

One of the men who contributed not a little, though, perhaps, unintentionally, to extend the Reformation in Europe and England, was the great scholar Erasmus. His Greek Testament was used as a mighty lever in the hands of the fomenters of that movement. It has been said that "Erasmus laid the egg and Luther hatched it."

The next great social convulsion was in the 18th century, namely, the French Revolution. Chief among its causes was the anarchistic character and spirit of French philosophy and literature. French philosophy at this time was sceptical and revolutionary. The names of the great writers, Rousseau and Voltaire, suggest at once its prevalent tone and spirit. Rousseau declared that all the evils which afflict humanity arise from vicious artificial arrangements such as the Family, the Church, and the State.

The tendency and effect of this sceptical philosophy was to create hatred and contempt for the institution of both State and Church, to foster discontent with the established order of things, to stir up an uncontrollable passion for the innovation and change.

Voltaire turned his brilliant gifts of poetry and wit into weapons of invective, slander, ridicule, buffoonery and malice to wage war against the Catholic Church. "Ecrasez l'infame"—crush the infamous thing—was the motto of his life. The dominant philosophy of both Voltaire and Rousseau undermined every existing institution and denied all authority to custom, religion and state. The reading of such works became the fashion, the rage in social and scientific circles. In their warfare against the Church, the followers of Voltaire and Rousseau were determined to obliterate the Jesuit Order, and this war against them began in the literary world.

They (the followers of Voltaire and Rousseau) founded the Merchants' Bank for the purpose of disseminating slanderous books and pamphlets. In Spain the downfall of the Jesuits was occasioned by a letter forged by the Duke of Alva.

Such writings proved that the pen had more influence in stirring up the people than the sword. So uncontrollable became the frenzy of the people that Charles III. in 1776 signed the decree banishing the Jesuits. By this (without the use of a sword) all the houses and colleges of the Society throughout the Spanish possessions were taken over by the state, 6,000 members were crowded into ships and thrown upon the shores of the Papal States.

Because of the feeling aroused against these zealous religious