

From the Catholic Advocate.

THE DEATH OF PHILOSOPHERS.

Many of those who during their lives published volumes of blasphemies against religion and against God, were glad at the hour of death to recant their mad sophisms, and demanded anxiously the consolations and aids of that religion which they pretended to despise. We translate with freedom, from the French work of Abbe Guillois, on "Confession."

"La Metrie, a physician and man of letters, famous for his errors and desolating doctrines, learned at last to detest the absurd philosophy in which he prided, and which carried him into so many excesses. He publicly disavowed his errors, caused a priest to be called and showed a great desire to leave with the world unequivocal proofs of his repentance. He died at Berlin, in 1751.

The Count de Boulainvilliers, the author of many works replete with sarcasm and ridicule against religion, died on the 23d of January, 1723. But in his last moments he solicitously demanded, and joyfully received the sacrament of the Eucharist, after having made to the priest a confession of his sins.

Montesquieu carried to great lengths the freedom of private judgment on religious subjects, while in the full enjoyment of life. But when death began to draw near, he called for a confessor, and gave up his last hours to religion. He died at Paris in 1755.

Du Marsais, who died on the 11th of June, 1756, had published many works filled with undisturbed hatred against religion; but he too would have the priest by his bedside when death came, and it is said that the confessor was much edified by the lively faith manifested by the repentant philosopher in these last solemn moments of his life.

Maupertuis, a member of the academy of sciences, and a learned Astronomer, had in his works favoured the senseless belief of materialists. But seeing death advance to gather him to the grave, he began to reflect upon his pride and folly, confessed his sins, and died at Bale in 1759, in the arms of two Capuchin friars whose presence he had solicited.

Fonteclle, one of the founders of the Philosophic school, died at Paris on the 11th of January, 1757. On the first of that month, finding the symptoms of his disease very threatening, he had sent for a priest and solicited the sacraments of religion which he received in his perfect senses.

Boulanger, author of a most dangerous and impious work, entitled *Antiquity unveiled*, (*Antiquite devoilee*) on his death-bed gave evidence of the most lively remorse. He was visited by Mr. Lambert, cannon of *St. Honore*, with whom he had several conferences on the subject of religion, giving many evidences of sorrow and repentance. He died on the 16th of September, 1759.

The Marquis d'Argens, celebrated for his lively but uncurbed imagination, and his open incredulity, died in 1771. He was taken sick at the house of one of his sisters in Provence, where he denounced the impious sentiments and opinions which he

had hitherto held. He became convinced of the truth of religion, repented, went to confession, and dying implored the priest who attended him to stay by his bed side and suggest pious sentiments and prayers while he was travelling through that terrible passage from life to eternity. His brother, the President d'Eguilles loved to recount how this proud and irreligious brother at last humbled himself before his God.

Toussaint, the author of the book *des Meurs* which as La Harpe says, was the first in which a plan of natural morality, independent of religion, was proposed, manifested the greatest repentance when struck by the malady which terminated his life in 1788. He loudly condemned the scandal of his conduct and of his writings, and received the sacraments of religion with the marks of the greatest piety. On the very day of his death, he called his friends around him, and in their presence thus addressed his son: "My son, hear what I now say to you. I am about to appear before God to give an account of my life: I have offended him much, and I stand in great need of his mercy. I have scandalized you by my irreligious conduct and my worldly maxims. Do you pardon me? Will you do what is necessary that God also may pardon me? Will you of yourself arrive at other principles than those which I have given you? Hear, my son, the tardy lessons which I give you at this moment: I call God to witness, whom I am now about to receive, and before whom I am about to appear, that if I have appeared not to be a christian in my actions, in my discourses, in my writings, it was never from conviction: it was only from human respect, from vanity, and to please certain persons. . . . Kneel down, my son; join your prayers with those of the persons who now listen to me: promise to God that you will profit by my last lessons, and beseech him to pardon me."

Bouguer, a member of the Royal Academy of Sciences, and a profound geometer, and at whose death d'Alembert declared, "we have just lost the best intellect of the academy," had been unfortunate enough to lose his faith. Towards the end of his career he had been attracted by the fame of a celebrated Dominican preacher, Father Laherthonie, whose sermons once more lighted up the spark of faith in his bosom. He resolved on confessing his sins and errors; but before doing so, he unveiled to several persons the secret motive which had lured him to the ranks of the infidels. "I was only incredulous because I was corrupt: let us to that which is most urgent, my father; it is my heart more than my mind that stands in need of a cure." This conversion was sincere, and in August, 1758, he died an edifying and christian death.

Buffon, whose systems have caused him to be ranked among the philosophers, in his last hours, gave evidence of the most religious sentiments. He made his confession to Ignatius Bougault, a capuchin, and having received the sacraments, died in 1788.

The Count de Tressan, the friend of Voltaire, and the author of several works

filled with antichristian sentiments and opinions, went to confession, and received the other consolations of religion eight days before his death, which occurred in 1783. D'Alembert, having understood that a priest had been with him several times, came to inform him that rumours on this score were circulated in the world injurious to his character. But de Tressan received this admonition with indignation, and d'Alembert withdrew confused.

The too famous Duke of Orleans, when condemned to death, entered into himself, and in his prison made a general confession to the Abbe Lotringer. When at the foot of the scaffold, he again knelt, and demanded absolution once more, showing a marked repentance for all the crimes of which he had been guilty.

De Langle, the author of many impious works, and among others of a "voyage or travel in Spain," where at every page he insult religion, having fallen sick in 1807, began to feel qualms of conscience for what he had done, and to tremble for the future. He wished to see a priest whom he joyfully received, and in October of that year, died with every appearance of sincere repentance, fortified by the sacraments of the church.

M. Robinet, author of a work on *Nature*, filled with paradoxical opinions upon the attributes of God, upon the soul, on matter, &c., recovered his religion at last, made a recantation of his errors by a public declaration, and died at Rennes in 1820, in the most christian and edifying sentiments.

Napoleon, in his glory, made religion consist in hearing a splendid musical mass on festivals and Sundays; but Napoleon, at St. Helena, had other sentiments about religion. He caused an Italian priest to be invited to the Island, the Abbe Bonaviso; and on the authority of Doctor Aatomarchi, who was then on the Island, it is stated that the ex-Emperor, asked and received from his Chaplain in his last moments the spiritual succours of religion."

Besides these, other Philosophers wished to do the same, but by one circumstance or another were prevented. For instance D'Alembert, had called the priest but Condorcet would not let him approach the dying Philosopher. Diderot was preparing a public recantation of his errors when removed by his irreligious friends into the country where he died.

Santerre had called the priest, but died before he came. Barras wished the priest, but this was denied him by his revolutionary compatriots, who paid no attention to his demands.

And Voltaire, when sick at Maisons in 1724, did go to confession:—afterwards, when sick in Germany, he did the same; and on his death-bed, which presented a scene of terrible despair, he would have been glad to see the priest, but this was refused by his philosophic friends.

The death of the philosophers is a sufficient refutation of all their impious writings against religion.

GOOD MANUFACTURING REGULATION
The Austrian Government has issued an order relative to the employment of children in manufactories. No child is to work younger than nine years old, nor

none then, unless they have been three years frequenting school, and receiving religious instruction. From 9 to 12 years, children must not work above 10 hours. From 12 to 16, children must not work above 12 hours, with one hour's interval. No boy or girl under 16 to work at nights.

We have great pleasure in copying from the Montreal Gazette, the following just tribute to our worthy and much esteemed friend, the Rev. Mr. Phelan:—

An eloquent and affectionate Address was recently presented to the Rev. P. Phelan, who, for the last sixteen years, officiated at the Recollect Church, by his Roman Catholic hearers, previous to his unexpected removal to Bytown. Mr. Phelan has been promoted to the office of Vicar General, preparatory to his advancement as Coadjutor to the Bishop of Kingston. His distinguished zeal and philanthropy were universally acknowledged among all classes of christians; his influence over his congregation was unbounded; and his departure will be regarded by all with sincere regret.

The Address was presented to him at the Seminary, by a large and highly respectable Committee of the Irish, and Roman Catholics of the city, speaking the English language, at the head of whom were Alderman Tobin, Messrs. Dunn, Cotterell, Collins, Conlan, Harkins, J. and C. Curran, Hewett, Murphy, Droingool, T. McNaughten, P. Brennan, Tully, Mahony, Dr. O'Doherty and others. While the address was being read, the Rev. gentleman was powerfully affected, and grief, too powerful to be controlled, drew tears from many among the auditors. At the solemn and touching conclusion of the Rev. gentleman's answer, all present knelt and received his fervent and pious benediction, after which, the Deputation individually took an affectionate farewell of their everend friend and instructor, and separated, it may be added without great exaggeration, in silence and tears.

[The Address, with the Rev. Mr. Phelan's Reply, will appear in our next.]

On the eve of the consecration of Monseigneur Arnoldi, Bishop of Treves, on presenting himself at Coblenz, to the President of the Rhenish province, to take the oath of allegiance to his Prussian Majesty, he was presented with a written formula, wherein a pledge was contained not to correspond directly with Rome. The prelate refused to take the oath until the article was expunged, as inconsistent with the liberal measures which the King had adopted; but Mr. Arnoldi, persisting in his refusal, a special messenger was despatched to the King, then at Cologne, who directed that the clause should be omitted. The consecration took place on the 18th September.—*C. Herald.*

A Well Required Duty.—The following scrap from an English contemporary, shows a very sure mode of adequate compensation being guaranteed to the Archbishop of Canterbury for the weighty and difficult undertaking of writing "A form of thanksgiving." No less a sum than nine thousand three hundred and seventy-five dollars!!! for a prayer of 1500 letters. His Grace owes "a thanksgiving" to the churchwardens we should think for their 7500 crowns.—*Id.*

"It is stated that in each of the 15,000 parishes of England, where the Archbishop of Canterbury's form of thanksgiving, ordered by council, shall be read to-morrow, the churchwardens will be called upon to pay 2s. 6d. for the copy thereof. 75000 crowns for the making and printing of 15,000 copies of a prayer of 1500 letters will pay pretty well—won't it?"

Paupers in Europe.—Among the 178,000,000 individuals who inhabit Europe, there are said to be 10,700,000 beggars, or persons who subsist at the expense of the community, without contributing to its resources. In Denmark, the proportion is 5 per cent; in England, 10 per cent; in Holland, 14 per cent; in Paris, in 1813, 102,856 paupers out of 830,000; in Liverpool, 108,000 out of 217,000. The number of indigent, it is feared, has rather increased than decreased.