

of those bones of unknown animals which we discover buried in the earth. Some may even conceive, that those various monsters, which constitute the essential ornaments of the history of the heroic ages of almost all countries, are precisely those very species which it was necessary to destroy, in order to allow the establishment of civilization. Thus the Theseuses and Bellerophons of ancient times had been more fortunate than all the nations of our days, which have only been able to drive back the noxious animals, but have never yet succeeded in exterminating a single species.

*Inquiry respecting the Fabulous Animals of the Ancients.*

It is easy to reply to the foregoing objection, by examining the descriptions of these unknown beings, and by inquiring into their origins. The greater number of them have an origin purely mythological, and of this origin their descriptions bear unequivocal marks ; for in almost all of them we see merely parts of known animals united by an unbridled imagination, and in contradiction to all the laws of nature.

Those which were invented or arranged by the Greeks, have at least the merit of possessing elegance in their composition. Like those ara-