SCARRON, Paul (1610-1660), poet, dramatist, novel­ist, and husband of Madame de Maintenon, was born or at least baptized on the 4th July 1610. His father, of the same name, was a man of position, and a member of the parlement of Paris. Paul the younger (who is said to have quarrelled with his stepmother) became an abbé, was not ill-allowanced, and travelled to Rome in 1634. Ho returned and became a well-known figure in literary and fashionable society. A wild story used to be told of his having (when in residence at his canonry of Le Mans) tarred and feathered himself as a carnival freak, of his having been obliged to take refuge from popular wrath in a swamp, and of his consequent deformity from rheumatism. The simple fact seems to be that in 1637 he had an attack of fever with the usual sequelae of rheumatic attacks, and that he put himself into the hands of a quack doctor. This at least is how Tallemant tells the story, though he substitutes a less creditable disease for fever. What is certain is that Scarron, after having been in perfect health for nearly thirty years, passed twenty more in a state of miserable deformity and pain. His head and body were twisted, and his legs became useless. Nevertheless he bore up against his sufferings with invincible courage, though they were complicated by his inheriting nothing from his father, and by the poverty and miscouduct of his sisters, whom he supported. For a few years he really held a benefice at Le Mans, but was then in no case to play pranks. It is said, however, that here he conceived the idea of the *Roman Comique* and wrote the drama of *Jodelet,* which gave a nickname to the actor who performed it. In 1646 he returned to Paris and worked hard for the booksellers, from the name of one of whom he is said to have called literature pleasantly his " marquisat de Quinet.” He had also a pension from Mazarin and one from the queen, but lost both from being accused of “ Frondeur ” sentiments. The most singular action of his life remains to be told. In his early years he had been, as hinted, something of a libertine, and a young lady of some family, Céleste Palaiseau, had openly lived with him. But in 1652, sixteen years after he had become almost entirely paralysed, he married a girl of much beauty and no fortune, Françoise or Francine d’Aubigné, granddaughter of Agrippa d’Aubigné, after­wards famous as Madame de Maintenon. Scarron’s house was, both before and after the marriage, a great centre of society, despite his narrow means. Yet only the most malignant and unscrupulous libellers of the future favourite accuse her of light conduct during the eight years of her marriage to this strange husband, and the well-informed author of the *Historiettes* distinctly acquits her of any such. But Scarron, who had long been able to endure life only by the aid of constant doses of opium, was at length worn out, and died on the 6th October 1660.

Scarron’s work is very abundant, and, written as it was under pressure of want and pain, it is very unequal. The piece most famous in his own day, his *Virgile Travesti* (1648-53), is now thought, and not unjustly, a somewhat ignoble and unprofitable waste of singular powers for burlesque. But the *Roman Comique* (1651) is a work the merit of which can be denied by no competent judge who has read it. Unfinished, and a little desultory, this history of a troop of strolling actors is almost the first French novel, in point of date, which shows real power of painting manners and character, and is singularly vivid. It furnished Théophile Gautier with the idea and with some of the details of his *Capitaine Fracasse.* Scarron also wrote some shorter novels of merit, which arc thought to have inspired Molière and Sedaine. Of his plays *Jodelet* (1645) and *Don Japhet d'Arménie* (1653) are the best. Both these and the others which he wrote are of course somewhat antiquated in style, but with Corneille’s *Menteur* they stand above everything else in comedy before Molière. He also produced many miscellaneous pieces.

Scarron is generally spoken of and thought of as a representative writer of burlesque, but in reality he possessed in abundance the faculty of true comedy. The most complete edition of his works is

held tobe that of 1737 (10 vols., Amsterdam), but his more celebrated pieces, including all those mentioned above, have been frequently reprinted.

SCAUP,—the wild-fowler’s ordinary abridgment of Scaup-Duck, meaning a Duck so called “ because she feeds upon *Scaup, i.e.,* broken shelfish,” as may be seen in Willughby’s *Ornithology* (p. 365) ; but it would be more proper to say that the name comes from the “Mussel- scaups,” or “ Mussel -scalps, @@1” the beds of rock or sand on which Mussels *(Mytilus edulis,* and other species) are aggregated,—the *Anas marila* of Linnæus and *Fuligula marila* of modern systematic writers, a very abundant bird around the coasts of most parts of the northern hemisphere, repairing inland in spring for the purpose of reproduction, though so far as is positively known hardly but in northern districts, as Iceland, Lapland, Siberia, and the fur-countries of America. It was many years ago believed *(Edin. N. Philos. Journal,* xx. p. 293) to have been found breeding in Scotland, but assertions to that effect have not been wholly substantiated, though apparently corroborated by some later evidence (*Proc*. *N. H. Soc. Glasgow,* ii. p. 121, and *Proc. Phys. Soc. Edinburgh,* vii. p. 203). The Scaup- Duck has considerable likeness to the Pochard (vol. xix. p. 252), both in habits and appearance ; but it much more generally affects salt-water, and the head of the male is black, glossed with green, and hence the name of “ Black­head,” by which it is commonly known in North America, where, however, a second species or race, smaller than the ordinary one, is also found, the *Fuligula affinis.* The female Scaup-Duck can be readily distinguished from the Dunbird or female Pochard by her broad white face. (a. n.)

SCEPTICISM signifies etymologically a state of doubt or indecision in the face of different mutually conflicting statements (σκϵπτομαι, I consider, reflect, hesitate, doubt). It is implied, moreover, that this doubt is not merely a stage in the road to certainty and true knowledge. The provisional suspense of judgment recommended by Descartes and others as the true beginning of philosophy is no more than a passing phase of the individual’s mind in his search for truth. But the doubt of the sceptic is professedly the last result of investigation; it is the renunciation of the search for truth on the ground that truth or real knowledge is unattainable by man. An account of the chief historical appearances of scepticism and its different motives will serve to illustrate and amplify this statement, and will lead up to any further considera­tions of a general nature. At the outset, and in general terms, scepticism may be summarily defined as a thorough­going impeachment of man’s power to know—as a denial of the possibility of objective knowledge.

Trust, not distrust, is the primitive attitude of the mind. What is put before us, whether by the senses or by the statements of others, is instinctively accepted as a veracious report, till experience has proved the possibility of decep­tion. In the history of philosophy, in the same way, affirmation precedes negation ; dogmatism goes before scepticism. And this must be so, because the dogmatic systems are, as it were, the food of scepticism; without them it would be without motive, without a *basis oper­andi.* Accordingly, we find that sceptical thought did not make its appearance till a succession of positive theories as to the nature of the real, by their mutual incon­sistency, had suggested the possibility that they might all alike be false. The Sophistic epoch of Greek philo­sophy was, in great part, such a negative reaction against the luxuriance of self-confident assertion in the nature- philosophies of the preceding age. Though scepticism as a definite school of opinion may be said, in accordance

@@@1 "Scalp ” primarily signifies a shell ; *cf.* Old Dutch *schelpe* and Old Fr. *escalope* (Skeat, *Etyrnol. Dictionary,* p. 528).