

phoenix-like, out of the ashes of Christianity. Meanwhile another historian,<sup>1</sup> not less eminent and gifted with a singularly piercing moral insight, was warning an Oxford congregation that "one thing is certain: nothing can take the place of Christianity." There are indications in his latest work that Mr. Morley would hesitate before refusing to subscribe to that judgment.

It is time to turn from these high moralities and set our feet in less precipitous places. We have now to follow our author for a little into the company of those earliest Liberals, who live again in the light of his powerful sympathy. With such a guide, indeed, those must be strangely difficult who do not catch the enthusiasm of the *philosophes* whom Holbach would gather round his hospitable board at Grandval—the freshness of their conversation, their boundless faith in the future of the race, their keen delight in intellectual toil, their hatred of ecclesiastical tyranny, their belief in thought and individuality as the great regenerators, their unflinching courage in face of opposition. For one of the party, who appears a little rougher than the rest, our sponsor, we observe, has a peculiar regard, and it is plain that this affectionate intimacy arises from a common width of horizon, a fondness for speculating upon certain ultimate matters concerning Nature and Man and Society, above all from a persistent determination to regard nothing as truth that does not permit of immediate intellectual demonstration. On inquiry, we learn that we are face to face with Diderot, the very focus of the rationalistic thought of the day. In respect of the others, our guide seems to entertain no preferences; though we notice that there is one—a solitary, mournful figure—whom he addresses with some reserve and constraint. This, he tells us, is Rousseau—a sentimental dreamer, a writer whose spring of action is not the head, but the heart, unpractical, somewhat given to egotism and self-observation, yet the master of a graceful, appealing style which makes him the very prophet

<sup>1</sup> Dean Church.