Photius. From this time it was continued through a ſeries of preceptors of little note to Sextus Empiricus, who alſo gave a ſummary of the ſceptical doctrine.

A ſyſtem of philoſophy thus founded on doubt, and clouded with uncertainty, could neither teach tenets of any importance, nor preſcribe a certain rule of conduct; and accordingly we find that the followers of ſcepti­ciſm were guided entirely by chance. As they could form no certain judgment reſpecting good and evil, they accidentally learned the folly of eagerly purſuing any apparent good, or of avoiding any apparent evil; and their minds of courſe fettled into a ſtate of undiſturbed tranquillity, the grand poſtulatum of their ſyſtem.

In the ſchools of the ſceptics we find ten diſtinct to­pics of argument urged in ſupport of the doctrine of uncertainty, with this precaution, however, that nothing could be poſitively aſſerted either concerning their num­ber or their force. Theſe arguments chiefly reſpect objects of ſenſe: they place all knowledge in appearance; and, as the ſame things appear very different to differ­ent people, it is impoſſible to ſay which appearance moſt truly expreffes their real nature. They likewiſe ſay, that our judgment is liable to uncertainty from the circumſtance of frequent or rare occurrence, and that man­kind are continually led into different conceptions con­cerning the ſame thing by means of cuſtom, law, fabu­lous tales, and eſtabliſhed opinions. On all theſe ac­counts they think every human judgment is liable to uncertainty; and concerning any thing they can only aſſert, that it ſeems to be, not that it is what it ſeems.

This doubtful reaſoning, if reaſoning it may be call­ed, the ſceptics extended to all the ſciences in which they diſcovered nothing true, or which could be abſolutely aſſerted. In all nature, in phyſics, morals, and theology, they found contradictory opinions, and inex­plicable or incomprehenſible phenomena. In phyſics, the appearances they thought might be deceitful; and reſpecting the nature of God and the duties of morali­ty, men were, in their opinion, equally ignorant and un­certain. To overturn the ſophiſtical arguments of theſe ſceptical reaſoners would be no difficult matter, if their reaſoning were worthy of confutation. Indeed, their great principle is ſufficiently, though ſhortly, refuted by Plato, in theſe words. “When you ſay all things are incomprehenſible (ſays he), do you comprehend or conceive that they are thus incomprehenſible, or do you not? If you do, then ſomething is comprehenſible; if you do not, there is no reaſon we ſhould believe you, ſince you do not comprehend your own aſſertion. ”

But ſcepticiſm has not been confined entirely to the ancients and to the followers of Pyrrho. Numerous ſceptics have ariſen alſo in modern times, varying in their principles, manners, and character, as chance, prejudice, vanity, weakneſs, or indolence, prompted them. The great object, however, which they ſeem to have in view, is to overturn, or at leaſt to weaken, the evidence of analogy, experience, and teſtimony; though ſome of them have even attempted to ſhow, that the axioms of geometry are uncertain, and its demonſtrations inconcluſive. This laſt attempt has not indeed been often made; but the chief aim of Mr Hume’s philoſophical writings is to introduce doubts into every branch of *phyſics, metaphyſics, history, ethics,* and *theology.* It is needleſs to give a ſpecimen of his reaſonings in ſupport of modern ſcepticiſm. The moſt important of them have

been noticed elſewhere (ſee Miracle, Metaphysics, and Philosophy, n0 41. ); and ſuch of our readers as have any reliſh for ſpeculations of that nature can be no ſtrangers to his Eſſays, or to the able confutations of them by the Doctors Reid, Campbell, Gregory, and Beattie, who have likewiſe expoſed the weakneſs of the ſceptical reaſonings of Des Cartes, Malbranche, and other philoſophers of great fame in the ſame ſchool.

SCEPTICISM, the doctrines and opinions of the ſceptics. See the preceding article.

SCEPTRE, a kind of royal ſtaff, or batoon, borne on ſolemn occaſions by kings, as a badge of their com­mand and authority. Nicod derives the word from the Greek which he ſays originally ſignified

“a javelin, ” which the ancient kings uſually bore as a badge of their authority; that inſtrument being in very great veneration among the heathens. But σχηπτρον does not properly ſignify a javelin, but *a staff to rest upon,* from οχηπΊω, *innitor,* “I lean upon.” Ac­cordingly, in the ſimplicity of the earlier ages of the world, the ſceptres of kings were no other than long walking-ſtaves: and Ovid, in ſpeaking of Jupiter, deſcribes him as reſting on his ſceptre (Met. i. v. 178. ) The ſceptre is an enſign of royalty of greater antiquity than the crown. The Greek tragic and other poets put ſceptres in the hands of the moſt ancient kings they ever introduce. Juſtin obſerves, that the ſceptre, in its original, was an *hasta,* or ſpear. He adds, that, in the moſt remote antiquity, men adored the *hastae* or ſceptres as immortal gods; and that it was upon this account, that, even in his time, they ſtill furniſhed the gods with ſceptres. —Neptune’s ſceptre is his trident. Tarquin the Elder was the firſt who aſſumed the ſceptre among the Romans. Le Gendre tells us, that, in the firſt race of the French kings, the ſceptre was a golden rod, almoſt always of the ſame height with the king who bore it, and crooked at one end like a crozier. Frequently inſtead of a ſceptre, kings are ſeen on medals with a palm in their hand. See Regalia.

SCHAEFFERA, in botany: A genus of the tetrandria order, belonging to the dioecia claſs of plants; and in the natural method ranking with thoſe that are doubtful. The calyx is quadripetalous; the corolla is quadripetalous, quinquepetalous, and often want­ing; the fruit is a bilocular berry with one feed. Of this there are two ſpecies, both natives of Jamaica; and grow in the lowlands near the ſea: viz. 1. The *Completa.* 2. *Lateriflora.*

SCHAFFHAUSEN, a large, handſome, and strong town of Swiſſerland, capital of a canton of the ſame name, with a caſtle in the form of a citadel. It is well built, with fine large ſtreets, and adorned with ſeveral fountains; and the greateſt part of the houſes are painted on the outſide. It is well fortified, and the ca­thedral is the largeſt church in Swiſſerland; beſides which, the minſter, with the monaſtery adjoining there­to, the arſenal, the town-houſe, the great clock (which ſhows the courſe of the ſun and moon with their eclipſes), and the ſtone bridge over the Rhine, are well worth the obſervation of a traveller. That river is of great conſequence to the inhabitants with regard to trade. E. Long. 8. 51. N. Lat. 47. 39.

*The Canton oſ Schaffhausen,* in Swiſſerland, is bounded on the north and weſt by Suabia; on the eaſt by the canton of Zurich, and the biſhoprick of Con-