

intervals, occasioning only local and restricted disasters. The rivers and their affluents flowed between tranquil banks. Animated Nature is that of our own days. An abundant vegetation, diversified by the existence of a climate which has now been acquired, embellishes the earth. A multitude of animals inhabit the waters, the dry land, and the air. Nevertheless, creation has not yet achieved its greatest work—a being capable of comprehending these marvels and of admiring the sublime work—a soul is wanting to adore and give thanks to the Creator.

God created man.

What is man?

We might say that man is an intelligent and moral being; but this would give a very imperfect idea of his nature. Franklin says that man is one that can make tools! This is to reproduce a portion of the first proposition, while depreciating it. Aristotle calls man the "wise being," ζῷον πολιτικόν. Linnæus, in his "System of Nature," after having applied to man the epithet of wise (*homo sapiens*) writes after this generic title these profound words: *Nosce te ipsum*. The French naturalist and philosopher, Isidore Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, says, "The plant *lives*, the animal *lives and feels*, man *lives, feels, and thinks*"—a sentiment which Voltaire had already expressed. "The Eternal Maker," says the philosopher of Ferney, "has given to man organisation, sentiment, and intelligence; to the animals sentiment, and what we call instinct; to vegetables organisation alone. His power then acts continually upon these three kingdoms." It is probably the animal which is here depreciated. The animal on many occasions undoubtedly thinks, reasons, deliberates with itself, and acts in virtue of a decision maturely weighed; it is not then reduced to mere sensation.

To define exactly the human being, we believe that it is necessary to characterise the nature and extent of his intelligence. In certain cases the intelligence of the animal approaches nearly to that of man, but the latter is endowed with a certain faculty which belongs to him exclusively; in creating him, God has added an entirely new step in the ascending scale of animated beings. This faculty, peculiar to the human race, is *abstraction*. We will say, then, that man is an *intelligent* being, gifted with the faculty of comprehending the *abstract*.

It is by this faculty that man is raised to a pre-eminent degree of material and moral power. By it he has subdued the earth to his empire, and by it also his mind rises to the most sublime contemplations. Thanks to this faculty, man has conceived the ideal, and realised poesy. He has conceived the infinite, and created mathe-