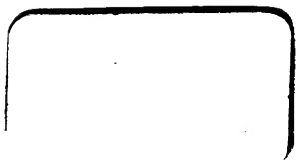


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MEMOIRS,
ILLUSTRATING THE
HISTORY OF JACOBINISM.

A TRANSLATION FROM THE FRENCH OF

THE ABBE BARRUEL.

PART I.—VOL. I.

THE ANTICHRISTIAN CONSPIRACY.



HARTFORD:

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P R E F A C E

OF THE

TRANSLATOR.

READER,

IN the work laid before you, you are not to expect the beauties of imagination ; truth alone is the object of this research. History has always been considered as the school in which the statesman is to learn the art of government ; the citizen to read with awe of those disastrous days of bloodshed and rapine, expressed by the term *Revolution*. This work will lay open the most terrible, and perhaps the most astonishing concatenation of intrigue, that has ever entered the mind of man, to bring about the dreadful revolution, with which all Europe has been convulsed.

The First Part will contain, THE ANTICHRISTIAN CONSPIRACY, or that of the *Sophisters of Impiety* against the God of Christianity, and a-

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gainst every religion and every altar, whether Protestant or Catholic, Lutheran or Calvinist, provided it be but Christian.

The Second Part will show, THE ANTI-MONARCHICAL CONSPIRACY, or that of the *Sophisters of Impiety*, coalescing with those of *Rebellion* against all kings.

The Third Part will demonstrate THE ANTI-SOCIAL CONSPIRACY, or that of the *Sophisters of Impiety* coalescing with those of *Anarchy* against every religion, against every government, without even excepting the republican, against all civil society and all property whatever.

The first of these conspiracies was that of those men called Philosophers. The second that of the Philosophers united with the Occult Lodges of the Freemasons.* The third was that of the Philosophers and the Occult-Masons coalesced with the Illuminés, who generated the Jacobins.

It is with confidence that we present the first volume to the public, after the approbation which one of the most distinguished authors of the age, both for his political knowledge, and the noble ardor he has shown in his writings to subdue the growing evil, was pleased to express, when he read the first volume of the French original. He was flattering enough to say, in writing to the author, "The whole of the wonderful narrative is supported by documents and proofs,

* We say OCCULT LODGES, as the Freemasons in general were far from being acquainted with the conspiracies of the Occult Lodges; and indeed many were not people to be tampered with. It might be objected, that all lodges were occult: with regard to the public they were so; but besides the common lodges, there existed others which were hidden from the generality of the Freemasons. It is those which the author styles ARRIERES LOGES, and that we have translated by OCCULT LODGES.

“ with the most juridical regularity and exactness. The reflexions and reasonings are interspersed with infinite judgment, and in their most proper places, for leading the sentiments of the reader and preventing the force of plausible objections. The tendency of the whole is admirable in every point of view, political, religious and philosophical.”

After such a decided opinion on the French original, the translator cannot but think it *a duty he has fulfilled* in laying such a work open to those of his countrymen, who may not be sufficiently versed in the French language; and if in so critical a moment, he can, by this means, serve his country, he is willing to take upon himself all those inaccuracies of style, which are too frequent in translations, especially when done in haste. That the reader may be instructed in these dreadful plots, and be acquainted with the whole and nothing but the truth, is the sincere wish of the

TRANSLATOR.

It would be useless to add, that in all quotations the most literal exactness has been observed.

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Preliminary Discourse.

AT an early period of the French Revolution, there appeared a sect calling itself Jacobin, and teaching *that all men were equal and free!* In the name of their equality and disorganizing liberty, they trampled under foot the altar and the throne; they stimulated all nations to rebellion, and aimed at plunging them ultimately into the horrors of anarchy.

At its first appearance, this sect counted 300,000 adepts; and it was supported by two millions of men, scattered through France, armed with torches and pikes, and all the fire-brands of revolution.

It was under the auspices of this sect, by their intrigues, their influence, and their impulse, that France beheld itself a prey to every crime; that soil was stained with the blood of its pontiffs and priests, of its rich men and nobles; with the blood of every class of its citizens, without regard to rank, age or sex! These were the men who, after having made the unfortunate Lewis XVI. his Queen and Sister, drink to the very dregs the cup of outrage and ignominy during a long confinement, solemnly murdered them on a scaffold, proudly menacing the sovereigns of the earth with a similar fate! These are the men who have made the French Revolution a scourge to all Europe, a terror to its Powers, who vainly combine to stop the progress of their revolutionary armies, more numerous and destructive than the inundations of the Vandals.

Whence originated these men, who seem to arise from the bowels of the earth, who start into existence

with their plans and their projects, their tenets and their thunders, their means and ferocious resolves; whence, I say, this devouring sect? Whence this swarm of adepts, these systems, this frantic rage against the altar and the throne, against every institution, whether civil or religious, so much respected by our ancestors? Can their primogeniture in the order of the revolution give them this tremendous power, or were they not anterior? is it not their own work? where then was their hiding place? Their schools, their masters, where shall we find them, and who will dive into their future projects? This French Revolution ended, will they cease to desolate the earth, to murder its kings, to fanaticise its people?

Importance of their History

These certainly are questions that cannot be indifferent to nations or their rulers, or to those who watch for the happiness and preservation of society; and these are the questions which I will attempt to answer. I will seek their solution in the very annals of the sect, whence I will shew their plans and systems, their plots and means. Such, Reader, will be the object of the following Memoirs.

Had I seen the plots and oaths of the Jacobins end with the disasters they produced; had I seen the cloud of our misfortunes dissipated with the French Revolution, still should I stand convinced of the importance and necessity of disclosing to the world the dark recesses from whence it burst into being.

to posterity;

When with awe and reverence we read of plagues and other scourges that have desolated the earth, though the danger may be passed, they are not to be considered as objects of mere curiosity. In the history of poisons we find the antidotes; in the history of monsters we learn the weapons that destroyed them. When former scourges re-appear, or are to be apprehended, is it not our duty to explore the causes which first promoted their destructive influence, the means by which they might have been opposed, and the errors by which they may again be produced? The present generation is instructed by the misfortunes of the past; be then the future instructed by the history of ours.

to the present generation.

But we have evils yet more pressing to combat: the present generation has been deluded; and such delusions must be done away as may double our misfor-

tunes in the instant when we think ourselves most secure. We have seen men obstinately blind to the causes of the French Revolution: we have seen men who wished to persuade themselves that this conspiring and revolutionary sect had no existence anterior to the revolution. In their minds this long chain of miseries which has befallen France, to the terror of all Europe, was the mere offspring of that concurrence of unforeseen events inseparable from the times; it is in vain, in their conceptions, to seek conspirators or conspiracies, vain to search for the hand that directs the horrid course. The man who rules to-day knows not the plans of his predecessor, and he that shall follow will, in their opinions, be equally ignorant of those of the present ruler.

First error on the cause of the revolution.

Prepossessed with such false ideas, and acting under so dangerous a prejudice, these superficial observers would willingly make all nations believe, that the French Revolution could to them be no cause of alarm; that it was a volcano rapidly venting itself on the unfortunate country that gave it existence, whilst its focus and its origin remain unfathomable. Causes unknown (they will say) but peculiar to your climate; elements less subject to ferment; laws more analogous to your character; the public fortune better balanced; these and such as these are reasons sufficient to make you regardless of the fate of France. But should such, alas! be your impending fate, vain will be your efforts to avert the threatening blow. The concurrence and fatality of circumstances will drag you towards it; the very ramparts you shall build against it will fall back upon you, and perhaps level the space that now divides you from the horrid scene of anarchy and desolation.

Who could conceive, that such was the language I have heard fall from the mouths even of those whom the unfortunate Lewis XVI. had called near his person to ward off the blows perpetually aimed at him by the revolution! a language better calculated to lull all nations into that fatal security which portends destruction.—I have now before me the Memorial of an Ex-minister, consulted on the causes of this infernal revolution, and in particular as to the chief conspirators, which he should have better known, and on the plan of the conspiracy.—I hear this man answering, that it would be useless to seek either men, or any set of men.

conspiring against the altar and the throne, or to suppose that any plan had been framed. Unfortunate monarch! Are those who are to watch for the safety of your person, for the safety of your people, ignorant of the names, of the very existence of your enemies! If then we behold both you and your people falling victims to their plots, can we be astonished?

Truths combating the first error.

Strong in the facts, and armed with the proofs shown in the following Memoirs, we shall hold a very different language. We shall shew that with which it is incumbent on all nations and their chiefs to be acquainted: we shall demonstrate that, even to the most horrid deeds perpetrated during the French Revolution, every thing was foreseen and resolved on, was combined and premeditated: that they were the offspring of deep-thought villany, since they had been prepared and were produced by men, who alone held the clue of those plots and conspiracies, lurking in the secret meetings where they had been conceived, and only watching the favorable moment of bursting forth. Though the events of each day may not appear to have been combined, there nevertheless existed a secret agent and a secret cause, giving rise to each event, and turning each circumstance to the long-sought-for end. Though circumstances may often have afforded the pretence or the occasion, yet the grand cause of the revolution, its leading features, its atrocious crimes, will still remain one continued chain of deep-laid and premeditated villany.

Second error on the nature of the revolution.

In revealing the object, and showing the extent of these plots, I meet a second error, more dangerous than the first. There are men who make no difficulty in owning that the French Revolution was premeditated, but that the intention of the first authors was pure, and that they only sought the happiness and regeneration of empires; that if great misfortunes have since happened, they arose from the obstacles thrown in their way; that a great people cannot be regenerated without commotion, but that the tempest will subside, and a calm succeed the swelling billow. Then nations, astonished at the fear they had conceived of the French Revolution, and true only to its principles, will be happy in imitation.

This error is the favorite theme of the Jacobin missionaries; it was this that gained them their first in-

struments of rebellion ; that cohort of constitutionalists, who still look on their decrees of the RIGHTS OF MAN as the summit of legislative perfection, and still impatiently wait the fatal day when the world shall impetuously move in the sphere of their political rhapsody. It was this that gained them that prodigious number of votaries more blind than wicked, and who might have been mistaken for honest, if virtue could have combined with ferocity in search of happier days. It was this that gained them those men whose well-meant, though stupid credulity, misled them to believe in the necessity of the carnage of the 10th of August, and of the horrid butcheries of the 2d of September ; in a word, all those men who, in the murders of 3 or 400,000 fellow-creatures, in the extermination of millions of victims by famine, the sword, or the guillotine, seek consolation, in spite of this depopulating scourge, in the empty hope that this dreadful chain of horrors may be productive of happier days.

In answer to these fallacious hopes, to these pretended good intentions, I will oppose the real views of this revolutionary sect, their true projects, their conspiracies, and their means of execution. I will show them, for they must be divulged, the proofs being acquired. The French Revolution has been a true child to its parent sect ; its crimes have been its filial duty ; and those black deeds and atrocious acts, the natural sequel of the principles and systems that gave it birth. I will show more ; so far from seeking future prosperity, the French Revolution is but a sportive essay of its strength, while the whole universe is its aim. If elsewhere the same crimes are necessary, they will be committed ; if equal ferocity is necessary they will be equally ferocious ; and it will extend wheresoever its errors are received.

The reflecting reader must then conclude, that either this Jacobin sect must be crushed or society overthrown : that all governments must give place to those massacres, those convulsive disorders, and that infernal anarchy which rages in France : 'tis true there is no other alternative, universal destruction or extinction of the sect. But let it be remembered, that to crush a sect is not to imitate the fury of its apostles, intoxicated with its sanguinary rage and propense to enthusiastic murder. It is not to massacre and immolate its adepts,

Truths combating the second error.

True consequences of these truths,

or retort on them the thunders they had hurled. To crush a sect, is to attack it in its schools, to reveal its imposture, and show to the world the absurdity of its principles, the atrocity of its means, and above all the profound wickedness of its teachers. Yes; strike the Jacobin, but spare the man; the sect is a sect of opinion, and its destruction will be doubly complete on the day when it is deserted by its disciples, to return to the true principles of reason and society.

The sect is monstrous, but all its disciples are not monsters. Its care in hiding its latter projects, the extreme precaution with which it initiated the chosen of the elect, shews how much it feared the desertion of the multitude of its disciples, and its consequent destruction, had the horror of its mysteries been surmised. For my part, I never doubted, how depraved soever the Jacobins may have been, that the greatest part would have deserted the sect could they have foreseen whither and by what means they were led. Could the French people have followed such chiefs, had it been possible to make them conceive to what lengths the plans and plots of the conspirators would carry them!

That these plots should be known, the interest of all nations;

Were France, like hell, a bottomless pit, impenetrable to every voice but that of the fiends of the revolution, still it is not too late to acquaint other nations of their danger. They have heard of the crimes and misfortunes of that revolution, let them learn the lot that awaits them should Jacobinism prevail; let them learn that they are not less within the grand revolutionary circle than France itself; that all those crimes, the anarchy and bloody scenes which have followed the dissolution of the French empire, equally await all other nations; let them learn that their altars and their thrones, their pontiffs and their kings, are doomed to the same fate with those of France: all are comprehended within the grand conspiracy.

Interest of all governments.

When a phantom of peace shall seem to terminate the present war between the Jacobins and the combined powers, it certainly will be the interest of all governments to ascertain how far such a peace can be relied on. At that period, more than at any other, will it be necessary to study the secret history of that sect, which sends its legions rather to shiver the sceptre than to fight the power, which has not promised to its adepts the crowns of princes, kings and emperors, but

has required of and bound those adepts by the oath of destroying them all : at that period we must remember, that it is not in the field of Mars that the war against sects is the most dangerous ; when rebellion and anarchy are in the very tenets of the sectary, the hand may be disarmed, but war glows warmly in the heart. The sect, weakened, may slumber for a while, but such a sleep is the calm preceding the irruption of the volcano. It no longer sends forth its curling flames ; but the subterraneous fire winds its course, penetrates, and, preparing many vents, suddenly bursts forth and carries misery and devastation wherever its fiery torrent rolls.

The object of these Memoirs is not to treat precisely of that state of war or of peace carried on from Power to Power. Then it often happens that, all resources being exhausted, the sword must be sheathed, though the original grievances still subsist. Let the rulers of the people discuss the means of force. But we know there exists another sort of war, which a confidence in treaties only renders more fatal ; *that* war is a war of plots and conspiracies, and against them public treaties can never avail. Woe to that Power which shall have made peace without knowing why its enemy had declared war against it. What the sect had done before it burst forth the first time, it will do again to prepare a second eruption. In darkness it will conspire anew, and calamities still more disastrous will teach all nations that the French revolution was only the first step towards the universal dissolution which the sect has so long been meditating and contriving.

Such were the reasons which stimulated me to investigate the plots and wishes, the tortuous means and nature of this sect. We have witnessed the frantic rage and the ferocity of its legions ; we have known them as the agents of the French Revolution, as the perpetrators of all its atrocious crimes and devastations ; but few are acquainted with the schools that have formed them. Posterity, alas ! will feel, during many generations, their dire effects. To trace their ravages, it will only have to cast its eyes around. The ruins of the palaces and the temples, the fallen cities, the mansions destroyed throughout the provinces, will paint in glowing colours the devastations of the modern Vandals. The lists of proscription, fatal to the

Object of
these me-
moirs.

prince and so many of his subjects, the deserted villages, all, in a word, will long be the vouchers of those fatal lanterns, of that insatiable guillotine, of those legislative executioners supported by bands of assassins.

Circumstances so painful and so humiliating to human nature will not be recorded in these Memoirs. It is not to expose what a Marat or a Robespierre has done, but to bare to the light the schools, the systems, the conspiracies, in a word, the masters who have formed a Philippe D'Orleans, a Syeyes, a Condorcet, or a Petion, and who at this present time are forming in all nations men who would rival Marat and Robespierre in their cruelties. Our object is, that, the sect of the Jacobins and their conspiracies once known, their crimes shall be no longer a cause of surprize; that their propensity to the effusion of blood, their blasphemies against Christ and his altars, their frantic rage against the throne, and their cruelties against their fellow-citizens, shall be as naturally understood as the ravages of the plague. And may nations in future as cautiously guard against the one, as they preserve themselves against the other!

It was to attain this important object that all our researches on the sect have been directed at its chiefs, its origin, its plots, its plans, and its progress; more particularly investigating the means it employed to bring about the revolution, than describing its conduct during that revolution.

The result of our research, corroborated by proofs drawn from the records of the Jacobins, and of their first masters, has been, that this sect with its conspiracies is in itself no other than the coalition of a triple sect, of a triple conspiracy, in which, long before the revolution, the overthrow of the altar, the ruin of the throne, and the dissolution of all civil society had been debated and resolved on.

1st. Many years before the French Revolution, men who styled themselves Philosophers conspired against the God of the Gospel, against Christianity, without distinction of worship, whether Protestant or Catholic, Anglican or Presbyterian. The grand object of this conspiracy was to overturn every altar where Christ was adored. It was the conspiracy of the *Sophisters of Impiety*, or the **ANTICHRISTIAN CONSPIRACY**.

2dly. This school of impiety soon formed the *Sophisters of Rebellion*: these latter, combining their conspiracy against kings with that of the Sophisters of Impiety, coalesce with that ancient sect whose tenets constituted the whole secret of the *Occult Lodges* of Free-masonry, which long since, imposing on the credulity of its most distinguished adepts, only initiated the chosen of the elect into the secret of their unrelenting hatred for Christ and kings.

3dly. From the Sophisters of Impiety and Rebellion, arose the *Sophisters of Impiety and Anarchy*. These latter conspire not only against Christ and his altars, but against every religion natural or revealed: not only against kings, but against every government, against all civil society, even against all property whatsoever.

This third sect, known by the name of *Illuminés*, coalesced with the Sophisters conspiring against Christ, coalesced with the Sophisters who, with the Occult Masons, conspired against both Christ and kings. It was the coalition of the adepts of *impiety*, of the adepts of *rebellion*, and the adepts of *anarchy*, which formed the CLUB of the JACOBINS. Under this name, common to the triple sect (originating from the name of the order, whose convent they had seized upon to hold their sittings,) we shall see the adepts following up their triple conspiracy against God, the King, and Society. Such was the origin, such the progress of that sect, since become so dreadfully famous under the name of JACOBIN.

In the present Memoirs each of these three conspiracies shall be treated separately; their authors unmasked, the object, means, coalition and progress of the adepts shall be laid open.

Proofs of the most pointed nature are necessary, when such horrid plots are denounced to all nations; and it is to give these proofs the greater authenticity, that the title of MEMOIRS has been prefixed to this work. To have written the simple history of the Jacobins might have sufficed for many; but these Memoirs are intended for the historian, who will find a collection of proofs, both numerous and convincing, all extracted from the records and avowals of the conspirators themselves. Strong in these proofs, we shall not fear to proclaim to all nations, "that whatever

“ their religion or their government may be, to what-
“ ever rank they may belong in civil society, if Jaco-
“ binism triumphs, all will be overthrown ; that
“ should the plans and wishes of the Jacobins be ac-
“ complished, their religion with its pontiffs, their
“ government with its laws, their magistrates and
“ their property, all would be swept away in the com-
“ mon mass of ruin ! Their riches and their fields,
“ their houses and their cottages, their very wives and
“ children would be torn from them. You have
“ looked upon the Jacobinical faction as exhausting
“ itself in France, when it was only making a sportive
“ essay of its strength. Their wishes and their oaths
“ extend throughout Europe ; nor are England or
“ Germany, Italy or Spain, strangers to their in-
“ trigues.”

Let not the Reader take this for the language of en-
thusiasm or fanaticism ; far be such passions either from
myself or my readers. Let them decide on the proofs
adduced, with the same coolness and impartiality which
has been necessary to collect and digest them. The
order followed in the investigation of these conspira-
cies shall be exactly that in which they were generated.
We shall therefore begin with the conspiracy against
the whole religion of the Gospel, and which we have
styled the **ANTICHRISTIAN CONSPIRACY.**

THE
ANTICHRISTIAN CONSPIRACY,

CHAP. I.

Of the Principal Actors of the Conspiracy.

ABOUT the middle of this century, there appeared three men leagued in the most inveterate hatred against Christianity. These were Voltaire, D'Alembert, and Frederick II. King of Prussia. Voltaire hated religion because he was jealous of its Author, and of all those whom it had rendered illustrious; D'Alembert because his cold heart was incapable of affection; Frederick because he had never seen it but through the medium of its enemies. Chiefs of the conspiracy.

To these three a fourth must be added, named Diderot; hating religion because he doated on nature; enthusiastically wedded to the chaos of his own ideas, he chose rather to build his system on chimeras and form mysteries of his own, than submit to the light of the Gospel.

Numerous were the adepts afterwards drawn into this conspiracy, generally stupid admirers or secondary agents. Voltaire the chief, D'Alembert the most subtle agent, Frederick the protector and often the adviser, Diderot the forlorn hope.

The first of these conspirators, Mary Francis Arouet, Voltaire was born at Paris, February 20th, 1694, son of an ancient notary of the Chatelet; through vanity he changed his name to that of Voltaire, which he deemed more noble, more sonorous, and better suited to the reputation he aimed at: and never had there yet appeared a man with such talents, and such a thirst of dominion over the literary world. Gravity of manners,

the spirit of meditation, of a genius leading to discussion and deep research, were unfortunately not among the gifts which Nature had lavished on him; and more unfortunately still, in his own heart were to be found all those passions which render abilities dangerous: from his early youth he seemed to direct them all at the overthrow of religion.

While only a student in rhetoric, in the college of Louis le Grand, he drew on himself the following rebuke from his professor, the Jesuit Le Jay, *Unfortunate young man, you will one day come to be the standard-bearer of Infidelity.** Never was oracle more literally fulfilled.

On leaving the college, he neither sought nor loved any other society, but that of men whose profligate morals could stimulate his incredulity. He was particularly intimate with Chaulieu the Anacreon of his day, the poet of voluptuousness; and with a few Epicureans who held their sittings at the Hotel de Vendôme. His first essays were in satire, which gave offence to government, and in tragedy, where we should have seen the rival of Corneille, Racine and Crebillon, had he not at the same time wished to rival Celsus and Porphyrius, with all the other enemies of religion. At a time when licentiousness in opinion still met with obstacles in France, he sought an asylum in England. He there found men whom the writings of Shaftesbury, commented on by Bolingbroke, had trained up to Deism. He mistook them for philosophers, and was persuaded that they alone were esteemed by the English. If he was not then mistaken, times since are greatly changed. All those sophisters whom Voltaire extols as the glory of Great-Britain, if not forgotten, are more despised than read. Collins and Hobbes when remembered are classed with Tom Paine; an Englishman's good sense does not allow him to hate religion, or make an ostentatious display of impiety. With him nothing is less philosophical, notwithstanding his toleration and variety of creeds, than that affected hatred to Christianity which marks our Sophisters, and more particularly their conspiracies to overthrow it.

Philosophism is said to have first arisen in England. I deny the fact. Philosophism is the error of every

* Life of Voltaire, edit. of Kell, and Feller's Hist. Dict.

man who, judging of every thing by the standard of his own reason, rejects in religious matters every authority that is not derived from the light of nature. It is the error of every man who denies the possibility of any mystery beyond the limits of his reason, of every man who, discarding revelation, in defence of the pretended rights of reason, their liberty and equality, seeks to subvert the whole fabric of the Christian religion.

Such an error may constitute a sect ; the history of ancient Jacobinism demonstrates that the sect existed long since ; but it had shrunk back to its dark abodes, when Voltaire appeared.

Such an error may be that of a few individuals. Many of the same sort had been broached during the two last centuries. Numerous were the sects which had sprung from Luther and Calvin, each making its partial attack on the ancient tenets of Christianity ; when at length there arose a set of men attacking them all, and they would believe nothing. At first they were styled Libertines, the only name they deserved.

Voltaire might every where have met with some of those men, and more particularly at Paris under the regency of the Duke of Orleans, who was himself a monster of libertinism ; but, feeling the necessity of religion for the state, would not suffer it to be attacked in their publications.

It was in England, it is true, where, under their Collins and their Hobbes, the libertines first styled themselves Philosophers, and assumed the airs of deep thought, probably from some impious productions, which in any other part of Christendom would have enjoyed neither equal publicity nor impunity. But it may be certainly concluded, that Voltaire would every where have been, what he became in England ; he would have been so, at least, wherever, from the lenity of the laws, he could give vent to his insatiable thirst of dominion over the empire of science or letters.

It was in vain for him to aspire at the reputation of a Bossuet, a Pascal, or of that blaze of genius which had shone forth in the defence of religion ; but, hating their cause, and dazzled by their glory, he dared be jealous of their God ; at his empire he levelled his blows, and would be foremost in the ranks of the Philosophists.—He succeeded ; but, to keep his pre-emi-

nence, blushed not to blend philosophy with impiety, and to compass the overthrow of religion. England however was the place where he first conceived a possibility of success. Condorcet, his adept, his confidant, his historian, and his panegyrist, asserts it in positive terms: *There it was (in England) that Voltaire swore to dedicate his life to the accomplishment of that project; and he has kept his word.**

On his return to Paris, about the year 1730, he made so little secret of his design, he had published so many writings against Christianity, and was so sanguine in his hopes, that Mr. Herault, the Lieutenant of Police, upbraiding him one day with his impiety, and adding, *You may do or write what you please, you will never be able to destroy the Christian religion.* Voltaire without hesitation answered, *That is what we shall see.†*

Stimulated by the obstacles he met with, and seeing so much glory in his enterprize, he would not willingly have shared it with any body. "I am weary," he would say, "of hearing people repeat, that twelve men have been sufficient to establish Christianity, and I will prove that one may suffice to overthrow it."‡ When he uttered these words, his spite seemed to blind him to such a degree, as to hide from him the immense distance between the genius that creates, and the petty cunning of the mischievous monkey that destroys. The Sophister may conjure the clouds, or veil the world in darkness, but does not by that approach the God of truth. The virtues, the miracles, all the divine knowledge of the apostles, were necessary to teach man the path of life.

Although Voltaire in his outset flattered himself to enjoy alone the whole glory of the destruction of the Christian religion, which was his sole object, he nevertheless soon found that associates would be necessary. He even feared the noise of his undertaking, and hence resolved to move in the surer though humbler sphere of a conspirator. Already his numerous writings, either impious or obscene, had gained him many admirers and disciples, who, under the name of Philosophers, prided themselves in the hatred they bore to Christianity. Among these he chose D'Alembert as the most proper person to second him in his new plan of attack; and he chose well.

* Life of Voltaire, edit. of Kell. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

In the nobler theme, among the Sophisters we should compare Voltaire to Agamemnon, and D'Alembert to Ulysses. If the comparison be too noble, see the latter cunning and cringing, even barking like the fox. Born of Fontenelle according to some, of Astruc the doctor according to others, his birth was always a secret to him. His mother was at the head of one of those societies of men of letters common in Paris, and she used to style them her beasts. Whether designed to hide his birth or not, is unknown; but certain it is, that in the night from the 16th to the 17th of November 1717, he was found, wrapped in swaddling cloaths, in the portico of the parish church of St. John; and hence took the name of *Jean le Rond* at the Foundling Hospital whither he was carried and in which he was bred.

D'Alembert.

While yet a youth he enlisted under the banners of incredulity, repaying with ingratitude the church that had charitably reared him; with the small sums given him for his education, he fought, like many other young men, all those profligate works written against a religion whose proofs they almost flee from. Thus do wicked boys calumniate the kind master who thwarts their evil disposition.

Both his heart and mind naturally led him to be a disciple of Voltaire; even their diversity of character and the immense difference of talent, were soon confounded in their mutual bias to incredulity, and confirmed hatred to Christianity.

Voltaire was fiery, passionate and impetuous; D'Alembert cold, reserved, prudent and crafty: Voltaire fond of show, D'Alembert almost feared to be seen. The one, like the chief who is obliged to mask his battery, reluctantly used dissimulation, wished to wage open war with Christianity, *and die on a heap of Christians, which he terms Bigots, immolated at his feet.** The other, by instinct a dissembler, waged war like the partizan who, from behind his bushes, smiles to see his enemy fall into the snares he has laid.† Voltaire, so transcendent in polite literature, was but superficial in mathematicks. In the latter D'Alembert was profound, and owed his reputation to them: in every thing else he was a dry, finical, and perplexed writer, and

* Letter from Voltaire to D'Alembert, 20th April 1761.

† Particularly Let. 100, from D'Alembert, 4th May 1762.

is sometimes as low and vulgar as Voltaire is noble, easy and elegant; he would plod to turn a bad epigram, while the latter would have wittily filled whole volumes.

Voltaire impudently daring, whether for or against, would quote the scriptures, history, or the holy fathers, affirming, inventing, or traducing the passage he wants; for to wound was his only aim. D'Alembert carefully guards against the reply that may expose him; his steps, mysterious and indirect, hide his design; shrinking from refutation, if attacked he flies, concealing the fight lest he proclaim his defeat. Voltaire on the contrary seeks his enemies, calls to them; though a hundred times defeated, he returns to the charge; though his error be refuted, he will incessantly repeat it. It is not in defeat, but in flight alone that he sees disgrace; and thus after a war of sixty years we still see him ranging on the field of battle.

D'Alembert seeks the smile of every little assembly; and the applause of forty men in an academical circle constitutes his triumphal day; while all the world, from London to St. Petersburg, from Sweden to America, to please Voltaire must sound his fame.

D'Alembert enlists from around him those secondary adepts; he trains them, initiates them, directs their missions, and holds petty correspondences. Voltaire will conjure kings, emperors, ministers and princes against his God; all must do homage to the sultan of incredulity. Among these latter, history must distinguish that Frederick, which it has yet only known by titles glorious to monarchs, whether conquerors or rulers.

Frederick
II.

In this Frederick II. the Solomon of the North according to the Sophisters, there are two distinct men. First, that King of Prussia, that hero less worthy of our admiration in the field of victory, displaying his vast military talents, than as the father of his people, giving life to agriculture and commerce, protecting the arts, counterpoising in some sort, by the justice and wisdom of his administration, those exploits perhaps more brilliant than just. In the second (so beneath a monarch) we see the Sophister, the philosophic pedant, the conspirator of incredulity; less cruel and enthusiastic than Julian the apostate, but more artful and perfidious.

It is painful to disclose the dark mysteries of this impious prince; but history must be true, and here especially. To trace the conspiracy against their thrones, kings must know what share their colleagues have had in the conspiracy against the altar.

Frederick, born with a mind worthy of a Celsus or his school, had not the help of a Justin or a Tertullian to guide his steps in religion, and was surrounded by its calumniators. While only Prince-royal he was in correspondence with Voltaire, and chiefly on religion or metaphysics; and even at that early age deemed himself a Philosopher; for he says—"To speak with my usual freedom, I must naturally own, that whatever regards the *God made man*, displeases me in the mouth of a Philosopher, who should be above popular error. Leave to the great *Corneille*, when *doting and fallen back to childhood*, the insipid talk of verifying the *Imitation of Christ*; and whatever you may give us, let it be your own. We may speak of fables, but merely as fables; and a profound silence in my opinion should be kept, concerning those fables of the Christians, sanctified by time and the credulity of the absurd and stupid."*

Even in his first letters there appears, with the ridiculous pride of a pedantic king, all the versatility and hypocrisy of a Sophister. Frederick denies, when Voltaire supports liberty.† With Voltaire, man is a pure machine; Frederick then maintains that man is free.‡ In one place we are free, precisely because we can form a clear idea of freedom.§ In another, man is all matter; though one can hardly form a more confused idea, than that of matter thinking, free or arguing, though it were with Frederick's own versatility.|| He upbraids Voltaire with the praises he had bestowed on Christ, and three years after he is not ashamed to write—"For my part, I own that (however people may enlist under the banners of Fanaticism) I never shall. I may indeed compose a few Psalms to give a good opinion of my orthodoxy. Socrates incensed the household Gods, so did Cicero, and he was not credulous. We must give way

* Let. 53, anno 1738.

† Let. of 16 Sept. 1771.

|| Let. of 4th Dec. 1775.

† Their letters in 1737.

§ Ibid.

“ to the fancies of a frivolous people, to avoid perfection and blame. For after all what is most desirable in this world is to live in peace ; let us then live foolishly with fools, that we may live quietly.”*

The same Frederick had written, that the Christian religion yielded none but *poisonous weeds* ;† and Voltaire had congratulated him, *as having above all Princes fortitude of soul, sufficient insight and knowledge, to see that for the seventeen hundred years past the CHRISTIAN SECT had never done any thing but harm*,‡ when we afterward find him the opponent of that work of Philosophic insight, or rather so infamously profligate, *the System of Nature*. “ One could be tempted,” says he, “ to accuse its author of want of sense and skill when, calumniating the Christian religion, he imputes to it failings that it has not. How can he with truth assert that religion can be the cause of the misfortunes of mankind ! He would have been more correct, had he simply said, that the ambition and self-interest of men, cloaked under the veil of religion, had sought to disturb the world and gratify their passions. What then is reprehensible in the morals of the commandments ? Were there in the whole Gospel but this single precept, *Do as thou wouldst be done by*, we should be obliged to confess that those few words contained the whole quintessence of morality :—The forgiveness of injuries, charity, humanity, were not these preached by Jesus in his excellent sermon on the mount ?”§

In writing this, how much Frederick had lost of that insight, that knowledge which had so lately distinguished him from other princes ! But strange to say, after having seen religion in so clear a light, he compliments Voltaire on being its scourge,|| he still communicates his plans for its destruction,¶ and foresees, that should it be preserved and protected in France, *the fine arts and higher sciences must fall*, and that *the rust of superstition will completely destroy a people, otherwise amiable and born for society*.**

* Let. of 7th Jan. 1740. † Let. to Voltaire 143, anno 1766.

‡ Let. of 5th April 1764.

§ Examination of the System of Nature, by Frederick, King of Prussia.

|| Let. of 12th Aug. 1773. ¶ Let. 20th July 1775.

** Let. to Voltaire, 30th July 1777.

Had our sophistical monarch really foreseen events, he would have seen *that* people, *otherwise amiable and born for society*, when it had lost its religion, terrifying all Europe with its horrid deeds. But, like Voltaire, he was to be the sport of his pretended wisdom, as he was of his philosophy; and though we shall often see him judging shrewdly of the adepts, we shall always find him conspiring with them against the religion of Christ.

The correspondence that so well develops the characters of the royal adept, and of his idol Voltaire, begins in 1736; it was uninterrupted during their lives, some few years of the idol's disgrace excepted. It is in this correspondence that we must study him, incredulous and impious; divesting himself of his royal insignia, he is more emulous of the Philosophist, than he was jealous of the Cæsars; and to rival Voltaire becomes his servile copyist. A poet beneath mediocrity, a metaphysician on the lower ranks, he excels in but two things, his admiration for Voltaire, and his impiety, often worse than that of his master.

In consideration of this homage, this zeal, Voltaire overlooked his caprice, the rough usage he sometimes met with, even to the correction of the cane inflicted on him at Frankfort by a major by order of the despotic Sophister. It was too essential for the sect to continue the support of a royal adept, and we shall see how very much he served them. But first, in order to fathom their mutual hatred to Christianity, let us attend to the vast obstacles they overcame; let us hear Voltaire pathetically describing his sufferings at Berlin, a few years after his arrival, in a letter to Mad. Denis, his niece and confidant. He says, "La Metrie in his Prefaces may extol his extreme felicity in being with a great king, who sometimes reads his poetry to him; yet in private he weeps with me; he would willingly return though it were on foot. But why am I here? I will astonish you. This La Metrie, a man of no consequence, chats familiarly with the king when their readings are over—He speaks to me with confidence. He declared to me that talking to the king a few days ago of my supposed favour, and of the jealousy it excites, the king had answered, *I shall certainly not want him above a twelve-month longer; we squeeze the orange and throw away*

“ *the rind* I made him repeat these consolatory
 “ words, I questioned him again and again, but he on-
 “ ly reiterated his declaration.—I have done my ut-
 “ most not to believe La Metrie; and yet, in reading
 “ over the king’s verses I found an epistle to one of
 “ his painters called Père, it begins thus :

“ *Quel spectacle étonnant vient de frapper mes yeux ?*
 “ *Ober Père, ton pinceau, s’égale au rang des dieux.*

“ Tell me what sight has struck my wond’ring eyes ?
 “ Thy skill, dear Père, with gods immortal vies.

“ Now this Père is a fellow whom he takes no no-
 “ tice of, and yet he is the *dear Père, he is a God* ; he
 “ may perhaps see me in the same light, and that is
 “ not saying much.—You may easily guess what re-
 “ flexions, what a recoil upon myself and what per-
 “ plexity, in a word what trouble this declaration of
 “ La Metrie’s has created within me.”*

This first letter was soon succeeded by a second, as follows : “ My sole views at present are, to desert in a genteel manner, to take care of my health, to see you again, and forget this three years dream. I plainly perceive the orange has been squeezed ; I must think of saving the rind. For my own instruction I will compile a dictionary for the use of kings. *My friend*, signifies *my slave* ; *my dear friend*, is to say, *you are to me more than indifferent* : you are to understand by *I will make you happy*, *I will bear with you as long as I shall have need for you* ; *sup with me to-night*, means *I will make game of you to-night*. This dictionary might be of some length, and not unworthy a place in the Encyclopædia.

“ Seriously this distresses me. Can there be truth in what I have seen ? To delight in making mischief among those that live with him ! To say every thing that is gracious to a person, and write pamphlets against him ! To force a man from his country by the most endearing and solemn promises, and treat him with the blackest malice ! What contrasts ! And this is the man who wrote in such a philosophic strain, and whom I mistook for a Philosopher ! and I styled him *the Solomon of the North* ! Do you re-

* Let. to Mad. Denis, Berlin 2d Sept. 1752.

“ member that fine letter, which never pleased you ?
 “ You are a Philosopher, said he, and so am I. Upon
 “ my word, Sire, as to Philosophers, we are neither
 “ of us so.”*

Voltaire never was more correct ; neither Frederick nor he could pretend to Philosophy in its true acceptation ; but they might eminently so in the sense of the conspirators, with whom impiety and hatred to Christianity was its only essence.

It was soon after writing this last letter, that Voltaire stole away from the court of his disciple, and received at Frankfort the *correction* which made him the laughing-stock of all Europe. Established however at Ferney, he soon forgot his bastinado, and Frederick was once more the *Solomon of the North*, who returns the compliment by saluting him as the Father of Philosophy. Though not in friendship, they were soon united in their mutual hatred to Christianity ; and though they never met again, their plans were more easily formed and intelligently conducted in their future correspondence.

As to Didoret, he spontaneously threw himself into the arms of the conspirators. A heated brain, an enthusiastic rage for that Philosophism of which Voltaire had set the fashion, a disorderly confusion of ideas (the more evident, as both his speech and pen followed all the explosions of his brain,) pointed him out to D'Alembert as a man essential to the conspiracy, and who would say, or could be made to say, such things as he dared not speak himself. They were both, until death, as firmly united to Voltaire, as the latter was to Frederick. Diderot.

If there had been any thing but chaos to have succeeded to Christianity, had there been any doctrine whatsoever to have been substituted, never were four men less fitted for such an undertaking. Uncertainty of the chiefs in their philosophical opinions.

Voltaire leaned to Deism, and seemed for some time to have adopted it ; but, insensibly falling into Spinoza's systems, he knew not what to believe. Consulting at one time D'Alembert, at another Frederick, he was torn with remorse during the remainder of his life ; if doubts and anguish of mind, void of repentance, can be called remorse. At nearly fourscore he expresses

* Letter to Mad. Denis, 18th Dec. 1752.

himself in the following uncertain manner : “ Doubts
 “ encompass us around, and *doubting is a disagreeable*
 “ *state*. Is there a God such as he is said to be? A
 “ soul such as is imagined? Analogies such as laid
 “ down? Is there any thing to be hoped for after this
 “ life? Was Gilimer in the right to laugh, though
 “ stript of his dominions, when brought before Justin-
 “ ian, or Cato preferring suicide to the fight of Cæsar.
 “ Is glory then but an illusion? Shall Mustapha in the
 “ effeminacy of his harem, beaten, ignorant, proud
 “ and committing every folly, be happier provided he
 “ digests well, than the philosopher who digests ill?
 “ Are all beings equal before the great Being that an-
 “ imates nature? In that case could the soul of Ra-
 “ vaillac be equal to that of Henry IV. or had they
 “ neither of them a soul? May the heroic philosophers
 “ unravel all this; for my part I can make nothing
 “ of it.” †

D'Alembert and Frederick alternately pressed by
 these questions, each answered after his own way.
 Unable to fix his own uncertainty the former frankly
 confesses he has not the gift of solving them : “ Lown
 “ to you,” says he, “ that concerning the existence of
 “ God, the Author of the *System of Nature* seems too
 “ resolute and dogmatic, and on this subject scepti-
 “ cism seems the most rational. *What do we know*
 “ *about it*, is with me, an answer to most metaphysical
 “ questions, and the consequent reflection must be,
 “ that since we know nothing of the matter, it is
 “ doubtless unnecessary that we should know more.” *

This reflection on the little importance of these
 questions, was added, lest Voltaire, harrassed out with
 the anguish of his mind, should forsake a philosophy
 unable to solve his doubts on questions, by no means,
 in his opinion, indifferent to the happiness of man.
 He insisted, but D'Alembert persisting in the same style,
 says that “ *No*, in metaphysics, appeared to him not
 “ much wiser than *yes*; and that *non liquet* (it is not
 “ clear) was generally the only rational answer.” †

Frederick was as averse to doubts as Voltaire, but
 perpetually wishing to stifle them, he was at length
 persuaded he had succeeded. “ A philosopher of my

† Letter 179, 12th Oct. 1770.

* Letter 36, anno 1770. † Letter 38, *ibid*.

“acquaintance,” says he, “a man pretty resolute in his opinions, thinks that we have a sufficient degree of probability, to constitute a certainty that *post mortem nihil est* (or that death is an eternal sleep,) he maintains that man is not twofold, that he is only matter animated by motion; and this strange man says, that there exists no relation between *animals* and the supreme *intelligence*.”*

This resolute philosopher, this strange man, was Frederick himself, and a few years after, he makes no secret of it, when he more decidedly writes, “I am well assured that I am not twofold; hence, I consider myself as a single being. I know that I am an animal organised and that thinks; hence, I conclude that matter can think, as well as that it has the property of being electric.”†

Verging towards his grave, but wishing to inspire Voltaire with confidence, he writes anew. “The gout has successively ran over all my body. Our frail machine must needs be destroyed by time, which consumes every thing; my foundations are undermined, but all that, gives me very little concern.”‡

As to the fourth hero of the conspiracy, the famous Diderot, he is exactly the person, whose decisions against God, D’Alembert had found too resolute and dogmatic, though oftentimes, in the same work, we find him after deciding against the Deist, deciding in the same peremptory manner for or against the Sceptic and the Atheist. But whether he writes for or against a God, he always appears impervious to doubts or anguish of mind. He fairly wrote what he thought at the moment he held his pen, whether *he crushed the atheist with the weight of the universe*, and that *the eye of a mite, the wing of a butterfly* was sufficient to defeat them,|| or when *that glorious display did not give him even the most distant idea of any thing divine*,§ and that this universe was but the *fortuitous result of motion and matter*;¶ whether, when the existence of God was to be left in doubt, *scepticism at all times and in all places, could alone preserve us from the two opposite excesses*,** or when *he prays God for the sceptics, because he sees they*

* Letter of 30th Oct. 1770. † Letter of 4th Dec. 1775.

‡ Letter 8th Apr. 1776. || Philosophical Thoughts, No.20.

§ The Code of Nature. ¶ Philosophical Thoughts, No.21!

** Idem, No. 33.

all want light ; whether in fine to form a sceptic, it was necessary to have a head as well organised as that of Montagne the philosopher.†*

Never was there a man so peremptory when affirming or denying any point, so perfectly void of constraint or trouble, so impervious to remorse ; he was a perfect stranger to them even when he positively says that, *between him and his dog he knows of no other difference but their dress.‡*

With these extravagancies in their religious opinions we find, Voltaire impious and tormented by his doubts and ignorance ; D'Alembert impious but calm in his ; while Frederick impious and triumphant, or thinking he had triumphed over his ignorance, left God in heaven provided there were no souls on earth ; and Diderot, by turns, Atheist, Materialist, Deist or Sceptic, but ever impious, ever frantic, the better fitted for the various parts he was doomed to act.

Such were the men whose characters and religious errors, were necessary to be known, to ascertain the conspiracy of which they were the chiefs, and of whose existence we shall give undeniable proof, indicate its precise object, and unfold its means and future progress.

* Idem, No. 22.

† Idem, No. 28.

‡ Life of Seneca, page 377.

CHAP. II.

Of the Object, Extent, and Existence of the Antichristian Conspiracy.

The true characteristics of a conspiracy.

TO say that there existed a conspiracy against the Christian religion, of which Voltaire, D'Alembert, Frederick II. King of Prussia, and Diderot, were the chief authors and instigators, is not simply to say, that each one of them was an enemy and that their writings tended to the destruction of the religion of Christ; for both before and after them, we have seen enemies to this same religion, seeking to spread, by their writings, the venom of incredulity. France has had her Bayle, and her Montesquieu; the first a true sophister, undecided in his principles and supporting the *pro* and *con* with equal versatility; but destitute of that hatred, which constitutes the conspirator, and seeks accomplices: the latter is but a youth when he writes his *Persian Letters*, and has no fixed principle against that faith, to which he will one day do homage, by declaring that *he always respected religion*, and that he beheld the Gospel, *as the fairest gift that God had bestowed on man.**

England has seen her Hobbes, her Woolstons or her Collins, with many other disciples of incredulity; but each of these sophisters was impious in his own way, and they fought not to league together, however much Voltaire and Condorcet may assert the contrary. Each makes his partial attack on Christianity from his own brain, and that is not sufficient to constitute a conspiracy.

In order to show a real conspiracy against Christianity, we must not only point out the wish to destroy, but also the union and secret correspondence in the means employed to attack, debase or annihilate it. When therefore I name Voltaire and Frederick, Diderot and D'Alembert, as the chiefs of this Antichristian Conspiracy, I not only mean to shew, that each had im-

* Vid. Montesquieu, Feller's Hist. Dict.

piously written against Christianity, but that they had formed the wish, and had secretly communicated that wish of destroying the religion of Christ; that they had acted in concert, sparing no political nor impious art to effectuate this destruction; that they were the instigators and conductors of those secondary agents whom they had misled, and following up their plans and projects, with all that ardor and constancy, which denotes the most finished conspirator. My very proofs shall be drawn from what we may very properly term the records of the conspiracy, I mean from their most intimate correspondence, a long time secret, or from their own assertions contained in their divers writings.

The true
archives of
the con-
spirators.

When Beaumarchais gave us a compleat edition of Voltaire's works, with all the magnificence of the Baskerville type; either the adepts, blinded by their success, were persuaded that the publicity of this monstrous conspiracy, could only add new lustre to its chief, or that the Editors themselves were ignorant of the fact, or in fine, that being scattered and dispersed through forty large volumes of letters, to all sorts of persons, and on all sorts of subjects, no man could at once seize the thread of a conspiracy, the work of many long years. But whatever may have been their intentions, whatever their art in suppressing parts of the correspondence, they have not effectually done away all means of discovery. Never should I have undertaken a work of such labour, so painful and disgusting, had I not seen the necessity of proving from the very records of the conspirators, the reality of their plots; the necessity of denouncing to all nations, with proof in hand, the men, who wish to mislead them, and who sought to overturn every altar provided it was but Christian. With them the altars of London or Geneva, of Stockholm or Petersburg were to share the same fate with those of Paris or Madrid, of Vienna or Rome, thus adding, by their fall, a new, though tardy proof of the universality of this conspiracy. Such then are their black and hidden crimes. Behold them conspiring against your God, in order to conspire against your sovereign and your laws, behold them seeking to overthrow all civil society and universally extend the scourges of the French revolution.

I know that the gravity of the charge requires strong evidence and clear proofs, to justify it; if then my

proofs are too numerous, let my reader reflect on the weightiness of the charge.

In all conspiracies there is generally a secret language or a watchword, unintelligible to the vulgar, though it perpetually recalls the object to the mind of the conspirator. The word chosen by Voltaire must have been dictated by some fiend of hatred or frantic rage. But what words! *Crush the wretch!* (*écrasez l'infame!*) and what a signification is attached to these three words in the mouths of D'Alembert, of Frederick or their disciples; constantly they mean *crush Christ, crush the religion of Christ, crush every religion that adores Christ.* Oh readers retain your indignation until you have seen the proof!

The word of the conspirators.

When Voltaire complains that the adepts are not sufficiently united in the war they wage against the *wretch*; when he wishes to revive their zeal, he recalls to their minds, the hopes and projects he had already conceived in 1730, when the lieutenant of the police at Paris, warned him that he would not succeed in overturning the Christian religion, he had daringly, answered *that is what we shall see.**

Proofs as to the true sense of the word with Voltaire.

When exulting in the success of the war, and progress of the conspiracy against the *wretch*, he triumphs in the idea, "that in Geneva, Calvin's own town, there are but a few beggarly fellows who believe in the consubstantial."†

When he wishes, during this war against the *wretch*, to give his reasons for tolerating the Socinians, it is, says he, *because Julian would have favoured them, and that he hates what Julian hated, and despises what he (Julian) despised.*‡

What then is this hatred, common to the Socinians and to Julian the apostate, if it be not their hatred to the divinity of Christ. What is meant by the consubstantial, fallen into disrepute, if it be not Christ, or how can the word *wretch*, be otherwise interpreted, in the mouth of him that had uttered, "I am weary of hearing people repeat that twelve men have been sufficient to establish Christianity, and I will prove that one may suffice to overthrow it."§ In the mouth

* Let. to D'Alembert, 20th of June 1760.

† Let. 119, anno 1763, 28th Sept.

‡ Let. to Frederick, 5th Nov. 1773.

§ Life of Voltaire by Condorcet.

I say of a man who, in his intrigues against the *wretch* exclaims, " could not five or six men of parts, and
 " who rightly understood each other, succeed, after
 " the example of twelve scoundrels who have already
 " succeeded."*

In the mouth of this frantic infidel can we conceal the sense of these words; The twelve apostles called *twelve scoundrels!* and their divine master a *wretch!* I may dwell too much on the proofs, but the charges are too heinous, to pass them over lightly.

All those men, so much extolled by Voltaire for their ardor in *crushing the wretch*, are precisely those who attacked Christianity without the least decorum or decency, such as Diderot, Condorcet, Helvetius, Freret, Boulanger, Dumarfais and such like infidels; and those whom he particularly wishes D'Alembert to rally, the more effectually to *crush the wretch*, are the Atheists the Deists and Spinofists.†

Against whom then will the Atheist, the Deist and the Spinofist coalesce, unless it be against the God of the Gospel?

Voltaire proceeds to direct the zeal of the conspirators against the holy fathers, and those modern writers, who have written in defence of Christianity and the divinity of Christ, both of whom he wishes to see treated with the utmost contempt; he writes to his adepts, " Victory is declaring for us on all sides, and I can
 " assure you, that soon, none but the rabble will follow the standard of our enemies, and we equally
 " contemn that rabble whether for or against us. We
 " are a corps of brave knights, defenders of the truth
 " and who admit none amongst us, but men of education. Courage brave Diderot, intrepid D'Alembert, form with my dear Damilaville and rush forward on those fanatics and knaves; pity poor Paschal, but despise Houtville and Abadie as much as
 " if they were fathers of the church."‡

Here then is the explanation of what Voltaire means by *crushing the wretch*. It is to undo what the apostles have done, to hate what Julian the apostate hated, to attack those, whom the Deists, Atheists and Spinofists always attacked, it is in fine to rush on the holy fa-

* Let. to D'Alembert 24th July 1760.

† Let. 37th to D'Alembert, 1770.

‡ Let. to Damilaville, anno 1765.

thers or on any other man who dares defend the religion of Christ.

The sense of this atrocious watchword is equally clear in the mouth of Frederick. With this royal sophister as with Voltaire, *Christianity, the Christian sect, the Christicole superstition* (La superstition Christicole) and *the wretch*, are all synonymous terms. With him as with Voltaire *the wretch yielded none but poisonous weeds*; the best writings against *the wretch* are precisely the most impious, and if any in particular deserve his peculiar esteem, it is, *that since Celsus, nothing so striking had been published* against Christianity. The fact really is, that Boulanger, unfortunately more known by his impiety than by his conversion, is *still superior to Celsus himself*.*

With Frederick.

As to D'Alembert we may see, though he seldom uses this shocking word, that he was well acquainted with its meaning; by his answers to Voltaire, by the means he suggests, by the writings he approves of and seeks to circulate, as fittest *to crush the wretch*; and which writings are precisely those that more directly tend to eradicate religion from the minds of the people. We may see it, when wishing to shew his zeal for the progress of the conspiracy against *the wretch*, he professes his eagerness to support Voltaire, or his sorrow that from localities, he cannot speak with the same freedom against Christianity. His expressions and numberless letters hereafter quoted, will leave no more doubt of him, than of Voltaire or Frederick.‡

With D'Alembert.

Such was the general acceptance of the word among all the conspirators; Condorcet, even laying aside the word *wretch*, positively asserts, that Voltaire had sworn, *to crush Christianity*,§ and Mercier says *to crush Christ* ||

Extent of the conspiracy.

In the views of the conspirators, *to crush Christ* was not too strong an expression. In the extent of their projects, no shadow of his worship was to remain: it is true that among the Christians, they honored the church of Rome with their chief hatred. But Luther and Calvin, the Church of England or of Geneva, tho' separated from Rome, had retained their belief of Christ, and were therefore to share the fate of the former.

* See let. of the King of Prussia, No. 143, 145, 153, anno 1767, &c. &c. &c.

‡ See D'Alembert's letters, 100, 102, 151.

§ Life of Voltaire. || Mercier's letters. No. 60 of M. Pelletier,

The whole Gospel of Calvin, is ridiculed by Voltaire, as the fooleries of *Jean Chauvin*,* and it was of these fooleries he speaks when writing to D'Alembert he says, that in Calvin's own town (Geneva) there were but a few beggarly fellows who believed in the consubstantial, that is to say, who believed in Christ. He particularly exults in the approaching fall of the Church of England, when he extols the *English truths*,† that is the impieties of Hume, or when he thought himself authorized to write, that in London Christ was spurned.‡

Those disciples who paid him the homage of their philosophic science, adopting his style, write, "I don't like Calvin, he was intolerant, and poor Servet fell a victim to him, and it is true he is no more spoken of at Geneva than if he had never existed. As to Luther, though he had not much wit, as is easily perceived by his writings, he did not persecute, and only loved wine and women?"§

It is even observable, that for a considerable time the conspiring sophisters placed particular satisfaction in their successes against the Protestant churches. With what excessive joy Voltaire would write, that England and Switzerland were over-run with men who hated and despised Christianity, as Julian the apostate hated and despised it,|| and that from Geneva to Berne not a Christian was to be found.¶ Frederick on his side, writes with equal joy, *In our protestant countries we go on much brisker.***

Such then was the extent of this conspiracy; they were to overturn every altar where Christ was adored. An historian might have been misled in seeing the adepts solicit, more than once, the recal of the Protestants into France; but at the very time that Voltaire writes, how much he laments to see the petition made by the minister Choiseul rejected, fearing lest his disciples should imagine he wished to spare the Huguenot more than the Catholic, he hastens to add, that the Huguenots and the Calvinists are not less mad than the Sorbonists or the Catholics, that they were even raving

* Let. to Darnilville, Aug. 18th, 1766.

† Let. to the Marquis D'Argence, April 28th, 1760.

‡ Let. to D'Alembert, Sept. 28th, 1763.

§ Let. of the Langrave of Hesse to Voltaire, Sept. 9th, 1766.

|| Let. to the King of Prussia, 15th Nov. 1773.

¶ Let. to D'Alembert, Feb. 8th, 1776. ** Let. 143.

mad; * nay, sometimes he saw *nothing more atrabilarious and ferocious than the Huguenots.*†

All this pretended zeal of the conspirators to calvinize France, was but as a preparatory step to de-Christianize it with greater expedition. We may trace the gradation of their intended progress, in the following words of D'Alembert to Voltaire: "For my part I see every thing in the brightest colours, I already behold toleration established, *the Protestants recalled, the priests married, confession abolished, and fanaticism crushed, without so much as its being perceived.*"‡ *Fanaticism and wretch* in D'Alembert's mouth are synonymous, the latter is even made use of in the same letter, both meaning *Christ or his whole religion crushed.*

There is however an exception often made by Voltaire, which might have left Christ some few worshippers among the rabble. He seems little jealous of that conquest, when he writes to D'Alembert, "Both you and Damilaville must be well pleased, to see the contempt into which *the wretch* is fallen among the better sort of people throughout Europe. *They are all we wished for, or that were necessary. We never pretended to enlighten the house-maids and shoemakers; we leave them to the apostles.*"|| Or when he writes to Diderot, "Whatever you do, have your eye on *the wretch.* It must be destroyed among the better sort *and leave it to the rabble for whom it was made;*"§ or when, in fine, he writes to Damilaville, "I can assure you, that soon none but the rabble will follow the standard of our enemies, and we equally condemn that rabble whether for or against us."¶

Voltaire, despairing of wider success, would sometimes except *the clergy and the great chamber of the Parliament.* But in the sequel of these memoirs, we shall see the conspirators actively extending their principles, and instilling their hatred against Christianity into every class of men, from the cottage to the throne, not even excepting their so much despised rabble.

* Let. to Marmontel, 21st Aug. 1767.

† Let. to the Marquis D'Argence de Dirac, Mar. 2d 1763.

‡ May 4th 1762. || Sept. 2d 1768. § Dec. 25th 1762.

¶ Anno 1765.

CHAP. III.

The Secret, the Union and the Epoch of the Conspiracy.

IN conspiracies it is not enough for the agents to have a particular watchword, or formula, in order to hide their general object, but they have also peculiar names, by which they mutually point out each other, and which are unintelligible to the public. They carefully conceal their correspondence; but if they fear discovery, it is then they use these precautions lest their names, or the object of the plot, be exposed.

The supposed names of the conspirators.

These means were not to be neglected by Voltaire or D'Alembert. In their correspondence Frederick is often called *Duluc*,* D'Alembert *Protagoras*,† though he often styles himself *Bertrand*.‡ Both were well applied to him, the former to denote the infidel, the latter to betoken the means of his impiety, by the shifts of Bertrand, in Fontaine's fable of the Monkey and the Cat: when D'Alembert is Bertrand (the monkey,) Voltaire is Raton§ (the cat.) Diderot personates Plato or Tomplat,|| and the general term for the conspirators, is *Cacouac*.¶ They say he is a good Cacouac, when he can be perfectly depended upon. Oftentimes, and particularly by Voltaire, they are called brothers as in masonry. They also give peculiar imports to whole phrases of their enigmatical language, for example, *the vine of Truth is well cultivated*, is to say we make amazing progress against religion.**

Their secret language.

This secret language was particularly made use of, when they feared their letters were opened or stopped, which often gave Voltaire and D'Alembert great uneasiness. It was for that reason, that many of their letters, were directed to fictitious persons, to merchants or some clerk in office, who was in the secret. It does not appear that they ever made use of cyphers, they

* Let. of D'Alembert, No. 77.

† Voltaire to Thiriot, 26th Jan. 1762.

‡ Let. 90. § Let. 22d March, 1774.

|| Voltaire to Damilaville, 25th August, 1766.

¶ Let. of D'Alembert, No. 76.

** Let. to D'Alembert, No. 35.

would have been much too tedious, considering Voltaire's immense correspondence. Those were reserved for conspirators, not leis ardent, but of a deeper policy. False directions and not signing their names, seem to have given them sufficient confidence in their style, and if perchance, any of their letters are more enigmatical than common, they are easily explained by the preceding or following ones. It was by these shifts they wished to leave an opening for excusing or explaining what they had already written; but they are not sufficiently obscure to prevent discovery, and that with very little trouble, when surprised.⁴

Some few, nevertheless, are more difficult to be understood than others; for example, the letter written by Voltaire to D'Alembert, the 30th of January 1764: "My illustrious philosopher has sent me the letter of Hippias, B. This letter of B. proves that there are T's and that poor literature is falling back into the shackles which *Malefberbes* had broken. That demi-scholar as well as demi-citizen, D'Agueffeu, was a T. . . . He would have hindered the nation from thinking! I wish you had but seen that brute of a *Maboul*, he was a very silly T. . . to be at the head of the customs upon ideas under the T. . . D'Agueffeu. Then followed the under T's about half a dozen miserable rascals, who for the pitiful salary of 17l. per annum, would erase from a book, every thing that was worth leaving in it."

Here it is evident that T. stands for *tyrant*, one of which tyrants is the chancellor D'Agueffeu, the other *Maboul*, the comptroller of the press. The under T's, or tyrants, are the public censors, whose salaries were about 17l. per annum. As to *Hippias B*, his person is not so clear; he was most probably some tyrant who wished to stop the circulation of those works, which directly tended to the overthrow of the altar and the throne. But who can see, without indignation, the chancellor D'Agueffeu, the ornament of the magistracy, called a tyrant, a demi-scholar, a demi-citizen. It is, however, forbearance in Voltaire, not to abuse him more grossly; we must expect to see him and D'Alembert lavishing the lowest terms of blackguardism, throughout this correspondence, on every man who differs from them in opinion, whatsoever be his merits.

otherwise, but especially on those who laboured for, or wrote in defence of religion.

Their secrecy.

However openly the conspirators expressed themselves to each other, secrecy was strictly recommended to them, with respect to the public; and Voltaire perpetually apprizes the adepts of its importance. "The mysteries of Mytra, (he would make D'Alembert write to the adepts) are not to be divulged, the monster (religion) must fall, pierced by a hundred invisible hands; yes, let it fall beneath a thousand repeated blows."*

This secrecy, nevertheless, was not to be so much with respect to the object of the conspiracy, as to the names of the conspirators, and the means they employed; for it was impossible for the rancorous hatred of Voltaire, to disguise the wish of annihilating Christianity; but he had to fear on one side the severity of the laws, and on the other the contempt and infamy which would certainly attach to himself and disciples, from the impudence of their falsehoods and the effrontery of their calumnies, had it ever been possible to trace their authors and abettors.

History is not in fault, if it is obliged to represent the chief of the conspiracy, at once the most daring, the most unrelenting in his hatred to Christ, and the most desirous of hiding his attacks. Voltaire secretly conspiring and concealing his means, is the same man, though bold and blaspheming. Openly attacking the altars of his God, he is still the Sophister, though veiling the hand that strikes, or seeking in the dark to undermine the temple. It is hatred that fires his rage, or leads him through the tortuous ways of the conspirator. To unmask this dissimulating man, shall be a leading point in the following memoirs.

Their lessons on the art of secrecy.

In his character of chief, the mysteries of Mytra as well as the intrigues of the conspirators, could be of no small concern to him, and the following were his secret instructions. "Confound *the wretch* to the utmost of your power, speak your mind boldly, strike *and conceal your hand*. You may be known; I am willing to believe there are people sufficiently keenscented, but they will not be able to convict you."†

* Let. to D'Alembert, April 27th, 1768.

† Let. to D'Alembert, May, 1761.

“ The Nile, it was said, spread around its fertilizing waters, though it concealed its head ; *do you the same, you will secretly enjoy your triumph. I commend the wretch to you.*”* “ We embrace the worthy knight and exhort him to conceal his hand from the enemy.”†

No precept is oftener repeated by Voltaire than *strike but conceal the hand*, and if by indiscretion any adept occasioned his discovery, he would complain most bitterly, he would even deny works that were the most decidedly his. “ I know not why (says he) people are so obstinately bent on believing me the author of the *Philosophical Dictionary*. The greatest service you can do me, is to assert, though you pledge your share in Paradise, that I have no hand in that hellish work. There are three or four people, who perpetually repeat, that I have supported the good cause, and that I fight mortally against the wild beasts. *It is betraying one's brethren, to praise them on such an occasion, those good souls bless me, but ruin me.* It is certainly him, they say, it is his style, his manner. Ah, my brethren, what fatal accents ; on the contrary you should cry out on the public ways, it is not he, *for the monster must fall pierced by a hundred invisible hands ; yes, let it fall beneath a thousand repeated blows.*”‡

It was in this art of secrecy and of concealing his steps, that D'Alembert so much excelled. Him it was, that Voltaire recommended to the brethren for imitation, and *as the hope of the flock*. “ He is daring (would he say to them,) but not rash ; he will make hypocrites tremble (that is religious men) without giving any hold against himself.”§

Frederick not only approved of this secrecy,|| but we shall see him playing off all the artifices of his dark policy to ensure the success of the conspiracy.

In every plot, union is as essential to the conspirator, as secrecy to the cause, and so it is often and particularly recommended. Among others we find the following instructions : “ Oh, my philosophers, we should march closed, as the Macedonian phalanx, it

Union of
the con-
spirators.

* Let. to Helvetius, May 11th 1761.

† Let. to Mr. de Vielleville, 26th April 1767.

‡ Let. to D'Alembert, 152 and 219.

§ Let. from Voltaire to Thuriot, 19th Nov. 1760.

|| Let. to Voltaire, 16th May 1771.

“ was only vanquished when it opened. ' Let the real
 “ philosophers unite in a brotherhood like the Free-
 “ masons ; let them assemble and support each other,
 “ let them be faithful to the association. Such an
 “ academy will be far superior to that of Athens, and
 “ to all those of Paris.”*

If any diffention, perchance, happened among the conspirators, the chief immediately wrote to appease them : he would say, “ Ah poor brethren, the primitive Christians behaved themselves much better than we do. Patience, do not let us lose courage, God will help us provided we remain united,” and when he wished to insist more particularly on the object of that union, he would repeat his answer to Hercul, *We'll see whether it be true, that the Christian religion cannot be destroyed.*†

Most of these diffentions arose from the difference of opinion in the conspirators, and the discordancy of their sophisms against Christianity, which often made them thwart each other. Voltaire, aware of the advantage it gave to religious writers, immediately enjoined D'Alembert to seek, if possible, a reconciliation with the Atheists, Deists and Spinofists. “ The two
 “ parties (says he) must necessarily coalesce. I wish
 “ you would undertake that reconciliation ; say to
 “ them, if you will omit the emetic, I will overlook
 “ the bleeding.”‡

Ardor
 and con-
 stancy in
 the plot

This premier chief, always fearful lest their ardor should subside, and wishing to animate their zeal, would write to the other chiefs, “ I fear you are not sufficient-
 “ ly zealous, you bury your talents, you seem only to
 “ contemn whilst you should abhor and destroy the
 “ monster. Could not you crush him in a few pages,
 “ while you modestly hide from him, that he falls by
 “ your pen. It was given Meleager to kill the boar ;
 “ *hurl the javelin, but hide your hand.* Comfort me in
 “ my old age.”§ He would write to a young adept, who might be dejected through ill success, *Courage ! do not let yourself be dejected.*|| In fine, to bind them by the strongest ties of interest, he would tell them by

* Let. to D'Alembert, No. 85 anno 1761, and No. 21 anno 1769.

† Let. to D'Alembert, No. 66.

‡ Let. to D'Alembert, No. 37, 1770.

§ Let. to D'Alembert, 28th Sept. 1763.

|| Let. to Damilaville.

means of D'Alembert, "Such is our situation that we shall be the execration of mankind, if we have not the better sort of people on our side. We must then gain them, cost what it will; labour therefore in the vineyard, and *crush the wretch, then crush the wretch.*"*

It is thus that every distinctive mark which constitutes the conspirator, such as enigmatical language, a common and secret wish, union, ardor and perseverance, is to be seen in these first authors of the war against Christianity. It is thus that the historian is authorized to represent this coalition of Sophisters, as a true conspiracy against the altar. At length Voltaire not only allows it, but wishes every adept to understand, that the war of which he was the chief, was a true plot, and that each one was to act the part of a conspirator. When he feared their excessive zeal, he would write himself, or through D'Alembert, that in the war they waged, *they were to act as conspirators and not as zealots.*†

Open
avowal of
Voltaire.

When the chief of these infidels makes so formal a declaration, when he so clearly orders them to *act as conspirators*, it would be absurd to seek further proofs, as to the existence of the conspiracy. I fear they have already been too numerous for my reader; but in a matter of such importance, I was to presume him equally rigid as myself, with respect to its demonstration. Now as nobody will deny this, unless blind to conviction, to have been a real conspiracy of the Sophisters against Christ and his church, I will not end this chapter, without trying to ascertain its origin and true epoch.

Was this conspiracy to be dated from the day on which Voltaire consecrated his life to the annihilation of Christianity, we should look back to the year 1728, that being the epoch of his return from London to France; and his most faithful disciples inform us, that he made his determination when in England.‡ But Voltaire lived many years, alone ruminating his hatred against Christ; it is true he was already the officious defender of every impious work that had the same tendency, but these were only the isolated works of Sophisters, singly writing, without any of the appurtenances of the conspirator. To form adepts and instil his hatred into them, could be but the work of time, and his efforts, unfortunately crowned with success,

Epoch of
the con-
spiracy.

* 13th Feb. 1764. † Voltaire to D'Alembert, let. 142.

‡ Life of Voltaire, edit. of Kell.

had greatly augmented their number, when, in 1750, he by the express desire of the king of Prussia, took his departure for Berlin. Of all the disciples he left in Paris, the most zealous were D'Alembert and Diderot, and it is to these two men, that the coalition against Christ can be first traced. Though it may not have acquired all its strength, it certainly existed when the plan of the Encyclopedia was decided on; that is to say, the year that Voltaire left Paris for Berlin. Voltaire had formed his disciples, but it was D'Alembert and Diderot who united them in one body to make that famous compilation, which may in truth be styled the grand arsenal of impiety, whence all their sophisticated arms, were to be directed against Christianity.

Voltaire, who alone was worth a host of infidels, laboring apart in the war against Christianity, left the Encyclopedists, for some time, to their own schemes; but if his disciples had been able to form the coalition, they were incapable of carrying it on. Their difficulties augmenting, they sought a man able to remove them, and without hesitation fixed on Voltaire, or rather, to use the words of his historian, *Voltaire, by his age, his reputation and his genius, naturally became their chief.*

At his return from Prussia, about the year 1752, he found the conspiracy complete. Its precise object was the destruction of Christianity; the first chief had sworn it, the secondary chiefs, such as D'Alembert, Diderot and even Frederick, notwithstanding his quarrels with the premier, were ever after leagued with him in the same bonds. At this period, the adepts were all that Voltaire could number, as his disciples: but from the day of the coalition between the premier, the secondary chiefs, and the adepts' agents or protectors; from the day that the object of this coalition to crush Christ and his religion, under the appellation of *wretch*, had been decreed, until the grand object of the coalition was to be consummated by the proscriptions and horrid massacres of the Jacobins, near half a century was to elapse; for so much time was necessary for the harbingers of blood and corruption, to prepare the way for the Philosopher of destruction and murder. Naturally during this long period of time, we shall see this sophisticated sect, who had sworn to crush, coalescing with the sect, who under the name of *Jacobin*, really does crush and massacre.

Where then the difference between the sophistical sect under Voltaire and D'Alembert, anticipating the murders of the French revolution, by their wishes and their conspiracies, and those sophisters, who under the name of Jacobin, overthrow the altar and embroc its steps with the blood of its priests and pontiffs? Do not they proscribe the religion of the same Christ, of the same God, whom Voltaire, D'Alembert, Frederick and all that impious sequel of adepts had sworn to crush and abhor? Will any one tell us, that there is any difference between the sophisms of the former, and the pretexts of the latter, between the school of Voltaire and the maxims of the Jacobinical den.

Relation
between
the Sophis-
ters and
the Jaco-
bins.

The Jacobins will one day declare that all men are free, that all men are equal, and as a consequence of this liberty and equality they will conclude that every man must be left to the lights of reason. That every religion subjecting man's reason to mysteries, or to the authorities of any revelation speaking in God's name, is a religion of slavery and constraint; that as such it should be annihilated, in order to re-establish the indefeasible rights of liberty and equality, as to the belief or disbelief of all that the reason of man approves or disapproves: and they will call this liberty and equality, the reign of reason and the empire of philosophy. Can the candid reader believe, that this liberty and equality is not apposite to the war carried on by Voltaire against Christianity? Had the chiefs or adepts ever any other view, than that of establishing their pretended empire of philosophy or their reign of reason, on that self-same liberty and equality applied to revelation and the mysteries, in perpetual opposition to Christ and his church?

Did not Voltaire hate the church and its pastors, because they opposed that liberty and equality applied to our belief; because nothing was *so contemptible* and *so miserable* in his eyes, as to see one man have recourse to another in matters of faith, *or to ask what he ought to believe.** *Reason, liberty and philosophy* were as constantly in the mouths of Voltaire and D'Alembert, as a means of overthrowing Revelation and the Gospel; as they are at this day in the mouths of the Jacobins.†

* Letter to the Duke D'Uzez, 19th Nov. 1760.

† See the whole of their correspondence.

When the adepts wish to extol the glory of their chiefs, they will represent them *perpetually reclaiming the independence of Reason*, and devoutly expecting those days when *the sun shall no longer shine, but upon free men, acknowledging no other master but their own reason.* †

When therefore, on the ruins of the temple, the Jacobins shall have erected the idol of their reason, their liberty or their philosophy; will they have fulfilled any other wish, any other oath, than that sworn by Voltaire and his adepts.

When the Jacobins shall apply the axe to the foundations of the temples whether Protestant or Catholic, or in fine of any sect acknowledging the God of the Christians; will they have more widely extended their systems of destruction, than Voltaire conspiring against the altars of London or Geneva, equally as against those of Rome?

When their grand club shall be filled with every infidel the French revolution can produce, whether Atheist, Deist or Sceptic, will their revolutionary cohorts be differently formed, than those which D'Alembert was to quicken and stir up against the God of Christianity?

In fine, when one day these legions falling from this den of impiety, from the grand club of the Jacobins, shall triumphantly carry to the Pantheon, the ashes of Voltaire; will not that be the consummating of the Antichristian Conspiracy, will not that be the revolution so long planned by Voltaire? The means may differ, but the object, the spirit, and the extent of the conspiracy will remain. We shall see the very means employed, the revolution that destroys the altar, that plunders and massacres its priests by the hand of the Jacobin, were not foreign to the wishes or intentions of the first adepts. The most dreadful and disgusting parts of this irreligious revolution, only differs from their plans, by a difference in terms; *one WISHED to crush, the other DID crush.* The means were such as the times suggested, both were not equally powerful.—We will now proceed to tear the veil from those dark intrigues, successively employed by the Sophisters during the half century, which prepared such scenes of blood and confusion.

† Condorcet's Progress of Reason, 9th Epoch.

CHAP. IV.

First Means of the Conspirators.

IN order to crush the wretch, in the sense of Voltaire, or to attain the destruction of the altars of that God whose worship had been taught by the Apostles, nothing less could suffice than the total subjection of the public opinion, and the annihilation of the faith of all Christian nations. To annihilate it by force was above the strength of the rising coalition. Force was only to be resorted to, when by a revolution in all religious ideas, things had been brought to that state, in which our Jacobin legislators found them; or when, by incredulity, the courts, the senates, the armies, in fine, men of all descriptions, had been gained over to a submission, or blind confidence in their sophistry. And indeed the necessary growth of impiety and corruption, supposed too long a period, for Frederick or Voltaire ever to flatter themselves with the hopes of seeing it.* It was then too early for them to grasp the falchion of the butchering Jacobin; nor must we expect, in the following pages, to read of guillotines, or forced requisitions in battle array, against the altars of Christianity.

In the beginning we see their intrigues hidden, and without tumult; slow and tortuous, but more insidious from their secrecy, more certain from their slowness; the public opinion was to perish, as it were, by inanition, before they dared lay the axe to the altar. And this mode of proceeding we find, is perfectly understood by Frederick, when he writes to Voltaire, that *to undermine the edifice in silence, is to oblige it to fall of itself*;† and still better understood by D'Alembert, when upbraiding Voltaire with being too hasty, he says, *If mankind grows enlightened, it is because we have the care to enlighten them by degrees*.‡ Convinced of the necessity of this gradation, D'Alembert bethought himself of the Encyclopedia, as the grand means of phi-

The Encyclopedia projected.

* Letter of Frederick to Voltaire, 5th May, 1767.

† 29th July 1775.

Vol. I.

‡ 31st July 1762.

G

lofophizing mankind, and *crushing the wretch*. His project is no fooner conceived, than enthusiastically embraced by Diderot; and Voltaire animated their drooping courage more than once, by his constant attention to the undertaking.

Its supposed object.

To judge of what amazing importance the success of this famous dictionary was to the conspiring chiefs, we must be acquainted with the plan, the method of its execution, and how it was to become the infallible agent of incredulity, and its most powerful weapon in perverting the public opinion, or overturning all the principles of Christianity.

The Encyclopedia is at first ushered into the world as the aggregate, as the complete treasure of all human arts and sciences, of Religion, Divinity, Physics, History, Geography, Astronomy or Commerce; in a word, of whatever may constitute a Science: of Poetry, Oratory, Grammar, Painting, Architecture, Manufactures, or of whatever can be the object of useful or pleasing arts. This great work was to comprehend the very minutix of different trades, from the manufacturer to the labourer; it was of itself to be an immense library, and supply the place of one. It was to be the work of men the most scientific and the most profound in every branch, that France could produce. The discourse in which it was announced by D'Alembert to all Europe, was written with so much art, had been so profoundly meditated and nicely weighed, the concatenation of the sciences and the progress of the human mind, appeared so properly delineated: whatever he had borrowed from Bacon or Chambers on the filiation of ideas, so perfectly disguised; in fine, the plagiarist sophister had so perfectly decked himself in the riches of others, that the prospectus of the Encyclopedia was looked upon as a masterpiece, and its author as the most proper person to preside over so stupendous a work.

Its secret object.

Such were their mighty promises, but promises never intended to be fulfilled; while, on the other side, they had their secret object, and that they were determined to accomplish. This was to convert the Encyclopedia into a vast emporium of all the sophisms, errors or calumnies, which ever had been invented against religion, from the first schools of impiety, until the day of their enterprize; and these were to be so artfully concealed, that the reader should insensibly imbibe the

poison without the least suspicion. To prevent discovery the error was never to be found where it might be supposed, religion was not only to be respected, but even supported in all direct discussions, though sometimes the discussion is so handled, that the objection they seem to refute, is more forcibly impressed on the mind of the reader. The more to impose on the unthinking, D'Alembert and Diderot artfully engaged several men of unblemished character to partake in this vast undertaking. Such was Mr. de Jeaucourt, a man of great learning and probity, who has furnished a number of articles to the Encyclopedia: his name alone could have been thought a sufficient guarantee against all the art and perfidy of its principles; in short, it was declared that all points of religion were to be discussed by divines well known for their learning and orthodoxy.

All this might have been true, and the work only prove the more perfidious, D'Alembert and Diderot reserving to themselves a three-fold resource to forward their Antichristian Conspiracy.

Their first resource, was that of insinuating error and infidelity into those articles deemed the least susceptible of them; such, for example, as History, or Natural Philosophy, even into Chemistry and Geography, where such danger could not even have been surmised. The second was that of references, an art so precious, by which after having placed some religious truths under the reader's eye, he is tempted to seek further information in articles of a quite different cast. Sometimes the mere reference was an epigram or a sarcasm. They would, after having treated a religious subject with all possible respect, simply add, *See the art.* PREJUDICE, or SUPERSTITION, or FANATICISM; lastly, when our referring Sophisters feared this shift could not avail them, they would not hesitate at falsifying and altering the discussion of a virtuous co-operator, or at adding an article of their own, whose apparent object was to defend, while the real was to refute what had already been written on the subject. In fine, impiety was to be sufficiently veiled to make it attractive, while it left place for excuse and subterfuge. This was the peculiar art of our barking sophister D'Alembert. Diderot, more daring, was at first countenanced in the mad flights of his impiety, but in cooler moments, his

Its means
and art.

articles were to be revised; he was then to add some apparent restriction in favour of religion, some of those high-sounding and reverential words, but which left the whole of the impiety to subsist. If he was above that care, D'Alembert as supervisor-general, took it upon himself.

Peculiar care was to be taken in the compiling of the first volumes, lest the clergy or those men of prejudice, as they were called, should take the alarm. As they proceeded in the work they were to grow more bold, and if circumstances did not favor them, nor allow them to say all they wished to say, they were to resort to supplements, and to foreign editions, which would at the same time render this dangerous work more common, and less costly to the generality of readers.

The Encyclopedia, perpetually recommended and cried up by the adepts, was to be a standing book in all libraries, and insensibly the learned was to be converted into the Antichristian world. If the project was well conceived, it was impossible to see one more faithfully executed.

Proofs.

As to the fact.

It is now our duty to lay before the reader, proofs first as to the fact, secondly as to the intention. For the first, it will be sufficient to cast the eye on divers articles of this immense collection, especially where the principal tenets of Christianity, or even of natural religion are treated, and to follow them through the divers references the Sophisters have prepared for the reader. We shall find the existence of God, free agency, the spirituality of the soul, treated in the style of a Christian philosopher, but a *vide* DEMONSTRATION, or a *vide* CORRUPTION will be added, to pervert all that had been said; and those articles to which D'Alembert and Diderot more particularly refer the reader, are exactly those where the doctrine of the sceptic or the Spinosist, of the Fatalist or the Materialist, is chiefly inculcated. [See note at the end of the Chapter.]

This cunning could not escape those authors who wrote in the defence of religion.* But Voltaire resorting to calumny, in order to defend their Encyclopedia, will represent these authors as enemies of the

* See *Religion Vindicated*, the writings of Gauchat, of Bergier, in our *Helvian Letters*.

state, as bad citizens.* Such, indeed, were his usual weapons, and had he perfectly succeeded in deceiving people, it would have been sufficient to have examined his confidential correspondence with the very authors of the work, to be convinced of the wickedness of their intentions.

At a hundred leagues from Paris, and not thwarted by the obstacles D'Alembert had to combat, he often complains, that the attacks are not sufficiently direct. He is often ruffled by certain restrictions familiar to D'Alembert, and at length he breaks out on those put to the article BAYLE. D'Alembert answers, "This is an idle quarrel indeed, on Bayle's Dictionary. In the first place, I did not say, *happy would it have been had he shown more reverence to religion and morality.* My phrase is much more modest: and besides, in a cursed country like this, where we are writing, who does not know that such sentences are of mere form and only a cloak to the truths additionally conveyed. Every one is aware of that."†

During the time that Voltaire was so much busied with the articles he so frequently sent to D'Alembert for the Encyclopedia, he often complains of his shackles, and is unable to dissemble how much he desires to attack religion openly, and writes, "All that I am told about the articles of Divinity and Metaphysics, grieves me to the heart; *oh how cruel it is to print the very reverse of what one thinks.*"‡ But D'Alembert, more adroit, sensible of the necessity of these palliatives, "lest he should be looked upon as a madman by those he wished to convert," foresaw the day when he could triumphantly answer, "If mankind is so much enlightened to-day, it is only because we have had the precaution, or good fortune, to enlighten them by degrees."§

When Voltaire had sent certain violent articles, under the name of the priest of Laufanne, D'Alembert would immediately write, "We shall always receive with gratitude whatever comes from the same hand. We only pray our heretic to draw in his claw a little, as in certain places he has shown his fangs a little too much. *This is the time for stepping back to*

* 18th Letter to D'Alembert.

† 10th Oct. 1764.

‡ Let. of the 9th of Oct. 1755.

§ 16th July 1762.

“ *make the better leap.*”* And to show that he never lost sight of this maxim, he answers Voltaire’s animadversions on the article HELL: “ Without doubt we have several wretched articles in our divinity and metaphysics, *but with divines for censors and a privilege, I defy you to make them better.* There are articles *less exposed* where *all is set to rights again.*”†

Can there be a doubt left of the precise and determined intention of the Encyclopedists, when Voltaire exhorts D’Alembert to snatch the moment, whilst the attention of government is drawn off by other concerns. “ During this war *with the parliament and the bishops,* the philosophers will have fine play. *You have a fair opportunity of filling the Encyclopedia with those truths, that we should not have dared utter twenty years ago.*”‡ Or when he writes to Damiaville, “ I can be concerned for a good dramatic performance, but could be far more pleased with a good philosophical work that should forever crush the wretch. *I place all my hopes in the Encyclopedia.*”§ After such an avowal it would be useless to seek further proof, of this immense compilation being no other than the grand arsenal for all their sophisticated arms against religion.

Diderot more open, even in his ambushes reluctantly employed cunning. He does not hide how much he wished, boldly to insert his principles, and his principles are explained when he writes, “ The age of Louis XIV. only produced two men worthy of co-operating to the Encyclopedia,” and these two men were Perault and Boindin. The merits of the latter are more conspicuous than those of the former. Boindin, born in 1676, had lately died a reputed Atheist, and had been refused Christian burial. The notoriety of his principles had shut the French academy against him, and with such titles he could not have failed being a worthy co-operator.

Such then the object, such the intention of the conspiring authors. We see by their own confession, that they did not wish to compile for science, but to compile for incredulity; that it was not the advancement of arts they sought, but to seize the moment, when the attention of the ruling authorities were drawn off, to propagate their impious calumnies against religion.

* 21st July 1757.

† Ibid.

‡ Let. to D’Alembert, 13th Nov. 1756. § 23d May 1764.

They hypocritically utter some few religious truths ; they *print the contrary of what they believed* on Christianity, but only the better to cover the sophisms they printed against it.

In spite of all those arts, men zealous for religion, forcibly opposed the work. The Dauphin in particular, obtained a temporary suspension of it ; and various were the rebuffs the authors met with. D'Alembert wearied, had nearly forsaken it, when Voltaire, sensible of the importance of this first tool of the conspiracy, roused his drooping courage. He, far from abating, rather redoubled his efforts, asking for, and incessantly sending fresh articles. He would extol perseverance, he would show D'Alembert and Diderot the ignominy and shame redounding to their opponents.* He would urge them, conjure them by their friendship or in the name of philosophy to overcome their disgust, and not to be foiled in so glorious an undertaking.†

Obstacles
and success
of the Ency-
clopedia.

At length the Encyclopedia was brought to a conclusion, and it made its appearance under the sanction of a public privilege. Triumphant in their first step, the conspirators saw in it but the forerunner of their future successes against religion.

Lest any one should doubt of the particular drift of this compilation ; the reader must be informed of the co-operators chosen by D'Alembert and Diderot, and that especially for the religious part. Their first divine was Raynal, a man just expelled from the order of the Jesuits on account of his impiety, his chief and strongest recommendation to D'Alembert. Every one unfortunately knows how much he verified the judgment of his former brethren, by his atrocious declamations against Christianity ; but few are acquainted with the anecdote of his expulsion from among the co-operators, and that connects his story with that of another divine, who, without being impious himself, had been unfortunately drawn into the company of the Sophisters.

This was the Abbé Yvon, an odd metaphysician, but an inoffensive and upright man ; often in extreme indigence, and living by his pen, when he thought he could do it with decency. In the simplicity of his

* See his letters of the years 1755-6.

† Letters of 5th Sept. 1752, 13th Nov. 1756, and particularly of 8th Jan. 1757.

heart he had written *The Defence of the Abbé de Prades*. I have heard him assert that not a single error could be found in that work, and on the first argument give up the point. With the same simplicity I have heard him relate, by what means he had co-operated to the Encyclopedia. "I was in want of money, (said he;) Raynal met me and persuaded me to write a few articles, promising me a good reward, I acceded, and my work delivered at Raynal's study, I received twenty-five Louis-d'ors. Thinking myself very well paid, I imparted my good fortune to one of the bookfellers employed for the Encyclopedia, who seemed much surpris'd that the articles furnished by Raynal, should not be his own. He was furious at the trick he surmised. A few days after I was sent for to the office; and Raynal, who had received a thousand crowns for his pretended work, was obliged to refund me the hundred Louis-d'ors he had kept for himself."

This anecdote will not surprize those who are acquainted with Raynal's plagiary talents. His impiety was not sufficient to prevent his dismissal, but it preserved him within the pale of the fraternal embrace.

I must add, that the articles on GOD and on the SOUL, furnished by the Abbé Yvon, are exactly those which grieved Voltaire to the heart, and for which, D'Alembert and Diderot were obliged to have recourse to their art of references.

The third divine, or as D'Alembert styles him the second, for he never dared mention Yvon to Voltaire, was the Abbé de Prades, obliged to fly to Prussia, on his attempt to impose on the Sorbonne in advancing his own impious propositions for those of religion. It was the cunning of this thesis which had misled the Abbé Yvon, but soon discovered, the parliament took it up. The author, nevertheless, was put under the protection of the King of Prussia, by Voltaire and D'Alembert.*

We also owe to the memory of De Prades to repeat, what his protectors would willingly conceal; that three years after, he publicly retracted all his errors in a declaration signed the 6th of April 1754, bewailing his intimacy with the Sophisters, adding, *that one life*

* Correspondence of Voltaire and D'Alembert, let. 2 and 3.

could not suffice to weep his past conduct* : he died in 1782.

Another of their divines was the Abbé Morelet, a man precious to Voltaire and D'Alembert, who playing on his name called him the Abbé *Mord-les* (bite them,) because under pretence of attacking the Inquisition, he had fallen on (bitten) the church with all his might.†

Should we enumerate the lay writers who co-operated in this work, we should find far worse. But we will only mention the famous Dumarfais, at the same time so infamous, that the public authorities were obliged to interfere and destroy a school he had formed, solely to imbibe his pupils with the venom of his impiety. This unfortunate man also retracted his errors, but only on his death-bed. The choice of this man's pen, shows what co-operators D'Alembert sought.

Far be it from me, to confound, in this class, such men as M. de Formey or Jaucourt, particularly the latter, to whom, as we have already said, they were indebted for many articles. The only reproach we can make him, is that he should have continued his labours, after he either did or should have seen the drift of that vast compilation, where intermixed with his toils, lay all the sophisms and calumnies impiety could invent.

Excepting these two men, we may nearly comprehend the rest of the Encyclopedian writers, in the following picture, drawn by Diderot himself. "All that detestable crew, who, though perfectly ignorant, valued themselves on knowing every thing, who seeking to distinguish themselves by that vexatious universality they pretended to, fell upon every thing, jumbled and spoiled all, and converted this pretended digest of science into a gulph, or rather a sort of rag-basket, where they promiscuously threw every thing half examined, ill digested, good, bad, and in different, but always incoherent." What a precious avowal as to the intrinsic merit of their work ; especially after what he says as to their views, in describing the pains they had taken, the torments it had put them to, the art it had required to insinuate what

* Feller's Hist. Dict.

† Correspondence of D'Alembert, No. 65 and 96 : Let. to Thiriot, 26th Jan. 1762.

they dared not openly write against prejudices (religion,) in order to overthrow them without being perceived.*

In fine, all these follies of the *rag-dealers*, contributed to the bulk and accelerated the appearance of the volumes; the chiefs carefully inserting, in each volume, what could promote the grand object. At length terminated, all the trumpets sounded, and the journals of the party teemed with the praises of this literary achievement. The learned themselves were duped. Every one would have an Encyclopedia. Numerous were the editions, of all sizes and prices, but under the pretence of correcting, greater boldness was assumed. About the time, when the antichristian revolution was nearly accomplished, appeared *The Encyclopedia by order of Matter*. When it was first undertaken, some deference was still paid to religion. A man of eminent merit, Mr. Bergier, a canon of Paris, thought it incumbent on him to yield to the pressing solicitations of his friends, lest the part treating of religion, should fall into the hands of its greatest enemies. What was easy to foresee came to pass. The name of a man, who had combated the impious works of a Voltaire or a Rousseau, naturally served as a cloak to this new digest, styled *The Encyclopedia methodised*. This was on the eve of the French revolution, so that the petty infidels charged with the work, kept no further bounds with regard to religion. This new work is more completely impious than the former, notwithstanding some excellent tracts of Mr. Bergier and of some others; and thus the Sophisters of the day perfected the first tool of the Antichristian conspirators.

A new Encyclopedia.

* The text in the original is far more extensive, where Diderot treats of the deficiencies of the Encyclopedia, but not having it at hand, we quote from Feller's Hist. Dict. art. DIDEROT.

Note referred to in Page 34.

Devices of the Encyclopedia on the article God.

Look for the article GOD (Geneva edition) and you will find very sound notions, together with the direct, physical and metaphysical demonstration of his existence; and indeed under such an article it would have been too manifest to have broached any thing even bordering on Atheism, Spinofism, or Epicurism; but the reader is referred to the article DEMONSTRATION,

and there all the physical and metaphysical cogent arguments for the existence of a God disappear. We are there taught, that all direct demonstrations *suppose the idea of infinitude, and that such an idea cannot be of the clearest, either for the Naturalist or the Metaphysician.* This in a word destroys all confidence the reader had in the proofs adduced of the existence of God. There again, they are pleased to tell you, that a single insect, in the eyes of the philosopher, more forcibly proves *the existence of a God, than all the metaphysical arguments whatever* (ibid.) ; but you are then referred to CORRUPTION, where you learn how much you are to beware of asserting in a positive manner, that corruption can never beget animated bodies, and that such a production of animated bodies by corruption, seems to be countenanced by *daily experiments* ; and it is from these experiments precisely, that the Atheists conclude, that the existence of God is unnecessary, either for the creation of man or animals. Prepossessed by these references, against the existence of God, let the reader turn to the articles of ENCYCLOPEDIA and EPICURISM. In the former he will be told, *that there is no being in nature that can be called the first or last, and that a machine infinite in every way must necessarily be the Deity.* In the latter the atom is to be the Deity. It will be the primary cause of all things, by whom and of whom, every thing is, active, essentially of itself, *alone unalterable, alone eternal, alone immutable* ; and thus the reader will be insensibly led from the God of the Gospel to the heathenish fictions of an Epicurus or of a Spinoza.

The same cunning is to be found in the article of the SOUL. When the Sophisters treat directly of its essence they give the ordinary proofs of its *spirituality and of its immortality.* They will even add in the article BRUTE, that the soul cannot be supposed material, nor can the brute be reduced to the quality of a mere machine, *without running the hazard of making of man an Automaton.* And under NATURAL LAW we read, that if the determinations of man, or even his oscillations, arise from any thing material, extraneous to his soul, *there will be neither good nor evil, neither just nor unjust, neither obligation nor right.* Then referred to the article LOCKE, in order to do away all this consequence, we are told that it is of no importance *whether matter thinks or not, for what is that to justice or injustice, to the immortality of the soul and to all the truths of the system, whether political or religious* ; the reader, enjoying the liberty and equality of his reason, is left in doubt with regard to the spirituality, and no longer knows whether he should not think himself all matter. But he will decide when, under the article ANIMAL, he finds *that life and animation are only physical properties of matter,* and lest he should think himself debased by his resembling a plant or an animal, to console him in his fall, they will tell him, article ENCYCLOPÆDIA and ANIMAL, *that the only difference between certain vegetables, and animals such as us, is, that they sleep and that we wake, that we are animals that feel, and that they are animals that feel not* ; and still further in the article ANIMAL, that the sole difference *between a stock and a man, is, that the one ever falls, while the latter never falls after the same manner.* After perusing these articles *bona fide,* the reader must be insensibly drawn into the vortex of materialism.

On the article of the SOUL

On the article LIBERTY.

In treating of Liberty or free agency, we find the same artifice. When they treat of it directly they will say, "Take away liberty, all human nature is overthrown, and there will be no trace of order in society—Recompense will be ridiculous, and chastisement unjust.—The ruin of liberty carries with it, that of all order, of police, and legitimates the most monstrous crimes—So monstrous a doctrine is not to be debated in the schools, but punished by the magistrates, &c. *Oh, Liberty!* they exclaim, *Oh, Liberty, gift of heaven!* *Oh, Liberty of action!* *Oh, Liberty of thought!* thou alone art capable of great things." [See articles AUTHORITY and the PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE.] But at the article CHANCE (*fortuit*) all this liberty of action and of thought is only a power that cannot be exercised, that cannot be known by actual exercise; and Diderot at the article EVIDENCE pretending to support liberty will very properly say, "This concatenation of causes and effects supposed by the philosophers, in order to form ideas representing the mechanism of the Universe, is as fabulous as the Tritons and the Naiads." But both him and D'Alembert will descant again on that concatenation, and returning to CHANCE (*fortuit*) will tell us "That though it is imperceptible, it is not the less real; that it connects all things in nature, that all events depend on it; just as the wheels of the watch, as to their motion, depend on each other: that from the first moment of our existence, we are by no means masters of our motions; that were there a thousand worlds similar to this, and simultaneously existing, governed by the same laws, every thing in them would be done in the same way; and that man in virtue of these same laws, would perform at the same instants of time, the same actions, in each one of these worlds." This will naturally convince, the uninformed reader, of the chimaera of such a liberty or free agency, which cannot be exercised. Not content, with this, Diderot at the article FATALITY, after a long dissertation on this concatenation of causes, ends by saying, that it cannot be contested either in the physical world, or in the moral and intellectual world. Hence what becomes of that liberty without which there no longer exists just or unjust, obligation or right.

These examples will suffice to convince the reader of the truth of what we have asserted, as to the artful policy with which the Encyclopedia had been digested; they will show with what cunning its authors sought to spread the principles of Atheism, Materialism and Fatalism, in fine, every error incompatible with that religion, for which they professed so great a reverence at their outset.

CHAP. V.

Second means of the Conspirators.—The Extinction of the Jesuits.

THE hypocrisy of Voltaire and D'Alembert, had triumphed over every obstacle: They had perfectly succeeded in their abuse on every person who dared oppose the Encyclopedia, representing them as barbarians and enemies to literature; they had found such powerful support during the successive ministers of D'Argenson, Choiseul and Maleherbes, that all the opposition of the great Dauphin, of the clergy and of the religious writers, could not avail, and this impious digest was in future to be looked upon as a necessary work. It was to be found in every library, whether at home or abroad, it was always to be referred to. From thence the simple mind in quest of science, was to imbibe the poison of incredulity, and the Sophister was to be furnished with arms against Christianity. The conspirators, though proud of their first invention, could not dissemble, that there existed a set of men whose zeal, whose learning, whose weight and authority, might one day counteract their undertaking. The church was defended by her bishops and all the lower clergy. They had, moreover, numerous orders of religious, always ready to join the seculars for her defence in the cause of Christianity. But before we treat of the means employed for the destruction of these defenders of the faith, we must show the plan formed by Frederick, whence they resolved on the destruction of the Jesuits, as the first step towards dismantling the church, the destruction of her bishops and of her different orders of priesthood.

General wish of the conspirators as to religious orders.

In the year 1743, Voltaire had been sent on secret service to the court of Prussia and among his dispatches from Berlin, we find the following written to the minister Amelot. "In the last interview I had with his Prussian majesty, I spoke to him of a pamphlet that appeared in Holland about six weeks back, in which the secularization of ecclesiastical principalities in favour of the Emperor and Queen of Hungary, was

Frederick's first plan to overthrow the church.

“ proposed as the means of pacification for the Em-
 “ pire. I told him that I could wish, with all my
 “ heart, to see it take place; that what was Cæsar’s
 “ was to be given to Cæsar that the whole business
 “ of the church was to supplicate God and the princes;
 “ that by his institution, the Benedictine would have
 “ no claim to sovereignty, and that this decided opin-
 “ ion of mine, had gained me many enemies among
 “ the clergy. He owned that the *pamphlet had been*
 “ *printed by his orders.* He hinted that he should not
 “ dislike to be one of those kings, to whom the clergy
 “ would conscientiously make restitution, and that he
 “ should not be sorry to embellish Berlin with the goods
 “ of the church. This is most certainly his grand
 “ object, and he means only to make peace, when he
 “ sees the possibility of accomplishing it. It is in your
 “ breast, to prudently profit of this his secret plans,
 “ which he confided to me alone.”*

Effect of
 this plan
 at the court
 of Ver-
 sailles.

D’Argen-
 son’s plan.

It was at this period that the court of Lewis XV. began to be overrun with ministers, who thought on religious matters, like a Voltaire or a Frederick. They had no ecclesiastical states, no ecclesiastical electors to pillage, but the possessions of the numerous religious orders dispersed through France, could satiate their rapacity, and they conceived that the plan of Frederick, could be equally lucrative to France. The Marquis D’Argenson, counsellor of state and minister of foreign affairs, was the great patron of Voltaire. It was he who adopted all his ideas, and formed the plan for the destruction of all religious orders in France. The progress of the plan was to be slow and successive, lest it should spread the alarm. They were to begin with those orders that were least numerous, they were to render the entrance into religion more difficult, and the time of their professions was to be delayed until that age, when people are already engaged in some other state of life. The possessions of the suppressed were artfully to be adapted to some pious use, or united to the episcopal revenues. Time was to do away all difficulties, and the day was not far off, when, as lord paramount, the sovereign was to put in his claim to all that belonged to the suppressed orders, even to what had been united, for the moment, to the fees of

* General correspondence, 8th Oct. 1743.

the bishops ; the whole was to be added to his domains.

That the French ministry often changed, but that the plans of the cabinet never did ; and that it always watched the favorable opportunity, was the remark of a shrewd and observing legate. The plan, for the destruction of religious orders, had been made by D'Argenson, in the year 1745, though forty years after it lay on the chimney-piece of Maurepas, then prime minister. I owe this anecdote to a person of the name of Bevis,* a learned Benedictine, and in such high repute with Maurepas, that he often pressed him to leave his hood, promising him preferment as a secular. The Benedictine refused such offers, and it was not without surprise, that he heard Maurepas tell him, in pressing him to accept his offer, *that secularization would one day be his lot* ; he then gave him *D'Argenson's* plan, which had long been followed and would soon be accomplished.

Avarice alone could not have suggested this plan, as the mendicant orders, as well as the more wealthy, were equally to be destroyed.

It would have been nugatory to attempt the execution before the Encyclopedian sophisters had prepared the way ; it was therefore dormant many years in the state offices at Versailles. In the mean time the Voltarian ministry, fostering up infidelity, pretended to strike, while they secretly supported the sophistical tribe. They forbid Voltaire the entrance of Paris, while *in amazement he receives a scroll of the king*, confirming his pension, *which had been suppressed twelve years before* !† He carries on his correspondence with the adepts, under the covers and the very seal of the first secretaries and of the ministers themselves, who were perfectly conversant with all his impious plans.‡ It was this very part of the Antichristian Conspiracy that Condorcet was wont to describe when he says : “ Often a government would reward the philosopher with one hand, “ whilst with the other it would pay his slanderer ; “ would proscribe him, while they were proud of the “ soil that had given him birth ; punished him for

* He is at present in London.

† Let. to Damilaville, 9th Jan. 1762.

‡ Let. to Marmontel, 13th Aug. 1760.

“ his opinions, but would have blushed not to have partaken of them.”*

Choiseul's understanding with the Sophisters.

This perfidious understanding between the ministers of his most Christian Majesty, and the Antichristian Conspirators, hastened their progress, when the most impious and most despotic of ministers, judged that the time was come when the decisive blow could be struck. This minister was the Duke of Choiseul; during the whole time of his power he was the faithful adept and admirer of Voltaire, who says: “ Don't fear opposition from the Duke of Choiseul; I repeat it, I don't mislead you, he will be proud of serving you :”† or to Marmontel, “ We have been a little alarmed by certain panics, but never was fright so unfounded. The Duke de Choiseul and Mad. de Pompadour know the opinions of the *uncle* and of the *niece*. You may send any thing without danger.” In fine, he was so secure in the duke's protection against the Sorbonne and the church, that he would exclaim, “ *The ministry of France for ever; long live the Duke de Choiseul.*”‡

Resolves the destruction of the Jesuits: why he begins with them.

This confidence of the premier chief was well placed in Choiseul, who had adopted and taken up all the plans of D'Argenson. The ministry prognosticated a great source of riches to the state, in the destruction of the religious, though many of them did not seek in that the destruction of religion; they even thought some of them necessary, and the Jesuits were excepted. Unfortunately these were exactly the men with whom Choiseul wished to begin, and his intention was already known by the following anecdote:—Choiseul, one day, conversing with three ambassadors, one of them said, If I ever chance to be in power, I will certainly destroy all religious orders excepting the Jesuits, for they are at least useful to education. “ As for my part (answered Choiseul), I will destroy none but the Jesuits; for, their education once destroyed, all the other religious orders will fall of themselves,” and his policy was deep! There can be no doubt but that destroying the order, in whose hands the majority of the colleges were at that time, would be striking at the very root of that Christian education, which prepared

* Condorcet's Sketch on History, 9th Epoch.

† Let. to D'Alembert, No. 68, anno 1760.

‡ Let. to Marmontel, 13th Aug. 1760, and 2d Sept. 1767.

so many for the religious state ; therefore, in spite of the exception, Choiseul still sought to sway the council by his opinion.

The Jesuits were tampered with, but in vain : so far from acceding to the destruction of the other orders, they were foremost in their defence ; they pleaded the rights of the church ; they supported them with all their weight, whether in their writings or their discourse. This gave occasion to Choiseul to remonstrate with the council, and to persuade them, if they wished to procure to the state, the immense resources of the religious possessions, that it was necessary to begin with the *destruction of the Jesuits*.

This anecdote I only cite, as having heard it among the Jesuits, but their subsequent expulsion strongly corroborates its veracity. Whether these religious deserved their fate or not, is alien to my subject ; I only wish to point out the hand that strikes, and the men who D'Alembert says *gave the orders* for their destruction. Treating of this Antichristian Conspiracy, I have only to ascertain whether their destruction was not conceived, urged and premeditated, by the sophistical conspirators, as a means powerfully tending to the destruction of Christianity. Let us then examine what that body of men really was, and how necessarily odious they must have been to the conspirators, from their general reputation. Let us, above all, hear the Sophisters themselves ; let us see how much they interested themselves in their destruction.

The Jesuits were a body of twenty thousand men, spread through all Catholic countries, and particularly charged with the education of youth. They did not for that neglect the other duties of the ecclesiastic, and were bound by a particular vow, to go as missionaries to any part of the globe, if sent to preach the gospel. From their youth, brought up to the study of literature, they had produced numberless authors, but more particularly divines, who immediately combated any error, that might spring up in the church. Latterly they were chiefly engaged in France against the Jansenists and Sophisters, and it was their zeal in the defence of the church, that made the King of Prussia style them *The Life-guards of the Pope*.*

What the
Jesuits
were.

* Let. of the King of Prussia to Voltaire, No. 154, an. 1767.
Vol. I. I

Opinion of
the bishops
on the Jes-
uits.

When fifty French prelates, cardinals, arch-bishops or bishops, assembled, were consulted by Louis XV. on the propriety of destroying the order, they expressly answered: "The Jesuits are of infinite service to us in our dioceses, whether for preaching or the direction of the faithful, to revive, preserve and propagate faith and piety, by their missions, congregations and spiritual retreats, which they make with our approbation, and under our authority. For these reasons we think, Sire, that to prohibit them from instructing, would essentially injure our dioceses, and that it would be difficult to replace them with equal advantage in the instruction of youth, and more particularly so, in those provincial towns where there are no universities."†

Such in general was the idea entertained of them in all Catholic countries; it is essential to the reader to be acquainted with it, that he may understand of what importance their destruction was to the Sophisters. At the time, the Jansenists had the honor of it, and indeed they were very ardent in the success. But the Duke de Choiseul, and the famous courtesan La Marquise de Pompadour, who then held the destiny of France, under the shadow and in the name of Louis XV, were not more partial to the Jansenists than to the Jesuits. Both confidants of Voltaire, they were consequently initiated in all the mysteries of the Sophisters,‡ and Voltaire, as he says himself, *would willingly have seen all the Jesuits at the bottom of the sea, each with a Jansenist hung to his neck.*§

The Jansenists were nothing more than the hounds employed in the general hunt by Choiseul, the Marquise de Pompadour and the Sophisters. The Minister, spurred on by his impiety, the Marquise, wishing to revenge the insult, as she called it, received from Pere Sacy a Jesuit. This father had refused her the sacraments, unless by quitting the court, she would in some sort atone for the public scandal she had given, by her cohabitation with Louis XV. But if we judge by Voltaire's letters, they neither of them needed much stimulation, as they both had always been great

† Opinion of the Bishops, 1761.

‡ Let. of Voltaire to Marmontel, 13th Aug. 1760.

§ Let. to Chabanon.

protectors of the Sophisters, and the minister had always favored their intrigues as far as he could, consistently with circumstances and politics.* The following pages will show these intrigues, and we shall begin by D'Alembert, who writes in the most sanguine manner on their future victory over the Jesuits, and on the immense advantages to be derived to the conspiracy by their downfall. "You are perpetually repeating, *Crush the wretch*; for God's sake let it fall headlong of itself! Do you know what Astruc says? It is not the Jansenists that are killing the Jesuits, but the Encyclopedia. Yes, zounds! it is the Encyclopedia, and that is not unlikely. This scoundrel of an Astruc is a second Pasquin, he sometimes says good things. For my part I see every thing in the brightest colours: I foresee the Jansenists naturally dying off the next year, after having strangled the Jesuits this; toleration established, the Protestants recalled, the priests married, confession abolished, and *fanaticism* (religion) *crushed*, and all this without its even being perceived."†

D'Alembert's avowal on their destruction.

The very words of the conspirators show what part they had in the destruction of the Jesuits. They were the true cause; we see what advantage they hoped to reap from it; they had kindled the hatred, they had procured the death warrant. The Jansenists were to serve the conspirators, but fall themselves, when no more wanted. The Calvinists were to be recalled, but only to perish in their turn. To strike at the whole Christian religion was their aim, and impiety with its sophisters, was solely to range throughout the unbelieving world.

D'Alembert smiles at the blinded parliaments, seconding with all their power the plans of the conspirators. It is in this idea he writes to Voltaire: "The laugh is no longer on the side of the Jesuits, since they have fallen out with the philosophers; at present they are at open war with the parliament, who find that the society of Jesus is contrary to *human* society. This same society of Jesus finds on its side, that the *order* of the parliament is not within the *order* of those who have common sense, and *philosophy* would decide that both the society of Jesus

* Let. from Voltaire to Marmontel, 21st Aug. 1767.

† Let. 100.

“ *and the parliament are in the right.*” * Or again, when he writes to Voltaire : “ The evacuation of the college of Louis le Grand (the Jesuits College at Paris) is of more importance to us than that of Martinico. Upon my word this is becoming serious, and the people of the parliament don’t mince the matter. They think they are serving religion, while *they are forwarding reason without the least suspicion.* They are the public executioners, *who take their orders from philosophy without knowing it.*” †

Wrapped up in his idea, when he sees the Encyclopedian commands nearly executed, he openly avows the cause of his revenge ; he even implores Heaven, lest his prey should escape him. “ Philosophy (says he) is on the eve of being revenged of the Jesuits, but who will avenge it of the other fanatics. Pray God, dear brother, that reason may triumph even in our days.” †

And this day of triumph comes, he proclaims the long-concerted exploit : “ At length, he cries on the sixth of next month, we shall be delivered from all that Jesuitical rabble, but will reason for that, have gained, or *the wretch* have lost ground. §

Thus we see, under this shocking formula, the destruction of Christianity is linked with that of the Jesuits. D’Alembert was so much convinced of the importance of their triumph over that order, that hearing one day of Voltaire’s pretended gratitude to his former masters, he immediately wrote to him, “ Do you know what I was told yesterday, that you began to pity the Jesuits, that you was almost tempted to write in their favor, as if it were possible to interest any one in favor of people, on whom you have cast so much ridicule. *Believe me, let us have no human weakness.* Let the Jansenitical rabble rid us of the Jesuitical, and do not prevent one spider from devouring another.” ||

Avowal of
Voltaire.

Nothing was less founded than this alarm, Voltaire was not the writer of the conclusions drawn by the Attorney-Generals of the Parliament, as D’Alembert had been informed, who himself had been the author of Mr. de la Chalotais, the most artful and virulent piece that appeared against the Jesuits. Voltaire how-

* Letter 98, 1761. † Let. 100. ‡ Let. 90, anno 1761.
§ Let. 102. || Let. 15th of Sept. 1762.

ever was not less active in composing and circulating memorials against them.*

If he suspected any great personage of protecting the Jesuits, he would write and use his utmost endeavours to dissuade them. It was for that he wrote to the Mareschal de Richelieu, "I have been told, my Lord, that you had favored the Jesuits at Bourdeaux. Try to destroy whatever influence they may have."† Thus again he did not blush to upbraid Frederick himself, with having offered an asylum to these unfortunate victims of their plots.‡ Full as rancorous as D'Alembert, he would express his joy at their misfortunes in the same gross abuse, and his letters show with what adepts he shared it. "I rejoice with my brave *chevalier* (he would write to the Marq. de Vielleville) on the expulsion of the Jesuits; Japan led the way in driving out those knaves of Loyola; China followed the example of Japan, and France and Spain have imitated the Chinese. Would to God that all the monks were swept from the face of the earth, they are no better than those knaves of Loyola. If the Sorbonne was suffered to act, it would be worse than the Jesuits. One is surrounded with monsters: we embrace our worthy chevalier, and exhort him to conceal his march from the enemy."§

What examples does the philosophist of Ferney adduce! The cruelties of a Taikofama, who, in expelling and crucifying the missionary Jesuits, also murders thousands and thousands of his subjects, in order to irradicate Christianity. The Chinese, less violent indeed, but with whom every persecution against the missionaries, has always been followed or preceded by a prohibition to preach the gospel. Can the man build upon such authorities, without forming the same wish?

It is to be remarked that Voltaire dares not cite the example of Portugal or of its tyrant Carvalho.¶ The

* Let. to the Marquis D'Argence de Dirac, 26th Feb. 1762.

† Let. of the 29th Nov. 1761. ‡ 5th Nov. 1773.

§ 27th April, 1767.

¶ I have seen well-informed persons, who thought that the persecution in Portugal was not entirely unconnected with the conspiracy of the Sophisters. That it was only a first essay of what might be afterwards attempted against the whole body. This might be. The politics and power of Choiseul and the

truth is, that with the rest of Europe, he is obliged to confess, that the conduct of this minister in Portugal, with regard to the Father Malagrida and the pretended conspiracy of the Jesuits, *was the summit of ridicule and the excess of horror.**

It is also worthy of remark, that the conspiring Sophisters spared no pains to throw the odium of the assassination of Louis XV. on the Jesuits, and more particularly Damilaville, whom Voltaire answers in the following manner: "My brethren, you may easily perceive that I have not spared the Jesuits. But posterity would revolt against me in their favor, were I to accuse them of a crime of which all Europe and Damien has cleared them. I should debase myself into the vile *ecba* of the *Jansenists*, were I to speak otherwise."†

Notwithstanding the incoherency in their accusations against the Jesuits, D'Alembert, certain of Voltaire's zeal in this warfare, sends him his *pretended history* of these Religious; a work, of whose hypocrisy, his own pen is the best guarantee, when he speaks of it as a means for the grand object. "I recommend this work to your protection (he writes to Voltaire,) I really believe it will be of service to the common cause, and that *superstition* notwithstanding the many bows I pretend to make before it, will not fare the better for it. Was I, like you, far from Paris, to give it a *sound threshing*, I would certainly do it, with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my strength, in fine, as they tell us, we are to love God. But, *placed as I am*, I must content myself with giving a few *fillips*, apologizing for the great liberty taken, and I do not think but what I have hit it off pretty well."‡

character of Carvalho, could add weight to this opinion. I candidly confess I have no proof of their secret co-operations; and besides, the ferocious wickedness of Carvalho, has been set in so strong a light, he was the murderer and jailor of so many victims declared innocent by the decree of the 8th of April 1771, that it would be useless to seek any other stimulator than his own heart, in that shocking series of cruelties which distinguished his ministry. See the *Memoirs and Anecdotes of the Marq. of Pombal*. The *Discourse on History* by the Comte D'Albon.

* Voltaire's Age of Louis XV. chap. 33.

† Let. to Damilaville, 2d March, 1763. ‡ 3d Jan. 1765.

Could the reader for a moment forget his indignation at the profligacy of the style, would not the hypocrisy, the profound dissimulation, of which these Sophisters speak so lightly, rouse it anew; if the annals of history should ever be searched, it would be in vain to seek a conspiracy whose intruges, whose cunning was of a deeper hue, and that from its own confession.

As to Frederick, during the whole of this warfare, his conduct is so singular, that his words alone can give a proper idea of it. He would call the Jesuits, *The life-guards of the court of Rome, the grenadiers of Religion*; and as such hated them, and triumphed with the rest of the conspirators in their defeat. But he also beheld in them a body of men useful and even necessary to his state; as such he supported them several years after their destruction; was deaf to the repeated solicitations of Voltaire and his motly crew. One could be almost tempted to think he liked them; he openly writes to Voltaire, "I have no reason to complain of Ganganelli, he has left me my dear Jesuits, who are the objects of universal persecution. I will preserve a seed of so precious and uncommon a plant, to furnish those who may wish to cultivate it hereafter."* He would even enter in a sort of justification, with Voltaire, on his conduct, so opposite to the views of the party. "However much a heretic, and still more an infidel, says he, I have preserved that order after a fashion, and for the following reasons:

"Not one Catholic man of letters is to be found in these regions, except among the Jesuits. We had nobody capable of keeping schools. We had no Oratorian Fathers, no Purists (Piaristes or Fathers of charity-schools;) there was no alternative, the destruction of our schools, or the preservation of the Jesuits. It was necessary that the order should subsist to furnish professors, where they dropped off; and the foundation could suffice for such an expence; but it would have been inadequate to the salary of laymen professors. Moreover, it was at the university of the Jesuits, that the divines were taught; who where afterwards to fill the rectories. Had the order been suppressed, there was an end of the university, and our Silesian divines would have

* 7th July, 1770.

Avowal
and strange
conduct of
Frederick.

“ been obliged to go and finish their studies in Bohemia, which would have been contrary to the fundamental principles of our government.”*

Such was the language of Frederick, speaking in his royal character, such were the political reasons he so ably adduced, in support of his opposition to the Sophisters. Alas! I have already said it; in Frederick there were two distinct men, one the great king, and as such, he believes the preservation of the Jesuits necessary; the other the impious Sophister, conspiring with Voltaire, and triumphant in the loss religion had sustained in that of the Jesuits. In the latter character we find him freely exulting with the conspirators and felicitating D’Alembert, on this happy omen of the total destruction of Christianity, and in his sarcastic style, writes, “ What an unfortunate age for the court of Rome; she is openly attacked in Poland, her life-guards are driven out of France and Portugal, and it appears that they will share the same fate in Spain. The philosophers openly sap the foundations of the apostolic throne; the hieroglyphics of the conjuror are laughed at, and the author of the sect is pelted, toleration is preached, so all is lost. A miracle alone could save the church. She is stricken with a dreadful apoplexy, and you (Voltaire) will have the happiness of burying her, and of writing her epitaph, as you formerly did that of the Sorbonne.”†

When what Frederick had foreseen really came to pass in Spain, he wrote again to Voltaire. “ Here is a new victory you have gained in Spain. The Jesuits are driven out of the kingdom. Moreover the courts of Versailles, of Vienna and Madrid have applied to the Pope for the suppression of divers convents. It is said the holy father, though in a rage, will be obliged to consent. Oh! cruel revolution, what are we not to expect in the next century, the axe is at the root of the tree. On one side the philosophers openly attack the abuses of a fainted superstition; on the other, *princes by the abuses of dissipation* are forced to lay violent hands on the goods of these recluse, who are the props and trumpeters of fanaticism. This edifice sapped in its founda-

* 8th November, 1777.

† Letter 154, anno 1767.

“ tions, is on the eve of falling, and nations shall in-
 “ scribe on their annals, that Voltaire was the promo-
 “ ter of the revolution, operated, during the nine-
 “ teenth century, in the human mind.”*

A long while fluctuating between the king and the Sophister, Frederick had not yet yielded to the solicitations of the conspirators. D'Alembert was particularly pressing in his ; we see how much he was bent on the success by his following letter to Voltaire. “ My venerable Patriarch, do not accuse me of want
 “ of zeal in the good cause, no one perhaps serves it
 “ more than myself. Do you know with what I am
 “ occupied at present ? With nothing less than the ex-
 “ pulsion of the Jesuitical rabble, from Silesia ; and
 “ your former disciple is but too willing, on account
 “ of the numerous and perfidious treacheries he experi-
 “ enced through their means, as he says himself,
 “ during the last war ; I do not send a single letter to
 “ Berlin without repeating, *That the philosophers of*
 “ *France are amazed, that the king of Philosophers, that*
 “ *the declared protector of philosophy should be so dila-*
 “ *tory, in following the example of the kings of France*
 “ *or Portugal. These letters are read to the king,*
 “ *who is very sensible, as you know, to what the true*
 “ *believers may think of him ; and this sense will,*
 “ *without doubt, produce a good effect, by the help*
 “ *of God's grace, which, as the scripture very prop-*
 “ *erly remarks, turns the heart of kings like a water-*
 “ *cock.*”†

Further
 avowals
 of D'Alembert and
 Voltaire.

It is a loathsome task to copy all this low buffoonery with which D'Alembert would season his dark plots, and the unconcern of his clandestine persecution, against a society of men, whose only crime was their respect and reverence for Christianity. I pass over many more expressions of this stamp, or more indecent ; it will suffice for my object, to show how little, how empty, how despicable, these proud and mighty men were, when seen in their true light.

In spite of all these solicitations, Frederick was invincible, and fifteen years after, he still protected and preserved *his dear Jesuits*. This expression in his mouth, when he at length sacrificed them to the conspiracy,

* 5th May, 1767.

† D'Alembert to Voltaire, 15th Dec. 1763.

may be looked upon as an answer to what D'Alembert had written of their treachery to the king; it might prove with what unconcern, calumny or supposed evidence of others, were adduced as proofs by him; as in another place he says, Frederick is not a man, *to confine within his royal breast*, the subjects of complaint he may have had against them,* as had been the case with the king of Spain, whose conduct in that respect had been so much blamed by the Sophisters.†

Their fears
of the recal
of the Jes-
uits.

These sophistical conspirators were not to be satisfied by the general expulsion of the Jesuits, from the different states of the kings of the earth. But by their reiterated cries, Rome was at length to be forced to *declare the total extinction of the order*. We may observe this in a work, in which Voltaire particularly interests himself, and whose sole object, was to obtain that extinction. At length it was obtained. France too late perceiving the blow it had given to public education, without appearing to recoil, many of her leading men, seeking to remedy the mistake, formed the plan of a new society solely destined to the education of youth. In this the former Jesuits, as the most habituated to education, were to be admitted. On the first news of this plan, D'Alembert spread the alarm; he sees the Jesuits returning to life; he writes again and again to Voltaire; he sends the counter-plan. He lays great stress on the danger that *would result from thence, for the state, for the king, and for the Duke D'Aiguillon*, during whose administration, the destruction had taken place; *also on the impropriety of placing youth under the tuition of any community of priests whatever*: they were to be represented as *ultramontains by principle and as anti-citizens*. Our barking philosophist then concluding in his cant to Voltaire, says, *Raton (cat,) this chestnut requires to be covered in the embers, and to be handled by a paw as dextrous as that of Raton, and so saying I tenderly kisses those dear paws*. Seized with the same panic, Voltaire sets to work, and asks for fresh instructions. He considers what turn can be given to this affair, much too serious to be treated with ridicule alone. D'Alembert insists,‡ Voltaire at Ferney, writes against the recal, and the conspirators fill Paris and Versailles

* 24th July 1767.

† D'Alembert to Voltaire, 4th May 1767.

‡ See Letters of 26th Feb. 3th and 22d March 1774.

with their intrigues. The ministers are prevailed upon, the plan laid aside, youth left without instruction, and it is on such an occasion that Voltaire writes, "My dear friend, I know not what is to become of me; in the mean time let us enjoy the pleasure of having seen the Jesuits expelled."*

This pleasure was but short, as D'Alembert, seized with a new panic, writes again to Voltaire, "I am told, for certain, that the Jesuitical rabble is about to be reinstated in Portugal, in all but the dress. This new Queen appears to be a very *superstitious Majesty*. Should the King of Spain chance to die, I would not answer for that kingdom's not imitating Portugal. *Reason is undone should the enemy's army gain this battle.*"†

When I first undertook to show that the destruction of the Jesuits was a favourite object of the conspirators, and that it was essentially inherent to their plan of overthrowing the Christian religion, I promised to confine myself to the records and confessions of the Sophisters themselves. I have omitted, for brevity sake, several of great weight, even that written by Voltaire, fifteen years after their expulsion, wherein he flatters himself, *that by means of the court of Peterburg, he could succeed in getting them expelled from China, because those Jesuits, whom the Emperor of China had chosen to preserve at Peking, were rather CONVERTERS than Mathematicians.*‡

Had the Sophisters been less sanguine, or less active, in the extinction of this order I should not have insisted so much on that object. But the very warfare they waged was a libel on Christianity; what! they had persuaded themselves that the religion of the Christians was the work of man, that the destruction of a few poor mortals, was to shake it to its very foundations? Had they forgotten that Christianity had flourished during fourteen centuries, before a Jesuit was heard of? Hell might open its gates wider after their destruction, but it was written that they should not prevail. The power and intrigues of the ministers of France, of a Choiseul or a Pompadour, plotting with a Voltaire; of a D'Aranda in Spain, the public friend of D'Alembert and the protector of infidelity;

Mistake of the Sophisters on this abolition.

* Let. to D'Alembert. 27th April 1771.

‡ 23d June 1777.

† 8th Dec. 1776.

of a Carvalho in Portugal, the ferocious persecutor of the good ; in fine, the intrigues of many other ministers, dupes or agents of the sophistical conspiracy, rather than politicians, may have extorted the bull of extinction from Ganganelli, by threats of schism : but did that pontiff, or any other Christian, believe that the power of the Gospel rested on the Jesuits ? No : the God of the Gospel reigns above, he will one day judge the pontiff and the minister, the Jesuit and the Sophister.—It is certain that a body of twenty thousand religious dispersed throughout Christendom, and forming a succession of men, attending to the education of youth, applying to the study of science, both religious and profane, must have been of the greatest utility both to church and state. The conspirators were not long before they perceived their error, and though they had done the Jesuits the honor to look upon them as the base on which the church rested, they found that Christianity had other succours left, that new plots were necessary, and with equal ardor, we shall see them attacking all other religious orders, as the third means of the Antichristian Conspiracy.

CHAP. VI.

Third Means of the Conspirators.—Extinction of all the Religious Orders.

THE favorite theme of those who were inimical to religious orders, has been to shew their inutility both to church and state. But by what right shall Europe complain of a set of men, by whose care she has emerged from that savage state of the ancient Gauls or Germanni, by whose labours two-thirds of her lands have been cultivated, her villages built, her towns beautified and augmented. Shall the state complain of those men, who perpetually attending to the cultivation of lands which their predecessors had first tilled, furnish sustenance to the inhabitants; shall the inhabitant complain, when the village, the town, the country, from whence he comes, would not have existed, or remained uncultivated, but from their care. Shall men of letters complain, when, should they have been happy enough to have escaped the general ignorance and barbarity of Europe, they would perhaps, be vainly searching ruins in hopes of finding some fragment of ancient literature. Yes complain, all Europe complain! It is from them you learned your letters, and they have been abused but too much; alas! your forefathers learned to read, but we to read perversely; they opened the temple of science, we half shut it again; and the dangerous man is not he who is ignorant, but the half wise, who would pretend to wisdom.

Charges
against re-
ligious or-
ders.

Had any one been at the trouble of comparing the knowledge of the least learned part of the religious orders, with that of the generality of the laity, I have no doubt but the former would greatly have excelled the latter, though they had received their ordinary education. It is true, the religious were not versed in the sophisticated science of the age; but often have I seen those very men, who upbraided with their ignorance, were happy in the sciences their occupations required. It was not only among the Benedictines, who have been more generally excepted from this

badge of ignorance, but among all other orders that I have met, with men, as distinguished by their knowledge, as by the purity of their morals. Could I, alas, extend this remark to the laity! This, indeed, is a language very different from that, which the reader may have seen in the satiric declamations of the age; but will satire satisfy his judgment. In the annals of the conspiring Sophisters, shall he find testimony borne of their services, and every scurrilous expression, shall be a new laurel in their crown.

Frederick's
plan.

Frederick's
plan for
the de-
struction
of the reli-
gious or-
ders.

The Jesuits were destroyed, the conspirators saw Christianity still subsisted, and they then said to each other, we must destroy the other religious orders, or we shall not triumph. Their whole plan is to be seen in a letter from Frederick, to which Voltaire gave occasion by the following: "Hercules went to fight the robbers and Bellerophon chimeras; I should not be sorry to behold Herculefes and Bellerophons delivering the earth, both from Catholic robbers and Catholic chimeras."* Frederick answers on the 24th of the same month: "It is not the lot of arms to destroy the wretch, it shall perish by the arm of truth and interested selfishness. If you wish me to explain this idea, my meaning is as follows.—I have remarked as well as many others, that those places where convents are the most numerous, are those where the people are most blindly attached to superstition. No doubt but if these asylums of fanaticism were destroyed, the people would grow tepid and see with indifference, the present objects of their veneration. The point would be to destroy the cloisters, at least to begin by lessening their number. The time is come, the French and Austrian governments are involved in debt; they have exhausted the resources of industry to discharge them, and they have not succeeded; the lure of rich abbeys and well-endowed convents, is tempting. By representing to them the prejudice cloistered persons occasion to the population of their states, as well as the great abuse of the numbers of *Cucullati*, who are spread throughout the provinces; also the facility of paying off part of their debts, with the treasures of those communities, who are without heirs;

* 3d March, 1767.

“ they might, I think, be made to adopt this plan of reform ; and it may be presumed, that after having enjoyed the fecularization of some good livings, their rapacity could crave the reft.

“ Every government who fhall adopt this plan, will be friendly to the *philofophers*, and the promoter of all thofe books, which attack popular fuperftition, or the falfe zeal that would fupport it.

“ Here is a pretty little plan, which I fubmit to the examination of the patriarch of Ferney ; it is his province, as father of the faithful, to rectify and put it in execution.

“ The patriarch may perhaps ask *what is to become of the bifhops ?* I anfwer, it is not yet time to touch them. To deftroy thofe, who ftir up the fire of fanaticifm in the hearts of the people, is the firft ftep, and when the people are cooled, *the bifhops will be but little perfonages, whom fovereigns in procefs of time, will difpofe of as they please.*”

Voltaire relifhed fuch plans too much not to fet a great value on them, and of courfe answered the King of Pruffia : “ Your plan of attack againft the *Chrifticole Superftition*, in that of the friarhood, is worthy a great captain. The religious orders once abolifhed, *error* is expofed to univerfal contempt. Much is written in France on this fubject ; every one talks of it, but it is not ripe enough as yet. People are not fufficiently daring in France, bigots are yet in power.”*

Having read thefe letters, it would be ridiculous to afk of what fervice religious orders could be to the church. Certain it is, that many had fallen off from the austeriy of their firft inftitute ; but even in this degenerate ftate we fee Frederick making ufe of all his policy to overturn them, becaufe his antichriftian plots are thwarted by the zeal and example of thefe religious : becaufe he thinks the church cannot be ftormed, until the convents are carried as the outworks ; and Voltaire traces the hand of the great captain, who had diftinguifhed himfelf fo eminently by his military fcience in Germany, in the plan of attack againft the *Chrifticole Superftition*. Thefe religious corps were ufeful then, though branded with floth and

* 5th April 1767.

ignorance; they were a true barrier to impiety. Frederick was so much convinced of it, that when the Sophisters had already occupied all the avenues of the throne, he dared not direct his attacks against the Bishops, nor the body of the place, until the out-works were carried.

Voltaire writes to him on the 29th of July 1775, " We hope that philosophy which in France *is near the throne*, will soon *be on it*. But that is but hope, which too often proves fallacious. There are so many people interested in the support of error and nonsense, so many dignities, and such riches are annexed to the trade, that the hypocrites, it is to be feared, will get the better of the sages. Has not your Germany transformed your principal ecclesiastics into sovereigns? Where is there an elector or a bishop, who will side with reason against a sect, that allows him two or three hundred thousand pounds a-year?"

Frederick continued to vote for the war being carried on against the religious. It was too early to attack the bishops. He answers Voltaire, " All that you say of our German bishops is but too true; they are the hogs fattened on the tithes of Sion (such is their scurrilous language in their private correspondence.) But you know likewise, that in the Holy Roman Empire, ancient custom, the golden bull, *and such like antiquated fooleries*, have given weight to established abuses. One sees them, shrugs one's shoulders, and things jog on in the old way. If we wish to diminish fanaticism, *we must not begin by the bishops*. But if we succeed in lessening the friarhood, especially the mendicant orders, the people will cool, and they being less superstitious, will allow the powers *to bring down the bishops* as best suits their states. *This is the only possible mode of proceeding*. To silently undermine the edifice hostile to reason, is to force it to fall of itself."*

I began by saying, that the means of the conspirators would give new proofs of the reality of the conspiracy, and of its object. Can any other interpretation, than that of an Antichristian Conspiracy, be put on the whole sentences made use of in their corres-

* 13th August 1775.

pondence ? How can we otherwise understand, *such is the only possible mode of proceeding, to undermine the edifice of that religion, which they are pleased to design by *Christicole Superstition*, as fanatic or unreasonable ; or in order to overthrow its pontiffs, to seduce the people from its worship ? What then is conspiracy, if those secret machinations carried on between Fernel, Berlin and Paris, in spite of distances, be not so ? What reader can be sufficiently blind not to see, that by the establishment of reason, it is only the overthrow of Christianity that is sought ? It is indeed a matter of surprize, that the Sophisters should have so openly exposed their plans at so early a period.*

In the mean time Voltaire was correct when he answers Frederick, that the plan of destruction was ardently pursued in France, ever since the expulsion of the Jesuits, and that by people who were in office. The first step taken was to put off the period of religious professions until the age of twenty-one, though the adepts in ministry would fain have deferred it till the age of twenty-five. That is to say, that of a hundred young people, who would have embraced that state, not two would have been able to follow their vocations ; for what parent would let his child attain that age, without being certain of the state of life he would embrace. The remonstrances made by many friends to religion, caused the age fixed on by the edict, to be that of eighteen for women, and twenty-one for men. Nevertheless, this was looked upon as an act of authority exercised on those, who chose to consecrate themselves more particularly to the service of their God, and rescue themselves from the danger of the passions, at that age when they are the most powerful. This subject had been very fully treated in the last Œcumenical Council, where the age for the profession of religious persons had been fixed at sixteen, with a term of five years to reclaim against their last Vows, in case they did not choose to continue the religious life they had undertaken. And it had always been looked upon as a right inherent to the church, to decide on these matters, as may be seen in Chappelain's discourse on that subject. It would be ridiculous to repeat the favourite argument of their inutility to France, after what has been said in this chapter. What ! pious

Plan adopted in France on the religious.

works, edification and the instruction of the people useless to a nation! Besides, France was a lively example that the number of convents had not hurt its population, as few states were peopled in an equal proportion. If celibacy was to be attacked, she might have turned her eyes to her armies and to that numerous class of men, who lived in celibacy, and who perhaps ought to have been noticed by the laws. In fine, all further reclamations were useless. What had been foreseen came to pass, according to the wishes of the ministerial Sophisters. In many colleges the Jesuits being very ill replaced, youth neglected in their education, left a prey to their passions, or looking on the number of years they had to wait for their reception into the religious state, as so much time lost, laid aside all thoughts of that state, and took to other employments. Some few, from want, engaged, but rather seeking bread than the service of their God, or else prone to vice and to their passions, which they had never been taught to subdue, reluctantly submitted to the rules of the cloister. Already there existed many abuses, but they daily increased; and while the number of religious was diminishing, their fervor languished, and public scandals became more frequent. This was precisely what the ministers wanted, to have a plea for the suppression of the whole; while their masters, more sanguine if possible, made the press teem with writings, in which neither satire nor calumny were spared.

Briennes
prosecutes
the plan.

The person who seemed to second them with the greatest warmth, was that man who, after having persuaded his companions even, that he had some talent for governing, at length finished by only adding his name to those ministers, whom ambition may be said to have blinded even to stupidity. This man was Briennes, Archbishop of Toulouse, since Archbishop of Sens, afterwards prime minister, then a public apostate, and who died as universally hated and despised, as Necker himself appears to be at this day. Briennes will be more despised, when it shall be known that he was the friend and confidant of D'Alembert, and that in a commission for the reform of the religious orders, he wore the mitre, and exercised its powers as a D'Alembert would have done.

The clergy had thought it necessary to examine the means of reforming the religious, and of re-establishing their primitive fervor. The court seemed to enter into their views, and named counsellors of state to join the bishops in their deliberations on this subject, and called it the *Commission of Regulars*. A mixture of prelates, who are only to be actuated by the spirit of the church, and of statesmen solely acting from worldly views, could never agree; some few articles were supposed to have been settled; but all was in vain, and many, through disgust, abandoned the commission. Among the bishops were Mr. Dillon, Archbishop of Narbonne; Mr. de Boisgelin, Archbishop of Aix; Mr. de Cicé, Archbishop of Bourdeaux, and the famous Briennes, Archbishop of Toulouse.

The first, majestic in his person and noble in his eloquence, seems to have had but little to do in this affair, and soon withdrew. The talents and zeal shewn by the second in the national assembly, in defence of the religious state, will convince the reader that he might have given an opinion which the court did not wish to adopt; he also abandoned the commission. In the third we see, that if by accepting of the seals of the revolution, and by affixing them to the constitutional decrees, he could err; by his repentance and retractation he never would have found it in his heart, had he known the plans of the conspirators.

Briennes was the only man of this commission who enjoyed the confidence of the court, or had the secret of D'Alembert, and the latter knew but too well how to prize the future services Briennes was about to render to the conspiracy. On his reception into the French academy, D'Alembert informs the patriarch, "We have in him a good brother, who will certainly prove useful to letters and to philosophy, provided philosophy does not tie up his hands by licentiousness, or that the general outcry does not force him to act against his will."* In fewer words, he might have said, he will attack his God and his religion with all the hypocrisy worthy a conspiring Sophister.

Briennes' understanding with D'Alembert.

Voltaire, thinking he had reason to complain of the monstrous prelate, is answered by D'Alembert, who was a connoisseur in brethren, "For God's sake don't

* 20th June and 21st December 1770.

“ judge rashly—I would lay a hundred to one, that
 “ things have been misrepresented, and that his mis-
 “ conduct has been greatly exaggerated. I know his
 “ way of thinking too well, not to be assured that he
 “ only did on that occasion, what he was indispensibly
 “ obliged to do.”*

Voltaire complained on that occasion, of an order published by Briennes against the adept Audra, who at Toulouse openly read lectures on impiety, under pretence of reading on history. On the enquiries made in favor of the adept by D’Alembert, he writes that Briennes “ had withstood, during a whole year, “ the joint clamours of the parliament, the bishops, “ and the assembly of the clergy ;” and that it was absolutely necessary *to compel him to act*, to prevent the youth of his diocese from receiving the like lectures. His apologist continues, “ Don’t let yourself be pre- “ judged against Briennes, and be assured, once for “ all, that reason (that is our reason) will never have “ to complain of him.”†

Such was the hypocrite or mitred Sophister, whom intrigue had placed in the commission to deliberate on the reform of the religious orders. Seeking disorder and destruction, supported by the ministry, without attending to the other bishops of the commission, he solely dictated in this reform.

Means
and suc-
cesses of
Briennes.

To the edict on the age for professions he added another, suppressing all convents in towns that consisted of less than twenty religious; and elsewhere, when their number was under ten, on the specious pretence, that the conventual rules were better observed where the number was greater. The bishops and the cardinal de Luynes in particular, objected the great services rendered in country places by these small convents, and how much they helped the curates, but all to no purpose; and Briennes had already contrived to suppress fifteen hundred convents before the revolution. Soon he would have advanced more rapidly, for by promoting and encouraging the complaints of the young religious against the elder, of the inferior against the superior, by cramping and thwarting their elections, he spread dissensions throughout the cloisters. On the other side, the ridicule and calumnies contri-

* 4th Dec. 1770.

† 21st Dec. 1770.

ved by the Sophisters were so powerful, that few young men dared take the habit, while some of the ancients were *ashamed of wearing a gown covered with infamy*.[§] Others at length, wearied out by these shuffling tricks, themselves petitioned to be suppressed.

Philosophism, with its principles of liberty and equality, was even gaining ground in their houses, with all its concomitant evils; the good religious shed tears of blood over those persecutions of Briennes, who alone would have effectuated those dreadful schemes planned by Voltaire and Frederick. Their decline was daily more evident, and it was a prodigy that any fervor yet remained, though a greater prodigy still, when we see the fervor of many of those who had petitioned for their secularization, revive in the first days of the revolution. I know for certain that not one third of those who had petitioned, dared take the oath, for apostacy stared them in the face. The tortuous intrigues of a Briennes had shaken them; but the direct attacks of the National Assembly opened their eyes, and they beheld astonished, in their suppression, the grand attack which had been levelled against Christianity.

Voltaire and Frederick did not live to see their plans accomplished, Briennes did; but claiming the honor, he only reaped the ignominy of them. Shame and remorse devoured him. With what pleasure we may speak of the piety of those chaste virgins, consecrated to the service of their God! With them his intrigues had been useless. They, more immediately under the direction of their bishops, had not been exposed to the anarchy and dissensions of a Briennes; their seclusion from the world, their professions at an earlier age (eighteen,) their education within the walls of the convent, these were barriers against his intrigues; but with what admiration should we not behold those who from the pure motives of religion spent their lives in the service of the sick, whose charity, whose chaste modesty, though in the midst of the world, could make man believe them to be angels in human forms. These were far above the reach of calumny or of a Briennes, a pretence could not even be devised.

His attempt
fruitless
against the
nuns.

§ Voltaire to the King of Prussia, No. 15.

With a view to diminish the number of real nuns, he thought, that if he augmented those asylums for canonessees, who have a much greater communication with the world, therefore more easily perverted, that novices would not be so numerous. But by an inconceivable oversight, unless he had some very deep and hidden scheme, these canonessees were in future, to prove a certain number of degrees of nobility to enter these asylums, when before they had been open to all ranks in the state. One would have thought he meant to render the real nuns odious to the nobility, and the latter to all other classes, by applying foundations to particular ranks, which had ever been common to all.

These plans
consummated
by the
National
Assembly.

These were reflections that Briennes little attended to; he was laying his snares, while D'Alembert smiled at the idea, that soon both nuns and canonessees would add to the common mass of ruin; but these sacred virgins baffled all their sunning. Nothing less than all the despotic powers of the Constituent Assembly could prevail against them; they were to be classed with the martyrs of that bloody September; their fervor was impassible. Edicts worthy of Nero, exulting in the flames of burning Rome, are necessary to drive them from the altar, cannons and the satelites of that Constituent Assembly, march against them to enforce those edicts, and *thirty thousand women* are driven from their convents, in contradiction to a decree of that same assembly, promising to let them die peaceably in their asylums. Thus was the destruction of religious orders completed in France. It was then forty years since this plan had been dictated by the Sophisters to the ministers of his most Christian Majesty. But when accomplished, ministers are no more! . . . The sacred person of the king, a prisoner in the towers of the Temple! . . . The object of the abolition of religious orders was fulfilled; religion was savagely persecuted in the person of its ministers! But during the long period that preceded the triumph of the Sophisters, they had resorted to many other means with which I have to acquaint my reader.

CHAP. VII.

Fourth Means of the Conspirators—Voltaire's Colony.

WHILST the conspirators were so much taken up with the destruction of the Jesuits, and of all other religious orders, Voltaire was forming a plan which was to give to impiety itself, both apostles and propogandists. This idea seems to have first struck him about the year 1760-61. Always ruminating the destruction of Christianity, he writes to D'Alembert, "Could not five or six men of parts, who rightly understood each other, succeed after the example of twelve scoundrels, who have already succeeded."* The object of this understanding has already been explained in a letter before quoted. "Let the real philosophers unite in a brotherhood, like the Free-masons; let them assemble and support each other; let them be faithful to the association. This secret academy will be far superior to that of Athens and to all those of Paris. But every one thinks but of himself, and forgets that his most sacred duty is to crush the wretch."†

Object of
this colony.

The conspirators never lost sight of this most sacred duty, but met with various obstacles; religion was still zealously defended in France, and Paris was not yet a proper asylum for such an association. It appears also that Voltaire was obliged for some time to lay this plan aside; but taking it up again, a few years afterwards, he applied to Frederick, as we are told by the editor of their correspondence, for leave "to establish at Cleves a little colony of French philosophers, who might there, freely and boldly, speak the truth, without fearing ministers, priests, or parliaments." Frederick answered with all the desired zeal, "I see you wish to establish the little colony you had mentioned to me.—I think the shortest way would be, that those men, or your associates, should send to Cleves to see what would be most

Frederick
seconds
this plan.

* Let. 69, anno 1760.

† Let, 85, to D'Alembert, 1761.

“ convenient for them, and what I can dispose of in
“ their favor.”*

It is to be lamented that many letters respecting this colony have been suppressed in their correspondence ; but Frederick’s answers are sufficient to convince us of the obstinacy of Voltaire in the undertaking, who returning to the charge again, is answered, “ You
“ speak of a colony of philosophers, who wish to est-
“ tablish themselves at Cleves. I have no objection
“ to it. I can give them every thing but wood, the
“ forests having been almost destroyed by your coun-
“ trymen. But only on this condition, that *they will*
“ *respect those who are to be respected*, and that they
“ will keep within the *proper bounds of decency in their*
“ *writings.*”†

The explanation of this letter, will be better understood, when we treat of the Antimonarchical Conspiracy. Decency in their writings, one should think, would be of the first necessity even for their own views, otherwise this new colony must have spread a general alarm, and governments would have been obliged to repress their barefaced impudence.

While on one side Voltaire was imploring the succour and protection of the King of Prussia, for these apostles of impiety, on the other he was seeking Sophisters worthy of the apostleship. He writes to Damienville, that he is ready to make a sacrifice of all the sweets of Ferney, and go and place himself at their head. “ Your friend, says he, persists in his idea ;
“ it is true, as you have remarked, that he must tear
“ himself from many objects that are at present his
“ delight, and then will be of his regret. But is it
“ not better to quit them through philosophy than by
“ death. What surprises him most, is that many
“ people have not taken this resolution together.
“ Why should not a certain philosophic baron labor
“ at the establishment of this colony ? Why should
“ not so many others improve so fair an opportu-
“ nity ?” In the continuation of this letter we find that Frederick was not the only prince who countenanced the plan : “ Two sovereign princes, *who think*
“ *entirely as you do*, have lately visited your friend.

* 24th October 1765.

† Letter 146, anno 1766.

“ One of them offered a town, provided that which relates to the grand work, should not suit.”*

It was precisely at the time this letter was written, that the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel went to pay homage to the idol of Ferney. The date of his journey, the similarity of his sentiments, can leave little doubt, but what he was the prince who offered a town to the colony, should Cleves prove inconvenient.†

Meanwhile, the apostles of this mock Messiah, however zealous for the grand work, were not equally ready to sacrifice their ease. D’Alembert idolized by the Sophisters at Paris, saw that he could be but a secondary divinity in the presence of Voltaire. That Damilaville, celebrated by the impious patriarch as personally hating God, was necessary for carrying on the secret correspondence in Paris. Diderot, the certain philosophic Baron, and the remaining multitude of adepts, reluctantly cast their eyes on a German town, where they could not with equal ease, sacrifice in luxury and debauchery to their Pagan divinities. Such remissness disconcerted Voltaire. He endeavoured to stimulate their ardor by asking, “ If six or seven hundred thousand Huguenots left their country for the *fooleries of Jean Chauvin*, shall not twelve sages be found, who will make some little sacrifice to reason which is trampled on.”‡

Coolness of the conspirators for this colony.

When he wishes to persuade them, that their consent is all that is necessary to accomplish the grand object, he writes again, “ All that I can tell you now, by a sure hand, is, that every thing is ready for the establishment of the manufacture ; more than one Prince envies the honor of it, and from the borders of the Rhine unto the Oby, Tomplat (that is Plato Diderot) will be honored, encouraged, and live in security.” He would then repeat the grand object of the conspiracy, in hopes of persuading the conspirators. He would seek to inflame their hearts with that hatred for Christ, which was consuming his own. He would repeatedly cry out, *Crush, crush the wretch, then crush the wretch.*§

* Letter of the 6th of August 1766.

† Letter of the Landgrave, 9th Sept. 1766.

‡ Letter to Damilaville, 18th of August 1766.

§ Letter to Damilaville, 25th of August 1766.

Voltaire's
regret on
its failure.

His prayers, his repeated solicitations could not avail against the sweets of Paris. That same reason which made Voltaire willing to sacrifice all the pleasing scenes of Ferney, to bury himself in the heart of Germany, there to consecrate his days and writings to the extinction of Christianity, that reason, I say, taught the younger adepts that the sweets of Paris were not to be neglected. They were not the Apostles of the Gospel preaching temperance and mortification both by word and example; so indeed, was Voltaire obliged to give up all hopes of expatriating his sophistical apostles. He indignantly expresses his vexation to Frederick a few years afterwards: " I own to you, that I was so much vexed and so much ashamed of the little success I had in the transmission to Cleves, that I have never since dared propose any of my ideas to your Majesty. When I reflect that a fool and an ideot, like St. Ignatius, should have found twelve followers, and that I could not find three Philosophers who would follow me, I was almost tempted to think, that reason was useless. † I shall never recover the non-execution of this plan, it was there I should have ended my old age." §

However violent Voltaire was in his reproaches against the other conspirators, the sequel of these memoirs will show that it was unjustly. D'Alembert in particular had far other plans to prosecute; he grasped at the empire of the academic honors, and without exposing his dictatorship, or expatriating the adepts, by distributing these honors solely to the Sophisters, he abundantly replaced Voltaire's so much regretted plan. This means and the method by which it was forwarded, shall be the subject of the ensuing chapter.

† Nov. 1769.

§ 12th of October 1770.

CHAP. VIII.

Fifth Means of the Conspirators.—The Academic Honors.

THE protection which the kings had given to men of letters, had brought them into that repute which they so well deserved, until abusing their talents, they turned them against religion and governments. It was in the French academy where glory seemed to be enthroned, and a seat within its walls, was the grand pursuit of the orator and the poet, in fine of all writers, whether eminent in the historic or any other branch of literature. Corneille, Bossuet, Racine, Massillon, La Bruyère, Lafontaine, in fine, all those authors who had adorned the reign of Louis XIV were proud of their admission within this sanctuary of letters. Morals and the laws seemed to guard its entrance, lest it might be prophaned by the impious. Any public sign of incredulity, was a bar against admission, even during the reign of Louis XV. Nor was the famous Montesquieu himself admitted until he had given proper satisfaction, on account of certain articles contained in his Persian Letters.—Voltaire pretends that he deceived the Cardinal de Fleury, by sending him a new edition of his work, in which all the objectionable parts had been omitted. Such a low trick was beneath Montesquieu, repentance was his only plea, and later, little doubt can be left of his repenting sincerely. In fine, on admission, impiety was openly renounced, and religion publicly avowed.

First object
of the
academies.

Boindin, whose incredulity was notorious, had been rejected, though a member of several other academies. Voltaire was for a long time unable to gain admission, and at length only succeeded by means of high protection and that low hypocrisy which we shall see him recommending to his disciples. D'Alembert, ever provident, hid his propensity to incredulity until he had gained his seat; and though the road to these literary honors had been much widened by the adepts who surrounded the court, nevertheless, he thought that it would not be impossible, by dint of intrigues, to turn the scale; that if formerly impiety had been

D'Alembert's plan
on the
academics.

a means of exclusion, in future it might be a title of admission, and that none should be seated near him, but those whose writings had rendered them worthy abettors of the conspiracy, and supporters of their sophistical arts. His true field was that of petty intrigue, and so successfully did he handle it, that in the latter times, the titles of Academician and Sophister were nearly synonymous. It is true that sometimes he met with obstacles; and the plot framed between him and Voltaire, for the admission of Diderot, will be sufficient to evince what great advantages they expected would accrue to their conspiracy, by this new means of promoting irreligion.

Intrigues
for Diderot.

D'Alembert first proposed it, Voltaire received the proposal with all the attention due to its importance, and answers, "You wish Diderot to be of the academy, it must then be brought about." The king was to approve of the nomination, and D'Alembert feared ministerial opposition. It is to this fear that we owe the account Voltaire has given of Choiseul, it is then, he mentions his partiality to the Sophisters, and that so far from obstructing the like plots, he would forward them with all his power; "In a word, he continues, Diderot must be of the academy, it will be the most noble revenge that can be taken for the play against the philosophers. The academy is incensed at le Franc-de-Pompignan: it would willingly give him a most swinging slap.—I will make a bonfire on Diderot's admission. Ah! what a happiness it would be, if Helvetius and Diderot could be received together."*

D'Alembert would have been equally happy in such a triumph, but he was on the spot and saw the opposition made by the Dauphin, the Queen and the Clergy; he answers, "I should be more desirous than yourself to see Diderot of the academy. *I am perfectly sensible how much the common cause would be benefited by it, but the impossibility of doing it, is beyond what you can conceive.*"†

Voltaire knowing that Choiseul and La Pompadour had often prevailed against the Dauphin, ordered D'Alembert not to despond. He takes the direction of the intrigue on himself, and places his chief hopes

* 9th of July 1760.

† 18th July 1760.

on the Courtesan. " Still further, (says he,) she
 " may look upon it as an honor, and make a merit of
 " supporting Diderot. Let her undeceive the king on
 " his score, and delight in quashing a cabal which she
 " despises." † What D'Alembert could not personally
 undertake, Voltaire recommends to the courtiers, and
 particularly to the Count D'Argental: " My divine
 " Angel, would he write, do but get Diderot to be
 " of the academy, it will be the boldest stroke that
 " can be in the game reason is playing against fanati-
 " cism and folly (*that is religion and piety*;) impose
 " for penance on the Duke de Choiseul to introduce
 " Diderot into the academy." §

The secretary of the academy, Duclos, is also called
 in, as an auxiliary by Voltaire, who gives him instruc-
 tions to insure the success of the recipiendary adept.
 " Could not you represent, or cause to be represented,
 " how very essential such a man is to you for the com-
 " pletion of some necessary work? Could not you
 " *after having slyly played off that battery assemble seven*
 " *or eight of the elect,* and form a deputation to the
 " king, to ask for Diderot as the most capable of for-
 " warding your enterprize? Would not the Duke of
 " Nivernois help you in that project, would not he be
 " the speaker on the occasion? The bigots will say,
 " that Diderot has written a metaphysical work which
 " they do not understand: *Deny the fact, say that he*
 " *did not write it, and that he is a good Catholic—it is*
 " *so easy to be a Catholic.*" ||

It would be an object of surprise to the reader and
 to the historian to see Voltaire straining every nerve,
 calling on Dukes and courtiers, not blushing at the
 vilest hypocrisy, advising base dissimulation, and that
 merely to gain the admission of one of his fellow con-
 spirators, into the academy; but this surprise will
 cease when they see D'Alembert's own words: *I am*
perfectly sensible how much the common cause would be ben-
efitted by it; or in other words, the war we are waging
 against Christianity. These words will explain all his
 agitation. And to have admitted within the sanctuary
 of letters, the man the most notorious for his incredul-
 ity, would it not have been corroborating the fault gov-
 ernment had committed, in letting itself be led away

† 28th July 1760.

§ Let. 153, anno 1760.

|| Let. 11th of August 1760.

by the hypocritical demonstrations of a Voltaire or a D'Alembert? Would it not have been crowning the most scandalous impiety with the laurels of literature, and declaring that Atheism so far from being a stain, would be a new title to its honors? The most prejudiced must own it would have been an open contempt for religion, and Choiseul and La Pompadour were conscious, that it was not yet time to allow the conspirators such a triumph. D'Alembert even shrunk back when he beheld the clamours it would excite, and desisted for the present. But the critical moment was now come, when the ministers secretly abetted, what they publicly seemed to wish to crush. D'Alembert persisted in his hopes, that with some contrivance he would soon be able to exclude all writers from literary honors, who had not offered some sacrifice at least, to the Antichristian Sophistry, and he at length succeeded.

Success of
the con-
spirators,
and list of
the princi-
pal academi-
cians.

From the time when D'Alembert had conceived of what importance the French academy, converted into a club of irreligious Sophisters, might be to the conspiracy, let us examine the merits of some of those who were admitted among its members. First, we find Marmontel perfectly coinciding in opinion with Voltaire, D'Alembert and Diderot; then in succession, La Harpe the favorite adept of Voltaire; Champfort, the adept and hebdomadary co-adjutor of Marmontel and La Harpe; a Lemierre distinguished by Voltaire as a *staunch enemy to the wretch, or Christ*;* an Abbé Millot whose sole merit with D'Alembert was his total oblivion of his priesthood, and with the public to have transformed the history of France into an antipapal one; † a Briennes, long since known to D'Alembert as an enemy to the church, though living in its bosom; a Suar, a Gaillar, and lastly a Condorcet, whose reception was to enthrone the fiend of atheism within the walls of the academy.

It does not appear why Mr. de Turgot did not succeed in his admission, though seconded by all the intrigues of D'Alembert and Voltaire. ‡ In casting an eye on their correspondence, the reader would be surprised to see of what concern it was to them to fill this

* Letter from Voltaire to Damilaville, 1767.

† Letter of D'Alembert, 27th Dec. 1777.

‡ Letter of Voltaire, 8th of Feb. 1776.

philosophical Sanhedrim with their favorite adepts. There are above thirty letters on the admission of their adepts, or on the exclusion of those who were friendly to religion. Their intrigues, whether through protection or any other way, were at length so successful, that in a few years, the name of Academician and Atheist or Deist were synonymous. If there were yet to be found among them some few men, especially bishops, of a different stamp from Briennes, it was a remains of deference shown them, which some might have mistaken for an honor, whilst they should have looked upon it as an insult, to be seated next to a D'Alembert, a Marmontel or a Condorcet.

There was however among the forty, a layman much to be respected for his piety. This was Mr. Beauzet. I one day asked him, how it had been possible, that a man of his morality could ever have been associated with men so notoriously unbelievers? "The very same question (he answered,) have I put to D'Alembert. At one of the sittings, seeing that I was nearly the only person who believed in God, I asked him, how he possibly could ever have thought of me for a member, when he knew that my sentiments and opinions differed so widely from those of his brethren? D'Alembert without hesitation (added Mr. Beauzet) answered, I am sensible of your amazement, but we were in want of a skilful grammarian, and among our party, not one had made himself a reputation in that line. We knew that you believed in God, but being a good sort of man, we cast our eyes on you, for want of a philosopher to supply your place."

Thus was the sceptre wrested from the hands of science and talents, by the hand of impiety. Voltaire had wished to place his conspirators under the protection of the Royal Sophister? D'Alembert stopped their flight, and made them triumph in the very states of that monarch, who gloried in the title of Most Christian. His plot, better laid, conferred the laurels of literature solely on the impious writer, whilst he who dared defend religion, was to be covered with reproach and infamy. The French academy thus converted into a club of infidels, was a far better support to the Sophisters conspiring against Christianity, than any colony which Voltaire could have conceived. The

academy infected the men of letters, and these perverted the public opinion by that torrent of impious productions, which deluged all Europe. These were to be instrumental in bringing over the people to universal apostacy, and will be considered by us, as the sixth means for the Antichristian revolution.

CHAP. IX.

Sixth Means of the Conspirators.—Inundation of Antichristian Writings.

THAT for these forty years past, and particularly for the last twenty of Voltaire's life, all Europe has been overrun with most impious writings, whether under the forms of pamphlets, systems, romances or pretended histories, is one of those self-evident truths which needs no proof. Though I shall in this place confine myself only to a part of what I have to say on this subject, I will here show how the chiefs of the conspiracy acted in concert, whether in the production, the multiplication or distribution of them, in order to disseminate their poisons throughout Europe.

Concert
of the
chiefs in
their
writings.

The method to be observed in their own works, was particularly concerted between Voltaire, D'Alembert and Frederick. We see them, in their letters, confiding to each other the different works they are writing against Christianity, their hopes of success and their arts to ensure it. We see them smile at the snares they have laid against religion, and that particularly, in those works and systems which they affected most to look upon as indifferent to, or as rather promoting than attacking religion. In that style D'Alembert was admirable. The following example will convince the historian, or the reader, of the great art of this crafty Sophister.

It is well known, with what immense pains our philosophers of the day, have been forming their pretended physical systems on the formation of the globe, their numerous theories and genealogies of the earth. We have seen them diving into mines, splitting mountains or digging up their surface in search of shells, to trace old ocean's travels, and build their epochs. These numerous researches, to hear them talk, had no other end but the advancement of science and natural philosophy. Their new epochs were not to affect religion, and we have reason to believe that many of our naturalists had no other object in view, as many of them,

Cunning
of D'A-
lembert
with re-
gard to
systems.

real men of learning and of candour in their researches, and capable of observation, have rather furnished arms against, than forwarded those vain systems by their studies, labours or peregrinations: not such the case with D'Alembert and his adepts. They soon perceived that these new epochs and systems drew the attention of divines, who had to maintain the truth of the facts and the authenticity of the books of Moses, the foundation and title-pages of Revelation. To baffle the Sorbonne and all the defenders of sacred writ, D'Alembert writes a work under the title of *The Abuse of Criticism*, a real apology of all those systems. The main drift of the work, was with showing a great respect for religion, to prove that neither revelation, nor the credibility of Moses, could be the least affected by these theories or epochs, and that the alarms of the divines were ungrounded. Many pages were dedicated to prove that these systems could only serve to raise our ideas to the grand and sublime. That so far from *counteracting the power of God, or his divine wisdom*, they only *displayed it more*; that considering the object of their researches, *it little became the divine, but the natural philosopher to judge of them*. Divines are represented as *narrow-minded, pusillanimous, or enemies to reason*, terrified at an object which did not so much as regard them. He is very pointed in his writings against those pretended panics, and among other things says, "They have sought to connect Christianity with systems purely philosophical. In vain did religion, so simple and precise in its tenets, constantly throw off the alloy that disfigured it, and it is from that alloy the notion has prevailed, of its being attacked in works where it was the least so."*

These are precisely the works where, for the formation of the universe, *a much longer space of time is required*, than the history of the creation, delineated by Moses, leaves us at liberty to suppose.

Who but would have thought D'Alembert convinced that all those physical systems, those theories, *and longer space of time*, so far from overturning Christianity, would only serve to raise the grandeur and sublimity of our ideas of the God of Moses and of the Christians. But that same D'Alembert, while seeking this

* *The Abuse of Criticism*, Nos. 4, 15, 16, 17.

longer space of time, anticipated his applause to the lie, which his travelling adepts were about to give to Moses and to revelation. Those adepts rambling in the mountains of the Alps or the Appenines, are the men he points out to Voltaire *as precious to philosophy*. It is he who, after having been so tender for the honor of Moses and revelation, writes to Voltaire, "This letter, my dear companion, will be delivered to you by Desmarests, a man of merit and of sound philosophy, who wishes to pay his respects to you on his journey to Italy, where he purposes making such observations on natural history, as may very well give the lie to Moses. He will not say a word of this to the master of the sacred palace, but if perchance, he should discover that the world is more ancient than even the septuagint pretend, he will not keep it a secret from you."^{*}

It would have been difficult to use more art, though it were to direct the hand of an assassin; D'Alembert would sometimes direct Voltaire, when shafts were to be sent from Ferney, which could not yet be shot from Paris. On these occasions the theme was already made, and only needed the last gloss of Voltaire's pen.

D'Alembert directs Voltaire in his writings.

When, in 1763, the Sorbonne published that famous Thesis, which foretold what the French revolution has since taught the sovereigns of Europe, on the evil tendency of this modern philosophism to their very thrones; D'Alembert, in haste, informs Voltaire of the exigency of counteracting an impression so detrimental to the conspiracy. He shews Voltaire how to impose on the kings themselves, and how to involve the church in all their doubts and suspicions. In tracing this master-piece of art and cunning, he reminds him of the contests long since extinct, between the priesthood and the empire, and lets him into the whole art of throwing odium and suspicion on the clergy.† Many other plans are proposed to the patriarch according to circumstances.‡ Those were in his style *the chestnuts* that Bertrand (D'Alembert) pointed out under the *ashes*, and which Raton (Voltaire) was to help him to draw out of the fire with *his delicate paw*.

Voltaire did not fail, on his part, to inform D'Alembert and the other adepts, of what he himself Their concert

* Let. 137, 1763.

† Let. of D'Alembert, 18th Jan. and 9th Feb. 1773.

‡ Particularly let. of 26th Feb. and 22d March 1774.

composed, or of the steps he took with ministry. It is thus that as a prelude to the plundering decrees of the revolution, he gave Count D'Argental notice of the memorial he had sent to the Duke de Praslin, to prevail on that minister to deprive the clergy of part of its maintenance by abolishing tythes.*

These secret memorials, the anecdotes, whether true or slanderous against the religious writers, were all concerted among the conspirators and their chiefs.† Even the smiles, the witticisms or insipid epigrams of the adepts, were under the direction of Voltaire, and used by him as forwarding the conspiracy. He, better than any man, knew the powers of ridicule, and he would often recommend it to the adepts in their writings or in their conversation. "Do your best, he writes to D'Alembert, to preserve your cheerfulness, always endeavour to crush the wretch. I only ask five or six witticisms a day; that would suffice. It would not get the better of them. Laugh Democritus, make me laugh, and the fages shall carry the day."‡

Voltaire was not always of the same opinion, with regard to this attack on Christianity. This method was not sufficiently elevated for a philosopher, and he soon after adds, in his quality of chief, *To the flood of jests and sarcasms, there should succeed, some serious work, which however should be worth reading, for the justification of the philosophers, and the confusion of the wretch.*|| This work, notwithstanding the exhortations of the chief, and his union with the adepts, never was executed. But on the other side, the press teemed with deistical and atheistical works, fraught with calumny and impiety. Monthly or weekly some new production of the most daring impiety was printed in Holland. Such were the *Philosophic Soldier, The Doubts, Priestcraft, Blackguardism unveiled*,§ which are nearly the most profligate the sect has produced. One would have thought Voltaire alone presided over this traffic of impiety, such was his zeal in promoting the sale of them. He received notice of the publications,

* Let. to the Count D'Argental, 1764.

† Letters of Voltaire and D'Alembert, 18 and 20.

‡ Let. 128. || Let. to D'Alembert, 67.

§ Le Militaire Philosophe, Les Doubts, l'Imposture Sacerdotale, Le Polissonisme dévoilé.

which he communicated to his brethren at Paris. He recommended their getting them, circulating them; upbraided them with their little ardor in spreading them abroad, while he himself dispersed them all around him.* To stimulate them, he would write, that it was out of these works *that all the German youth learned to read; in short, that they were the universal catechisms from Baden to Moscow.*†

Circulation of these works urged.

When he thought Holland could not sufficiently infect France with these profligate writings, he would select those which D'Alembert was to get privately printed at Paris, and then distribute them by thousands. Such, for example, was the pretended *Survey of Religion*, by Dumarçais. "They have sent me," these are Voltaire's own words, "*a work of Dumarçais AScribed to St. Evremond.* It is an excellent work (precisely one of the most impious.) I exhort you, my dear brother, to prevail on some one of our faithful and beloved, to reprint this little work, which may do a great deal of good."‡ Like exhortations, but rather more pressing, he made with regard to the *Last Will of Jean Meslier*, of that famous Curate of Etrepigni, whose apostacy and blasphemies could make still stronger an impression on the minds of the populace. Voltaire would complain that there were not so many copies of that impious work in all Paris, as he himself had dispersed throughout the mountains of Switzerland.||

D'Alembert was himself obliged to apologize as if indifferent and deficient in point of zeal, but particularly for not having dared, at the entreaties of Voltaire, to *print in Paris and distribute four or five thousand copies of John Meslier's Last Will.* His excuse shows the consummate conspirator, who knows how to wait the moment, and take precautions to ensure that success, which too great precipitancy might have ruined.§ We see by what he writes to Voltaire on a master-piece of impiety, entitled *Good Sense*, that he was perfectly aware of the effect these impious works had on the minds of the people; that he knew when

D'Alembert's excuse.

* See his letters to Count D'Argental, to Mad. du Deffant and particularly to D'Alembert, No. 2, 1769.

† Let. to the Count D'Argental, 26th Sept. 1766. ‡ Let. 122.

|| Let. of D'Alembert, 3d of July, and of Voltaire 15th Sept. 1762. § Let. 102,

they were to be multiplied or cast into the hands of the vulgar; he says, "This production (*Good Sense*) "is a work much more to be dreaded than the *System of Nature*." It really was so, because, with greater art and unconcern, it leads to the most unqualified Atheism; and for that reason we see D'Alembert setting forth the advantages to be derived from it to the conspiracy if it were abridged, though already but small, *so as to cost no more than five-pence, and thus to be fitted for the pocket and the reading of every cook-maid.**

Their circulation helped by ministry.

These low intrigues were not the only means the Sophisters resorted to, to evade the law, and overrun all Europe with these Antichristian productions. They were supported at court by powerful men, or ministerial adepts, who knew how to silence the law itself, or if it ever was to speak, it was only the better to favour this impious traffic, at another time, in spite of the magistracy. The duke de Choiseul and Maleherbes were again the promoters of this grand means of robbing the people of their religion, and insinuating the errors of philosophism. The former, with all the assurance of ministerial despotism, threatened the Sorbonne with all the weight of his indignation, when by their public censures, they fought to guard the people against those ephemeral productions. It was this strange exertion of authority, which made Voltaire exclaim, *Long live the ministry of France; above all, long live the Duke of Choiseul! †*

Maleherbes, who, having the superintendency over the whole of bookfelling, and hence enabled to evade the law, both as to the introduction and circulation of these impious writings, was on that object, in perfect unison with D'Alembert. They both would willingly have hindered the champions of religion from printing their replies to that legion of infidels then rising in France. But the time was not yet come. With his pretended toleration, Voltaire was indignant, that under a philosophic minister, the apologists of the Gospel, should still have access to the press, and D'Alembert is obliged to plead in his defence, that Maleherbes, so far from favoring the antiphilosophic works, had reluctantly been obliged *to submit to superior orders*, which he could not resist. ‡ Not content with

* Let. 146. † Let. of Voltaire to Marmontel, 1767.

‡ Let. of 15th Jan. 1757.

a simple connivance, such excuses were not satisfactory to Voltaire, nothing less than the authority of kings could second his zeal, and he has again recourse to Frederick. This inundation of impious books, was to have been the grand object of his colony. As yet unconsolated for the failure of that plan, he writes to the king of the Sophisters, "Was I younger, had I health, " I would willingly quit, the house I have built, the " trees I have planted, to go and dedicate with two " or three philosophers, the remainder of my life, under your protection, to the printing of a few useful " books. *But, Sire, cannot you, without exposing yourself, have some of the Berlin booksellers encouraged to " reprint them, and to distribute them throughout Europe, " at a price low enough to ensure their sale.*"†

Concert of
Voltaire
and Frederick on
this object

This proposal, which transformed the king of Prussia into the hawker-general of Antichristian pamphlets, did not displease his protecting majesty. "You may " (answers Frederick) *make use of our printers as you " please, they enjoy perfect liberty, and as they are " connected with those of Holland, France and Germany, I have no doubt, but that they have means " of conveying books whithersoever they may think " proper.*"‡

Even at Petersburg, Voltaire had found hawkers of these impious productions. Under the protection, and by the influence of Count Schouvalow, Russia was to petition Diderot, *for leave to be honoured with the impression of the Encyclopedia, and Voltaire is commissioned to announce that triumph to Diderot.*§ The most impious and most seditious work Helvetius had written, was then reprinting at the Hague, and the Prince Gallitzin dares to dedicate it to the Empress of all the Russias. Here Voltaire's zeal was out-run by his success. He could not help remarking, with what amazement the world would see such a work inscribed to the most despotic sovereign on earth; but whilst he smiled at the imprudence and folly of the prince adept, he exultingly beheld *the flock of sages silently increasing, since princes themselves were no less eager than himself, in the circulation of these antichristian writings.* We find this account repeated three different times in his letters to D'Alembert, so great was his joy, and so

† 5th April 1767.

‡ 5th May 1767.

§ Let. of Voltaire to Diderot.

confident was he of annihilating all idea of Christianity in the minds of the people by this means.

In this chapter we have only treated of the solicitude with which the chiefs sought to infuse the poison of their writings into the minds of the people ; hereafter we shall see the means employed by the sect, to extend it to the hovel or the cottage, and to imbibe that low rabble with its impious principles, though we have seen Voltaire so little desirous of such a conquest.

Note to CHAP. IX.

On those Works which are more particularly recommended by the Conspirators.

Their doctrine.

Were I less acquainted with a certain, though numerous class of readers, I might look upon the observations I am about to make, on the doctrine of those works which the chiefs of the conspiracy, independently of their own, sought to circulate through all classes of society, as superfluous. I have not only to satisfy men difficult of conviction, but persuade men who will resist evidence itself, unless it overwhelms them. In spite of all the proofs we have already adduced of the conspiracy formed and carried on by Voltaire, D'Alembert, Frederick, Diderot and their adepts against the vitals of Christianity, will nobody recur again to say, that the Sophisters only levelled their writings at the abuses, or at least that Catholicity was their only aim, and that they never meant to attack the divers other religions that are within the pale of Christianity, whether at Geneva or London, in Germany or Sweden. The extreme falsity of such an argument renders it absurd. If we do but reflect for a moment on the nature of those works, which the Sophisters circulated with so much zeal ; could they wish to disseminate other principles than those preached up in these works ? Let us appeal to them and see if the destruction of abuses, or even of Catholicity alone, could have been their sole object.

That the conspiracy was general, proved by these works.

The works we have seen so highly recommended by Voltaire and D'Alembert, are particularly those of Freret, Boulanger, Helvetius, John Meslier, Dumarçais and Maillet, or at least they bear the name of these Sophisters. They are once more, THE PHILOSOPHIC SOLDIER, THE DOUBTS OR THE SAGE'S SCEPTICISM, GOOD SENSE, whose authors remain unknown. I will lay before the reader the divers opinions, broached by these writers, so much commended by the Sophisters, concerning those points which cannot be invalidated, without overthrowing the very foundation of Christianity. Then let any one conclude that the conspiracy only impugned abuses, or some particular branch of Christianity.

The absolute belief of the existence of a God, belongs to every religion that is Christian ; let us then examine their doctrine as to a God.

Freret tells us expressly, "The universal cause, that God of the philosophers, of the Jews and of the Christians, is but a chimera and a phantom." The same author continues, "Imagination daily creates fresh chimeras, which raise in them that impulle of fear, and such is the phantom of the Deity."*

The author of *Good Sense*, or of that work which D'Alembert wishes to see abridged, in order to sell it for five-pence to the poor and ignorant, is not so emphatical; but what is his doctrine? "That the phenomena of nature only prove the existence of God to a few prepossessed men," that is to say, full of false prejudices; "that the wonders of nature, so far from being speaking a God, are but the necessary effects of matter prodigiously diversified."†

The *Philosophic Soldier* does not deny the existence of God, but sets off, in his first chapter, by a monstrous comparison between Jupiter and the God of the Christians, and the pagan god carries all the advantage of the discussion.

According to the *Christianity Unveiled*, which appeared under the name of Boulanger, it is more reasonable to admit with Manes of a twofold God, than of the God of Christianity.‡

The author of the *Doubts* or of Scepticism, informs the world, "That they cannot know whether a God really exists, or whether there exists the smallest difference between good and evil or vice and virtue." Such is the drift of the whole of that work.||

We find the same opposition to Christianity in their doctrines on the spirituality of the SOUL. With Freret, "every thing that is called Spirit or SOUL, has no more reality than the phantoms, the chimeras or the sphinxes."§

The Sophister of the pretended *Good Sense*, heaps up arguments anew to prove, that it is the body that feels, thinks and judges, and that the SOUL is but a chimera.¶

Helvetius pronounces, "That we are in an error, when we make the SOUL a spiritual being; that nothing can be more absurd, and that the SOUL is not a distinct being from the body."**

Boulanger tells us decidedly, "That the immortality of the SOUL, so far from stimulating man to the practice of virtue, is nothing but a barbarous, desperate, fatal tenet, and contrary to all legislation."††

If from these fundamental tenets, essential to every religion, as well as to Catholicity, we pass on to MORALITY, we shall find Freret teaching the people, that "all ideas of justice and injustice, of virtue and vice, of glory and infamy, are purely arbitrary and dependent on custom."‡‡

Helvetius will one while tell us, that the only rule by which virtuous actions are distinguished from vicious ones, is the law of

* Letter from Thrafsybulus to Lucippus, page 164 and 254.

† No. 36 et passim. ‡ Page 101.

|| Particularly No. 100 and 101.

§ Letter from Thrafsybulus. ¶ No. 20 and 100.

** Of the Spirit, and of Man and his Education; No. 4 and 5.

†† *Antiquity Unveiled*, page 15. ‡‡ Letter of Thrafsybulus.

Vol. I.

princes, and public utility. Elsewhere he will say, "that *virtue*, that *honesty*, with regard to individuals, is no more than "the *habit of actions personally advantageous*, and that *self-interest* is the sole scale by which the actions of man can be "measured." In fine, "that if the virtuous man is not happy "in this world, then will be the time to cry out, *O Virtue ! thou art but an empty dream.*"*

The same Sophister also says, that "*sublime virtue, enlightened wisdom*, are only the fruits of those passions called *folly*. "Or that stupidity is the necessary consequence of the cessation of passion. That to moderate the passions, is to ruin "the state.† That *conscience* and *remorse* are nothing but the "fore-sight of those physical penalties, to which crimes expose "us. That the man who is above the law, can commit, without remorse, the dishonest act that may serve his purpose."‡ That *it little imports whether men are vicious*, if they be but enlightened.||

And the fair sex will be taught by this author, that "*MOR- ESTY* is only an *invention of refined voluptuousness*: that "*MORALITY* has nothing to apprehend from *love*, for it is the "passion that *creates genius*, and *renders man virtuous.*"§ He will inform children, that "the commandment of loving their "father and mother, is more the work of education than of "nature."¶ He will say to the married couple, that "the law "which condemns them to live together, becomes *barbarous and cruel* on the day they cease to love each other."**

In vain should we seek among the other works that the chiefs of the conspirators wished to circulate a more Christian MORALITY. Dumarçais, as well as Helvetius, knows no other virtue but what *is useful*, nor vice but that which *is hurtful* to man upon earth.†† The *Philosophic Soldier*, thinks that so far from being able to offend God, *men are obliged to execute his laws.*‡‡ The author of the *Good Sense* so much praised by the leaders, tells them that to think we can offend God, is to *think ourselves stronger than God.*|| He would even teach them to answer us, "If your God leaves to men the *liberty of damning themselves*, "why should you meddle with it? Are you wiser than that God "whose rights you wish to avenge. §§

Boulanger, in that work so much admired by Frederick and Voltaire, asserts that the *fear of God*, so far from being the beginning of wisdom, *would rather be the beginning of folly.*¶¶

It would be useless to the reader, and irksome to us, were we to carry these quotations any farther. Those who wish to see these texts and numberless others of the same kind, may peruse the HELVIAN LETTERS. But certainly there is enough

* On the Mind. Discourse 2d and 4th.

† Idem. Discourse 2d and 3d, chap. 6, 7, 8 and 10.

‡ Idem. Of Man, vol. 1st, sec. 2d, chap. 7.

§ Idem. Nø. 9, chap. 6.

¶ Of the Mind. Discourse 2d, chap. 4 and 15, &c.

¶¶ Of Man. Chap. 8. ** Ibid. Sect. 8, &c.

†† Essay on Prejudices, chap. 8. ‡‡ Chap. 20.

|| Sect. 67. §§ Sect. 135.

¶¶ Christianity un-veiled, in a note to page 163.

here to demonstrate, that conspirators who wished to circulate such works, were not levelling solely at the Catholic religion, much less at a few abuses. No evidently every altar where Christ was adored, was to be overthrown, whether Anglican, Calvinist or Protestant.

The base project of throwing into circulation four or five thousand copies of John Meslier's Last Will, would fully prove the absolute design of annihilating every vestige of Christianity, since this Last Will or Testament is nothing but a gross declamation against the doctrines of the Gospel.

CHAP. X.

Of the Spoliations and Violences projected by the Conspirators, and concealed under the Name of Toleration.

What their
toleration
really was.

PERHAPS of all the arts put in practice by the conspirators, none has succeeded better with them, than that perpetual appeal in all their writings to *toleration, reason, and humanity*; of which Condorcet tells us they had made their *war hoop*.* In fact it was natural enough, that men who appeared so deeply impressed with these sentiments should gain the attention of the public: But were they real? Did the conspiring Sophisters mean to content themselves with a true toleration? As they acquired strength, did they mean to grant to others what they asked for themselves? These questions are easily solved, and it would be useless for the reader to seek the definition of each of these high-sounding words imposed upon the public, when their private and real sentiments are to be seen in their continued cry of *Crush religion*. To cast an eye on their correspondence, is sufficient to identify the plans of these conspiring Sophisters, with those of the Jacobins their successors; do not the Petions, the Condorcets, and the Robespierres, adopt their wishes and execute their plans under the same mask of toleration.

Spoliations
premeditated
by
Voltaire.

Plunder, violence and death has been the toleration of the revolutionists. Nor were any of these means foreign to the first conspirators, whose language the latter had adopted. As to spoliations, I have already said that Voltaire, as early as the year 1743, was plotting with the King of Prussia to plunder the ecclesiastical princes and the religious orders of their possessions. In 1764, we have seen him sending a memorial to the Duke of Praslin, on the abolition of tythes, in hopes of depriving the clergy of their sustenance.† In 1770, he had not abandoned his plan when he writes to Frederick, “ I wish to God that Ganganelli
“ had some good domain in your neighbourhood, and

* Sketch on History. Epoch 9.

† Let. from Voltaire to the Count D'Argental, 1764.

“ that you were not so far from Loretto. It is noble
 “ to scoff at these Harlequin *Bull-givers*. I like to
 “ cover them with ridicule, but *I had rather PLUN-*
 “ *DER them.*”*

These various letters prove to the reader, that the chief of the conspirators only anticipated the plundering decrees of the Jacobins, or even the revolutionary incursion their armies have made to Loretto.

Frederick, assuming the kingly tone, seems for an instant so shocked at these spoliations, as to have forgotten that he had been the first to propose them. He answers, “ Were Loretto adjoining to my villa, I should not touch it. Its treasures might tempt a Mandrin, a Conflans, a Turpin, a Rich . . . or their fellows. It is not that I reverence donations consecrated by sottish stupidity, but what the public venerates is to be spared. When one looks upon one’s self, as gifted with superior lights, out of compassion for others, in commiseration for their weaknesses, one should not shock their prejudices. It is a pity that the pretended philosophers of our days are not of the same way of thinking.”†

Rejected
and approved
by
Frederick.

But soon the Sophister prevails over the monarch, and Frederick is no longer of opinion that spoils of the church are to be left to a Mandrin: the very next year coinciding with Voltaire he writes to him, “ If the new minister of France is a man of sense, he will neither be weak nor foolish enough to restore Avignon to the Pope.”‡

He recurs to his means of *silently undermining the edifice*, by first plundering the religious orders, that they might then strip the bishops.§

D’Alembert, on his side advised, that the clergy should be first deprived of that consequence they enjoyed in the state, before they were plundered of their possessions. In sending to Voltaire his task almost ready made, that he might speak out what he dared not utter himself, he tells him, “ that he must not forget, if it could be done delicately, to add to the first part a little appendix, or an engaging postscript on the danger there is both for states and kings, to suffer the clergy to form a separate and distinct bo-

D’Alembert’s
advice.

* 8th June, 1770.
 † Let. 29th June 1771.

‡ Let. 7th July 1770.
 § 13th Aug. 1775.

“ dy, with the privilege of holding regular assemblies.”*

As yet this doctrine was new both to king or state; they had never perceived this pretended danger of letting the clergy form a distinct body in the nation, as did the nobility and the third order; but these conspiring chiefs were anticipating the horrors of the revolution, the plunders and murders of their Jacobin successors and disciples.

Voltaire's wish for violent measures.

The violent and sanguinary edicts, the decrees of deportation and of death, were not foreign to the wishes of the conspiring chiefs. However frequent the words of toleration, humanity or reason, may be in Voltaire's mouth, it would be a great error in judgment to think, that those were the only arms he wished to employ against the Christian religion. When he writes to Count Argental, “ Had I but a hundred thousand men, I well know what I would do with them.”† Or when he wrote to Frederick, “ Hercules went to fight the robbers and Bellerophon chimeras; I should not be sorry to behold Hercules and Bellerophons delivering the earth both from Catholic robbers and Catholic chimeras.”‡ Doubtless it was not toleration that dictated those wishes, and one is tempted to conclude, that he would not have been sorry to behold the massacre of the clergy, by the Hercules and Bellerophons of the butchering September. Have we not seen him wishing to behold every Jesuit at the bottom of the ocean, each with a Jansenist hung to his neck? When with the view of avenging Helvetius and philosophism, he does not blush to ask, *Could not the moderate and discreet proposal of strangling the last Jesuit with the guts of the last Jansenist, bring matters to some compromise?* In reading this, could we reasonably infer, that the humanity and toleration of Voltaire would have been greatly shocked at the sight of those ships, stowed with the Catholic clergy by a Lebon, as a preparatory step to submerging them in the ocean!!!

Frederick's similar wish.

Frederick seemed to be nearer simple toleration when he answered Voltaire: “ It is not the lot of arms to destroy the wretch. It will perish by those of truth.”§ At length he begins to think that force

* Letter 95, 1773.

† 3d March, 1767.

‡ 16th Feb. 1761

§ 25th March, 1767.

must strike the last blow at religion. He is not averse to this force, and one sees him willing to employ it had the occasion offered, when he wrote to Voltaire, " To Bayle, your forerunner, and to yourself no doubt, is due the honor of that revolution working in the minds of men. But to speak with truth, it is not yet complete ; bigots have their party, and *it will never be perfected but by a superior force : from government must the sentence issue, that shall crush the wretch.* Ministers may forward it, *but the will of the sovereign must accede.* Without doubt this will be effectuated in time, but neither of us can be spectators of that long-wished for moment."*

There can be no doubt but the long-sought for moment was that, when impiety enthroned, should cast aside the mask of toleration, which it had necessarily disguised itself with : Julian-like, would not Frederick also have had recourse to superior force at that desired period ? would he not have seconded the sophisms of the conspirators with that sentence which was to issue from the sovereign ? He would have spoken as a master, and under Frederick might not the reigns of a Domitian or a Julian have been renewed, when apostacy, exile or death, were the only alternatives left to a Christian's choice. But how to reconcile this superior-force, this sentence of the government, that is *to crush*, with what D'Alembert says of that prince in a letter to Voltaire, is difficult : " I believe him at his last shift, and it is a great pity. Philosophy will not easily find like him a prince, tolerant through indifference, which is the true style, and an enemy to superstition and fanaticism."†

But with D'Alembert even that mode of tolerating, through indifference, did not exclude underhand persecutions ; nor would it have been incompatible with this man's rage and phrenzy, so openly expressed in his letters to Voltaire, to see a whole nation destroyed solely for having shewn its attachment to Christianity. Could toleration, through indifference, dictate the following lines ? " Apropos of the King of Prussia, he has at length got a-head again. And I, as a Frenchman and a thinking being, am quite of your opinion, that it is a great happiness both for France and

The frantic wish of D'Alembert.

* Let. 95, 1775.

† Letter 195, an. 1762.

“ for philofophy. Thofe Auftrians are a fet of info-
 “ lent capuchines who hate and defpife us, and whom
 “ I could wifh to fee annihilated with the fuperftition they
 “ proteét.”†

It would be ufelefs to remark in this place, that thefe very Auftrians which D’Alembert wifhes to fee annihilated, were then the allies of France, at war with that very King of Pruffia whose victories he celebrates. Thefe circumftances might ferve to fhew, how much more philofophifm fwayed the heart of the Sophifter than the love of his country, or that toleration would not have hindered the confpirators from betraying their king or country, could they by that have made a new attack on Chriftianity.

We plainly fee that all thefe inhuman wifhes were rather dropped unawares, than the avowed object of their correpondence. They were preparing the road for thofe feditious and ferocious minds, who were to perpetrate what the Sophifters yet could only devife and fcheme. The day of rebellion and murder was not yet come, with the fame wifhes circumftances had not diftributed to them the fame parts to act. Let us then examine what characters the firft chiefs performed, and by what fervices each one in particular, fignalizing his zeal in the Antichriftian Confpiracy, prepared the reign of their revolutionary adepts.

† To Voltaire, 12th Jan. 1763.

CHAP. XI.

Part, Mission and private Means of each of the Chiefs of the Antichristian Conspiracy.

IN order to attain the grand object of the conspiracy, in short to crush the Christ whom they pursued with unrelenting hatred, all the general plans and means they had concerted were judged insufficient. Each one in particular was to concur with his own means, with those which his faculties, his situation or peculiar mission enabled him to exert. Voltaire was endowed with all those talents which adorn the eminent writer, and no sooner was the confederacy formed than he turned them all against his God. During the last five and twenty years of his life he declares himself, that *he had no other object in view than to vilify the wretch.** Until that period, he had shared his time between poetry and impiety, but henceforward he is solely impious. One might have thought that he alone wished to vomit forth more blasphemies and calumnies against the God of Christianity, than had done the whole class of Celsi, or Porphyrii during all ages. In the numerous collection of his works more than forty volumes in 8vo, Romances, Dictionaries, Histories, Memoirs, Letters or Commentaries, flowed from his pen, imbittered with rage and the wish of crushing Christ.

Voltaire's services:

his ardor:

In this immense collection it would be in vain to seek any particular system of Deism, of Materialism or Scepticism. They all form one common mass. We have seen him conjuring D'Alembert to unite all these diverging sects in the common attack against Christ, and his own heart may be said to have been their focus. He cared not from whence arose the storm, or whose the hand that struck, for the subversion of the altar was his only aim. The religious authors and we ourselves, have shown him fickle in his systems and daily adopting new opinions, and that from his own works; † one beheld twenty different men in him alone, but each of them equally hateful. Rage accounts for his con-

his contradictions.

* Letter to Damilaville, 15th June 1762.

† See the Helvian Letters, and particularly letter 34 and 42, Vol. I.

traditions ; his hypocrisy even flows from the same source. This latter phenomenon is not sufficiently known, it must have its page in history ; but let Voltaire himself speak as to the extent and original cause of so base a conduct.

Of his hypocrisy and communions.

During that inundation of Antichristian books in France, government would sometimes, though remissly, take cognizance of their authors. Voltaire himself had been prosecuted, on account of his first impious writings. When declared premier chief, he thought that more caution became his pre-eminence left any legal proof should be acquired of his impiety. The better to attack, and the more securely to *crush Christ*, he conceals himself under his very banners ; frequenting his temples, being present at his mysteries, receiving into his mouth the God he blasphemed : and if annually at Easter he received, it was but to blaspheme his God more audaciously. To so monstrous an accusation, uncontestible proofs must be brought.

On the 15th of Jan. 1761, Voltaire sends a performance, I know not what, but which the editor of his works supposes to be an epistle to Mademoiselle Clairon a famous actress in those days, to one of his female adepts, the Countess of Argental, whom he styles his angel. Beyond a doubt it was a most scandalous production, since only the chosen of the elect are favoured with it, or rather that Voltaire *dares* send it to. In fine, whatever was the subject, it was accompanied with the following letter.

“ Will you amuse yourself with the perusal of this
 “ scrap : will you read it to Mademoiselle Clairon ?
 “ None but yourself and the Duke de Choiseul are in
 “ possession of it : you will presently tell me that I grow
 “ very daring and rather wicked in my old age : wicked !
 “ No, I turn Minos, I judge the perverse. But
 “ take care of yourself. There are people who do not
 “ forgive.—I know it, and I am like them. I am now
 “ sixty-seven years old, I go to the parochial mass. I
 “ edify my people. I am building a church, *I receive*
 “ *communion*, and I will be buried there, zounds, in
 “ spite of all the hypocrites. I believe in Jesus Christ
 “ consubstantial with God, in the Virgin Mary mother
 “ of God.—Ye base persecutors what have you to say
 “ to me.—But you have written the Pucelle—No, I
 “ never did.—It is you who are the author of it, it was
 “ you gave ears to Joan’s palfrey.—I am a good Chris-

“ tian, a faithful servant of the king, a good lord of
 “ the parish and a proper tutor for a daughter. I make
 “ curates and Jesuits tremble. I do what I please with
 “ my little province as big as the palm of my hand
 “ (his estate extended about six miles;) I am a man to
 “ dispose of the Pope whenever I please.—Well, ye
 “ raggamuffins, what have you to say to me.—These,
 “ my dear angels, are the answers, I would make to
 “ the Fantins, Grifels, Guyons or to the little black
 “ monkey, &c. &c.”

The female adepts might laugh at the tone and style of such a letter, but will the judicious reader see it in any other light, than as the production of an insolent old man, who proud of his protections is nevertheless determined to impudently lie, and to set forth the most orthodox profession of faith, should the religious authors accuse him of impiety, to combat the laws with denials or his sacrilegious *communions*; and the infidel talks of hypocrites and base cowards!

Such odious artifice seems to have shocked the Count D'Argental himself, for on the 16th of January following, Voltaire writes to him, “ That had he a hundred
 “ thousand men he knows what use he would make of
 “ them; but as I have them not, *I will receive at East-*
 “ *ter*, and you may call *me hypocrite as much as you please*;
 “ yes by God I will receive the sacrament, and that in
 “ company with Mad. Denis and Mademoiselle Cor-
 “ neille, and if you say much, I will put the *Tantum*
 “ *ergo* into verse and that in cross rhimes.”

It appears that many more of the adepts were ashamed of this meanness in their chief. He at length thinks himself bound to write to D'Alembert on the subject, and tells him, “ I know there are people who speak
 “ ill of my Easter devotions. It is a penance I must
 “ resign myself to, in expiation of my sins.—*Yes, I have*
 “ *received my Easter communion, and what is more, I pre-*
 “ *sented in person, the hallowed bread*; after this, I could
 “ boldly defy both Molinists and Jansenists.”*

If these last words do not sufficiently declare the motives of his hypocrisy, the following letter, again to D'Alembert, will do away all doubt. It is only three days posterior to the last. “ In your opinion, what are
 “ the sages to do when they are surrounded by senseless
 “ barbarians? There are times when *one must imitate*

* 27th of April 1768.

à their distortions and speak their language. *Métemax elys*
peos (let us change our bucklers.) In fine, what I
 “ have done this year, I have already done several times,
 “ and please God I will do it again.” † This is the same
 letter in which he particularly recommends that *the mys-*
teries of Mytra should not be divulged, and concludes it
 with this terrible sentence against Christianity, *For the*
monster must fall pierced by a hundred invincible hands; yes,
let it fall beneath a thousand repeated blows.

His pref-
 sing exhor-
 tations to
 the adepts.

With this profound dissimulation, ‡ Voltaire combin-
 ed all that dark-dealing activity, which the oath of
 crushing the God of Christianity could suggest to the
 premier chief of the Antichristian Sophisters. Not
 content with his partial attacks, he had recourse to
 whole legions of adepts from the east to the west; he
 encouraged them, he pressed and stimulated them in this
 warfare. Present everywhere by his correspondence, he
 would write to one, “ Prevail on all the brethren, to
 “ pursue *the wretch in their discourses and in their writings,*
 “ *without allowing him one moment's respite.*” To another
 he would say, “ *make as much as possible, the most pre-*
 “ *udent efforts to crush the wretch.*” Should he observe
 any of the adepts less ardent than himself, he would ex-
 tend his Phillipics to all: “ *They forget (says he) that the*
 “ *most material occupation ought to be to crush the monster.*” §
 The reader has not forgotten that monster, wretch and

† 1st of May 1768.

‡ If I am to credit men who knew Voltaire in the earlier part
 of his literary triumphs, he was then no stranger to this profound
 hypocrisy. The following is an anecdote I learned of men who
 knew him well. By one of those fantastical chances, Voltaire
 had a brother, an arrant Jansenist, professing all that austerity of
 manners which that sect affected. The Abbé Arouet heir to a
 considerable fortune would not see his impious brother, and open-
 ly said that he would not leave him a halfpenny. But his health
 was weak, and his life could be of no long duration, Voltaire
 had not given up all hopes of the inheritance; he turns Jansenist
 and acts the devotee; on a sudden he appears in the Jansenistical
 garb, with a large slouched hat, he runs from church to church.
 He took care to choose the same hours as the Abbé Arouet, and
 there with a deportment as contrite and humble as Deacon Paris
 himself, kneeling in the middle of the church, or standing with
 his arms crossed on his breast, his eyes cast on the ground, on the
 altar or on the Christian orator, he would hearken or pray with
 all the compunction of the penitent sinner reclaimed from his er-
 rors. The Abbé believed in his brother's conversion, exhorted
 him to persevere and died leaving him all his fortune. But the
 Jansenist's cash was all that Voltaire retained of his conversion.

§ See letters to Thiriot, Saurin and Damilville.

Christ or religion, are synonymous in his mouth. Satan could not have been more ardent, when, in the war of hell against heaven, he sought to stir up his legions against the Word; he could not more urgently exclaim, we must triumph over the Word or meanly serve: shame in defeat, could not be expressed more forcibly by Satan than by Voltaire, when he cries out to his adepts, "*Such is our position, that we shall be the execration of mankind, if (in this war against Christ) we have not the better sort of people on our side; we must therefore gain them cost what it will; crush the wretch, I tell you, then crush the wretch.*"*

So much zeal had made him the idol of the party. The adepts flocked from all parts to see him, and went away fired with his rage. Those who could not approach him, consulted him, laid their doubts before him; would crave to know whether there really was a God, if they really had a soul. Voltaire, who knew nothing of the matter, smiled at his own power, but always answered that the God of the Christians was to be crushed. Such were the letters he received every week.† He wrote himself a prodigious number in the same blasphemous style. One must have seen the collection, to believe that the heart or hatred of one single man could dictate, or that his hand could pen them, and that without alluding to his many other blasphemous works. In his den at Ferney, he would be informed of, and see all; he would even direct every thing that related to the conspiracy. Kings, princes, dukes, marquises, petty authors or citizens, might write to him, provided they were but impious. He would answer them all, strengthen them, and encourage them in their impiety. In fine, to his extreme old age, his life was that of a legion of devils, whose sole and continued object, was to crush Christ and overthrow his altar.

His correspondence.

Frederick the Sophister, though on a throne, was not less active, nor less astonishing for his activity. This man, who alone did for his states all that a king could do, and more even than both king and ministers in most other countries do, out-stripped the Sophisters also, in their Antichristian deeds. As a chief of the conspiracy, his part, or folly, was to see and protect the inferior adepts, if any of them chanced to fall Victims to what was called fanaticism. When the Abbé

Frederick's services.

* Let. to D'Alembert, 129.

† Voltaire's let. to Mad. du Deffant, 22d July 1761.

Desprades was obliged to fly the censures of the Sorbonne and the decrees of the parliament, the sophistical monarch presents him with a canonicate at Breslaw.* A hair-brained youth flies the vengeance of the laws, after having broken the public monuments of religion, he is received, and the colours of a regiment are entrusted to his hands.† His treasures are exhausted for his armies, but not so for the adepts. In the very height of war, their pensions, and particularly D'Alembert's, are regularly paid.

He was sometimes seen to lay aside the Sophister, and think it beneath a monarch to be connected with a set of *blackguards, coxcombs and visionary fools*.‡ But those were little fallies which the Sophisters easily overlooked; his philosophism would return, he was one of their's again, and his hatred to Christianity would once more engage his whole attention. He would then spur on Voltaire himself; he would urge and solicit him impatiently for new writings, and the more impious the work, the more he approved of it. Then with Voltaire and D'Alembert, he would demean himself even to their artifices; he would above all admire the hand that struck unseen, or as he expresses himself, that method of filliping the *wretch*, while loading him with civilities.§

Then assuming the character of base flattery, he would style Voltaire the God of Philosophy. "He would figure him ascending Olympus, loaded and fatiated with glory, *the conqueror of the wretch*, supported by the genii of Lucretius and Sophocles, of Virgil and Locke, seated on a car beaming with light, and placed between Newton and Epicurus."|| He paid homage to him for the Antichristian revolution, which he saw preparing.¶ Unable to triumph by so many titles himself, he would acquire that of being laborious, and all those impious works whether in rhyme or in prose, and published under his name, are not the only productions of the royal Sophister. Many are those which he privately ushered into circulation, and which never could have been thought to be those of a man who had the duties of the throne to fulfil. Such, for example, that extract of Bayle, more-impious than Bayle himself; he only rejects the useless articles, in

* Voltaire to D'Alembert, 2 and 3.

† Ibid. 211.

‡ His Dialogues of the Dead.

§ 16 March 1771.

|| 25th Nov. 1766.

¶ Let. 154, anno 1767.

order to condense the poison of the rest. His *Atakia*, and that *Discourse on the History of the Church*, so much extolled as well as its preface, by the abettors of impiety. In fine, such were his numberless productions, in which Voltaire finds no other fault but the eternal repetitions (like his own,) of the same arguments against religion.*

Hence we see that it was not enough for Frederick to forward the conspiracy by his counsels; to give refuge to its agents; but he would also, by his constancy and application to infect Europe with his impieties, attain to the rank of chief. If he was inferior to Voltaire, it was by his talents, and not from his hatred; but had Voltaire been destitute of the support of a Frederick, he could not have risen to the height he did. Possessed of the secret, he would willingly have initiated all kings to the mysteries of the conspiracy, and of all, he was the king who gave it the chief support. His example was still more powerful than his writings, and it may be justly said that, his reign was that of the sceptered infidel.

Placed in an humbler sphere, Diderot and D'Alembert began their mission, or parts, by a game, which well characterized their apostleship. Both were already actuated by its zeal, but neither had yet acquired that reputation which they afterwards gained, more by their impiety, than by their abilities. The coffee-houses of Paris were their first stage. There unknown, first in one then in another, they would begin an argument on religious matters, Diderot the assailant and D'Alembert the defendant. The objection was forcible and pointed, the energy and tone of Diderot was invincible. The reply was weak, but made with all the apparent candour of a Christian, who wished to maintain the honor and truth of his religion. The idle Parisians, who generally resorted to these places, would hearken or admire, and sometimes take a part in the dispute. Diderot then insisted, resumed and pressed the argument. D'Alembert in return, owned that the difficulty appeared unanswerable, and then withdrew as if ashamed, and regretting, that neither his divinity, nor his love for religion, could furnish him with arguments for its defence. Soon after our two friends would meet to felicitate each other on the good success of their sham

Diderot's
services.

* Correspondence of Voltaire and King of Prussia, let. 133, 151, 159, &c. &c.

conflict, and on the impression they had made upon the croud of ignorant hearers, who had been completely duped. They made a fresh appointment; the dispute was taken up again, the hypocritical advocate for religion, makes a new display of his zeal, but submits to the superior arguments of Atheism. At length the police, informed of their game, attempted to put a stop to it: but it was too late; these sophisms had spread through the different societies, never more to be eradicated. Hence arose, in great part, that fury which soon became fashionable, with all the youth of Paris, of disputing on matters of faith, and that still greater folly of looking on objections as insuperable, which immediately disappear when in search of truth, we seek to know it, and follow it in spite of those passions which militate against it. It was on this occasion, of the coffee-house disputations, that the lieutenant of the police, upbraiding Diderot with propagating Atheism, that madman proudly answered, *It is true, I am an Atheist, and I glory in it.* Why Sir, replied the minister, you would know, were you in my place, that had no God existed, it would be necessary to have invented one.

However much the brain of this Atheist might have been heated, the fear of the Bastille put a period to his apostleship. The minister would have been more correct in his office, had he threatened him with Bedlam. We refer the reader to the Helvian Letters, where are recorded his numberless titles to a place there.* He was in reality the boasting madman of the conspiracy. They wanted a man of this cast, who would utter all the absurd and contradictory impieties which his brain could invent. Such are those ideas with which he filled his different writings, his pretended *Philosophic Thoughts*, his *Letter on the Blind*, his *Code* and his *System of Nature*.

This last work gave great offence to Frederick, who even refuted it, for reasons we shall explain in the Antimonarchical Conspiracy. And indeed D'Alembert always kept the authors name a profound secret. He would not even own it to Voltaire, though he was as well acquainted with it as myself. Diderot was not the sole author of this famous system. To build this chaos of nature, which destitute of *intelligence*, had made man intelligent, he had associated with two other

* Let. 57 and 58.

Sophisters, whose names I will not hazard, for fear of error, not paying sufficient attention to them to be certain; but as to Diderot, I am sure, being previously acquainted with him. It was he who sold the manuscript, to be printed out of France, for the sum of one thousand livres. I know the fact from the man who paid them and owned it, when he had learned to better know those impious Sophisters.

Notwithstanding all these follies, Diderot, was not the less, in Voltaire's eyes, the *illustrious philosopher, the brave Diderot*, and one of the most useful *knights* of the conspiracy.* The conspirators proclaimed him the *Great Man*; they sent him to foreign courts as the *Admirable Man*; and when he had been guilty of some notable piece of folly, they were silent, or even disowned him. This was the case in particular, when at the court of the Empress of Russia.

Formerly at all courts, a fool was kept for their amusement; fashion had substituted a French philosopher, and little had been gained in point of common sense. But the Empress Catherine, soon perceived that much might be lost with respect to public tranquillity. She had sent for Diderot, she judged his *imagination to be inexhaustible*. She classed him *among the most extraordinary men that ever existed*.† She was correct in her judgment, for Diderot behaved himself in such an extraordinary manner, that her majesty thought it necessary to send him back to the place he came from. He comforted himself for his disgrace, with the idea that the Russians were not yet ripe for the sublimity of his philosophy. He sets off for Paris in a bannian, with a velvet cap on his head. His footman, like a king at arms preceded, and when they were to pass through any town or village, he would cry out to the gazing multitude, it is Diderot the great man that passes.‡ Such was his equipage from Peterburg to Paris. There he was, to support the character of the extraordinary man, whether writing in his study, or dealing out in divers companies, his philosophic absurdities; always the bosom friend of D'Alembert, and the admiration of the other Sophisters. He finished his apostleship by his

* Let. from Voltaire to Diderot, 23th of Dec. 1761, and to Damilaville, 1765, &c.

† Catherine to Voltaire, let. 134, anno. 1774.

‡ Feller's Historical Dictionary.

Vol. I,

Life of Seneca, in which he sees no other difference between him and his dog but that of their dress: and by his *New Philosophical Thoughts*, where God is supposed to be the *Animal Prototype*, and mortals so many little particles flowing from this great animal, and successively metamorphosed into all sorts of animals until the end of time, whence they are all to return to the divine substance, whence they had originally emanated.*

Diderot would madly utter all those absurdities, which Voltaire would impiously assert. None gained credit, it is true, but religious truths were enfeebled by these assertions wrapped in frothy discourse and philosophic pomp. Men ceased to believe the Religion of Christ, ever reviled in these writings, and that was all the Sophisters aimed at. Hence was the part which Diderot acted, so essential to the conspiracy.

Who can combine this antichristian zeal, ever boiling ever emphatic when his imagination is heated, with that real admiration which he often expressed for the Gospel. The following is an anecdote I had from Mr. Beauzet, a member of the academy. One day going to see Diderot, he found him explaining a chapter of the Gospel to his daughter, as seriously and with the concern of the most Christian parent. Mr. Beauzet expressed his surprize. "I understand you, said Diderot, but in truth where could I find,* or what better lessons could I give her?"

D'Alembert's services.

D'Alembert would never have made such an avowal. Though the constant friend of Diderot we find throughout their lives, and their philosophic course, that same difference which marked their first essays in the apostleship. Diderot spoke out whatever he thought for the moment, D'Alembert never but what he wished to say. I will defy any one to find his real opinion on *God* or on the *soul*, elsewhere than in his private correspondence with the conspirators. His works have all the darkness and cunning of iniquity, but he is the fox that infects and then burrows himself. Easier would it be to follow the twistings of the eel, or trace the windings of the serpent gliding through the grass, than the tortuous course he follows in those writings which he owns.†

* *New Philosophical Thoughts*, page 17 and 18. The whole is exposed in the *Helvian Letters*, No. 49.

† From the criticism made of his works in our *Helvian Letters*; the result is this: D'Alembert will never declare himself a

Nobody was ever more true to Voltaire's maxim of *strike, but hide your hand*. The avowal he makes of his *bows* to religion, while he is striking to pull it to pieces,* might ~~defend~~ the historian from seeking those numerous proofs with which the works of this Sophister abound. To make himself amends for this perpetual restraint under which, from his dissimulation, he was forced himself to write, by means of his pupils or in their productions he would speak more daringly. When he returned them their works, he would artfully insinuate an article or plan a preface, but so much the worse for the pupil, if he underwent the punishment incurred by the master. Morellet, as yet a youth, though already a graduate among the divines of the Encyclopaedia, had just published his first essay in philosophism. This was a manual with which Voltaire was enchanted; above all he valued the Preface, *it was one of the finest lashes ever given by Protagoras*. The youth was taken up and sent to the Bastille. The real Protagoras or D'Alembert, who had so well taught him the art of *lashing* never owned the whip, as may be supposed.†

sceptic, or whether he knows of the existence of a God or not. He will even let you think that he believes in God; but will begin by attacking certain proofs of a Deity; he will tell you that through zeal for the Deity, man must know how to choose among those proofs. *He will end by attacking them all, with a *yes* on one object, and a *no* a little later on the same; he will entangle the minds of his readers, he will raise doubts in them, and smile to see them fallen without perceiving it, into the very snare he had prepared for them. He never tells you to attack religion, but he will tempt you with a stand of arms, or place them in your hands ready for combat. (*See his Elements of Philosophy and our Helvian Letters, No. 37.*) He will never declaim against the morality of the church or the commandments of God, but he will tell you that *there does not exist a single catechism on morality, fitted to the capacities of youth*; and that it is to be hoped there will at length appear a Philosopher who will confer that gift (*See Elem. of Phil. No. 12.*) He will not pretend to deny the sweets of virtue, but he will tell you, "that all philosophers would have better known our nature, had they been satisfied with simply confining the happiness of this life to the exemption from pain." (*Preface of the Encyclopaedia.*) He will not offend his reader by obscene descriptions, but he will tell him, Art. HAPPINESS, "Men all agree as to the nature of happiness; they declare it to be the same as pleasure, or at least that they are indebted to pleasure for all that is most delicious in it." And thus his young pupil is transformed into an Epicurean without knowing it.

* Let. to Voltaire, No. 151.

† Letter from D'Alembert to Voltaire, anno. 1760, and of Voltaire to Thiriot, 26th Jan. 1762.

Is charged
with train-
ing youth.

On the whole, D'Alembert would have been but of little use to the conspirators, had he confined himself to his pen. In spite of his quibbling style and of his epigrams, his talent of wearying his readers, left them an antidote. Voltaire, by giving him another mission suited his genius better. He had reserved to himself the ministers, dukes, princes and kings, and all those sufficiently initiated to forward the conspiracy. But he charged D'Alembert, with the care of training the young adepts: "*Endeavor,*" he writes expressly, "*endeavour on your part, to enlighten youth as much as you are able.*"*

Never was mission more actively, more zealously, nor more ably fulfilled. It is even to be remarked, that however hidden D'Alembert may have been in all the other parts he acted in the conspiracy, he was not averse to having his zeal in this particular rather observed. He was the general protector of all young men who came to Paris possessed of any talent. Had they any fortune of their own, he dazzled them with crowns, premiums, or even with the academic seats, of which he absolutely disposed, either as perpetual secretary, or as irresistible in all those petty intrigues wherein he so much excelled. The reader has already seen what a party-stroke it was for the conspirators, to have filled this tribunal of European Mandarines presiding over the empire of letters, with their adepts. But his power in this extended far beyond Paris. He writes to Voltaire, "I have just got Helvetius and the Chevalier de Jeaucourt, admitted into the academy at Berlin."

D'Alembert was particularly attentive to such of the adepts as were intended to train others, or to fulfil the functions of private or public professors, or of tutors in private families; but particularly in the latter, when the pupil, by his rank or wealth, could hereafter be a protector of the conspirators, or more amply remunerate his teacher. This was the true method of imbibing youth with the real principles of the conspiracy. D'Alembert was perfectly aware of its importance, and judged his means so well that he succeeded in spreading such tutors and preceptors, throughout all the countries of Europe, and deserved the title of the most fortunate propagator of philosophism.

The proofs he cites of their progress, will suffice to show the choice he had made. "There is my dear

* 15th September, 1763,

“philosopher, who consultingly writes to Voltaire, there is what was pronounced at Cassel on the 8th of April, in presence of his highness the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel, of six princes of the empire and of a most numerous assembly by a professor of history which I gave to his Highness the Landgrave.” This was a discourse full of the grossest invectives against the church and the clergy as *obscure fanatics, ye praters crossed or unmitred, with or without a cowl*; and such was the style of the professor, such the proofs adduced by D’Alembert of the victories daily gained by his adepts over religious ideas, and of the sentiments they instilled into their pupils.*

It imported above all to the conspirators to place such tutors about young princes and children hereafter destined to govern nations. The correspondence of Voltaire and D’Alembert lays open their intrigues on this point and what powerful support they expected from it.

The court of Parma was seeking men worthy of presiding over the education of the young Infant. In placing the Abbés de Condilhac and de Leire at the head of his instructors they flattered themselves with having succeeded, as they little thought that these two men were to inspire the young prince with the irreligious ideas of the Sophisters. The Abbé de Condilhac in particular, had by no means the reputation of an Encyclopedian philosopher. It was even late when they became sensible of their error, which could only be remedied by the total subversion of all that these two tutors had done. The whole would have been foreseen, had they known that Condilhac was the particular friend of D’Alembert, who always looked up to him as a man precious to the self-created philosophers, or had they known that the choice of these two men, was only the effect of an intrigue in which Voltaire glories, when he writes to D’Alembert, “It appears to me that the Parmesan child will be well surrounded. He will have a Condilhac and a de Leire. If with all that he is a bigot, grace must be powerful indeed.”†

These wishes and artifices of the sect were so well handed down, that in spite of Louis the XVIth’s attachment to religion, they sought to place new Condilhacs about the heir to the crown; they succeeded in

* Letter 78, anno 1772.

† Letter from Voltaire to D’Alembert, No. 77, and from D’Alembert, No. 151.

discarding every bishop from the education of the young Dauphin, they would have willingly excluded all ecclesiastics; but despairing of so complete a success, they sought to make the choice fall on some clergyman, who, like Condilhac, would inspire the illustrious pupil with all the principles of the Sophisters. I am acquainted with one of those men whom they dared to tamper with. They offered him the place of tutor to the Dauphin, being, as they said, sure of getting it for him, and of thereby making his fortune; *but on condition* that when he taught the young prince his Catechism, he would take care to insinuate, that all religious doctrine, as well as all the mysteries of Christianity were only prejudices and popular errors, which a prince should be informed of, but never credit; and that in his private lessons he would instil, as true doctrine, all the errors of philosophism. Fortunately this priest answered, that he knew not how to sacrifice his duty to his fortune; more fortunately still Louis XVI. was not a man to encourage such intrigues. The Duke D'Harcourt, named to preside at the education of the Dauphin, took the advice of some bishops, and chose, to read lectures on religion to his pupil, a clergyman perfectly competent to the task, as he was then superior of the College of La Fleche. Alas! why must we felicitate this tender youth on his death though premature. When the Sophisters of incredulity could not yet flatter themselves with the subversion of the throne of his ancestors, were they not infusing their poisons to transform him at least into an impious king. And when the throne was overturned, would he, more than his young brother, have escaped the hands of the Sophisters of rebellion.

Many other adepts, with the same zeal to enthrone philosophism and to prepare the way for the Antichristian Revolution, in divers other courts, showed the same activity. At Petersburg they had beset the Empress; they had persuaded her that some Sophister, and that of the first class, ought to be entrusted with the education of her son. D'Alembert was named, and the Count Schouvalow is ordered by his sovereign to make the proposal in her name. D'Alembert simply received the offer as a proof that *Voltaire had no reason to be displeased with his mission, and that philosophy was sensibly reaching the throne.** Whatever advantages he might

* Let. 106 and 107, anno 1762.

have expected to reap from such a commission, he prudently declined ; he preferred the petty empire he swayed in Paris, as chief of the adepts, to the precarious favor of courts, and of that in particular whose distance from the center of the conspiracy, could not have permitted him to act the same part in it.

King of the young adepts, he did not confine his protection to those of Paris alone, but to the remotest parts of Russia would he extend his paternal care ; he would follow their progress, their destiny, or protect them in adversity. When he found his power insufficient, he would have recourse to Voltaire's credit ; he would write, for instance : " The poor Bertrand is not lucky. He had petitioned fair Kate (the Empress of Russia) to restore to liberty five or six giddy-headed Velches. He had conjured her, in the name of philosophy ; he had drawn up, under that sacred name, the most eloquent pleading that from memory of monarchy was ever made, and Kate pretends not to understand it."* This was as much as to say to Voltaire, try in your turn whether you can succeed better, and do for them what you have so often done for other adepts whose misfortunes I have made known to you.

This understanding equally subsisted in all that regarded the conspiracy ; little satisfied with pointing out works that were to be refuted, or with giving the sketch of some new impious work, he would also be the spy over every religious author. It has often been an object of surprise, to see Voltaire, so familiar with the anecdotes of the private lives of those whose works he pretended to refute, though generally they are slanderous, sometimes ridiculous, but always foreign to the question. He was indebted to D'Alembert for them. Whether true or false, the latter always chose such as could attach ridicule to the person of the authors, knowing how well Voltaire could substitute ridicule for proof, or for sound argument. Those who doubt of this fact, may consult D'Alembert's letters on the Pere Bertier, or the Abbé Guenée, whom Voltaire, himself, could not but admire, or in those concerning Messrs. le Franc, Caveirac or Sabbatier, and on many others whom Voltaire hardly ever combats, but with the weapons D'Alembert had furnished him with.

How he serves Voltaire as a spy.

On his side Voltaire spared nothing which could raise the consideration of D'Alembert. He would recom-

His petty societies and clubs.

* Letter 88, anno 1773.

mend him to all his friends; he would introduce him into every little society, or petty philosophic club, for these were already forming in Paris, to be one day absorbed by the great club of the Jacobins. Some indeed would have been styled aristocratical, as they were the weekly meetings of *counts, marquisses or chevaliers*, personages already too consequential to bend their knee before the altar of their God. Here would they debate on prejudices, superstition or fanaticism. They would scoff at I. C. and his priests, or smile at the simplicity of the adoring populace. They also thought of shaking off the yoke of religion, leaving indeed, just what was necessary to keep the rabble in awe. The female adept, the Countess du Deffant held the chair, and continued her philosophic education under the particular direction of Voltaire, by whose orders she studies Rabelais, Polymbrock, Hume, the Tale of the Tub, and such like romances.*

D'Alembert was far from being at his ease in these aristocratical clubs, he even disliked this female adept. Voltaire on the contrary, knowing what advantages were to be drawn from them, wished him to belong to them all, and would introduce him by his letters. His introduction was less difficult into some other clubs, and particularly into that where Mad. Necker presided, when she had snatched the sceptre of philosophy from the hands of all the other adepts of her sex.†

His plan
for rebuilding
the temple of
Jerusalem.

Our two chiefs, mutually helped each other by imparting their plans for drawing off the people from their religion. One, in particular, most certainly cannot be omitted in these memoirs, it denotes too well, the intentions of the conspirators, it shows how far their views extended. It is true, that it was not the invention of D'Alembert, but he was aware of the advantages philosophism would derive from it, and however strange the plan, he flattered himself with the execution of it.

It is well known what strength the Christian religion draws from the fulfilling of the prophecies, and particularly from those of Daniel and of Christ himself, on the fate of the Jews and of their temple. Julian

* Letters of Voltaire to Mad. Deffant, particularly 13th Oct. 1759.

† See the correspondence of D'Alembert, let. 77, and following of Voltaire to Mad. Fontaine, 8th Feb. 1762, to D'Alembert, No. 31, anno 1770.

the apostate, in order to give the lie to Christ and to the prophet Daniel, had sought to rebuild the temple. It is also known that flames, bursting forth from the earth, at divers times and devouring the workmen, had obliged him to desist from the undertaking. D'Alembert was not ignorant of this act of the divine vengeance, having been ascertained by a multitude of eye witnesses. He had undoubtedly seen it recorded in Ammianus Marcellinus; an author of unquestionable authority, for he was a friend of Julian, and a Pagan like him. But this did not hinder him from writing to Voltaire, "You probably know, that at this present time, there is at Berlin, one of the circumcised, who expecting Mahomet's paradise, is in the mean time, gone to wait on your former disciple, in the name of the Sultan Mustapha. In writing to that country the other day, I mentioned, that if the king would but just say a word, it would be a fine opportunity to have the temple of Jerusalem rebuilt."*

That word was not said by the former disciple, and D'Alembert gives the following reason to Voltaire. "I have no doubt but that we should have succeeded in our negotiation on the re-edification of the temple of the Jews, if your former disciple had not been afraid of losing some circumcised worthies, who would have carried away thirty or forty millions with them."† Thus in spite of all their inclination to give the lie to the God of the Christians, even to the sordid interest of the conspirators, was to add a new proof to his doctrines.

Eighteen years after Voltaire had not given up the plan, nor lost all hopes of accomplishing it. Seeing that D'Alembert had not succeeded with Frederick, he endeavoured to prevail with the Empress of Russia. He writes to her, "If your Majesty is in a regular correspondence with Aly Bey, I implore your protection with him; I have a little favor to ask of him, it is to rebuild the temple of Jerusalem, to recal the Jews, who will pay him a large tribute, and thereby make a mighty lord of him."‡

Voltaire was nearly eighty when he still persisted in this plan, by which he was to prove to the people, that Christ and his prophets, were imposters. Frederick

* 18th Dec. 1763. † 29th Dec. 1763. ‡ 6th July 1771.
Vol. I. R

and D'Alembert, were also far advanced in their career, and the time was not far off, when they were to appear before that very God whom they had daringly styled wretch, and against whom they had never ceased to conspire.

I have now laid before my readers, the means, the constancy with which they fought to overturn the altars, to annihilate the dominion of the faith, to destroy the priests of that God, and to substitute the hatred and ignominy of him whom the Christians adore, to his religion. I had promised not so much the history, as the real demonstration of the conspiracy; and whether as to its object, its extent, or its means, I have not resorted to heresay or vague report, for proof. My proofs are their own; the comparison of their letters, of their mutual communications, carries conviction. My readers may henceforth reconcile this conspiracy, and its means, with that revolution operated by the Jacobins. They may already perceive, that the latter, in destroying the altars of Christ, only execute the plots of the Sophisters, their fore-runners and masters.

Was there a temple to be overthrown, a depredatory decree against the church, to be passed by the Jacobins, of which we have not already seen the plan! Are not the Marats and the Robespierres, figured by Voltaire in his Hercules and Bellerophon? Or where whole nations are to be crushed in hatred to Christianity, have we not seen the wish formally expressed by D'Alembert? Every thing teaches us, the hatred of the father gaining strength in the breast of the son, and the plots propagating, that when force shall coalesce with impiety they can only generate a race brutal and ferocious.

But this force to be acquired by the conspirators supposes a successive progress. Before it could throw off the mask, it was requisite that the number of the adepts should be augmented, and that the arms of the multitude should be secured to them. I am about to show their successes under the reign of corruption, in the divers orders of society, during the lives of the chiefs. Hence history will hereafter more easily conceive and explain what they were during the reign of terror and devastation.

CHAP. XII.

Progress of the Conspiracy under Voltaire.—First Class of Protectors.—Crowned Adepts.

VOLTAIRE's grand object, as we have seen, was to hurry away that whole class of men, styled by the conspirators the better sort, and instil into their minds his hatred for Christ and his religion : to have left his gospel to none but the rabble, and to them only, in case they could not efface it from their minds. Under this denomination of better sort, they comprehended all who were illustrious, either by power, rank or riches ; and, after them, all people of education or instruction and honest citizens, ranking above what Voltaire calls rabble, footmen, cooks, &c. It is an observation worthy the historian, that the Antichristian Conspiracy first makes its progress in the most illustrious part of this class ; among princes, kings, emperors, ministers and courts ; in fine, among those who may be styled the Great.

That the historian must be true.

If a writer dares not utter truths like these, let him throw aside his pen ; he is unworthy of treating such important subjects of history. He who has not the courage to tell kings, that they were the first to league in the conspiracy against Christ and his religion, and that it is the same God who has permitted the conspirators, first to threaten, shake and silently undermine their thrones ; then openly to scoff at their authority. The man, I say, who dares not hold such language is only abandoning the powers of the earth to their fatal blindness. They would continue to hearken to the impious, to protect impiety, and support its dominion, to let it circulate and spread from the palace to the city, from the towns to the country, from the master to the servant ; in fine, from the lords to the people. And would not such crimes call down vengeance from heaven ? Will not heaven have too numerous crimes to avenge upon nations, not to curse them with luxury and discord, with ambition and conspiracies, or with all those scourges which portend the downfall of na-

tions. Had the monarch alone, throughout his empire, raised his head against his God, who has told us that the crimes of the chief shall not be avenged upon his people. Once more let the historian be silent, if he dares not utter the truth. Should he seek the causes of a revolution in its agents, he would meet a Necker, a Brienne, a Philippe D'Orleans, Mirabeaux, and Robespierres; a confusion in the finances, factions among the great, insubordination in the armies, the people agitated and disquieted, in fine seduced. Will he, for that, know from whence these Neckers, Mirabeaux, or Robespierres, have arisen; whence this confusion in finance, this spirit of faction, this insubordination of the armies, or the seduction of the divers classes of the state? He will have seized but the last thread of the conspiracy. He will have seen empires in their agony, but he will have overlooked that slow fever which consumes them, whilst the violence of the fit is reserved to that last crisis which precedes dissolution. He will describe the calamities which every one has seen, but will he be the nearer the remedy. Let the historian reveal the secrets of the masters of the earth, to ward from them the conspiracy which shall fall back upon them; and we, what secrets do we reveal, secrets publicly printed for these ten years past, in their own correspondence with the chief of the conspiracy. It is too late to attack us on that point. Those letters were printed, to the great scandal of the public, to discover the favor of the impious man with the sovereigns of the earth; and when we show this protection avenged upon the sovereigns, it is not their shame we are seeking to divulge, it is their misfortunes and those of their people that we make known; the remedy then spontaneously manifesting itself, may avert or prevent, much greater evils. Such a motive is more than an equivalent, to all that could induce us to be silent.

Joseph II.

In the correspondence of the conspirators there is more than one letter which deposes against the Emperor Joseph II. with all the possible evidence of such testimony, that he was initiated and had been admitted into all the mysteries of the Antichristian Conspiracy by Frederick.

In the first of these letters, Voltaire announced his victory in these terms: "You have afforded me great pleasure by reducing the infinite to its real value. But here is a thing far more interesting: Grimm af-

“ *assures us, that the Emperor is one of ours. That is lucky, for the Dutchess of Parma, his sister, is against us.*”*

In another letter, Voltaire exulting in so important a conquest, writes to Frederick, “ A Bohemian of great wit and philosophy, called Grimm, has informed me that you had initiated the Emperor into our holy mysteries.”† In a third in fine, Voltaire, after enumerating the princes and princesses whom he reckoned among the adepts, adds these words: “ You have also flattered me with the Emperor’s being in the way of perdition; *that would be a good harvest for philosophy.*”‡ This alludes to a letter written by Frederick to Voltaire a few months before, in which he says, “ I am setting off for Silesia, and shall meet the Emperor, who has invited me to his camp in Moravia; not to fight as formerly, but to live as good neighbours. He is an amiable prince and full of merit. *He likes your works and reads them as much as he can.* He is the *very reverse of being superstitious.* In fine, he is an Emperor such as Germany has not seen long since. We neither of us like the ignorant and barbarous, but that is not a reason for exterminating them.”§

Now that we are acquainted with Frederick’s idea of a prince, *The very reverse of being superstitious and who reads Voltaire’s works as much as he is able*, his encomiums are easily understood. They truly point out an Emperor such as Germany had not long since beheld, in fine, an Emperor as irreligious as Frederick himself. Both the date and last words, *But that is not a reason for exterminating them*, recalls to mind a time when Frederick, thinking the Sophisters too daring and haughty, sought himself to repress their imprudence, lest it might overthrow the whole political system of governments. It was not yet time to employ *superior force* or to pass the *last sentence*. The war then resolved on between Frederick and Joseph against Christ was not to be a war of Neros and Dioclesians; it was to silently undermine. Such was that which Joseph waged, as soon as the death of Maria Teresa left him at liberty to act. He carried it on with hypocrisy, for Joseph, as unbelieving as Frederick, wished to be looked upon as a very religious prince, and would protest that the slightest attack on Christianity was the most distant from his ideas.

* 23th of Oct. 1769.

† No. 162, Nov. 1769.

‡ Let. No. 181, 21st of Nov. 1770. § 18th of August 1770.

During his travels through Europe he continued to approach the sacraments, and perform his Easter devotions at Vienna and Naples, with that exterior piety, which could not seem to coincide with the hypocrisy of those of Voltaire at Ferney. He carried his dissimulation so far, that in passing through France, he refused to call at Ferney, though very near and expected there by Voltaire. It is even said, that in turning away he affectedly said, *That he could not bear to see a man, who, by calumniating religion had given the severest blow to humanity*; what credit is to be given to these words, I will not pretend to decide, but certain it is, that the philosophers did not the less look upon Joseph as one of theirs. This flight of Voltaire was soon pardoned; they spread every where, that his admiration had not diminished for the premier in impiety; that he would have willingly visited him, but that he had refrained through regard for his mother, *who at the solicitations of the priests, had made him promise that he would not see him during his journey*.*

Notwithstanding his reserve and his dissimulation, the war which Joseph waged, soon became one of authority and oppression, of rapine and violence, and was well nigh ending in the extermination of his own subjects. He began by the suppression of a large number of monasteries; this we have seen was a leading feature in Frederick's plan; he seized on a great part of the ecclesiastical property; so would Voltaire have done, when he exclaims, *But I had rather plunder them*; Joseph II. tore from their cells and cloisters, even to those Carmelite nuns, whose extreme poverty could afford no bait to avarice and whose angelic fervor left no room for reform. He was the first who gave to his age the public show of holy virgins reduced to wander into distant countries, even as far as Portugal, to seek an asylum for their piety. Innovating at pleasure in the church, he only anticipated that famous constitution of the clergy, called *civil* by the Jacobin legislators, and which prepared the way to the butchery at the Carmes. The sovereign pontiff thought it incumbent on him to leave Rome and pass into Austria, and in the capacity of common father of the faithful, personally to represent to the emperor the laws and rights of the church. Joseph II. receives him with respect, and permits all

* See note to the letter of the Count de Touraille, 6th of Aug. 1777, General Correspondence of Voltaire,

that homage and public veneration should be shown to Pius VI. which both his virtues and dignity equally commanded. He did not for that cease to continue his war of oppression. He did not expel the bishops, but he gave them much trouble; for constituting himself in some sort the superior of a seminary, he would permit no lectures to be read but by those professors he had chosen, and whose doctrine like that of *Camus* tended only to forward the grand apostacy; at length these secret persecutions and depredations gave rise to murmurs. The wearied Brabanters revolted. Since that, we have seen them call in those Jacobins who promising them the free exercise of their religion, and more artful than Joseph, are now consummating his work. Had they been less tormented by Frederick's adept in matters of faith, the Brabanters would have been less impatient under the yoke of Austria: had they been penetrated with a greater zeal and affection for the Emperor Joseph, they would have better seconded, and have had more confidence in the virtues of Francis II. They would with greater force have opposed that invasion which we have seen extend to the very banks of the Danube. Should history lay the blame on Joseph, let it look back to that day, when by Frederick, he is initiated into the mysteries of Voltaire. It is the emperor adept, that shall be found guilty of this war of extermination, which has threatened even to his throne.

In the sequel of this work we shall see Joseph repenting of the war he had waged against Christ, when he beheld philosophism attacking both himself and his throne. He will then attempt but too late to repair his fault. He will fall a melancholy victim.

Many other sovereigns are mentioned in the correspondence of the conspirators, as having imprudently engaged in these plots. D'Alembert complaining to Voltaire of the obstacles he sometimes encountered, and which he terms *persecutions*, from the public authorities, at length consoles himself by adding, "But we have on our side, the Empress Catherine, the King of Prussia, the King of Denmark, the Queen of Sweden and her son, many princes of the empire and all England."* Much about the same time, Voltaire writes to the king of Prussia, "I know not what Muffapha thinks (on the immortality of the soul;) my

* 28th of Nov. 1770.

“ opinion is, that he does not think at all. As for the
 “ *Empress of Russia, the Queen of Sweden, your sister,*
 “ *the King of Poland, and Prince Gustavus* son of the
 “ *Queen of Sweden,* I imagine that I know what they
 “ think.”†

Voltaire effectually knew it. The letters of these sovereigns could not leave him in the dark ; but had we not those letters to adduce in proof, we now see an Emperor, an Empress, a Queen and four Kings who had already enlisted under the banners of the conspirators.

Falſe con-
 ſequences
 to be a-
 voided in
 ſpeaking of
 the royal
 adepts.

In baring to the light this horrid conspiracy, let not the historian abandon himself to false declamation nor draw inferences still more deceitful. Let him not pretend to say to the people, your kings have shaken off the yoke of Christ, it is but just, that you should throw off that of their dominion ; such reasoning would be to blaspheme Christ, his doctrines and his examples. The arm of vengeance is reserved to God alone. For the happiness of subjects, to preserve them from revolutions and all the horrors of rebellion, he alone can smite the apostate on the throne. Let not the Christian apostatize, but let him be subject to his lawful prince. To join revolt to impiety is not averting the scourge of heaven ; that would be only adding anarchy, the most terrible of political scourges ; that would not be a bar against the Sophister of impiety, but the consummation of the conspiracy of the Sophisters of sedition, against the throne and all the laws of civil society. Such was the fate of the unfortunate Brabanters when in rebellion against the Emperor Joseph. They pretended to the right of rejecting their lawful sovereign, and they are become the prey of Jacobins ; they called insurrection to the aid of religion, and that religion proscribes insurrection against all lawful authority. At the time that I am now writing, the fulminating reports made to the Convention, forbode those dreadful decrees which levelling the religious worship, the privileges and the churches of the Brabanters to the standard of the French revolution, shall punish them for their error. When therefore the historian shall report the names of those sovereigns, who unfortunately were initiated and conspired against their God, let his intention be to recal them to their religion, let him not be led away into

† 21st of Nov. 1770.

false consequences, so contrary to the peace of nations. Then let him insist on the duties which religion imposes on the people; let him teach them what they owe to Cæsar and to every public authority.

Among the royal protectors all are not to be classed with Voltaire, Frederick or Joseph. All had tasted of the impious cup of incredulity, but all did not equally wish to imbibe their people with its poison.

Catherine
II.
Empress
of Russia.

Immense was the distance between Frederick and this Empress, in whom the conspirators placed so much confidence. Seduced by the talents and homage of their premier chief, Catherine may have been indebted to him for her first taste for literature; she almost devoured those works, which she had mistaken for master-pieces, whether in history or philosophy, totally ignorant of their being disguised solely to forward the ends of impiety. On the fallacious encomiums of the Sophisters, she boldly pronounced, *That all the miracles in the world could never efface the pretended blot of having hindered the printing of the Encyclopedia.** But we never see her, like Frederick, to obtain the fulsome flattery of the Sophisters, pay to impiety that degrading court. Catherine would read their works, Frederick would circulate them, compose himself and wished to see them devoured by the people. Frederick would propose plans for the destruction of the Christian religion, Catherine rejected all those proposed to her by Voltaire. She was tolerant by nature, Frederick only from necessity. He would have been no longer so, had his policy permitted him, in following the dictates of his hatred, to call in a *superior force* to effect the overthrow of Christianity.†

* Her correspondence with Voltaire, letter 1, 2, 3 and 8.

† Those who, as men of literature, shall criticise the correspondence of this Empress, will find an amazing difference between hers and that of the King of Prussia. The former is that of a woman of wit, who often plays upon Voltaire in the most agreeable manner. With her light style and full of taste, she never forgets her dignity; she at least will not be seen to degrade herself to that gross dialect of abuse and blasphemy; while Frederick in his, truly the pedantic Sophister, will be as void of shame in his impiety, as he is of dignity in his encomiums. When Voltaire wrote to Catherine, "We are three, Diderot, D'Alembert and myself, who raise altars to you." She answers, "Pray leave me, if you please on earth, there I shall be more at hand to receive your letters and those of your friends." Nothing so perfectly French can be found in Frederick's, we only have

Nevertheless, Catherine is also a royal adept, she has the secret of Voltaire, she applauds the most famous of our infidels.* She is even willing to entrust the heir of her crown into the hands of D'Alembert; her name constantly appears among the protecting adepts in the writings of the Sophisters, nor can the historian hide it.

Christiern
VII. King
of Den-
mark.

The claims of Christiern VII. King of Denmark, to the title of adept, are also founded on his correspondence with Voltaire. Among the numerous services rendered by D'Alembert, I should not have omitted the pains he had taken to prevail on different powers and great personages, to subscribe to the erection of a statue in honor of Voltaire. I could have shewn the Sophister of Ferney, modestly pressing D'Alembert to get these subscriptions, and that in particular from the King of Prussia, who hardly waited their solicitations. This triumph of their chief was too desirable for the conspirators; Christiern VII. eagerly contributed. A first letter, with a few compliments, could not constitute an adept, but we have Voltaire's own word for it. He mentions him, and besides, among these compliments we find one so much in the style of Frederick, "You are now occupied in delivering a considerable number of men from *the yoke of the clergy, the hardest of all others*, for the duties of society are only imprinted in their heads, and never felt in their hearts. This is well worth being revenged of the barbarians."† Unfortunate monarchs! Such was the language held to Mary Antoinette, in the days of her prosperity, by those corruptors. But in her misfortunes, when she witnessed the loyalty and the sensibility of those *barbarians*, at the Thuleriés, she exclaimed, "Oh! how we have been deceived! We now plainly see how much the clergy distinguish themselves among the faithful subjects of the king."‡ May the king that is led away by philosophy never be reduced to the same experiment; may

to regret, that it was addressed to a set of infidels. Catherine wrote Voltaire's own language in perfect purity, while Frederick could have had little pretensions to the hero, had he not handled his sword better than his pen.

* 26th Dec. 1773, and No. 134, anno 1774.

† Let. to Voltaire, 1770.

‡ I heard this anecdote in the midst of the revolution, and such expressions were necessary to shew, that she was recovered from those prejudices she had imbibed against the clergy, and which appeared to have redoubled, after the second journey which her brother made to Versailles.

he learn at least from one revolution, that there is a yoke more *hard* and terrible than that of the clergy, which Voltaire his master had taught him to calumniate.

It is our duty to add, that with regard to this prince, as well as to many others who were seduced by the Sophisters, the conspirators had taken advantage of their youth. At that period of life, the writings of Voltaire could easily make impression on men, who for being kings, were not better versed than other people, in what they had not learned, nor were they able to discriminate truth from error, in objects where the want of knowledge is more to be dreaded, than inclination or the passions.

At the time of his journey into France, Christiern was but seventeen years of age, and already, to use D'Alembert's expression, he had *the courage to say at Fontainbleau, that Voltaire had taught him to think.** Men of a different way of thinking, about the court of Lewis XV. wished to hinder his young majesty from learning still more to think like Voltaire, and from seeing in Paris, the adepts or most celebrated of his disciples. These however, obtained admission, and to judge how well they understood improving their opportunity, we need only hear D'Alembert writing to Voltaire, "I had seen that prince at his own apartments, together with several of your friends. He spoke much about you, of the services your works had rendered, of the prejudices you had rooted out, of the enemies your liberty in thinking had made you. You easily guess what my answers were."† D'Alembert has a second interview, and again writes, "The King of Denmark scarce spoke to me but of you.—I can assure you, he had rather have seen you at Paris, than all the entertainments with which they have surfeited him." This conversation had been but of short duration; but D'Alembert made amends in a discourse which he pronounced at the academy on philosophy, in presence of the young monarch. Numerous were the adepts present, and they applauded; the youthful monarch joins in the applause.‡ In fine, such is the opinion he carries away of that pretended philosophy, thanks to D'Alembert's new lectures, that no sooner is he informed of a statue to be erected to the premier chief of the conspirators, than he sends a very

* Letter of 12th Nov. 1768.

† 6th Dec. 1768.

‡ Let. 17th Dec. 1768.

handsome subscription, for which Voltaire acknowledges himself to be indebted to the lessons of the academical adept.¶ How much these lessons have since been forgotten by Christiern VII. I cannot pretend to say. Sufficient events have taken place since his Danish majesty had learned to *think* from Voltaire, to have given him a very different opinion of the *services* that the *WORKS* of his master have rendered to empires.

Gustavus
III. King
of Swe-
den.

Similar artifices were made use of with regard to Gustavus King of Sweden. That prince also came to Paris, to receive the homage and lessons of the self-created philosophy. He was as yet but Prince Royal, when already extolling him as one whose protection was insured to the sect, D'Alembert writes to Voltaire, "You love REASON AND LIBERTY, my dear brother, and one can hardly love one without the other. Well then, here is a *worthy republican philosopher* that I present you, who will talk PHILOSOPHY and LIBERTY with you. This is Mr. Jennings, chamberlain to the King of Sweden.—He has besides compliments to pay you from the *Queen of Sweden and the Prince Royal, who in the North PROTECT that philosophy* so ill received by the princes in the South. Mr. Jennings will inform you of the *progress REASON is making in Sweden* under those happy auspices."§

At the time that D'Alembert was writing this letter, Gustavus, who was soon to restore royalty to the rights it had lost long since in Sweden, was no doubt ignorant that those great men, which he so much protected, were *philosophers* superlatively *republican*. He was equally ignorant what would one day be for him, the last fruit of this conspiring philosophy, when on his accession to the throne he writes to their premier chief, "I daily pray the Being of beings, that he may prolong your days, so precious to humanity and so necessary to the progress of REASON and TRUE PHILOSOPHY."¶

The prayer of Gustavus was heard, the days of Voltaire were prolonged, but he who was to suddenly shorten the days of Gustavus was born; he, grasping the dagger, was soon to sally forth from the occult school of Voltaire. For the instruction of kings, let the historian compare the gradual steps of this unfortunate prince and those of the adept and his assassin.

¶ Letter from Voltaire to D'Alembert, 5th Nov. 1770.
§ 19th Jan. 1769. ¶ 10th Jan. 1772.

Ulrica of Brandenburg had been initiated into the mysteries of the Sophisters by Voltaire himself. So far from rejecting his principles, she did not even feel herself outraged at the declaration of a passion, which he was daring enough to express.* When Queen of Sweden, she more than once pressed the Sophister to come and end his days near her person.† She knew no means of giving a stronger proof of her staunchness in the principles she had received, than during Voltaire's first residence at Berlin, to make the infant king imbibe them with his milk. She initiated Gustavus, and wished to be the mother of the Sophister as well as of the king; and indeed we constantly see both the mother and the son ranking together among the adepts, of whom the Sophisters thought themselves the most secure. Such then was the gradation of the unfortunate Gustavus. Voltaire initiated Ulrica, and Ulrica initiates her son.

On the other side, Voltaire initiated Condorcet, and Condorcet, seated in the club of the Jacobins, initiated Ankestron. A pupil of Voltaire, Ulrica, teaches her son to ridicule the mysteries and scoff at the altars of Christ. Condorcet also, a disciple of Voltaire, teaches Ankestron to scoff at the throne and sport with the lives of kings.

When public report announced that Gustavus III. was to command in chief the confederate armies against the French revolution, Condorcet and Ankestron were members of the great club; and the great club resounded with the cry of, Deliver the earth from kings! Gustavus was doomed for the first victim, and Ankestron offers himself for the first executioner. He leaves Paris, and Gustavus falls beneath his blows.‡

The Jacobins had just celebrated the apotheosis of Voltaire, they also celebrate that of Ankestron.

Voltaire had taught the Jacobins that *the first of kings was a successful soldier*; and they teach Ankestron that the first hero was the assassin of kings; and they placed his bust beside that of Brutus.

Kings had subscribed to the erection of a statue to Voltaire, the Jacobins erect one to Ankestron.

* It was for this princess that Voltaire composed the Madrigal *Souvent un peu de Vérité.*

† Her letters to Voltaire, anno 1743 and 1751.

‡ Journal of Fontenai.

Poniatowski, King of Poland.

Lastly, Voltaire's correspondence shows Poniatowski, King of Poland, to have been of the number of the protecting adepts. That king had known our philosophers in Paris, who was one day to fall a victim to philosophism ! He had done homage to their chief, and written to him, " Mr. de Voltaire, every contemporary
 " of a man like you, that knows how to read, who has
 " travelled, and has not been acquainted with you,
 " must feel himself unhappy ; you might be allowed
 " to say, *Nations shall pray that kings may read me.*"*
 At this day, when the king has seen men, who, like himself, had read and cried up the works of Voltaire, attempting in Poland the revolution they had wrought in France ; at this day, when victim of that revolution, he has seen his sceptre vanish from his hand, how different must be his prayer ? Does he not repent that nations have known Voltaire, or that kings had ever read his works ? But those days that D'Alembert had foretold, and which he longed to see, are at length come, and that without being foreseen by the royal adepts. When the misfortunes of religion shall fall back upon them, let them read the prayer which D'Alembert expresses in his style, often low and ignoble, to Voltaire, " Your illustrious and former protector
 " (the King of Prussia) began the dance, the King of
 " Sweden led it on, Catherine imitates them, and bids
 " fair to outdo them both. How I should laugh to see
 " the string run off in my time." And indeed the string has begun to run with a vengeance. Gustavus, King of Sweden, dies by the dagger : Lewis XVI. King of France, on the scaffold : Lewis the XVII. by poison. Poniatowski is dethroned ; the Stadtholder is driven from his country, and the adepts, disciples of D'Alembert and his school, laugh as he would have done himself, at those sovereigns, who protecting the impious in their conspiracy against the altar, had not been able to foresee that the disciples of those same conspirators would conspire against their thrones.

These reflections anticipate, against my will, what I have to unfold in this second conspiracy ; but such is the union of the Sophister of impiety with the Sophister of rebellion, that it is hard to separate the progress of one from the ravages of the other. It is the intimacy of this union, which has forced us to lay before

* 21st of February 1767.

the eyes of the protecting monarchs, one of the most important lessons that history could produce.

I cannot finish this chapter without remarking, that among the kings of the North, in whose protection the Sophisters so often exult, the name of his Britannic Majesty is not so much as mentioned. This silence of the conspirators, is above all the encomiums they could bestow. Had they sought a king beloved by his subjects, and deservedly so; had they sought I say, a king good, just, compassionate, beneficent, jealous of maintaining the liberty of the laws and the happiness of his empire, then George III. might have been extolled as the Solomon of the North, he would have been their Marcus Aurelius, or Antoninus. They found him too wise to coalesce with vile conspirators, who knew no merit but impiety, and hence the true cause of their silence. It is noble for a prince to be nul in their records, whilst, in this terrible revolution, he has been so conspicuous by his activity in stopping its progress, by his greatness and compassionate generosity in relieving its victims.

It is also a justice, which the historian owes to the kings of the South, to say, that the conspirators, so far from ranking them among their adepts, complained that they had not yet attained to the height of their sophisticated philosophy.

CHAP. XIII.

Of the Adept Princes and Princesses.

IN the second class of protecting adepts, I shall comprehend those persons, who, without being on the throne, enjoy a power over the people, nearly equal to that of kings, and whose authority and example, adding to the means of the conspirators, gave them reason to hope that they had not sworn in vain, the destruction of the Christian religion.

Frederick
Landgrave
of Hesse
Cassel.

In this class of protectors, Voltaire particularly mentions the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel. The care, with which D'Alembert had chosen the professor of history we have already mentioned, shows how much the Sophister abused his confidence. He was much imposed upon when he confided in the philosophy and the lights of Voltaire; he permitted him in some sort, to direct his studies, and it was difficult to fall into the hands of a more perfidious tutor. A letter, in date of the 25th Aug. 1766, will suffice to show in what sources the august pupil was directed to seek lessons of wisdom. "Your Serene Highness has shown, the corruptor writes, a desire of seeing some new productions worthy your attention. There is one which has just made its appearance, entitled *The necessary Collection*. You will find there, in particular, a work of Lord Bolingbroke's, which appears to me one of the most forcible things ever written against superstition. I believe it is to be found at Frankfort; but I have a copy of it sewed, which I will send to your Highness, if agreeable."

For a prince, who really was desirous of instruction, what lessons he was to find in this collection! The name of Bolingbroke does not sufficiently denote, how far they intended to pervert his religion; but we know that Voltaire often published, under that name, works far more impious than those of the English philosopher; and that he was the author of several of those, which he particularly recommended in that collection.

Left to himself for the solution of doubts, nourished by such readings, and unfortunately prejudiced against those who might have solved them, he threw himself

headlong into those studies, which he had mistaken for those of truth, and of the most transcendent philosophy. When he could receive these lessons from Voltaire himself, the illusion was so great, that his Highness would flatter himself, and really believe that he had found a means of soaring far above the vulgar. He would lament the absence which deprived him of the lessons of his master, and thinking himself under real obligations, he would say to him, "I left Ferney with the greatest regret.—I am delighted to find you approve of my way of thinking : I try as much as possible to divest myself of all prejudices, and if in that, I differ in opinion from the vulgar, it is to my conversation with you, and to your works, that I am solely indebted for it."*

That he might adduce some proof of his proficiency in the school of philosophism, the illustrious adept was wont to impart to his master, the new discoveries he had made, and which he looked upon as unanswerable objections against the sacred writ. "I have been making, would he write to his hero, for this some time past, reflections on Moses, and on some of the historians of the New Testament, to me apparently just ; might not Moses be a natural child of Pharoah's daughter, whom that princess caused to be brought up ? It is not credible that the daughter of a king, should have taken such care of an Hebrew child, whose nation was so much abhorred by the Egyptians."† Voltaire could easily have solved such a doubt, by making his pupil observe that he was gratuitously slandering the fair sex, whose benevolence and tenderness would readily lead them to take compassion on a child, exposed to such a danger. Many would naturally do what Pharoah's daughter did, and would precisely show it greater care and attention, was the child exposed to national enmities. Had Voltaire wished to give his illustrious pupil the rules of sound criticism, he would have hinted, that to destroy a fact both simple and natural, his Highness supposed one truly incredible. A princess who wishes to give her child a brilliant education, and begins by exposing it to be drowned, for the pleasure of going to seek it on the banks of the Nile, at a given time. An Egyptian princess, who, loving

* 9th Sept. 1766.
Vol. I.

† Let. 66.

her child, and knowing how much the Egyptians, hated the Israelites, causes this child to be suckled by an Israelite, leaves it to believe, that it was born of that nation, which its mother detests, and afterwards to render this child odious to the Egyptians, persuades them of the same. A mystery, still more singular, is that the birth of an infant, who became the man, the most tremendous to the Egyptians, has always remained a secret. That the whole court of Pharaoh, obstinately believed him to be an Israelite, and that at a time when, to have declared Moses an Egyptian, would have sufficed to destroy his power with the Israelites and to have saved Egypt. Such arguments might have been made use of by Voltaire, to make his Highness sensible of the impropriety in sound criticism, of combating a fact both simple and natural, by suppositions the most distant from probability. But such suppositions were consonant with that hatred which Voltaire bore to Moses and the Sacred writ; he was better pleased to see his disciples ignorantly launching into incredulity, than to show them the rules of sound criticism.

Voltaire again applauded his adept, when his Highness pretends that the *brazen serpent*, isolated on the mountain, *did not a little resemble the god Esculapius*, in the temple of Epidaurus, holding a stick in one hand and a serpent in the other, with a dog at his feet. That the cherubims, displaying their wings over the ark, *were not unlike the sphinx* with the woman's head, and the four claws, body, and tail of a lion. That *the twelve oxen standing under the brazen sea*, and bearing that enormous vessel, twelve cubits in breadth and five in height, filled with water for the ablutions of the Israelites, bore a strong resemblance to the god Apis, or to the ox elevated on the altar and beholding all Egypt at its feet.*

His Highness concludes, that Moses appeared to have introduced among the Jews, many ceremonies which he had taken from the Egyptians.† The historian will at least remark, that it would have been easy for the conspirators to have undeceived an adept who sought only to be instructed. While we lament his Highness having been the dupe of such masters, in justice we are obliged to show how frankly he sought the truth, when he continues, to Voltaire, “As to what regards the

* Let. 66.

† Ibid.

“ New Testament, there are stories in it, which I
 “ *should wish to be better informed of.* I cannot under-
 “ stand the massacre of the innocents. How could
 “ King Herod have ordered all those infants to be slain,
 “ he not having had the power of life and death, as we
 “ see in the history of the Passion, and that it was Pon-
 “ tius Pilate, governor for the Romans, who condem-
 “ ned Jesus Christ to death.”*

Had he recurred to the proper sources of history,
 had he consulted any other but that professor of history
 which D'Alembert had given him, or any other masters
 than those vain Sophisters, this prince, who wished for
 and deserved better information, would have seen this
 slight difficulty vanish from before his eyes. He would
 have learned, that Herod of *Ascalon*, surnamed the
Great, and who might have been more properly called
 the ferocious, he who ordered the massacre of the In-
 nocents, was king of all Judea and of Jerusalem, and
 is not the person mentioned in the Passion. He would,
 moreover, have learned that the latter was Herod *Anti-*
pas, who had only been able to obtain of the Romans
 one third part of his father's dominions, and being sim-
 ply Tetrarch of Galilee, he had not the same power
 over the other provinces. Hence there can be little
 room for surprize at his not exercising the power of life
 and death in Jerusalem, though we see Pilate inviting
 him to exercise that right, by sending Jesus Christ be-
 fore him, as he had before judged and caused to be be-
 headed St. John the Baptist.

As to the ferocious Herod of *Ascalon*, his Highness
 would have learned, that this prototype of Nero, had
 caused the infants at Bethlehem to be slain, by the same
 power with which he had murdered Aristobulus and
 Hircanus, the one the brother, the other an octagena-
 rian and grand-father to the queen; by the same power
 did he put to death Marianne his queen and her two
 children; Sohemus his confidant and numbers of his
 friends and nobles of his court, who had had the mis-
 fortune to displease him. On reading of these nume-
 rous murders, of such unheard-of tyranny, and particu-
 larly when he learned that this Herod of *Ascalon*, on
 the point of death and fearing lest the day of his de-
 cease should prove a day of public rejoicing, had caused
 all the chiefs of the Jews to be shut up in the Circus,
 commanding they should be massacred at the moment he

* Letter 66.

himself expired; such lectures, I say, could have left little doubt in the mind of the illustrious adept, whether this Herod exercised the right of life and death. He then would never have suspected the Evangelists of forging a fact like that of the massacre of the innocents, a fact so recent, that many Jews then living had been witnesses to it. He would have reflected that impostors would not expose themselves to be so easily discovered and that in so public a manner; and all his objections against this massacre of the innocents, would not have availed against his faith in the Gospel.

But he was nurtured in the same objections with his master, he studied the sacred writ through the same medium; and Voltaire, who had fallen into thousands of the grossest errors on those sacred writings, carefully avoided referring his disciples to those answers which he had received from the religious writers.*

Though we blend these slight discussions with our memoirs, we will not add to the bitterness with which so many princes, who have been seduced by these impious chiefs of the Sophisters, now reproach themselves. We will not say to them, "With what strange
 "blindness were you smitten. It was your duty to
 "study the sacred writings, to learn how to become
 "better, and to render your subjects more happy,
 "and you have debased yourselves to entering the lists
 "with the conspirators, that like them you may dis-
 "pute against Christ and his prophets. If doubts arise
 "on religion, why appeal to those who have sworn its
 "ruin. The day will come when the God of the
 "Christians shall raise doubts on your rights, and will
 "refer your subjects to the Jacobins for their solution.
 "They are in your dominions, seated in your palaces
 "ready to applaud, as Voltaire did, at your objections
 "against Christ and his prophets. Answer to their
 "sword, the objections they make to your laws." Let us forbear these reflections, let us simply remark, as history must, how very unfortunate these princes must have been, who seeking instruction had applied to men, whose sole object was to make them efficient to the destruction of the altar, as the first step towards the overthrow of their thrones.

Duke of
Brunswick.

In the number of the protecting adepts history will find itself necessitated to insert the names of many

* See the errors of Voltaire in the Letters of some Portuguese Jews,

princes, whose states at this present moment feel the sweets of this new philosophy. In the account given by D'Alembert to Voltaire of those foreign princes who would not travel through France, without doing homage to the conspiring Sophisters, we see him extol the *Duke of Brunswick* as deserving *the kindest welcome*, and particularly so, when put in competition with the *Prince of Deux Ponts*, who only protects *Frerons and such like rabble*, that is to say religious authors.† The Jacobin army at this day proves which of those two princes was most mistaken in his protection. It will be still better seen when in these memoirs, we shall treat of the last and deepest conspiracy of the Jacobins.

To this prince we must add Louis Eugene Duke of Wirtemberg, and Louis Prince of Wirtemberg: both equally gloried in the lessons they received from Voltaire. The former writes to him, "When at Ferney I think myself a greater philosopher than Socrates himself."‡ The latter, not content with encomiums on the premier chief, petitions for the most licentious and the most impious work Voltaire had ever penned, I mean the poem of Joan D'Arc or the Maid of Orleans.

Louis Eugene, Duke, and Louis Prince of Wirtemberg.

Charles Theodore, Elector Palatine, would one while solicit the impious Sophister for the same master-piece of obscenity, or for philosophic lectures; at another time he would press and conjure him to repair to Mannheim, that he might there receive his lectures anew.¶

Charles Theodore, Elector Palatine.

Even those adepts who through modesty, should have shrunk back at the very name of such a production, even the Princess Anhalt-Zerbst, sends thanks to the author, who had been impudent enough to send her a present more worthy the Aretino.§

The Princess Anhalt-Zerbst.

The historian cannot but remark the eagerness of these mighty adepts for so profligate a work. This is an awful example of what charms depravity of morals gave to the productions of the Sophisters; the empire of the conspirators will cause less surprise when we reflect how prevalent their sophisms became over the mind, when they had once tainted and perverted the heart. This is a reflection we reluctantly make, but it is too apposite to the history of Philosophism, and to the cause and progress of the Antichristian Conspiracy, to be suppressed. We know the reverence due to great

† 23d June, 1766.

‡ 1st February, 1766.

¶ Letters of the 1st May, 1754, and No. 38 anno 1762.

§ Letters of the Princess Anhalt-Zerbst, 9th and 39th.

names, but we cannot, on that consideration, hide the truth. Let those look to it, whose misconduct is exposed to view ; for to conceal it longer would be to betray at once their own interest, and that of their people, the safety of their thrones, and that of the altar.

Her Highness Wilhelmina, Margravine of Barieth, ranking among the protecting adepts, affords to the historian the opportunity of laying open a new cause of the progress of the Antichristian Sophisters, of the weight they acquired from the vanity of their school, and from their pretensions to a superiority of light above the vulgar.

It is far from being the lot of all men to argue with equal success on religious or philosophical topics. Without being wanting in the respect due to that precious half of mankind, we may observe in general, I think, that women are not born with a mind so congenial with philosophy, metaphysics, or divinity, as men. Nature has compensated this want of research and meditation, by the gift of embellishing virtue, by that sweetness and vivacity of sentiment, which often proves a surer guide than all our reasonings. They do the good peculiarly allotted to them, better than we do. Their homes, their children, are their real empires, that of their lessons lies in the charm of example, more efficacious than all our syllogisms. But the philosophic woman, philosophizing like a man, is either a prodigy or a monster, and the prodigies are not common. The daughter of Necker, the wife of Roland, as well as Mesdames du Deffant, D'Espinaffe, Geofrin, and such like Parisian adepts, in spite of all their pretensions to wit, can lay no claim to the exception. If the reader is indignant when he finds the name of the Margravine of Barieth on the same line, let his indignation turn against the man who inspired her with such pretensions. Let an opinion be formed of the masters, by the tone she assumed with them to insure their approbation. Here is a specimen of the style of this illustrious adept, aping the principles and the jests of Voltaire, in order to captivate his approbation, at the expence of St. Paul.

“ Sister Guillemetta to Brother Voltaire, greeting.
 “ I received your consoling epistle. I can swear by my
 “ favorite oath, that it has edified me infinitely more
 “ than that of St. Paul to Dame Elect. The latter
 “ threw me into a certain drowsiness that had the effect
 “ of opium, and hindered me from perceiving the

“ beauties of it. Yours had a contrary effect ; it drew
 “ me from my lethargy, and put all my vital spirits in
 “ motion again.”*

We have no knowledge of any Epistle of St. Paul to Dame Elect ; but sister Guillemetta, like Voltaire, burlesquing what she had, as well as what she had not read, means no doubt to speak of St. John's Epistle to Electa. This contains no other compliment but that of an apostle applauding the piety of a mother, who rears her children in the way of life, exhorting her to charity, and guarding her against the discourse and schools of seducers. It is rather unfortunate that such lessons should have been opium for the illustrious adept. It is probable that Voltaire would have found a dose in the following letter, had it come from any other hand but that of Sister Guillemetta. We will however copy it, as making an epoch in the annals of philosophism. We shall there see the female adept attempting to give lessons to Voltaire himself, anticipating Helvetius by mere dint of genius, and without perceiving it copying Epicurus. Before she commences, Sister Guillemetta assures Voltaire of the friendship of the Margrave, and had carefully invoked the *Genius of Bayle*.† One day she thought herself inspired with the whole of it, and immediately writes to *brother Voltaire*, “ God, you say
 “ (in the Poem of the Law of nature,) has bestowed
 “ on all men justice and conscience to warn them, as he
 “ has given them all what is needful. As God has
 “ bestowed on man justice and conscience, these two
 “ virtues must be innate in man, and become an at-
 “ tribute of his existence. Hence it necessarily fol-
 “ lows, that man must act in consequence, and that he
 “ cannot be just or unjust, or without remorse, being
 “ unable to combat an instinct annexed to his essence.
 “ Experience proves the contrary. If justice was an
 “ attribute of our being, chicane would be banished.
 “ Your counsellors in parliament would not loose their
 “ time as they do, in disturbing all France about a mor-
 “ sel of bread given or not. The Jesuits and the Jan-
 “ senists, would equally confess their ignorance in point
 “ of doctrine—Virtue is barely accidental—Aversion
 “ to pain and love of pleasure, have induced men to
 “ become just—Disorder can beget nothing but pain—
 “ Quiet is the parent of pleasure, I have made the hu-

* 25th Dec. 1755.

† 19th July, 1752.

“ man heart my particular study, and I draw my conclusions on what has been, from what I see.”*

There is extant a play intitled, *Divinity dwindled into a Distaff*. This letter of her Highness the Margravine of Bareith, dwindled into Sister Guillemetta, may perhaps furnish the same idea, for philosophy. But handing over the female Socrates to the Molières of the day, the historian will draw from the errors of this female adept, a more serious lesson on the progress of the Antichristian Conspiracy. He will behold a new cause in the mortifying limits of the human intellect, and the vanity of its pretensions, which in certain adepts seem precisely to expand itself, in as much as nature had from the weakness of their understanding, seemed naturally to insinuate modesty and humility.

Sister Guillemetta fears for liberty, if it be true that God has given to man a conscience, the necessary sense of right and wrong. She was then ignorant that man, with the eyes that God has given him to see and know his road, is nevertheless free to go where he pleases. She has made a particular study of the human heart, and she has not yet learned, that man often sees what is best, but will do the worst! She thinks herself in the school of Socrates, and with Epicurus, she only sees the *aversion of pain and the love of pleasure*, as the principle of justice and virtue. She tell us, in fine, probably without even perceiving it, that if chicane is not banished, it is because our attorneys have not a sufficient aversion to indigence; that if our vestals are not all chaste, it is because they do not sufficiently love pleasure; and after that, in presence of her Highness, Parliaments, Jesuits, Jansenists, and undoubtedly the whole Sorbonne, with the whole faculty of divinity, must confess their ignorance *in point of doctrine*.

With more genius but less confidence in his own lights, Frederick William, Prince Royal of Prussia, presents us with quite another species of adept. Indefatigable in the field of victory, he dares not answer for himself: he knows what he could wish to believe, but not what he ought to believe; he fears to lose himself in reasoning. His soul repeats that he must be immortal, he fears her voice misleads him, and Voltaire is to decide for him; when in the field of Mars, he has the confidence and activity of a hero; but when he

* 1st Nov. 1759.

Frederick
William,
Prince of
Prussia.

is to reflect on futurity, he has all the modesty and the humility of a disciple, almost the unconcern of a sceptic. The authority of his master is to save him the trouble of research, and his master again is Voltaire. "Since I have taken the liberty of conversing with you, he respectfully writes, suffer me to ask for my own instruction only, whether as you advance in years, you find no alteration to make in your ideas on the nature of the soul. I don't like to bewilder myself in metaphysical reasonings, but I could wish not to die entirely, and that such a genius as yours were not annihilated."*

Like a man who can assume every tone, Voltaire answered, "The King of Prussia's family is much in the right, not to consent to the annihilation of his soul.—It is true that it is not well known what a soul is, as nobody has ever seen one. All that we know is, that the eternal Master of nature has endowed us with the faculty of feeling and knowing virtue. That this faculty survives us after our death, is not demonstrated; but then the contrary is not better proved. There are none but quacks who are certain, we know nothing of the first principles—Doubt is not an agreeable state, but certainty is a ridiculous one."†

I know not what effect this letter had on the serene and respectful disciple, but we see the premier chief varying his means of power over his princely adepts, as much as he did over the citizens of Harlem. When the King, Frederick, wrote to him in so resolute a tone, *man once dead there is nothing left*; he takes care not to reply, that certainty is *a ridiculous state*, that *quacks only are certain*. No, Frederick, King of Prussia, is always the first of philosophic kings.‡ And a week after, Frederick, Prince Royal, only wishes to be confirmed on the immortality of his soul, then it is, that notwithstanding all the troubles and disquietudes of scepticism, the doubts of the sceptic is the only rational state for the true philosopher. Such a state will suffice, as he then beholds his adepts no longer belonging to the religion of Christ, and that is sufficient for his plans. He will lead the king materialist, and resolute in his opinions, notwithstanding his own irresolution and uncertainty, by encomiums and admiration. He leaves

* 12th Nov. 1770.

† 28th Nov. 1770.

‡ See their letters, 30th Oct. and 21st Nov. 1770.

Eugene of Wirtemberg in astonishment at the master he coincides with in opinion. Wilhelmina of Bareith, more daring than her master, is permitted to argue. He cuts short, and threatens with ridicule and quackery, the humble adept who seeks to reclaim and allay the ire of his master. To one he dictates his principles; to another he peremptorily declares that man is condemned to the total ignorance of the *first principles*. He is not the less the idol of the astonished princes. He does not the less transform them into the protectors of his school and of the conspirators; and such is the success with which he flatters himself, that writing to his dear Count D'Argental, he says, "At present there is not a German prince who is not a philosopher."*—That is to say, the philosophist of impiety! There are certainly exceptions to be made from such an assertion, but it will prove at least how much these abettors of impiety flattered themselves with the progress they were making among sovereigns and princes,—and to whom impiety was one day to prove so fatal!

* 26th Sept. 1766.

CHAP. XIV.

Third Class of protecting Adepts.—Ministers, Noblemen and Magistrates.

IT was in France that philosophism had taken all the forms of a true conspiracy; and it was in France also, that it had made its greatest ravages among the rich and powerful. It had not gained the throne of Bourbon as it had many of the northern thrones, but it would be vain for history to dissimulate, that Lewis XV. without being of the conspiracy, powerfully helped the Antichristian conspirators. He never had the misfortune of losing his faith, he even loved religion; but during the last thirty-five years of his life, he so little practised it, the dissoluteness of his morals and public triumph of his courtizans answered so little to the title of his Most Christian Majesty, that he might nearly as well have been a disciple of Mahomet.

Errors of
Louis XV.

Sovereigns are not sufficiently aware of the evils they draw on themselves by swerving from morality. Some have supported religion only as a curb on their subjects; but woe be to him who only views it in that light. In vain shall they preserve its tenets in their hearts, it is their example that must uphold it. Next to the example of the clergy, that of kings is the most necessary to restrain the people. When religion is used only as a policy, the vilest of the populace will soon perceive it; they will look upon it as a weapon used against them, and sooner or later they will break it, and your power vanishes. If without morals you pretend to religion, the people will also think themselves religious in their profligacy; and how often has it been repeated, that laws without morals are but a mere phantom. But the day will come when the people, thinking themselves more consequential, will throw aside both morals and tenets, and then where shall be your curb.

Such were the discourses often held by the Christian orators in presence of Lewis XV. He without morals was soon surrounded by ministers destitute of faith, who could have seldomer deceived him, had his love for religion been stimulated by practice. After the death of the Cardinal de Fleury some are to be found, the

Marechal de Belleisle and Mr. de Bertin for example, who are not to be confounded in that class of adepts; but then we successively find near his person Mr. Amelot in the foreign department, Mr. D'Argenson in the same; the Duke de Choiseul, de Praslin and Mr. de Malesherbes, also the Marquise de Pompadour as long as she lived, and all these were initiated and intimately connected with Voltaire and his conspiracy. We have seen him make application to Mr. Amelot on the destruction of the clergy. This minister had sufficient confidence in Voltaire to intrust him with a secret and important mission to the King of Prussia, and Voltaire in return, does not conceal from him the use he had made of his mission against the church. He confided no less in that *Duke de Praslin*, to whom he had sent his memorial on the tithes, in hopes of depriving the clergy of the greatest part of their sustenance.* This confidence from the premier chief sufficiently denotes the sentiments of those men to whom he sent his plans for execution.

Mr. Ame-
lot.

Duke de
Praslin.

Marquis
D'Argen-
son.

A minister whose assiduity in corresponding with Voltaire, indicates more clearly their perfect coincidence with each other, was the Marquis D'Argenson, whom we have already noticed, tracing the plan for the destruction of the religious orders. It was he who first protected Voltaire at court and with the Marquise de Pompadour; he was also one of the most impious of his disciples, and to him it is, that Voltaire writes constantly, as to one of the adepts with whom he was most intimate. If any thing, he appears more resolute in his antireligious opinions than his master, his philosophy coincided more with that of the King of Prussia's, for he was also convinced that he was not twofold, and that he had nothing to fear or hope for, when once his body should rest in eternal sleep.†

Duke de
Choiseul.

More zealous and more active than the Marquis D'Argenson for the reign of impiety, the Duke de Choiseul better knew and more powerfully seconded the secrets of Voltaire. We have already seen him extolling this great protector in his quarrels with the Sorbonne; we have already seen why this duke, adopting and pressing the execution of D'Argenson's plans against the religious orders, began by that of the Jesuits. It

* Letter to Count D'Argental, anno 1764.

† See in the General Correspondence, the letters of Mr. D'Argenson.

would be useless to insist on this minister, his impiety is too well authenticated, and lest he might be mistaken for a Christian, he wished to refuse himself Christian burial, and to be buried, far from any religious monument, in the midst of his park where his cattle fed.

Thus did this series of Antichristian ministers, each partially anticipate the Jacobins in the overthrow of the altar. It was to the man, who was one day to see that very revolution in all its horrors, and at length fall a victim to it, that these impious chiefs pay their greatest homage, it was to him they were chiefly indebted. And this protector of the conspiracy against his God, was Maleherbes; this name, I am aware, will recal to mind many moral virtues, it will recal his benevolence when alleviating the rigor of the prisons, when remedying the abuse of the *Lettres de Cachet*; but France shall, nevertheless, demand of him her temples in ruin; for it was he who above all other ministers abused his authority to establish the reign of impiety in France. D'Alembert, who knew him well, always vouches for his reluctantly executing the *superior orders* issued in favor of religion, and for his favoring philosophism whenever circumstances would permit; and unfortunately he knew but too well how to avail himself of circumstances. By his office he particularly presided over the laws relative to the press, but with a single word he effaced all distinctions in books, whether impious, religious or seditious, he declared them all to be a mere object of commerce.

Maleherbes before the revolution.

Let politicians of other nations argue on that object in consequence of what experience has taught them in their own countries; but it is an incontrovertible fact, that France owes the misfortunes of the revolution to the great abuse of the press, and to that real inundation of bad books at first only impious, but latterly both impious and seditious. There are also many reasons peculiar to France which rendered the abuse of the press more fatal than elsewhere.

Liberty of the press dangerous in France.

Without pretending to raise the merit of the French writers, it may be observed, and I have often heard foreigners repeat it, that there is a certain clearness, process and method peculiar to them, which by putting our French books more within the reach of the commonality of readers, makes them in some sort more popular and thence more dangerous when bad.

Our frivolousness may be a failing, but that failing made a book more sought for in France, than would the profoundest meditations of an Englishman. Neither truth nor error could please a Frenchman when latent, he likes to see clearly; epigram, sarcasm, in fine all what may be called wit, is what he delights in. Even blasphemy, elegantly spoken, will not displease a nation, unhappily gifted with the talent of laughing on the most serious subjects, and who will pardon every failing in him who can divert them. It was to this unfortunate taste that the impious writings of Voltaire owed their chief success.

Whatever may be the reason, the English also have their books against the Christian religion; they have their Collins, their Hobbes, their Woolstons, and many others, where in substance is to be found, all that our French Sophisters have only repeated after their way, that is to say, with that art which adapts every thing to the most vulgar minds. In England Hobbes and Collins are almost forgotten or unknown. Bolingbroke, and other authors of the same class, are little read, though of greater merit as literary men, by a people who knows how to occupy itself with other things. In France, from the idle marquis or countess unto the attorney's clerk, or even to the petty citizen, who had far other occupations, these impious productions, and particularly Voltaire's were not only read, but each would have his opinion and criticise every new publication of the sort. The French, in general, were great readers, and every citizen would have his library. Thus in Paris a bookseller was sure of selling as many copies of the most pitiful performance, as are generally sold in London of a work of no small merit.

In France an author was as passionately cried up as a fashion; the Englishman, who deigns to read his work, passes judgment on it and remains unconcerned. Can this arise from good sense or indifference, or may it not be a mixture of both. Notwithstanding all the benefactions received from the English, I will not pronounce; neither flattery nor criticism is within my sphere; but an undoubted fact, and which ought to have taught Malesherbes, is that in France, still less than elsewhere, a book either impious or seditious never could be looked upon as a mere article of commerce. The greater readers, arguers, and the more volatile the French people were, the more the minister superintend-

ing the press, should have enforced the laws enacted to repress the licentiousness of it, which, on the contrary, he favored with all his power. His condemnation is recorded in the encomiums of the conspirators, it was he, they said, who *broke the shackles of literature*.*

In vain would it be objected that the minister left the same liberty to the religious writers. In the first place, that was not always true, it was much against his will that he suffered works, refuting the Sophisters, to appear;† and what a minister allows with reluctance, he finds abundant means of preventing. Could a minister be innocent, when letting a poison infuse itself throughout the public, under pretext that he did not forbid the sale of the antidote? Moreover, however well written a religious work may be, it has not the passions to second it; much more talent is required to make such a performance palatable. Any fool may attract the people to the theatre, but the eloquence of a Chrystom is necessary to tear them from it. With equal talent, he who pleads for licence and impiety, will carry more weight than the most eloquent orator, who vindicates the rights of virtue and morality. The religious apologist requires a serious and an attentive reading, with a stedfast desire of finding the truth, and such a study fatigues, whereas, depravity requires none; in a word, it is far more easy to irritate, and throw the people into revolt, than to appease them, when once put in motion.

At length Malesherbes, seeing the revolution consummated in the death of Lewis XVI. gave signs of a tardy repentance. His zeal, in that moment did not hinder men, who had deeply felt his fault, from exclaiming, "Officious defender, cease to plead for that king you yourself betrayed, it is too late. Cease to accuse that legion of regicides, who demand his head; Robespierre is not his first executioner; it was you that long since prepared his scaffold, when you suffered those impious works, that called the people to the destruction of the altar and of the throne, to be openly sold and displayed in the porticos of his palace. That unfortunate prince confided in you, he had imparted his authority to you, to repress the impious and seditious writers, and you permitted the people to inhale blasphemy and hatred of kings, from a Raynal, an Helvetius or a Diderot,

Malesherbes during the revolution.

* Voltaire to D'Alembert, No. 128.

† Ibid. let. 22 and 24.

“ and you pretexted commerce. If then, to-day, this
 “ people, in the frantic crisis of those poisons you have
 “ circulated in their veins, call aloud for the head of
 “ Lewis XVI. It is too late to make a parade of his
 “ defence, or to criminate the Jacobins.”

Men of meditation and reflection, had long since foreseen the reproach that history would one day make to Maleherbes. They never passed the galleries of the Louvre, without exclaiming in the bitterness of their souls, *Unfortunate Lewis XVI! It is thus that you are sold at the gates of your own palace!*

Maleherbes, at length, leaving the ministry overpowered by the reclamations of the friends of religion, his successors undertook or pretended to undertake, to enforce the former laws. But presently, under the title of *Fables*, the Sophisters sought to spread their poison anew, and charmed with their success D'Alembert writes to Voltaire, “ The luck of it is, that these fables, far
 “ superior to Esop's, are sold here (at Paris) pretty
 “ freely. I begin to think the trade (of book-selling)
 “ will have lost nothing by the retreat of Mr. de Male-
 “ herbes.”* It in truth lost so little, that the writers in defence of the altar and the throne, were the only ones thwarted in their publications.†

Meanwhile the conspirators carefully calculated their successes with ministry. At the period when Lewis XVI. ascended the throne, they were already such, that Voltaire, writing to Frederick, expresses his hopes in the following terms: “ I know not whether our
 “ young king will walk in your footsteps, but I know
 “ that he has taken *philosophers for his ministers*, all,

* Let. 121.

† We know of several excellent works which never could gain admission into France. Such was the case with Feller's *PHILOSOPHICAL CATECHISM*, because it contains an excellent refutation of the systems of the day. We are acquainted with several authors, and we might cite ourselves, to whom greater severity was shown, than the law could countenance, whilst it was openly transgressed in favor of the conspirators. Mr. Lourdet, of the Royal College, the censor of our Helvian letters, needed all his resolution and firmness to maintain his prerogative and ours, by publishing that work which the Sophisters would fain have suppressed, and that before the first volume was half printed. The same censor reclaimed in vain the power of the laws, to stop the publication of Raynald's works. That seditious writer had daringly presented his pretended *PHILOSOPHIC HISTORY* to the censure, and instead of the probate, he received the reproaches of just indignation. In spite of censure or laws, his work appeared the next day, and was exposed for public sale.

“ except one, who is unfortunately a bigot. There is
 “ Mr. Turgot, who is worthy of your Majesty’s conver-
 “ sation. The priests are in despair. THIS IS THE
 “ COMMENCEMENT OF A GREAT REVOLUTION.”*

Voltaire, in this, is correct to the full extent of the term. I remember, in those days, to have seen venerable ecclesiastics bewailing the death of Lewis XV. while all France and myself among others, were in expectation of better days. They would say, the king we lose, truly had many failings, but he that succeeds is very young, and has many dangers to encounter. They foresaw that same revolution which Voltaire foretels to Frederick, and they shed tears over it, in the bitterness of their hearts. But let not the historian blame the young prince for the unhappy choice in which Voltaire so much exults. Lewis XVI. to succeed the better in this choice, had done all that diffidence in his own abilities, or that the love of his subjects or of religion could suggest. This we see by the deference he paid to the last advice he received from his father, from that Dauphin whose virtues had long been the admiration of France, and whose death plunged it into universal Mourning. This is again to be seen in the eagerness with which Lewis XVI. called to the ministry that man, whom Voltaire’s style, was unfortunately a bigot. This was the Marechal De Muy. When the historian shall discover the throne surrounded by so many perfidious agents of its authority, let him remember to avenge piety and Christian fervor, courage and fidelity, in fine all the virtues of a true citizen, when he shall treat of the memory of this Marechal. Mr. de Muy had been the companion and bosom friend of the Dauphin, father of Lewis XVI, and such a friendship is more than an equivalent for the scurrilous abuse of Voltaire. The Marechal de Saxe, was soliciting for one, whom he protected, the place of companion (menin) to the young prince. On being told that it was intended for Mr. de Muy, he replied, *I will not do Mr. Le Dauphin the injury of depriving him of the company of so virtuous a man as the Chevalier de Muy, and who may, hereafter, be of great service to France.* Let posterity appreciate such a commendation, and could the Sophister but hear and blush!

The Marechal de Muy to be excepted,

* Letter of 3d August, 1775.

Mr. de Muy, was the man who bore the greatest resemblance to the Dauphin, who loved him. In him were to be found the same regularity and amenity of manners, the same beneficence, the same disinterested zeal for religion and the public welfare. It was through his means that the prince, unable visit the provinces in person, was acquainted with the misfortunes and grievances of the people; he sent him to examine their situations, and they were occupied together in seeking those remedies which the prince's premature death, alas! hindered from being carried into execution. When, during the war, Mr. de Muy was called upon to give proofs of his fidelity in the victorious fields of Crevelt and Warbourg, the Dauphin would daily offer the following prayer for his safety: "My God, may thy sword defend, may thy shield protect the Count Felix de Muy, to the end, that if ever thou makest me bear the heavy burthen of a crown, he may support me by his virtue, his counsels and his example."

When the God of vengeance struck France with its first scourge, when the hand of death had mortally struck the Dauphin, Mr. de Muy by his bedside, bathed in the tears of friendship, hears the prince, in a voice that could rend the heart asunder, pronounce these last words: "Do not abandon yourself to sorrow. Preserve yourself, to serve my children. Your knowledge, your virtues will be necessary to them. Be for them, what you would have been for me. Bestow on my memory, that mark of kindness; but above all, let not their youth, during which God grant them his protection, keep you at a distance from them."

Lewis XVI. ascending the throne, recalled these words to Mr. de Muy, conjuring him to accept of the ministry. Though he had refused it in the preceding reign, he could not withstand the entreaties of the son of his departed friend. In a court universally assailed by impiety, he taught it that the Christian hero would, in no situation, be ashamed of his God.

When he commanded in Flanders, he had the honor of receiving the Duke of Gloucester, brother to the King of England, at a time when the Catholic church commands abstinence from meat. True to his duty, he conducted the Duke to his table, saying, "My religion is strictly observed in my house; had I ever the misfortune to infringe that law, I should more

“ carefully observe it, on a day when I have so illustrious a prince, for a witness and censor of my conduct. The English punctually follow their religion; out of respect for your Royal Highness, I will not exhibit the scandal of a loose Catholic, who could dare violate his, in your presence.”

If so much religion, in the eyes of philosophism, is only unfortunately being a bigot, let it look to the thousands of unhappy creatures that religion relieved, by the hands of Mr. de Muy. Let it behold the soldiery, rather led by his example than by the laws of courage and discipline. Let it learn; that the province in which he commanded, still gratefully remembers and bless their former governor, in spite of the revolution, which seems to have tinged the human mind with the black hue of ingratitude.*

One of the great misfortunes of Lewis XVI. was to lose this virtuous minister at an early period. **Maurepas** Maurepas. was by no means the proper person to replace him in the confidence of the young king. His father even, who mentioned him in his will, had been misled by the aversion this former minister had shown to the Marquise de Pompadour, and his long exile had not wrought the change in him, which the Dauphin had supposed. The attention, however, which the young prince paid to the counsels of his father show how ardently he wished to surround himself with ministers seconding his views, for the good of the people. He could have made a better choice, had he known what had misled the Dauphin. Maurepas was now old and decrepid, but had all the vices of youth. Voltaire transforms him into a philosopher, and he coalesced with the sect through levity and indolence. He believed in nothing; he was without hatred against the altar, as without affection for the Sophisters. He would with equal indifference, wittily lash a bishop or D'Alembert. He found D'Argenson's plan for the destruction of the religious orders, and he followed it. He would have soon set aside the impious minister, had he known him that would conspire against the religion of the state. An enemy to all convulsions, and without any fixed principles on Christianity, he thought it at least impolitic to attempt its destruction. He certainly was not one of those men ca-

* See Mr. Le Tourneur de Tressel, on this Marechal, also Feller's Hist. Dict.

pable of stopping a revolution, but he did not forward it. He rather let others do the harm, than he did it himself; but unfortunately that harm which he let others do, was great. Under his administration philosophism made a terrible progress. Nothing proves it better than the choice of that Turgot, whose nomination is celebrated by Voltaire as the *beginning of a great revolution*.

Turgot.

The philanthropy of this man has been much extolled, but it was that of a hypocrite, as the reader will be convinced of, by the following letter from D'Alembert to Voltaire: "You will soon receive another visit, which I announce to you. It is that of Mr. de Turgot, a master of Requests, full of philosophy, a man of great parts and learning, a great friend of mine, and who wishes to see you in luck. I say luck for *propter metum Judæorum* (for fear of the Jews;) we must not brag of it too much, nor you neither."*

If at first sight the signification of the fear of the Jews is not understood, D'Alembert will explain it in a second portrait of his friend: "This Turgot, he writes, is a man of wit, great instruction and very virtuous; in a word, he is a worthy *Cacouac*, but has good reasons for not showing it too much, for I have learned to my cost, that the *Cacouaquery* (philosophism) is not the road to fortune, and he deserves to make his."†

Voltaire had an interview with Turgot, and formed so true a judgment of him, that he answers, "If you have many licentiates of that stamp in your sect; I fear for the *wretch*, *she* is lost to good company."‡

To every man who understands the encomiums of Voltaire or D'Alembert, this is as much as to say, Turgot is a secret adept, he is an ambitious hypocrite and will at once be a traitor to his God, his king and his country: but with us, we call him virtuous; he is a conspirator of the true stamp, necessary to compass the overthrow of Christianity. Had Voltaire or D'Alembert spoken of an ecclesiastic, or a religious writer who had only the virtues of a Turgot, what a monster we should have seen arise from his pen. Let the impartial historian examine, and lay aside these usurped reputations of virtue, let him say with truth, that Turgot, rich and above the common run of citizens, and still aiming at dignities and further fortune, cannot be called a real philosopher. Turgot being the adept of the

* Letter 64, anno 1760. † Letter 76. ‡ Letter 77.

conspiring Sophisters and a master of requests, is already perjured. He will be far more so when he arrives at the ministry. For by the standing laws of the state, he could only enjoy these dignities, by affirming both by himself and others, his fidelity to the king, to religion and to the state. He had already betrayed religion and the state, he will soon betray his king. He belonged to that sect of Economists who detested the French monarchy, and only suffered a king, in order to treat him as did the first rebels of the revolution.

At length, carried to the ministry, by the cabals of the sect, he uses all his power to inspire the young king with his disgust for the monarchy, and with his principles on the authority of a throne, he had sworn to maintain as minister. He would willingly have transformed him into a Jacobin king. He first insinuates those errors, which are one day to throw the sceptre into the hands of the people, and overturn the altar and the throne; if those are the virtues of a minister, they are those of a treacherous one; if errors of the mind, they are of a mad-man. Nature had endowed him with the desire of relieving his fellow-creatures. He heard the declamations of the Sophisters against the remains of the feudal system, under which the people still labored, and what with the Sophisters, was a mere tool of their hatred for kings, he mistook for the cry of compassion. He was blind to what all the world saw, and that particularly on the Corvees. He would not hearken to the voice of history, which told him that the shackles of the feudal system had as yet been only broken, by the wisdom and mature deliberation of the monarch, foreseeing the inconveniences and the means of covering the losses of the suppression. But he would be hasty and he ruined every thing. The Sophisters thought his dismissal too early, but alas! it was not early enough; for he had already tainted the throne with those revolutionary ideas on the sovereignty of the people; he had then forgotten that this was making all power depend on their caprice; he pretended to make the people happy by placing arms in their hands, with which they destroyed themselves. He thought to re-establish the laws in all their purity, and he only taught rebellion; he misleads the youthful monarch, too unexperienced, to unravel the sophisms of the sect; the very goodness of his heart leads him still more astray. In the pretended rights of the people, he only

sees his own to be sacrificed, and it is from Turgot, we are to trace that fatal error of his insurmountable patience and fatal condescension for that people, whose sovereignty led to the scaffold himself, his queen and his sister.

Turgot is the first minister who shows that revolutionary spirit, at once antichristian and antimonarchical. Choiseul and Malesherbes were more impious than Turgot, Choiseul perhaps was even more wicked, but never before had a minister been known, seeking to destroy the principles of that authority, in the mind of the king, which he imparted to them. It was reported that Turgot had repented on seeing the sovereign mob threatening his person, on seeing them bursting open the magazines of corn, and throwing both corn and bread into the river and that under pretence of famine; it was then, as reported, that seeing his errors, he had laid open to Lewis XVI. all the plans of the Sophisters, and that these latter ever after sought to destroy the idol they had set up. This anecdote, unfortunately for the honor of Turgot, is unfounded. Before his elevation to the ministry, he was an idol of the conspirators, and such he remained, until his death. Condorcet has also been his panegyrist and historian, and he would not have been tolerant on the repentance of an adept.

Scourges have fallen successively on France since the revolution, but prior to it they had succeeded each other in the persons of Lewis XVIth's ministers. Necker appeared after Turgot, and Necker re-appears after Briennes. And his virtues were extolled by the Sophisters nearly as much as he extols them himself. This is another of those reputations, which the historian must judge by facts, not for the mere pleasure of detecting the conspiring hypocrite, but because *these unmerited reputations were a means employed for the consummation of the conspiracy.*

Necker.

Necker, as yet a banker's clerk, was employed by some speculators both as the confidant and agent, in a business which was suddenly and greatly to augment their fortunes. They had the secret of an approaching peace, which was considerably to enhance the value of the Canada Bills; one of the conditions of the future peace being, the payment of those bills which had remained in England: they let Necker into the secret, on condition that for their common emolument, he

would write to London to have a number of these bills bought up at the low price which the war had reduced them to. Necker engaged in the association, and through the credit of his master, the bills were monopolized. His associates, returning to know the state of the bargain, he told them that the speculation had appeared so hazardous and bad, that he had desisted from and countermanded the purchase. Peace comes, and Necker is in possession of these bills in his own account alone, and these make near three millions Tournois.—Such was the virtue of Necker when a clerk!

Now rich, he calls the Sophisters to his table; his house becomes a weekly club, and the new Mecenas is well repaid for his good cheer by the encomiums and flattery of his guests. D'Alembert, and the chiefs of the conspirators, punctually attended these assemblies every Friday.* Necker hearing of nothing but philosophy, would be a philosopher, as suddenly as he became a lord, and the intrigue and encomiums of the sect would transform him into a Sully. At length Lewis XVI. hearing so much of the talents of this man in finance, called him to the ministry as Comptroller General. Among the many means of the conspirators, the most infallible was to introduce disorder in the finances. Necker succeeded completely in this plan, by those exorbitant loans which nothing could have hidden from the public, but that blind confidence, and those encomiums perpetually thrown out by the sect. But let Necker have acted from the impulse of conspirators, like an ignorant minister who knew not whither he was driven, or knowingly hollowed out the abyss, it is not his pretended virtue that is to plead his defence. Is it not probable that the man, who, when recalled for the second time to the ministry, could dare to starve the people in the midst of plenty, in order to convulse them into a revolution, could also attempt to ruin the finances to produce the same convulsive state? Such a virtue as his may be nearly classed with the blackest guilt.

At the time when Necker was recalled to replace Briennes in the ministry, at the time when his great generosity to the people was cried up, and that all France was stunned with his great feats, at that very time was he, in concert with Philippe D'Orleans, star-

* Correspondence of Voltaire and D'Alembert, Let. 31, anno 1770.

ving the people into revolt against their king, the nobles and the clergy. This virtuous man had bought up all the corn, had ordered it to be shut up in store-houses, or in barges sent it from one place to another, forbidding the intendants to allow of the sale of any corn, until they had received his orders. The Magazines remained shut. The boats wandered from port to port. The people clamorously called for bread, but in vain! The parliament of Rouen, concerned for the state to which the province of Normandy was reduced, desired its president to write to the minister (Necker) to demand the sale of a great quantity of corn which they knew to be then in the province. His letter was not answered. The first president received a second summons from his body, to expatiate in the most pressing manner on the wants of the people; at length Necker answers, that he has sent his orders to the Intendant. His orders are executed, but the Intendant is obliged, for his own justification, to lay them before the parliament, and so far were they from what was expected, that they were barely an instruction to put off the sale, and to invent divers pretexts and excuses to elude the demands of the magistrates, and to rid him of their applications. Meanwhile the vessels laden with corn, proceeded from the ports to the ocean, from the ocean to the rivers, or simply to the interior of the provinces. At the period when Necker was driven from the ministry for the second time, the people were destitute of bread. The parliament had then obtained proof that the same boats, laden with the same corn, had been from Rouen to Paris, and from Paris back again; then embarked at Rouen for the Havre, and thence returned again half rotten. The *Attorney General* profited of this second dismissal to send circular orders to stop these proceedings, and to give the people the liberty of buying this corn. At the expulsion of this minister, the populace of Paris, stupidly sovereign, run to arms, and demand their Necker, carrying his bust through the streets with that of Philippe D'Orleans, and never were two assassins better coupled in their triumph. The populace would have its executioner, which it stupidly stiled its father; and Necker, on his return, starves it anew. Scarce had he heard of the orders which the *Attorney General* of the Parliament of Normandy had given, when the revolutionary agents are sent from Paris, the people are stirred up against the magistrate, his mansion is forced and

pillaged, and a price is put upon his head !—Such were the virtues of the adept Necker, when minister and protector of the conspirators.

For the authenticity of these facts, the historian will appeal to the chief magistrates of the parliament of Rouen. If to shew the chief agent of such horrid deeds, I have been obliged to anticipate on the second part of this work ; it is because Necker had conspired against the throne, equally as against the altar. It was through him the Sophisters were to draw the Calvinists into their party, but pretending to the faith of Geneva he was really a Deist. Had not the Calvinists been blind to conviction, they could have seen it in his writings or in his universal connections with the impious. For this empty and vain man aimed at every thing. From a Clerk he became Comptroller-General ; next a protecting Sophister, and hence concluded he was a divine. He published his ideas on RELIGIOUS OPINIONS, and this work was nothing less than deism, and that is not judging severely a work, which does not look upon the existence of God as proved ; for what can the religion of that man be, who doubts of the existence of a God ? This work obtained for its author an academic crown, as being the best production of the day ; that is to say, that could insinuate the most impiety the least perceived.

After what has been said of the minister Briennes, Briennes, the intimate friend of D'Alembert, after the wickedness of this man has been so public, I should not mention him had I not to discover a plot, the like of which history would blush to show, and none but the annals of the modern Sophisters could produce. Under the name of Œconomists, the conspirators held secret meetings (which later we shall lay open to the public,) and impatiently waited the death of Mr. de Beaumont, Archbishop of Paris, to give him a successor, who entering into their views, and, under the pretext of humanity, kindness and toleration, was as patiently to endure with Philosophism, Jansenism and all other sects, as Mr. de Beaumont had strenuously opposed them. He was to be particularly indulgent as to the discipline of the parish clergy, even to let it decay in a few years. On tenets he was to be equally patient. He was to repress the zeal of those who appeared too active ; to interdict them, even to displace them as men too ardent or even

turbulent. He was carefully to receive all accusations of this sort, and replace the over-zealous by men whom the Sophisters had prepared and would recommend, particularly for dignitaries. By this plan the parish churches, as yet administered by a most edifying clergy, were soon to be overrun by the most scandalous. Sermons and catechistical lectures becoming daily less frequent; in fine, all instructions running in the philosophic strain, bad books daily multiplying; the people seeing in their parishes none but a clergy scandalous in their morals, and little zealous in their doctrine, were naturally to abandon the churches and their religion. The apostacy of the capital was to carry with it that of the most essential diocese; and hence the evil was to spread far around. Thus without violence, *without being perceived*, by the sole connivance of its chief pastor, religion was to be crushed in the capital; not but what Briennes might have given some exterior signs of zeal, had the circumstances required.*

Nothing but the ambition of a Briennes, and the wickedness of his heart, could have made him accept the archbishopric on such conditions. The agreement made, the Sophisters put all their agents in motion. The court is beset; an artful man, of the name of Vermon, who had been made reader to the queen by Choiseul, on the recommendation of Briennes, seized on this opportunity to make some return to his protector. The queen recommended the protector of Vermon, and she thought she was doing well; the king thought he did still better in nominating the man, whose moderation, whose prudence and whose genius, were so perpetual a topic, to the Archbishopric of Paris: and during one day Briennes was really named. But no sooner was it known either at court or in Paris, than every Christian shuddered at the news. The king's aunts and the Princess de Marsan in particular, immediately foresaw the scandal with which France was threatened, and the king prevailed upon by their prayers, annulled what he had already done. The archbishopric was given to a man whose modesty, zeal and impartiality, would form the strongest contrast, with the vices of Briennes. Unfortunately for France neither the king nor particularly the queen were sufficiently convinced, to lose all confidence in the pretended virtues of this man, nor did the

* See hereafter the declaration of Mr. le Roi.

conspirators lay all hopes aside of hereafter raising him to a more exalted station.

Like to the thunder-bolt hidden in the clouds, blackened by the tempest and waiting the convulsion of the heavens to break forth, so did Briennes, from the dark cloud which threatened France, convulsed during the sitting of the Notables, called by Calonne, burst forth prime minister. To show his subserviency to the Sophisters, he began by that famous edict which Voltaire had solicited twenty years before in behalf of the Huguenots, though he had looked upon them as *mad* and *raving mad* ;* by that edict so long wished for by D'Alembert, as a means of *duping* the Protestants, and of *crushing* Christianity, without its *even being perceived*. † Offspring of the tempest, he is at length overpowered by those billows which carried Necker to the helm, and which Necker holds solely to immerse his king, the nobility and the clergy into that sea of impious sophistry and frantic rage, which the conspirators had created.—Briennes died covered with infamy, but without remorse or giving signs of repentance.

By the same intrigue that had carried Briennes to the prime ministry, Lamoignon, whose ancestors had been an ornament to the magistracy, obtained the seals. He was notoriously like many other courtiers, an unbeliever, but he was also one of the conspirators. His name is to be found in their most secret committees. On his disgrace which soon followed that of Briennes, he *philosophically* shot himself.—Two such men at the head of the ministry! what means had they not, of countenancing and forwarding the Antichristian Conspiracy!

Lamoignon.

Posterity will find it difficult to conceive that a monarch so religious as Lewis XVI. should have been surrounded by such a set of impious ministers. Their surprise will be much lessened, when they consider that the conspirators aimed mostly at the higher orders of society, and that they wished to destroy religion in those chiefly who approached the person of the monarch. ‡ To the passions of this privileged class, let the facility of satisfying them be added, and we shall easily conceive with what facility Voltaire could attack a religion

Why so many impious ministers.

* Letter to Marmontel, 21st August 1767.

† Letter 4th of May 1762.

‡ Voltaire to Diderot, 25th December 1762, to D'Alembert and Damilaville.

which so much militated against those passions. Without doubt, eminent virtues and the most distinguished piety were to be found among the nobility and grandees of the court: for instance, Madame Elizabeth, sister to the king, Mesdames de France the king's aunts, the Princesses de Conti, Louise de Condé, de Marfan, the Duc de Penthièvre, the Mareschal de Mouchi, de Broglie, and many other distinguished personages who would have done honor to the brightest ages of Christianity. Among the ministers themselves, history will except Mr. de Vergennes and Mr. de St. Germain, and perhaps some others who could not be challenged by impiety; throughout the whole class of the nobility these exceptions may be more frequent than might be supposed, but nevertheless it is unfortunately true to say, that Voltaire had made surprising progress among the great, and that will easily account for the most unhappy choices Lewis XVI. had made; virtue seeks obscurity and is little jealous of elevation. None but the ambitious were foremost on the ranks, and the Sophisters would stun the ill-fated monarch with the praises of those whom they thought would best second their views, and who had been initiated in their mysteries. Not only the throne, but the public itself was to be overpowered by the praises which they lavished on the adept they wished to elevate to the ministry. Their intrigues were more secret and surpassed the art of courtiers themselves; besides, acting under the influence of public opinion, how could they not direct the choice of a young prince whose greatest failing was diffidence in his own judgment. By such arts were the Turgots, the Neckers, the Lamoignons, the Briennes successively forced into the councils of Lewis XVI. passing over in silence those subaltern ministers and first clerks, importantly great, whose services the conspiring Sophisters carefully secured.

Thus protected, impiety soared above the laws nearly silenced. It was in vain for the clergy to reclaim the hand of power, for it connived at the conspirators; their writings were circulated and their persons secure. Voltaire even writes to D'Alembert, "Thanks to a priest about the court, I should have been undone had it not been for *the Chancellor*, who at all times has shown me the greatest kindness."* This shows how little

* Letter 133, anno 1774.

any reclamations of the clergy could avail even against the chief of the conspirators. This letter discovers a new protector of the Sophisters in the person of Mr. de Meaupou; his ambition and his connection with the chief of the conspirators had always been hidden under the mask of religion.

M. Meaupou.

In a letter written also to D'Alembert, we see what immense use such protections were of, not only to Voltaire but also to the other adepts. He speaks of Choiseul. "I have the greatest obligations to him. "It is to him alone that I owe all the privileges I have "on my estate. Every favor that I have asked for my "friends he has granted."*

Some of these protectors also aimed at being authors, and without Voltaire's talents sought to inspire the people with the same principles. Of this number was the Duke D'Uzez who, to verify the expression of Voltaire that he was stronger in mind than in body, had undertaken a work in favor of liberty and equality applied to our belief in matters of faith, without consulting either church or pastor. Voltaire only wished to see it finished to declare the work as useful to society as it was to the duke himself.† This work never appeared, so we know not how to class the genius of the noble divine.

Duc D'Uzez

In Voltaire's letters we find many other great personages who swell the list of adepts and protectors, many names already famous in history; such was the descendant of a *Crillon* or a *Prince of Salme*, both worthy of better days according to Voltaire; but let not the reader mistake them, for the age of the Bayards and of those bold knights of former times; no, it is of an age worthy of *their modesty and their philosophic science*. We see Voltaire placing all his hopes in the prince of Ligne for the propagation of his sophisticated science throughout Brabant; and the Duke of Braganza, is as much extolled for the similarity of his sentiments.

Other great personages.

Among the Marquisses, Counts and Chevaliers, we find the Marquis D'Argence de Derac, a brigadecor-general, zealous in the destruction of Christianity in the province of Angoumois, and modernizing his fellow-countrymen, with his philosophic ideas.—The Marquis de Rochefort, Colonel of a regiment, who through his philosophism had gained the friendship of

* Letter 110, anno 1762.

† Voltaire to the Duc D'Uzez, 19th Nov. 1760.

Voltaire and D'Alembert.—The Chevalier Chattellux bold but more adroit in the war against Christianity. In fine, were we to credit Voltaire, nearly all those whom he was acquainted with in this class, were what he styles honest men in a letter to Helvetius in 1763. "Believe me, he writes, that Europe is full of men of reason, who are opening their eyes to the light. Truly the number is prodigious. I have not seen for these ten years past a single honest man of whatever country or religion he may have been, but what absolutely thought as you do." It is probable, and it is to be hoped that Voltaire greatly exaggerated his success. It would be impossible to conceive, that of the numbers of the nobility who went to contemplate the Grand Lama of the Sophisters at Ferney, the greatest part were not attracted by curiosity, rather than impiety. The surest rule by which we may distinguish the true adepts, is by the confidence he placed in them, or whether he sent them the productions of his own pen or those of other conspirators. At that rate even the list would greatly extend. Many duchesses and marchionesses would be found, as philosophic as Sister Guillemetta. But let them be forgotten those adepts were dupes than wicked, more unfortunate are they still, if they are above being pitied.

Count
D'Argental

Of these protectors, the Count D'Argental honorary counsellor of the parliament, is to be particularly distinguished. Nearly of the same age as Voltaire, he always had been his bosom friend. All that Mr. de la Harpe says of the amiability of this Count, may be true, but however amiable, it will also be true to say, that both the Count and Countess D'Argental were the dupes of their admiration and friendship for Voltaire. He corresponds as regularly with these two adepts as he did with D'Alembert, and as confidently exhorts them to crush the wretch. He styles them his two angels. He employed the Count as general agent for all higher protections, that he might stand in need of, and few agents were more devoted or more faithful, that is to say more impious.*

Duc de la
Rochefou-
cault.

A name of greater importance, and that is not to be overlooked among the protecting adepts, is that of the Duc de la Rochefoucault. To him who knows how much the Duke must have been mistaken in his own

* See General Correspondence.

wit, it will be matter of little surprize to see him so seldom mentioned in Voltaire's correspondence; but facts supply the place of written proofs. The Duke had been weak enough to allow himself to be persuaded, that impiety and Philosophism could alone give him a reputation. He protected the Sophisters, and even pensioned Condorcet. It would have been happy for him had he not waited for the murderers sent by Condorcet himself, to learn what were the real principles of this Philosophism.

In foreign courts, many great personages thought to soar above the vulgar, by this same Sophistry. Voltaire could not sufficiently admire the zeal of Prince Gallitzin, in dedicating the most impious of Helvetius's works to the Empress of Russia.* He was still more delighted with Count Schouwallow, the powerful protector of the Sophisters at that Court, and with all those, by whose intrigues D'Alembert had been nominated for the education of the heir to the Imperial diadem.

In Sweden, whence the Chamberlain Jennings, under the auspices of the King and Queen, had gone to announce to the patriarch of Ferney, the great progress of Philosophism in that country,† an adept was to be found far more extolled by the conspirators. This was the Count de Creutz, ambassador in France, and afterwards in Spain. He had so well blended his embassy with the apostleship of impiety, that Voltaire, enraptured, was inconsolable at his departure from Paris. He writes to Madame Geofrin, "Had there been
 " an Emperor Julian on earth, the Count de Creutz
 " should have been sent on embassy to him, and not
 " to a country where Auto-da-fe's are made. The
 " senate of Sweden must have been mad, not to have
 " left such a man in France; he would have been of
 " use there, and it is impossible that he should do any
 " good in Spain."‡

But this Spain, so much despised by Voltaire, could produce a D'Aranda, whom he styles the *Favorite of Philosophy*, and who daily went to stimulate his zeal, in the company of D'Alembert, Marmontelle, and Mademoiselle D'Espinasse, whose club nearly equalled the French Academy.

* Let. 117, to D'Alembert.

† Let. to D'Alembert, 19th Jan. 1769. ‡ 21st May, 1764.

Other dukes and grandees were to be found in Spain, equally admiring the French Sophistry. In particular the Marquis de Mora and the Duke of Villa Hermosa.* In this same country, so much despised by the Sophisters, we find D'Alembert distinguishing the Duke of Alba. It is of him that he writes to Voltaire, "One
 " of the first grandees of Spain, a man of great wit,
 " and the same person who was ambassador in France,
 " under the name of Duke of Huescar, has just sent
 " me twenty guineas towards your statue; condem-
 " ned, he says, secretly to cultivate my reason, I joy-
 " fully seize this opportunity of publicly testifying my
 " gratitude to the great man, who first pointed out the
 " road for me."†

It was at the sight of so numerous a list of disciples, that Voltaire exclaimed, "Victory declares for us on
 " all sides; I do assure you that in a little time, noth-
 " ing but the rabble will follow the standard of our ene-
 " mies."‡ He did not sufficiently dive into futurity, or he would have seen that rabble misled one day by the same principles, and sacrificing its masters on the very altar they had raised to impiety.

As to D'Alembert, he could not contain himself, when informed of the numerous admirers that flocked to Ferney. "What the devil, would he write, forty
 " guests at table, of whom two masters of requests
 " and a counsellor of the grand chamber, without
 " counting the Duke of Villars and company."§ Dining at Voltaire's, to be sure, is not an absolute proof of the philosophism of the guest, but it shews, generally, men who admired the chief of that impiety which was one day to be their ruin.

It was not by chance that D'Alembert mentions the counsellor of the grand chamber. He was fully aware of what importance it was for the conspirators, to have protectors, or even admirers, in the higher orders of the magistracy. Voltaire was of the same opinion when he writes, "Luckily during these ten years past,
 " that parliament (of Thoulouse) has been recruited by
 " young men of great wit, who have read, and who
 " think like you."|| This letter alone denotes how much the tribunals were relaxed, for many years preceding the revolution. They were vested with all the author-

* Let. of Voltaire, 1st May 1768. † Let. 108, anno 1773.

‡ Let. to Damilaville. § Let. 76, anno 1760.

|| Let. 11, anno 1769.

ity necessary for stopping the circulation of these impious and seditious works, and of taking cognizance of their authors, but they had so much neglected it, that in the latter times, a decree of the parliament was a means of enhancing the price, and extending the circulation of the work.

Voltaire, notwithstanding the numerous conquests made in these temples of justice, often complains of some of those respectable corps, as still containing magistrates who loved religion. But in return he extols the philosophic zeal of those of the fourth. "There (he writes to D'Alembert) you go from a *Mr. Duché* to a *Mr. de Castillon*, Grenoble can boast of a *Mr. Servan*. It is impossible that reason and toleration should not make the greatest progress under such masters."* This hope was the better founded, as these three magistrates, here named by Voltaire, are precisely those, who by their functions of attorney or solicitor generals, were obliged to oppose the progress of that reason, synonymous with impiety in the mouth of Voltaire; and to uphold the power of the law against those daily productions and their authors.

Mr. de la Chalotaix is of all others, the solicitor general who seems to have been in the closest intimacy with Voltaire. It is in their correspondence, that we see how much the conspirators were indebted and how grateful they were to him, on account of his zeal against the Jesuits, and how much the destruction of that order, was blended with that of all other religions, in their plans for the total overthrow of all ecclesiastical authority.†

But in spite of all this Philosophism, which had crept into the body of the magistracy, we meet with men venerable, and whose virtues were the ornament of the highest tribunals; particularly the grand chamber of the parliament of Paris, appeared so opposite to his impiety, that he despaired of ever philosophizing it. He even does it the honor of ranking it with that *populace* and *those assemblies of the clergy*, that he despaired of ever rendering *reasonable*, or rather impious.‡

* Let. of the 5th Nov. 1770.

† See their correspondence, particularly Voltaire's letter to Mr. Chalotaix, 17th May 1762.

‡ Let. to D'Alembert, 13th Dec. 1763.

There even was a time, when he expresses his indignation to Helvetius in the following terms. " I believe that the French are descended from the centaurs, who were half men and *half pack-horses*. These two halves have been separated, and there remained, *men like you and some others*, also horses, *who have bought the offices of counsellor* (in parliament,) or who have made themselves doctors of Sorbonne."*

It is an agreeable duty I fulfil, when I show proof of this spite of the Sophisters against the first corps of the French magistracy. It is certain that at the time of the revolution, many magistrates were yet to be found, who better informed of the intrigues of the Sophisters, would willingly have given greater vigour to the laws for the support of religion. But impiety had intruded even into the grand chamber. Terrey, as yet only known as a wicked minister, is not sufficiently so as a Sophister.

Trait of
the Abbé
Terrey.

Whatever may be the blackness of many facts mentioned in these memoirs, few are of a deeper hue than the following one.

The bookseller Le Jay was publicly selling one of those works, the impiety of which sometimes commanded the attention of the parliament. That sold by Le Jay was ordered to be publicly burnt and the author and sellers to be prosecuted. Terrey offered himself to make the necessary perquisitions, and was to report to parliament. He ordered Le Jay before him, and I will lay before the reader the very words I heard the bookseller make use of, when he gave an account of what had passed on the occasion. As to the title of the work, I am not quite certain whether he mentioned it or not, but I perfectly remember what follows:—" Ordered before Mr. Terrey, counsellor in parliament; I wait on him. He received me with an air of gravity, sat down on a couch, and questioned me as follows:—" Is it you that sell this work condemned by a decree of the parliament? I answered, Yes, my Lord. How can you sell such dangerous works? As many others are sold.—Have you sold many of them? Yes my Lord.—Have you many left? About six hundred copies.—Do you know the author of this bad work? Yes, my Lord.—Who is it? You, my Lord!—How dare you say so; how do you know that? I know it,

* July 22d, 1761.

“ my Lord, from the person of whom I bought your
“ manuscript.—Since you know it all is over ; go, but
“ be prudent.”

It may be easily conceived that this interrogatory was not reported to the parliament, and the reader will equally understand what progress the Antichristian Conspiracy made in a country, where its adepts were seated in the very sanctuary of the laws.

CHAP. XV.

The Class.—Of Men of Letters.

THE passions and the facility of gratifying them, the yoke of religion once thrown off, had given the conspirators great power among the higher classes of society; and the empty hopes of a reputation brought over to their standards all those who pretended to literary fame. The great talents of Voltaire, and a success perhaps superior to his talents, proclaimed his sway absolute, over the class of men of letters. Humbly those men followed his triumphant car, who above all others will proudly flatter themselves with the perfection of their own ideas. It was only necessary for him to give the fashion. Like to those frivolous nations where the high-flown courtizans, by their sole example, can introduce the most wanton fashions in attire, just so does the premier chief. Scarce had he shown his bias towards impiety, when the men of letters would all be impious.

Rouffeau.

From that cloud of writers and adepts, a man shone forth who might have disputed with him the palm of genius; and who, for celebrity, needed not to resort to impiety. This was Jean Jaques Rouffeau. That famous citizen of Geneva, sublime when he pleases in his prose, rivalling Milton or Corneille in his poetry, could have rivalled Bossuet under the banners of Christianity. Unfortunately for his glory, he was known to D'Alembert, Diderot and Voltaire, and for a time he leagued with them, and fought like them, the means of crushing Christ and his religion. In this synagogue of impiety, as in that of the Jews, testimonies did not agree; divisions ensued, but though separated, their attacks were bent against Christianity. This is to be seen in a letter from Voltaire to D'Alembert, where he says, "What a pity it is that Jean Jaques, Diderot, Helvetius and you, with other men of your stamp, should not have been unanimous in your attacks on *the wretch*. My greatest grief is, to see the impostors united, and the friends of truth divided."*

* No. 156, anno 1756.

When Rousseau seceded from the Sophisters, he did not by that forsake either his own or their errors; he separately carried on the war. The admiration of the adepts was divided. In either school, impiety had only varied its weapons, nor were opinions more constant or less impious.

Voltaire was the most active, but vigor was given to Jean Jaques. With the strength of Hercules he also partook of his delirium. Voltaire laughed at contradiction, and his pen flew with every wind. Jean Jaques would insist on the paradoxes fostered in his brain, and brandishing his club on high, he would equally strike at truth or falsehood. The former was the vane of opinion, the latter the Proteus of Sophistry. Both equally distant from the schools of wisdom, both wished to lay the foundations and first principles of philosophy.

The *pro* and *con* was equally adopted by them, and both found themselves condemned to the most humiliating inconstancy. Voltaire, uncertain as to the existence of a God, or of a future state, applies to Sophisters bewildered like himself, and remains perplexed. Jean Jaques, as yet a mere youth, says to himself, "I am going to throw this stone against that tree opposite to me: If I hit, a sign of salvation; if I miss, a sign of damnation." Jean Jaques hits, and heaven is his lot. This proof sufficed for the philosopher long after his youthful days: and he was far advanced in years when he says, "Ever after that I never doubted of my salvation."*

Voltaire one day believed he could demonstrate the existence of the *Author of the Universe*; he then believed in an all-powerful God, who remunerated virtue.† The day after, the whole of this demonstration is dwindled into probabilities and doubts, which it would be the summit of ridicule to pretend to solve.‡

The same truth is one day evident to Jean Jaques, nor does he doubt of it after having demonstrated it himself. He beheld the Deity all around him, with him, and throughout nature on that day, when he exclaimed, "I am certain that God exists of himself."§ But the day following, the demonstration was forgotten, and he writes to Voltaire, "Frankly I confess that

* His Confessions, book 6th. † Voltaire on Atheism.

‡ Voltaire on Atheism; and on the Soul by Suranus.

§ The Emile and Let. to the Archbishop of Paris.

“ (on the existence of God,) neither the *pro* nor the *con* appears to me demonstrated.” With Jean Jaques as with Voltaire, *Theism and Atheism* could only found their doctrine on *probabilities*.* And they both believed in one only principle or *sole Mover*.† But at another time they could not deny but what there were two principles or two causes.‡

Voltaire, after having written that Atheism would people the earth with robbers, villains and monsters,§ would acquit Atheism in Spinoza, and even allow of it in a Philosopher,|| and professed it himself when he writes to D’Alembert, “ I know of none but Spinoza who has argued well.”¶ That is to say, I know of no true philosopher but he to whom all matter and this world is the sole God; and after having tried every sect, he ends by pressing D’Alembert to unite all parties in the war against Christ. Jean Jaques had written that the Atheists deserved punishment; that they were *disturbers of the public peace*, and as such guilty of death.** Then thinking he had fulfilled Voltaire’s wish, writes to the minister Vernier, “ I declare that my sole object in the *New Eloisa*, was to unite the two opposite parties (the Deists and Atheists,) by a reciprocal esteem for each other, and to teach the philosophers that one may believe in God without being a hypocrite, or deny him without being a rascal.”†† And this same man writes to Voltaire, that an Atheist cannot be guilty before God. That should the law find the Atheist guilty of death, it was the denounciator who should be burned as such.‡‡

Voltaire would blaspheme the law of Christ, retract, receive the sacrament, and press the conspirators to crush the wretch! Jean Jaques would lay aside Christianity, or resume it again, and with Calvin will partake of the Last Supper; §§ will write the most sublime

* Letter to Voltaire, vol. 12. Quarto edit. of Geneva.

† Voltaire on the Principle of Action.—Jean Jaques in the *Emile*, vol. 3, page 115, and Letter to the Archbishop of Paris.

‡ Voltaire, *Quest. Encyclop.* vol. 9.—Jean Jaques, *Emile*, vol. 3, page 61, and Let. to the Archbishop of Paris.

§ On Atheism.

|| Axiom 3.

¶ Letter to D’Alembert, 16th June, 1773.

** *Emile*, vol. 4, page 68. *Social Contract*, chap. 3.

†† Letter to Mr. Vernier.

‡‡ Letters to Voltaire, vol. 12, and *New Eloisa*.

§§ D’Alembert writes to Voltaire, in speaking of Rousseau, “ I pity him, and if his happiness depends on his approaching

encomiums on Christ that human eloquence could devise, and then finish by blaspheming that same Christ as a fanatic. || If the Antichristian Revolution was one day to carry Voltaire triumphantly to the Pantheon, Rousseau had the same rights to the inauguration of the Sophisters of Impiety. We shall see him gain far other claims on the Sophisters of Rebellion. If the former secretly solicits kings to subscribe to his statue, the latter openly writes that at Sparta one would have been erected to him.

With so similar a conduct, each of these chiefs had his distinctive characteristics. Voltaire hated the God of the Christians. Jean Jaques admired but blasphemed him, and pride wrought in the latter, all that jealousy and hatred produced in the former; and it will long be a doubt which has been most fatal to Christianity, the one by his atrocious sarcasms and impious satire, the other by his sophistry under the cloak of reason.

After their separation, Voltaire hated Jean Jaques, scoffed at him, and would have him chained as a madman.* But he could not hide his joy, when the Profession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar, written by this madman, was the book out of which youth were taught to read. † Jean Jaques would at the same time detest the chiefs of the conspirators, expose them and be hated by them: he would preserve their principles, court their friendship and esteem anew, and that of the premier chief in particular. ‡

If to define the Sophister of Ferney was a difficult task, is it not equally so, to paint the citizen of Geneva? Jean Jaques loved the sciences and is crowned by those who reviled them; he wrote against the theatre and composed operas; he sought friends and is famous for his breaches of friendship. He extols the

“the Holy Table, and in calling holy a religion which he has so much vilified, I own that my esteem is greatly diminished.” (Let. 105, anno 1762.) He might have said as much of Voltaire’s communions, but he never dared. He even seeks to give him a plea for his hypocrisy, when he says, “Perhaps I am in the wrong, for certainly you are better acquainted than I am, with the reasons that determined you.” He does not mention his esteem being diminished; on the contrary, Voltaire is always his *dear and illustrious master!* Letter 31st May, 1768.

|| His Confession and Professions of the Savoyard Vicar.

* Let. to Damilaville, 8th May 1761, and War of Geneva.

† Letter to the Count D’Aigental, 26th Sept. 1766.

‡ See his letters, and the Life of Seneca by Diderot.

charms of virtue, and he bends the knee before the prostitute de Varens. He declares himself the most virtuous of men and under the modest title of his Confessions, he retraces in his old age the dissolute scenes of his youth. To tender mothers he gives the most pathetic advice in nature ; and smothering in himself the cries of that same nature, he banishes his children to that hospital where, from the shame of its birth, the unfortunate babe is condemned to the perpetual ignorance of its parents. The fear of seeing them, makes him inexorable to the entreaties of those who would have provided for their education. § A prodigy of inconsistency even to his last moments ; he wrote against suicide, and perhaps it is treating him too favorably, not to assert that he himself had prepared the poison, which caused his death. ||

However inconsistent, error is inculcated by the Sophister of Geneva, with all the powers of genius, and many have lost their faith by his works, who would have resisted all other attacks. To be cradled in one's passions, gave empire to Voltaire ; but to resist Jean Jaques the acutest sophisms were to be seen through : youth was led away by the former, whilst those who were advanced in age fell a victim to the latter, and a prodigious number of adepts owed their fall to these two writers.

Buffon.

Indignantly would the manes of Buffon see his name classed, after that of Jean Jaques, among the conspiring adepts. But difficult would it be for the historian, when speaking of those who have adopted the fashion set by Voltaire, not to sigh at pronouncing the name of the French Pliny. He certainly was rather the victim than the associate of the conspirators. But who can erase Philosophism from his writings ? Nature had lent her genius and why would he not content himself with what she had placed before him. No, he would ascend higher, he would explain those mysteries reserved to revelation alone ; and soaring above his sphere, he often shows himself the disciple of Maillet and Boulanger. To give the history of nature, he destroys that of religion. He was the hero of those men whom D'Alembert had sent to split mountains and seek from the depths of the earth, arguments to belie Moses and the first pages of holy writ. In the praises of the Sophis-

§ See his Confessions.

|| See his life by the Count Barruel de Beauvert,

ters he consoles himself for the censures of the Sorbonne; but the punishment attached to the fault itself, for he only belied his own reputation on his knowledge of the laws of nature. They appeared to be null when he treated of the earth formed by the waters, or by fire, and of his endless epochs. And to falsify the scriptures, he makes nature as inconsistent as his own systems. His style elegant and noble has always been admired, but found insufficient to save his works from the smile of the real philosopher; and his glory, like his comet, vanished in his dreams of incredulity. Happy, if in retracting his errors, he had been able to destroy that spirit of research in the adepts who only studied nature through the medium of Voltaire.*

And these two men so justly distinguished by the grandeur of their style, the remaining adepts chiefly owe their celebrity to their impiety; nevertheless two might have done honor to science by their learning. The first, which is Freret, had from his immense memory nearly learned Bayle's Dictionary by heart. But his letters to Thrasylbulus, the offspring of his Atheism, shows that his vast memory was more than outweighed by his want of judgment.

Freret;

The second was Boulanger, whose brain overburdened with Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Syriac and Arabic, had also adopted all the extravagancies of Atheism; but retracted in the latter part of his life, execrating the sect that had misled him. We shall soon see that all those posthumous works attributed to these writers, were never written by them.

Boulanger;

Fain would the Marquis D'Argens have figured among the learned Sophisters; but his *Chinese and Cabalistic Letters*, and his *Philosophy of Good Sense*, only prove, that to Bayle's Dictionary he was indebted for his pretended reputation. He was a long while a friend of Frederick's, and his impiety entitled him to that friendship. It is from his brother, the President D'Eguille,

Marquis
D'Argens,

* D'Alembert and Voltaire ridiculed all those vain systems of Bailly and Buffon on the antiquity of the world and of its inhabitants. They would call these systems, *Nonsense, Follies, an Excuse for the want of Genius, Shallow Ideas, Vain and ridiculous Quackery* (Letter to Voltaire, 6th March 1777); but D'Alembert took care to keep his opinions secret on this subject. By discrediting these systems he feared lest he should discourage those adepts whom he had sent to forge new ones in the Appennines, in order to give the lie to Moses and the sacred writ.

Vol. I.

Z

that we have learned, that after several discussions on religion, with persons better versed in that science than Frederick, he submitted to the light of the Gospel, and ardently wished to atone for his past incredulity.

La Metrie. As to La Metrie the Doctor, if he appeared to rave, it was only from the sincerity of his heart. His *man-machine*, or his *man-plant*, only caused the sect to blush from the open manner in which he had said, what many of them wished to insinuate.

Marmontel. Down to the first days of the revolution, the Sophisters conspiring against their God, thought they could glory in the talents and co-operation of Marmontel. But let us not add to the sorrows of the man, who needed only the first days of the revolution, to shrink with horror from those conspiracies which had given it birth. Of all the Sophisters, who have outlived Voltaire, Mr. de Marmontel is the one who most wished to hide his former intimacy with the Antichristian chiefs. But alas, it is to those connections that he owes his celebrity far more than to his *Incas*, his *Belisarius* or to his *Tales*, intermingled with Philosophism. We could wish to hide it, but Voltaire's own letters convict the repenting adept of having acted, and that during a long time, a very different part among the conspirators. Voltaire was so well convinced of Mr. de Marmontel's zeal, that thinking himself on the point of death, he bequeathed La Harpe to him. This last will is worded thus, "I recommend La Harpe to you, when I am no more; he will be one of the pillars of our church. You must have him received of the academy. After having gained so many prizes, it is but just that he should bestow them in his turn."*

La Harpe. With a taste for literature, and some talents, which in spite of his critics, distinguish him above the common rank of the writers of the day, Mr. de la Harpe might have rendered his works useful had he not, from his youth, been the spoilt child of Voltaire. At that age, it is easy to believe one's self a philosopher, when one disbelieves one's catechism, and the young La Harpe blindly followed the instructions of his master. If he never was the pillar, he might be correctly styled the trumpeter of the new church, by means of the *Mer-cure*, a famous French journal, which by its encomiums,

* Voltaire to Marmontel, 21st Aug. 1767.

or its weekly criticisms, nearly decided the fate of all literary productions.*

The encomiums which Voltaire lavished on that journal, after La Harpe had undertaken the direction of it, show how little governments are aware of the influence of such journals over the public opinion. Above ten thousand people subscribed, and many more perused the *Mercur*; and influenced by its suggestions, they by degrees became as philosophic, or rather impious, as the hebdomadary Sophister himself. The conspirators saw what advantage could be reaped from this literary dominion. La Harpe ruled the sceptre during many years, then Marmontel jointly with Champfort, as Remi who was little better, had held it before them. I one day asked the latter, how it was possible, that he had inserted in his journal, one of the wickedest and falsest accounts possible, of a work purely literary, and of which I had heard him speak in the highest terms. He answered me, that the article alluded to had been written by a friend of D'Alembert's, and that he owed his journal, his fortune even to D'Alembert's protection. The injured author wished to publish his defence in the same journal, but it was all in vain.—Let the reader judge from thence how powerfully the periodical papers contributed to the designs of the conspirators, and it was by them that the public mind was chiefly directed to their desired object.

This sect disposed of reputations by their praises or their critics, as it best suited them. By these journals they reaped the two-fold advantage of pointing out to those writers, who hungered after glory or bread,† what

* We learn, by the public newspapers, that Mr. de la Harpe was converted, when in prison, by the Bishop of St. Brieux. I should be little surpris'd at it. The examples of this prelate, with the fruits of Philosophism in this revolution, must strongly impress the man who, with a sound judgment, can compare them with the lessons and promises of his former masters. If the news of this conversion be true, I shall have shown him consecrating his talents to error, and nobody will applaud him more than myself, in seeing him direct them in future towards truth alone.

† The Sophisters were so well acquainted with the powers of a journal, that they mustered up their highest protections against the religious authors who would dispute one with them. When Voltaire was informed that Mr. Clement was to succeed to Mr. Freron, whose pen had long been consecrated to the vindication of truth, he did not blush at sending D'Alembert to the chancellor in hopes of hindering Mr. Clement from continuing Freron's journal. (Let. 12th Feb. 1773.)

subjects they were to investigate, and of calling by means of their literary trump, the attention of the public only on those works, which the sect wished to circulate, or had nothing to fear from.

By such artifices, the La Harpes of the day forwarded the conspiracy as much if not more, than the most active of the Sophisters, or their most impious writers. The sophistical author would mingle or condense his poison in his productions, whilst the journalist adept would proclaim it, and infuse it throughout the capital, or into all parts of the empire. The man, who would have remained ignorant of the very existence of an impious or a seditious work, the man, who would have neither spent his time nor his money, on such productions, imbibed the whole of their poison from the perfidious extracts made by the sophistical journalist.

Condorcet.

Above all the adepts, far more than Voltaire himself, did a fiend called Condorcet, hate the son of his God. At the very name of the Deity, the monster raged, and it appeared as if he wished to revenge on heaven, the heart it had given him. Cruel and ungrateful, the cool assassin of friendship and of his benefactors, he would willingly have directed the dagger against his God, as he did against La Rochefoucault. Atheism was but folly in La Metrie, madness in Diderot, but in Condorcet, it was the phrenzy of hatred and the offspring of pride. It was impossible to convince Condorcet, that any thing but a fool could believe in God. Voltaire, who had seen him when a youth, little foresaw what services he was to render to the conspiracy, even when he wrote, "My great consolation in dying is, that you support the honor of our poor Velches, in which you will be well seconded by Condorcet!"*

It could not have been on the talents of this man, that the premier rested his hopes. Condorcet had learned as much geometry as D'Alembert could teach him; but as to the Belles' Lettres, he was not even of the second class. His style was that of a man who did not know his own language, and his writings, like his sophisms, required much study to be understood. But hatred did for him what nature has done for others. Perpetually plodding at his blasphemies, he at last succeeded in expressing them more clearly; for the amazing difference which is observable between his former

* Let. to D'Alembert, No. 101, anno 1773.

and his latter works, can only be explained after that manner. It is more remarkable in his posthumous work on the human mind, where his pen can hardly be traced, excepting in a few passages, though his genius haunts every page. There he is to be seen, as during his life time, in his studies, in his writings or conversation, directing every thing towards Atheism, seeking no other object in this work, than to inspire his readers with his own frantic hatred against his God. Long since had he waited for the downfall of the altar, as the only sight his heart could enjoy. He beheld it, but was soon to fall himself. His end was that of the impious man, a vagabond and wanderer, sinking under pain, misery and the dread of Robespierre, without acknowledging the hand of God, that struck him by that of the ferocious dictator. Alas, if he died as he lived, will not the first instants of his conviction and repentance be those, when he shall hear that God, whom he blasphemed and denied, confessed by the mouths of those awful victims of eternal vengeance ! !

During his lifetime, so great was his hatred, that adopting error, in order to rid men of that fear of an immortal God in heaven, he did not hesitate in hoping that his philosophism would one day render men immortal upon earth. To belie Moses and the prophets, he became himself the prophet of madness. Moses had shown the days of man decreasing unto the age at which God had fixed them, and the royal prophet had declared the days of man to extend from sixty to seventy, and at the most to eighty years, after which all was trouble and pain. And to the oracles of the Holy Ghost, Condorcet would oppose his ! When he calculates his philosophic revolution, which begins by dragging so many to their graves, he adds to the creed of his impiety, that of his extravagancies ; and without hesitation he pronounces that, "*we are to believe that the life of man must perpetually encrease, if physical revolutions do not obstruct it. That we are ignorant of the extreme term, which it is never to exceed. We do not even know, whether nature in its general laws has fixed that extreme term !*" Thus in his pretended *Philosophic Sketch of the Progress of the human Mind*,* after having built his entire history on the hatred of Christ, and left no hopes to man but in Atheism,

* Epoch 10th, page 322.

we see this Sophister of falsehood, setting up for a prophet, and foreseeing all the fruits of his triumphant philosophy. It is in the very moment of the overthrow of the altar, that he tells us, that henceforth the days of man shall be lengthened, and that in lieu of an eternal God in heaven, man may become immortal on earth, as if at the very moment of its triumph, Philosophism, and the pride of the whole sect, were to be humbled through the extravagancies of the most impious and dearest of its adepts. A life wholly spent in blasphemy, could never have but frenzy for its end.

This name of Condorcet, will appear again in these memoirs, and we shall see him hating kings nearly as much as he did his God. Helvetius, and many others before him, had fallen a victim to this double hatred, though their hearts seemed capable of neither.

Helvetius.

The unfortunate Helvetius, the child of a virtuous father, followed his steps till beyond his early youth. An exemplary piety had been the fruits of a good education, when he became acquainted with Voltaire. He at first sought him as a master, and his love for poetry had inspired him with admiration for him. Such was the origin of their intimacy, and never was connection more perfidious. In lieu of poetry, impiety constituted his lectures, and in the space of one year, Voltaire transforms his pupil into a more impious and determined Atheist than he was himself. Helvetius was rich, and is at once actor and protector. Laying aside the Gospel, like the generality of the Sophisters, who while they pretend to superior understanding, in crediting the mysteries of Revelation not only believe in all the absurdities of Atheism, but are the sport of their own puerile credulity in all that can be turned against religion. Helvetius's work on the *Spirit*, and which Voltaire calls *Matter*, is filled with ridiculous stories, and fables which he gives for truths, and which are all beneath criticism. This is nevertheless the work of a man who pretends to reform the universe, but who equally disgusts his readers by the licentiousness and obscenity of his morals, and by the absurdity of his materialism.

Helvetius also wrote on *Happiness*, but appears himself to have been a perfect stranger to it. In spite of all his philosophy, he was so tender to the best-founded censure, that he lost his rest, went a travelling, and only returned to brood over the hatred he had vowed to

kings and the church. Naturally of a good and gentle disposition, his work *on Man and his Education*, proves how much Philosophism had altered that disposition. There he gives full scope to the grossest calumny and abuse, and denies daily facts, the most publicly attested.*

I have already spoken of RAYNALD ; it is not worth our while to call DESLISLE from the oblivion which both he and his work on the *Philosophy of Nature*, have so long been buried in. Still less that ROBINET and his book of *Nature*, which is only remembered on account of his strange explanations of the intellect by *oval fibres* ; of memory by *undulated or spiral fibres* ; of will by *fretted fibres* ; pleasure and pain by *bundles of sensibility*, and learning by *bumps in the understanding*, and a thousand such like vagaries, still more ridiculous if possible.†

I shall mention TOUSSAINT, as this man shows to what a height Atheism raged among the conspirators. He had undertaken the part of the corruption of morals. Under the mask of moderation, he succeeds by telling youth, that *nothing was to be feared from love*, this passion *only perfecting them*.‡ That between man and woman *that was a sufficient claim on each other without matrimony*.§ *That children are not more beholden to their fathers for their birth, than for the champagne they had drunk, or the minuet they had been pleased to dance*.|| That vengeance being incompatible with God, the wicked

* I would willingly have acquitted Helvetius of this posthumous work, by saying, that it might have been an offspring of that same committee, which had fathered so many other impious works on the dead. But then Voltaire could not have mentioned that work to his brethren at Paris, as one that they must be acquainted with. In three successive letters, he attributes it to Helvetius. He censures him on history, as we have done, and D'Alembert, who could not be ignorant of its author, does not undeceive him. The shame then of this work, must attach to Helvetius. This man writes, in a city where its archbishop, and its pastors were remarkable for their care and charity to the poor, that the clergy were so hard-hearted that the poor were never seen to beg an alms of them ; and it was in that same city where the rectors were perpetually seen surrounded by, and alleviating the distresses of those same poor. (See his work on Man, &c.) Such were the calumnies his hatred invented, though contradicted by daily facts. He might have said, with more truth, that many applied for alms, to ecclesiastics and religious houses, when they dared not ask them elsewhere.

† Of Nature, vol. the 1st, book 4th, chap. 2, &c. &c.

‡ On Morals, part 2 and 3.

§ Ibid. part 2 and 3. || Ibid. part 3, article 4.

had nothing to fear from the punishments of another world.* Notwithstanding all this doctrine, the conspirators looked upon him as a timed adept, because he owned a God in heaven, and a soul in man; and to punish him they stiled him the *Capuchin Philosopher*. Happily for him he took a better way of punishing them, by abandoning their cause and recanting from his errors.†

In vain should I name a croud of other writers of the sect. Voltaire had so perfectly brought these Antichristian productions into fashion, that this species of literature was the resource and livelihood of those miserable scribblers, who fed upon their traffic in blasphemy. Holland in particular, that miry bog, where the demon of avarice, enthroned under the auspices of a few booksellers, for a doit would have made over every soul, every religion to impiety, was the grand asylum of these starving infidels. Marc Michel appears to have been the bookseller, who bought their blasphemies at the highest price. He kept in his pay one Laurent, a monk, who had taken refuge at Amsterdam, and is the author of the *portable divinity*, and so many other impious works recommended by Voltaire, in short, of the *compere Mathieu*. This monk had other co-operators, whom Marc Michel paid by the sheet. It is Voltaire himself who gives us this account, and these are the works he perpetually recommends the circulation of, as those of a philosophy which diffused a new light to the universe.‡

We shall soon see the presses of the secret confraternity vying with those of Holland, in the deluging of Europe, with these vile productions. Their immense number brought them into such repute, that many years before the revolution, there was not a petty poet, not a novel writer, but must needs pay his tribute to the Philosophism of impiety; one would have thought that the whole art of writing and of getting readers, consisted in epigrams and sarcasms against religion, that all sciences, even the most foreign to religion, had equally conspired against the God of Christianity.

The history of mankind was transformed into the art of distorting facts, and of directing them against

* On *Morals*, part 2, sec. 2.

† See his *Expostulations on the Book of MORALS*.

‡ Let. to the Count D'Argental, 26th Sept. 1761. To D'Alembert, 13th Jan. 1768. To Mr. Desbordes 4th April 1768.

Christianity and Revelation ; Physics or the history of Nature, anti-Mosaic systems. Medicine had its atheism, and Petit taught it at the schools of surgery. La Lande and Dupui imbibed their lectures on astronomy with it, while others introduced it even into grammar ; and Condorcet, proclaiming this progress of Philosophism, exults in seeing it *descend from the northern thrones into the universities*.* The young men walking in the footsteps of their masters, carried to the bar all those principles, which our romancing lawyers, were to display in the Constituent Assembly. On leaving the college, the attorneys clerks, or those of a counting-house, only seemed to have learned their letters in order to articulate the blasphemies of Voltaire or Jean Jaques. Such was the rising generation, who since the expulsion of their former masters, were to be found prepared for the grand revolution. Hence arose the Mirabeaux and Brissots, the Caras and Garats, the Merciers and Cheniers. Hence in a word, all that class of French literators, who appear to have been universally carried away by the torrent of the French Revolution.

An apostacy so universal does not prove that literature and science are prejudicial in themselves, but it shews that men of letters, destitute of religion, are the most dangerous subjects in the state. It is not absolutely in that class that a Robespierre and a Jourdan is found ; but it can afford a Petion or a Marat. It can afford principles, sophisms, and a morality, which terminate in Robespierres or in Jourdans ; and if these latter murder a Bailly, terrify a Marmontel, and imprison a La Harpe, they only terrify, murder, or imprison their progenitors.

* See his artful edition of Pascal, Advertisement, page 5.

CHAP. XVI.

Conduct of the Clergy towards the Antichristian Conspirators.

WHILST apostacy bore sway in the palaces of the great, in the Schools of science, and that all the higher classes of citizens were led away from the worship of their religion, some by example, others by the artful sophisms of the conspirators, the duties of the clergy could not be doubtful. It was they who were to oppose a bank to the fetid torrent of impiety, and save the multitude from being swept away by its waters. Far more than its honor or its interest, its very name called on the clergy by the most sacred ties of duty and of conscience, to guard the altar against the attacks of the conspirators. The least backwardness in the combat would have added treason to apostacy. Let the historian who dared speak the truth on kings, be true on the merits of his own body, and whether it redounds to the honor or disgrace of his brethren, let him speak the truth. Hence the future clergy will learn the line of conduct they are to follow, from what has been done. The conspiracy against Christ is not extinct, it may be hidden; but should it burst forth anew, must not the pastor know how far his conduct may influence or retard its progress?

If under the name of Clergy, were comprehended all those who in France wore the half-livery of the church, all that class of men who in Paris, and some of the great towns, styled themselves Abbés, history might reproach the clergy with traitors and apostates, from the first dawn of the conspiracy. We find the Abbé de Prades the first apostate, and happily first to repent. The Abbé Morellet, whose disgrace is recorded in the repeated praises of Voltaire and D'Alembert.* The Abbé Condilhac, who was to sophisticate the morals of his royal pupil, and particularly that Abbé Raynald, whose name alone is tantamount to twenty demoniacs of the sect.

Sophisters
under title
of Abbés.

* Letter to D'Alembert, No. 65, anno 1760. To Thiriet, 26th Jan. 1762.

Paris swarmed with those Abbés; we still say, the Abbé Barthelemi, the Abbé Beaudeau, again the Abbé Noel, the Abbé Syeyes. But the people on the whole, did not confound them with the clergy. They knew them to be the offspring of avarice, seeking the livings but laying the duties of the church aside, or through economy adopting the dress while they dishonored it by their profligacy and irreligious writings. The numbers of these amphibious animals, and particularly in the metropolis, may be one of the severest reproaches against the clergy. However great the distinctions made between these and the latter may have been, the repeated scandals of the former, powerfully helped the conspiracy, by their laying themselves open to satire, which retorted upon the whole body, and affected the real ministers of the altar. Many of these Abbés who did not believe in God, had obtained livings through means of the Sophisters, who by soliciting dignities for their adepts, sought to introduce their principles, and dishonor the clergy by their immorality. It was the plague they spread in the enemy's camp, and not daring to face them in the field, they sought to poison their springs.

If under the title of Clergy we only comprehend those who really served at the altar, the conspirators never prevailed against them. I have searched their records, I have examined whether among the bishops and functionary clergy, any of these adepts were to be found, who could be classed with the conspiring Sophisters. Antecedent to the Perigords, D'Autuns, or the apostacy of the Gobets, Gregoires, and other constitutionalists, I only meet with the name of Briennes, and one Judas seated in the College of the Apostles during the space of thirty years should suffice.† That Mellier,

Conduct of the true clergy, and what may be objected against them.

† It is true that Voltaire in his correspondence, sometimes flatters himself with the protection of the Cardinal de Bernis, who was then but the youthful favorite of the Marquis de Pompadour, or the slender poet of the Graces. The mistakes of a young man are not sufficient to prove his concert with conspirators, whom he never after supported unless in the expulsion of the Jesuits. But could not what D'Alembert said of the parliaments apply to him, "Forgive them, Lord, for they know not what they do, nor whose commands they obey." D'Alembert writes in a quite other style, when he speaks of Briennes; he shews him acting the most resolute part of a traitor, in support of the conspiracy, and simply hiding his game from the clergy. (See particularly letter of the 4th and 21st Dec. 1770.)

I found some few letters also, mentioning the Prince Lewis de

rector of Etrépigny in Champagne might be added, were it certain that his impious *Last Will and Testament*, was not a forgery of the Sophisters, attributed to him after his death.

In the times when the revolution drew near Philosophism attached itself to the convents of men and soon produced Dom Gerles and his confederates, but this belonged to a different class of conspirators, who are to be the future object of our Memoirs. At all times the body of the clergy preserved the purity of its faith, a distinction might have been made between the zealous edifying ecclesiastics, and the lax not to say scandalous ones; but that of believing and unbelieving could never stand. Never could the conspirators exult in this latter distinction. Would they not have availed themselves of their decreasing faith, as they did of the incredulity of the ministers of Geneva.* On the contrary, nothing but the most scurrilous abuse is uttered against the clergy for their zeal in support of Christianity, and the satire of the Sophisters redounds to their immortal honor.

The purity of faith alone was not sufficient in the clergy; examples far more powerful than lessons, were necessary to oppose the torrent of impiety. It is true that in the greater part of their pastors the people beheld it in an eminent degree, but the majority will not suffice. Those who are acquainted with the powers of impression, know but too well, that one bad ecclesiastic does more harm than a hundred of the most virtuous can do good. All should have been zealous but many were lax. There were among those who served the altars men unworthy of the sanctuary. These were ambitious men, who owing good example to their diocesses preferred the intrigues and pomp of the capital. It is true that such a conduct could not have constituted vice in the worldling, but what may be light in the world, is often monstrous in the church. The So-

Rohan, seconding their intrigues on the reception of Marmontel at the academy, condescending, as D'Alembert says, *from Coadjutor of a Catholic Church*, to become *the Coadjutor of Philosophy*. (Let. 8th Dec. 1763.) If such an error in a prince, naturally noble and generous, proves that he was mistaken in thinking that he barely protected literature, in the person of an adept, it does not for that prove him to have been initiated into the secrets of those who abused his protection, and ended by sporting with his person.

* See the Encyclopedia, article GENEVA; and letter of Voltaire to Mr. Vernes.

phisters in particular with their morals, were not authorized to reprobate those of the delinquent clergy. Where is the wonder that some few unworthy members should have intruded on the sanctuary, when the enemies of the church had possessed themselves of its avenues, in order to bar the preferment of those, whose virtues or learning they dreaded; how could it be otherwise, when the bishops wishing to repel an unworthy member, Choiseul answered, "Such are the men we want and will have:" or when the irreligious nobleman only beheld in the riches of the church, the inheritance of a son not less vicious than his father.

The clergy might certainly have thus replied to their enemies. And true it is, that if any thing could astonish history, it is not, that with all these intrigues and ambition, some few bad pastors had been intruded on the church, but rather that so many good ones, worthy of their titles, yet remained. But the crimes of the first instigators, does not excuse the scandals of those pastors who gave it. Let the future clergy find this avowal recorded, let those men be acquainted with whatever influenced the progress of the Antichristian Revolution, whose duty essentially militates against that progress, and renders the least pretext given, criminal in them.

But history must also declare, that if the remissness of some few may have been a pretence for the conspirators, that the majority made a noble stand against them, and though some few spots could be found, the body was nevertheless splendid with the light of its virtues, which shone forth with redoubled lustre, when impiety at length, strong in its progress, threw off the mask. Then rising above its powers the clergy are not to be intimidated by death, or the rigors of a long exile, and the Sophister unwillingly blushed at the calumnies he had spread, when he represented those men as more attached to the riches than to the faith of the church. Their riches remained in the hands of the banditti, while that faith crowns the archbishops, bishops and ecclesiastics butchered at the Carmes, or consoles those who have found a refuge in foreign countries, from the armies and bloody decrees of the Jacobins. Every where poor, and living on the beneficence of those countries, but powerfully rich in the purity of their faith and testimony of their consciences.

Their resistance to impiety.

But the clergy had not waited these awful days to oppose the principles of the conspirators. From the first days of the conspiracy we can trace their opposition; scarce had impiety raised its voice when the clergy fought to confound it: the Encyclopedia was not half printed when it was proscribed in their assemblies; nor has a single one been held for these fifty years past, which has not warned the throne and the magistracy of the progress of Philosophism.*

At the head of the prelates who opposed it, we find Mr. de Beaumont archbishop of Paris, whose name history could not pass over without injustice; generous as an Ambrose, he was fired with his zeal and steadiness against the enemies of the faith. The Jansenists obtained his exile, and the Antichristians would willingly have sent him to the scaffold; but there would he have braved their poignards, as he did the Jansenists; when returning from his exile, he might be said to have acquired new vigor to oppose them both.

Many other bishops following his example, to the most unblemished morals, added their pastoral instructions. Mr. de Pompignan then Bishop of Puy refuted the errors of Voltaire and Jean Jaques; the Cardinal de Luynes warned his flock against the *System of Nature*; the Bishops of Boulogne, Amiens, Auch and many others, more powerfully edified their dioceses by their example even than by their writings, nor did these pass a single year, but what some bishop combated the increasing progress of the impious conspirators.

If the sophistry of the sect continued its ravages, it was not the fault of the bishops or the religious writers. The Sorbonne exposed it in their censures. The Abbè Bergier victoriously pursues Deism in its very last retrenchments, and makes it blush at its own contradictions. To the sophisticated learning of the conspirators, he opposed a more loyal application and a truer knowledge of antiquity and of the weapons it furnished to religion.† The Abbè Guèrèc with all that urbanity and attic salt which he was master of, obliges Voltaire to humble himself at the sight of his own ignorance and false criticism of sacred writ.‡ The Abbè Gerard had found a method of sanctifying novels themselves. Under the most engaging forms, he reclaims

* See the acts of the clergy since the year 1750.

† His Deism refuted, and his Answer to Freret.

‡ Letters of some Portuguese Jews.

youth from vice and its tortuous ways, and restores history to its primitive truth. The Abbè Pey had searched all the monuments of the church to reinstate it in its real rights, and under the simple form of a catechism, we see the Abbè Feller, or Flexier Dureval, uniting every thing that reason, truth or science can oppose against the Sophisters.

Prior to all these champions of the faith, the Abbé Duguet had victoriously vindicated the principles of Christianity, and the Abbé Hauteville had demonstrated the truth of it from history. From the first dawn of the conspiracy, the Pere Berthier and associates had, in the *Journal de Trevoix*, particularly exposed the errors of the Encyclopedists. In fine if the Celsi and Porphirii were numerous, religion had not lost its Justins or its Origenes. In these latter times as in the primitive days of Christianity, he who sincerely sought after truth must have found it in the victorious arguments of the religious authors, opposed to the sophisms of the conspirators. And it may be said that many points of religion had been placed in a clearer light, than they had been before, by these modern apologists.

The Christian orators seconded their bishops and perpetually called the attention of the people to their danger. The refutation of Philosophism was become the object of their public discourses. The Pere Neuville, and after him Mr. de Senez, in fine, the Pere Beauregard in particular, seem to have been fired by that holy zeal. That sudden inspiration with which he appeared to be seized in the Cathedral Church of Paris, is not yet forgotten; when thirteen years before the revolution, expounding the different maxims and exposing the plans of modern Philosophism, he makes the vaults of the temple resound with words too shamefully verified by the revolution, and exclaims in a prophetic strain:

“ Yes it is at the king—at the king and at religion
 “ the philosophers aim their blows. They have grasped
 “ the hatchet and the hammer, they only wait the
 “ favorable moment to overturn the altar and the throne.
 “ —Yes, my God, thy temples will be plundered and
 “ destroyed; thy festivals abolished; thy sacred name
 “ blasphemed; thy worship proscribed.—But what
 “ sounds, Great God, do I hear, what do I behold!
 “ to the sacred canticles which caused the vaults of this
 “ temple to resound to thy praises, succeed wanton and
 “ profane songs! And thou infamous Deity of Pa-

“ ganism, impure Venus, thou durst advance hither
“ even, and audaciously in the place of the living God,
“ seat thyself on the throne of the Holy of Holies,
“ and there receive the guilty incense of thy new
“ adorers.”

This discourse was heard by a numerous audience, carried by their own piety or attracted by the eloquence of the orator ; by adepts themselves, who attended in hopes of carping at his expressions ; by doctors of the laws whom we were acquainted with, and who often repeated them to us, long before we had seen them printed in various publications. The adepts cried out, sedition and fanaticism. The doctors of the law only retracted the severity of their censures after they had seen the prediction completely accomplished.

Such strong cautions from the clergy, and the means they opposed, retarded the progress of the Sophisters, but could not triumph over the conspiracy. It was too deep, the black arts of seduction had been too well planned in the hidden dens of the conspirators. I have still to unfold some of their dark mysteries, and when light shall have shone upon them, with surprise shall the reader ask, not how it was possible, with so much zeal on the part of the clergy, that the altar was overthrown, but on the contrary, how the fall of the temple had been so long delayed ?

CHAP. XVII.

New and deeper Means of the Conspirators, to seduce even the lowest Classes of the People.

WHEN Voltaire had sworn to annihilate Christianity, he little flattered himself with drawing the generality of nations into his apostacy. His pride is often satisfied with the progress Philosophism had made among those *who governed, or were made to govern,* and among *men of letters* ;* for a long time he does not appear to envy Christianity, the inferior classes of society, which he does not comprehend under the appellation of the *better sort*. The facts, we are about to lay before the reader, will show to what new extent, the conspirators fought to carry their impious zeal, and by what artifices Christ was to be deprived of all worship, even from the lowest populace.

A doctor, known in France by the name of Duquesnai, had so well insinuated himself into the favor of Lewis XV. that the king used to call him his *thinker*. He really appeared to have deeply meditated on the happiness of the subject, and he may have sincerely wished it ; nevertheless he was but a system-maker, and the founder of that sect of Sophisters called *Œconomists*, because the œconomy and order to be introduced into the finances, and other means of alleviating the distresses of the people, were perpetually in their mouths. If some few of these *Œconomists*, fought nothing further in their speculations, it is at least certain, that their writers, little hid their hatred for the Christian religion. Their works abound in passages which show their wish of substituting natural religion, at least to the Christian religion and revelation.† Their affectation of solely speaking of agriculture, administration and œconomy, render them less liable to suspicion, than those conspirators perpetually forwarding their impiety.

Origin of
the Œconomists.

* Letter to D'Alembert, 13th Dec. 1763.

† See the analysis of those works, by Mr. Le Gros, Prevost of St. Louis du Louvre.

Their plan
for free
schools.

The con-
spirators
support
the plan.

Duquesnai and his adepts, had more especially undertaken to persuade their readers, that the country people, and mechanics in towns, were entirely destitute of that instruction necessary for their professions. That men of this class, unable to acquire knowledge by reading, pined away in an ignorance equally fatal to themselves and to the state. That it was necessary to establish free schools, and particularly throughout the country, where children could be brought up to different trades, and instructed in the principles of agriculture. D'Alembert, and the Voltarian adepts, soon perceived what advantages they could reap from these establishments. In union with the Economists, they presented various memorials to Lewis XV. in which, not only the temporal but even the spiritual advantages of such establishments, for the people are strongly urged. The king, who really loved the people, embraced the project with warmth. He opened his mind, on the subject, to Mr. Bertin, whom he honored with his confidence, and had entrusted with his privy purse. It was from frequent conversations with this minister, that the memorial from which we extract the following account was drawn up. It is Mr. Bertin himself that speaks.

“ Lewis XV. said that minister, having entrusted me with the care of his privy purse, it was natural that he should mention to me an establishment, of which his Majesty was to defray the expence. I had long since closely observed the different sects of our philosophers; and though I had much to reproach myself as to the practice, I had at least preserved the principles of my religion. I had little doubt of the efforts of the Philosophers to destroy it. I was sensible that they wished to have the direction of these schools themselves, and by that means, seizing on the education of the people, under pretence that the bishops and ecclesiastics, who had hitherto superintended them and their teachers, could not be competent judges in subjects so little suited to clergymen. I apprehended that their object was not so much to give lessons on agriculture, to the children of husbandmen and trades-people, as to withdraw them from their habitual instructions on their catechism, or on their religion.

“ I did not hesitate to declare to the king, that the intentions of the Philosophers were very different

“ from his. I know those conspirators, I said, and
 “ beware, Sire, of seconding them. Your kingdom
 “ is not deficient in free schools, or nearly free; they
 “ are to be found in every little town, and nearly in
 “ every village, and perhaps they are already but too
 “ numerous. It is not books that form mechanics and
 “ plowmen. The books and masters, sent by these
 “ philosophers, will rather infuse system than industry,
 “ into the country people. I tremble lest they render
 “ them idle, vain, jealous, and shortly discontented,
 “ seditious, and at length rebellious. I fear, lest the
 “ whole fruit of the expence, they seek to put your
 “ Majesty to, will be to gradually obliterate, in the hearts
 “ of the people, its love for their religion and their
 “ sovereign.

“ To these arguments, I added whatever my mind
 “ could suggest, to dissuade his Majesty. I advised
 “ him, in place of paying and sending those masters,
 “ which the Philosophers had chosen, to employ the
 “ same sums, for multiplying the catechists, and in
 “ searching for good and patient men, whom his Ma-
 “ jesty, in concert with the bishops, should support, in
 “ order to teach the poor peasantry the principles of
 “ religion, and to teach it them by rote, as the rectors
 “ and curates do to those children who do not know
 “ how to read.

“ Lewis XV. seemed to relish my arguments, but
 “ the philosophers renewed their attacks. They had
 “ people about his person, who never ceased to urge
 “ him, and the king could not persuade himself, that
 “ his *thinker*, Duquesnai, and the other Philosophers,
 “ were capable of such detestable views. He was so
 “ constantly beset by those men, that during the last
 “ twenty years of his reign, in the daily conversations
 “ which he honored me with, I was perpetually em-
 “ ployed in combating the false ideas he had imbibed,
 “ on the Economists and their associates.

“ At length determined to give the king proof posi-
 “ tive that they imposed upon him, I sought to gain the
 “ confidence of those pedlars who travel through the
 “ country, and expose their goods to sale in the vil-
 “ lages, and at the gates of country seats. I suspect-
 “ ed those in particular who dealt in books, to be noth-
 “ ing less than the agents of Philosophism with the
 “ good country folks. In my excursions into the coun-
 “ try, I above all fixed my attention on the latter.

He discovers the means of the conspirators.

“ When they offered me a book to buy, I questioned
 “ them what might be the books they had ? Probably
 “ Catechisms or Prayer-books ? Few others are read in
 “ the villages ? At these words I have seen many smile.
 “ No, they answered, those are not our works ; we
 “ make much more money of Voltaire, Diderot, or
 “ other philosophic writings. What ! says I, the
 “ country people buy Voltaire and Diderot ? Where
 “ do they find the money for such dear works ? Their
 “ constant answer was, We have them at a much
 “ cheaper rate than Prayer-books ; we may sell them at
 “ ten sols (5d.) a volume, and have a pretty profit into
 “ the bargain. Questioning some of them still farther,
 “ many of them owned, that those books cost them
 “ nothing ; that they received whole bales of them,
 “ without knowing whence they came, simply desired
 “ to sell them in their journeys at the lowest price.”

Such was the account given by Mr. Bertin, and particularly during his retreat at Aix la Chapelle. All that he said of those pedlars perfectly coincides with what I have heard many rectors of small towns and villages complain of. They looked upon these hawking booksellers as the pests of their parishes, and as the agents of the pretended philosophers in the circulation of their impiety.

Lewis XV. warned by the discovery made by his minister, at length was satisfied that the establishment of these schools so much promoted by the conspirators, would only be a new mean of seduction in their hands. He abandoned the plan, but perpetually harrassed by the protecting Sophisters, he did not strike at the root of the evil, and but feebly impeded its progress. The pedlars continued to serve the measures of the conspirators, but this was but one of the inferior means employed to supply the delay of their free schools, as a new discovery brought one far more fatal to light.

The school-
 masters in
 the villages.

Many years prior to the French Revolution, a rector of the diocese of Embrun, had had frequent contests with the school-master of the village, charging him with corrupting the morals of his pupils, and with distributing most irreligious books among them. The lord of the village, one of the protecting adepts, supported the school-master ; the good rector applied to his archbishop. Mr. Salabert D'Anguin, Vicar-general, desired to see the library of the master. It was filled with these sort of works : but the delinquent, so far from

denying the use he made of them, with a pretended simplicity, said he had always heard those works spoken of in the highest terms; and, like the hawkers, declared that he was not at the trouble of buying them, as they were sent to him free of all costs.

At about a league from Liege, and in the adjacent villages, masters still more perfidious, carried their means of corruption to a far greater extent. These would assemble a certain number of trades-people and poor country fellows, who had not learned to read, on certain days, at particular hours. In these meetings, one of the pupils of the professor would read in an audible voice, a chapter in some work with which he himself had already been perverted. For example one of Voltaire's romances, then the *Sermon of the Fifty*, the pretended *Good Sense*, or other works of the sect furnished by the master. Those that abounded in calumny and abuse against the clergy, were particularly read. These meetings, the fore-runners of the Liege revolution, were only discovered when an honest and religious carpenter, who worked for a canon of that cathedral, declared the sorrow he had conceived in finding his two sons at one of these meetings reading such lectures to about a dozen of country fellows. On this discovery, a proper search was made in the adjacent country, and many school-masters were found guilty of the same perfidy; and, terrible to say, by the exterior practice of their religion, these men had done away all suspicion of such infernal dealings. The researches were carried still further, and the plots were traced up to D'Alembert; the following was the result of this new discovery. It is the very person to whom the honest carpenter opened his mind, and who made the necessary perquisitions on so important an object, who gave me the following information.

In seeking what men had been the promoters of these corrupters of youth, they were found to be protected by men whose connexions with the Sophisters of the day, were no secret. At length they were traced to D'Alembert himself, and his office for tutors. It was to this office that all those heretofore mentioned addressed themselves, who wanted the recommendation of the Sophisters to obtain a place of preceptor or tutor in the houses of the great or wealthy. But at this period, private education was not the sole object of D'Alembert. He now had established a correspondence through-

D'Alembert's committee of education.

out the provinces and beyond the kingdom. Not a place of professor in a college, or of a simple school-master in a village became vacant, but what he or his coadjutors were immediately informed of it by his agents. Also of the persons who petitioned for these places, of those who should be accepted or rejected, and of the means necessary to be employed, or persons to be applied to, to obtain the nomination of an adept competitor, or of those who were to be sent from Paris; in short, of the proper instructions to be given to the elected with regard to local circumstances, or the more or less progress Philosophism had made around them. Hence the impudence of the school-master in the diocese of Embrun, and that hypocrisy in those of the principality of Liege, where a government totally ecclesiastical was to be feared, and where infidelity had not yet made the same ravages it had in France.

It is thus that D'Alembert, faithful to the mission Voltaire had given him, *to enlighten youth as much as lay in his power*,* had extended his means of seducing them. Voltaire no longer regretted the colony of Cleves. That *manufacture* of impiety which was to have been its chief object, the philosophic *confraternity*, like to *that of the Free-masons*, the SECRET ACADEMY, more zealous in crushing Christ and his religion, than any other ever had been in the propagation of science or learning, were now established in Paris. And it was in the capital of the Most Christian empire, that these associations were held, the parents of the revolution that was to bring devastation on France, and destruction on Christianity throughout the world. This was the last *mystery of Mytra*; this was the deepest intrigue of the conspirators; nor do I know that it has been laid open by any writer. In the correspondence of the Sophisters, no trace can be discovered of this intrigue, at least in what the adepts have published. They had their reasons for suppressing such letters, for even in the first days of the revolution, would not the people have been indignant on hearing of such means to wrest their religion from them, and never would such a mystery of iniquity have emerged from the darkness in which it had been conceived, if Providence had not ordained that the unfortunate adept we are about to speak of, tortured with remorse, should make an avowal of it.

* Letter 15th of Sept. 1762.

Before we publish his declaration ourselves, it is incumbent on us to say by what means we became acquainted with it, and what precautions we have taken to ascertain the authenticity of it. The honor and probity of the person who gave us the account, placed its veracity beyond all doubt, nevertheless we requested to have it under his signature. Still further, seeing that a great nobleman was mentioned as a witness, and even as the second actor in the scene, we did not hesitate in applying directly to him. This nobleman, of distinguished honor, virtue and courage, bears the first distinction of French knighthood, and is in London at this present time. We attended to the recital he was pleased to make, and found it perfectly consonant with the signed memorial we had carried with us. If his name is omitted, it is only because he was loath to see it appear in a fact that criminales the memory of a friend, whose error was rather owing to the seduction of the Sophisters than to his own heart, and whose repentance in some sort atoned for the crime he had been guilty of. The following is the fact, which will complete the proofs, as yet only drawn from the letters of the conspirators themselves.

Discovery of the secret academy, and of its means.

About the middle of the Month of September, 1789, that is a little more than a fortnight antecedent to the atrocious 5th and 6th of October, at a time when the conduct of the National Assembly, having thrown the people into all the horrors of a revolution, indicated that they would set no bounds to their pretensions, Mr. Le Roy, Lieutenant of the King's Hunt, and an Academician, was at dinner at Mr. D'Angeville's, Intendant of the Buildings of his Majesty, the conversation turned on the disasters of the revolution, and on those that were too clearly to be foreseen. Dinner over, the nobleman abovementioned, a friend of Le Roy, but hurt at having seen him so great an admirer of the Sophisters, reproached him with it in the following expressive words. *Well, this however is the work of PHILOSOPHY!* Thunder-struck at these words,—Alas! cried the Academician, *to whom do you say so? I know it but too well, and I shall die of grief and remorse!* At the word *remorse*, the same nobleman questioned him whether he had so greatly contributed towards the revolution, as to upbraid himself with it in that violent manner? “Yes, answered he, I have contributed to it, and far more than I was aware of. I was secre-

Avowal and sorrow of its secretary.

“ tary to the committee to which you are indebted for
 “ it, but I call heaven to witness, that I never thought
 “ it would come to such lengths. You have seen me
 “ in the king’s service, and you know that I love his
 “ person. I little thought of bringing his subjects to
 “ this pitch, *and I shall die of grief and remorse!*”

Pressed to explain what he meant by this committee, this secret society, entirely new to the whole company, the Academician resumed: “ This society was a sort
 “ of club that we had formed among us philosophers,
 “ and only admitted into it persons on whom we could
 “ perfectly rely. Our sittings were regularly held at the
 “ Baron D’Holbach’s. Lest our object should be sur-
 “ mised, we called ourselves Economists. We created
 “ Voltaire, though absent, our honorary and perpetual
 “ president. Our principal members were D’Alembert,
 “ Turgot, Condorcet, Diderot, La Harpe, and that La-
 “ moignon Keeper of the Seals who, on his dismissal,
 “ shot himself in his park.”

Their
 object.

The whole of this declaration was accompanied with tears and sighs, when the adept, deeply penitent, continued: “ The following were our occupations; the
 “ most of those works which have appeared for this
 “ long time past against religion, morals and govern-
 “ ment, were ours, or those of authors devoted to us.
 “ They were all composed by the members or by the
 “ orders of the society. Before they were sent to the
 “ press, they were delivered in at our office. There
 “ we revised and corrected them; added to or curtailed
 “ them according as circumstances required. When
 “ our philosophy was too glaring for the times, or for
 “ the object of the work, we brought it to a lower
 “ tint, and when we thought that we might be more
 “ daring than the author, we spoke more openly. In
 “ a word, we made our writers say exactly what we
 “ pleased. Then the work was published under the
 “ title or name we had chosen, the better to hide the
 “ hand whence it came. Many supposed to have been
 “ posthumous works, such as *Christianity Unmasked*,
 “ and divers others, attributed to Freret and Boulan-
 “ ger, after their deaths, were issued from our society.
 “ When we had approved of those works, we be-
 “ gan by printing them on fine or ordinary paper, in
 “ sufficient number to pay our expences, and then an
 “ immense number on the commonest paper. These
 “ latter we sent to hawkers and booksellers free of costs,

“ or nearly so, who were to circulate them among the
 “ people at the lowest rate. These were the means
 “ used to pervert the people and bring them to the
 “ present state you see them in. I shall not see them
 “ long, for I shall die of grief and remorse !”

This recital had made the company shudder, nevertheless they could not but be struck at the remorse and horrid situation in which they beheld the speaker. Their indignation for Philosophism was carried still further, when Le Roy explained the meaning of *ECR : L'INF* (*écrasez l'infame, crush the wretch,*) with which Voltaire concludes so many of his letters. The reader will perceive, that in the whole of these Memoirs we had uniformly given the same explanation ; and indeed the context of the letters makes the sense evident ; but he revealed what we should not have dared assert on our own authority, that all those to whom Voltaire wrote under that horrid formula, were members or initiated into the mysteries of this secret committee. He also declared what we have already said on the plan of elevating Briennes to the archbishopric of Paris, and many other particulars, which he related, and that would have been precious for history, but have escaped the memory of those present. None of them could give me any information as to the exact time when this secret academy was formed ; but it appears from the discovery made by Mr. Bertins, that it must have existed long before the death of Lewis XV.

I think it necessary, on this occasion, to lay before my reader a letter of March 1763, which Voltaire writes to Helvetius. “ Why, says he to his zealous
 “ brother, do the worshippers of reason live in silence
 “ and fear ? They are not sufficiently acquainted with
 “ their own strength. *What should binder them from
 “ having a little press of their own, and from publishing
 “ small works, short and useful, and which should only
 “ be confided to their friends.* This was the method followed by those who printed the last will of the good
 “ and honest curate (Meslier,) his testimony is certainly
 “ of great weight. It is further certain, that you and
 “ your friends could, with the greatest facility, pen the best
 “ works possible, and throw them into circulation without
 “ exposing yourselves in the least.”

There also exists another letter, in which Voltaire, under the name of *Jean Patourel*, heretofore a Jesuit,
 Vol. I. C c

and in his ironic style, seeming to felicitate Helvetius on his pretended conversion, describes the method employed for the circulation of those works, among the lower classes. "In opposition to the *Christian pedagogue*, and the *Think well on it*, books formerly so much famed for the conversions they had wrought; pretty little philosophic works are cleverly circulated; these little books rapidly succeed each other. They are not sold, they are given to people who can be relied on, who in their turn distribute them, to women and young people. At one time it is the *Sermon of the fifty*, attributed to the King of Prussia; at another an *extract from the will*, of the unfortunate curate Jean Meslier, who, on his death-bed, implored forgiveness of his God, for having taught Christianity, or lastly, the *Catechism of the honest man*, written by a certain Abbè Durand, (that is Voltaire himself.)*")

These two letters may throw great light on the subject. First, we see Voltaire giving the plan of a secret society, which perfectly coincides with the one described by Le Roi; secondly, that one of a similar nature existed at Ferney; thirdly, that it had not taken place, at the period when these letters were written, as he presses the establishment of it. But on the other side, the pretended posthumous works of Freret and Boulanger, which the adept Le Roy declares to have been issued from this secret academy, holding its sittings at the Baron D'Holbach's, were published in 1756 and 1757.† It therefore appears that this secret committee was established at Paris, between the years 1763 and 1766. That is to say, that for three and twenty years preceding the revolution, they had been incessantly attempting to seduce the people by those artifices and intrigues, the shame of which, drew the above avowal from its repenting secretary. Such would have been the manufacture of Voltaire's colony.

It was with truth, that this unhappy adept repeated, *I shall die of grief and remorse*; for he did not survive his avowal three months. When he mentioned the principal members, he added that all those to whom Voltaire wrote under the abominable formula of *Crush the Wretch*, were either members, or initiated into the mysteries of this secret academy.

* Letter to Helvetius, 25th August, 1763.

† See *L'Antiquité dévoilée*, Amsterdam, anno 1766, and *l'Examen des Apologistes du Christianisme*, anno 1767.

When established.

Other adepts of the academy.

Damilaville.

In following this rule the first of these adepts will certainly be Damilaville, who exulted so much on hearing that none but the rabble were left to worship Christ; for it is to him in particular, that Voltaire always ends his letters by, crush the wretch. This man was himself very little above that rabble he so much despised. He had made a small fortune by being one of the clerks in the office for the tax called the Vingtiemes, and had a salary of about 180l. per ann. His philosophy had not taught him the spirit of poverty, as we see Voltaire excusing himself, on his not having been able to procure him a more lucrative employment.*

The distinctive character, which Voltaire gives him in one of his letters, is that of *hating God*; could that have given rise to their great intimacy? It was through his means, that he transmitted his most impious productions or particular secrets to the conspirators. We should have remained in the dark, as to his literary talents, had it not been for a letter from Voltaire to the Marquis de Villeville, which so perfectly describes the meanness of the Sophisters, and how distant they were from the true Philosopher, ready to sacrifice every thing in the cause of truth. "No, my dear friend" (says Voltaire to the Marquis,) the modern Socrateses "will not drink hemlock. The Athenian Socrates, "with respect to us, was a very imprudent man, an "eternal quibbler, and who foolishly set his judges at "defiance."

"Our philosophers of these days, are wiser than "that. They are not possessed with that foolish vanity "of putting their names to their works. They are in- "visible hands, who, from one end of Europe to the "other, pierce fanaticism with the shafts of truth. "Damilaville is just dead, he was the author of *Cbrif- "tianity unmasked* (which he had published as a posthu- "mous work of Boulanger's) and of many other writ- "tings. *It was never known, and his friends kept his se- "cret with a fidelity worthy of Philosophy.*"†

Such then is the author of that famous work, which the Sophisters had given us, as flowing from the pen of one of their most learned adepts. Damilaville, under the name of Boulanger, from his publican-office, fallies forth the phoenix of modern Philosophism, and with the courage of a Sophister, shrinks from his own

* Gen. Cor. let. to Damilaville, 2d Dec. 1757.

† 20th Dec. 1768.

works, lest they cost him dearly, if ever called upon to support his principles before the tribunals. He also would have shrunk from the hemlock potion, in the infamy and eternal shame, that such abominable calumnies as he had vomited forth against Christianity, must have overpowered him with.

This adept, so worthy of Voltaire's and D'Alembert's friendship, died a bankrupt clerk in office, and had been parted from his wife, for the last twelve years. Voltaire is his panegyrist when he says, "I shall always regret Damilaville, I loved the intrepidity of his soul, he was enthusiastic like St. Paul, he was a necessary man."* Decency forbids us to quote the remainder of the panegyric.

Count D'
Argental.

Next to this Sophister, whose chief merits appear to have been his enthusiastic Atheism, we find the Count D'Argental. I have already spoken of his intimacy with Voltaire, and only mention him, as one of those initiated in the secret mysteries of the secret academy; being one of those correspondents with whom Voltaire expresses himself in the most unreserved manner on his plan of crushing Christ.†

Thiriot.

On the same claim a sort of scribbler called Thiriot is to be aggregated to the academy. Neither more elevated than Damilaville in rank or fortune; he for a longer time subsisted on Voltaire's benefactions, who first made him his disciple and then his agent. Brother Thiriot added ingratitude to his impiety, and Voltaire complained bitterly of him. But Thiriot notwithstanding his ingratitude, always remained impious, which reconciled him to Voltaire and preserved him within the fraternal embrace of the conspirators.‡

Saurin.

It is with concern that Mr. Saurin is seen a member of this academy. Certainly it is not his literary works which raise this sentiment, for were it not for his Tragedy of Spartacus, both his prose and verse, would equally, be forgotten; but we are told that it was rather to his want of fortune, than to his disposition, that he owed his connexions with the Sophisters. He is even said to have been a man of great probity, but that he was drawn into that society, for the consideration of a pension of a thousand crowns which Helvetius paid

* 23d December 1769, 13th of January, &c.

† See numbers of letters in the General Correspondence.

‡ See Correspondence and Letters to D'Alembert, and letters from the Marchioness of Chatellet to the King of Prussia.

him. What an excuse ! And where is the probity of the man who will sacrifice his religion to his interest ; and for a pension coalesce with those who conspire against his God ? We see Voltaire writing to Saurin himself, and placing him on the same line with Helvetius and the initiated brethren, entrusting him with the same secrets, and exhorting him to the same warfare against Christ. As we have never seen him disclaim the connexion, the shame of it must attach to him.*

A Swiss Baron of the name of Grimm must necessarily find his place here. He was the worthy friend and co-operator of Diderot, like him travelling to Petersburg to form adepts, then returning to Paris, he also joins in his absurdities, repeats after him, that *between a man and his dog there is no other difference but their dress*, and exults in being able to apprise Voltaire, that the Emperor Joseph II. was initiated into his mysteries. Grimm.

We will terminate our list by the German Baron D'Holbach, who destitute of abilities lends his house. He had acquired at Paris, the reputation of a lover and protector of the arts, nor did the Sophisters contribute a little to it. This was a cloak to their meetings at his house. Unable to vie with the poet, he wishes to be the Mæcenas. Nor is he the only person who has owed his reputation to his purse, and to his having disposed of it in favor of the Sophisters. In spite of these pretences, sought for coloring the frequent meetings of the adepts, the public repute of those who resorted to his house, had thrown such an odium on him, that it was openly said, that to gain admittance at his house, it was necessary, as in Japan, to trample on the cross. Baron D'Holbach.

Such then were the members of this famous academy, whose sole object was to corrupt the minds of the people and prepare the way to universal apostacy, under the pretext of their happiness, public œconomy, or the love and advancement of the arts. Here are fifteen of its members whom we have mentioned, Voltaire, D'Alembert, Diderot, Helvetius, Turgot, Condorcet, La Harpe, the keeper of the seals Lamoignon, Damilaville, Thiriot, Saurin, the Count D'Argental, Grimm, the Baron D'Holbach, and the unfortunate Le Roy, who died consumed with grief and remorse, for having been the secretary to so monstrous an academy.

* Voltaire to Mr. Saurin, anno 1761 ; and to Damilaville, 38th December 1762.

If at present we ascend back to the real founder of this academy, to Voltaire's letter to Helvetius, already quoted, the following one to D'Alembert should be added : " Let the Philosophers unite in a brotherhood like " *the Free-Masons*, let them assemble and support each " other ; let them be faithful to the association. Then " I would let myself be burnt for them. This SECRET " ACADEMY will be far superior to that of Athens, and " to all those of Paris. But every one thinks only " for himself, and forgets that his most sacred duty is " to *crush the wretch*." This letter is dated 20th of April 1761. Confronting it with the declaration of Le Roy, we see how faithfully the Parisian adepts had followed the plans of the premier chief. Often did he lament his inability of presiding over their toils but at a distance ; and it was difficult to persuade him, that the capital of the most Christian empire, was a proper seat for so licentious an establishment. It was for that reason we see him pursuing his favorite plan of the philosophic colony, even after the establishment of the secret academy. But the time came when the direful success of the latter more than compensated the loss of the former. Triumphant in Paris and surrounded by the adepts, he was one day to reap the fruits of such unrelenting constancy in the warfare he waged during the last half century against his God.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of the General Progress of the Conspiracy throughout Europe.—Triumph and Death of the Chiefs.

AS the conspirators advanced in their arts of seduction, their hopes are daily heightened by some new success. They were already such, that a few years after the Encyclopedia had first appeared, we find D'Alembert confidently writing to Voltaire, "Let Philosophy alone, and in twenty years the Sorbonne, however much Sorbonne it may be, will outstrip Lausanne itself." That is to say, that in twenty years time (and this was written 21st July 1757,) the Sorbonne would be as incredulous and Antichristian as a certain minister of Lausanne (Voltaire himself) who furnished the most impious articles that are to be found in the Encyclopedia. Hopes of the conspirators.

Soon after, Voltaire improving on D'Alembert, says, twenty years more, *and God will be in a pretty plight!** That is to say, twenty years more, and not an altar of the God of the Christians shall remain.

Every thing indeed seemed to forbode the universal reign of impiety throughout Europe. The district which had fallen in particular to Voltaire, was making such an awful progress, that eight years after he writes, *that not a single Christian was to be found from Geneva to Berne.*† Every where else, to use his expressions, *the world was acquiring wit apace, and even so fast, that a general revolution in ideas threatened all around.* Their progress. In Switzerland.

Germany in particular, gave him great hopes.‡ Frederick, who as carefully watched it, as Voltaire did Switzerland, writes, that "philosophy was beginning to penetrate even into superstitious Bohemia, and into Austria, the former abode of superstition."§ In Germany.

In Russia the adepts gave if any thing, still greater hopes. This protection of the *Scythians*, is what consoles Voltaire for the persecutions which befel the sect elsewhere.¶ He could not contain himself for joy, when he wrote to D'Alembert how much the brethren In Russia.

* 25th Feb. 1758. † 8th Feb. 1766. ‡ 2d Feb. 1765.

§ Letter to Voltaire, 143, anno 1766.

¶ Letter to Diderot, 25th Dec. 1762.

were protected at Petersburg and informed him, that during a journey made by that court, the Scythian protectors had each one, for his amusement, undertaken to translate a chapter of Belifarius into their language : that the Empress had undertaken one herself, and had even been at the trouble of revising the translation of this work, which in France had been censured by the Sorbonne.*

In Spain. D'Alembert wrote, that in Spain Philosophism was *undermining* the Inquisition,† and according to Voltaire, a great *revolution was operating in ideas* there, as well as
 In Italy. *in Italy.*‡ A few years after we find this Italy swarming with men thinking like Voltaire and D'Alembert, and that their sole interest prevented them from openly declaring for impiety.||

In England. As to England they made but little doubt of its falling an easy prey. To hear them speak, it was overrun with Socinians who scoffed at and hated Christ, as Julian the apostate hated and despised him, and who only differed in name from the philosophers §

Finally, according to their calculations, Bavaria and Austria alone (this was during the life-time of the Empress Queen) continued to support the divines and defenders of religion. The Empress of Russia *was driving them on gloriously*, and they were at *their last gasp in Poland*, thanks to the King Poniatowski. They were *already overthrown in Prussia*, through the care of Frederick, and *in the north of Germany* the sect daily gained ground, thanks to the Landgraves, Margraves, Dukes and Princes, adepts and protectors.¶

In France. Far otherwise did matters stand in France. We often see the two chiefs complaining of the obstacles they had to encounter in this empire, the favorite object of their conspiracy.

The perpetual appeals of the clergy, the decrees of the parliaments, the very acts of authority which the ministers, though friendly to the conspirators, were obliged to exert in order to hide their predilection, were not totally ineffectual. The bulk of the nation still remained attached to its faith. That numerous class called the people, in spite of all the intrigues of

* Voltaire to D'Alembert, July, 1767. † 3d May, 1773.

‡ Letter to Mr. Ricke, 1st March 1768.

|| Voltaire to D'Alembert, 16th June 1773.

§ Letter to the King of Prussia, 15th Nov. 1773.

¶ Voltaire to D'Alembert, 1st Sept. 1767.

the secret academy, still flocked to the altar on days of solemnity. In the higher classes, numerous were the exceptions to be made of those who still loved religion. Indignant at so many obstacles, Voltaire would perpetually stimulate his countrymen, whom he contemptuously calls his *poor Velches*. Sometimes however he was better pleased with them, and would write to his dear Marquis Villevieille, "*The people are mighty foolish, nevertheless Philosophism makes its way down to them. Be well assured for instance, that there are not twenty people in Geneva who would not abjure Calvin as soon as they would the Pope, and that many philosophers are to be found in Paris behind the counter.*"* But generally speaking, his complaints about France predominate in his correspondence with the conspirators; sometimes he would despair of ever seeing Philosophy triumph there. D'Alembert, on the spot, judged of matters very differently, and though every thing did not answer his wishes, nevertheless he thought himself authorised to flatter Voltaire, that though *philosophy might receive a temporary check, it never could be got the better of.*†

About the period when D'Alembert writes this, it was but too true that Philosophism could flatter itself with the hopes of triumphing over the attachment of the French nation to their religion. During the last ten or twelve years, impiety had made a dreadful progress, the colleges had sent forth a new generation educated by new masters, and they were nearly void of all knowledge, and particularly destitute of religion or piety. It perfectly coincided with Condorcet's expression, that Philosophism *had descended from the thrones of the North into the very universities* ‡ The religious generation was nearly extinct, and the revealed truths were obliged to give place to the empty sounds of reason, philosophy, prejudices, and such like. In the higher classes impiety made large strides, whether at court or in the tribunals; from the capital it gained the provinces, and the master shows the example to the servant. Every body would be a Philosopher, whether minister or magistrate, soldier or author. He that wished to follow his religion, was exposed to all the sarcastic irony of the Sophisters, and that particularly

* 20th Dec. 1768.

† 25th Jan. 1776.

‡ See his Preface to his edition of Paschal's Thoughts.

among the great, where it required as much courage to profess one's religion, since the conspiracy, as it did audacity and rashness to declare one's self an Atheist before.

Triumph
of Voltaire.

Voltaire was at that time in his eighty-fourth year. After so long an absence, and always under the power and lash of the law, he should only have appeared publicly in Paris, to controvert those impieties, which had brought the animadversion of the parliament on him. D'Alembert and his academy resolve to overcome that obstacle. In spite of religion they easily succeed, and ministers, chiefly adepts, abusing the clemency of Lewis XVI. obtain the recal of this premier chief, under pretence that this aged man had been sufficiently punished by his long exile, and that in favor of his literary trophies, his failings might be overlooked. It was agreed that the laws should be silent with regard to him on his approach to Paris; the magistrates seemed to have forgotten the decree they had passed against him. This was all the conspirators wished. Voltaire arrives in Paris, he receives the homage of the sect, and his arrival constitutes their triumphal day. This man, bending under the weight of years, spent in an unrelenting warfare, whether public or private, against Christianity, is received in the capital of his most Christian Majesty, amidst those acclamations which were wont to announce the arrival of the favorite child of victory returning from the arduous toils of war.

Whithersoever Voltaire bent his steps, a croud of adepts, and the gazing multitude, flocked to meet him. All the academies celebrate his arrival, and they celebrate it in the Louvre, in the palace of the kings, where Lewis XVI. is one day to be a prisoner and victim to the occult and deepest conspiracies of the Sophisters. The theatres decreed their crowns to the impious chief; entertainments in his honor, rapidly succeed each other. Intoxicated with the incense of the adepts, through pride he fears to sink under it. In the midst of these coronations and acclamations, he exclaimed, *You then wish to make me expire with glory!*—Religion alone mourned at this sight, and vengeance hung over his head. The impious man had feared to die of glory, but rage and despair was to forward his last hour still more than his great age. In the midst of his triumphs, a violent hemorrhage raised apprehensions for his life. D'Alembert, Diderot and Marmontel, hastened to support his

His death.

resolution in his last moments, but were only witnesses to their mutual ignominy as well as to his own.

Here let not the historian fear exaggeration. Rage, remorse, reproach and blasphemy, all, accompany and characterize the long agony of the dying Atheist. This death, the most terrible that is ever recorded to have struck the impious man, will not be denied by his companions of impiety; their silence, however much they may wish to deny it, is the least of those corroborative proofs, which could be adduced. Not one of the Sophisters has ever dared to mention any sign given, of resolution or tranquility, by the premier chief, during the space of three months, which elapsed from the time he was crowned at the theatre, until his decease. Such a silence expresses, how great their humiliation was in his death.

It was on his return from the theatre, and in the midst of the toils he was resuming, in order to acquire fresh applause, when Voltaire was warned, that the long career of his impiety was drawing to an end.

In spite of all the Sophisters, flocking around him, in the first days of his illness he gave signs of wishing to return to the God he had so often blasphemed. He calls for the priests who ministered to *Him* whom he had sworn to *crush*, under the appellation of *the wretch*. His danger encreasing, he wrote the following note to the Abbé Gaultier. "You had promised me, Sir, to come and hear me. I intreat you would take the trouble of calling as soon as possible. Signed, VOLTAIRE. Paris, the 26th Feb. 1778."

A few days after he wrote the following declaration, in presence of the same Abbé Gaultier, the Abbé Mignot and the Marquis de Villeville, copied from the minutes deposited with Mr. Momet, notary at Paris.

"I, the underwritten, declare that for these four days past, having been afflicted with a vomiting of blood, at the age of eighty-four, and not having been able to drag myself to the church, the Rev. the Rector of St. Sulpice, having been pleased to add to his good works, that of sending to me the Abbé Gaultier, a priest; I confessed to him, and if it pleases God to dispose of me, I die in the *Holy Catholic Church*, in which I was born; hoping that the divine mercy, will deign to pardon all my faults: if ever I have scandalized the Church, I ask pardon of God and of the Church. 2d March 1778. Signed,

“VOLTAIRE : in presence of the Abbé Mignot my nephew, and the Marquis de Villevieille my friend.”

After the two witnesses had signed this declaration, Voltaire added these words, copied from the same minutes : “ The Abbé Gaultier, my confessor, having apprized me, that it was said among a certain set of people, I should protest against every thing I did at my death ; I declare I never made such a speech, and that it is an old jest attributed, long since, to many of the learned, more enlightened than I am.”

Was this declaration a fresh instance of his former hypocrisy ? Unfortunately, after the explanations we have seen him give of his exterior acts of religion, might there not be room for doubt ? Be that as it may, this is a public homage, paid to that religion in which he declared he meant to die, notwithstanding his having perpetually conspired against it during his life. This declaration is also signed by that same friend and adept the Marquis de Villevieille to whom eleven years before, Voltaire was wont to write, “ *Conceal your march from the enemy in your endeavours to crush the wretch.*”*

Voltaire had permitted this declaration to be carried to the rector of St. Sulpice, and to the Archbishop of Paris, to know whether it would be sufficient. When the Abbé Gaultier returned with the answer, it was impossible for him to gain admittance to the patient. The conspirators had strained every nerve to hinder the chief from consummating his recantation, and every avenue was shut to the priest, which Voltaire himself had sent for. The demons haunted every access ; rage succeeds to fury, and fury to rage again during the remainder of his life. Then it was that D’Alembert, Diderot, and about twenty others of the conspirators, who had beset his apartment, never approached him, but to witness their own ignominy, and often he would curse them and exclaim, “ Retire, it is you that have brought me to my present state ; begone, I could have done without you all, but you could not exist without me, and what a wretched glory have you procured me !”

Then would succeed the horrid remembrance of his conspiracy ; they could hear him, the prey of anguish and dread, alternatively supplicating or blaspheming that God whom he had conspired against, and in plaintive

* 27th April, 1767.

accents would he cry out, Oh Christ! Oh Jesus Christ! And then complain that he was abandoned by God and man. The hand which had traced in ancient writ the sentence of an impious revelling king, seemed to trace before his eyes CRUSH THEN, DO CRUSH THE WRETCH. In vain he turned his head away, the time was coming apace when he was to appear before the tribunal of him he had blasphemed, and his physicians, particularly Mr. Tronchin, calling in to administer relief, thunderstruck retire, declaring the death of the impious man to be terrible indeed. The pride of the conspirators would willingly have suppressed these declarations, but it was in vain: the Marechal de Richelieu flies from the bedside declaring it to be a sight too terrible to be sustained, and Mr. Tronchin, that the furies of Orestes could give but a faint idea of those of Voltaire.

Thus died on the 30th of May 1778, rather worn out by his own fury than by the weight of years, the most unrelenting conspirator against Christianity, that had been seen since the time of the apostles. His persecution longer and more perfidious than those of Nero or Dioclesian had YET only produced apostates, but they were more numerous than the martyrs made in the former persecutions.

The conspirators in losing Voltaire, had lost every thing on the side of talents; but his arms of impiety they had remaining in his numerous writings. The arts and cunning of D'Alembert proved more than a succedaneum to the genius of their deceased founder, and he is proclaimed chief. The secret committee of education in Paris, the country conventicles and the correspondence with the village school-masters owed their origin to him. He continued to direct the works of the secret academy, in the propagation of impiety, until called upon to appear before that same God who had already judged Voltaire. He died five years after his patron, that is in November 1783. Left remorse should compel him to similar recantations, which had so much humbled the sect, Condorcet undertook to render him inaccessible; if not to repentance and remorse, at least to all who might have availed themselves of his homage done to religion.

D'Alembert succeeds him.

He dies.

When the Rector of St. Germain's, in quality of pastor presented himself, Condorcet, like to the devil who watches over his prey, ran to the door and barred his entrance! Scarce had the breath left his body when

the pride of Condorcet betrays his secret. D'Alembert really had felt that remorse which must have been common to him with Voltaire; he was on the eve of sending, as the only method of reconciliation, for a minister of that same Christ against whom he had also conspired; but Condorcet ferociously combated these last signs of repentance in the dying Sophister, and he gloried in having forced him to expire in final impenitence. The whole of this odious conflict is comprized in one horrid sentence; when Condorcet announced the decease of D'Alembert and was relating the circumstances, he did not blush to add, *Had I not been there he would have flinched also.**

Frederick.

Frederick alone had succeeded or pretended to have succeeded in persuading himself that death was but an eternal sleep.† And he alone appears to have been an exception from among the chiefs of the conspiracy, with whom the approach of death had substituted, in lieu of their pretended hatred for the *wretch*, the fear of his judgments.

Diderot that hero of Atheism, that conspirator who long since had carried his audacity against his Christ and his God, to insanity; Diderot I say, is he who was nearest to a true reconciliation. This is another of those mysteries of iniquity carefully hidden by the Antichristian conspirators.

When the Empress of Russia purchased Diderot's library, she left him the use of it during his life. Her munificence had enabled him to have near his person, in quality of librarian, a young man who was far from partaking in his impiety. Diderot liked him much, and he had particularly endeared himself by the attentions he had shown Diderot during his last illness. It was he who generally dressed the wounds in his legs. Terri-

* Historical Dictionary, Article D'Alembert. It is true that Condorcet, sorry to have inadvertently revealed the secret of his associate's remorse, sought to destroy the effect of it. It is true, that questioned another time on the circumstances of D'Alembert's death, he answered in his philosophic jargon, *that he did not die like a coward.* In fine it is true that in his first letter to the King of Prussia, in date of the 22d Nov. 1783, he represents D'Alembert dying with a tranquil courage, and with his usual strength and presence of mind. But it was too late to lead Frederick into error on that subject, as the adept Grimm had already written, *That sickness had greatly weakened D'Alembert's mind in his last moments.* (11th of November 1783.)

† Vide supra.

fixed at the symptoms he perceived, the young man uns to acquaint a worthy ecclesiastic, the Abbé Lemoine, then resident at the house called the Foreign Missions, Rue du Bac Fauxbourg, St. Germain. By his advice the young man prays during half an hour in a church, begging of Almighty God, that he will direct him in what he should say or do, to ensure the salvation of one, who though he detested his impieties, he could never lose sight of as his benefactor. Rising from his prayers he returns to Diderot and the same day when dressing his wounds, he spoke as follows :

“ Mr. Diderot, you see me this day more anxious than ever on your fate, do not be surpris'd, I am aware how much I am indebted to you, it is by your kindness that I subsist, you have deign'd to show greater confidence in me than I had reason to expect. I cannot prove ungrateful, I should forever accuse myself of ingratitude, were I to hide the danger, which your wounds declare you to be in. Mr. Diderot, you may have dispositions to make, and above all you have precautions to take, for the world you are about to enter. I am but a young man I know ; but are you certain that your philosophy has not left you a soul to save ? I have no doubt of it, and it is impossible for me to reflect on it, and not warn my benefactor to avoid the eternal misfortune which may await him. See, sir, you have yet sufficient time left, and excuse an advice which gratitude and your friendship forces from me.”

Diderot heard the young man with attention, and even melted into tears, thanked him for his frankness and the concern he had shown for him. He promised to consider and to reflect what line of conduct he should hold in a situation which he owned to be of the greatest importance.

The young man waited his decision with the greatest impatience, and the first signs were conformable to his wishes. He ran to inform the Abbé Lemoine that Diderot asked to see a clergyman, and the Abbé directed him to Mr. de Terfac, Rector of St. Sulpice. Mr. de Terfac waited on Diderot and had several conferences with him, he was preparing a public recantation of his past errors, but unfortunately he was watched by the conspirators. The visit of a priest to Diderot had given the alarm to the Sophisters, who would have thought themselves dishonored by the dereliction of so import-

ant a chief. They surround him, they persuade him that he is imposed upon, that his health is not in so bad a state, and that a little country air would immediately recover him. Diderot was for a long time deaf to all the arguments Philosophism could invent, but at length consented to try at least the country air. His departure is kept secret and the wretches who carry him away, knew that his last hour was approaching fast. The Sophisters who were in the plot pretended to think him still in Paris, and the whole town is misled by daily reports; while those jailors who had seized on his person, watched him till they had seen him expire; then continuing their horrid duplicity they bring back the lifeless corpse to Paris and spread the report that he had died suddenly at table. He expired the 2d of July 1784, and was represented as having died calm, in all his Atheism, without giving any signs of remorse. The public are again misled and thus many are corroborated in their impiety, who might have followed the example of this chief, had he not by the most unheard-of cruelty, been deprived of all spiritual relief in his last moments.

Thus in the whole of this conspiracy, from its origin to the death of its first promoters, we have seen but one continued chain of cunning, art and seduction; of the blackest, falsest and most disgusting means employed in that tremendous art of seducing the people. It was on these horrid arts that Voltaire, D'Alembert and Diderot had built all their hopes of working the universal apostacy, and in their last moments they are a prey to these very arts. In that awful moment when glory vanishes and that the empty name they had acquired by their deceit is no more, the disciple of seduction lords it over his master. When their reason calls on them to make use of that liberty, (so much cried up when opposed to their God) to reconcile themselves with him they had blasphemed, even to their very remorse, is sacrificed to the vanity of their school: when it calls on them to use that courage they had shown when blaspheming, it fails them in their repentance, and they show none but the slavish symptoms of weakness and fear. Under the subjecton of their adepts, they expire fettered in those chains which they themselves had forged, and consumed by that impiety, which their hearts then abhorred.

At the time of their death, hatred to Christianity and the conspiracy against the altar, was not the only object

of their school. Voltaire had been the father of the Sophisters of impiety, and he lived to be the premier chief of the Sophisters of rebellion. He had said to his first adepts, "Let us crush the altar, let the temples be destroyed and let not a single worshipper be left to the God of the Christians;" and his school soon re-echoed with the cry of, "Let us break the sceptres, let the thrones be destroyed, and let not a single subject be left to the kings of the earth." It is from their mutual success, the combined revolution is to be generated, which grasping the hatchet, shall in France overthrow the altar and the throne, murder the pontiffs, strike off the head of the monarch, and proudly menace the kings of the earth and all Christian altars, with a similar fate.— We have now given the history of the plots and of the means of the ANTICHRISTIAN CONSPIRACY, or of the *Sophisters of Impiety*. Before we begin that of the ANTIMONARCHIAL CONSPIRACY, or of the *Sophisters of Rebellion*, let us reflect on the extraordinary illusion Philosophism has put upon all nations, which may be considered as having been one of the most powerful agents of the sect.

CHAP. XIX.

Of the great Delusion which rendered the Conspiracy against the Altar so successful.

IN the first part of these Memoirs on Jacobinism, our object was to demonstrate the existence, to unmask the chiefs and deduce the means and progress of a conspiracy, planned and executed by men, known by the name of Philosophers, against the Christian religion, without distinction of Protestantism or Catholicity, without even excepting those numerous sects which had sprung up in England or Germany, or in any other part of the universal world, provided they did but adore the God of Christians. To unfold this mystery of impiety, we had promised to adduce our proofs solely from their own records, that is from their letters, writings or avowals, and we flatter ourselves with having given real historical demonstration of it, sufficient to convince the reader, the most difficult of conviction. Let us for a moment examine what pretensions its authors could have had to be styled PHILOSOPHERS, a name which gave them so much weight in their conspiracy.

The generality of men attending rather to words than things, this affectation of dominion over wisdom and reason, proved a very successful weapon in their hands. Had they called themselves unbelievers or the declared enemies of Christianity, Voltaire and D'Alembert would have been the execration of all Europe, while only calling themselves PHILOSOPHERS, they are mistaken for such. Is not their school to this day, venerated by many as that of Philosophy, notwithstanding the numerous massacres, and all the horrid disasters which we have seen naturally flowing from their conspiracy. And every man who will adopt their way of thinking on religion, styles himself a Philosopher!—This is a delusion of more consequence than can be imagined, and has carried the number of adepts perhaps farther than any other of their artifices. As long as their school shall be mistaken for that of reason, numberless will be the thoughtless persons who pretending to depth of thought, will adopt the sentiments of a Voltaire or a Diderot, of a D'Alembert or a Condorcet, and con-

Delusion
on the
word Phi-
losophy.

spire like them against the altar ; and that disastrous blast will once more spread around the throne, and over all the orders of society.—Their oaths, their wishes and their plots have been laid open ; whence then are their pretensions to wisdom ? Is it not the historian's duty to tear off that mask of hypocrisy, which has misled such numbers of adepts, who miserably seeking to soar above the vulgar, have only sunk into impiety, gazing after this pretended Philosophy. The empty sounds of *Reason*, *Philosophy* and *Wisdom*, have made them believe themselves inspired, when like Voltaire, they hated or despised the religion of Christ. But it is time they should know that they have only been the dupes of designing men. Let them hearken, the numerous proofs we have adduced, give us a right to be heard when we tell them, “ that at the school of “ the conspirators they have mistaken the lessons of ha- “ tred and phrenzy, for those of reason ; they have “ been the dupes of folly and madness, under the “ cloak of reason ; of ignorance under the pretence “ of science ; of vice and depravity, under the mask “ of virtue, and their zeal for Philosophy, still makes “ them err through all the tortuous windings of “ wickedness and impiety.” We do not pretend, in holding such language, to dispute the talents of the premier chief. That his poetic genius should enjoy itself in fictions, on the banks of Parnassus, or on the heights of Pindus, is much to be admired ; but is he for that, to substitute those fictions for truths ? The greater his genius, the less we are astonished to see him entangled, when he has once adopted error. If stupidity can never attain to genius, the genius that dares to soar above reason, is not for that the less within the regions of delirium. In a raging fever, will not your strength be redoubled, but what more humbling fight for man ! Where then the excuse of genius or of talents in the Sophister conspiring against his God ? Can the adepts, who believe their master to be a Philosopher even to his last moments, admire that frantic rage in which he expired ? But first let them tell us what other titles he may have to the empire of reason.

What Philosophy can there be in that extraordinary *hatred* which Voltaire had sworn against the God of Christianity ? That a Nero should have sworn to crush the Christians and their God, may be explained, because the idea could only have been that of a cruel mon-

ster. That a Dioclesian should have sworn it, may be understood, because the idolatrous tyrant thought to appease the anger of his gods and avenge their glory. That a Julian, mad enough to restore the worship of idols, should have sworn it, appears only to have been a consequence of his former delirium. But that a pretended sage, who neither believes in the God of the Christians, nor in the Gods of the Pagans, and that knows not in what God to believe, should vent all his rage and fury precisely against Christ, is one of those phenomenons of modern Philosophism, which can be explained but as the delirium of the impious man.

I do not pretend by this to exclude from the school of reason every one who is not fortunate enough to be within the pale of Christianity; let that man rank with an Epicætetus or a Seneca, or before the Christian æra, with a Socrates or a Plato, who has been unfortunate enough not to have known the proofs of Christianity. But this real Philosophy of reason fought, what Voltaire has conspired to destroy. The greatest of Socrates's disciples pants for the coming of that just man who shall dissipate the darkness and the doubts of the sage; I hear him exclaim, "Let him come that man, let him come who will teach us our duties towards the Gods, and our duty towards man. Let him come incessantly; I am ready to obey whatever he may ordain; and I hope he will make me a better man."* Such is the language of the Philosophy of reason. I think I behold him again, when in the bitterness of his heart he foresees, that should this just man appear upon earth, he would be scoffed at by the wicked, buffeted and scourged, treated in a word as the outcast of men.† That man has appeared so much sought for by the Pagan Philosopher, and the conspiring Sophisters, a D'Alembert or a Voltaire, seek to crush him and yet pretend to the Philosophy of reason. Let their disciples answer for them. If in the son of Mary they will not acknowledge the Son of the Eternal Father, let them own him at least to be that just man sought for by Plato—what then are their pretensions to the Philosophy of reason in conspiring against him? If the awful testimony of the sun being darkened, the dead rising from their graves, the veil of the temple being rent, cannot convince them; let them at least admire the most holy, the justest of men, the prodigy of goodness and meekness,

* Plato in his second Alcibiades.

† Ibid.

the apostle of every virtue, the wonder of oppressed innocence praying for his executioners—where then is their Philosophy when they conspire against the Son of Man? Yes, Philosophy they had, but it was that of the Jews, that of the synagogue, whence issued those blasphemous cries of, “Crucify him, crucify him!” or *crush the wretch!* Judas himself confesses him to be the just man, and shall he approach to perfection when compared to their school of modern Philosophy. Oh, what a philosophy! that after seventeen centuries repeats the blasphemous cries which resounded in the courts of Pilate or Herod, against the Holy of Holies!—In vain shall the disciple deny the hatred of Voltaire against the *person* of CHRIST; does he not particularly distinguish Damilaville for that hatred, does he not sign himself *Christ-moque* (Christ-scoffer,) just as he terminates his letters by *crush the wretch*, or talks of the *Christicole* superstition? * Yet whilst the Sophister denies the power of Christ, he cannot refuse acknowledging his wisdom, his goodness, and his virtue.

But they may object, that it is not so much at the person as at the *religion* of Christ they aim their blows. Where then is the Philosophy in attacking a religion whose essence is to enforce every virtue, and condemn every vice. Either before or after Christ, has there ever appeared a Philosopher, who has even formed the idea of a virtue of which this religion does not give the precept or set the example? Is there a crime or a vice which it does not condemn and reprobate? Has the world ever seen a sage, impressing such divine doctrines with more powerful motives? Either before or since Christ, did there ever exist laws more conducive to the interior happiness of families, or to that of empires? Laws that teach men the reciprocal ties of affection; laws in short that more peremptorily command us to afford each other mutual assistance? Let the Philosopher appear who pretends to perfect this religion; let him be heard and judged. But should he, like Voltaire and his adepts, only seek to destroy it, let him be comprised in the common sentence of madman, and of enemy to humanity.

It is only at the altars, at the *mysteries* of that religion, and not at the *morality* of it, they aim their blows.—In the first place that is not true, as we have already seen and shall see again. Their attack was common on

* Letter to the Marq. D’Argence, 2d March 1763.

the morality of the Gospel, as well as on the mysteries or the altars of Christianity.—But had it been true, what is there to be found in these mysteries, sufficient to render the Christian religion so hateful in the eyes of the Philosopher? Do any of them favor the crimes and faults of men? Do any of them counteract his affection for his neighbour, or render him less attentive to his own duties, less faithful to friendship or gratitude, or less attached to his country? Is there a single mystery which does not elevate the Christian, stimulate his admiration for his God, or spur him on to his own happiness, and to the love of his neighbours? The son of God expiring on a cross, to open the gates of heaven to man, to teach him what he has to dread, should he by his crimes, be unfortunate enough to close them again. The bread of angels, given only to those who have purified themselves from the dross of sin: those words pronounced on the man repenting of his crimes, and firmly purposing rather to die than to fall into them anew. The awful sight of a God who comes to judge the living and the dead; to call to him those who have loved, clothed and fed their brethren, while he casts into eternal flames the ambitious man, the traitor and the tyrant; the hard-hearted rich, the bad servant, and the violator of the nuptial tie. Lastly, all persons who have not loved and helped their neighbour. Are all these, I say, mysteries at which the philosopher should direct his hatred, or can reason, on such a plea, authorize his conspiracy against the religion of the Christians.

Should Voltaire and his disciples refuse to believe these *mysteries*, does it import to them that other people should not equally disbelieve them. Is the Christian more dangerous to them because he that forbids me to injure my brother, is the same God before whom we are both one day to appear in judgment. Is that God less tremendous to the wicked, or less favorable to the just, because on his word we believe him to be one in essence, though three in persons? This hatred of Voltaire must be a phrenzy which the very infidels themselves, could not ground on such pretexts. What frantic rage must it be that blinds the Sophisters, when in contradiction with themselves, they applaud the toleration of the ancient Philosophers, who, though disbelieving the mysteries of Paganism, never attempted to rob the people of their religion; whilst on the other side they

incessantly conspire against Christianity under pretence that it contains mysteries.

Another objection not less extravagant, is that against *Revelation* itself. It is God, they say, whom the Christians declare to have spoken; hence there can be no further liberty of opinion in man on matters of faith. The Sophister of liberty and equality is then authorised to rise in arms against Christianity and its mysteries. Such are their arguments. But to what lengths does their phrenzy carry them? Voltaire, D'Alembert, and Diderot, conspire to overthrow every altar, Roman or Lutheran, Calvinist or Anglican, and that in order to avenge the rights of liberty and toleration in matters of faith. What bedlamite idea is this? Can reason be traced through plots and conspiracies, of which the sole tendency is the overthrow of the universal religion of Europe, under pretence of liberty of worship: we have heard Voltaire invoking Bellerophons and Herculeffes to his aid, to crush the God of the Christians; D'Alembert, expressing the frantic wish of seeing a whole nation annihilated for its attachment to that God and his worship; have we not seen them for half a century past, meanly conspiring and using all the artifice of cunning intrigue to rob the world of its religion? And because they utter the empty sounds of LIBERTY, EQUALITY, and TOLERATION, you will mistake their voice for that of Philosophy!—Far from us the idea of such Philosophy; terms themselves must have been changed, for this must be extravagance and absurdity; and is not such REASON madness and phrenzy? Such must be the explanation of these words to expound the REASON and PHILOSOPHY of a Voltaire or a D'Alembert, conspiring to crush the religion of Christ.

I could wish not to have to mention Frederick again. I reflect that he was a king; but alas! he is also the royal Sophister. Let us then examine how far philosophy misled him, and whether his wisdom extended beyond the genius of the meanest adept.

Frederick wrote, but why? It is a problem. Was it to impose on the public, or to delude himself? decide it who can. Probably for both, which he seems to have succeeded in. Frederick would sometimes write in favor of Toleration, and he was believed to be tolerant. In the *Monthly Review*, October 1794, page 154, we see him cried up as a model of toleration, and the following passage of his works is quoted: "I never

“ will constrain opinions on matters of religion. I dread
 “ religious wars above all others. I have been so for-
 “ fortunate that none of the sects who reside in my states,
 “ have ever disturbed civil order. We must leave to
 “ the people the objects of their belief, the form of
 “ their devotion, their opinions, and *even their preju-*
 “ *dices.* It is for this reason I have tolerated priests
 “ and monks, IN SPITE of *Voltaire and D’Alembert,*
 “ *who have QUARRELLED WITH ME ON THIS HEAD.*
 “ I have the greatest veneration for all our modern
 “ Philosophers, but indeed I am compelled to acknowl-
 “ edge that a GENERAL TOLERATION is not the *pre-*
 “ *dominant virtue in these gentlemen.*” From this the
 editors draw many excellent conclusions by objecting the
 wisdom of Frederick’s doctrine to the atrocious perse-
 cutions and ferocious intolerance of the French Sophis-
 ters ; but the reader who has seen him stimulate these
 same Philosophers to overthrow the altar, *to crush the*
wretch : who has seen him trace the plan so much ad-
 mired by Voltaire as that of *a Great Captain* for the de-
 struction of the priests and monks, in order to attack
 the bishops and to compass the overthrow of religion :*
 who has heard him decide that the Antichristian Revo-
 lution, which he so much longed to see, could only be
 accomplished by a superior force and that the sentence
 which was definitively to crush religion was to issue from
 government ; † will the reader I say, recognize the tole-
 ration of the sophistical monarch ! No, he will pass
 the same judgment on the Sophister which the editors
 have passed on the disciples of that school. “ When
 “ SUCH MEN tell us their *object is to carry into practice*
 “ *all the perfection of Theory,* we know not which we
 “ ought principally to feel our *DISGUST or INDIGNA-*
 “ *TION.*” But let us revere the monarch, let us vent
 our indignation against that frantic Philosophism which
 involves in darkness the royal adept on his throne, as it
 did his masters in their sanhedrims and secret acad-
 emies, eradicating from man every symptom of reason.

If any thing could paint the folly of the masters in
 stronger colors, it would be that empty pride of the
 adepts at the period when they look upon the grand ob-
 ject of their conspiracy as accomplished. Religion was
 mourning over her altars overthrown, her temples pro-
 faned ; when Condorcet exalting the triumph of Vol-

* Vide Supra, Chap. VI.

† 24th March 1767, 13th August 1775.

taire, exclaims : " Here at length it is permitted openly to proclaim the right, so long difused, of reducing all opinions to the standard of *our own reason* ; that is to say, to employ, in order to attain to truth, the *only implement* that has been given us to recognize it. Man learns with a certain pride, that he is not designed by nature to believe on the affirmation of others ; and the superstitions of antiquity, the degradation of reason in the phrenzy of a supernatural faith, are vanished from society as they were from Philosophy."*

Condorcet when writing these words no doubt meant to describe the triumph of reason, over revelation and over the whole Christian religion. The adepts applaud, and like him, believe in the pretended triumph of reason. But it had not less cause than religion to mourn over such triumphs. Was it then, to reinstate man in the right of bringing his *opinions* to the test of *reason*, that the Sophisters had with unrelenting fury conspired against the religion of Christ ? What could they have intended by this test ? Was it to exercise the right of only believing what their reason when convinced, invited them to believe ? If so, where the necessity of conspiring ? Does the religion of Christ command man to believe what his enlightened reason does not induce him to believe ? Is it not to convince our reason that Christianity surrounded itself with incontestable proofs, that Christ and his Apostles wrought numberless miracles, that religion has preserved its records, and that her pastors invite the Christian to the spirit of research, that he may know what has been proved and what he ought to believe ; that her apostles formally declare, that *his faith, his submission should be reasonable* (*rationabile obsequium vestrum* ;) and can the Sophister hence infer that conspiracies and the darkest plots are necessary to vindicate the rights of reason believing in religion ? A religion whose God is the God of reason ; whose tenets are the tenets of reason ; whose rights are the rights of reason rejecting sophistry and false prejudices, but whose duty is to believe from the numerous proofs of the power, of the sanctity, of the wisdom and sublimity of the God who speaks, and on the authenticity of his word.

* Sketch on the Progress of Mind, epoch 9.

If by the rights of reason the Sophister means the right of only believing what his reason can conceive, and that ceases to be mysterious; then these rights of reason must truly border on phrenzy. The Sophister is no longer to believe in the light of the day nor the darkness of the night, till light and its action on man shall cease to be a mystery; no longer shall he believe in the oak towering over the forest, raised from an acorn; nor in the humble flower glowing in the brightest colors; no longer shall he believe in man, succeeding from generation to generation; nature shall be denied, and his own existence remain a doubt until all is clearly conceived by his reason, and that the veil of mystery spread over these various objects shall be rent asunder.—Thus to attain the honors of incredulity, he submits to the garb of folly.

How different is the language of the real sage! His reason declares that objects once proved are to be believed, however mysterious they may be, under the penalty of absurdity; for then they are believed to exist because their existence is demonstrated, and not as the Sophister would pretend, because their nature is inconceivable.

But another right equally inconceivable and triumphantly inculcated by Condorcet is that of being reduced in order to attain to truth, to the only implement that has been given us to distinguish it! If then nature has left me in the dark, on objects of the greatest importance, on my future state; on the means of avoiding a destiny I dread, or of obtaining the lot I desire; the man who shall dissipate the mist with which I am surrounded, will have robbed me of my rights? Why did he not say that the right of the blind man is also to keep to the only instrument nature had given him, and that it would be encroaching on his rights if he that has eyes, should attempt to lead him? Why did he not conclude that the blind man had also learned with a *sort of pride* that nature had never designed that he should believe in light on the assertion of another.—What philosophic pride is that of the Sophister! His reason is degraded by a *supernatural faith*!—Christianity, he thinks, has debased his reason by raising it above the sphere of this world; he thinks the God of Christians has vilified man by explaining to him his eternal destiny, and leaving him the memory of his miracles as a proof of his word.—Such a pretension was the grand plea for the Antichristian

Conspiracy, and dared they invoke the name of reason? Were they believed to be Philosophers? And do many as yet labor under this error?—But let us return to their masters, to Voltaire, D'Alembert and Diderot, let us show to the adepts, the unfortunate dupes of ignorance also decorated with the title of Philosophers.—To accomplish this, it will only be necessary, to point out the most formal avowals and mutual confidences of these pretended Philosophers.

Does God exist, or does he not?—Have I a soul to save, or have I not?—Is this life to be entirely spent for my present interest? Am I to believe in a future state?—Is this God, this soul and this future state what I am told, or am I to believe quite another thing?—Such certainly are the elementary questions of true science, of Philosophy the most apposite to the happiness of man both in itself and in its consequences. On questions of such importance, what do these assuming sages reply, what are their mutual answers to each other, at the very time they are conspiring against Christ? Has not the reader seen their letters, their own expressions; did not these men, who pretended to the empire of knowledge, formally and repeatedly declare that they were unable even to form an opinion on any of these questions. Voltaire consulted by the citizen or by the prince, consults D'Alembert in his turn, whether there is a God, whether he has a soul; and a *non liquet* (I do not know,) is the answer he receives—These must be strange Philosophers indeed, uncertain on the very principles of Philosophy; whence can they assume the title of rulers of reason, they who are ignorant of that science on which the morals, principles and basis of society rest; on which the duties of man, of the father of a family and of the citizen, of the prince and of the subject, on which in short, their conduct and happiness entirely depend? What can be their science on man if they are perfectly ignorant of his nature? What can be their doctrine on his duties; on his grand concerns; if they are ignorant of his future destiny? What is that Philosophy which barely teaches me that I am ever to be in the dark with regard to those objects, which most concern me and those I am to live with?

Dupes of
ignorance.

We have seen D'Alembert, in order to hide his ignorance, absurdly excusing it by answering, that it could be of little concern to man, not to be able to solve these

questions on the soul, on God, or on a future state.* We have seen Voltaire declaring that nothing was known of these first principles, yet own that uncertainty was a disagreeable state; but pleading this uncertainty itself, he adds, that certainty is a ridiculous state or that of a quack†. Thus because the former is ignorant on these questions, it can little import man to know whether his concerns extend no further than this mortal life, or whether a happy or an unhappy eternity is to be his fate. Because the latter is equally ignorant, though more unhappy in his ignorance, man is to despise whoever shall pretend to dispel his doubts; Christ and his Apostles are to be treated with ridicule, and certainty shall be the doctrine of a Quack!—This cannot be ignorance alone, it must be pride and folly; what! Man is to be buried in darkness, because the jealous eye of the Sophister is dazzled with the light.

Dupes of
depravity
mistaken
for virtue.

Hatred, jealousy and destruction contain the whole science of these pretended sages. Hate the Gospel, calumniate its author, overthrow his altars, and your science will be that of the modern Philosopher. Profess yourself a Deist, an Atheist, a Sceptic, a Spinosist, in short, whatever you please; deny or affirm, set up a doctrine or a worship in opposition to the religion of Christ, or set up none, that is not what either the sect or Voltaire himself requires to constitute a modern Philosopher. When asked what doctrine he wished to substitute to that of Christ, did he not think himself authorized to answer, I have delivered them from the physicians (he called the clergy physicians,) what farther service do they require? Require! have you not infected them with the plague? Have you not unbridled every passion? And what remedies have you left them? In vain were it for us to challenge Voltaire and his panegyrist Condorcet, they will not answer.—No, follow their example; declare all religious truths to be erroneous, false, or popular prejudices, to be superstition and fanaticism; glory in destruction, little troubling yourself with substituting science for ignorance, or truth for error; to have destroyed will suffice, and for that you shall be entitled to the high-sounding name of a modern Philosopher. €

At this rate, the reader's surprise must cease, at the numerous tribe of Philosophers to be found in every

* Letter to Voltaire 25th of July and 4th of August 1770.

† Letter to the Prince Royal of Prussia, 28th Nov. 1770

rank, of all ages and sexes. But at such a rate can an honest man pride himself in the title of Philosopher. Such a science is, alas ! but too easily acquired. It is as yet a problem why Voltaire, on his outset, seemed to confine his views to the higher classes, to kings, nobles and the rich, why he should have excluded *beggars and the rabble*. On seeing the guests smile at the blasphemies uttered at table, will not the footman soon equal his master in the Philosophic science, will he not also learn to scoff at the pontiff and the pastor, at the altar and the gospel ! Will not the butchering Marfeillois, like Condorcet, glory in having cast off those vulgar prejudices, when in those bloody murders of September, he overthrows the altar and stains its steps with the blood of its priests and pontiffs. Like Voltaire, will he not style this, the Age of reason, and of enlightened Philosophy ? Harangue the vilest of the populace ; tell them that the priests are imposing on them, that hell is of their invention, that the time is come to throw off the yoke of fanaticism and superstition, to assert the liberty of their reason ; and in a few minutes, the ignorant plough-boy will rival, in Philosophic science, the most learned of the adepts. The language may vary, but the science will be the same. They will hate with the adept, and will destroy what he wished to crush. The more ignorant and ferocious they are, the more easily shall they adopt your hatred, which constitutes the whole of this sophisticated science.

If adepts are sought for in another line, it is easy to increase their numbers, but without adding to the science of the sect. Thus let the daughter of Necker but find some impertinent sarcasm of hers against the Gospel, taken for wit by D'Alembert, and she immediately becomes as Philosophic as he, and as void of religious prejudices as sister Guillemetta. It had astonished many to see the numbers of young fops, who were already styled philosophers, when they scarce had had time to read any thing, except a few impious pamphlets. But this age of enlightened Philosophy, can no longer be a subject of surprize.

What ! shall every wanton coquette partake of this Philosophy, shall every husband or wife, who scoffs at conjugal fidelity, shall every son who, throwing aside all sentiments of duty, and denying the authority of a parent, shall they all be styled Philosophers ? The cour-tier destitute of morals, or the man who is a slave to,

and imprudently gives loose to his passions, they also will glory in the name of Philosopher ! Voltaire, in spite of all their vices, rejects none of these from his school, provided they have the necessary requisites of scoffing at the mysteries, of insulting the priesthood, and hating the God of the gospel. Certainly these cannot be simply the dupes of ignorance, mistaken for science. No ; these must be the children of corruption substituted for the school of virtue. That folly, that frantic rage which consumes Voltaire, conspiring against his God, or setting heaven at defiance, when he writes to D'Alembert, *twenty years more and God will be in a pretty plight*, or when he repeatedly writes to Damilaville, *crush, crush the Wretch* ; that I say may be more worthy of pity than of blame. Yes, Voltaire in the phrenzy of his rage is to be pitied. That multitude of adepts, of noblemen, ministers, and citizens, are to be excused, who without having the least idea of Philosophy, have believed themselves Philosophers, being misled by those impious Sophisters. I will not even ask them, since when could the bare title of Philosopher, assumed by Frederick and Voltaire, suffice to constitute them masters in a science of which they openly professed their ignorance and contempt : I will not tell them, that if Frederick, consummate in the art of war, could form warriors ; that if Voltaire, rivalling Corneille, could give lessons to the poet, nevertheless they were both equally ignorant in point of religion. I will not say to them, that this latter is a science like all others, requiring great application and study, in order to excel ; that it was absurd to look for masters and teachers in men who blasphemed what they neither understood nor sought to understand ; in men, who often stammering out a petty sophism, which they deemed unanswerable, resembled the child, who dashes the watch on the ground because the spring is hidden from him. Such would be the reflexions of common sense, which should have rendered the school of the Sophisters at least suspected, if not absurd and ridiculous to its adepts ; when Frederick combats the Sorbonne, or Voltaire St. Thomas ; when D'Alembert attacks St. Augustin, or Sister Guillemetta St. Paul.

It is possible, that all these great Sophisters, debating on divinity, religion and tenets, may have been mistaken by the ignorant adepts for learned doctors. But when the whole school, treating of morality and

virtue, pretend to direct them solely by the rules of natural religion, the very shadow of a pretext for their delusion, disappears. From casting an eye on the sect, could they perceive a single adept who, under the direction of Voltaire or D'Alembert, had quitted his religion to become a better father or a better son, a better husband or a better man, in short more virtuous! Would not the simple reflexion have sufficed, that this pretended Philosophy of virtue had regularly been the refuge of all those men who were publicly known to scoff at every duty, at all morality: that when the friends to religion reproached them with the dissoluteness of their morals, they as constantly answered with a sort of sneer, such reproaches may do for men, who have not as yet shaken off the prejudices of the Gospel—but we are Philosophers, and we know what to believe!!

It would be impossible to hide, that every vice was cloaked under such a Philosophy; the faithless wife, the profligate youth, the man practising every art, whether just or unjust, to attain his ends, even to the loose women whose characters were openly disparaged, all decorated themselves with the highfounding name of Modern Philosophers. None would have dared to justify their criminal conduct by answering,—I am a Christian,—I believe in the Gospel.—Let not the chiefs charge the error and ignorance on the disciples. The adept knew but too well that nothing but the name of virtue remained in the school of the Sophisters; that the greater progress he made in their science, the more he adopted their principles, by setting at defiance the reproach of the virtuous man, and by smothering the cries of his own conscience. It is true they had not barefacedly blasphemed the morality of the Gospel, but they had erased from their code all those virtues *which religion maintains to be descended from heaven*. He had seen the long list of those which they called *sterile and imaginary virtues, or virtues of prejudice*; he had seen erased from their code, all that list of real virtues such as modesty and continence, conjugal fidelity and filial piety, gratitude and forgiveness of injuries, disinterestedness, even probity itself.* To these virtues they had substituted ambition, pride, vain glory, the pleasures and the passions. Their morality acknowledged no

* See the original texts quoted in the Helvian Letters, vol. 5.

other virtue than that *which is advantageous* ; nor vice but that *which is hurtful* in this world ; and virtue is declared to be but *an empty dream* if the virtuous man is unhappy.† Personal interest is laid down as the sole principle of all Philosophic virtues ; they sometimes indeed name *beneficence* as one, but that is merely as an excuse to dispense them from the practice of every other virtue. *Friend, do good to us and we will overlook every thing else*, is the express doctrine of Voltaire ‡ but that was not all. It was necessary to bring the adepts to doubt even of the existence of virtue, to doubt whether in morality there existed a right and wrong, and it was to such a question that Voltaire did not blush to answer, *non liquet* (it is not known.)§ As a further step they were to decide, that all that is called “ perfection, im-
 “ perfection, righteousness, wickedness, goodness,
 “ falsehood, wisdom, folly, only differed from each
 “ other by their sensations of pleasure or pain.”¶
 “ That the more the Philosopher examined the nature
 “ of things, the less he dared to assert that it depended
 “ any more on man to be pusillanimous, choleric, vi-
 “ cious or voluptuous, than it did to be squinteyed,
 “ hump-backed or lame.”¶¶ Such were the lessons of the conspiring Sophisters, and can it be believed that such lessons could be mistaken for those of virtue and Philosophy ?

Had the adept been certain as to the existence of vice and virtue, of what consequence would this distinction have been to him, when his masters teach him, that man is born for happiness, and that the latter consists *in pleasure, or the absence of pain.*‡‡ When laying aside all solicitude for his soul, he is taught that *the motto of the wise man ought to be to watch over his body ;*§§ or that it is by *pleasure* that God *stimulates to virtue.*¶¶¶ Such are the lessons taught by Voltaire, Diderot and D’Alembert, the chiefs of the conspirators.

What motives to virtue did these chiefs suggest to their adepts when they declared that a God neither re-

† Vide supra, note to 9th chapter.

‡ Fragments on divers subjects, Art. VIRTUE.

§ Philosophical Dictionary, Art. TOUT EST BIEN.

¶ Let. of Thrasylulus.

¶¶ Encyclopedia, Geneva edition, Art. VICE.

‡‡ Encyclopædia, Art. HAPPINESS, and Preface.

§§ D’Alembert on the Elements of Philosophy, No. 5.

¶¶¶ Voltaire’s Discourse on Happiness.

gards their virtues nor their vices, that the fear of this GOD is an absolute folly ! Or when wishing to stifle all remorse of conscience, they tell them that “ the man “ void of fear is above the laws—That a bad action, “ when useful, can be committed without remorse— “ That remorse is no other than the fear of men and of “ their laws.” When carrying their doctrine beyond all absurdity, they on one side assert the liberty of opinions in order to leave man free to choose the false, while, on the other side they destroy in him all liberty of action to smother all symptoms of remorse.¶

Such was the doctrine of the Sophisters. In vain would they attempt to deny it ; all their writings are full of it, and particularly those which they most extolled as their principal master-pieces. What could have been the conduct of these great philosophers, had they undertaken to draw up a code of villainy and depravity ? What more could be required to demonstrate to the world that this pretended age of philosophy was no other than that of vice ; than that of wickedness organized into principles and precepts for the use of the abandoned, to whom they might be advantageous.

The only plea that can be left to the numbers of adepts who styled themselves Philosophers, in alleviation of their criminality, is the amazing constancy and artfulness which it required from the chiefs, to propagate their principles, and ensure the success of their conspiracy. Dupes of wickedness.

But with these artifices, these intrigues, what was their philosophy ? Let us suppose that during the lifetime of Voltaire, of Frederick, or of D'Alembert, and before depravity had attained to such a height, let us suppose that the frequent and repeated orders given to the conspirators, of *strike, but hide your hand*, had been known ; let us suppose that the people had been acquainted with all the tortuous means secretly used to seduce them, would any one then have traced the actions of the Philosopher, in such dark hypocrisy, in such perpetual dissimulation, or in the ambushes which were their only means of success.

At the time when D'Alembert and Condorcet, Diderot, Helvetius and Turgot, held their sittings at the

¶ See their texts quoted in the Helvian Letters; vol. 3.

Hotel D'Holbach, under the name of Economists, and under the pretence of meditating on the happiness of the people, had it been known by that same people, that they were only plotting against the altars of the God whom it adored ; had it been known that those teachers, who had been appointed to instruct the rising generation, were only the impious emissaries of D'Alembert, sent to corrupt its morals ; that all those hawkers of books sold at so low a rate, were the agents of the secret academy, employed to circulate its poisons from towns to villages, and thence to the poorest cottages ; would such means, I ask, have entitled the sect to that respect and veneration which it has usurped ? Their wicked plots, once detected, could such ages have sufficed to have given to the century they lived in the appellation of the Philosophic Age ? No ; without doubt, horror would have succeeded to this admiration, and had the laws remained silent, public indignation would have avenged Philosophy of the infamous plots carried on under the cloak of its name.

Let then this age of pretended Philosophy, cast off the delusion under which it has been led away, a delusion arising perhaps more from its own vices and corruption, than from the arts of the conspirators ; let it blush and repent. That unpolished multitude, confessing its inexperience in the ways of the Sophisters, whom instinctive virtue so long preserved from the arts of seduction, may be excusable ; but let those thousands of adepts, who are to be found in the courts and palaces of the great, in the seats of literature, let them reflect on and scrutinize their past conduct. In adopting impiety they believed themselves Philosophers. In throwing off the yoke of the Gospel, and laying aside its virtues rather than its mysteries, they mistook the empty sounds of *prejudice* and *superstition*, perpetually repeated by the Sophisters, for profound reasoning. They were ignorant that the word prejudice only signifies an opinion void of proofs ; and that they themselves had become slaves to prejudice, by casting off a religion of which they gloried in not having studied the proofs, while yet they read all the calumnies that its enemies could compile against it. Let them seek still further claims to this Philosophy in their own hearts : was it not to that lukewarm weariness for the virtues of the Gospel they were indebted for their admiration of the

conspirators? Was it not the love of their passions which made them a prey to incredulity, far more than all the intrigues and ambushes of the Sophisters? It is much to be feared, that that man is already wicked, who makes himself so happy and glories so much in following the apostles of wickedness; or small indeed must have been his portion of Philosophy, if such duplicity, such meanness, and such conspiracies could have been mistaken for wisdom or virtue.

Whatever may have been the causes, it was ordained, that an age duped by the intrigues and conspiracies of impiety should glory in styling itself the *Age of Philosophy*. It was ordained that an age, a dupe to the frantic rage of impiety substituted to reason, a dupe to the paths of hatred and the wish of crushing all religion, mistaken for toleration, for religious liberty and equality, to ignorance for science, to depravity for virtue, a dupe in short to all the intrigues and plots of the most profound wickedness mistaken for the proceedings and means of wisdom; it was ordained, I say, that this *Age of Philosophy* should also be a dupe to the plots of the rebellious Sophisters, mistaken for the love of society and the basis of public happiness.

The conspiracy against the altar, the hatred sworn by the chiefs against their God, were not the only legacies bequeathed by the chiefs to this school of modern philosophy. Voltaire was the father of the Sophisters of Impiety, and before his death he becomes the chief of the Sophisters of Rebellion. He had said to his first adepts, let us crush the altar, and let not a single altar nor a single worshipper be left to the God of Christians; and his school soon resounded with the cry of, *Let us crush the sceptre*, and let not a single throne, nor a single subject be left to the kings of the earth! It was from the mutual success of these two schools, that the revolution was to be generated in France, which, grasping the hatchet, was at the same time to destroy the altar of the living God, and imbrue its steps with the blood of its pontiffs; to overturn the throne, and strike off the head of the unfortunate Lewis XVI. menacing all the altars of Christendom, all the kings of the earth with a similar fate. To the plots contrived under the veil of liberty and equality, *applied to religion*, and of religious toleration, are to succeed those begotten under the veil of *political* liberty and equality. The mysteries of the

second conspiracy, of the *Sophisters of Rebellion*, combining with those of *Impiety*, in order to generate the modern JACOBINS, will be the object of the Second Part of these Memoirs.

END OF THE FIRST PART.

5/6
M.D.

