

18.
Condorcet.

school of Voltaire and the Encyclopædists, whilst the work of destruction had been performed by the followers of Rousseau. No one has expressed himself on the value of scientific study and knowledge in a clearer or more far-seeing manner than Condorcet. In his 'Report and Project of a Decree on the General Organisation of Public Instruction,' which he presented to the National Assembly in the name of the Committee of Public Instruction, he says:¹ "Many motives have brought about the kind of preference which is accorded to the mathematical and physical sciences. Firstly, for men who do not devote themselves to long meditations, who do not fathom any kind of knowledge—even the elementary study of these sciences is the surest means of developing their intellectual faculties, of teaching them to reason rightly and to analyse their ideas."² . . . It is because in the natural sciences the ideas are more simple, more rigorously circumscribed, it is because their language is more perfect, &c., &c. . . . These sciences offer a remedy for prejudice, for smallness of mind—a remedy, if not more certain, at least more universal, than philosophy itself.³ . . . Those

¹ It was presented on the 20th and 21st April 1792. See Hippeau, 1^o série, pp. 185-288. It was printed by order of the Convention, Paris, Imprimerie nationale, 1793.

² Ibid., p. 203.

³ Ibid., p. 204. It is interesting to see how in all these reports the exact sciences are placed in the foreground. See, for instance, what Gilbert Romme says of the teaching of the proposed *instituts*: "Les sciences mathématiques et physiques, morales et politiques, l'agriculture et les arts mécaniques, la littérature et les beaux-arts, com-

poseront l'enseignement des instituts où l'on pourra suivre, dans leurs éléments, l'échelle entière des connaissances humaines" (vol. i. p. 322). "Les lycées seront l'école des gens instruits; ils embrasseront les sciences, les arts et les lettres dans toute leur étendue." One is forcibly reminded that the most perfect realisation of this arrangement of studies is to be found a century later in the provincial science colleges of this country. The preference, however, is now given to science mainly for utilitarian reasons: the difference is shown by