qualities in bodies, except those which are essential to pri­mary atoms ; and that **he** referred every thing else to the perceptions of the mind produced by external objects, in other words, to appearance and opinion. All knowledge of course appeared to him to depend on the fallacious report of the senses, and consequently to be uncertain ; and in this notion he was confirmed by the general spirit of the Eleatic School, in which he was educated. He was further con­firmed in his scepticism by the subtilties of the Dialectic school, in which he had been instructed by the son of Stil­po; choosing to overturn the cavils of sophistry by recur­ring to the doctrine of universal uncertainty, and thus break­ing the knot which he could not unloose. For being na­turally and habitually inclined to consider immoveable tran­quillity as the great end of all philosophy, he was easily led to despise the dissensions of the dogmatists, and to infer from their endless disputes, the uncertainty of the questions on which they debated ; controvérsy, as it has often hap­pened to others, becoming also with respect to him the pa­rent of scepticism.

Pyrrho’s doctrines, however new and extraordinary, were not totally disregarded. He was attended by several scho­lars, and succeeded by several followers, who preserved the memory of his notions. The most eminent of his followers was Tiraon, in whom the public succession of professors in the Pyrrhonic school terminated. In the time of Cicero it was almost extinct, having suffered much from the jealousy of the dogmatists, and from a natural aversion in the human mind to acknowledge total ignorance, or to be left in abso­lute darkness. The disciples of Timon, however, still con­tinued to profess scepticism, and their notions were em­braced, privately at least, by many others. The school it­self was afterwards revived by Ptolemaeus a Cyrenian, and was continued by Ænesidemus a contemporary of Cicero, who wrote a treatise on the principles of the Pyrrhonic phi­losophy, the heads of which are preserved by 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 settled 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 expresses 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, the 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 in the articles Miracle, Metaphysics, and Philosophy; 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 Reid, Campbell, Gregory, Beattie, and Stewart, who have like­wise exposed the weakness of the sceptical reasonings of Descartes, Malebranche, and other philosphers of great fame in the same school.

SCEPTRE, a kind of royal staff, borne on solemn occa­sions by kings, as a badge of their command and authority. Nicod derives the word from the Greek *σχηπτϑov,* 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 *σχηπτϑov* does not properly signify a javelin ; it means a staff to rest upon, from *σχητω, 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. 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 in­troduce. Justin observes, that the sceptre, in its original, was a *hasta,* or spear. He adds, that, in the most remote antiquity, men adored the *hastœ* 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. Legendre 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.

SCHAFFHAUSEN, one of the cantons *of* Switzerland. It is bounded on the north, east, and west, by the grand duchy of Baden ; and on the south by the Rhine, which divides it from the cantons of Thurgau and Zurich. It is only 120 square miles in extent, in which are comprehended three cities, four market-towns, and thirty-five villages. It contains 28,050 inhabitants, who, except about 200 Roman Catholics, adhere to the reformed church. The force to be contributed to the general confederation is fixed at 466 men, and the payment in money at 9320 francs. The chief article