

VOLTAIRE

Philosophical Dictionary

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PENGUIN BOOKS

1972

of the four rivals united, Virtue, Health, Wealth, Pleasure; but this fable does not resolve the absurd question of the sovereign good. Virtue is not a good, it is a duty: it is a different kind, of a superior order. It has nothing to do with painful or agreeable sensations. The virtuous man with the stone and gout, without friends, lacking necessities, persecuted, put in chains by a voluptuous tyrant who is in good health is very unhappy; and the insolent persecutor, fondling a new mistress on his purple bed, is very happy. Say that the persecuted good man is preferable to his insolent persecutor; say that you love one and detest the other; but admit that the good man in chains is wild with rage. If the good man will not admit this he is deceiving you, he is a charlatan.



### Bien (tout est): All is good

There was a fine row in the schools, and even among people who think, when Leibniz, paraphrasing Plato, built his edifice of the best of possible worlds, and imagined that all was for the best. He affirmed in the north of Germany that god could make only a single world. Plato had at least left him free to make five, because there are only five regular solids: the tetrahedron or three-faced pyramid with uniform base, the cube, the hexahedron, the dodecahedron, the icosahehedron. But our world is not shaped like any of Plato's five bodies, he had allowed god a sixth manner.

That will do for Plato. Leibniz, who was certainly a better geometer than he, and a more profound metaphysician, did mankind the service of explaining that we ought to be entirely satisfied, and that god could do no more for us, that he had necessarily chosen, among all the possibilities, what was undeniably the best one.

'What will become of original sin?' they shouted at him. 'It will become what it can,' said Leibniz and his friends; but in public he wrote that original sin was necessarily part of the best of worlds.

What! to be chased from a place of delights, where we

### Bien (tout est): All is good

would have lived for ever if an apple had not been eaten! What! produce in wretchedness wretched children who will suffer everything, who will make others suffer everything! What! to undergo every illness, feel every sorrow, die in pain, and for refreshment be burned in the eternity of centuries! Is this really the best lot that was available? This is not too good for us; and how can it be good for god?

Leibniz realized that these questions were unanswerable: so he wrote thick books in which he did not agree with himself.

A Lucullus in good health, dining well with his friends and his mistress in the house of Apollo, can say laughingly that there is no devil; but let him put his head out of the window and he will see unhappy people; let him suffer a fever and he will be unhappy himself.

I do not like to quote; it is usually a ticklish job: what precedes and follows the passage quoted is passed over, and one exposes oneself to a thousand quarrels. Still, I must quote Lactantius, church father, who, in his chapter XIII, of his *On the Wrath of God*<sup>1</sup> puts these words into the mouth of Epicurus:

Either god wants to remove the evil from this world, and cannot, or he can, and does not want to; or he neither wants to nor can; or he wants to and can. If he neither wants to nor can, this is impotence, which is contrary to the nature of god; if he can but does not want to, this is wickedness, which is no less contrary to his nature; if he neither can nor wants to this is at once wickedness and impotence; if he wants to and can (which is the only one of these possibilities fitting for god) whence then comes the evil which is on earth?

The argument is powerful; so that Lactantius answers it very badly, saying that god wants evil but that he has given us the wisdom with which one acquires the good. It must be admitted that this answer is quite weak in comparison with the objection, for it assumes that god could create wisdom only by producing evil; besides our wisdom is pretty ridiculous!

1. The exact date of *De ira dei* is not known; Lactantius Firmianus flourished c. 300.

The origin of evil has always been an abyss whose bottom nobody has been able to see. This is what reduced so many ancient philosophers and legislators to have recourse to two principles, one good, the other bad. Typhon was the bad principle of the Egyptians, Ahriman of the Persians. It is well known that the Manicheans adopted this theology; but as these people had never spoken to the good nor the bad principle, we should not take their word for it.

Among the absurdities with which this world overflows and which can be counted among our evils, it is not a trivial one to have imagined two all-powerful beings fighting each other to see which of them would put more of himself into this world, and entering into a treaty like the two doctors in Molière: Pass me the emetic, and I'll pass you the lancet.

Basilides<sup>1</sup> alleged as early as the first century of the church, following the Platonists, that god had entrusted the creation of the world to his lowest angels, and that these, not being skilful, arranged matters as we see them. This theological fable crumbles into dust before the terrible objection that it is not in the nature of an all-powerful and all-wise God to entrust the building of the world to incompetent architec-

tests.

Simon,<sup>2</sup> who appreciated the objection, met it by saying that the angel who directed the workshop was damned for having done his work so badly; but the burning of this angel does not remedy our ills.

Among the Greeks the adventure of Pandora does not meet the objection any better. The box in which all ills reside, and at the bottom of which hope remains, is certainly a charming allegory; but this Pandora was created by Vulcan only to avenge himself against Prometheus, who had made a man out of mud.

The Indians have no better solution: having created man god gave him a drug that ensured his permanent health; man loaded his donkey with the drug, the donkey was thirsty, the

serpent told him about a fountain; and while the donkey drank the serpent took the drug for himself.

The Syrians imagined that man and woman, having been created in the fourth heaven, took it into their heads to eat a pancake instead of the ambrosia which was their natural food. The ambrosia was exhaled through the pores, but after having eaten pancakes they had to go to stool. The man and woman begged an angel to tell them where the closet was. 'Well,' replied the angel, 'you see that little planet, though it is so small, which is about 60 million leagues from here; it is the universe's privy; hurry there.' They went there, they were left there, and since then our world has been what it is. We must still ask the Syrians why god allowed man to eat the pancake, and so appalling a host of ills to descend on us in consequence.

I move quickly, before I get bored, from this fourth heaven to milord Bolingbroke. This man, who was undoubtedly a great genius, gave the celebrated Pope his notion of the *All is good*. It was in effect found later word for word in the posthumous works of lord Bolingbroke, and had previously been set out by lord Shaftesbury in his *Characteristics*. Read Shaftesbury's chapter on moralists; you will find these words in it:

Much is alleged in answer to show why nature errs, and how she came thus impotent and erring from an unerring hand. But I deny she errs. . . . 'Tis . . . from this order of inferior and superior things that we admire the world's beauty, founded thus on concordies: whilst from such various and disagreeing principles, a universal concord is established. . . . The vegetables by their death sustain the animals: and animal bodies dissolved, enrich the earth, and raise again the vegetable world. . . . The central powers, which hold the lasting orbs in their just poise and movement, must not be controlled to save a fleeting form, and rescue from the precipice a puny animal, whose brittle frame, however protected, must of itself so soon dissolve.<sup>1</sup>

1. *Characteristic: the Meritites* I. iii. (I have modernized the original text.) The intellectual descent from Shaftesbury to Pope through Bolingbroke has been much debated, but what Voltaire says here is still basically sound.

1. Basilides was a second-century gnostic, one of the most important links between Persian dualism and Manicheanism.  
2. Probably Simon of Gitta as reported in the *Clementine Homilies*.

Bolingbroke, Shaftesbury and Pope, who embodied their ideas, do not resolve the question any better than the others: their *All is good* means nothing more than that all is controlled by immutable laws. Who does not know that? You tell us nothing new when you observe, as all little children have done, that flies are born to be eaten by spiders, spiders by swallows, swallows by shrikes, shrikes by eagles, eagles to be killed by men, men to kill one another, and to be eaten by worms, and then, all but one in a thousand, by devils.

Here we have a clear and fixed order among every kind of animal. There is order everywhere. When a stone is formed in my bladder it is by means of admirable mechanics: calculous juices pass little by little into my blood, they filter into the kidneys, pass through the ureters, deposit themselves in my bladder, and assemble there by an excellent Newtonian attraction; the stone is formed, gets bigger, I suffer pains a thousand times worse than death, by the most elegant arrangement in the world. A surgeon, having perfected the art invented by Tubalcain,<sup>1</sup> comes to thrust a sharp and cutting iron into the perineum, and takes hold of my stone with his pincers. It breaks under his efforts by a necessary mechanism; and by the same mechanism I die in frightful torments. *All this is good*, all this is the evident consequence of inalterable physical principles. I agree with them, and I knew it as well as you did.

If we were without feeling there would be no reason to object to this cause and effect. But that is not the point. We are inquiring whether there are any perceptible evils, and whence they come. 'There are no evils,' says Pope in his fourth essay on the *All is good*; 'or, if there are particular evils, they form the common good.'<sup>2</sup>

A strange general good! composed of the stone, the gout, all crimes, all suffering, death and damnation. The fall of man is the plaster we stick on all these particular

1. Tubalcain, the descendant of Cain, was 'the forger of every cutting instrument of brass and iron' (*Cantus iv. 22*).

2. Pope's most lapidary rendering of this view is 'All partial Evil universal Good' (*Essay on Man*, i. 292).

diseases of the body and the soul, which are called 'general health'. But Shaftesbury and Bolingbroke derided original sin; Pope does not refer to it; it is obvious that their system undermines the Christian religion at its foundations, and explains nothing at all.

Nevertheless this system has recently been approved by several theologians who readily accept contradictions. Capital! we must not begrudge anybody the consolation of reasoning as best he can about the deluge of evils by which we are inundated. It is right to allow the incurable to eat what they like. It has even been claimed that this system is consoling. 'God', says Pope, 'sees perish with equal eye the hero and the sparrow, an atom or a thousand planets precipitated into ruin, the formation of a soap-bubble or a world.'

Here, I must admit, we have a pleasant consolation. Do you not find a great palliative in the prescription of lord Shaftesbury, who says that god is not going to upset his eternal laws for so puny an animal as man? It must at least be admitted that this puny animal has the right to cry out humbly, and to seek to understand, in crying, why these eternal laws are not made for the well-being of every individual.

This system of *All is good* represents the author of nature only as a powerful and malevolent king, who does not care, so long as he carries out his plan, that it costs four or five hundred thousand men their lives, and that the others drag out their days in want and in tears.

1. *Essay on Man*, i. 87-90, reads:

'Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,  
A hero perish, or a sparrow fall,  
Atoms or systems into ruin hurled,  
And now a bubble burst, and now a world.'

The difference is not trivial, for Voltaire, unlike Pope, has included creation in God's indifference.

~~their chains. As for the unthinking mass, it rather resembles fish who have been moved from a river to a reservoir. They do not suspect that they are there to be eaten in Lent: nor do we know anything by our own resources about the causes of our density.~~

~~Let us put at the end of nearly all chapters on metaphysics the two letters used by Roman judges when they could not understand a lawsuit: N. L., *non liquet*; this is not clear.~~

### Bonnes de l'esprit humain: Limits of the human mind

~~They are everywhere, poor doctor. Do you want to know how it is that your arm and your foot obey your will; and your liver does not obey it? Do you seek to know how thought is formed in your puny understanding, and this child in the uterus of this woman? Those like you have written ten thousand volumes on this subject; they have found a few qualities of this substance: children know them as well as you do. But at bottom, what is this substance? and what is it you have named mind from the Latin word meaning *breadth*,<sup>1</sup> unable to do any better because you have no idea what it is?~~

~~Consider this grain of wheat I throw into the earth, and tell me how it rises to produce a stalk bearing an ear. Teach me how the same earth produces an apple at the top of this tree and a chestnut on the neighbouring tree. I could compose for you a folio volume of questions to which you would have to reply only with four words: *I do not know*.~~

~~And yet you have taken your degrees, and your gown is furred, and so is your cap,<sup>2</sup> and you are called *mater*. And this other conceited upstart who has bought an office thinks that he has bought the right to judge and to condemn what he does not understand.~~

<sup>1</sup> The point is lost in translation: the French and Latin words are *esprit* and *spiritus*; but *esprit* has several meanings for which English has different words: spirit, mind, wit, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Formerly the quantity and quality of fur on his cap and gown indicated the wearer's academic rank.

~~Montaigne's motto was: *What do I know? and yours is: What do I not know?*~~

### Caractère: Character

From the Greek word *impression*, *engraving*. It is what nature has engraved in us. Can we efface it? ~~Vast question. If I have a hooked nose and two cat's eyes I can hide them with a mask. Can I do better with the character nature has given me? A man born violent, choleric, presented himself before François I, king of France, to complain of an injustice. The prince's countenance, the respectful conduct of the courtiers, the very place in which he found himself, made a powerful impression on this man; he unconsciously lowered his eyes, his rough voice softened, he presented his request humbly. One would believe him to be naturally as gentle as are (at least at this moment) the courtiers in whose midst he is even disconcerted; but if François I is good at reading faces he will easily realize in his eyes, lowered but alight with hidden fire, in the taut muscles of his face, in his lips pressed against each other, that this man is not so gentle as he is obliged to appear.~~

~~This man followed him to Pavia, was captured with him, and taken to prison in Madrid with him; the majesty of François I no longer made the same impression on him; he became familiar with the object of his respect. One day, while pulling off the king's riding boots, and pulling them badly, the king, soured by his misfortune, became angry: my man sent the king to the devil, and threw his boots out of the window.~~

<sup>1</sup> Few men of such bad character can boast such great achievements as this sixteenth-century pope.  
<sup>2</sup> That is, the furious ambition to become pope.

know any longer what I am. I love god with all my heart, and I sell my vegetables very reasonably.

TUCTAN: You've got some very fine figs there.

KARPOS: Pasha, they are entirely at your disposal.

TUCTAN: I'm told that you also have a pretty daughter.

KARPOS: Yes, pasha; but she is not at your disposal.

TUCTAN: Why not, wretch?

KARPOS: Because I'm an honest man: I'm allowed to sell my figs, but not to sell my daughter.

TUCTAN: And by what law aren't you allowed to sell that fruit?

KARPOS: By the law of all honest gardeners. My daughter's honour belongs to her, not to me. It isn't merchandise.

TUCTAN: So you aren't faithful to your pasha?

KARPOS: Very faithful in all things just, for as long as you are my master.

TUCTAN: But if your Greek *oplea* conspired against me, and if, on behalf of the *tas patros* and the *tas vris*, he ordered you to join his plot, wouldn't you be devout enough to do it?

KARPOS: I? Not at all. I most certainly wouldn't.

TUCTAN: And why would you refuse to obey your Greek *oplea* when such a fine opportunity offers?

KARPOS: It's because I have taken an oath of obedience to you, and well know that the *tas patros* does not order conspiracies.

TUCTAN: I'm very glad to hear it. But if your Greeks were unfortunately to recapture the island and expelled me, would you be faithful to me?

KARPOS: Come! how could I then be faithful to you since

you would no longer be my pasha?

TUCTAN: And the oath you took to me? What would become of it?

KARPOS: It would be like my figs, you would no longer dispose of it. Isn't it true (with great respect) that if you were dead at this very moment I should no longer owe you anything?

TUCTAN: The supposition is hardly civil, but you are right. KARPOS: Well, if you were expelled it would be as if you

were dead, for you would have a successor to whom I would have to take another oath. Could you exact from me a fidelity which could be of no use to you? It is as if, not being able to eat my figs, you wanted to prevent me from selling them to others.

TUCTAN: How your argue! You have principles then?

KARPOS: Yes, in my fashion. They are few, but they suffice me; and if I had more they would encumber me.

TUCTAN: I should be curious to know your principles.

KARPOS: They are, for instance, to be a good husband, a good father, a good neighbour, a good subject, and a good gardener. I don't go beyond that, and I hope that god will have mercy on me.

TUCTAN: And do you think that he will have mercy on me, who am the governor of your island?

KARPOS: And how do you expect me to know that? Is it for me to guess how god deals with pashas? It's a matter between you and him; I don't interfere in it in any way. I simply imagine that, if you are as good a pasha as I am a gardener, god will treat you very well.

TUCTAN: By Mohammed! I'm delighted with this idiot.

KARPOS: Farewell friend; may Allah have you in his holy keeping!

KARPOS: A thousand thanks. May Theos have pity on you, pasha!

*Certain, certitude: Certain, certainty*

'How old is your friend Christopher?'

'Twenty-eight. I have seen his marriage contract and his baptismal certificate. I have known him since his childhood. He is twenty-eight; it is a certainty, I'm certain of it.'

Hardly had I heard the reply of this man, so sure of what he says, and of twenty others who confirmed the same thing, than I discovered that Christopher's baptismal certificate had been antedated by a strange trick for hidden reasons. Those to whom I spoke don't yet know about it. In the meantime they're still certain of something false.

If you had asked the entire world before the era of Coperni-

cus: 'Did the sun rise today? did it set?' everybody would have answered you: 'We're absolutely certain of it.' They were certain, and they were mistaken.

Spells, divination, possession were for long the surest things in the world in the eyes of all peoples. What an innumerable crowd of people saw all these fine things and were certain of them! Today this certainty has somewhat diminished.

A young man who was beginning to study geometry called on me. He had not got beyond the definition of triangles. 'Aren't you certain,' I said, 'that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles?' He replied that not only was he not at all certain of it, but that he did not even have a clear idea of this proposition. I demonstrated it to him; he then became very certain of it, and will be so all his life.

That certitude is very different from the others: they were no more than probabilities, and these probabilities, once examined, became errors; but mathematical certitude is immutable and eternal.

I exist, I think, I feel pain. Is all this as certain as a geometric truth? Yes. Why? It is because these truths are proved by the same principle that a thing cannot be and not be at the same time. I cannot at the same time exist and not exist, feel and not feel. A triangle cannot at the same time have and not have 180 degrees, which is the sum of two right angles.

The physical certainty of my existence and of my feelings, and mathematical certainty thus have the same value, although they are of a different kind.

This does not apply to the certainty based on appearances or to the unanimous reports made by men.

'But really!' you tell me, 'aren't you certain that Peking exists? Haven't we got fabrics from Peking? People from different countries, of different opinions, who wrote violently against each other while all preached the truth in Peking, haven't they assured you of the existence of this city?' I answered that it seems to me extremely probable that there was then a city of Peking; but I would not wish to bet my life that this city exists, and I would bet my life at any time

that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles.

Something very droll has been published in the *Dictionnaire encyclopédique*. It is maintained there that if all Paris told one that marshal de Saxe had been resurrected, one should be as sure, as certain of it as one would be if told by all Paris that marshal de Saxe had won the battle of Fontenoy. Consider, I beg, how admirable is this reasoning: 'I believe all Paris when they tell me something possible in principle; therefore I must believe all Paris when they tell me something impossible in principle and physically.'

Apparently the author of this article wanted to have a good laugh, and the other author, who goes into raptures at the end of this article and writes against himself, also wanted to have a good laugh. As for me, who have undertaken this little *Dictionary* in order to put questions, I am far from being certain.

### *Chaîne des êtres créés: Great chain of being<sup>1</sup>*

The gradation of beings which ascends from the lightest atom to the supreme being, this ladder of the infinite, strikes one with wonder. But when one looks at it attentively this great phantasm vanishes, as formerly all apparitions fled at the crowing of the cock.

At first the imagination is gratified by the imperceptible passage from brute matter to organized matter, from plants to zoophytes, from these zoophytes to animals, from these to man, from man to spirits, from these spirits, dressed in little aerial bodies, to immaterial substances, and finally a thousand different orders of these substances which ascend from beauty to perfection and finally to god himself. This hierarchy much pleases decent folk, who liken it to the pope and his cardinals followed by the archbishops and the bishops, after whom come rectors, vicars, simple priests, deacons, sub-deacons;

<sup>1</sup>. The notion of the interdependent continuity of created beings has had a fascinating history, admirably described in A. O. Lovejoy's *The Great Chain of Being* (1926).

## Morale: Morality

I have just read these words in a fourteen-volume harangue entitled *Histoire du Bas-Empire*:<sup>1</sup>

'Ah! monsieur Le Beau, author of these fourteen volumes, where did you find this nonsense? If so, what about the morals of Socrates, Zaleucus, Charondas, Cicero, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius?

'There is only one morality, monsieur Le Beau, just as there is only one geometry. But, I shall be told, most men know nothing of geometry. Yes, but everybody agrees as soon as it is studied a little. Farmers, artisans, artists have not taken a course in morality. They have read neither Cicero's *D's fuisse* nor Aristotle's *Ethics*, but as soon as they reflect they are unwittingly Cicero's disciples: the Indian dyer, the Tartar shepherd and the English sailor know justice and injustice. Confucius did not invent a system of morality as one constructs a system in natural philosophy. He found it in the hearts of all men.'

This morality was in the heart of the praetor Festus when the Jews urged him to condemn Paul to death because he had brought strangers into their temple. 'Know,' he told them, 'that the Romans never condemn anyone without giving him a hearing.' If the Jews lacked morality or failed to observe it, the Romans knew it and honoured it.

There is no morality in superstition, it is not in ceremonies, it has nothing in common with dogmas. It cannot be too often repeated that all dogmas are different, and that morality is the same among all men who use their reason. Therefore morality comes from god like light. Our superstitions are nothing but darkness. Reader, reflect, spread this truth, draw your conclusions.'

i. [Charles] Le Beau's *Histoire du Bas-Empire* (Paris, 1737-1817) eventually achieved twenty-nine volumes.

## Nécessaire: Necessary



OSMIN: Aren't you saying that everything is necessary?

SELIM: If everything weren't necessary it would follow that god had made useless things.

OSMIN: That is, it was necessary for the divine nature to have made everything it made?

SELIM: I believe so, or at least I suspect it. There are people who think otherwise. I don't understand them. Perhaps they are right. I'm afraid of disputes about it.

OSMIN: Anyway I want to talk to you about another necessity.

SELIM: Which? Of what is necessary to an upright man to live? Of the wretchedness to which one is reduced when one lacks necessities?

OSMIN: No, for what is necessary for one isn't always necessary for another. It's necessary for an Indian to have rice, for an Englishman to have meat, a Russian needs furs, an African gauze materials. One man believes that he needs twelve coach horses, another limits himself to a pair of shoes, a third gaily walks barefoot. I want to talk to you about what is necessary for all men.

SELIM: It appears to me that god gave our species all it needed: eyes to see, feet to walk, a mouth to eat, an oesophagus to swallow, a stomach to digest, a brain to reason, organs to produce their kind.

OSMIN: How then does it happen that some men are born deprived of a part of these necessary things?

SELIM: It's because the general laws of nature have produced accidents, which have caused monsters to be born; but in general man is provided with all he needs to live in society.

OSMIN: Are there notions common to all men that help them to live in society?

SELIM: Yes. I have travelled with Paul Lucas,<sup>1</sup> and wherever I went I saw that people respected their fathers and mothers, felt it necessary to keep their promises, pitied the

i. He wrote books about his travels chiefly in the Near East.

oppressed innocent, hated persecution, looked upon liberty of thought as a natural right, and the enemies of this liberty as the enemies of mankind. Those who think differently appeared to me to be ill-balanced creatures, monsters like those born without eyes and hands.

OSMIN: Are these necessary things necessary always and everywhere?

SELIM: Yes, otherwise they wouldn't be necessary to mankind.

OSMIN: So a new belief was not necessary to our species. Men could live very well in society and accomplish their duties to god before they believed that Mohammed had frequent conversations with the angel Gabriel.

SELIM: Nothing is more obvious. It would be ridiculous to think that one couldn't have carried out one's duties as a man before Mohammed came into the world. It was not at all necessary for the human species to believe in the *Koran*. The world wagged before Mohammed just as it does today. If Mohammedanism had been necessary for the world it would have existed since the beginning of the world, it would have existed everywhere. God, who gave us all eyes to see his sun, would have given us all intelligence to see the truth of the Moslem religion. Therefore this sect is merely like practical laws that change according to time and place, like fashions, like the opinions of doctors, which succeed each other. So the Moslem sect cannot be essentially necessary to man.

OSMIN: But as it exists, god permitted it?

SELIM: Yes, as he permits the world to be filled with nonsense, errors and calamities. This doesn't mean that men are all essentially made to be stupid and unhappy.

OSMIN: What do you mean when you say: 'God permits?' Can nothing occur without his orders? To permit, to want and to do are they not for him the same thing?

SELIM: He permits crime, but doesn't commit it.

OSMIN: To commit a crime is to act against divine justice, to disobey god. Now god can't disobey himself, he can't commit a crime; but he so made man that he commits many. How does that come about?

### *Orgueil: Pride*

325

SELIM: There are people who know that, but I'm not one of them. All I'm convinced of is that the *Koran* is ridiculous, although it contains some pretty good things here and there. The *Koran* is certainly not necessary to man. That's enough for me. I see clearly what is false, and I know very little what is true.

OSMIN: I thought you were going to instruct me, and you teach me nothing.

SELIM: Isn't it a lot to know the people who deceive you, and the gross and dangerous errors they utter?

OSMIN: I'd have reason to complain of a doctor who explained to me which plants are harmful, but never showed me a beneficial one.

SELIM: I'm not a doctor and you're not ill, but it seems to me that I should be giving you a very good prescription if I said to you: 'Beware of all the inventions of charlatans, worship god, be upright, and believe that two and two make four.'

### *Orgueil: Pride*

In one of his letters Cicero says familiarly to his friend: 'Let me know to whom you would like me to give Gaul.' In another he complains that he is tired of the letters of various princes who thank him for having had their provinces elevated into kingdoms, and he adds that he does not even know where these kingdoms are.

It may be that Cicero, who of course had often been applauded and obeyed by the Roman people, a people that was sovereign, and who was thanked by kings he did not know, had some impulses of pride and vanity.

Although this feeling is not at all suitable for so puny an animal as man, we might nevertheless pardon it in a Cicero, a Caesar, a Scipio, but that at the far end of one of our semi-barbarous provinces a man who has bought a minor office and printed some mediocre verse, should take it into his head to be proud, that is enough to make us laugh loud and long.