting our neighbour, lest our neighbour hurt us in return.

Thus the preservation of man, and the unfolding of his faculties directed towards this end, are the true law of Nature in the production of the human being; and it is from this simple and fruitful principle, that are derived, are referred, and in its scale are weighed, all ideas of *good* and of *evil*, of *vice* and of *virtue*, of *just* and of *unjust*, of *truth* or of *error*, of *allowed* or *forbidden*, on which is founded the morality of individual, or of social man.

CHAPTER IV.

Basis of Morality; of Good, of Evil, of Sin, of Crime, of Vice, and of Virtue.

Q. What is good according to the Law of Nature?

A. It

A. It is every thing that tends to preserve and perfect man.

Q. *What is evil?*

A. It is every thing that tends to spoil or destroy man.

Q. *What is meant by physical good and evil, and by moral good and evil?*

A. By the word physical, is understood every thing that acts immediately on the body. Health is a *physical* good; *sickness* is a physical evil. By moral, is understood what acts only by consequences more or less near. Calumny is a *moral* evil; good reputation is a *moral* good; because both the one and the other occasion towards us, on the part of other men, dispositions and *habitudes** which are useful or hurtful to our preservation, and which attack or favour our means of existence.

Q. *Every thing that tends to preserve, or to produce, is therefore a good?*

A. Yes: and it is for that reason that certain legislators have placed in the rank of works, agreeable to God, the cultivation of a field, and the fruitfulness of a woman.

Q. *Every thing that tends to give death is therefore an evil?*

A. Yes: and it is for that reason some legislators have extended the idea of evil and of sin, even to the murdering of animals.

* It is from this word *habitudes* (*reiterated actions*), in Latin *mores*, that the word *moral*, and all its family, are sprung.

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Q. *The*

Q. *The murdering of a man is therefore a crime in the law of Nature ?*

A. Yes, and the greatest too that can be committed : for every other evil can be repaired, but murder alone is irreparable.

Q. *What is a sin in the law of Nature ?*

A. It is every thing that tends to trouble the order established by Nature, for the preservation and the perfection of man and of society.

Q. *Can intention be a merit or a crime ?*

A. No : for it is only an idea void of reality ; but it is a commencement of sin and of evil, by the tendency it gives towards action.

Q. *What is virtue according to the law of Nature ?*

A. It is the practice of actions useful to the individual and to society.

Q. *What does the word individual signify ?*

A. It signifies a man, considered separately from every other.

Q. *What is vice according to the law of Nature ?*

A. It is the practice of actions prejudicial to the individual and to society.

Q. *Have not virtue and vice an object purely spiritual, and abstracted from the senses ?*

A. No ; it is always to a physical end that they finally relate ; and that end is always either to destroy or to preserve the body.

Q. *Have vice and virtue degrees of strength and intenseness ?*

A. Yes,

A. Yes, according to the importance of the faculties which they attack, or which they favour; and according to the number of individuals in whom those faculties are favoured or injured.

Q. *Give me examples of them.*

A. The action of saving the life of a man is more virtuous than that of saving his property; the action of saving the life of ten men, than that of saving only the life of one; and the action useful to mankind, is more virtuous than the action useful to one nation only.

Q. *How does the law of Nature prescribe the practice of good and of virtue, and forbid that of evil and of vice?*

A. By the very advantages which result from the practice of good and of virtue towards the preservation of our body; and by the losses which result to our existence from the practice of evil and of vice.

Q. *Its precepts are then in action?*

A. Yes; they are action itself, considered in its present effect and in its future consequences.

Q. *How do you divide the virtues?*

A. We divide them into three classes; 1st, individual virtues, as relative to man alone;—2dly, domestic virtues, as relative to a family;—3dly, social virtues, as relative to society.

C H A P. V.

Of Individual Virtues ; and of Science.

Q. *Which are the individual virtues ?*

A. They are five principal ones in number :

1st, SCIENCE, which comprises prudence and wisdom.

2dly, TEMPERANCE, which comprises sobriety and chastity.

3dly, COURAGE, or strength of body, and of the soul.

4thly, ACTIVITY ; that is to say, the love of labour, and the employment of time ; and in short, CLEANLINESS OR PURITY of body, as well in dress as in habitation.

Q. *How does the law of Nature prescribe science ?*

A. By the reason that man, who knows the causes and effects of things, attends in an extensive and sure manner to his preservation, and to the developement of his faculties. Science is to him the eye and the light that enables him to discern clearly, and with justness, the objects amidst which he moves ; and hence the word *enlightened* man is made use of, to signify a learned and instructed man. Science and instruction furnish us, unfaillingly, with resources and means of subsisting ; and this is what prompted a philosopher that was shipwrecked

wrecked to say, in the midst of his companions, who were lamenting bitterly the loss of their wealth, "*for my part, I carry all my wealth within me.*"

Q. *Which is the vice contrary to science ?*

A. It is IGNORANCE.

Q. *How does the law of Nature forbid ignorance ?*

A. By the grievous detriments which result from it to our existence ; for the ignorant man, who knows neither causes nor effects, commits, every instant, errors the most pernicious, both to himself and to others ; he resembles a blind man, who gropes his way at random, and runs, or is run against, by every one he meets.

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

A. The same difference that there is between a blind man, who owns frankly, that he cannot see ; and one who pretends to see clear : silliness is the reality of ignorance, together with the vanity of being learned.

Q. *Are ignorance and silliness common ?*

A. Yes, very common ; they are the habitual and general distempers of mankind : it is three thousand years since the wisest of men said, "*The number of fools is infinite ; and the world has not changed.*"

Q. *What is the reason of that ?*

A. Because, in order to be instructed, much labour and time are necessary ; and because, men
born

born ignorant, and fearing the trouble, find it more convenient to remain blind, and to pretend to see clear.

Q. *What difference is there between a learned and a wise man ?*

A. The learned know, and the wise man practises.

Q. *What is prudence ?*

A. It is the anticipated perception ; the *fore-sight* of the effects, and of the consequences of each thing : a foreseeing of the means by which man avoids the dangers that threaten him, and seizes on and creates occasions which are favourable to him : whence it results, that he attends to his preservation for the present ; and for the future in a certain and extensive manner ; whilst the imprudent man, who calculates neither his steps nor his conduct, nor efforts nor resistance, falls every instant into a thousand perplexities and dangers, which destroy, more or less slowly, his faculties, and by degrees his existence.

Q. *When the gospel says, " happy are the poor of spirit," does it mean the ignorant and the 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, integrity and honesty ; and the precept of the gospel is only that of Nature.

C H A P.

C H A P. VI.

On Temperance.

Q. *What is TEMPERANCE?*

A. It is a regular use of our faculties, which makes us never exceed, in our sensations, the end of Nature to preserve us: it is the moderation of the passions.

Q. *Which is the vice contrary to temperance?*

A. The disorder of the passions, the avidity of all kind of enjoyments; in a word, cupidity.

Q. *Which are the principal branches of temperance?*

A. Sobriety, continence, or chastity.

Q. *How does the law of Nature prescribe sobriety?*

A. By its powerful influence over our health. The sober man digests with comfort; he is not overwhelmed by the weight of aliments; his ideas are clear and easy; he fulfils all his functions properly; he conducts his business with intelligence; he advances in age exempt from disorders; he does not spend his money in remedies, and he enjoys, in mirth and gladness, the wealth which chance, and his own prudence, have procured him. Thus, from one virtue alone, generous Nature draws innumerable recompences.

Q. *How does it prohibit gluttony?*

A. By

A. By the numerous evils that are attached to it. The glutton, oppressed with aliments, digests with anxiety; his head, troubled by the fumes of indigestion, is incapable of conceiving clear and distinct ideas; he abandons himself with violence to the disorderly impulse of lust and anger, which injure his health; his body becomes fat, heavy, and unfit for labour; he endures painful and expensive distempers; he seldom lives to be old; his age is replete with infirmities, and he becomes loathsome to himself.

Q. Should abstinence and fasting be considered as virtuous actions.

A. Yes, when one has eaten too much; for then abstinence and fasting are simple and efficacious remedies: but when the body is in want of aliment, to refuse it any, and to let it suffer with hunger or thirst, is delirium and a real sin against the law of Nature.

Q. How is drunkenness considered in the law of Nature?

A. As a most vile and pernicious vice. The drunkard, deprived of the sense and of the reason which God has bestowed on him, profanes the donations of the Divinity; he debases himself to the condition of brutes; unable even to guide his steps, he staggers and falls as if he were epileptic; he hurts, and even risks killing himself; his debility in this state exposes him to the ridicule and contempt
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of every person that sees him ; he makes, in his drunkenness, prejudicial and ruinous bargains, and ruins his affairs ; he makes use of opprobrious language, which creates him enemies and repentance ; he fills his house with trouble and sorrow, and terminates, by a premature death, or by a cacothymical old age.

Q. Does the law of Nature interdict absolutely the use of wine ?

A. No : it only forbids the abuse : but as the transition from the use to the abuse is easy and prompt amongst the generality of men, perhaps the legislators, who have proscribed the use of wine, have rendered a service to humanity :

Q. Does the law of Nature forbid the use of certain kinds of meat, or of certain vegetables, on particular days, during certain seasons ?

A. No : it absolutely forbids, only whatever is injurious to health ; its precepts, in this respect, vary according to persons, and they constitute a very delicate and important science ; for the quality, the quantity, and the combination of aliments have the greatest influence, not only over the momentary affections of the soul, but even over its habitual disposition. A man is not the same fasting as after a meal ; even were he sober, a glass of spirituous liquor, or a dish of coffee, give degrees of vivacity, of mobility, of disposition to anger, sadness, or gaiety ; such a meat, because it lies

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heavy

heavy on the stomach, engenders moroseness and melancholy; such another, because it assists digestion, creates sprightliness, and an inclination to oblige and to love. The use of vegetables, because they have little nourishment, renders the body weak, and gives a disposition to repose, idleness, and ease. The use of meat, because it is full of nourishment, stimulates the nerves, and therefore gives vivacity, uneasiness, and audacity. Now from those habitudes of aliment result habits of constitution and of the organs, which form at length different kinds of temperaments, distinguishing each by a peculiar characteristic. And it is for this reason that, in hot countries especially, legislators have made laws respecting regimen or food. The ancients were taught by long experience, that the dietic science constituted a great part of the moral science. Amongst the Egyptians, the ancient Persians, and even amongst the Greeks, at the areopagus, important affairs were examined fasting. And it has been remarked, that amongst those people, where public affairs were discussed during the heat of meals, and the fumes of digestion, deliberations were hasty and turbulent, and the results of them frequently unreasonable, and productive of turbulence and disturbance.

CHAP. VII.

On Continence.

Q. Does the law of Nature prescribe CONTINENCE?

A. Yes: because a moderate use of the most lively of pleasures is not only useful, but indispensable, to the support of strength and health; and because a simple calculation proves, that for some minutes of privation, you increase the number of your days, both in vigour of body and of mind.

Q. How does it forbid libertinism?

A. By the numerous evils which result from it to the physical and the moral existence. The man who makes an abuse of women enervates and pines away; he is no longer able to attend to study or labour; he contracts idle and expensive habits, which destroy his means of existence, his public consideration, and his credit. These intrigues are the cause of continual embarrassment, cares, quarrels, and lawsuits, without mentioning the grievous deep-rooted distempers, and the loss of his strength by an inward and slow poison; the stupid dullness of his mind, by the exhausting and waste of the nervous system; and, in short, a premature and infirm old age.

Q. Does the law of Nature prescribe absolute chastity?

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A. No

A. No: for sometimes excess of continence is injurious to health, and occasions dangerous distempers, by reason of another law of the same nature, which ordains man and woman to reproduce.

Q. *Why is chastity more considered as a virtue in women than in men?*

A. Because the abuse, and even the use of pleasure, is productive, in the social state, of more important disadvantages to women than to men; besides, the inconveniences attendant on pregnancy, and the pains of child-birth, they remain charged with the nourishment and education of children, an expence which impoverishes them, which injures their means of subsisting, and attacks their physical and moral existence. Deprived, in that state, of the freshness and health which constitutes their support, carrying with them an extra and expensive burthen, they are less sought after by men; they find no solid establishment; they fall into poverty, misery, and wretchedness, and thus drag on, in bitterness, their unhappy existence.

Q. *Does the law of Nature extend so far as the scruples of desires and thoughts?*

A. Yes: because, in the physical laws of the human body, thoughts and desires inflame the senses, and soon provoke to action. Now, by another law of Nature in the organization of our body, those actions become machinal wants, which recurs at certain periods of days or of weeks, so that at such a time the want is renewed of such an action
and

and such a secretion. Now if this action, and this secretion be injurious to the health, the habitude of them becomes destructive of life itself. Thus thoughts and desires have a true and natural importance.

Q. Should modesty be considered as a virtue ?

A. Yes : because modesty, in as much as shame of certain actions, maintains the soul and the body in all those habits, useful to good order, and to self-preservation. The modest woman is esteemed, sought after, and established, with advantages of fortune, which assure her existence, and render it agreeable to her ; whilst the immodest, impudent, and prostitute, are despised, repulsed and abandoned to misery and infamy.

CHAP. VIII.

On Courage, and of Activity.

Q. Are COURAGE, and STRENGTH OF BODY AND MIND virtues in the law of Nature ?

A. Yes ; and most important virtues ; they are the efficacious and indispensable means of attending to our preservation and welfare. The courageous and strong man repulses oppression, defends his life, his liberty, and his property. By his labour he procures himself an abundant subsistence, which he enjoys

enjoys in tranquillity and peace of mind. If he falls under misfortunes, from which his prudence could not protect him, he supports them with firmness and resignation; and it is for this reason that the ancient moralists have placed strength and courage on the list of the four principal virtues.

Q. Should weakness and cowardice be considered as Vices?

A. Yes: since it is certain that they produce innumerable calamities. The weak or cowardly man lives in perpetual cares and agonies; he undermines his health by the dread, oftentimes illfounded, of attacks and dangers; and this dread, which is an evil, is not a remedy; it renders him, on the contrary, the slave of whosoever will oppress him; and by the servitude and debasement of all his faculties, it degrades and diminishes his means of existence, so far as the seeing his life depend on the will and caprice of another man.

Q. But after what you have said on the influence of aliments, are not courage and strength, as well as many other virtues, in a great measure the effect of our physical constitution and temperament?

A. Yes: it is true, and so far; that those qualities are transmitted by generation and blood with the elements on which they depend. The most reiterated and constant facts prove, that in the breed of animals of every kind, we see certain physical and moral qualities attached to the individual animals

animals of those species, encrease or decay according to the combinations and mixtures they make with other breeds.

Q. *But then as our will is not sufficient to procure us those qualities, is it a crime to be deprived of them ?*

A. No : it is not a crime, it is a *misfortune* ; it is what the ancients called a *fatal fatality* ; but even then it still depends on us to acquire them ; for as soon as we know on what physical elements such or such a quality is founded, we can promote its growth, and accelerate its developments, by a skilful management of those elements ; and in this consists the science of education, which, according as it is directed, perfectionates or degrades individual, or the whole race, to such a pitch, as totally to change the nature and inclinations of them ; and this is what renders the knowledge of the laws of Nature so important, by which those operations and changes are certainly and necessarily effected.

Q. *Why do you say that activity is a virtue according to the law of Nature ?*

A. Because the man who works, and employs his time usefully, reaps from it a thousand precious advantages to his existence. If he is born poor, his labour furnishes him with subsistence ; and still more, if he is sober, continent, and prudent, for he soon acquires a sufficiency, and enjoys the sweets of life : his very labour gives him virtues ; for
while

while he occupies his body and mind, he is not affected with unruly desires; his time does not lie heavy on him; he contracts mild habits, he augments his strength and health, and advances on to a peaceful and happy old age.

Q. Are idleness and sloth vices in the law of Nature?

A. Yes, and the most pernicious of all vices; for they lead to every other. By idleness and sloth, man remains ignorant, and forgets even the science he may have acquired, and falls into all the misfortunes which accompany ignorance and folly; by idleness and sloth man, devoured with disquietude, in order to dissipate it, abandons himself to all the desires of his senses, which, increasing from day to day, render him intemperate, gluttonous, lustful, enervated, cowardly, vile and contemptible. By the certain effect of all those vices he ruins his fortune, consumes his health, and terminates his life in all the agonies of sickness, poverty, and wretchedness.

Q. One would think, from what you say, that poverty was a vice?

A. No; it is not a vice; but it is still less a virtue; for it is by far more ready to injure than to be useful; it is even commonly the result, or the beginning of vice; for the effect of all individual vices is, to lead to indigence, and to the privation of the necessaries of life; and when a man is in
want

want, he is very near procuring them by vicious means, that is to say, by means injurious to society. All the individual virtues tend, on the contrary, to procure to man an abundant subsistence; and where he has more than he is able to consume, it is much easier for him to give to others, and to practise the actions useful to society.

Q. *Do you look upon riches as a virtue?*

A. No; but it is still less a vice; it is the use alone of it that can be called virtuous or vicious, according as it is serviceable to man and to society. Riches is like *science*, like *strength and courage*, an instrument, the use and employment alone of which determine its virtue or vice.

CHAP. IX.

Q. *Why do you place cleanliness in the rank of virtues?*

A. Because it is, in reality, one of the most important amongst them, on account of its powerful influence over the health and preservation of the body. *Cleanliness*, as well in dress as in residence, obviates the pernicious effects of the humidity, the baneful odours, and contagious exhalations, which exhale from all things abandoned to putrefaction: cleanliness maintains free transpiration; it renews the air, refreshes the blood, and disposes even the mind to alacrity.

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From this it appears, that persons attentive to the cleanliness of their body and habitations, are, in general, more healthy, and less exposed to distempers, than those who live in the midst of filth and nastiness; again, it is further remarked, that cleanliness carry along with it throughout all the branches of domestic administration, habits of order and arrangement, which is one of the first means and first elements of happiness.

Q. Uncleanliness, or filthiness, is therefore a real vice?

A. Yes, as real a one as drunkenness or idleness, from which, in a great measure, it is derived. Uncleanliness is the second, and often the first cause of many inconveniences, and even of grievous disorders: it is a fact in medicine, that it brings on the itch, the scurf, tetter, and leprosy, as much or more, than the use of tainted or sour aliments; that it favours the contagious influence of the plague and malignant fevers; that it even produces them in hospitals and prisons; that it occasions rheumatisms, by incrusting the skin with dirt, and thereby preventing transpiration, without reckoning the shameful inconvenience of being devoured by vermin—the foul appendage of misery and depravity.

Also, most part of the ancient legislators have laid down cleanliness (expressed by purity) as one of the essential dogmas of their religion; it was for this reason that they expelled from society, and even punished corporally, those who were infected with
dilempers.

distempers produced by uncleanness; that they instituted and consecrated ceremonies of *ablutions*, *baths*, baptisms, and of purifications even by fire; and the aromatic fumes of incense, myrrh, benjamin, &c. so that the entire system of *flains*, all those rites of *clean* and *unclean* things, degenerated since into abuses and prejudices, were only founded originally on the judicious *observation*, which wise and instructed men had made, of the extreme influence that cleanliness in dress and abode exercises over the health of the body, and by an immediate consequence over that of the mind and moral faculties.

Thus all the individual virtues have for their object, more or less direct, more or less near, the preservation of the man who practises them; and by the preservation of each man they lead to that of families and society which are composed of the united sum of individuals.

C H A P. X.

On Domestic Virtues.

Q. *What do you mean by domestic virtues?*

A. I mean the practice of actions useful to a family, supposed to live in one and the same house*.

Q. *What are those virtues, or how are they denominated?*

* Domestic is derived from the Latin word *domus*, a house.

A. They are *ÆCONOMY*, *PATEREAL LOVE*, *CONJUGAL LOVE*, *FRATERNAL LOVE*, and the accomplishment of the duties of *MASTER* and *SERVANT*.

Q. *What is œconomy?*

A. It is, according to the most extensive meaning of the word,* the proper administration of every thing that concerns the existence of the family or house; and as subsistence holds the first rank, the word *œconomy* is confined to the employment of money for the first wants of life.

Q. *Why is œconomy a virtue?*

A. Because the man who makes no useless expences acquires a superabundancy, which is true wealth, and by the means of which he procures for himself and his family every thing that is really convenient and useful; without mentioning his securing thereby resources against accidental and unforeseen losses, so that he and his family enjoy an agreeable and undisturbed sufficiency, which is the basis of human felicity.

Q. *Dissipation and prodigality therefore are vices?*

A. Yes; for by them man, in the end, is deprived of the necessaries of life, he falls into poverty and wretchedness; and his very friends, fearing to be obliged to restore to him what he has spent with or for them, avoid him as a debtor does his creditor, and he remains abandoned by the whole world.

* *Oico nomos*, or the good order of the house.

Q. *What*

Q. *What is paternal love ?*

A. It is the assiduous care taken by parents to make their children contract the habit of every action useful to themselves and to society.

Q. *In what is paternal tenderness a virtue in parents ?*

A. In this, that parents, who rear their children in those habits, procure for themselves during the course of their lives enjoyments and helps, that give a sensible satisfaction at every instant, and which assure to them, when advanced in years, supports and consolations, against the wants and calamities of all kinds, with which old age is beset.

Q. *Is paternal love a common virtue ?*

A. No: notwithstanding the ostentation made of it by parents, it is a rare virtue; they do not love their children, they caress them and spoil them; in them they love only the agents of their will, the instruments of their power, the trophies of their vanity, the toy of their laziness: it is not so much the good of their children that they propose to themselves, as their submission and obedience; and if among children so many are seen ungrateful for benefits received, it is because there are among parents as many despotic and ignorant benefactors.

Q. *Why do you say that conjugal love is a virtue ?*

A. Because the concord and union resulting from the love of the married, establish in the heart of the family a multitude of habits and customs useful

to its *prosperity* and preservation. The united pair are attached to, and seldom quit their house; they superintend each particular direction of it; they apply themselves to the education of their children; they maintain the respect and fidelity of domestics; they prevent all disorder and dissipation; and from the whole of their good conduct, they live in ease and consideration: whilst married persons, who do not love one another, fill their house with quarrels and troubles, create dissention betwixt their children and the servants, leaves both indiscriminately to all kinds of vicious habits; each in his turn spoils, and plunders the house; the revenues are absorbed without profit, debts accumulate, the married pair avoid each other, or contend in law-suits; the whole family falls into disorder, ruin, and disgrace, and the want of the necessaries to preserve life.

Q. *Is adultery an offence in the law of Nature?*

A. Yes; for it drags along with it a number of habits injurious to the married, and to their families. The wife or husband's affections being attached to others, they neglect their house, avoid it, and take from it, as much as they can, its revenues or income, to expend them with the object of their affections; hence arises quarrels, scandal, law-suits, the contempt of their children and of their servants, and at last the plundering and ruin of the whole family; without reckoning that the adulterous woman

man commits a most grievous theft in giving to her husband heirs of foreign blood, who deprive his real children of their legitimate portion.

Q. *What is filial love?*

A. It is, on the side of children, the practice of those actions, useful to themselves, and to their parents.

Q. *How does the law of Nature prescribe filial love?*

A. By three principal motives, 1st, by sentiment, for the affectionate care of parents inspires, from the most tender age, mild habits of attachment: 2dly, by justice; for children owe to their parents a return and indemnity of the cares, and likewise for the expences they have caused them: 3dly, by personal interest, for if they use them ill, they give to their own children examples of revolt and ingratitude, which authorises them, one day or other, to behave to themselves in a similar manner.

Q. *Are we to understand by filial love, a passive and blind submission?*

A. No, but a reasonable submission, founded on the knowledge of the mutual rights and duties of parents and children; rights and duties, without the observance of which their mutual conduct is nothing but disorder.

Q. *Why is fraternal love a virtue?*

A. Because the concord and union which result from the love of brothers, establish the strength, security, and conservation of the family: brothers
united

united, defend themselves against all oppression, they aid one another in their wants, they help one another in their misfortunes, and thus secure their common existence; whilst brothers disunited, abandoned each to his own personal strength, fall into all the inconveniences attendant on an isolated state and individual weakness. It is what a certain Scythian king has ingeniously expressed; being on his death-bed, he called his children to him, and ordered them to break a bundle of arrows; the young men, though strong and nervous, being unable to effect it, he took them in his turn, and, having untied the bundle, broke each of the arrows separately with his fingers. "Behold here" said he, "the effects of union; united together you will be invincible; taken separately, you will be broken like reeds."

Q. What are the reciprocal duties of masters and of servants?

A. They consist in the practice of the actions which are respectively and justly useful to both, and there begins the relatives of society; for the rule and measure of those respective actions, is the equilibrium or equality between the service and the recompence, between what the one returns, and the other gives, which is the fundamental basis of all society.

Thus all the domestic and individual virtues, refer more or less mediately, but always with certitude, to the physical object of the amelioration and preservation

preservation of man, and thereby are precepts resulting from the fundamental law of Nature in his formation.

C H A P. XI.

Of the social Virtues—of Justice.

Q. *What is SOCIETY?*

A. It is every reunion of men living together under the clauses of an expressed or tacit contract, which has for its end, their common preservation.

Q. *Are the social virtues numerous?*

A. Yes; there may be as many reckoned of them as there are kinds of actions useful to society; but all may be reduced to one only principle.

Q. *What is that fundamental principle?*

A. It is JUSTICE; which alone comprises all the virtues of society.

Q. *Why do you say that justice is the fundamental, and almost the only virtue of society?*

A. Because it alone embraces the practice of all the actions which are useful to society; and because all the other virtues, under the denominations of charity, humanity, probity, love of one's country, sincerity, generosity, simplicity of morals and modesty, are only varied forms, and diversified applications of the axiom, *do not do to another what you would not wish to be done to yourself*; which is the definition of justice.

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Q. *How*

Q. *How does the law of Nature prescribe justice?*

A. By three physical attributes inherent in the organization of man.

Q. *What are those attributes?*

A. They are EQUALITY, LIBERTY, and PROPERTY.

Q. *How is equality a physical attribute of man?*

A. Because all men having equally eyes, hands, mouths, ears, and the requisite want of the use of them in order to live, have, by this reason alone, an equal right to life, and to the use of the aliments which maintain it; they are all equal before God.

Q. *Do you pretend to say, that all men hear equally, see equally, feel equally, have equal wants, and equal passions?*

A. No; for it is evident, and daily facts shew, that one is short, another long sighted; that one eats much, another little; that one has mild, another violent passions; in a word, that one is weak in body and mind, whilst another is strong in both.

Q. *They are therefore really unequal?*

A. Yes, in the developement of their means, but not in the nature and essence of those means; they are made of the same stuff, but the dimensions of it are not equal, the weight and value of it are not the same. Our language possesses no one word adequate to design or express the identity of Nature, and the diversity of its form and employment. It is a proportional equality, and it is for this reason

son I have said, equal before God, and in the order of Nature.

Q. How is liberty a physical attribute of man ?

A. Because all men having senses sufficient for their preservation; no one wanting the eye of another to see, his ear to hear, his mouth to eat, his feet to walk; they are all, by this very reason, constituted naturally independent and free; no man is necessarily subjected to another, nor has he a right to domineer.

Q. But if a man is born strong, has he not a natural right to master the weak man ?

A. No; for it is neither a necessity for him, nor a convention between them; it is an abusive extension of his strength: and here an abuse is made of the word *right*, which implies in its true meaning, *justice or reciprocal faculties.*

Q. How is property a physical attribute of man ?

A. In as much as all men being constituted equal, or similar to another, and consequently independent and free, each is the absolute master, the full and whole proprietor of his body, and of the produce of his labour.

Q. How is justice derived from those three attributes ?

A. In this; that men being equal and free, owing nothing to each other, have no right to require any thing from one another, only in as much as they return an equal value for it; or in as much as

the balance of what is given is in EQUILIBRIUM to what is returned, and it is this *equality*, this *equilibrium*, which is called *justice*, *equity*;* that is to say, that *equality* and *justice*, are but one and the same word, the same *law* of Nature, of which all the social virtues are only applications and derivatives.

C H A P. XII.

Developement of the social Virtues.

Q. Explain to me how the social virtues are divided from the law of Nature. How is charity, or the love of one's neighbour, a precept and application of it ?

A. By reason of equality and reciprocity ; for when we injure another, we give him a right to injure us in return. Thus, by attacking the existence of our neighbour, we act prejudicially to our own, from the effect of reciprocity ; on the other hand, by doing good to others, we have room and right to expect an equivalent exchange : and such is the character of all the social virtues, that they are useful to the man who practises them by the right of reciprocity, which they give him over those who have reaped advantages from them.

* *Æquitas, equilibrium, equalitas*, are all of the same family.

Q. *Charity*

Q. *Charity is nothing then but justice ?*

A. No ; it is only justice, with this slight difference, that strict justice confines itself to say, *Do not do to another the harm you would not wish he should do to yourself* : and that charity, or the love of one's neighbour, extends so far as to say, *Do to another the good which you would wish to receive from him*. Thus the gospel, in saying, that this precept contained the whole of the law and the prophets, announced nothing more than the precept of the law of Nature.

Q. *Does it enjoin pardon for injuries ?*

A. Yes ; in as much as that pardon is consistent with self-preservation.

Q. *Does it prescribe to us, after having received a blow on one cheek, to hold out the other for a second ?*

A. No : for it is, in the first place, contrary to the precept of loving our neighbour *as ourselves*, since thereby we should love, more than ourselves, him who makes an attack on our preservation. 2dly, Such a precept taken literally, excites the wicked to oppression and injustice ; the law of Nature has been more wise in prescribing a calculated proportion of courage and moderation, which induces us to forget a first or casual injury, but which punishes every act tending to oppression.

Q. *Does the law of Nature prescribe the doing of good*

good to others beyond the bounds of reason and measure ?

A. No: for it is a sure way of leading him to ingratitude. Such is the force of sentiment and justice implanted in the heart of men, that they are not even pleased with benefits conferred without discretion. There is one only measure with them, and that is—to be just.

Q. Is alms-giving a virtuous action ?

A. Yes, when it is done according to rule ; without which it degenerates into imprudence and vice, in as much as it encourages laziness, which is hurtful to the beggar and to society ; no one has a right to partake of the property and fruits of another's labour, without rendering an equivalent of his own industry.

Q. Does the law of Nature consider as virtues the faith and hope which people blend with charity ?

A. No: for they are ideas without reality ; and if any effects result from them, they turn rather to the profit of those who have not the same notions or ideas, than to those who have them ; so that FAITH and HOPE may be called the virtues of dupes to the profit of rogues.

Q. Does the law of Nature prescribe probity ?

A. Yes ; for probity is nothing more than respect of one's own rights in those of another, a respect founded on a prudent and well combined calculation.

calculation of our interests, compared to those of others.

Q. But does not this calculation, which embraces the complicated interests and rights of the social state, require an enlightened understanding and knowledge, which make it a difficult science ?

A. Yes ; and a science so much the more delicate, as the honest man pronounces in his own cause.

Q. Probity, therefore, is a sign of extension and justice in the mind ?

A. Yes ; for an honest man most always neglects a present interest, in order not to destroy a future one ; whilst the rogue acts contrary, and loses a great future interest for a present smaller one.

Q. Improbability, therefore, is a sign of falseness in the judgment and contraction in the mind ?

A. Yes ; and rogues may be defined ignorant and silly calculators ; for they do not understand their true interest, and they have the pretension of being cunning ; nevertheless, their cunning never ends but by making known what they are ; the loss of all confidence and esteem ; and the good services which should result to them for their physical and social existence. They neither live in peace with others, nor with themselves ; and incessantly menaced by their conscience and by their enemies, they enjoy no real happiness but that alone of not being hanged.

Q. Does

Q. Does the law of Nature interdict theft or robbery ?

A. Yes ; for the man who robs another gives him a right to rob him ; from thence there is no security in his property, nor in his means of preservation : thus, by injuring others, he, like a back stroke, injures himself.

Q. Does it interdict even an inclination to rob ?

A. Yes ; for that inclination leads naturally to action, and it is for this reason that envy has been made a sin.

Q. In what manner does it forbid murder ?

A. By the most powerful motives of self-preservation ; for 1st, the man who attacks, exposes himself to the risk of being killed by the right of defence : 2^{dly}, if he kills, he gives to the parent and friends of the deceased, and to society at large, an equal right of killing him ; so that his life is no more in safety.

Q. How can we, by the law of Nature, repair the evil we have done ?

A. By rendering a proportionate good to those whom we have made suffer.

Q. Does it permit us to repair it by prayers, vows, offerings to God, fasts, and mortifications ?

A. No ; for all those things are foreign to the action we wish to repair ; they neither restore the ox to him from whom it has been stolen, nor honour

nour to him whom we have deprived of it, nor life to him from whom it has been snatched; consequently they miss the end of justice; they are only perverse contracts by which a man sells to another goods which do not belong to him; they are a real depravation of morality, in as much as they embolden to commit crimes through the hope of expiating them; wherefore, they have been the real cause of all the evils by which the people amongst whom those expiatory practices were used, have been continually tormented.

Q. *Does the law of Nature order sincerity?*

A. Yes: for lying, perfidy, and perjury creates distrust, quarrels, hatred, revenge, and a croud of evils amongst men, which tend to their common destruction; whilst sincerity and fidelity establish confidence, concord, and peace, besides the infinite good resulting from such a state of things to society.

Q. *Does it prescribe mildness and modesty?*

A. Yes: for roughness and obduracy, in alienating from us the hearts of other men, give them disposition or inclination to hurt us; ostentation and vanity, in wounding their self love; and their jealousy, occasion us to miss the end of a real utility.

Q. *Does it prescribe humility as a virtue?*

A. No: for it is a propensity in the human heart to despise secretly every thing that presents to it the idea of weakness; and self-debasement encourages pride and oppression in others: the balance should be kept just and equal.

Q. *Yours*

Q. You have reckoned simplicity of manners as a social virtue; what do you mean by that word?

A. I mean the restricting our wants and desires to what is truly useful to the existence of the citizen and his family; that is to say, the man of simple manners has but few wants, and lives content with a little.

Q. How is this virtue prescribed to us?

A. By the numerous advantages which the practice of it procures to the individual and to society; for the man whose wants are few, is free at once from a croud of cares, perplexities and labours; he avoids many quarrels and contests, arising from avidity, and desire of acquisition; he spares himself the corroding anxieties of ambition, the inquietudes of possession, and the uneasiness of losses; finding superfluity every where, he is the real rich man, always content with what he has, he is happy at little expence, and other men, not fearing any opposition or competition from him, leave him in quiet, and if he should want, are disposed to render him all kinds of services.

And if this virtue of simplicity extends to a whole people, they assure to themselves abundance: rich in every thing they do not consume, they acquire immense means of exchange and commerce; they work, fabricate, and sell at a lower price than others, and attain to all kinds of prosperity both at home and abroad.

Q. What is the vice contrary to this virtue?

A. It is CUPIDITY and LUXURY.

Q. Is

Q. Is luxury a vice in the individual, and in society?

A. Yes: and to that degree, that it may be said to embrace all the others with it; for the man who gives himself the want of many things, imposes thereby all the cares and pains, submits to all the means, just or unjust, to their acquisition.

Does he possess an enjoyment? he covets another; and in the bosom of superfluity of every thing, he is never rich: a commodious dwelling is not sufficient for him, he must have a superb hotel; he is not content with a plenteous table; he must have rare and costly viands; he must have splendid and glittering furniture, expensive cloaths, a train of attendants, horses, carriages, women, and a variety of theatrical as well as innumerable other amusements. Now to supply so many expences, much money must be had, and every method of procuring it becomes good and even necessary to him: at first he borrows, afterwards steals, robs, plunders, turns bankrupt, is at war with every one, ruins and is ruined.

Should a nation be involved in luxury, it occasions at large the same devastations, by reason that it consumes its own entire produce, and finds itself poor even with abundance; it has nothing to sell to foreigners; its manufactures are carried on at a great expence, and are sold too dear; it becomes tributary for every thing it imports; it attacks externally

its consideration, power, strength, and means of defence and preservation; whilst internally it undermines and falls into the dissolution of its members; all its citizens being covetous of enjoyments, are engaged in a perpetual struggle to obtain them; all hurt or are near hurting themselves; hence arise those habits and actions of usurpation, which is denominated *moral corruption*, intestine war between citizen and citizen. From luxury arises avidity, from avidity, invasion by violence and perfidy: from luxury arises the iniquity of the judge, the venality of the witness, the improbity of the husband, the prostitution of the wife, the obduracy of parents, the ingratitude of children, the avarice of the master, the dishonesty or theft of the servant, the delapidation of the administrator, the perversity of the legislator, lying, perfidy, perjury, assassination, and all the disorders of the social state; so that it was with a profound sense of truth, that ancient moralists have laid the basis of the social virtues on simplicity of morals, or manners; restriction of wants, and contentment with a little; and a sure way of knowing the extent of a man's virtues or vices, is, to find out if his expences are proportionate to his fortune, and calculate from his want of money, his probity, his integrity in fulfilling his engagements, his devotion to the public weal, and his false or sincere love of his *country*.

Q. *What do you mean by the word country?*

A. I mean

A. I mean the communion of citizens, who, united by fraternal sentiments, and reciprocal wants, make of their respective strength one common force, the re-action of which towards each other, takes the preservative and beneficent character of *paternity*.

In society, citizens form a bank of interest; in our country we form a family of endearing and soft attachments; it is charity, the love of one's neighbour, extended to a whole nation. Now as charity cannot be isolated from justice, no member of the family can pretend to the enjoyment of its advantages, but only in proportion to his labour; if he consumes more than results from it, he necessarily encroaches on his fellow citizens; and it is only in as much as he consumes less than what he produces, or what he possesses, that he can acquire the means of making sacrifices and being generous.

Q. *What do you conclude from the whole of this?*

A. I conclude from it, that all the social virtues are only the habitude of actions useful to society, and to the individual who practises them; that they all refer to the physical object, the preservation of man; that nature having implanted in us the want of that preservation, has made a law to us of all its consequences, and a crime of every thing that deviates from it; that we carry in us the seed of every virtue, and of every perfection; that it only requires to be developed, that we are only happy in

as

as much as we observe the rules established by Nature for the end of our preservation; and that all wisdom, all perfection, all law, all virtue, all philosophy, consist in the practice of those axioms founded on our own organization,

PRESERVE THYSELF;

INSTRUCT THYSELF;

MODERATE THYSELF;

Live for thy fellow citizens—that they may live for thee.

FINIS



