

they are the fashion among all nations, whether at the periods when their idolatry has not yet been refined, or when the import of these emblematical combinations has been lost. But who would dare to affirm that he had found those productions of ignorance and superstition in nature? And yet it may have happened that travellers, influenced by a desire of making themselves famous, might pretend that they had seen those strange beings, or that, deceived by a slight resemblance, into which they were too careless to enquire, they may have taken real animals for them. In the eyes of such people, large baboons or monkeys may have appeared true cynocephali, sphinxes, or men with tails. It is thus that St Augustin may have imagined he had seen a satyr.

Some real animals, inaccurately observed and described, may have given rise to monstrous ideas, which, however, have had their foundation in some reality. Thus, we can have no doubt of the existence of the hyena, although that animal has not its neck supported by a single bone*, and al-

* I have even seen, in the collection of the late Mr Adrien Camper, a skeleton of a hyena, in which several of the vertebræ of the neck were ankylosed. It was probably from seeing some similar individual that the character in question was attributed to all hyenas. This animal ought to be more subject than any other to such an accident, on