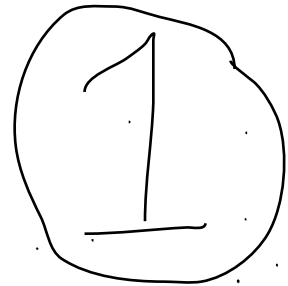


Voltaire

An Enlightenment Thinker



TOLERANCE

WHAT is tolerance? it is the consequence of humanity. We are all formed of frailty and error; let us pardon reciprocally each other's folly--that is the first law of nature.

It is clear that the individual who persecutes a man, his brother, because he is not of the same opinion, is a monster. That admits of no difficulty. But the government! but the magistrates! but the princes! how do they treat those who have another worship than theirs? If they are powerful strangers, it is certain that a prince will make an alliance with them. Francis I., very Christian, will unite with Mussulmans against Charles V., very Catholic. Francois I. will give money to the Lutherans of Germany to support them in their revolt against the emperor; but, in accordance with custom, he will start by having Lutherans burned at home. For political reasons he pays them in Saxony; for political reasons he burns them in Paris. But what will happen? Persecutions make proselytes? Soon France will be full of new Protestants. At first they will let themselves be hanged, later they in their turn will hang. There will be civil wars, then will come the St. Bartholomew; and this corner of the world will be worse than all that the ancients and moderns have ever told of hell.

Madmen, who have never been able to give worship to the God who made you! Miscreants, whom the example of the Noachides, the learned Chinese, the Parsees and all the sages, has never been able to lead! Monsters, who need superstitions as crows' gizzards need carrion! you have been told it already, and there is nothing else to tell you-if you have two religions in your countries, they will cut each other's throat; if you have thirty religions, they will dwell in peace. Look at the great Turk, he governs Guebres, Banians, Creek Christians, Nestorians, Romans. The first who tried to stir up tumult would be impaled; and everyone is tranquil.

Of all religions, the Christian is without doubt the one which should inspire tolerance most, although up to now the Christians have been the most intolerant of all men. The Christian Church was divided in its cradle, and was divided even in the persecutions which under the first emperors it sometimes endured. Often the martyr was regarded as an apostate by his brethren, and the Carpocratian Christian expired beneath the sword of the Roman executioners, excommunicated by the Ebionite Christian, the which Ebionite was anathema to the Sabellian.

This horrible discord, which has lasted for so many centuries, is a very striking lesson that we should pardon each other's errors; discord is the great ill of mankind; and tolerance is the only remedy for it.

There is nobody who is not in agreement with this truth, whether he meditates soberly in his study, or peaceably examines the truth with his friends. Why then do the same men who admit in private indulgence, kindness, justice, rise in public with so much fury against these virtues? Why? it is that their own interest is their god, and that they sacrifice everything to this monster that they worship.

I possess a dignity and a power founded on ignorance and credulity; I walk on the heads of the men who lie prostrate at my feet; if they should rise and look me in the face, I am lost; I must bind them to the ground, therefore, with iron chains.

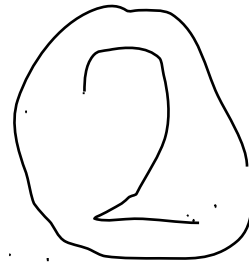
Thus have reasoned the men whom centuries of bigotry have made powerful. They have other powerful men beneath them, and these have still others, who all enrich themselves with the spoils of the poor, grow fat on their blood, and laugh at their stupidity. They all detest tolerance, as partisans grown rich at the public expense fear to render their accounts, and as tyrants dread the word liberty. And then, to crown everything, they hire fanatics to cry at the top of their voices : " Respect my master's absurdities, tremble, pay, and keep your mouths shut."

It is thus that a great part of the world long was treated; but today when so many sects make a balance of power, what course to take with them? Every sect, as one knows, is a ground of error; there are no sects of geometers, algebraists, arithmeticians, because all the propositions of geometry, algebra and arithmetic are true. In every other science one may be deceived. What Thomist or Scotist theologian would dare say seriously that he is sure of his case?

If it were permitted to reason consistently in religious matters, it is clear that we all ought to become Jews, because Jesus Christ our Saviour was born a Jew, lived a Jew, died a Jew, and that he said expressly that he was accomplishing, that he was fulfilling the Jewish religion. But it is clearer still that we ought to be tolerant of one another, because we are all weak, inconsistent, liable to fickleness and error. Shall a reed laid low in the mud by the wind say to a fellow reed fallen in the opposite direction : " Crawl as I crawl, wretch, or I shall petition that you be torn up by the roots and burned?"

Voltaire

An Enlightenment Thinker



LAWS

SHEEP live very placidly in community, they are considered very easy-going, because we do not see the prodigious quantity of animals they devour. It is even to be believed that they eat them innocently and without knowing it, like Us when we eat a Sassenage cheese. The republic of the sheep is a faithful representation of the golden age.

A chicken-run is visibly the most perfect monarchic state. There is no king comparable to a cock. If he marches proudly in the midst of his people, it is not out of vanity. If the enemy approaches, he does not give orders to his subjects to go to kill themselves for him by virtue of his certain knowledge and plenary power; he goes to battle himself, ranges his chickens behind him and fights to the death. If he is the victor, he himself sings the Te Deum. In civil life there is no one so gallant, so honest, so disinterested. He has all the virtues. Has he in his royal beak a grain of corn, a grub, he gives it to the first lady among his subjects who presents herself. Solomon in his harem did not come near a poultry-yard cock.

If it be true that the bees are governed by a queen to whom all her subjects make love, that is a still more perfect government.

The ants are considered to be an excellent democracy. Democracy is above all the other States, because there everyone is equal, and each individual works for the good of all.

The republic of the beavers is still superior to that of the ants, at least if we judge by their masonry work.

The monkeys resemble strolling players rather than a civilized people; and they do not appear to be gathered together under fixed, fundamental laws, like the preceding species.

We resemble the monkeys more than any other animal by the gift of imitation, the frivolity of our ideas, and by our inconstancy which has never allowed us to have uniform and durable laws.

When nature formed our species and gave us instincts, self-esteem for our preservation, benevolence for the preservation of others, love which is common to all the species, and the inexplicable gift of combining more ideas than all the animals together; when she had thus given us our portion, she said to us: "Do as you can."

There is no good code in any country. The reason for this is evident; the laws have been made according to the times, the place and the need, etc.

When the needs have changed, the laws which have remained, have become ridiculous. Thus the law which forbade the eating of pig and the drinking of wine was very reasonable in Arabia, where pig and wine are injurious; it is absurd at Constantinople.

The law which gives the whole fee to the eldest son is very good in times of anarchy and pillage. Then the eldest son is the captain of the castle which the brigands will attack sooner or later; the younger sons will be his chief officers, the husbandmen his soldiers. All that is to be feared is that the younger son may assassinate or poison the Salian lord his elder

brother, in order to become in his turn the master of the hovel; but these cases are rare, because nature has so combined our instincts and our passions that we have more horror of assassinating our elder brother than we have of being envious of his position. But this law, suitable for the owners of dungeons in Chilperic's time is detestable when there is question of sharing stocks in a city.

To the shame of mankind, one knows that the laws of games are the only ones which everywhere are just, clear, inviolable and executed. Why is the Indian who gave us the rules of the game of chess willingly obeyed all over the world, and why are the popes' decretals, for example, to-day an object of horror and scorn? the reason is that the inventor of chess combined everything with precision for the satisfaction of the players, and that the popes, in their decretals, had nothing in view but their own interest. The Indian wished to exercise men's minds equally, and give them pleasure; the popes wished to besot men's minds. Also, the essence of the game of chess has remained the same for five thousand years, it is common to all the inhabitants of the earth; and the decretals are known only at Spoleto, Orvieto, Loretto, where the shallowest lawyer secretly hates and despises them.

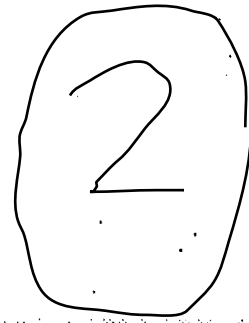
But I delight in thinking that there is a natural law independent of all human conventions: the fruit of my work must belong to me; I must honour my father and my mother; I have no right over my fellow's life, and my fellow has none over mine, etc. But when I think that from Chedorlaomer to Mentzel, colonel of hussars, everyone loyally kills and pillages his fellow with a licence in his pocket, I am very afflicted.

I am told that there are laws among thieves, and also laws of war. I ask what are these laws of war. I learn that they mean hanging a brave officer who has held fast in a bad post without cannon against a royal army; that they mean having a prisoner hanged, if the enemy has hanged one of yours; that they mean putting to the fire and the sword villages which have not brought their sustenance on the appointed day, according to the orders of the gracious sovereign of the district. "Good," say I, "that is the 'Spirit of the Laws.'"

It seems to me that most men have received from nature enough common sense to make laws, but that everyone is not just enough to make good laws.

Voltaire

An Enlightenment Thinker



DEMOCRACY

ORDINARILY there is no comparison between the crimes of the great who are always ambitious, and the crimes of the people who always want, and can want only liberty and equality. These two sentiments, Liberty and Equality, do not lead direct to calumny, rapine, assassination, poisoning, the devastation of one's neighbours' lands, etc.; but ambitious might and the mania for power plunge into all these crimes whatever be the time, whatever be the place.

Popular government is in itself, therefore, less iniquitous, less abominable than despotic power.

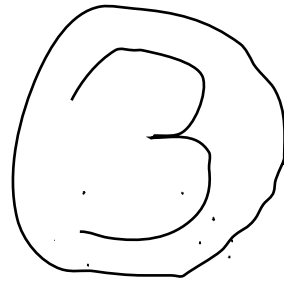
The great vice of democracy is certainly not tyranny and cruelty: there have been mountain-dwelling republicans, savage, ferocious; but it is not the republican spirit that made them so, it is nature.

The real vice of a civilized republic is in the Turkish fable of the dragon with many heads and the dragon with many tails. The many heads hurt each other, and the many tails obey a single head which wants to devour everything.

Democracy seems suitable only to a very little country, and further it must be happily situated. Small though it be, it will make many mistakes, because it will be composed of men. Discord will reign there as in a monastery; but there will be no St. Bartholomew, no Irish massacres, no Sicilian vespers, no inquisition, no condemnation to the galleys for having taken some water from the sea without paying for it, unless one supposes this republic composed of devils in a corner of hell.

One questions every day whether a republican government is preferable to a king's government? The dispute ends always by agreeing that to govern men is very difficult. The Jews had God Himself for master; see what has happened to them on that account: nearly always have they been beaten and slaves, and to-day do you not find that they cut a pretty figure?

Voltaire
An Enlightenment Thinker



TYRANNY

ONE gives the name of tyrant to the sovereign who knows no laws but those of his caprice, who takes his subjects' property, and who afterwards enrols them to go to take the property of his neighbours. There are none of these tyrants in Europe.

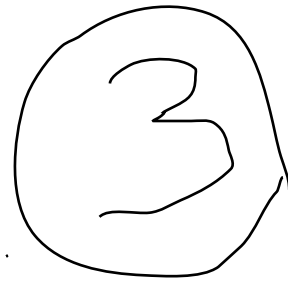
One distinguishes between the tyranny of one man and that of many. The tyranny of many would be that of a body which invaded the rights of other bodies, and which exercised despotism in favour of the laws corrupted by it. Nor are there any tyrants of this sort in Europe.

Under which tyranny would you like to live? Under neither; but if I had to choose, I should detest the tyranny of one man less than that of many. A despot always has his good moments; an assembly of despots never. If a tyrant does me an injustice, I can disarm him through his mistress, his confessor or his page; but a company of grave tyrants is inaccessible to all seductions. When it is not unjust, it is at the least hard, and never does it bestow favours.

If I have only one despot, I am quit of him by drawing myself up against a wall when I see him pass, or by bowing low, or by striking the ground with my forehead, according to the custom of the country; but if there is a company of a hundred despots, I am exposed to repeating this ceremony a hundred times a day, which in the long run is very annoying if one's hocks are not supple. If I have a farm in the neighbourhood of one of our lords, I am crushed; if I plead against a relation of the relations of one of our lords, I am ruined. What is to be done? I fear that in this world one is reduced to being either hammer or anvil; lucky the man who escapes these alternatives!

Voltaire

An Enlightenment Thinker



THEIST

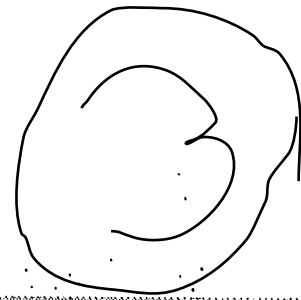
THE theist is a man firmly persuaded of the existence of a Supreme Being as good as He is powerful, who has formed all beings with extension, vegetating, sentient and reflecting; who perpetuates their species, who punishes crimes without cruelty, and rewards virtuous actions with kindness.

The theist does not know how God punishes, how he protects, how he pardons, for he is not reckless enough to flatter himself that he knows how God acts, but he knows that God acts and that He is just. Difficulties against Providence do not shake him in his faith, because they are merely great difficulties, and not proofs. He submits to this Providence, although he perceives but a few effects and a few signs of this Providence: and, judging of the things he does not see by the things he sees, he considers that this Providence reaches all places and all centuries.

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

Voltaire

An Enlightenment Thinker



FAITH

We have long pondered whether or no we should print this article, which we found in an old book. Our respect for St. Peter's see restrained us. But some pious men having convinced us that Pope Alexander VI. had nothing in common with St. Peter, we at last decided to bring this little piece into the light, without scruple.

One day Prince Pico della Mirandola met Pope Alexander VI. at the house of the courtesan Emilia, while Lucretia, the holy father's daughter, was in child-bed, and one did not know in Rome if the child was the Pope's, or his son's the Duke of Valentinois, or Lucretia's husband's, Alphonse of Aragon, who passed for impotent. The conversation was at first very sprightly. Cardinal Bembo records a part of it.

" Little Pic," said the Pope, " who do you think is my grandson's father? "

" Your son-in-law, I think," answered Pic.

" Eh! how can you believe such folly? "

" I believe it through faith."

" But do you not know quite well that a man who is impotent does not make children?"

" Faith consists," returned Pic, "in believing things because they are impossible; and, further, the honour of your house demands that Lucretia's son shall not pass as the fruit of an incest. You make me believe more incomprehensible mysteries. Have I not to be convinced that a serpent spoke, that since then all men have been damned, that Balaam's she-ass also spoke very eloquently, and that the walls of Jericho fell at the sound of trumpets? " Pic forthwith ran through a litany of all the admirable things he believed.

Alexander fell on his sofa by dint of laughing.

"I believe all that like you," he said, " for I know well that only by faith can I be saved, and that I shall not be saved by my works."

" Ah! Holy Father," said Pic, " you have need of neither works nor faith; that is good for poor profane people like us; but you who are vice-god can believe and do all you want to. You have the keys of heaven; and without a doubt St. Peter will not close the door in your face. But for myself, I avow I should need potent protection if, being only a poor prince, I had slept with my daughter, and if I had used the stiletto and the cantarella as often as your Holiness."

Alexander could take a jest. " Let us talk seriously," he said to Prince della Mirandola. "Tell me what merit one can have in telling God that one is persuaded of things of which in fact one cannot be persuaded? What pleasure can that give God? Between ourselves, saying that one believes what is impossible to believe is lying."

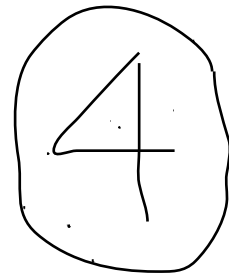
Pico della Mirandola made a great sign of the cross. "EhI paternal God," he cried, " may your Holiness pardon me, you are not a Christian."

" No, by my faith," said the Pope.

" I thought as much," said Pico della Mirandola.

Voltaire

An Enlightenment Thinker



EQUALITY

SECTION I

IT is clear that men, enjoying the faculties connected with their nature, are equal; they are equal when they perform animal functions, and when they exercise their understanding. The King of China, the Great Mogul, the Padisha of Turkey, cannot say to the least of men: "I forbid you to digest, to go to the privy and to think." All the animals of each species are equal among themselves. Animals by nature have over us the advantage of independence. If a bull which is wooing a heifer is driven away with blows of the horns by a stronger bull, it goes in search of another mistress in another field, and lives free. A cock, beaten by a cock, consoles itself in another poultry house. It is not so with us. A little vizier exiles a bostangi to Lemnos: the vizier Azem exiles the little vizier to Tenedos: the padisha exiles the little vizier Azem to Rhodes: the Janissaries put the padisha in prison, and elect another who will exile good Mussulmans as he chooses; people will still be very obliged to him if he limits his sacred authority to this little exercise.

If this world were what it seems it should be, if man could find everywhere in it an easy subsistence, and a climate suitable to his nature, it is clear that it would be impossible for one man to enslave another. If this globe were covered with wholesome fruits; if the air, which should contribute to our life, gave us no diseases and a premature death; if man had no need of lodging and bed other than those of the buck and the deer; then the Gengis-kans and the Tamerlans would have no servants other than their children, who would be folk honourable enough to help them in their old age.

In the natural state enjoyed by all untamed quadrupeds, birds and reptiles, man would be as happy as they; domination would then be a chimera, an absurdity of which no one would think; for why seek servants when you have no need of their service?

If it came into the head of some individual of tyrannous mind and brawny arm to enslave a neighbour less strong than he, the thing would be impossible; the oppressed would be on the Danube before the oppressor had taken his measures on the Volga.

All men would then be necessarily equal, if they were without needs; the poverty connected with our species subordinates one man to another; it is not the inequality which is the real misfortune, it is the dependence. It matters very little that So-and-so calls himself "His Highness," and So-and-so "His Holiness"; but to serve the one or the other is hard.

A big family has cultivated fruitful soil; two little families near by have thankless and rebellious fields; the two poor families have to serve the opulent family, or slaughter it: there is no difficulty in that. One of the two indigent families offers its arms to the rich family in order to have bread; the other goes to attack it and is beaten. The serving family is the origin of the servants and the workmen; the beaten family is the origin of the slaves.

In our unhappy world it is impossible for men living in society not to be divided into two classes, the one the rich that commands, the other the poor that serves; and these two are subdivided into a thousand, and these thousand still have different gradations.

When the prizes are drawn you come to us: "I am a man like you," you say. "I have two hands and two feet, as much pride as you, nay more, a mind as disordered, at least, as inconsequent, as contradictory as yours. I am a citizen of San Marino, or of Ragusa, or Vaugirard: give me my share of the land. In our known hemisphere there are about fifty thousand million

arpents to cultivate, some passable, some sterile. We are only about a thousand million featherless bipeds in this continent; that makes fifty arpents apiece: be just; give me my fifty arpents."

"Go and take them in the land of the Cafres," we answer, "or the Hottentots, or the Samoyedes; come to an amicable arrangement with them; here all the shares are taken. If among us you want to eat, be clothed, lodged, warmed, work for us as your father did; serve us or amuse us, and you will be paid; otherwise you will be obliged to ask charity, which would be too degrading to your sublime nature, and would stop your being really the equal of kings, and even of country parsons, according to the pretensions of your noble pride."

SECTION II

All the poor are not unhappy. The majority were born in that state, and continual work stops their feeling their position too keenly; but when they feel it, then one sees wars, like that of the popular party against the senate party in Rome, like those of the peasants in Germany, England and France. All these wars finish sooner or later with the subjection of the people, because the powerful have money, and money is master of everything in a state: I say in a state; for it is not the same between nations. The nation which makes the best use of the sword will always subjugate the nation which has more gold and less courage.

All men are born with a sufficiently violent liking for domination, wealth and pleasure, and with much taste for idleness; consequently, all men want their money and the wives or daughters of others, to be their master, to subject them to all their caprices, and to do nothing, or at least to do only very agreeable things. You see clearly that with these fine inclinations it is as impossible for men to be equal as it is impossible for two predicants or two professors of theology not to be jealous of each other.

The human race, such as it is, cannot subsist unless there is an infinity of useful men who possess nothing at all; for it is certain that a man who is well off will not leave his own land to come to till yours; and if you have need of a pair of shoes, it is not the Secretary to the Privy Council who will make them for you. Equality, therefore, is at once the most natural thing and the most fantastic.

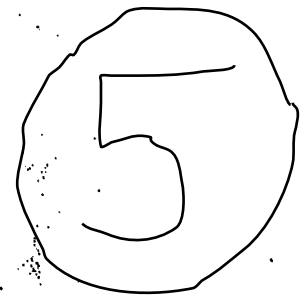
As men go to excess in everything when they can, this inequality has been exaggerated. It has been maintained in many countries that it was not permissible for a citizen to leave the country where chance has caused him to be born; the sense of this law is visibly: "This land is so bad and so badly governed, that we forbid any individual to leave it, for fear that everyone will leave it." Do better: make all your subjects want to live in your country, and foreigners to come to it.

All men have the right in the bottom of their hearts to think themselves entirely equal to other men: it does not follow from that that the cardinal's cook should order his master to prepare him his dinner; but the cook can say: "I am a man like my master; like him I was born crying; like me he will die with the same pangs and the same ceremonies. Both of us perform the same animal functions. If the Turks take possession of Rome, and if then I am cardinal and my master cook, I shall take him into my service." This discourse is reasonable and just; but while waiting for the Great Turk to take possession of Rome, the cook must do his duty, or else all human society is perverted.

As regards a man who is neither a cardinal's cook, nor endowed with any other employment in the state; as regards a private person who is connected with nothing, but who is vexed at being received everywhere with an air of being patronized or scorned, who sees quite clearly that many monsignors have no more knowledge, wit or virtue than he, and who at times is bored at waiting in their antechambers, what should he decide to do? Why, to take himself off.

Voltaire

An Enlightenment Thinker



PREJUDICES

PREJUDICE is an opinion without judgment. Thus all over the world do people inspire children with all the opinions they desire, before the children can judge.

There are some universal, necessary prejudices, which even make virtue. In all countries children are taught to recognize a rewarding and revenging God; to respect and love their father and their mother; to look on theft as a crime, selfish lying as a vice, before they can guess what is a vice and what a virtue.

There are then some very good prejudices; they are those which are ratified by judgment when one reasons.

Sentiment is not a simple prejudice; it is something much stronger. A mother does not love her son because she has been told she must love him; she cherishes him happily in spite of herself. It is not through prejudice that you run to the help of an unknown child about to fall into a precipice, or be eaten by a beast.

But it is through prejudice that you will respect a man clad in certain clothes, walking gravely, speaking likewise. Your parents have told you that you should bow before this man; you respect him before knowing whether he merits your respect; you grow in years and in knowledge; you perceive that this man is a charlatan steeped in arrogance, self-interest and artifice; you despise what you revered, and the prejudice cedes to judgment. Through prejudice you have believed the fables with which your childhood was cradled; you have been told that the Titans made war on the gods, and Venus was amorous of Adonis; when you are twelve you accept these fables as truths; when you are twenty you look on them as ingenious allegories.

Let us examine briefly the different sorts of prejudices, so as to set our affairs in order. We shall be perhaps like those who, at the time of Law's system, perceived that they had calculated imaginary riches.

PREJUDICES OF THE SENSES

Is it not strange that our eyes always deceive us, even when we have very good sight, and that on the contrary our ears do not deceive us? Let your well-informed ear hear "You are beautiful, I love you"; it is quite certain that someone has not said "I hate you, you are ugly": but you see a smooth mirror; it is demonstrated that you are mistaken, it has a very uneven surface. You see the sun as about two feet in diameter; it is demonstrated that it is a million times bigger than the earth.

It seems that God has put truth in your ears, and error in your eyes; but study optics, and you will see that God has not deceived you, and that it is impossible for objects to appear to you otherwise than you see them in the present state of things.

PHYSICAL PREJUDICES

The sun rises, the moon also, the earth is motionless: these are natural physical prejudices. But that lobsters are good for the blood, because when cooked they are red; that eels cure paralysis

because they wriggle; that the moon affects our maladies because one day someone observed that a sick man had an increase of fever during the waning of the moon; these ideas and a thousand others are the errors of ancient charlatans who judged without reasoning, and who, being deceived, deceived others.

HISTORICAL PREJUDICES

Most historical stories have been believed without examination, and this belief is a prejudice. Fabius Pictor relates that many centuries before him, a vestal of the town of Alba, going to draw water in her pitcher, was ravished, that she gave birth to Romulus and Remus, that they were fed by a she-wolf, etc. The Roman people believed this fable; they did not examine whether at that time there were vestals in Latium, whether it were probable that a king's daughter would leave her convent with her pitcher, whether it were likely that a she-wolf would suckle two children instead of eating them; the prejudice established itself.

A monk writes that Clovis, being in great danger at the battle of Tolbiac, made a vow to turn Christian if he escaped; but is it natural to address oneself to a foreign god on such an occasion? is it not then that the religion in which one was born acts most potently? Which is the Christian who, in a battle against the Turks, will not address himself to the Holy Virgin rather than to Mohammed? It is added that a pigeon brought the holy phial in its beak to anoint Clovis, and that an angel brought the oriflamme to lead him; prejudice believed all the little stories of this kind. Those who understand human nature know well that Clovis the usurper and Rolon (or Rol) the usurper turned Christian in order to govern the Christians more surely, just as the Turkish usurpers turned Mussulman in order to govern the Mussulmans more surely.

RELIGIOUS PREJUDICES

If your nurse has told you that Ceres rules over the crops, or that Vishnou and Xaca made themselves men several times, or that Sammonocodom came to cut down a forest, or that Odin awaits you in his hall near Jutland, or that Mohammed or somebody else made a journey into the sky; if lastly your tutor comes to drive into your brain what your nurse has imprinted on it, you keep it for life. If your judgment wishes to rise against these prejudices, your neighbours and, above all, your neighbours' wives cry out "Impious reprobate," and dismay you; your dervish, fearing to see his income diminish, accuses you to the cadî, and this cadî has you impaled if he can, because he likes ruling over fools, and thinks that fools obey better than others: and that will last until your neighbours and the dervish and the cadî begin to understand that foolishness is good for nothing, and that persecution is abominable.