A judicious hiſtory of ſuperſtition would be a curious and entertaining work, and would exhibit the human cha­racter in a remarkable point of view. Superſtition is moſt prevalent among men of weak and uncultivated minds ; it is more frequent in the female sex than among men ; and abounds more in the rude than in the refined ſtages of society. The general features of it have been the ſame in all ages ; but it aſſumes certain peculiarities according to the diverſity of character of different nations. It gained admiſsion into the ſcience of medicine at an early period. He who was endowed with ſuperior genius and knowledge was rec­koned a magician. Dr Bartolo was ſeized by the inquiſition at Rome in the laſt century, becauſe he unexpectedly cured a nobleman of the gout.@@ Diſeaſes were imputed to faſcination, and hundreds of poor wretches were dragged to the ſtake ſor being acceſſary to them. Mercatus, phyſician to Philip II. of Spain, a writer of uncommon accuracy and information, appears ſtrongly inclined to deny the exiſtence of faſcinatory diſeaſes : but he is conſtrained to acknow­ledge them for two reaſons ; 1st*,* Becauſe the inquiſition had decided in favour of their reality; 2dly, Becauſe he had feen a very beautiful woman break a ſteel-mirror to pieces, and blaſt ſome trees by a ſingle glance of her eyes.

As the opinions concerning the cauſe of diſeaſes were superſtitious, thoſe concerning the method of curing them were not leſs ſo. In the Odyssey we read of a cure per­formed by a ſong. Joſephus relates, that he ſaw a certain Jew, named *Eleazar,* draw the devil out of an old woman’s noſtrils by the application of Solomon’s ſeal to her noſe in preſence of the Emperor Veſpaſian. Many different kinds of applications were uſed for expelling the devil. Flagella­tion ſometimes succeeded admirably ; purgatives and antiſpaſmodics were other modes of discharging him. Dr Mynſight cured ſeveral bewitched perſons with a plaſter of aſſafœtida. How the aſſafoetida was ſo efficacious, was much disputed. Some thought the devil might conſider ſo vile an application as an inſult, and run off in a paſſion ; but others very ſagely obſerved, that as devils are ſuppoſed to have eyes and ears, it is probable they may have noses too.

Nor was it only in medicine theſe ſuperſtitious opinions were entertained ; they prevailed alſo in natural philoſo­phy. The pernicious effects in mines, which we now know are occaſioned by noxious air, were confidently imputed to the demons of the mine. Even Van Helmont, Bodinus, Strozza, and Luther, attributed thunder and meteors to the devil. Chemiſts were employed for centuries in ſearch of the philoſopher’s ſtone, with which they were to do miracles. It was a common queſtion among philoſophers in the laſt century, whether the imagination could move external objects ? A queſtion generally decided in the af­firmative.

Though ſuperſtition be generally the mark of a weak mind, ſuch is the infirmity of human nature, that we find many inſtances of it among men of the moſt ſublime ge­nius and moſt enlightened minds. Socrates believed that he was guided by a demon. Lord Bacon believed in witchcraft ; and relates that he was cured of warts by rub­bing them with a piece of lard with the ſkin on, and then nailing it with the fat towards the fun on the poſt of a chamber window facing the ſun. Henry IV. one of the moſt illuſtrious of monarchs, was very uneaſy before his aſſaſſination on account of ſome prophecies @@\*. Sully de­clares, that one of the conſiderations that kept him faithfal to his maſter in the moſt unpromiſing ſtate of his af­fairs, was a prediction of La Broſſe, that Henry would make his fortune@@\*. The aſtrologer Morin directed Car­dinal Richelieu’s motions in ſome of his journeys @@\*. The enlightened Cudworth defended prophecies in general, and called thoſe who oppoſed the belief of witchcraft by the name of *atheists;* and the predictions of Rice Evans have been ſupported in the preſent century by the celebrated names ol W*arburton and Jortin.* DrHoffman, the father of the Modern Theory and Practice of Medicine, in a diſſertation publiſhed in the large edition of his works in 1747, ſays, that the devil can raiſe ſtorms, produce insects, and act upon the animal ſpirits and imagination ; and, in fine, that he is an *excellent optician and natural philοsopher* on account of his long experience. Dr Johnſon, the leviathan of literature, is ſuppoſed to have believed the ſecond light.

With respect to the effects of ſuperſtition on the human mind, they are indeed deplorable. It chains down the underſtanding, and links it into the moſt abject and fordid ſtate, and keeps it under the dominion of fear, and ſome­times of cruelty. Where once it takes posseſſion, it has a tendency to become extreme, and generally becomes ſo in­tolerable, that men of reflection and learning conſpire its deſtruction. The Chriſtian religion gave a violent ſhock to the heathen ſuperſtition ; the reformation in a great meaſure demoliſhed the ſuperſtition of the church of Rome ; and the ſuperſtition which remained among Proteſtants after their ſeparation from that church has been gradually yield­ing to the influence of enlightened reaſon, or to the bold and daring attacks of infidelity and deism. We behold the proſpect of its ruins with pleaſure, and thank the deiſts for their zeal ; but it is from the firm hope that the religion of Jeſus will ariſe in all its beauty and ſimple majeſty, and be admired and reſpected as it deserves : for mean and contemptible as ſuperſtition certainly is, we would rather ſee men do what they reckon their duty from ſuperſtitious principles, than ſee anarchy and vice prevail, even though attended with all the knowledge and liberality of ſentiment which deiſm and infidelity can inſpire.

SUPERVISOR, a surveyor or overſeer.

SUPINATION, in anatomy, the action of a ſupinator mulcle, or the motion whereby it turns the hand ſo as that the palm is lifted up towards heaven.

SUPINE, in Latin grammar, part of the conjugation of a verb, being a verbal ſubſtantive of the Angular num­ber and the fourth declension.

There are two kinds of ſupines : One, called the first s*upine,* ending in *um* of the acculative case, which is always of an active ſignification, and follows a verb of motion ; as *abiit deambulatum.* The other, called the *last ſupine,* and ending in *u* of the ablative caſe, is of a paſſive ſignification, and is go­verned by ſubſtantives or adjectives ; *as,ſacile dictu,* &c.

They have their name, says Probus, and after him Voſſius, *quod ad instar* ſupinorum *otiosorum hominum omnia habent confuſa ;* or, according to Priſcian, *quod nascantur a partici­piis passiυis, qua* ſupina *appellata Junt, quia in infimo loco sita, totam conjugationis molem suscipiant.*

SUPPER, the evening repart.— Suppers that are heavy ſhould be avoided, becauſe the ſtomach is more oppressed with the ſame quantity of food in an horizontal poſture than in an erect one, and because digeſtion goes on more slowly when we ſleep than when we are awake. They ſhould be eaten long enough before bed-time, that they may be nearly digeſted before going to ſteep ∙, and then a draught of pure water will dilute that which remains in the ſtomach.

*Supper of the Lord,* otherwiſe called the *Eucharist,* is a ſacrament ordained by Chriſt in. his church, of which the outward part is bread and wine, and the inward part or thing ſignified the body and blood of Chriſt, which the majority of Chriſtians believe to be in ſome ſenſe or other taken and received by the faithful communicants. See Sacrament.

There is no ordinance of the goſpel which has been the ſubject of more violent controversies between: different churches, and even between different divines oſ the ſame

@@@[mu] Manchester Transactions, vol. iii.

@@@[m]\* Memoirs of Sully.

@@@[m]\* Ibid.

@@@[m]\* Boyle, Art. Morin.