

brilliant generalisations, expressed frequently in the most perfect language, did no good to the truly scientific cause; they did not spread the genuine scientific spirit. Much of the good done by Fontenelle, by Voltaire, by Buffon, was spoiled or neutralised by premature and ill-founded theories. How much, or how little, they contributed (either directly or by a kind of reaction which set in against them, of which Rousseau may be regarded as the centre) to bring about the Revolution is a matter of much controversy; certain it is that the Revolution broke their sway, and destroyed their immediate influence.¹ To the purely literary the Revolution added

important, in dealing with the extreme materialistic writings which French literature produced between 1745 and 1770, to keep distinct the different origins from which they started, and the different influences which combined to produce them: the mathematical and mechanical principles borrowed from Newton, the physiological and medical emanating from Linnæus and Boerhaave, and the psychological coming from Locke and Shaftesbury. Lange, in his 'History of Materialism' (transl. by Thomas, London, 1880, 3 vols.), was the first to point out clearly the correct chronology and succession of these writings (see especially vol. ii. pp. 49-123), and to dispel the misconceptions which, since the appearance of Hegel's 'Geschichte der Philosophie' in 1833-36, had passed through nearly all historical works published in Germany. From his exhaustive references, it is evident that the extreme views of La Mettrie, Diderot, and Holbach cannot be fathered on any of the great scientists or philosophers, but were an attempt to apply scientific principles to the solution of philosophical, ethical, or religious questions,

frequently for practical and political purposes.

¹ It would probably be more correct to say that these daring attempts to deal with the general problems of knowing and being, with the nature of the soul and the conduct of life, were discarded as premature, and that the followers of Condillac and Locke betook themselves to a more patient study of the facts of the inner life, as the followers of Buffon forsook his brilliant generalisations for the more patient and fruitful study of all the forms of physical nature. And in this respect the Government of the Revolution took a memorable step when it founded on the 3rd brumaire, an iv. (25th October 1795), on a Report of Daunou, based mainly on ideas expounded by Condorcet, the "Académie des Sciences morales et politiques." It was the intention to abandon metaphysical generalisations, and to combine the scientific and historical spirit in the study of mental, moral, and social phenomena, drawing extensively on the assistance of the medical sciences, or a knowledge of human nature in its nor-

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The Revolution added the modern practical popularisation of science.