tachment. The genius of Socrates informed him by sneezing, when it was necessary to perform any action. The young Parthenis, hurried on by her passion, resolved to write to Sarpedon an avowal of her love; she sneezes in the most tender and impassioned part of her letter : this is suf­ficient for her ; this incident supplies the place of an an- swer, and persuades her that Sarpedon is her lover. Pene- lope, harassed by the vexatious courtship of her suitors, be- gins to curse them all, and to pour forth vows for the return of Ulysses. Her son Telemachus interrupts her by a loud sneeze. She instantly exults with joy, and regards this sign as an assurance of the approaching return of her hus­band. Xenophon was haranguing his troops ; a soldier sneezed in the moment when he was exhorting them to em- brace a dangerous but necessary resolution. The whole army, moved by this presage, determined to pursue the project of their general ; and Xenophon ordered sacrifices to Jupiter the preserver.

This religious reverence for sneezing, so ancient, and so universal even in the times of Homer, always excited the curiosity of the Greek philosophers, and of the rabbins. These last have spread a tradition, that, after the creation of the world, God made a general law to this purport, that every living man should sneeze but once in his life, and that at the same instant he should render up his soul into the hand of his Creator, without any preceding indisposition. Jacob obtained an exemption from the common law, and the favour of being informed of his last hour. He sneezed and did not die ; and this sign of death was changed into a sign of life. Notice of this was sent to all the princes of the earth ; and they ordained that in future sneezing should be accompanied with forms of blessing, and vows for the persons who sneezed.

Aristotle likewise remounts to the sources of natural re- ligion. He observes, that the brain is the origin of the nerves, of our sentiments, our sensations, the seat of the soul, the image of the Divinity; that upon all these accounts, the substance of the brain has ever been held in honour ; that the first men swore by their head ; that they durst not touch nor eat the brains of any animal ; that it was even a sacred word which they dared not to pronounce. Filled with these ideas, it is not wonderful that they extended their reverence even to sneezing. Such is the opinion of the most ancient and sagacious philosophers of Greece.

According to mythology, the first sign of life Prome- theus’s artificial man gave was by sternutation. This supposed creator is said to have stolen a portion of the solar rays ; and filling with them a phial, which he had made on purpose, sealed it up hermetically. He instantly flies back to his favourite automaton, and opening the phial, holds it close to the statue; the rays still retaining all their activity, insinuate themselves through the pores, and set the fictitious man a-sneezing. Prometheus, transported with the success of his machine, offers up a fervent prayer, with wishes for the preservation of so singular a being. His automaton ob- served him, and, remembering his ejaculations, was very careful, on the like occasions, to offer these wishes in behalf of his descendants, who perpetuated it from father to son in all their colonies.

SNIGGLING, a method of fishing for eels, chiefly used in the day time, when they are found to hide themselves near wears, mills, or flood-gates.

SNIPE. See Ornithology.

SNOW, a well-known meteor, formed by the freezing of the vapour of water in the atmosphere. It differs from hail and hoar-frost, in being as it were crystallized, which they are not. This appears in examining a flake of snow by a magnifying glass ; when the whole of it will appear to be composed of fine shining spicula diverging like rays from a centre. As the flakes fall down through the atmosphere, they are continually joined by more of those radiated spi­

cula, and thus increase in bulk like the drops of rain or hailstones. Dr. Grew, in a discourse of the nature of snow, observes, that many parts thereof are of a regular figure, for the most part stars of six points, and are as perfect and transparent ice as any we see on a pond. Upon each of these points are other collateral points, set at the same an- gles as the main points themselves ; among which there are divers other irregular, which are chiefly broken points, and fragments of the regular ones. Others also, by various winds, seem to have been thawed and frozen again into ir­regular clusters, so that it seems as if the whole body of snow were an infinite mass of icicles irregularly figured ; that is, a cloud of vapours being gathered into drops, the said drops forthwith descend ; upon which descent, meet- ing with a freezing air as they pass through a colder region, each drop is immediately frozen into an icicle, shooting it- self forth into several (points ; but these still continuing their descent, and meeting with some intermitting gales of warmer air, or in their continual waftage to and 1fo, touch- ing upon each other, some of them are a little thawed, blunted, and again frozen into clusters, or entangled so as to fall down in what we call flakes.

The lightness of snow, although it is firm ice, is ow- ing to the excess of its surface, in comparison to the matter contained under it ; as gold itself may be extended in surface till it ride upon the least breath of air.

The whiteness of snow is owing to the small particles in- to which it is divided ; for ice, when pounded, will become equally white. An artificial snow has been made by the following experiment. A tall phial of aquafortis being placed by the fire till it is warm, and filings of pure silver, a few at a time, being put into it, after a brisk ebullition, the silver will dissolve slowly. The phial being then placed in a cold window, as it cools, the silver particles will shoot into crystals, several of which running together, will form a flake of snow, which will descend to the bottom of the phial. While they are descending, they represent perfectly a shower of silver snow, and the flakes will lie upon one another at the bottom, like real snow upon the ground.

According to Signor Beccaria, clouds of snow differ in nothing from clouds of rain, but in the circumstance of cold that freezes them. Both the regular diffiιsion of the snow, and the regularity of the structure of its parts, particularly some figures of snow or hail which fall about Turin, show that clouds of snow are acted upon by some uniform cause like electricity ; and he endeavours to show how electricity is capable of forming these figures. He was confirmed in his conjectures by perceiving, that his apparatus for observ- ing the electricity of the atmosphere never failed to be electrified by snow as well as rain. Professor Winthrop sometimes found his apparatus electrified by snow when driven about by the wind, though it had not been affected by it when the snow itself was falling. A more intense electricity, according to Beccaria, unites the particles of hail more closely than the more moderate electricity does those of snow, in the same manner as we see that the drops of rain which fall from thunder-clouds are larger than those which fall from others, though the former descend through a less space.

But we are not to consider snow merely as a curious and beautiful phenomenon. The Great Dispenser of universal bounty has so ordered it, that it is eminently subservient, as well as all the works of creation, to his benevolent designs. Were we to judge from appearances only, we might imagine, that so far from being useful to the earth, the cold humidity of snow would be detrimental to vegetation. But the experience of all ages asserts the contrary. Snow, par- ticularly in those northern regions where the ground is covered with it for several months, fructifies the earth, by guarding the corn or other vegetables from the intenser cold of the air, and especially from the cold piercing winds.